Studies in Curriculum Theory Series

THE NORDIC EDUCATION MODEL IN CONTEXT

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND CURRENT RENEGOTIATIONS

Edited by
Daniel Tröhler, Bernadette Hörmann,
Sverre Tveit, and Inga Bostad

ROUTLEDGE

The Nordic Education Model in Context

Tracing historical and cultural factors that gave rise to the Nordic Education Model, this volume explores why Northern European education policy has become an international benchmark for schooling.

The text explains the historical connection between a Nordic ideal of democracy and schooling, and indicates how values of equality, welfare, justice, and individualism might be successfully integrated in national school systems and curricula around the world. The volume also highlights recent debates around the longevity of the Nordic model and explores the risks and challenges posed by international policy and assessment agendas. Exploring how Nordic education polices successfully merge social equity with academic excellence, the book combines cultural, historical, sociological, and philosophical analysis with a deep exploration of curriculum and teaching.

This book will be of great interest to researchers, scholars, and postgraduates working across the fields of curriculum, comparative education, cultural studies, and history and philosophy of education and education policy.

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Introduction

The Nordic Education Model: Trajectories, Configurations, Challenges

Daniel Tröhler

In the 1970s, the political and economic realm in the Western World was confronted with something called the "Nordic model" as a "plausible" solution to its financial crisis and inflation (OECD, 1973, p. 27). Many rubbed their eyes in disbelief: Had something been overlooked in the construction of Western modernity? Was there—in the Western World—an alternative, even a plausible alternative, to French *etatism*, German social market economy, or the laissez-faire system of the Anglo-Saxons? Had a different and distinct economic order developed that had been largely overlooked by Western Continental European and Anglo-Saxon narcissistic exceptionalism? Was this order, which went far beyond the economic realm and became apparent on a general political and social level, even successful or at least plausible?

The world being shaken by innumerable problems such as the Cold War, the social and political consequences of the 1968 riots and unrests, the global fear of overpopulation and famine, the oil crisis, and the recession that followed, the way of life that was suddenly discovered in *the North* appeared to be a *model*, that is, a kind of ideal type that could perhaps even be exported outside its area of origin. People, especially those who had a kind of middle way between predatory capitalism and collectivist Marxism in mind, preferring greater social equality and even a welfare state balance and extended political participation in the sense of more democratic rights, saw the Nordic countries as a kind of model that was applicable to schools. The comprehensive school was demanded for compulsory schools following the Nordic model, which was then introduced in most of the German *Bundesländer* with more success in the northern entities than the southern (see Wiborg, 2009).

The quasi-global canonization of the Nordic model by the OECD in 1973 did not just come suddenly, but it was sanctified at the "highest level" following decades of Western-global reasoning efforts to communicate the specific nature of the Nordic order of social, economic, and political life "to the outside world." Earlier examples of this go back to, for instance, the 1930s and interested continental Europeans, such

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as the anti-fascist Czech Karel Čapek. Čapek visited the Scandinavian countries in 1936 and published a travelogue in Czech that same year (Čapek, 1936), and it then appeared in German in the year of his death (Čapek, 1938) and a year later in English under the title *Travels in the North* (Čapek, 1939).

A prime example of co-operation between individual, local efforts and international expertise can be seen in the 1958 publication *Scandinavian Democracy* (Lauwerys, 1958), initiated by the American-Scandinavian Foundation founded in 1910. As the editor of the volume, the Belgian comparatist in education at the University of London, Joseph Albert Lauwerys, said in the introduction that the foundation aimed "to present an account of the special manner in which the democratic principles upon which Western society is founded operate in Scandinavian countries" (Lauwerys, 1958, p. 7). The volume, *Scandinavian Democracy*, was a kind of modified and updated translated version of a book titled *Nordisk Demokrati*, edited in 1949 by two Danish intellectuals, the theologian Hal Koch and the legal and moral philosopher Alf Ross, which united various contributions to the specific democratic and social order of the North in the three languages: Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian.

One section of *Scandinavian Democracy* is devoted to questions of "Building up Democratic Attitudes" (pp. 280–254). It brings together essays such as "Christianity and Democracy," by the Primate of the Church of Norway, Eivind Berggrav, which emphasized the uniting principle of equality in both realms: Christianity and democracy (Berggrav, 1958), and "Education for Democracy," by the communist-affine Swedish literary historian and author Stellan Åke Arvidson, who devoted a large part of his chapter to the characteristic of the comprehensive school as "the solution aimed at in the Northern countries" (Arvidson, 1958, p. 307). A third essay in this section, "Education of the Youth," by the co-editor of the original volume from 1949, Hal Koch, identified authoritarian education practices as incompatible with democracy and, based on Grundtvig, suggested creating moral, social, and self-confident citizens especially through folk high schools (Koch, 1958). These and other chapters of the book refer to an actual educational autonomy and self-confidence in the Nordic countries that had already been known in the late 1920s. On the occasion of the fifth world conference of the New Educational Fellowship held in Helsingør, Denmark, scholars from the North presented domestic educational models that were published in the minutes for 1930 (Boyd, 1930). Then a couple of years later, Norway, Finland, and Sweden were invited by American initiators to participate in the large-scale international comparative research project funded by the Carnegie Foundation under the title "International Examination Inquiry" (Lawn, 2008; for the Norwegian case, see Jarning & Aas, 2008).

The Nordic as a Cultural Construction

The public display of the Nordic model by the OECD in 1973 was thus a kind of Western coronation, which was in its essence perhaps not very original but which acted as a catalyst, not least within the Nordic region itself. As a result, political aspirations within the framework of the Nordic welfare state were fueled, and intensive—also specifically sponsored—research on the essence of the Nordic model began that did not attempt to renounce national distinctions. It soon became clear that the Nordic model could not be reduced to financial policy, the welfare state, or the comprehensive school, and that even the term "model" was not without its problems, which, read in the technocratic language of, for instance, the OECD, virtually ignored cultural emergences and path-dependencies.

For a while, the historical-cultural roots of the model remained somewhat obscure, but eventually, towards the end of the last century and under the influence of the cultural turn, which began to increasingly dominate the social sciences and historiography from the 1980s onwards, *Norden* was understood as a cultural construction (Sørensen & Stråth, 1997a) with a very long history, the exploration of which—also demanding the consideration of national and increasingly also regional differences—still had to be done. These historical reconstructions brought to light centuries-old lines of cultural developments, which—at least in this historiography—indeed differed from those on the Continent or in the Anglo-Saxon world. The cultural differences with Germany were particularly emphasized since all areas that are, today, counted as Nordic had adopted a Christian denomination in the 16th century that also dominated in Germany and has its roots there, namely Lutheranism and the religious culture associated with it. In the Nordic region, regardless of their own diversity, people felt different from Germany's religiously conditioned political culture, especially with regard to aspects of co-operation and participation in public life.

The history of the Reformation and, above all, of what is called the Enlightenment is characterized in the Nordic region—regardless of all the differences between the individual territories and later nation-states—by particularities that distinguish it from the Continent or the United Kingdom, and from very early on they characterized it by issues of social integration and education. In Germany, the nobility had always played a central role and had created an almost unsatisfiable greed for social advancement—equal in status to the nobility, the highest goals of non-aristocratic people were, especially, the bourgeoisie and professorship—in the social imagination of Germans. In contrast to this, there was a popular, non-populist tendency in the Nordic states that was directed against the nobility, which exerted the most influence in Sweden and Denmark, or against the civil servant elite, which dominated in Norway. In a difference that had seemed strange to Germany, absolutism in Sweden in the 17th century, which included Finland, insisted on a coalition of king and peasants against the nobility; in Denmark, and later also in Norway once it was emancipated from Denmark, the insistence was on a coalition of king and citizens. It was, according to Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth, this popular support for the king that later made it possible to develop the state apparatus in such a way that it was not seen as directed against the people (1997, p. 7); accordingly, Nordic societies have hardly ever experienced anti-parliamentarian mass mobilization (Stenius, 1997, p. 170; see also Schröder, 2013, pp. 144–157; Nelson, 2017).

The Educational Component in the *Nordic Model*

Above all—and closer to the English example than to the German one—the peasantry played a central role in the Nordic trajectory through modernization processes. Although serfdom had been abolished in Denmark only around 1800, the peasants, especially the free peasants, played an important social role in the Nordic popular movements that emerged in the 19th century in protest to older forms of social coexistence. This involvement in the shaping of their cultural self-perception (what can be labeled as "nation"), which shaped the political and social life of the people in the nation-state via the state institutions such as the schools, had a central educational component from the very beginning (Stråth, 2004, pp. 10–11) since it was based on the assumption that the developed responsibility of each individual is a prerequisite for participation in the nation-state (Trägårdh, 1997).

The intellectual elite in the Nordic region thus focused less on the educated *Bildungsbürgertum* and more on the peasant, and romanticized him. They did not do this in regard to a vision of a romanticized unity with nature, but—I am following Nina Witoszek's trenchant analysis here—rather in terms of a cultural hero whose role was not seen in a Gothic utopia of the past, as the Germans were dreaming of after 1800, but in a bright future (Witoszek, 1997, p. 86). Also, the combination of nation and (Nordic) socialism never took the direction that it did in Germany, where socialists and social democrats were to be banned from political life by Chancellor Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Laws in the 1880s, since the social democratic parties in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden won increasing parliamentary power and aimed at class compromise. On this basis, which decisively placed national and social integration and cohesion before social selection and distinction, however not excluding the latter, and which was decisively shaped by the educational understanding of the peasantry in particular, what was then called the Nordic model developed, somewhat unnoticed by the continental and Anglo-Saxon avant-garde of intellectuals and scholars.

In a similar vein, Nordic educational ideals did not develop as elitist education under the keyword *Bildung* as it did in Germany. In contrast, in the Nordic region, we see a broad popular educational movement. These initiatives were partly fueled by the ideology of "folk education" that was effectively propagated by Grundtvig, who combined his creation of a "Nordic mythology" (Henningsen, 1997, p. 96) with fundamental quests for the education of the folk, though researchers have rightly warned against overestimating Grundtvig's influence (Korsgaard & Wiborg, 2006). However, the *Folk* was not imagined as a holistic whole, as for instance in Germany after 1900 with the *Volk*, but as an assemblage of empowered individuals within "pastoral patriotism" (Witoszek, 1997, p. 87), an imaginary of a mostly Pietistically inclined Lutheran Protestantism (Markkola, 2011) that paved the way for a particular kind of educational organization of reasoning (Buchardt, 2017). Education, in turn, was interpreted as a sound fundament of folk-democratic patriotism (Hroch, 1985) and nation-building (Jarning, 2009; Thorkildsen, 2014; Tröhler, 2016).

The Nordic model, with which the world found itself confronted as a plausible alternative after 1970, thus had a long, relatively independent history. This is reflected, for example, in the inter-nation-state co-operation that is indeed unusual for continental and Anglo-Saxon traditions, namely the transnational school meetings as an arena for co-operation in education policy and reform that started to be organized in 1870 and that attracted thousands of researchers, reformers, and activists in its quinquennial meetings (Landahl, 2015). Co-operations and organized exchanges like these that remained for a long time relatively unnoticed outside the Nordic region were of essential educational relevance. This was reflected, unsurprisingly, in a relatively independent configuration of education that went far beyond what was called the comprehensive school starting around 1970. The school and education systems had culturally embedded histories, they were nationally different, and yet they had similarities and increasingly—within the framework of *Nordic*—international communication and co-operation.

As part of the official Nordic co-operation, the Council of Ministers, founded in 1971, also formed a communication for the ministers of education, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U); and, on academic terrain, the Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA) was founded in 1972. They started publishing the journal *Nordisk Pedagogik* in 1986, which in turn was renamed *Nordic Studies in Education* in 2010. There are also other Nordic communication organs in the academic field of education, such as the English-language *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* (since 1971), which emerged from the 1957-founded Scandinavian language journal *Pedagogisk Forskning*; the *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, existing since 2002; the *Nordic Studies in Science Education* (*Nordisk tidsskrift i naturfagdidaktikk*), founded in 2005; *Nordidactica—Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education* (since 2011); the *Nordic Journal of Educational History*, in circulation since 2014; the *Nordisk tidsskrift for pedagogikk og kritikk* (since 2015); and the *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education*, being published since 2017.

The Nordic Education Model Under Examination

Perhaps it is a parody of fate that the organization which, in the context of economic and financial problems, has contributed significantly to the spread of the Nordic model on a global scale (i.e., the OECD, 1973) has, in the context of its educational policy efforts, also questioned the foundations of this model. The OECD, with an agenda often referred to under the slogan of global "neo-liberalism" that generally became visible after the end of the Cold War and, in the field of education, especially with PISA tests from 2000 onwards, never wanted or was never able to historically and culturally understand the Nordic model. Attention to it as a showcase model thus began to wane in favor of a model that was in need of reform. As early as 2006, Ari Antikainen promoted the *Search of the Nordic Model in Education* as facing neo-liberal threats to Nordic democracy, equality, progressiveness, and pragmatism (Antikainen, 2006), and in 2014, a group of Nordic scholars edited a similarly motivated book titled *The Nordic Education Model: "A School for All" Encounters Neo-Liberal Policy* (Blossing et al., 2014).

The discussions sparked by these publications often bear the characteristic of concern that something unique and historically grown is in danger and will disappear. This may have ultimately been the reason for setting up a research project at the University of Oslo dedicated to the phenomenon of the Nordic education model. However, there is a risk of simplifying or shortening the story. The first question to ask is whether there really is such a thing as a *model* that applies to all Nordic countries. According to Mary Hilson, the Nordic model is historically seen as a model with five exceptions, each of the states in question being an exception (Hilson, 2008). This makes it difficult to talk about a model that can be copy-pasted anywhere in the OECD's technocratic sense. Rather, in talking about the model, we are well advised to understand historically evolved cultural practices of interaction and policy-making that, while increasingly institutionalized (via collaborations, associations, publication bodies), have hardly ever assumed a true "model" character.

Against this background, it is worthwhile to ask in more detail how the Nordic education model came into being, what different trajectories it has taken on, and, against this background, what major challenges it is facing with regard to what is called *global governance*. These add longer historical, comparative cultural aspects to studies that have highlighted developing phases of the Nordic education model as part of the political system in the last 50 years (Telhaug et al., 2006). They can also work on a two-sided comparative level: intra-Nordic as well as international (for instance with examples or models on the Continent or in the United States).

Still, caution is in order here. Just as we cannot speak of a model that "existed" in the sense of the OECD in the 1960s and 1970s, there are no simple reasons now for presuming a decline in recent times under, ironically, the influence of the OECD and PISA—although things have indeed changed. Just as it is hardly historiographically appropriate to read all developments before the 1960s and 1970s simply as a development towards the Nordic model, it is also not advisable to read history since the 1980s as simply a pitiful history of decay from it. Nothing would contradict the character of the institutionalized cultural practices of what has been called the Nordic model more than to see in this model the unchangeable culmination of development according to which any novelty is judged as decay.

Of course, reform initiatives triggered by culturally indifferent comparative studies, such as those of the OECD, are problematic, but the interesting question is actually not why PISA—as a central OECD steering instrument in the area of school education—wants to and is able to appear so imperial, but why political leaders in the individual nation-states allow themselves to be intimidated by the assessment experts in such a way, as for instance in Sweden. There is not much left of the self-confidence that distinguished the Nordic states in the 1970s, when the world became interested in the model. The question is why this had to happen and why scholars feel the need to already talk, perhaps somewhat dramatically, about "epistemicide" (Paraskeva, 2016; Zhao, 2020). In any case, we are well-advised to not forget the lesson of early neo-institutionalist sociology, which had assumed that publicly funded institutions, such as the school, function because they are characterized by a loosely coupled system. In other words, they were assumed to adapt reform paradigms in their formal structures but remain relatively autonomous in their "inner activities" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1978)—much to the annoyance of reformers.

Now that the global euphoria for large-scale assessment is slowly waning—there is simply no evidence to support the sustainability of evidence-based policy based on these expensive assessments—it is time to look at real empiricism, what David Tyack and Larry Cuban once called the "wisdom of praxis" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, pp. 82, 138), which is made up of historically developed cultural patterns of professional behavior that have much to do with the cultural expectations of the environment. This shows that research should stop so intensely obsessing about, fretting about, or deploring chimeras such as the globalization of education or its developments. Education is (still) nationally organized, and the school and its curricula aim at developing national literacies and national identities (Tröhler, 2020). What is of interest, then, is the examination of how these national systems adjust to international movements beyond or below politics, and here, case studies from smaller countries in particular are very revealing, such as the case of Norway (Sivesind, 2021) or, outside the Nordic region, for instance Austria (Hörmann, 2021).

For too long, preoccupation with the real or alleged consequences of *globalization* has obstructed views of national conditions and contexts of school organization and experience, marginalizing or even impeding research in this direction (Tröhler et al., 2022). It is precisely against this background that the study of transnational yet regional co-operation, for instance among the Nordic states, is of great interest. There are many possible questions that can be posed in this direction, such as how desirable citizens with national identities are educated toward supranational cultural commonalities and solidarity (Ydesen & Buchardt, 2020), particularly in the context of the welfare state principle (Buchardt et al., 2013); how the Lutheran religion in the Nordic region has distinct national manifestations, which yet differ overall from Germany (Markkola & Naumann, 2014); or how ethnic minorities such as the *Sámi* (have to) have very different life experiences in the different nation-states in which they live (but which are not their own; Kortekangas, 2021).

Accordingly, this publication, *The Nordic Education Model*, has three objectives expressed in its three sections. The first, "Trajectories," aims to detect and analyze historical-cultural developments that originated long before the period in which explicit reference was made to the Nordic model. The chapters collected in this section create a more precise picture of how a Nordic model could have emerged and developed without being designed as an engineering model that was obediently implemented. Rather, these chapters consider how it was integrated into and grew out of a lively Nordic culture, while at the same time strengthening this culture without ignoring national identities and particularities. The second section, "Configurations," shows how this model took concrete shape precisely in the period after the Second World War, how the traditional cultural values then materialized, and how, in this process, they became institutionally contoured, took on stable forms, or—in the sense of Norbert Elias (1978, pp. 14–15, 126–128)—became figurations. The chapters in this section show how successful educational policies, curricula, and designs of educational practices in organizations could and can be achieved, at least in this cultural context, in a largely pragmatic way, while at the same time taking up and passing on certain values, namely ideas of equality, welfare, justice, and individualism. The third section, "Challenges," is devoted to the question of how stable these Nordic-national configurations were, especially against the backdrop of the end of the Cold War, when imperial national interests presented themselves as globalization and put massive pressure on them. This then also impacted research, which seems to have been put under a spell of globalization (Tröhler, 2022). The chapters assembled in this section address the question of how the Nordic educational systems and educational research can possibly deal with these current challenges and, conversely, discuss the question of how quickly a historically grown educational system that is so closely interwoven with the dominant culture can be shaken in its basic components beyond the rhetorical roll of thunder that international agencies have intoned.

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Part 1

Trajectories

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1 Mapping the Nation

Fabricating Citizens From Patriotism Towards Nordicism?

Brit Marie Hovland

Imagine a little girl in her classroom studying this map (see Figure 1.1) and listening to the teacher telling the heroic tales of the national past—of "our" past. The teacher vividly depicts tales of gory border battles defending the beloved fatherland against the hostile enemy "others." The little girl listens with her mouth and mind open. The map, "Noregr," illustrated the Norwegian patriotic history grand narrative of the 1890ies, mapping border battles and land lost centuries ago into the minds of the young citizens-to-be. Studying this map, the little girl realizes why her father can be called into battle to defend the national territory against the neighboring archenemy union partner any day now. Yesterday, he prepared the weapon and filled the lead. She had sneaked a peek. She understood. Lessons of history mapped heroic legends and poetic spaces of the homeland for future citizens and the collective memory.

When considering nationalism, modernism, and nation-building, "we should not dismiss the evidence provided by the intense nationalist concern with the 'heroic legends' of antiquity, and with its 'poetic spaces' of the homeland" (Smith, 1998, p. 198). In 19th-century Norway, nation-building was a major task of the emerging public school system. The second half of the century was characterized throughout Europe by educational reforms aimed at the formation of national citizenry and national identity. These nation-building processes "naturalized" future citizens into a galvanized perception of their respective nation by imprinting poetic spaces, heroic legends, and tragedies of lost land into their young minds through history and geography lessons. Those two subjects played a key role in the educational construction of the nation. They depict where we are from, where we are now, and where we are going. As a rule, the "educationalization of the nation" was deeply intertwined with democratization and constitutional reforms (Dahn & Boser, 2015; Hobsbawm, 1995; Smith, 1991; Tröhler, 2017, 2020). Tröhler (2016) has shown an international pattern that, within no more than five years after major constitutional reforms, educational reform was introduced to impose and implement the new political system and regime. The little girl with the map represents this educationalization of the new collective

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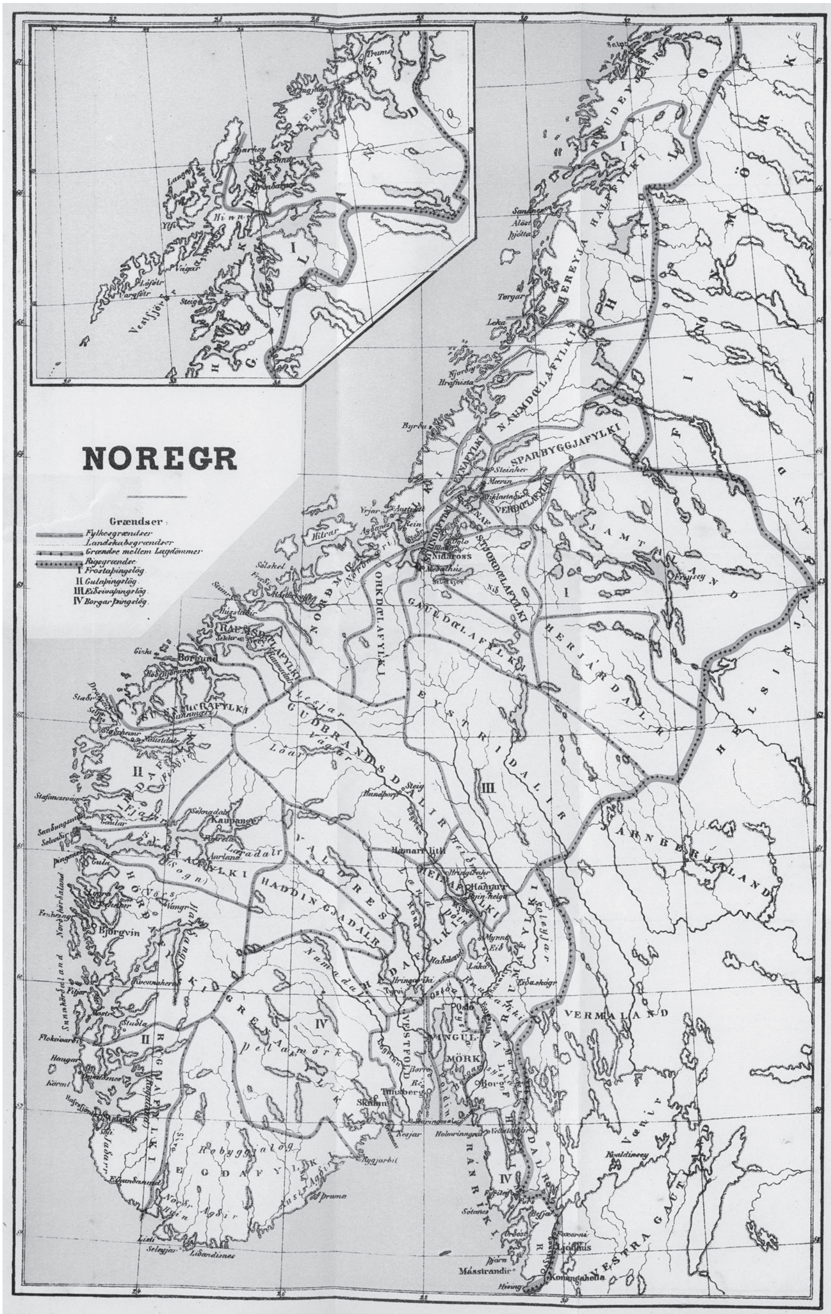

Figure 1.1 "Noregr" Map (1894): Map of Selected Parts of Norway and Regions "Lost" to Sweden

memory and identity in Norway, where parliamentarism in 1884 was followed by the Primary School Act of 1889, which presented *Folkeskolen*, a secularized primary school that introduced the first level of "One School for All" (*Enhetsskolen*).[1]

One classroom—one canon—one nation. The only new mandatory textbook in the new Primary School Act of 1889 was the history textbook, which included the map "Noregr" (Norse for Norway) in its 1894 edition.[2] But, "Noregr" did not depict the Norwegian territory at any time in history, nor the contemporary Swedish-Norwegian union. Instead, the map ignored the northern part of Norway yet included land "lost" centuries earlier to Sweden—their contemporary union partner with a common (Swedish) king. The purpose was clear: A historical land that had been lost was mapped into the future citizens' minds as still "belonging to" Norway. It was a "a phantom limb map." This is not history. This is not geography. This is nation-building.

The nation-building process and the creation of a national identity in Norway was heavily influenced by its being a "small-state nation" in an "empire," the union with Sweden (1814–1905). Norway had for centuries been the weaker partner in Nordic unions (1380–1814), but as of 1814, it had its own liberal constitution and control of domestic politics. In this situation, such a mapping in the new school subject of history iconized a political argument of autonomy close to what Anthony D. Smith (1991) described as the paradigm of national identity: golden ages—decline—rebirth. Within such a pattern, "the phantom limb" powerfully depicted a national territory and tale of origin. By this, it implied a successive (still ongoing) period of decline and a political imperative for the citizenry to act for a (eschatologically promised) rebirth. The map and the narrative would, in such an understanding, have explicit political meaning. This kind of (everyday) nationalism (Billig, 1995), as opposed to its "evil" aggressive twin, produced strong national sentiments and collective memories rooted deep down in everyday life (Wertsch, 2002). In the educational construction of the nation in small-state nations like Norway, establishing a political imperative and argument of *autonomy* by imposing a dominant historical paradigm and grand narrative was of crucial importance.

The phantom limb narrative can serve as a Norwegian example of Marc Bloch's description of the first phase of patriotic history textbooks and education: history education that served the purpose of patriotic nationalism. Originally written in 1940, the question "Daddy, what's the good of history?" introduced his book *The Historian's Craft* (1949/1953). Bloch described how interwar revisionists (he was one of them) had tried to erase this patriotism and nationalism from the history textbooks in their eagerness to do away with the dehumanization and antagonism which had shown to be fertile ground for the most evil forms of nationalism and the collapse of civilization during World War I. One lesson learned, was the failure not to acknowledge the workings and values of history, identity, and nationalism. In the UNESCO Report *Suggestions on the Teaching of History*, from 1953, C. P. Hill used the same question and the same two divergent phases of history to explain the purpose of history education in school and society:

> The child is one day to vote, perhaps serve in the army. . . . One of the special functions of history teaching in schools therefore has been to help to develop in children a love of their own country, and an understanding of its traditions and way of life; how the homeland has become united or has freed itself from foreign rulers, how its system of government has come into being.
>
> (Hill, 1953, p. 8)

Traditionally, history teachers had justified their work on a joint concept—education in patriotism and national citizenship—but World War I was a landmark event that brought this long 19th-century narrative of nationalism to an end and ushered in a period of revision and re-narration. Importantly for the Norwegian case, a successful Nordic interwar revision project was to be the model for post–World War II UNESCO's history textbook and teaching efforts.

This chapter explores the educational construction of the nation from the formative nation-building era of the 19th century to the Nordic revision works and new historiography of the interwar period. It discusses the extent to which the subject and textbooks of history served different political aims in the two eras. Thereby, it focuses on three aspects: history as a patriotic grand narrative mapping the course of the nation in the long 19th century; the reshaped nation and the figured narrative trying to eliminate antagonism as a peacemaking interwar effort; and a post World War II retrospective on lessons learned about history teaching, nation-building, and identity. The hypothesis of change from national patriotism towards Nordicism will be explored step by step. First, there will be a theoretical overview of the concepts of educationalization and nation-building. Second, the Norwegian constitutional and educational reforms (1884–1889) will be explained. Third, the Norwegian grand narrative of suffering, liberation, and rebirth that was institutionalized through history textbooks of the new *Folkeskolen* from 1889 and throughout the long 19th-century nation-building process will be examined. Fourth, interwar revisionism and its revisionists leading up to the discussion of contested questions in Nordic historiography and a philosophical change of perspective from oneself to another.

Educationalization of the Nation: Invented and Imagined

> The public, mass education system binds state and culture of an industrial society. In the past, the links between the state and culture were thin, loose and fortuitous. Today, the necessity of exo-socialisation means that

> these links are unavoidable; and that is the reason why we live in an age of nationalism.
>
> (Smith, 1998, p. 32)

In the age of nationalism, schooling, education, or (exo-)socialization through public education systems connected state and culture in new ways: it was the age of the nation-state. Theories of nationalism and national identity also emphasize that the nation as a cultural thesis about belonging and commonality were constructed in the people's minds through "invented traditions," "imagined communities," and the "mass public diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom" (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983, p. 57). Anthony D. Smith (1995) holds the modern concept of the nation to be "a named population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories" (p. 57). Hobsbawm, Anderson, Gellner, and Smith thus all agree that modern national identity is a constructed result of nation-building, mediated and socialized into the population through the emerging and modern public school systems. "These public, mass education systems and their values are the product, not the cause, of the nationalist movement once it has come to power" (Smith, 1998, p. 39). More specifically, public schooling and school reform are pointed out as crucial: Educational reform is the cause and later the fulfillment of a nationalist movement once in power.

In the new era of the nation-state, the big fight of each wannabe nation was: What is the nation? This implied a choice between several options about whose past and future defines the nation and its territory. In Norway, as in most small-state nations, the two main national projects were the conservative elite preserving the union, king, and elite prerogatives (also through separate school systems) and an oppositional movement advocating extended democracy and autonomy (from the union with Sweden 1814–1905 and from the previous union with Denmark for centuries until 1814). An elite versus an opposition correlates to Smith's (1986) two opposite projects: the civic-territorial and the ethnic-genealogical, closely related to the better-known French versus German conceptualizations and construction of a nation (pp. 136–137). The "Old Empires" of Sweden and Denmark would exemplify the civic-territorial constellation, while a separatist mobilization in Finland, Iceland, and Norway showed small-state oppositions. But once in power, the new national elite instituted educational reforms naturalizing the new regime. Education as nation-building took form in the Nordic region through the institutionalization of the vision of a "School for All" (*Enhetsskolen*).

Nation-building processes in small-state nations transformed powerless oppositions into an elite in control of politics—and of education. The crucial point of the "from below" movement was, according to Smith (1991), to galvanize the "nation" inwardly and mobilize it against foreign rule (p. 123). He holds history to be the most important subject of the new public schools. History galvanized the nation in a "community of faith."

> An historical drama that gives us our identities and values, must do two things: it must *define* the entity or unit in which it narrates the drama; and it must *direct* the entity or unit towards a visionary goal. . . . [T]he drama-mythology must "explain" the trajectory of growth, decline and rebirth; and its first task is to situate and describe the community "as it was" in its "pure" or "unmixed" state.
>
> (Smith, 1991, p. 179)

The historical drama told through the new subject of history should situate the "pure" origin and define the eschatological goal through small stories that would add up all together to a national canon of descent and belonging, fabricating and mapping the nation into the future citizenry. In doing so, the narratology of history is given a poetic and political emplotment. The subjects of history and geography answer the questions of who we are, where we are from, and where we are going.

Constitutional and Educational Reform 1884–1889

National theory emphasizes public education systems as the main vehicle of nation-building, nations, and the nation-state. Daniel Tröhler's (2016, 2020) educational history and curriculum analysis highlights this educational fabrication of citizens and interestingly reveals a close connection between political and curricular reform. He suggests that we should address the educational construction of the nation within specific periods of political transformations. In the Norwegian case this would be the constitutional reform of parliamentarism in 1884 and the Primary School Act introducing a secular primary school for all in 1889.

Sverdrup 1884: Any Child of Any Social Class

> [A] child entering a public school has the prospect of being able, without unnecessary interruptions or deviations from the path it has chosen, to progress through the different levels of education/schools, ending at the university or university colleges.
>
> (Sverdrup, 1884)

"Prime Minister Sverdrup's Proposed Reform of Our Public School System" ("*Statsminister Sverdrups Forslag til Reform i vort Folkeskolevæsen*") was published as an open letter in the radical newspaper *Dagbladet* in September 1884. The connection to 1884's constitutional reform of parliamentarism is obvious and direct. Sverdrup was the first Parliamentarian Prime Minister and educational reform was his first main project in public office. The shift of power from the civil servant elite (*Embetsmannsstaten*) to the former oppositional Liberal movement (*Venstrerørsla*) was formalized that same year by the political Conservative Party (*Høyre*) and Liberal Party (*Venstre*). Once in power, educational reform seemed to be the one big issue for Sverdrup and the Liberal Party. His open letter proposing a total reform of the school system was published only months after he came to office. Additionally, his public appeal in a public (and radical) newspaper was itself a democratic advertisement. It was not launched to a secluded elite, but, on the contrary, proposed to the public: the people, the nation, through modern, national mass media. Both the content and the form were part of an obviously anti-elitist and democratic project. Sverdrup's call in 1884 was the starting signal for five years of committee work in the run-up to the revolutionary Primary School Act of 1889.

In his arguments, Sverdrup closely linked the proposed education reform to parliamentarism and democratization. The new regime and governance required a new school system, equal rights, and new knowledge and competences for the Norwegian citizens of all social classes. "Any child" entering an elementary school classroom at the age of 7, Sverdrup wrote, should have equal opportunity to progress from one level to the next, and without unnecessary interruptions to moving on to graduate from university (1884). Regardless of background and heritage, all children should have the same educational opportunities in school and in society. Sverdrup considered education for all a prerequisite to fulfilling the constitutional reform of 1884 (Hovland, 2016, pp. 71–74, 243–244). Sitting together, reading the same textbooks, and receiving the same education were an important part of this idea. Sverdrup's "open letter" from 1884 expressed, in the form of a politically proposed reform from the head of the new regime, the main requirements pointing to a future School for All concept and the Nordic educational model. He emphasized social equality and the democratic obligation to every child as a potentially equal future citizen. The singular most important reform, first step, and foundation for this equality was a secular primary school for all classes.

Folk *and Nation*

In the very concept of *Folkeskolen* (primary school), the term *folk* was itself coined to culturally naturalize a new school system as the hub of a more democratic and egalitarian nation. *Folk*, "people," is derived from the German concept *Volk*, a key concept and core of a pure or original *Volksgeist* that was later politicized and mobilized into a nation (Kohn, 1944). Accordingly, to use the term *Folkeskolen* referred to the "pure" and "original" *folk*, and it was tied to the historical paradigm of restoration of this oppressed people as the core of citizenry and the eschatologically promised restored nation. The name of the new educational reform was itself a political argument strengthening the democratization project and the oppositional perception of a divided culture overruled by the elite. In 19th-century Norway and Europe, social hierarchies marked all aspects of life. Class-divided school systems had become taken for granted as the way to organize the education system. The lower strata were often taught a limited curriculum in humble religious subservience and very basic skills such as reading, writing, and, in Protestant areas, singing. The subject of Christianity still linked the national school system closely to the state church alongside the new national and patriotic educationalization agenda.

Against this background, the new Prime Minister Sverdrup's call for a total school reform, *Folkeskole* for All, must have been perceived as even more radical than parliamentarism itself: A School for All would seriously upset the political equilibrium of the status quo. Teachers advocated for the oppositional Liberal movement, which was encouraged and supported in Norway by the perception of a society that was divided between an urban empowered elite, who were of foreign descent through centuries of unions, and a rural but overruled pure or original *folk* and culture. Teachers and rural teachers' colleges empowered an alternative elite (Hovland, 1999). This alternative elite and ideology was the educational core of Sverdrup's crucial moments of 1884 and further on to 1889. Parliamentarism, the founding of political parties (1884), and the transfer of power to the former opposition broke the spell and reign of the "foreign" civil servant elite.

Ritualized Educationalization: The Children's Parade on May 17th

Sverdrup's "Open letter" exemplifies Tröhler's correlation between constitutional and educational reform and Smith's claim that public, mass education was the product—not the cause—of the nationalist movement once in power. Once in power, the new elite introduced educational change, secular subjects, and democratization. *Folkeskolen* and the Primary School Act of 1889 represented the shift away from a class-divided school system.

Educational reform was a key political issue, and teachers were agents of the "educationalization of the nation." The new *Folkeskole* history textbook's title had one specific and very interesting detail: It was "for the school and the home" ("*for skolen og hjemmet*"), thus indicating that the teaching of history at school was part of a bigger educationalization of the people or nation, including the concept of "*folkehjemmet*" (the homeland, or *Heimat* in German). Formal education was only one brick in the wall of the wider, everyday nation-building and nationalism (Billig, 1995). The children's parade and the National Day in Norway exemplify close connections between formal and everyday educational constructions (Hovland, 2004; Elgenius, 2011).

> And just because so much of what subjectively makes up the modern "nation" consists of such symbols or suitably tailored discourse (such as "national history"), the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the "invention of tradition."
>
> (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 14)

The children's parade is the core ritual of today's National Day celebration in Norway. This parade has its origin in 1869 when two teachers and national poets initialized "The Little Boys Flag Parade" as an act of honoring the liberal Norwegian Constitution of 1814 while also teaching future citizens love of the fatherland. The constitutional commemoration of May 17th had been celebrated since the beginning of the 19th century as an oppositional act of Norwegian autonomy. As the ritual institutionalized, it was adopted by the civil servant elite. In 1869, when the teachers introduced "The Little Boys Flag Parade" as an embodiment of the nation, gathering all social classes in one parade to celebrate the constitution and the nation, the conservative elite instantly reacted and protested: "A children's crusade!" (Brottveit et al., 2004). Starting in 1889, the year the Primary School Act was passed, girls were included in the new national ritual. There was one nation, embodied in one parade of future citizens. The children's parade illustrates the position of the teacher and the school as the hub of construction of Norwegian national identity and the formation of its citizens. Since 1889, the children's parade of primary school classes and their teachers was the major ritual for the commemoration of the constitution and National Day, May 17th, in Norway. From this year on, girls were allowed into the parade though bearing flowers, not flags, part of the parade but without formal national citizenry as in the right to vote. One parade for all—representing one school for all. Both institutions, the children's parade and the *Folkeskole*, disturbed the equilibrium of the old regime. Prime Minister Sverdrup's 1884 reform call for "any child" from "any social class" represented a paradigm shift.

Norwegian Patriotism: Narrative of Suffering, Liberation, and Rebirth

The little map-girl of 1890s Norway went to school in the context of an almost warlike struggle for Norwegian autonomy from their union with Sweden (1814–1905). The map iconized a Norwegian narrative of loss, suppression, and suffering, and therefore an imperative of liberation. History was the one new mandatory subject with its own mandatory textbook. For decades after 1889, one history textbook dominated the

Norwegian classrooms by more than 90%: Ole Jensen's *Norway's History in Stories for the School and the Home*, in which the "phantom limb map" was included in 1894. The total dominance infers that this most patriotic of maps was used in close to every Norwegian classroom, mapping the agony of lost land onto the consciousness of the future nation. An analysis of five different Norwegian history textbooks from 1889 to 1940, in a total of more than 40 editions (see Table 1.1), reveals a corresponding grand narrative or deep memory that, in the period leading up to World War II, was slowly changing from a people overruled and suffering in patriotic antagonism towards Sweden to a more protagonist narrative of Norwegian growth (Hovland, 2016, 2013).

A central element of the phantom limb symbolism is that it displayed the territory of the Norwegian state in the 1890s with two exceptions. First, the amputated territory, the northern part of Norway, was not plotted on the map. Second, the expanded territory, the regions lost to Sweden centuries before, were etched into the map. The exceptions to the ordinary rules of mapping expose the map as a political argument illustrating the argumentative and highly patriotic (perhaps chauvinistic) narrative: A previous period of origin was to be restored. Introduced in a school book as the only illustration in color, the symbolism is loud and clear; it was a political argument of suffering and liberation.

The first generation of primary school textbooks from 1889 onwards had a strong emphasis on Norse Golden Ages, the founding fathers, and the tales of origin. It was of uttermost importance that they establish an unquestionable narrative of the "pure" nation and tale of origin. They should show where we come from and with which virtues and heroic legends we are distinguished.

Table 1.1 Golden Age—Decline—Rebirth

Book	*Cover illustration*	*Golden Age (%)*	*The Rupture Decline*	*Rebirth (%)*
O. Jensen (1889->) *The History of Norway, for School and Home*	Parliament	46	Period of Powerlessness (*Vanmaktstid*)	24 (19 + 5)*
J. Hæreid (1909->) *The History of Norway, Told for School and Home*	A Viking Raid	39	Period of Powerlessness (Vanmaktstid)	36 (28 + 8)
O. I. K. Lødøen (1910->) *The History of Norway*	A Kings coin	40		35 (31+ 4)
P. Kleppen (1927->) *The History of Norway*	A Norse dragon's head	*42*	Period of Decay (*Nedgangstid*)	28 (17 + 11)
T. Knutson (1934->) *The History of Our People*	A rural peasant farm	36	Period of Decay (Nedgangstid)	39 (25 + 14)

*Note: 24 is the total no. pages in the period 1814–1905.

Additionally, specific attention was given to border areas in the repressed period of "Decline." Throughout the union period, stories of heroic border battles defending the fatherland represented a red thread of nationhood through the "darkest of times" (Jensen, 1889; Hæreid, 1910). Border battles and borderlands symbolized the connection between the Golden Ages and a promised rebirth. The Swedish antagonist played a key role as "the other." On the surface, the narrative plot of an overruled nation was full of small tales that were adding up to a narrative of suffering through centuries of foreign rule. The essence was not the historical period itself but a retrospective political argument to the contemporary position. In his preface, Jensen explained that his purpose had been to tell a tale that would foster children's patriotism and love of the fatherland (Jensen, 1889). The phantom limb iconized the geohistorical argument of a "pure" nation, thus fueling a patriotic union struggle.

An example that shows the sacralization of the nation in early patriotic textbooks is a very strong national framing allegory introduced in the new textbook launched in 1889 (the year of the Primary School Act; Jensen, 1889). The key symbol of the allegory is a sacral church and dome in Trondheim that was built between 1070 and 1300 on the burial site of a patron saint and king of the nation, King Olav II. The Nidaros Cathedral is the northernmost medieval cathedral in the world, the national cathedral, and the coronation site for the kings of Norway. Since the church was built in the Norse Middle Ages, it was presented in Jensen's book as the architectural image of "the nation" through history: "Trondhjem's Cathedral coincides closely with the history of the country." Jensen's use of the cathedral's destiny as an allegory of Norway closely resonates to Smith's paradigm of national history: "the church declined along with the nation. Little by little the country lost its independence, and it sank until it mostly lay in ruins" (Jensen, 1889, p. 95; see also Jensen, 1912, 1924, 1928). While 1814 heralded a promised restoration, the "Norwegian people had regained their autonomy and felt the urge to restore the church to its magnificent condition" (Jensen, 1889, p. 95). Jensen used the cathedral to epitomize the suffering nation and its ongoing restoration. The clever narrative plot clarified Jensen's political project in his 1889 textbook, and the cathedral-mythometeur (strong mythological figure or allegory; Smith, 1995) remained in every edition until 1928. The cathedral-in-ruins-towards-new-glory-mythometeur was utterly reinforced by the front image of Jensen's 1905 edition: *Nidarosdomen* in sunrise. With 1905 being the landmark year of union resolution, the cathedral was to be used as a site for the coronation of a Norwegian king (1906) of an autonomous state for the first time since the Middle Ages. The sunrise obviously connects to Smith's "rebirth." The cathedral-mythometeur and related symbols shows the sacralization or even sanctification of the nation in early patriotic history textbooks.

The next dominant textbook was written by Jens Hæreid in 1909, revised to be authorized in a new 1910 edition. From the beginning, Hæreid's book was criticized for being too patriotic and chauvinistic. One of the criticisms was a story recounting the Swedes' use of *Nidarosdomen* as a stable for their horses during the union period. This little story thereby resonated with and encapsuled a much bigger grand narrative or mnemonic pattern DNA (Wertsch, 2008). The educational construction of the national self-image established through history textbooks at the end of the long 19th-century nation-building period was molded through stories of otherness, border battles, and antagonism. These enemy images were soon to be criticized.

The period's emphasis in the history textbooks changed in the early 20th century. While the oldest book focused on the Golden Ages for almost 50% of the text (Jensen, 1885, 1889), later books devoted more and more focus to modern history and contemporary democracy by up to 40% (Kleppen, 1927, 1939). Such a change of quantity and focus is a strong indicator of narratological change. A contemporary discussion on the term used to coin the period of "Decline" (the union period up to 1814 and/or 1905) is very telling. There was a political, yet historiographical discussion of terms used to describe the union period. In the early-generation textbooks, Jensen (1885, 1889) and Hæreid (1909, 1910) coined it "The Period of Powerlessness" (*Vanmaktstid*). Later books named it "The Period of Decline" (*Nedgangstid*). The renaming is important: To be powerless invokes a state of being disarmed and overtaken, forced from without by an "other." Decline, on the other hand, points to an inner recession that can be fought and overcome (Hovland, 2013). Obviously, since Norway was an autonomous nation-state as of 1905, the emphasis was no longer on defining the origin of the nation or writing up an antagonistic argument against the union king. More than that, the era of optimistic nation-building halted abruptly with nationalist-imploding Europe and the world in World War I.

The diachronic textbook analysis thus reveals a narratological change with regard to both distribution of emphasis and emplotment away from the Golden Ages with heroic stories of Norse culture that were followed by those of an oppressed nation as "The Sleeping Beauty" through centuries of union. National events (1905) and changed international sentiments both affected the change of context. In this change, the concepts of Reinhart Koselleck (1979) offer important insights into the philosophy and historiography of history. New "horizons of expectation" changed the perspectives and purpose of history writing. The history or "space of experience" expressed in the text, the textbooks, and the grand narrative at the core of history teaching changed accordingly. New political aspirations required reconfiguring and re-mapping of the nation.

Interwar Revisionism and Revisionists

By 1919, Kristiania (soon to be renamed Oslo as in the Norse Middle Ages) had been the capital of the "young" Norwegian nation-state for 14 years. The small-state experience might explain the initiation of the world's first international history textbook revision. In October 1919 in the Norwegian pedagogical journal *Den høiere skole* (Dhs), the Norwegian teacher Refsdal published a critical review of a recent Swedish history textbook: "What Swedish students ought to know about 1814 and 1905" (Refsdal, in Refsdal (ed), 1919–20, pp. 210–211; Hovland, 2016, pp. 101–122). Refsdal claimed that the Swedish textbook presented enemy images of Norway and more generalized antagonistic imagery of the Nordic others, thus inciting nationalistic bad blood amongst the neighboring countries. Then, in November 1919, the review article was debated in a meeting of the Association Norden (founded in 1919 and aimed at closer co-operation between the Nordic nation-states). Christian Lange, the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (and an historian who was soon to win the Nobel Peace Prize), addressed the challenge from Refsdal directly in the meeting by saying that "it ought to be the natural task of '*Norden*' to correct disputes of the kind that Refsdal pointed out" (Lange, as cited in Refsdal (ed), 1922, p. 307; see also Hovland, 2016). Others in the meeting immediately involved themselves in the matter by establishing a history textbook revision group and inviting the other Nordic associations (by then only established in Sweden and Denmark) to join in an international Nordic revision work.

The mandate of the history textbook revision initiated in Kristiania in 1919 was to "[i]nvestigate whether the textbook description of our country's relationship to Denmark and Sweden does injustice to our neighbouring countries" and to "determine whether the textbooks present images that do injustice to Danes or Swedes" (Refsdal, 1922, p. 308). Step two was to urge the Danes and Swedes to engage in similar revision work. In this meeting, Lange and the most prominent Norwegian historian at the time, Halvdan Koht, strongly emphasized the need to respect and not insult the Nordic neighbors by criticizing their history narratives. Instead, the Norwegians called for an investigation and revision of their own textbooks with the intent of revealing common problems and to urge a joint effort. A third historian focusing peaceful relations and reconciliation, Haakon Vigander explained this problem in 1964. He used the example of the cathedral to illustrate the narratological antagonism and problem of enemy images of neighboring countries and nations:

> Before the revision work, many Norwegian textbooks told that during the Nordic war, Swedes appeared as "savages" in Norway. They burned farms, Sarpsborg city, Hamar Cathedral and bishop's manor, looted and lit the country. Yes, they even used Trondhjem Cathedral, the Norwegian national sanctuary, as a stable for their horses—just what one could expect from savages.
>
> (Vigander, 1964, p. 7)

The Norwegian revisionists were careful not to criticize the Swedish textbooks. Instead, they engaged in a critical investigation of their own Norwegian textbooks, in which the stable-cathedral story exemplified a chauvinistic Norwegian grand narrative aimed at fabricating national-minded citizens and patriots. Then they urged the Nordic others to do the same. This crucial point was made explicitly in the Danish response (to the Norwegian request) in 1922. The Danes suggested a mutual revision of the textbooks, which the Norwegian revisionists brusquely refused: History textbooks were considered an entirely national matter (Vigander, in Föreningarna Nordens Facknämnder, 1937, p. 5; see also Hovland, 2016). This response corresponds in a fascinating way to the Norwegian revision strategy of criticizing one's own textbooks and urging the others to do the same in order to remove antagonism and hostile enemy images of each other. The hyper-nationalism of World War I had made it obvious that patriotic tales of gory border battles and nationalistic enemy images were outdated, problematic, and no longer served contemporary politics. The paradigm iconized by the phantom limb map and the cathedral mythometeur had come to an end.

The second Nordic history textbook revision (1933–35) engaged all five Nordic countries (including Finland and Iceland) and a total of 126 different history textbooks. By then, the perspective had changed. Instead of engaging in several parallel national critical readings, each country engaged in a critical reading of the grand narrative of the other Nordic textbooks—each focusing on their particular "significant other." That means that Norwegian revisionists read only Danish, Swedish, and Icelandic textbooks, while only briefly commenting on the Finnish books. Norwegian textbooks were read by the same three neighbors, while the Swedish revisionists engaged in the reading of, foremost, Finland's, Denmark's, and then Norway's. The Swedish patriotic textbook narrative established in the 19th century was molded from and defined in contrast to their archenemies of Finland and Denmark. As a result of the second revision effort, the revisionists from all five attending Nordic countries concluded that there was a great need of future revisions and joint revisionist work. Analyzing the revisions, the most important outcome must nevertheless have been the reciprocity and mutual agreement to "agree to disagree" on key historical and national narratives (Föreningarna Nordens Facknämder, 1937; Vigander, 1960). This important outcome was investigated and published as a book—*Contested Questions in the History of Norden* (*Omstridte spørsmål i Nordens historie*)—that explored the areas of diverging memories from the perspective of historians from national historiography and from each country (Carlgren et al., 1940). Rather than attempting to find one single common solution in the search for and trust in a historical "truth" (as the previous revisionists had attempted to do, 1919–1922), the 1930s revisionists "agreed to disagree." They enforced the replacing of border battles and hostile enemy images with stories of Nordic co-operation and community across borders and contemporary nation-states while still respecting the national identities and collective memories of each. The '30s revisionists were loyal to two levels of community: national patriotism and Nordicism.

Contested Questions (Carlgren et al., 1940) is a key publication, revealing a new historiography and philosophy of history and history education. Phase one was the patriotic narrative, defining the nations up against "the other." Neighboring nation-states were antagonistic archenemies in the grand narratives established through the emerging public school systems of the long 19th century. Phase two was initiated by the revisionists' recognition of other, different, or even conflicting perspectives. In this context, acceptance of divergent perspectives of an historical episode or conflict implies a respect for the other Nordic nations' grand narratives. More importantly, it is a constructivist acknowledgment of the nature of the historical narrative being perspectivized and constructed. This implies a big historiographical shift away from historicism and Ranke's German historical school focused on "how things actually were" ("*wie es eigentlich gewesen*"; in Norway, a parallel Norwegian historical school was led by R. Keyser and P. A. Munch) and towards a more constructivist historiography (Sørensen, 1998; Myhre, 2009; Hovland, 2016). This is a historiographical game changer when it comes to historical "truth," history didactics, and of course, divergent memories and revision work: Only if the history textbook and narrative is construed as a perspectivized point of view can divergent narrations exist without being rivals of the true history: "The same is never (or at least not always) the same" (Gotling, 2020, p. 65; see also Tröhler, 2020). *Contested Questions* (1940) points to a new philosophy of history introducing narratological and historiographical changes in the educationalization of the nation.

The Nordic history textbook revisions of 1919–1922 and 1933–1935 were pioneer efforts, paving the way for revisions conducted by dozens of countries and organizations in the interwar period. The revision effort occurred as a phenomenon in the zeitgeist of the post–World War I era (Schüddekopf et al., 1967; Pingel, 2010; Fuchs, 2010; Åström Elmersjö & Lindmark, 2010; Åström Elmersjö, 2013; Hovland, 2016). According to the reasoning of Koselleck's philosophy of history, an imbalance had occurred between the space of experience and the horizon of expectations, between collective memory and political aspirations.

The new context called for a revised narrative—for deconstruction and reconstruction. This is exactly what Jürgen Kocka describes in the preface of Erdmann's *Towards a Global Community of Historians. The Interwar Historical Congresses and the International Committee of Historical Sciences 1898–2000* (ICHS). "In the interwar period, its [pre ICHS] main function was overcoming nationalism and bridging the deep gaps between historians from different nations who fought one another in the First World War" (Erdmann, 2005, p. ix). The international organization of historians (ICHS) entailed personal networks across national(istic) borders, the emergence of the comparative method, and historiographical shifts into the more constructivist historiography. This international network was closely intertwined with the Nordic revisionist work. The Norwegian revision work was led by Christian Lange and Halvdan Koht, both prominent historians and politicians. Koht had been attending ICHS congresses since 1909. In 1919, he was launched to be the first ICHS President. When ICHS was formally institutionalized in 1926, he was actually in the position (Vigander as his secretary) and initiated the first ICHS conference in Oslo, Norway, in 1928. "Oslo and the international program" had been presented as the "Locarno of the historical sciences" ("Locarno *de la science historique*"), and Koht as "the true embodiment of the will to mutual understanding within the historical profession that was often referred to as the 'spirit of Oslo'" (Erdmann, 2005, p. 83, 123; Hovland, 2016, p. 56). ICHS Oslo in 1928 was the scene where Marc Bloch launched the new history and the *Annales*. One very interesting observation is that the central Nordic revisionists had all been attending the ICHS congresses.

When Bloch (in 1940) and Hill (via UNESCO, 1953) referred to the failure of international textbook revisions, they also highlighted one successful Nordic example. The success of the Nordic textbook revisions must be due to the reciprocity and the mutual textbook model of the 1930s. Yet a respectful mutual consideration characterized the first phase (1919–1922) as well. Norwegians rejected the Danish suggestion of reciprocity in 1922 because they considered history textbooks to be a strictly national matter. Could the Norwegian small-state union experience and their "feeling" of inferiority hence explain both the Norwegian interest in Swedish textbooks in 1919 and their refusal of Danish reciprocity in 1922? We could argue that the reciprocity was the essence of the Nordic mutual model of the 1933–1935 textbook revision instead of trying to narrate one true Nordic history, as in *Contested Questions in the History of Norden* (1940). Nordic 1930s revisionists agreed to disagree, and respected the perspective and narrative of the other. They changed their perspective—from oneself to the other.

Change of Perspective: Oneself as Another

When Bloch asked in 1940, "What's the good of history?" he represented the interwar generations of revisionist historiography. In their eagerness to erase evil nationalism from history textbooks and education, they failed to acknowledge the important valuable workings of history, identity, and nationalism. Bloch's *Annales* school (the journal of which started publishing in 1929) represented two aspects of the historiographical lessons learned: On the one hand, the comparative method highlighted by ICHS, and on the other, a new constructivist relativism expressed in history textbook revisions. This analysis has revealed mutual respect and reciprocity as central elements of the success of Association Norden's textbook revisions. *Contested Questions in the History of Norden* (1940) summarized and expressed a key historiographical change. The same did not have to be the same when seen from different perspectives and narratological points of view: One event and one king could in fact continue to have divergent roles in two different historical narratives. This implies a new perspective on historical truth. It is a historiographical game changer going from Ranke's 19th-century historicism towards 20th-century constructivism and relativism. This is also an essence of Ricoeur's narratology on history, conflicting memories and the need of change of perspective from oneself to the other (Ricoeur, 1992). In a 2005 interview on "Haunting Memories" and reconciliation, he stated that "to agree to let *mimesis* be produced by the other. *That* is difficult" (Ricoeur & Antohi, 2005, p. 24). This reciprocity and change of perspective is the very essence of the Nordic '30s mutual model: To let the grand narrative be revised by the other, they agreed to disagree.

This chapter explored the educational construction of the nation in Norwegian primary school history textbooks from 1880s until World War II. Traditionally, history teachers of the 19th century justified their work on the concept of education in patriotism and national citizenry. This patriotic grand narrative and canon was established and institutionalized in the new mandatory history textbooks introduced alongside the Primary School Act of 1889. Prime Minister Sverdrup's "Open Letter" in 1884 was a key document revealing the close correlation between constitutional reform (parliamentarism in 1884) and educational reform (the Primary School Act of 1889), the goal of these being the educational fabrication in school and everyday life into national-minded citizens. "The phantom limb map" can be seen as an icon of this patriotic grand narrative dominating these first generation textbooks characterized by a political argument of national rebirth and autonomy. These were the lessons learned by the little girl studying the 1894 "Noregr" map of the nation with her young citizen-to-be mind.

In the zeitgeist of post–World War I, political and historical arguments changed. It was time to build bridges instead of creating isolated national islands as had been the project of the formative nation-building years. The 1919 Kristiania textbook revision initiative was a very early omen of this historiographical and ideological change. At the international level, the context was a change of zeitgeist towards international peace efforts and co-operation; at the Nordic level, a recent Nordic Association had been founded to enforce closer relations and community between the Nordic countries; and at the national level, there was an autonomous Norwegian nation-state still embossed by its small-state eagerness to be acknowledged by the Nordic and international others. This special correlation might explain why the world's first international textbook revision was initiated in 1919 Kristiania. The close relations within the Nordic community explain the willingness of mutual respect and reciprocity, which was the essence of the Nordic mutual model.

The Nordic revision and the Norwegian history textbook example reveals the challenges of refiguration and re-narration when it comes to textbooks and their close connections to collective memory and identity. Each of the iconic small stories added up to a grand narrative, a collective memory, or cultural DNA shared by those at school and at home for generations. The textbook title for "school and home" was literally the Bildung project of *Folkeskolen*—the primary school. The phantom limb map and the cathedral-mythometeur both iconized central elements of the patriotic tale of the nation, its destiny, and its territory. The phantom limb and the Swedish horses could be removed from the national sanctuary cathedral in the textbooks, but the narrative paradigm with its heroic legends and poetic spaces was engraved deeply into the national collective memory. The interwar revisionists removed the horses from the cathedral as a symbol of the most obvious enemy images of the antagonist plot and "the other" (Swede). New lessons of history mapped the nation within a Nordic community, yet did not result in patriotism being replaced by any form of Nordicism. The educational construction of the nation from the formative nation-building to the Nordic revision works of the interwar period has confirmed that history education in primary school served different political aims in the two eras. The patriotic grand narrative from the long 19th century was revised, reshaped, and refigured in a narrative eliminating antagonism and enemy images of the Nordic other as part of an international post world war I zeitgeist and peacebuilding effort.

Notes

1. *Folkeskolen*: The school of the people—the *folk* or *Volk*. The Primary School Act (*Folkeskolelovene*) of 1889 introduced a seven-year primary municipal school, secular subjects, and secular school boards. *Folkeskolen* replaced the former more religious *Allmueskole*, a primary school for the lower social strata. For more, see the section "*Folk* and Nation."
2. Norse: a demonym for Norseman, a medieval ancestral group to modern Scandinavians.

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2 The Danish Nation-State as Crafted in Textbook Narratives

From Democracy Toward a Nordic Model

Nicole Gotling

It has been well documented and researched that national education institutions, school systems, and curricula are an important (a)venue through which political, societal, and ideological agendas can be implemented and (for stakeholders, at least) hopefully achieved (e.g., Apple, 1979, 2000; Buchardt, 2020; Smeyers & Depaepe, 2008; Tröhler, 2016, 2020; Tröhler et al., 2011; Westberg et al., 2019). For these purposes, textbooks are one of the tools employed in education institutions in which nation-state engineers'[1] political, societal, and educational goals are reflected and made visible and which can be expected to be taught to the younger generations—a nation's future citizens (e.g., Fuchs & Bock, 2018; Heinze, 2010; Lässig & Pohl, 2009; Matthes & Heinze, 2005; Williams, 2014). There's also a historical link between the development of national compulsory, mass schooling and of nation-oriented school subjects. At about generally the same time that many nation-state engineers in Europe were developing their national, state-wide compulsory school-education systems, they were also including more and more time and importance in the curriculum to national subjects like history and geography (e.g., Åström Elmersjö, 2017; Boser Hofmann, 2016; Gotling, 2020; Maricic, 2020; Osler, 2009).

With the connections between nation-state-building, the making of citizens, curriculum, and educational historiography and textbooks in mind, this chapter focuses on the specific case of Denmark and its nation-state-building agenda in an effort to reconstruct their historical path towards a *Nordic model*. To do this, the Danish educational historiography and textbook narratives that concerned the specific time periods from this nation-state-building era, particularly those leading directly up to, housing, and resulting from the historic events of the Schleswig Wars (1848–1850/51, 1864) and their relation to the Schleswig Question, were used to systematically frame the case for analysis. The Schleswig Question itself was such a historically, legislatively, and demographically complicated question of jurisdiction and loyalties that lie between the Duchy of Schleswig (a historically more Danish region to the north of the German nations [i.e., states] and at the base of the Danish Jutland Peninsula), the

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neighboring County of Holstein (a northern German county), and the old Kingdom of Denmark.

This is not the place to digress and explain the complex relationships at the heart of the Schleswig Question that led to the Schleswig Wars and affected Danish politics even decades after the wars.[2, 3] However, it should suffice to say that, with the rise of nationalism in the first half of the long 19th century, many German nationalists in the German Confederation; Danish nationalists, such as those belonging to the National Liberal Party; and Danish and German Schleswigians and German Holsteiners started hotly debating to which developing nation-state or region Schleswig should be attached, if at all. What resulted were the 1848 Schleswig-Holstein revolts against Danish (especially National Liberal) efforts to incorporate the autonomous Duchy of Schleswig into the Kingdom of Denmark. These revolts ran alongside other national revolutions, such as that in France, and, with the support of some of the German Confederation states, eventually turned into the (First) Schleswig-Holstein War (or, in Danish historiography, the Three Years' War; 1848–1850/51), which resulted in a stalemate and status quo.

Tensions flared up again by the end of 1863 when Danish National Liberals once again tried to incorporate Schleswig into Denmark, and the heads of the Prussian and Austrian German states reacted by declaring war on Denmark (the Second Schleswig War of 1864). The result of this second war was that the region of Schleswig was incorporated into the victorious Prussian state and eventually the German Empire nation-state. There was also a reactionary turn away from national liberal idealism in Danish government, yet, conversely, a turn towards implementing more national ideals for the common Danish *Folk* into the social sphere, such as with the increased inclusion of national subjects in Danish curricula and the ever-increasing opportunities for lifelong learning and the continuing education of the common *Folk* through all stages of life. Eventually, after the First World War, the winning allies granted Denmark the right to offer Schleswigians a referendum on whether or not they wanted to remain part of the German Empire or "return" to Denmark. Following the split results of this referendum, the primarily Danish-speaking northern portion of Schleswig was reunited with and incorporated into the Danish nation-state in 1920.

The time after the First World War and the postwar referendum in Schleswig not only saw Denmark become "whole" again, but this period also (re)affirmed nation-statehood for most of the rest of the Nordic countries (*Norden*) as well. Indeed, the Nordic region has had a long history consisting of states that were, to varying extents, conjoined with and separate from each other, and they each followed the nationalist movements that emerged after the French Revolution and especially after the Napoleonic Wars of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.[4] Denmark, Sweden, and Norway each developed as constitutional monarchies across the long

19th century. Then, by the end of 1917, Finland declared itself to be a new parliamentary republic, and even Iceland, while not gaining independence from Denmark and becoming a parliamentary republic until 1944, had increased the sovereign, political scope of Icelanders with a constitution in 1874 and sovereignty in 1918. These similar path dependencies led not just to a sense of common, shared regional histories among the Nordic nation-states, but to many common values, goals, and ways of being organized (politically, socially, economically, educationally, etc.). It was after the various international aggressions of the early 20th century had calmed down that the Nordic nation-states were recognized as becoming a more cohesive unit with similar democratic, institutional priorities and policies, including for education (e.g., with comprehensive schooling "for All" and what would be called the Nordic education model; see, e.g., Blossing et al., 2014), by the 1930s.

Framing the Danish Nation-State-Building Case for the Nordic Region

Since the official narratives perused for this case were especially those that concerned integral events surrounding Denmark's nation-state-building period, namely the Schleswig Question and the Schleswig Wars, the findings frame and are framed by the ideals and goals that were highly relevant during this period and into the developments of the 20th century. The analysis of Danish educational historiography follows history and geography textbook narratives from the period of Danish government reform and the Schleswig Wars in the mid-1800s up through when Denmark's state borders were re-established in 1920 and into the period following Reunification (i.e., the 1920s and 1930s). The timeframe of this study thus brings the trajectories of Danish educational historiography and national values up to the larger context of increased Nordic regionalism and co-operation and provides a historic dimension to the development of some of the national yet international values behind the Nordic model.

Following this nation-state-building path towards Nordic co-operation, more than 80 compulsory-level Danish history and geography textbooks published from the late 1840s through the 1930s were analyzed within a historical, discourse approach (see Özkırımlı, 2017; Rüsen, 1996) and according to the framing of the textbooks and different narrative strategies (see, e.g., Berger, 2007; Fairclough, 2003; Montesano Montessori, 2014), and certain, persistent ideals of the engineers of the new but developing Danish nation-state were revealed throughout the process. What emerged in this case is how the Danish national movement and the importance it placed on the Danish language and *Folk* relate to the reforms and goals connected to and developed after Denmark turned from an absolutist monarchy to a constitutional monarchy at the end of the 1840s and how it dealt with the nationalist Schleswig Question. Ultimately, what the Danish educational historiographic trajectories show are not just these connections between the specific goals and ideals of the national engineers and the roles educational tools such as textbooks can have in the building of a nation-state, but also the path that Denmark took as it developed as a nation-state whose values were both nationalistic and Nordic.

A New Role for the Danish *Folk* as Citizen

Following a contemporary nationalist movement and neighboring national revolutions of 1848, the newly ascended Danish King Frederik VII signed Denmark's first constitution into law on June 5, 1849. The publication of this June Constitution, as it would come to be called, was a monumental step in the development of Danish politics and nation-state-building. For one thing, the type of government in Denmark was changed from an absolutist monarchy, which had been formally established with the old *Kongeloven* (The Law of the King) of 1665, to a constitutional monarchy, which took autocratic rule away from the monarch. It also established a bicameral parliament with the creation of the privileged *Landsting* for the wealthy and the landed gentry that ran alongside the *Folketing*, which was open to more of the general Danish populace, the Danish *Folk* (Den grundlovgivende rigsforsamling, 1849, §§ 34–36).[5] In essence, this government reform elevated the position and significance of the everyday Danish citizen, as the Danish *Folk*, in the eyes of many, including those of the nation-state engineers. In terms of education, the creation of the *Folketing* inspired new ways of thinking about the new Danish citizens: now that common folk were able to participate in government, even with their own house in parliament, it was necessary to start educating and preparing them for the responsibility.

These government reforms and increase in status of the Danish *Folk* took place after a nationalist movement had already been gaining momentum for a few decades. Plus, while the June Constitution itself did not greatly affect Denmark's already-established institutions, such as that for education, there was already a state-wide school system in place that incorporated developments over time. Denmark had actually published a set of updated School Laws (*Skoleloven*) on July 29 and August 24, 1814 (which essentially stayed in effect until national curriculum and school system changes [such as the creation of the new *Folkeskole* compulsory-level school type[6]] between 1899–1904[7]). The School Laws of 1814 set up different forms of compulsory schooling across Denmark, differentiating school systems especially by location: for the countryside (Det Kongelige Danske Cancellie, 1814c), for market towns (Det Kongelige Danske Cancellie, 1814b), for the capital city of Copenhagen (Det Kongelige Danske Cancellie, 1814d), and for the autonomous yet historically connected and contended over Duchy of Schleswig (Det Kongelige Danske Cancellie, 1814a), which lay between southern Denmark and northern Germany. The Danish education institution has historically been very decentralized (especially in comparison to many other [developing] nation-states outside of the North),[8] and there was no uniform national curriculum attached to these school laws for at least 85 years. However, they did provide guidelines for relatively similar aims of education across the school forms. With the rise in nationalism that followed the School Laws of 1814, the aims of Denmark's nation-state engineers would find their way into the Danish curricula and educational historiography as well. These goals were to, in part, provide the Danish peasants and citizens the guidance and knowledge they would need to act as the Danish *Folk* (see Grundtvig, 1848; Larsen, 1899, pp. 202–221; Smith, 2012).

Danish Nation-State Engineers, Their Public Roles, and Their Ideals

From the time of these Danish school laws and the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, ideas of nationalism were spreading in Denmark as they were elsewhere around Europe. Over the three and a half decades between the Napoleonic Wars and Denmark's change in government type from absolutism to constitutionalism with the First Danish Constitution in 1849, Danish nationalists found various platforms through which to share and spread their ideas. National actors like Ditlev Gothard Monrad (1811–1887), Orla Lehmann (1810–1870), Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872), and more, were, to various extents over the early and mid-19th century, authors, preachers, and statesmen who came to have a hand in the drafting of the Danish Constitution of 1849 (and even of 1863) and in the ministries like the Ministry for Church and Education.

Monrad, for instance, is renowned for being the lead author of the first Danish Constitution (1849). Yet before this, Monrad had been an editor of National Liberal newspaper and magazine publications, such as *Fædrelandet*, and a vocal proponent of Danish democracy (see, e.g., Nygaard, 2013). He was also a parish priest in the decades before, during, and after Denmark's transition to constitutionalism. On top of these influential roles, Monrad was also the Danish constitutional monarchy's first Minister of Church and Education (a.k.a., *Kultusminister*; in 1848 and again in 1859 and from 1860 to 1863), a Copenhagen school board leader, the first chief school director (*Overskoledirektør*; a special position made within the Ministry of Church and Education), and Denmark's Council President (*konseilspræsident*: Prime Minister) during the War of 1864. Linking his public roles and values together, in his time as minister, Monrad made clear in official parliamentary writing that he believed administrative organizations should handle the affairs of the Church and the schools (Røge, 2020, p. 104).

Lehmann worked closely with Monrad. Although his father had originally come from German Holstein, Orla Lehmann was a staunch promoter of a "free" Denmark, believing it needed to turn away from autocracy and towards constitutionalism. He was also a powerful orator in support of a united Denmark, leading National Liberal idealists in pushing for the incorporation of Danish Schleswig into the developing Danish nation-state (e.g., Lehmann, 1842, as cited in Ploug, 1872–1874, pp. 263–267; Lehmann, 1869). In this matter, he also contributed to nationalist publications like *Fædrelandet* and co-authored the June Constitution with Monrad, which included these goals of Danish unity as well. Tied to these actions, Lehmann held various Danish ministerial and parliamentary posts over the years, such as Minister of the Interior (from 1861 to 1863), where he also upheld the important privilege of the well educated (though in a slow-moving, more conservative direction), until his death in 1870 (see, e.g., Krogsgaard, 2012).

After analyzing nine decades' worth of compulsory-level history and geography textbook narratives for this case, it was the Danish nationalist ideals of Grundtvig which stood out in particular. Although not actively participating in the mass march for democratic change in 1848, Grundtvig was "a voluble member of the [national Constituent Assembly] that drew up the new Constitution" (the *Grundlovgivende Rigsforsamling*), and he was a member of the Danish Parliament from 1849 until 1858 (Hall & Korsgaard, 2015, p. 6). Through his many actively public capacities, he was able to be extremely influential in the groundwork of Danish *Folk* and popular education and curricula as well as other aspects of Danish society and national identity (Hall et al., 2015; see also Gjerløff & Jacobsen, 2014; Hansen, 1868).

In addition to their roles in government, there were nation-state engineers whose positions in the Danish Church also fit in with the school laws which stated that local parish leaders had a role in deciding local school content and to an extent the approval of the content contained in textbooks (see Det Kongelige Danske Cancellie, 1814b, §§ 6, 57–58; 1814c, §§ 36, 67–68, pp. 424, 433–434; 1814d, §§ 2–3, 27, pp. 4–5, 24). Still, some had an even closer role in engineering these national educational tools. Besides his often-discussed positions in religious discussions and concerning the role of the Church (see, e.g., Jonas, 2015; Røge, 2020, pp. 24–26), Grundtvig had also dabbled in and taught history and geography in the early 1800s, gave pedagogical advice on how to teach history in a way that should arouse Danish patriotism, and published a world history (*Verdenshistorie*) textbook (Larsen, 1899, pp. 151–152). When looking into the Danish history and geography textbooks published from the mid-1800s till the 1930s, the nation-state engineers' ideals are consistently evident in the narratives.

Danish Ideals in the Textbook Narratives

As well as developments from the change in government that paved the way for educational reform and curricular development over the half-century following the Constitution of 1849, the ideals and values of the national engineers found their way into the curricular content. One of the most prevalent messages that remained throughout the decades-long trajectory of the Danish textbook narratives, and with which Danish nationalism and Grundtvig have been especially linked, is that Denmark's national movement and eventual institutional reforms revolved around the idea that the Danish people as an interconnected and united Danish nation was inherently and essentially reliant on the shared Danish folk language and traditions, which were ancient Norse as well as Danish. These shared traditions and language would bring the Danish people together in populism (*folkelighed*[9]) as a like-minded nation that could uphold the state (Grundtvig, 1848). Also, in advocating for and prioritizing language above other ideals, Grundtvig believed the enlightenments of the people could be reached (see Jonas, 2015, pp. 169–170); he even helped revise the role of religion within Denmark in order to meet these goals and priorities. According to him, it was "the people's language that was to be the basis of state and school" rather than the Danish Lutheran-Evangelical Church (Hall & Korsgaard, 2015, p. 13).

Connected to this prominent message in the textbook narratives that the national language was important and that it would support and unite the Danish *Folk* was also the Schleswig Question, which, as explained earlier, revolved around centuries of complicated history and legislation on how connected the Duchy of Schleswig should be with the Kingdom of Denmark. After the territory of Schleswig had been annexed from Denmark and integrated into the German Empire as a result of Denmark's defeat in the Second Schleswig War of 1864, there was a pronounced surge in Danish national pride and patriotism. Attached to this was a stronger focus on the Danish *Folk*, the common man and peasant. Grundtvigianism had always focused on the everyday peasant as the cultural-national backbone of the Danish state (e.g., Nielsen, 2012, pp. 76–77), but after 1864, popular peasant movements gained even more cultural, economic, and political influence for the *Folk* than earlier in the century (see Østergård, 2012, p. 56). At the same time, this post-1864 period saw Grundtvig's national educational concepts flourish, such as through folk high schools (*Folkehøiskoler*) and lifelong learning (see, e.g., Smith, 2012),[10] and there was also an acute rise in the public's interest in the benefices of teaching Denmark's future citizens the national history of the Fatherland—which Grundtvigians interpreted as an expression of the Danish folk spirit (Gjerløff and Jacobsen, 2014, p. 193).

A United Nation-State

The inclusion of national history and geography in curricula has often been linked to the events, losses, and expectations of war (e.g., Lacoste, 2012), and this is very clear in Denmark's case. Danish nation-state engineers never let go of their agenda to bring at least the mostly still Danish-speaking northern region of Schleswig back to Denmark. History textbooks regularly contained sentences or paragraphs, especially as the closing lines of the narratives, that reminded the reader that northern Schleswigians, at the least, should have been allowed the right to return. While the inherent message in the narratives remained the same over the decades, the actual wording of the goal changed as more and more time passed after Schleswig's separation from Denmark and incorporation into the German Empire. The post-Schleswig Wars narratives bemoaned the issue that "North Schleswigians, who are fully Danish like any of us, are still being constantly abused by German officials," and they expressed the hope that they could return to the Danish Empire (e.g., Rasmussen, 1869, p. 88). This hope evolved into a demand that "North Schleswig should be given back to Denmark" because there were "over two hundred thousand compatriots [there] who have always been Danish" (e.g., Rom, 1878a, p. 106) and who "have often made and still make the wish to return to Denmark" (Bang & Ellinger, 1892, p. 98). Once this goal was finally achieved in 1920, though, Danish narratives were finally able to express "great joy at being reunited" with Southern Jutland (Gjerløff, 1920, p. 179). They still celebrated this long-awaited reunion of North Schleswig with Denmark well into the 1930s and beyond, even bringing a Nordic romantic aspect to the event. Additions to the narratives after 1920 stated that the alienation of the Southern Jutlanders was over on June 15, 1920, and the reunification was celebrated at the end of the history textbook narratives with the words of a short poem that had been written by a Norwegian author, Bjørnson, and cited by H. P. Hanssen, a leader of Danish Southern Jutland (e.g., Gjerløff, 1935, p. 179) who had played a large part in the Reunification.

This drive to bring Schleswig back into the Danish fold was connected to the nationalist focus on promoting the Danish language, *Folk*, and Danish and Norse traditions pushed during the long 19th century and seen in the history textbook narratives,[11] but there was also a prominent message of Denmark's claim to Schleswig, or at least North Schleswig, in the geography textbooks as well. The Danish geography textbooks were structured by country, breaking down the content within according to the different regions of a country and including not only natural, geographic, and demographic information, but also short, relevant historical narratives, images, and maps (when possible). One of the first chapters of the geography textbooks covered Denmark and its regions, and one of the regions always included in the chapter was "The Duchy of Schleswig" (e.g., Rom, 1878b, pp. 50–52) or "Southern Jutland" (*Sønderjylland*, a Danish name for the region of Schleswig; e.g., Bondesen, 1905, pp. 26–27). The framing of the Danish geography textbooks continued to include Schleswig within "Denmark" even after the Duchy of Schleswig had been annexed in 1864 by Prussia, which would become the German Empire. There was only a short narrative about this fact usually included in the section, such as Schleswig's history "coincides with the history of Denmark, as they stood under the Danish king until 1864. . . the northern part of Schleswig must be returned to Denmark" (Laursen, 1868, pp. 13–14); "(Since 1866 a part of Prussia)" (e.g., Rom, 1896, p. 59); and "over the border and we are in the old Danish part of Southern Jutland, which since 1864 has been subject to Germany and called Schleswig by the Germans" (e.g., Bondesen, 1905, p. 26). Once the referendum was finally allowed after the First World War, Danish geography textbook narratives were quickly updated to proclaim that Southern Jutland "will now be partially united with Denmark" (Bondesen, 1919, p. 26) and, after 1920, to include information on the reunification of "Southern Jutland" with Denmark (e.g., Bondesen, 1921, p. 12).

The geography textbook narratives for "Denmark" also often included some information on the Schleswig Wars, but most of the focus in the narratives was still on the situation of the Danish *Folk* who lived in Schleswig and still spoke the (Danish) "*Folk*'s language" (e.g., Bondesen, 1905, p. 26). They also brought up nostalgic ties to historic Danish places and constructions which held "precious memories" for the Danish, such as the "famous" *Dannevirke* (e.g., Bondesen, 1919, p. 26; Rom, 1878b, p. 52). While Danish educational historiography was clearly engineered to keep Schleswig connected to Denmark, it also consistently kept Schleswig out of the chapter covering Germany: There was no mention of Schleswig within "Germany," and the main map provided for the country had "Denmark" partially written across the area of North Schleswig (e.g., Bondesen, 1905, p. 43).

The Revered Folk Language

As already mentioned, Grundtvig had been one of Denmark's most influential "nation-builders." Throughout the middle of the 19th century, he pushed for a cohesive, popular national identity that was connected through the common Danish tongue and mythos of the Danish *Folk*, to the point where Grundtvigianism has been incorporated in various ways into different Danish institutions over the past two centuries. This has become especially apparent in the policy-making applied after North Schleswig returned to Denmark in 1920 (Østergård, 2015, p. 128), but the ideals he promoted are evident in Danish educational historiography and textbook narratives long before that.[12]

The clearest example of Grundtvig's ideals in Danish educational historiography is the frequency with which the history and geography textbook narratives prioritize the Danish language. The theme of highlighting the Danish language was often tied in the narratives to the other goals of the nation-state-building agenda, including those which supported the Danish cause in Schleswig. There were actors included in textbook after textbook, like the Schleswigian Peder Hjort Lorentsen, who were represented as heroes because they "defended the Danish case" and fought for the right to speak Danish and, even amidst a sea of German-speakers and hostility, dared to "continue to speak Danish"—something which "noble Danish men in both North Schleswig and the kingdom supported" (e.g., Boiesen, 1895, p. 90; Gjerløff, 1935, p. 152). Even though there was also dismay shown in the narratives over the fact that the Northern Schleswigians, who were separated from the rest of the Danish *Folk*, were being discouraged from using Danish, narratives made sure to emphasize "Danish-speaking and Danish-minded" choices (Rasmussen, 1869, p. 74; see also, e.g., Bondesen, 1905, p. 26), for "the Folk [there] not only spoke Danish, but this language was still used in worship and schooling" (Allen, 1864, p. 207). Tied to these values were the common Danish *Folk*, especially the peasantry in German-threatened Schleswig, who were highlighted as having "faithfully preserved their Danish nationality" and remembered the language of their forefathers (e.g., Hansen, 1901, p. 168). Indeed, if there was one ideal to value above all others, it was the Danish language.

The National Family

In addition to his promotion of the Danish language, Grundtvig also encouraged sharing ancient Norse mythology and traditional, national folktales as a way to promote the Danish *Folk*, and he and other nationalists also often wrote songs and poetry to do this. Several history textbooks actually included short poetry citations as well (e.g., Boiesen, 1870; Tang, 1859). In this way, Danish nationalists also personified national identity in the poetic frame of a family: "What is a people? . . . those who can hear the Mother tongue, those who love the Fatherland. The rest are separated from the people, expel themselves, do not belong" (Østergård, 2015, p. 127[13]). This sentiment goes hand-in-hand with textbook narratives concerned with the efforts of uniting the Danish *Folk*, not just in connection with each other and against "others" as a nation, but also united as a nation-state. As mentioned earlier, after the Schleswig Wars, history and geography textbook narratives persistently reminded readers, through text or even visuals like maps, that Schleswig was Danish and should be a part of Denmark, and terms and images (see Figure 2.1[14]) relating to the family were regularly used with the topic. When Schleswig was written about as being a part of Denmark again, the textbook narratives referred to Schleswigians (or, Southern Jutlanders) as "our brothers

Figure 2.1 "The Soldiers' Homecoming"

and sisters" (Gjerløff, 1920, p. 179) who would be returning to the Motherland, and the kings of Denmark were often upheld as father figures (e.g., Boiesen, 1870, pp. 81–82).

Danish educational historiography upheld King Frederik VII in particularly very high regard, not only following the family motif but also relating him to the other ideals of the nation-state engineers. According to the history textbook narratives, King Frederik VII was "loved by his people like only a few kings have ever been" (e.g., Rom, 1878a, p. 105; see also, e.g., Boiesen, 1895, p. 92), and his "name will not be forgotten as long as Denmark stands" (Rasmussen, 1869, p. 81). He had been "a good fighter for mother tongue and Fatherland"; he had listened to the Danish *Folk*, supported them, and given them their "freedom" through the free constitution of 1849; and he had "fought for the Danish language and nation" (e.g., Johannsen, 1870, p. 161). The textbooks said that he did all of this because, in his own "beautiful words," he found his strength in the "love of the people" (e.g., Rom, 1878a, p. 105; Klaussen, 1906, pp. 109–110). The king's love of the people therefore correlated in turn with, as one Grundtvig scholar described it, "the citizens' shared love of [the Danish] imagined community," which was centered on "the national symbols of God, king, fatherland, and mother-tongue" (Jonas, 2015, p. 176).

Discussion

This Danish case has explained that Denmark's history and geography textbooks included narratives that supported the Danish political and national goals from the first half of the 19th century and worked to unite the Danish people together as both a *Folk* and a "complete" nation-state. Their educational historiographic trajectories supported and promoted nation-state engineers' not-so-trivial goals of national-linguistic unification until, eventually, borders changed so that state borders encompassed linguistic borders more closely. In the almost 90 history and geography textbook narratives analyzed from the 90-year timespan of the case, the Danish language was regularly prioritized and mentioned first, even before the nation. In addition to this task of unification, textbook narratives were also purposed with supporting other national goals and reforms, like those that elevated the common Danish *Folk* once they could play a more active role in Danish politics. While there are also other ways and reasons textbooks and educational historiography can be engineered and applied, what is visible in this case is that they have been a strong tool that has been successfully used in crafting a Danish nation-state.

This Danish nation-state has not moved along a purely individualistic trajectory, however. Rather, it has been interconnected with the trajectories of the other Nordic states as well. Their histories have been intermingled and dependent on each other since before the Kalmar Union was formed in 1397, for example, and even into the long 19th century and beyond, when Finland ceded from Sweden in 1809 (and from Russia in 1917); Norway was finally disjointed from Denmark in 1814 and then from Sweden in 1905; and Iceland broke away from Denmark in stages, first with sovereignty in 1918 before a vote for independence in 1944. Since the development of these Nordic entities into separate nation-states over the 19th and into the 20th centuries, their relationships have continued to evolve as a Nordic model of co-operative nation-states that have found their unique national paths amongst a cohesive base of Nordic social balance and participation that emerged in large part from the empowering of the rural, namely peasant, masses (see, e.g., Østergård, 2012)—those who are often referred to as the *Folk*. These Nordic historic, hegemonic popular developments differed essentially from even the region's closest neighbors. Emerging during the nationalist movements of the 19th century, the 20th century's Nordic essence can be well-labeled as developed from *folkelighed*: a populist term coined by Grundtvig that stressed "the importance of consensus among the people" (Østergård, 2012, p. 63; see also Grundtvig, 1848).

Alongside the political, economic, and societal aspects that have made the Nordic model stand out from others, the education institutions of the Nordic nation-states, exemplified, for instance, in the Nordic education model and with comprehensive schools, have also stemmed from the development of the unique and intertwined educational, social, political, economic, and ideological trajectories of each nation-state. As Daniel Tröhler discusses in the "Introduction" to this volume, Nordic educational ideals, which would eventually lead to the Nordic education model, were fueled by the idea that folk education was intended to empower the *Folk*, the (respective) Nordic people (p. 4). This indeed was the case in Denmark. As we saw, the nationalist push for uniting the Danish nation as a *Folk*, especially on the basis of a common Danish folk language and through this language as well as through a sense of shared, ancient Nordic traditions, had inspired the creation of not only Denmark as a constitutional monarchy but also the Danish *Folk* as integral and active members of this new Danish democratic nation-state (especially thanks to its *Folketing* house of parliament). From this time on, folk education and empowered patriotism were understood to be and engineered to be intrinsically linked. Even after Denmark became a "united family" once again with the return of North Schleswig in 1920, more and more of the nationalist folk ideals, like those espoused by Grundtvig, were fitting into the Danish education institutions as well as those of its Nordic neighbors than before during the long 19th century.

Notes

1. I refer to the relationship between nation-state stakeholders and actors and the production of curricular content, such as found in textbooks, in terms of engineers and their bricolages (see Lévi-Strauss, 1962).
2. For more on this topic, see, for example, William Carr's (1963) *Schleswig-Holstein 1815–1848: A Study in National Conflict*.
3. People in Schleswig, especially peasant populations and those in North Schleswig, were also not immune to continuing Danish nationalism and politics after the Schleswig Wars (see Hjort, 1985, pp. 117–124).
4. For more details on the interconnected historical background of the Nordic region, see Árnason & B. Wittrock, 2012, pp. 1–12. For a more specific breakdown of politics in the Nordic region during the long 19th century, see, for example, Stråth (2012).
5. With the enactment of the Danish Constitution (Den grundlovgivende rigsforsamling, 1849), the commoners' *Folketing* and the upper class' *Landsting* were the two houses of Denmark's bicameral parliament (§§ 34–36) until 1953, when a new constitution united the houses as the *Folketing*.
6. The structure and aim of the Danish *Folkeskole* would eventually develop, through legislature, from a primary and lower-secondary school type "intended to contribute to nation building" into a "comprehensive School

for All with no streaming" that would form the next generations (Rasmussen & Moos, 2014, p. 57).

7. Legislature was passed at the turn of the 20th century that overhauled the Danish school system and created, finally, a nation-wide curriculum (see Ministeriet for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsenet, 1899, 1900, 1904a, 1904b).
8. For comparisons of how the decentralization of the Danish education institution has evolved between different, involved parties and parts of the institution over time, even into the 21st century, see, for example, Moos et al. (2013, pp. 19–20).
9. *Folkelighed*: A Danish populist term coined by N. F. S. Grundtvig. It represented the idea that the people, the *Folk*, should find consensus and be united in their ways of being, thinking, feeling, and so on. In a poem titled "*Folkeligheden*," Grundtvig wrote of it as what "popular" (*folkeligheden*, *folkeligt*) can mean for the "*Folk* [. . . for] real Danish at all times" (Grundtvig, 1848, pp. 381–384; see also Østergård, 2012, p. 63).
10. Lifelong learning and the institutes that supported it were also supported in Danish history textbook narratives. For example, according to one textbooks series,

    > Danish farmers are some of the most skilled in the world. And it is connected with the fact that they get good schooling, and that since then, when the children's learning is about to be forgotten, they can get it refreshed at high schools [*Højskoler og Landbrugsskoler*].
    >
    > (Gjerløff, 1915, p. 175)

11. In reaction to the international (lack of) interference during the Schleswig Wars, Denmark promoted increased interaction northward, especially with Sweden and Norway (see Gotling, 2020, p. 72).
12. The emphasis on language and history in Danish educational historiography is even still evident today. Hultén, Jarning, and Kristensen point out in their chapter (this volume) that those in charge of the Ministry of Education in the late 20th century were still "engaged in strengthening the national, cultural core subjects: Danish language, history, and Christianity" (p. 241). Even up until today, researchers are finding that the Danish language has been and continues to be an overarching policy norm in public school policy (see Li & Enemark, 2021; Haas, 2018; Kristjánsdóttir, 2018).
13. This is Østergård's summary of Grundtvig's writings (see, e.g., Grundtvig, 1848, pp. 381–384).
14. Figure 2.1. Originally a painting by David Monies (1850), this is one of the most common images used in Danish history textbook narratives concerning the end of the First Schleswig War (e.g., Gjerløff, 1915, p. 165). It portrays the united Danish family in the forefront of a scene of national celebration.
15. The primary literature (e.g., textbooks) referenced here do not represent all sources that were used for the analysis, but only those which have been specifically cited in the text.

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3 Constructions of the In-/Educable

A Nordic Outlook on Changing Legal and Educational Statuses of Pupils With Disabilities[1]

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Educational opportunities for children with disabilities are key indicators of the equality of educational provision. Who should be educated in a common school system, what content should be taught, and for what purpose have been issues of debate. Equal access to education for all, irrespective of social and economic status, abilities, and background is one of the driving visions of the Nordic education model (Blossing et al., 2014; Holm, 2018). In Norway, the policy of schooling for all can be traced back to the idea of a common compulsory unitary school system gradually encompassing more pupils of all abilities, with inclusion and equality as basic intentions. However, separate provisions and the thorny issue of who should be included when referring to *all* have struck a discordant note in this history (Johnsen, 1998; Nilsen, 2010). The emergence in the 1850s of the so-called abnormal schools for deaf, blind, and mentally impaired children should be seen in the context of the prevailing optimism regarding the teaching of pupils with disabilities and of the Norwegian school authorities' efforts to expand public education to all children (Simonsen, 1999). Shaped by new teaching methods and supported by philanthropic initiatives, various provisions for children and youth with disabilities emerged in the Nordic region (Froestad, 1995; Berthén, 2007; Simonsen & Befring, 2019). The Norwegian Abnormal Schools Act of 1881 was the first in the Nordic region to grant children with disabilities the statutory right to formalized schooling, indicating that education was now a state responsibility (Simonsen, 2000; Haustätter & Thuen, 2014). However, not every child actually had access. Distinct from the *educable*, some were persistently considered *ineducable*,[2] a construct attached to so-called "idiots" and the "feebleminded"[3]—these being professional concepts of the time (Johnsen, 1998; Simonsen, 2000). In today's terminology, this may be encompassed in the category of "intellectual disability" (ID).[4]

The conceptual distinction between the educable and the ineducable is crucial, as this distinction held for decades in all the Nordic countries. It implied a persistent demarcation of those who should be granted

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the common privilege of education. During the interwar period, eugenic ideology was prevalent in all the Nordic countries, also influencing special education legislation and debate (Berthén, 2007; Askildt & Johnsen, 2012). Optimism was replaced by pessimism, and the views of hereditary traits changed the prognosis for the feebleminded, whose learning opportunities were now viewed as very limited. As the school consolidated as a permanent institution and its curriculum expanded, the term ineducable was used in more systematic ways (Askildt & Johnsen, 2012, p. 65). In Norway, the system for differentiating between the educable and ineducable and that of separate legislation for pupils with disabilities lasted until 1975.

Ideas of integration marked a turning point in the professional debate about legislation for children with disabilities in the Nordic countries in the late 1960s and 1970s. With the passing of the Act on Care for Particular Groups of Intellectually Disabled in 1967, Sweden became the first Nordic country to grant the right to public education to those formerly considered *obildbara sinnesslöa*, that is, the "ineducable feebleminded," thus representing a milestone towards a "School for All" (Berthén, 2007; Göransson, Szönyi et al., 2020). In Norway, the so-called Integration Act of 1975, a law that stipulated schooling for all children, marked a similar milestone. It ended the long-standing legal separation between the educable and ineducable (Befring & Tangen, 2003; Nilsen, 2010). One of the greatest challenges of a School for All is differentiation and the question of universal subject matter—that is, the extent to which pupils should have the exact same curriculum (Imsen & Volckmar, 2014). Swedish policy forms an interesting comparative case with Norway on this issue, as its response to the new-found educational entitlement for pupils with ID took a different direction in terms of the curriculum. In Norway, the Model Plan (or *Mønsterplanen*; the M74) marked one common national curriculum for all, with the same overall aim for both special and mainstream education (Nilsen, 2010, p. 487). However, this policy was relatively radical and not consistent within the Nordic region. Sweden, in contrast, developed a separate curriculum, the *Läroplan för särskolan* (Lsä73), designed for pupils with ID. Since these different policy decisions in the 1970s, Norway has maintained a tradition of one common curriculum for all pupils, whereas Swedish pupils with ID have been provided with a distinct curriculum.

The aim of this chapter is to gain deeper insight into the construction of the ineducable in the Nordic region, with its traditionally inclusive commitments and aspirations. This may contribute to critical thinking about processes of inclusion and exclusion and historically inform debates about defining educational needs, curriculum policy and stratification, and ideals of knowledge to sharpen perspectives on the challenge of meeting pupils' diversity in a School for All. Pupils with ID are a culturally marginalized group. The history of particular groups may represent a prism through which to shed light on broader historic trajectories (Simonsen, 1999, p. 66). While studies on the policies, professional debates, and pioneering efforts in the Nordic history of schooling for pupils with disabilities exist, as well as studies concerning constructions of disability, the idea of the ineducable itself requires closer examination. Therefore, the concept of in-/educable serves as an analytic lens to connect individual and systemic perspectives and points to past and recurrent curriculum dilemmas in compulsory schooling. To this end, we analyze central school policy documents related to key legislative and educational milestones within the Nordic history of schooling for children with disabilities. Emphasis is placed on the Abnormal Schools Act of 1881 and the emergence of new views on education for pupils with ID and the Integration Act of 1975 in Norway. Regarding the new-found curriculum response to this group, a cross-national comparison with Sweden is made. Further, a historic comparison between the policy discourses that characterized the two milestones is drawn.

The following research questions guide the next sections: How was the ineducable defined in the Abnormal Schools Act of 1881—the first legal framework for the education of pupils with disabilities in Norway? What concept of education may be discerned in the curriculum response towards pupils with ID in Norway and Sweden in the 1970s? We conclude the chapter by discussing the implications of shifting constructions of the in-/educable and pinpointing how constructions of the ineducable are not necessarily a bygone story.

Theoretical and Empirical Approaches to Re-/Constructing the History of the *Ineducable*

A central feature of disability studies in education (DSE) is its contribution to the discussion on educational equality and social justice (Baglieri et al., 2011; Hakala et al., 2018). Another is how environments such as policy, shared cultural assumptions, and educational institutions construct disability and shape pupils' educational opportunities—in contrast to a purely medical "deficit" or individual understanding of disability. However, acknowledging that disabilities may have biological or cognitive referents is also important in DSE (Baglieri et al., 2011). Viewing disability as a mismatch between individual functioning and societal/environmental demands and expectations, a relational approach is sought in this chapter as this connects with a tradition of disability studies in the Nordic countries (Froestad, 1995; Tøssebro, 2004).

Reflecting a social constructivist approach (Freedman, 2017), ineducable is treated here as a social construct: a set of ideas reflecting norms and perspectives formed in specific contexts. This is not to say that ID is socially constructed in all cases, as this may potentially undermine real biomedical conditions. Cautious of a hasty application of the phrase "socially constructed" in the field of ID, Carlson (2010, pp. 85–86) points out that there are individuals who have various intellectual limitations, some as a result of endogenous biological or genetic factors, others caused by external factors (e.g., deprivation, poverty, trauma), and some for which there is no identifiable cause. At the same time, Carlson continues, people with ID may face social barriers because of their intellectual limitations, but also simply because they are *labeled* as intellectually disabled. Following Carlson (p. 88), social construction refers to the process of construction and the interpretation of a particular condition. Constructions of someone as ineducable are viewed here as an epistemic activity where given *agents*[5] (x) construct given *children* (y) relative to a given *concept of education* (z) in a given historic period.[6] Following this scheme, the present analysis examines views on the "abnormal" pupil (y) and views on education (z) in the aforementioned historic contexts for children with disabilities in the Nordic region.

The selection of primary sources for the analysis aims to represent historical, legal, and educational written manifestations of change in discourse towards education for pupils with ID. These consisted of the Abnormal Schools Act of 1881 and related preparatory work, the Norwegian Blom-Report (Blom-komiteen [B-k], 1971), and the Norwegian curriculum supplement to the M74, "Teaching Pupils With Intellectual Disabilities" (hereafter the supplement to M74; Grunnskolerådet, 1977) as well as the Swedish curriculum for pupils with ID "*Läroplan för särskolan. Allmän del*" (hereafter the Lsä73; Skolöverstyrelsen, 1973). The analysis also draws widely on secondary sources, such as prior research and presentations of historic trajectories in special education (i.e., Simonsen, 1999, 2000; Froestad, 1995; Berthén, 2007; Simonsen & Befring, 2019; Askildt & Johnsen, 2012; Johnsen, 1998; Göransson, Szönyi et al., 2020). To guide the readings, specific attention is paid to the characteristics and potential for learning that the "abnormal" child has been ascribed and to how the educational aims and content areas for pupils with ID are articulated. This twofold focus is intended to enable a deeper understanding of the constructions of the ineducable as an interplay between individual and social components.

Pedagogical Responsibility and Optimism—The Norwegian Abnormal Schools Act of 1881

The Abnormal Schools Act of 1881 may be seen in the context of a growing philosophical and scientific interest in human nature and optimistic views among professionals in Europe in the late 1800s regarding the opportunities to raise, teach, and treat children and adolescents with impairments (Johnsen, 1998; Simonsen, 2000; Haustätter & Thuen, 2014). The term *abnormal* appears in the *Nordic Journal for the Blind-Deaf and Idiot School* in a publication from 1872 related to the first

Nordic teachers' meeting regarding the Abnormal Schools (Simonsen, 2000, p. 100). Meaning "outside the rule" and unlike "normal" or "by the rule," children who were viewed as unable to be taught within the mainstream school were termed abnormal as an organizational term comprising the deaf, blind, and idiots (in Norway, feebleminded; Simonsen, 2000, p. 101; Rören, 2007, p. 41).

The Norwegian Abnormal Schools Act passed in 1881 clearly entitles children with these specific disabilities to education between the ages of 7 and 21, with the "class of abnormality" determining the allocation of school type (§§ 1, 3). A signal of the evolving public responsibility for the abnormal was stated thus: "It must be acknowledged that abnormal children need a higher degree of care from society than normal children" (Ministry of Church, 1879, p. 6). The learning characteristics and needs of abnormal children were described in preparatory works, and the substantial outcome that schooling was expected to provide in terms of independence and ability to work was highlighted (pp. 5–6). It was stated that abnormal children have a "distinct apparatus" that requires distinct teaching methods (p. 5). Left to their own devices, they were described as "unhappy and helpless" and as "existing outside of society." Deaf and blind children were described as having the potential to live as conscious, responsible working people, which the methods in the schools for the abnormal were meant to realize. Through sign and speech training, the deaf could participate in the community, and the blind could learn to read, write, and work with their hands (p. 5). In a somewhat moderate vein, the expectations for the feebleminded are that "many" of the feebleminded "may be freed from the veil that obscures their consciousness and from the laxity that affects their will" (Ministry of Church, 1879, p. 5). Thus, feeblemindedness was explained as something (a veil) from which one could be freed or cured. No specific expectations about skills development for this group are traced here. Another characteristic referred to was the feebleminded' "weak ability to perceive," which is described as requiring a breadth of educational influences that ordinary teaching could not provide (p. 5).

Abnormal schools were often remote from the children's parental home. Compulsory education was emphasized, and parents could be fined if they did not send their children to school (Abnormal Schools Act, 1881, § 6). Elaborate registration systems ensured that all children were assessed for eligibility. Once a child was defined as abnormal, this indicated a limited opportunity for growing up as a member of a family in a local neighborhood and endangered the right of parents to love and care for their child in the family home. Transferring the authority to educate and care for these children to governmental institutions made them "children of the state" as Haustätter and Thuen put it (2014). Thus, being categorized as abnormal seemed to limit the child's autonomy: It was either the abnormal schools' pathway or no educational pathway.

According to the Abnormal Schools Commission, abnormal children could also be educated to be Christians and useful citizens of society. The same overarching aims of Christian and civil enlightenment were also to apply to them, as it was pointed out that no citizen could forego these (Abnormal Schools Act, 1881, §§ 1a, 1b; Ministry of Church, 1879, p. 5). Bringing abnormal children to Christian confirmation was the primary aim just as it was for the public school. The responsibility to educate children with disabilities was justified as a Christian duty. On this issue, it was stated that there was no reason to differentiate between normal and abnormal children—as long as the child was considered educable (Kirkebæk & Simonsen, 2012, p. 82). In contrast to the public school, a third overarching aim was added to the act: teaching for practical life activities (Abnormal Schools Act, 1881, § 1a). Simonsen (2000, p. 99) recounts that the Abnormal Schools Commission wanted the aim to be participation in adult working life. However, the Church ministry was against this, emphasizing that there was no economic motive, such as making the pupils self-sufficient, for establishing schools for the abnormal. Rather, the ministry clarified that it was any individual's right to receive schooling. Teaching for practical life activities became the accepted formulation. However, the Norwegian Parliament supported the commission's suggestion regarding preparation for adult working life, and work training became the central focus in schools for the abnormal (Simonsen, 2000, p. 99). With locally developed curricula, schools for the feebleminded focused on craftmanship and agriculture. As such, this indicates a novel discourse on aims and content in education that differed from the norms of the mainstream, thereby marking steps in a school system aiming to adapt to the assumed characteristics and needs of this group of learners.

The policy discourse related to the Abnormal Schools Act expresses a new paradigm of education. A significant belief in new training methods reflects educational optimism and high expectations of abnormal children's developmental potential. Thus, providing education to the feebleminded marks a substantial cultural shift in perspective towards this group. This marks a move away from the perspective of charity and care, where expectations for development may be sparse. Accordingly, the entitlement of children with disabilities to formal schooling involves both legal and educational recognition and status as citizens with legitimate rights and needs. Nevertheless, this recognition had its limits: only those who qualified as educable could enjoy this new-found status.

Beyond Abnormal: Differentiating Out the *Ineducable*

The category of abnormal appeared on the basis of what was understood as *normal* and appeared in close connection with conditions in the mainstream schools (Froestad, 1995; Simonsen, 2000). Compulsory education was emphasized as a duty that applied to everyone, however—only "*as* *long as it is proven that the abnormal children are educable* [emphasis added]" (Ministry of Church, 1879, p. 6). Key markers for educability were the ability to absorb the word of God, a minimum of bookish learning, and basic hygiene (Kirkebæk & Simonsen, 2003, p. 68). The Abnormal Schools Act (1881) and the special schools' legislation and separate paragraphs in the Elementary School's Act (1889) that followed laid the foundations for an extensive differentiated school system in Norway that separated the normal pupils from the pupils at special schools and the ineducable. By the beginning of the 20th century, Norway had established a parallel school system for the different categories of pupil (Haustätter & Thuen, 2014).

Differentiating admittance to schools for the abnormal became an important issue related to the allocation of pupils as well as to the costs of implementing the new act (Simonsen, 2000). It was important that the state did not waste resources on pupils who could not make use of the education (p. 105). While the municipalities had costs to consider and kept to a stricter line for admission, the school managers—also due to their philanthropic visions—held a more liberal line. Thus, pioneers in the schools for the abnormal and school authorities became key agents in defining the ineducable through their decisions on who should be admitted or not. In practice, it was the admission criteria that demarcated this based on competing educational and economic interests—between the medical profession and the teaching profession and between different governmental levels (Simonsen, 2000, pp. 105–106). For the feebleminded, admission and allocation were complex, and the terminology and categorization of the pupils was unclear (p. 101). On the whole, it was important to separate the ineducable *true idiots* from those who were considered receptive to teaching. The Norwegian Ministry of Church and the Abnormal Schools Commission held the view that the feebleminded could be more or less cured, but true idiots could at best be receptive to simple manual skills and should be transferred to care institutions. Furthermore, to identify the *spiritually abnormal*[7] from the feebleminded was important because of the possibility to transfer the spiritually abnormal children to the public school, where costs were lower than at the expensive schools for the feebleminded. However, as "a naturally occurring reason for separation cannot be proven" (Ministry of Church, 1879, p. 3), the problems of differentiation became an issue of long-held dispute.

The Abnormal Schools Act entitled abnormal children to education unless they exhibited any bodily "weakness," which, according to a doctor's certificate, made it "useless" or "inadvisable" to send them to school (Abnormal Schools Act, 1881, § 3). Thus, with health, mobility, and the probability of the pupil later being able to practice a profession becoming central requirements for being considered educable, the medical profession was heavily involved in determining pupils' eligibility for school (Simonsen, 2000, p. 105). The problems of differentiation was vigorously discussed in the Nordic meeting for the Abnormal Schools in 1889. As the theoretical demands in public schools increased, so did the need to allocate so-called "slow" pupils to special classes (p. 204). J. A. Lippestad, a Norwegian school manager of a central school for the feebleminded at the time and later director of the system of schools for the abnormal, disagreed that the assessment of pupils should be a strictly medical matter involving predictions for the children's development, and he decided to keep the gate open and allow for trial periods. The Dane Christian Keller criticized this "unscientific" line and argued that slow pupils were not the responsibility of schools but should be quickly taken care of and transferred to medical care institutions, as they were perceived as a social threat (p. 205). This may be illustrative of the Nordic professional debate about the *idiot school* concerning a pedagogical versus a medical approach, two often conflicting epistemic discourses (e.g., Simonsen, 2000; Rören, 2007). While a pedagogical approach relied on an interpretation of the children's functioning and progress, a medical approach focused on the individual's health status and soon relied on psychometric methods and tests to determine developmental abilities.

As long as pedagogical optimism persisted, the admission criteria for schools for the feebleminded were kept open (Simonsen, 2000, p. 102). However, this eventually changed. Towards the turn of the century, hereditary hygiene, eugenics, and degeneration were concepts that influenced official debates on the subject (Askildt & Johnsen, 2012, p. 65). According to the corresponding ideology, so-called backward and degenerate individuals were viewed as a threat to the development of a civilized society. Persons with ID became a clear target. Public schooling for this group was no longer a priority. In the 1890s, an "A," "B," and "C" classification system of the feebleminded was introduced in Norway, with the "C" category considered ineducable (Simonsen & Befring, 2019). While such a delimitation had previously been economically motivated, the legitimacy of this delimitation now related to the emerging ideology of hereditary hygiene that also justified segregation (Simonsen & Befring, 2019; for details, see Simonsen, 2000; Froestad & Ravneberg, 2006).

The distinction between the educable and ineducable continued in the new Special Schools Act of 1915 on "Teaching the Deaf, Blind, and Feebleminded and Care and Working Homes for the Ineducable Feebleminded," as the title clearly reflects. During the interwar period, research on differential diagnostic and psychometric methods achieved a breakthrough. The prevailing view was that ability-based differences among pupils could be revealed by intelligence tests, and the feebleminded could be medically classified according to levels of normal development and their developmental potential predicted in terms of IQ scores (Simonsen, 1999, p. 63; Simonsen, 2000). In line with stricter assessment procedures supported by the new intelligence tests, the pupil population in the schools for the feebleminded decreased. The number was almost halved in Norway by the beginning of the 1920s (Froestad, 1995, p. 345; Kirkebæk & Simonsen, 2003). Thus, the number of children considered ineducable increased. This segregation scheme lasted until the 1970s.

Integration and Education of the Hitherto-*Ineducable* in Norway and Sweden in the 1970s

The 1970s school policy discourse marked a clear break with the tradition of segregating pupils with severe ID. The legal right to education, also for those with severe needs, was first manifested in Sweden (1967) and then in Norway (1975). The school's responsibility to adapt to pupils' needs and to abolish exclusion and abdication of responsibility was emphasized (Berthén, 2007; Befring & Tangen, 2003). A major driver of change was also the vehement criticism of segregated institutional care. The strong influence of developmental psychology as a new knowledge perspective in the professional special education discourse laid the foundations for a new paradigm from which to designate, understand, and teach pupils with ID (Berthén, 2007; Simonsen, 1999). In the following, some details on the specific curriculum thinking of the time is provided to show how the new-found rights were played out.

A Common Curriculum for All in Norway

The new Norwegian Special Schools Act of 1951 maintained that the primary aim of the special school was to provide education in the same subjects as the regular school. This resulted in large groups of children with disabilities still being considered ineducable and not entitled to education (NOU, 1995, p. 119). However, new views emerged emphasizing that children with ID, "who have fewer preconditions to acquire theoretical knowledge in a traditional concept of education, could gain from other forms of learning adapted to their abilities and prerequisites" (p. 119). The Blom-Report (B-k, 1971), prepared under the direction of Knut Blom, a judge at the Supreme Court, marked a turning point as it led to the legal integration of the Special Schools Act with the Primary and Lower Secondary Schools Act in 1975 into one common act for all compulsory education. The long-lasting legal division between the educable and ineducable was abolished (Befring &Tangen, 2003; Nilsen, 2010; Haustätatter & Thuen, 2014). The report's introduction of a "broadened concept of education" (B-k, 1971, p. 44) had a major impact on pupils with ID. As constitutive of special education, the Blom-Report emphasized personality development, practical life orientation, and the development of functional skills (pp. 44–45). Furthermore, it stated that all children, regardless of abilities and resources, had the right to education according to a "broad practical, cultural, and social developmental goal" (p. 43). Reflecting this broadened concept of education, development of the pupil's emotional life, will, sociability, ethics, aesthetics, religiosity, and physical abilities stand out as keywords. The report pinpoints a move away from a "commonly held understanding of schooling as acquiring academic content and educational progress through reading and writing" toward a promotion of skills that are functional according to a life span perspective (p. 44). For pupils with severe ID, the value of special education support is particularly highlighted (p. 43). As such, training in activities of daily living (ADL) are included in the broader concept of education (p. 45). Nevertheless, also in the Blom-Report, a delimitation may be traced in the reference to "cases of mere nursing" and to "those who cannot make use of education." At the same time, however, it states that the possibilities of pedagogy are not sufficiently explored, thus the scope of the concept of education must be kept broad (p. 45). The notion that special education intersects with treatment, training, and therapy seem to explain this position.

A curriculum supplement to the national curriculum, M74, was published "to provide teachers with the guidance necessary to teach pupils with ID, focusing on content different from that of the M74 due to the severe learning difficulties of this group of learners" (Grunnskolerådet, 1977, p. 7). The supplement to M74 and the Blom-Report emphasized respect for individual differences, the equality of all persons, and human dignity regardless of minimum performance requirements (Grunnskolerådet, 1977, p. 11; B-k, 1971, p. 39). According to the supplement, this manifested in pupil-centered teaching adapted according to pupils' needs and abilities (Grunnskolerådet, 1977, p. 85). In contrast to how the framework of the Abnormal Schools Act explains ID, the supplement to M74 stated that "it is not a lack of will, but the pupil's abilities that makes the pupil unable to meet the expectations placed on him in the home, school, and society" (p. 30). The environment was described as a reinforcing factor for ability retardation in that a non-stimulating environment hindered positive development (e.g., p. 50). The necessity of research, knowledge, and theories was emphasized to understand and accommodate pupils' needs (pp. 30, 37). In the supplement to M74, ID is explained as a delay in development (pp. 9, 169), thereby referring to developmental psychology and a stage-based model as a norm for categorizing levels of functioning (e.g., pp. 9, 169–170). Furthermore, the need for tests was mentioned; however, intelligence testing for educational purposes was considered to have little value (p. 33).

In line with the previous legislation, the Blom-Report argued that the same overarching aims for education should also apply to pupils with disabilities. At the same time, it also stated that "objectives in the preamble to the Education Act assume results that seem unrealistic with regard to the developmental potential of many disabled persons" (B-k, 1971, p. 43). Solving this somewhat contradictory passage, they pointed out that special education must operate within these broad aims, working on subordinate objectives and partly other educational activities than those in mainstream education. The supplement to M74 emphasized a multifaceted education for the development of the pupil's personality, in which play, perceptual, and motorial training stood out as key components (Grunnskolerådet, 1977, pp. 5–6, 13). The broadened concept of education was stated as regulative for education, including a range of human developmental areas (p. 85). The school subjects of the M74 should form the basis, but the supplement states that teaching should be accompanied by topics from preschool and activities that are normally not associated with mainstream education. A consequence of the Blom-Report that was enshrined in the common Education Act of 1975 was the principle of adapting teaching according to the needs and prerequisites of the pupil. Thus, in contrast to previous legislation and of central importance is the shift from *causes*, that is, disability categories, to the *need* for education (NOU, 1995, p. 119). This clearly signifies a change of perspective—it is the school system that must adapt to the needs of the child regardless of classification of disability or assessment of educability. The Integration Act of 1975 allowed for various organizational solutions. However, integration into a common, unitary school system[8] was emphasized; the main view was that special education should be coordinated with mainstream education as much as possible (Nilsen, 2010).

The Curriculum for the Special School in Sweden

To provide schooling for those hitherto considered ineducable, the Swedish special school was reorganized into two new school types: the theoretically oriented *grundsärskola* (special primary school) and the more practically oriented *träningsskola*[9] (training school; Berthén, 2007). In contrast to Norway, a new curriculum was developed especially for pupils with ID, the Lsä73, for those who could not follow mainstream education (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1973, p. 8). A pedagogical, psychological, and medical assessment formed the basis for the placement of pupils in the special school. Similar to Norway's supplement to M74, the Lsä73 emphasized adapted teaching as essential in order to conform to the pupil's individual level. Maturation, experience, environmental impact, and the opportunity to form developmental experiences were highlighted as important factors in pupils' learning and functioning (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1973, p. 11). The Lsä73 emphasized respect for human dignity and the responsibility to seek knowledge about pupils' individuality and abilities. ID was explained as a deviation in cognitive development that is slower. With clear references to developmental psychology, it stated that the pupil's development took place in stages. Similar to the supplement to M74, the stages were visualized in a table, with mental age, cognitive processes, and abilities described in an elaborate system of categories (p. 12). Pupils with ID were ascribed difficulties with, for example, concentration and information processing.

Adapted expectations were highlighted, and in line with the supplement to M74, it was pointed out that a deficient educational environment hinders development (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1973, p. 13).

The overall aim for education in the Lsä73 was described as a meaningful transformation of knowledge and skills that are relevant for the pupil in later adult life. Similar to the supplement to M74, "the pupil in the center" and the pupil's personal development were at the forefront (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1973, p. 6). Versatile development was highlighted to stimulate alertness, motivation, emotional balance, co-operative skills, and physical and mental development. In addition, the school's task was to help the pupil to develop self-awareness and their own unique characteristics, to handle personal problems, and at the same time to picture an image of the tasks given by school and society (p. 6). The curricula for *grundsärskola* contained many typical academic subjects such as mathematics, geography, and so on, whereas *träningsskola* contained fewer of these (p. 5). Common subjects for *grundsärskola* and *träningsskola*, which may stand out as different in content from those of mainstream curricula, were perceptual-cognitive training, ADL, and practical skills. As such, some elaboration on these concepts is needed. For perceptual-cognitive training, the described aims were to widen the pupils' imaginary world, to organize visual, tactile, and auditive experiences; spatial perception; and concept formation. As overall aims for training in ADL, the curricula for both *grundsärskola* and *träningsskola* focused on self-care and social functioning in the home and in society. However, *grundsärskola* emphasized equipping pupils for harmonic and rich lives while *träningsskola* focused on increasing pupils' self-awareness. Furthermore, within ADL, *grundsärskola* focused on independence and worked with specific topics (e.g., hygiene, economy, mastering community facilities, leisure activity), whereas *träningsskola* had looser categories (e.g., daily living, travel, dressing oneself). The two curricula also differed slightly with regard to practical skills. In *grundsärskola*, the aims related to practical career information that would contribute to the pupil's perception of working life and career choice (p. 117), but for *träningsskola*, the emphasis was on developing fine motor skills and working with materials and tools that would enable creative activity (p. 120). In sum, the Lsä73 displayed an elaborate approach to the curriculum for pupils with ID that seemed to reflect a recognition of this pupil group's heterogeneity, diversity of abilities, needs, and interests. Contrary to ideas of integration in Norwegian curriculum policy and the supplement to M74, stated goals on coordination with mainstream schools seem sparse.

Discussion: The De-/Construction of the *Ineducable*

Originating from the framework of the Abnormal Schools Act of 1881, the ineducable were defined as "incurable idiots" whose bodily and spiritual constitution allegedly made them unable to obtain Christian confirmation. When schooling was considered "useless," school authorities disclaimed responsibility for them. The enduring practice of differentiating the ineducable from the educable into the early 1970s is a complex issue for posterity. One aspect that may explain the resilience of the idea of the ineducable is the influence of hereditary ideology. Intelligence testing was a powerful tool for systematically sorting children with severe ID out of schools. However, intelligence testing seems to be only one part of the story. A point made here is that the processes of differentiating the ineducable may be explained by the very concept of education. As the analysis suggests, by restricting *education* to bookish or theoretical learning, preparation for Christian confirmation, or future employability, pupils became ineducable. Thus, the underlying and recurrent question becomes: educable in relation to *what*? In the 1970s, the ineducable became educable. Presumptively, it was the norms and perspectives towards this group rather than the pupils themselves that changed. Thus, new concepts of ID and education materialized into legal rights to education. While the entitlement to education for pupils with ID is now established in the Nordic countries, this is not the case everywhere. Thus, "ineducability" is not about fixed traits, but about shifting educational demands.

This chapter's analysis demonstrates how individual and social-environmental components interplay in constructions of the in-/educable through prevailing views of the abnormal child and concepts of education. Fluid and negotiated, the constructions of the ineducable were shaped by competing epistemic, ideological, and educational policy discourses typical for the time as well as by organizational and economic considerations. The Norwegian Blom-Report and supplement to M74 and the Swedish Lsä73 mark a coinciding discursive shift in conceptualizing education for pupils with ID. Affirmation of the educability of and legitimate educational pathway for those with the most severe ID is clear. The supplement to M74 and the Lsä73 demonstrate specific curriculum thinking for this group, paving the way for an educational concept that is not strictly academic. Versatile development towards the personal, practical, and social are goals in a life span, and mastering the activities of daily living, bodily learning, and play are central components. What seems to be maintained from the policy discourse of the schools for the abnormal is the idea of pupils with IDs "distinct apparatus." However, replacing the morally laden terms of *veils*, *will*, and *laxity* is the sober language of developmental psychology. Attributions of these pupils' individuality in terms of, for example, different personalities, also appears novel (Grunnskolerådet, 1977, p. 28). Policy from the 1970s signifies a discursive turn to how environmental factors may also shape disability. In the view that functioning and opportunity are also relative to educational demands and expectations, systemic factors that may be altered seem to be emerging. Efforts of categorization and differentiation also seem to be maintained, yet seemingly not for the purpose of sorting out pupils but for adapting education. The supplement to M74 and the Lsä73 make clear that some pupils are at an early developmental level and that the educational task is to facilitate the next step from where the child stands. The idea of the ineducable child seems to be abandoned.

Direct comparison between Norwegian and Swedish curriculum policy towards pupils with ID using the supplement to M74 and the Lsä73 is difficult because of the documents' different statuses and functions. An obvious difference is the indicative and somewhat literary form of the supplement to M74 compared to the stringent and mandatory form of the Lsä73. The organizational solution to the right to education for pupils with ID differed between Norway and Sweden. Given the shared ideal of a School for All, the difference of the common versus separate provisions is remarkable. However, seen in the context of a Swedish school system with many private and independent schools, various separate settings may be viewed as an integral part or as a response to the imperative of an inclusive school system allowing for various choices for educational pathways. In any case, the concept of education that may be discerned in curriculum thinking towards pupils with ID in Norway and Sweden in the 1970s coincides with the focus on personal development along developmental areas considered specifically relevant. A broadened concept of education, as the Blom-Report advocated, implies a versatile concept of education that also values the personal, social, and practical aims of schooling. As such, this includes pupils whose potential may lie in non-academic domains; more children are within educational reach. Thus, narrow views of the aims and content of education seem to exclude more learners.

Ideas about respect for human dignity and individual differences, the universal right to education, and advances in knowledge and curriculum thinking towards this group were ideas that seemed to deconstruct the idea of the ineducable. An interesting observation that calls for more attention than this chapter offers is how a Christian *Bildung* ideal in the legislative framework of the Abnormal Schools Act seems to run parallel to a utility perspective: education must be *useful*. In contrast, throughout the 1970s, when publications emphasized education for personal development, the intrinsic value of education seemed to play a more dominant role.

Concluding Remarks

The implications of the construction of the in-/educable is fundamental. Firstly, this distinction led to denying children the common privilege of education for decades, even within an alleged School for All. Secondly, the ideas behind the distinction of in-/educable pave the way for a contemporary challenge of a Nordic education model, that is, equal access to a common national curriculum. In Norway, the national curriculum forms the basis of all compulsory education, including special education for pupils with ID. No official curriculum guides, such as the supplement to M74, have been published in subsequent years. In contrast, Sweden teaches pupils with ID a separate curriculum based on the expectation that they do not meet the knowledge objectives of the comprehensive school because of their ID, as stated in the Swedish Education Act (Göransson, Bengtsson et al., 2020). Concerning the still-current tradition of separate curriculum provision for pupils with ID, Göransson, Bengtsson et al. (2020) point out that education is segregated on a national level (p. 3). While not taking a stand in a common versus separate curriculum debate, it is important to recognize that pupil diversity poses a recurrent dilemma with regard to the curriculum. A separate curriculum risks marginalizing pupils with ID from society. However, mainstreaming pupils into a common curriculum may risk marginalizing their needs (Moljord, 2021). Within a realm of Nordic ideals of equality and inclusion, dilemmas emerge between unity and diversity and between common versus separate school provision. Furthermore, a continuous risk of marginalization exists if some needs are defined as "special." However, to the extent that these dilemmas are acknowledged, different solutions can be expected within pluralistic societies. In any case, mere entitlement to a common curriculum does not equal inclusion, if by inclusion we mean equal opportunity and outcome. Recognizing the full educational status of pupils with ID means recognizing individual learning prerequisites and providing meaningful curriculum experiences that enable individuals to flourish, both in and out of school. This is not *special*.

More knowledge is needed on the present curriculum condition for pupils with ID. The epistemic aspects of inclusion should be explored in more depth. What (and whose) knowledge is valued in a *common* curriculum? Critical curriculum inquiries are needed to investigate epistemic injustice and the veil of barriers to inclusion on different levels. Narrow knowledge objectives and curriculum standardization may be seen as tacit modern admission criteria to pass as educable. Neo-liberal goals of turning children into effective contributors to the workforce are one of them. If inclusion is the imperative, a *common* curriculum should reflect diversity in pupils needs and interests. As we have pointed out in this chapter, a broad concept of education, evidenced in a curriculum that reflects a multitude of knowledge forms, seems to be geared towards pupils' diversity. To maintain and give shape to ideals of equality and respect for every pupil, recognizing education as a common and individual good, vigilance for competing interests, and ideologies are needed. Resting in a dilemma perspective is of no help to children and youth with disabilities. Action is needed on the current challenges, representing a joint task for further research and school policy towards an inclusive curriculum.

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Notes

1. This chapter refers to historically defined conditions and terms that are problematic in use because of derogatory connotations, fluid demarcations, and translations.
2. The Norwegian phrases *ikke opplæringsdyktig* (not able to be educated) and *ikke dannelsesdyktig* (not able to achieve *Bildung*) are used synonymously here.
3. "Idiot" (Greek: private person, peculiar) and "feebleminded" (weak-mindedness; Norwegian: *åndssvak*) are historic terms used to describe people with cognitive impairments (Wehmeyer & Smith, 2017).
4. There is no unified terminology related to ID. The American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD, 2010) characterizes ID as the limitations of intellectual and adaptive functioning. The World Health Organization's (11th ed.; *ICD-11*; 2021) diagnosis manual uses the term Disorders of Intellectual Development and classifies into subtypes of mild, moderate, severe, and profound as measured by, for example, IQ tests.
5. As authors, we are also agents.
6. This is inspired by Mallon's (2019) views on naturalistic approaches to social construction.
7. In Norwegian: *åndelig abnorm*.
8. In Norwegian: *enhetsskolesystem*. The vision of a unitary school encompasses the idea of phasing out separate and parallel schooling in that all children, regardless of geographic, social, and ability background shall take part in the social, academic, and cultural community of the common compulsory school system.
9. Training schools were provided for those formerly termed ineducable, such as those who proved not to make use of the teaching at the special primary school, for instance, when the theoretical content was impossible to learn. Furthermore, pupils who had not reached the necessary age of maturity to make use of the teaching in the first levels of the special primary school, despite having reached the compulsory school age, were also referred to the training school (Berthèn, 2007, p. 30).

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4 Schoolteachers, Child-Centered Education, and the Nordic Education Model

Danish and Norwegian Experiences, 1920–1935

Afshan Bibi

Periodic examinations of the existence of a Nordic education model and its various characteristics have been conducted by Nordic and international scholars since the term's internationalization in the 1970s (Frímannsson, 2006; Imsen et al., 2017). The Nordic education model and the Nordic region more broadly are associated with characteristics such as democracy, universalism, egalitarianism, and child-centered education (Carlgren et al., 2006; Imsen et al., 2017). This last characteristic—child-centered education—has evolved from so-called progressive ideas about individual, child-led learning through experience and discovery (Howlett, 2013). These progressive ideas are often traced back to developments in educational philosophies in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries and are connected to, for example, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori (Myhre, 1996). In the early 20th century, advances in educational philosophies in the West manifested in an increased interest in child developmental psychology and a progressive education movement.

The progressive education movement's main ideas focused on emancipating children's minds, viewing children as active learning participants rather than passive recipients of teacher-fed information (Howlett, 2013). Teachers and educators influenced by progressive education ideas concentrated on reforming teaching methods, experimenting with classroom layouts, and addressing the central role of the school in child-upbringing as a holistic enterprise (Röhrs, 1995). After the First World War, many countries found themselves in a state of reconstruction, and it was at this time that international interest in child-centered education, developmental psychology, and experimental learning peaked. This global state of reconstruction and reform also witnessed the establishment of organizations like the League of Nations, which addressed power imbalances and reinforced ideas of democracy to deter countries from going to war again. One necessary part of the West's postwar reconstruction involved advancing the field of education; progressive educators believed that such advancements would meet the changing demands of a changing society (Ydesen,

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2011; Howlett, 2013). In this postwar, progressive education movement context, educational organizations like the New Education Fellowship (NEF) were established and functioned as arenas for the exchange of knowledge and practice. Celia Jenkins (2000) writes that "New Education implied a critique of the existing system . . . recognizing its limitations . . . [and] using this . . . for the realization of the educational interests of children in the reconstruction of society" (p. 139).

In the Nordic region, the reception of progressive education ideas was made possible through both pre-existing regional arenas of educational knowledge exchange and continental European influences, thus reflecting the movement's international scope (Hörner, 1995). This chapter examines some of the main trajectories of transfer, addressing the questions of how child-centered education became associated with the Nordic education model, what preconditions promoted the reception of progressive education ideas in Norway and Denmark, and what role schoolteachers and different exchange arenas of educational knowledge and practice played in this reception. To analyze the preconditions of transfer, the chapter refers to the Nordic School Meetings (*Nordiske Skolemøter*), which were first held in 1870 as an earlier, regional arena for educational knowledge and practice exchange. I thereby contextualize the development of the Nordic School Meetings against a backdrop of Scandinavianism in the 19th century and Nordic co-operation in the 20th. The chapter introduces the New Education Fellowship (NEF) as an international arena for educational knowledge and practice sharing, which developed from the progressive education movement in the 20th century. To explore the role of schoolteachers in the reception and implementation of progressive education ideas, I present the cases of two teachers, Anna Sethne from Norway and Georg Julius Arvin from Denmark, who were actively involved in both the Nordic School Meetings and the NEF between 1920–1935. I historically trace the teachers in these two arenas to highlight their ideas on child-centered education and the reception of these ideas in both regional and international arenas of educational knowledge and practice exchange.

Sharpening the Focus

Selecting Norway and Denmark

The reasons for selecting Norway and Denmark as the two Nordic countries at the center of analysis in this chapter are twofold: First, these countries have a deeply connected history and very similar written languages. Up until January 1814, Norway had spent centuries under the rule of the Danish crown as part of the larger Kingdom of Denmark. One of the outcomes of the Napoleonic Wars in the 19th century was the signing of the Treaty of Kiel in January 1814, which resulted in Denmark ceding Norway to Sweden. Although Norway was no longer a territory in the Kingdom of Denmark after 1814, the influence of the Danish language and elements of Danish culture remained for many years on written Norwegian and on the urban Norwegian elite. This influence, as well as opposition to it, would spark a cultural and social movement in Norway during the 19th century. This movement aimed at establishing a *distinctly* Norwegian identity by making written Norwegian less Danish and more reflective of the various spoken Norwegian dialects.

Second, in addition to the linguistic and historical connections, the development of Norway's and Denmark's educational systems in the 19th and early 20th centuries displays a number of similarities unmatched by other Nordic countries; this particularly applies to the influence of N. F. S. Grundtvig's educational philosophy (Larsen et al., 2022). Grundtvig's educational philosophy focused on educating individuals at the lower end of the social spectrum—the *folk*—and used education to instill ideas about nationalism and the uniqueness of the Scandinavian region (Szelągowska, 2019). Polish historian Grażyna Szelągowska writes that "Grundtvig had his own vision of . . . Denmark's renaissance—and indeed the renaissance of all the Scandinavian North . . . [through] national education and . . . development of a national (and Nordic) identity" (2019, p. 11). Grundtvig's other educational ideas linked to reform and progress emphasized "*freedom* [emphasis added] in education . . . [and] stimulating the creativity of . . . students" (pp. 14–15). His most notable influence in the educational trajectories of Denmark and Norway was in the establishment of the *folkehøjskole*[1] (folk high school), in the mid–19th century (Tønnessen, 2011; Larsen et al., 2013). The *folkehøjskole* provided education for people from all social backgrounds with the aim of dissipating class divisions between city and countryside inhabitants (Myhre, 1996; Larsen et al., 2013; Szelągowska, 2019). The initiation and establishment of these folk high schools serve as an early example of steps taken towards educational reform with the wider goal of social progress in Denmark's and Norway's histories (Bugge, 1983).

Period of Analysis and Source Material

The progressive education movement in the early 20th century is the main period of analysis; this period coincides with the establishment of the international NEF organization, thus providing a window from which I can also present the activities of the regional Nordic School Meetings. The time period, 1920–1935, offers an opportunity to outline the workings of the Nordic School Meetings and the NEF: *before* the NEF's inception in 1921, *during* it, and *after* the largest NEF conference in Elsinore, Denmark in 1929. I highlight the activities of the Nordic School Meetings and the NEF—as regional and international arenas for educational knowledge and practice exchange—and the presence of the Norwegian schoolteacher Anna Sethne and Danish schoolteacher Georg Julius Arvin in them. Of the Nordic School Meetings, the 11th, 12th, and 13th took place between 1920 and 1935 in three Nordic capital cities; the 11th meeting took place in Kristiania (modern-day Oslo) in 1920, the 12th in Helsinki in 1925, and the 13th in Copenhagen in 1931. Simultaneously, the NEF held a number of conferences across Europe from 1920 to 1935,[2] but for my purpose, I focus only on the conference in Elsinore in 1929, as this represents the very *first* time that NEF members came to the Nordic region. The Elsinore conference took place four years after the Nordic School Meeting in Helsinki and two years before the school meeting in Copenhagen.

The Nordic School Meeting summary books from the three selected meetings, published in 1921, 1927, and 1932, contain the main events, lectures, and participants of the meetings and comprise one set of the historical primary sources analyzed in this study. These sources display ways in which the Norwegian teacher Sethne and her Danish counterpart Arvin participated in regional and international arenas of educational knowledge and practice exchange. They also highlight the ideas of Sethne and Arvin about progressive child-centered education and the ways in which they presented these to Nordic audiences. Other primary historical sources include editions of the NEF's journal, *The New Era*, from 1921 through 1935,[3] and the book *Towards a New Education: The New Education Fellowship*, edited by William Boyd in 1930.[4] I supplement the analysis of the Nordic regional level by bringing it into the context of the international progressive education movement in order to pinpoint key descriptions of Nordic education from an outsider, international perspective. The secondary sources used include biographies, book chapters, and articles on Sethne and Arvin, on the concepts of Scandinavianism and Nordic co-operation, and on the international progressive education movement.

At a micro-level, I study the ideas of these two schoolteachers, Sethne and Arvin, in two arenas of educational knowledge and practice exchange—the Nordic School Meetings (regional) and the New Education Fellowship conferences (international). I situate these individual ideas in the wider temporal context of the progressive education movement in the early 20th century, specifically the interwar period from 1920–1935, in which activities of the Nordic School Meetings and the NEF occurred. On a meso-level, I draw inferences from the individual discourses of Sethne and Arvin to highlight the ideas that were generated in Norway and Denmark about child-centered progressive education and to discuss their potential impact on the wider Nordic region. Scaling up from the individual micro-level and the regional meso-level, the international progressive education movement forms the macro-level of analysis. This is done to show the reception of individual and regional discourses on child-centered, progressive education from the Nordic region in an international arena.

Regional and International Arenas of Educational Knowledge and Practice Exchange

The Nordic School Meetings—From Scandinavianism to Nordic Co-operation

The initiation of the Nordic School Meetings occurred in the context of Scandinavianism in the late 19th century; it is in this context that one can also place the development of Grundtvig's educational philosophy, and in which the development of Nordic co-operation in the 20th century can be understood. Ruth Hemstad (2010) defines the term *Scandinavianism* as "a national and liberal, cultural and political movement in the Scandinavian countries" (p. 180). In the 19th century, the movement aimed at nurturing collaboration and feelings of collective identity based on the shared histories and languages of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden (Hemstad, 2010; Åström Elmersjö, 2020). Grundtvig's educational ideas shared this aim with their emphasis on national histories and the uniqueness of the Scandinavian region (Szelągowska, 2019). Scandinavianism hoped to manifest itself in all spheres of life, but its influence was most visible in the field of education amongst scholars, teachers, and students (Hemstad, 2010; Landahl, 2015; Åström Elmersjö, 2020). Of the various Nordic meetings that were established in the late 19th century, the Nordic School Meetings proved to be stronger arenas for regional co-operation; this remained the case even when the movement of Scandinavianism itself faced criticism (Landahl, 2015).

Criticism toward the political branch of Scandinavianism grew in the aftermath of Denmark's war with Prussia and Austria in 1864, in which the Kingdom of Denmark lost three of its southernmost duchies, Schleswig, Holstein, and Saxe-Lauenburg to Prussia and Austria. Hemstad (2010) describes this war as a turning point in the Scandinavian movement, since neither Norway nor Sweden came to Denmark's aid when its sovereignty and cultural identity was perceived to be under threat. This lack of practical action led many in the region to proclaim Scandinavianism a failed political project, and indeed, a number of Nordic meetings and conferences were boycotted or postponed because of the Danish war with Prussia and Austria (Landahl, 2015). However, despite the political tension in the region, the Nordic School Meetings remained largely unaffected and continued to amass interest from teachers, students, and other educationalists (Landahl, 2015). The very first Nordic School Meeting, originally planned to be held in Copenhagen in 1864, was delayed because of the war; it was rescheduled to 1870 and held in Gothenburg, Sweden, with 842 participants registered (Det 13. Nordiske Skolemøde, 1932, p. 788). Subsequent meetings were held on average every three to six years[5]—a relatively regular basis—and attracted a large audience from the Nordic region.

The growing number of participants at the meetings shows their popularity and accessibility as an arena for the advancement of education through lectures, presentations, and an openness to the exchange of knowledge and practice. At the second Nordic School Meeting in Kristiania (modern-day Oslo) in 1874, 1,164 participants attended; at the third meeting in Copenhagen in 1877, a total number of 1,910 attended; at the fourth meeting in Stockholm in 1880, there were 5,227 participants; and at the ninth Nordic School Meeting in Copenhagen in 1905, close to 7,000 participants were recorded (Det 13. Nordiske Skolemøde, 1932, p. 788). In the early 20th century, narratives of Scandinavianism evolved into narratives of Nordic co-operation reflecting a less political and increasingly *cultural* pursuit of regional Nordic collaboration and identity formation (Hemstad, 2010; Åström Elmersjö, 2020). The idea of a culturally united Nordic region extended in the 20th century to include Iceland and Finland; in this context of expansion, the Nordic School Meetings prevailed as arenas of co-operation, educational advancement, and Nordic teacher participation. Landahl (2015) explains: "For . . . many teachers . . . the meetings represented a dramatic break from the conditions that characterized everyday life in a regular school" (p. 10). The meetings also presented a new forum for the presentation and exchange of educational knowledge and practice via the medium of mass gatherings.

The 11th, 12th, and 13th Nordic School Meetings took place from 1920–1935; during this time, educational ideas centered on the child and its learning became increasingly distinct. The 11th Nordic School Meeting was held before the inception of the NEF, from August 5–8, 1920, in Kristiania/Oslo; 3,195 participants from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland attended this meeting (Det 13. Nordiske Skolemøde, 1932, p. 788). At the meeting, educational topics up for discussion and debate included plans for developing reform schools; the school and the natural environment; the child's desire to play in their upbringing; reflections of past, present, and future educational practices; and student abilities (Hoversholm et al., 1921, pp. v–vii). From these topics, one can see that Nordic educationalists were interested in education as a *holistic* endeavor, and they understood the significance of school reforms in instigating educational change on a larger scale.

The 12th Nordic School Meeting was held from August 4–6, 1925, in Helsinki, with 2,655 participants in attendance from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. This meeting represented the first time that Finland played the role of host—a point that supports the expansion of the concept of Nordic co-operation in the early 20th century. Written in a combination of Swedish, Finnish, Danish, and Norwegian, the beginning of the Nordic School Meeting summary book offers an insight into the educational topics that were discussed (Det tolfte Nordiska Skolmötet, 1927). These topics included the old and new school, children's participation in schoolwork, modern school principles and reform attempts, social and individual considerations in upbringing, and special education for "mentally challenged" children[6] (pp. 9–19). The subjects discussed show an awareness of new and old forms of education, of the impact of advances in the field of child psychology, and the child as a social individual developing in a context of educational reform. Another clear and emotive narrative that emerged at the 12th Nordic School Meeting centered on a *distinctly* Nordic culture:

> For the great and significant thing about these meetings, is that they want to embrace the whole of the Nordic region and . . . stand as a symbol of our efforts to fully connect the various branches of Nordic culture. . . . [M]ay the Nordic culture win in all-around wealth and inner harmony.
>
> (Bergqvist, 1927, p. 51)

The 12th meeting also demonstrated the recognition of international educational developments and their influence on the Nordic region; this is less evident in the school meeting summary book from the 11th Nordic School Meeting held five years prior. Names associated with the international progressive education movement, such as Adolphe Ferrière and Maria Montessori, are referenced several times (Det tolfte Nordiska Skolmötet, 1927, pp. 58–73). Such recognition shows that Nordic schoolteachers and educators were not only aware of international developments in education, but they could also *place* themselves in these developments on both regional and national levels.

The 13th Nordic School Meeting took place in Copenhagen from August 6–8, 1931, two years after the NEF conference in Elsinore, 1929. More than twice as many participants from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland attended this meeting in Copenhagen as they did in Elsinore—4,408 compared to 2,000 (Det 13. Nordiske Skolemøde, 1932, p. 788). Topics addressed by participants included educational psychology, child upbringing, school reforms, exams, and different school types (pp. 28–40). From these subjects, one can see a clearer acknowledgement from Nordic educators of the significance of psychology, child-centered pedagogies, and educational practice and experimentation. In his opening speech, Chairperson Axel Jensen emphasized sentiments of Nordic unity and identity in a much larger *global* context; he highlighted the central role of the school and education in keeping lines of collaboration open:

> Individually the people of the Nordic countries are not so great, but through fraternal union, they will have great significance in their relationships with the rest of the world; it is precisely the school's task to help promote this cooperation and increase understanding and friendship between the Nordic people.
>
> (Jensen, 1932, p. 69)

At this 13th Nordic School Meeting in Copenhagen in 1931, the two schoolteachers, Anna Sethne and Georg Julius Arvin, met; they both held lectures and commented on the other participants' discussions. Arvin and Sethne had first crossed paths at the NEF's international education conference in Elsinore in 1929; it is to the topics of the NEF and the NEF's role in the Nordic region that the chapter now turns.

The New Education Fellowship (NEF) and the Nordic Region

In 1921, British teacher Beatrice Ensor established the NEF[7] with the aim of bringing together the many strands of progressive educational thought worldwide. Developing from a social movement (Brehony, 2004) and from a turn towards different religious philosophies at the start of the 20th century (Clews, 2009), the NEF served as a non-governmental organization focused on developing education for the new, postwar era. The NEF advanced the idea that a new *global* progressive education could unite countries and establish international networks for educational exchange (Jenkins, 2000; Charle et al., 2004; Clews, 2009; Ydesen, 2011). NEF members exchanged educational knowledge and practice at annual conferences held in a number of international locations; the NEF's journal, *The New Era*, published summaries of these conferences and disseminated information about the NEF's work in that particular calendar year to its members.

Much of the available literature on the NEF and the Nordic countries presents the conference in Elsinore, 1929, as a turning point because it highlighted Nordic understandings of the new progressive education to a wider international audience (Ydesen, 2011; Jarning, 2009). However, a much lesser-known fact is that even before the NEF conference in Elsinore in 1929, Beatrice Ensor had chosen to devote an *entire volume* of the NEF's journal, *The New Era*, to introducing NEF members to Danish educational history and pedagogical developments (New Education Fellowship, 1929). The NEF published and distributed the 10th volume of *The New Era* to its members at the beginning of 1929. In justifying this decision, Ensor wrote in her column "The Outlook Tower":

> In . . . the approach of our Fifth International Conference, to be held in Denmark this year, we feel it . . . helpful to our members to devote this number . . . to educational work in Denmark. . . . [I]t will be of special interest to all of us to meet in a northern country and to have the privilege of becoming acquainted with Scandinavian thought and culture as well as with scenery and customs. . . . This Conference promises to be a large and very important gathering of world leaders in education, and we feel sure that its home in Denmark will give added charm to its holiday atmosphere, as well as richness of thought to its outlook on progressive education.
>
> (Ensor, 1929, pp. 3–4)

The volume also presented a number of individuals that had made significant efforts to implement progressive education ideas in new and existing schools in Denmark. Of these individuals, Georg Julius Arvin received great attention; his photograph portrait featured on a page between the index and the contents pages, and his contribution "How to Introduce Principles of the New Education into Danish State Schools" (New Education Fellowship, 1929, pp. 24–26) combined international progressive education ideas with national education settings. Arvin explained:

> In this century of ours, "The Child's Century," as it has been called by the Swedish author, Ellen Key, we are faced with the problem of the liberation of the child. . . . One road leads through the experimental schools, which are able—by virtue of possessing the best possible exterior and interior conditions—to examine the new educational problems, and to map out the new course of action for the future. . . . The other road leads through a continued development within the State school in general, by the gradual reform of the training of teachers, and of the whole structure of the school itself.
>
> (Arvin, 1929, p. 24)

In his journal segment, Arvin touched upon the topics of freedom, private and state schools, parents, the school for life, experimental schools, and reform at the national level (New Education Fellowship, 1929, pp. 24–26). All of these topics ran parallel to the main ideas of the international progressive education movement; with his final words, Arvin welcomed the NEF's readership to the conference in Elsinore:

> We wish to make our colleagues from all countries welcome to Denmark, and we hope that the Fellowship's endeavor to embody in the principles of the New Education the high ideal of the new age, "Peace on earth, good will to men," may meet with response from the Danish people.
>
> (Arvin, 1929, p. 26)

The following section describes in more detail the involvement of the schoolteachers Arvin and Sethne in the arenas of the Nordic School Meetings and the NEF; it shows how they implemented and advanced progressive education ideas in national settings.[8]

Danish and Norwegian Schoolteacher Involvement in the Nordic School Meetings and the NEF

Anna Sethne

When reading about key individuals of the progressive education movement in Norway, the name Anna Sethne (1872–1961) stands out. Texts about the history of education in Norway have referred to her as a "pioneer" (Dale, 2004), an "educational entrepreneur" (Jarning, 2009), and an "educator of the people" (Aagre, 2016). Sethne was trained as a primary school teacher and was actively involved in the establishment of a female teacher's union in 1912. She became headmistress at Sagene School in Oslo in 1919, and it was here that Sethne put her understandings of progressive education into practice with a number of experimental classes and teaching methods (Aagre, 2016; Dale, 2004). She appeared at all three of the Nordic School Meetings from 1920–1935 and at the NEF conference in Elsinore 1929.

At the 11th Nordic School Meeting in Kristiania/Oslo in 1920, Sethne held a lecture on joint teaching for boys and girls and focused on the topic of equal education for both sexes in mixed classrooms. She emphasized that education should recognize the differences between boys' and girls' development (Hoversholm et al., 1921, pp. 353–363) and encouraged schools without mixed classrooms to incorporate them. For schools that already had mixed classrooms, Sethne recommended progressive reforms based on the ideas that:

> children demand to have their full right . . . to develop according to their abilities, strengths, and needs. Therefore, teaching, subject areas, [and] work pace must be adapted to their interests and development. This is one of the most important reforms for the countries that have joint schools.
>
> (Sethne, 1921, p. 359)

Against a backdrop of equal education between the sexes, Sethne considered the central rights of the child and a more individual approach to education that catered to children's individual needs. She addressed the topic of equality between the sexes again at the 12th Nordic School Meeting in Helsinki in 1925.

At the 12th Nordic School Meeting, Sethne held a discussion titled "Current Questions for Girls' Physical Development" (in Det tolfte Nordiska skolmötet, 1927, pp. 723–724). In this discussion, she posed two questions to the other participants: Why should one take girls' physical development seriously, and which signs suggest a weakening of the young female physique? In 1925, Sethne suggested that issues surrounding the development of girls could be remedied through a *holistic* approach involving schools, families, and health authorities; she stressed that "[t]eachers, doctors, parents, and others interested in society should unite and take control of the youth's development into healthy, strong individuals" (1927, p. 724). She underlined the importance of physical activity for children's physical and mental development and that schools in Norway had to do more to ensure the availability of equal physical activity opportunities for girls. Sethne did not discuss this topic at the

NEF's conference in Elsinore in 1929. In fact, in this international arena of educational knowledge and practice exchange, she registered herself as an observer rather than as an active participant (Aagre, 2016). However, Sethne returned to the theme of the importance of children's physical health at the 13th Nordic School Meeting in Copenhagen in 1931.

At the 13th Nordic School Meeting, Sethne gave the lecture "Teaching Health Education (Family Hygiene)" (in Det 13. Nordiske Skolemøde, 1932), in which she covered the topics of teaching children about the differences between male and female physiques, the various functions of the body parts, and the age of maturity at which children should be taught this. Sethne emphasized that one of the most important things in relation to these topics was an openness for knowledge. She encouraged teachers to present the biological processes and changes in male and female physiques as a reflection of processes that occurred in nature—in the physical environment containing both human and non-human life. At the heart of Sethne's educational ideas from the Nordic School Meetings is a child-centered focus on child individuality, on the importance of bringing examples from the environment into teaching, and on ensuring that teaching itself is one part of a much larger, holistic process of child upbringing linked to different institutions and individuals.

Georg Julius Arvin

Arvin (1880–1962) was a Danish primary school teacher who was instrumental in establishing, and later becoming, the school inspector at the progressive La Cours Vej School in Frederiksberg from 1918–1939; it was at this school that Arvin put developments in progressive education into practice. The summary book of the 11th Nordic School Meeting in 1920 registered Arvin as an attendee, and it recorded that he commented on certain lectures: "Students' Individuality and Their Skills" (Hoversholm et al., 1921, p. 207), "Craft in Connection With Other School Subjects" (p. 312), and Anna Sethne's "Joint Teaching" (p. 363). In response to the topics Sethne raised, Arvin agreed and commented that the "school is not aimed at taking individual considerations into account. It is wise to educate men and women to understand each other . . . [and the] curricula must be adapted in an individual direction" (p. 363). Arvin's agreement with Sethne suggests that he was a visibly invested individual in the development of educational knowledge and practice. It also indicates that he believed a child-centered, individual education encouraging both sexes to understand each other was as important in Denmark as it was in Norway.

Unlike Sethne, Arvin was absent from the 12th Nordic School Meeting in Helsinki in 1925, but he played a central role in the NEF's fifth conference at Kronborg Castle in Elsinore in 1929 (Jarning, 2009; Ydesen, 2011). Over 2,000 schoolteachers and educators from more than 40 countries attended the Elsinore conference, and it remains one of the

NEF's most attended conferences to this day (Aagre, 2016; Ydesen, 2011). The formality with which NEF members were received by both politicians and schoolteachers at Elsinore (Boyd, 1930) suggested a recognition and validation of the event's significance not only for Denmark, but for the wider Nordic region as well. As mentioned previously, this was the first time that the NEF and its members held a conference in a Nordic country (New Education Fellowship, 1929). At the conference, Arvin lectured on the topics of "Firmness and Freedom" and "The International People's College" (Boyd, 1930). When addressing the other NEF members at Elsinore in his speech "Firmness and Freedom," Arvin stated:

> For the fifth time the New Education Fellowship has called an International Education Conference. The response is greater than ever, and shows that interest in new education is spreading in all countries. . . . Denmark is only a small nation; but as a link in a northern culture, we can make a contribution to the cause of peace, freedom, and reconciliation. . . . What characterizes northern pedagogy is the desire to create firmness and freedom. Above all we want a democratic school. . . . The . . . pedagogical movement . . . has changed the interest in subject matter to the interest of the new education in the child himself.
>
> (Arvin, 1930, pp. 9–11)

What comes across in this speech is the central idea of a Nordic education based on principles of equality, freedom, democracy, and the inherent importance of children. With his use of words like "link," "contribution," and "reconciliation," Arvin firmly placed Danish and Nordic education in the context of the wider international progressive education movement.

Two years after the NEF's conference at Elsinore, Arvin lectured at the 13th Nordic School Meeting in Copenhagen in 1931. In "The Experimental School and Experiments in School" (1932), Arvin differentiated between two of the main methods in which progressive education ideas had translated into practical school reforms in Denmark. One of these methods focused on the establishment of entirely new experimental schools; the other focused on developing experimental classes *within* schools that had been founded on more traditional, "older" educational philosophies. Since this particular Nordic School Meeting took place after the NEF's international conference in Elsinore, 1929, there is a strong sense of following through with the recommendations discussed at that conference. Arvin referred specifically to a "*nordisk Skolevæsen*"—a *Nordic* School System, which—if it was to develop—should focus on:

> greater space for . . . individual pedagogical [initiatives] within the framework of the existing school . . . the authorities' active participation in the establishment of pilot schools . . . [arranging] exams and . . . tests . . . [so] they do not . . . [interfere with] school work . . .

> [and a] reform of teacher education . . . [that] takes greater account . . . of the importance of prospective teachers receiving a thorough . . . more comprehensive education in psychology.
>
> (Arvin, 1932, p. 441)

Similar to Sethne, Arvin's educational ideas concentrated on a holistic approach to implementing progressive education in schools. His points showed the importance of more freedom in educational methods, of the role played by the educational authorities regarding education reforms in the Nordic countries, and of the advances in psychology and their impact on educational knowledge in the early 20th century. These sentiments echoed Arvin's comments at the NEF's conference in Elsinore in 1929 and the comments he made in the 10th volume of the NEF's journal, *The New Era*, which was distributed before the conference and devoted to Danish educational history and development. Arvin's words also reiterated a number of Grundtvig's ideas about reform and progress through greater educational freedom and a greater understanding of individual child creativity and ability (Bugge, 1983; Szelągowska, 2019).

Reflecting on the Centrality of Child-Centered Education in Norway and Denmark

This chapter has tried to understand how child-centered education emerged as one of the defining characteristics of the Nordic education model. It conducted a historical analysis focused on two schoolteachers, Anna Sethne and Georg Julius Arvin, in two arenas of educational knowledge and practice exchange—the Nordic School Meetings and the NEF, during the interwar period of 1920–1935. Initiated and developed in the wider context of Scandinavianism in the late 19th century and Nordic co-operation in the early 20th, the Nordic School Meetings provided a regional arena for the exchange of educational knowledge and practice. Concurrently, the New Education Fellowship developed from the international progressive education movement of the early 20th century and functioned as an international arena for educational advancement.

Parallel to Scandinavianism in the early 19th century was the development of N. F. S. Grundtvig's educational philosophy in Denmark, which advocated for freedom in education and increased access to it for individuals from lower social-economic groups. One of the aims of Grundtvig's educational philosophy was to advance Nordic societies through greater social equality. This aim manifested itself in part with the establishment of the *folkehøjskoler*, the influence of which laid the foundation for the further reception of international progressive education ideas in Norway and Denmark that were more child-centered. Reading and analyzing the lectures, comments, and discussions of Norwegian schoolteacher Sethne and Danish schoolteacher Arvin in these two arenas has highlighted that the core idea of educational freedom was very much a recurring one. In this sense, the reception of international progressive education ideas in Denmark and Norway can tentatively be viewed as a gradual process of evolution from Grundtvig's educational philosophy rather than an abrupt break from it.

In addition to focusing on individuals at the societal level, Arvin and Sethne's educational ideas promoted educational freedom specifically centered on the *individual child*. These schoolteachers modified Grundtvig's educational philosophy in the context of the international progressive education movement and addressed topics such as holistic child upbringing, adapting to children's individuality, and continued educational freedom and reform. Both Arvin and Sethne actively pursued progressive reforms in their schools and were instrumental in prompting tangible change; they acknowledged that the implementation of child-centered education demanded reform at the local *and* national level. On an international level, exchange arenas like the NEF functioned to recognize and validate Norwegian and Danish schoolteachers as implementers of child-centered progressive educational ideas while simultaneously linking this representation to the wider Nordic region.

Another finding from the historical analysis concerns the contemporary literature available on the NEF and its interactions with Denmark, Norway, and the Nordic region more broadly. This literature has placed a significant amount of emphasis on the NEF's largest conference in Elsinore in 1929; however, in doing so it has overlooked the *earlier* and *more* established arena of the Nordic School Meetings as an equally important place for the exchange of educational knowledge and practice. These meetings highlighted an *existing* cultural practice between Nordic schoolteachers and educators in the 19th century and served as an important precondition for the reception of the NEF's progressive education ideas in the Nordic region in the 20th. The NEF was therefore less revolutionary; it was less *new* in the Nordic countries and more an arena that *complemented* contemporary practices at the regional Nordic level, *extending* them internationally.

The transfer of ideas does not occur in a vacuum and demands the interplay of people, places and temporal contexts. The arenas of the NEF and the Nordic School Meetings, as well as the experiences of Arvin from Denmark and Sethne from Norway within them, have revealed nuanced national variations in the reception of child-centered progressive education ideas. An underlying working assumption throughout this chapter has been that a Nordic model of education *does* indeed exist with distinct characteristics visible in the Nordic countries. A separate line of inquiry could take a more critical view of the Nordic education model's existence, and reflect on what the centrality of a child-centered education in Norway and Denmark would look like in such a case. Perhaps that could be the start of a discussion for another day?

Notes

1. The term *folkehøjskole* in Danish refers to a type of young adult education institution where students normally live on the premises during their studies—much like boarding schools in Britain. Originally founded on Grundtvig's educational philosophy in Denmark in 1844, the *folkehøjskoler* provided education to a wider spectrum of society and was later developed in Denmark and Norway, as well as the greater Nordic region, with distinct national differences. I have translated *folkehøjskole* to "folk high school" in English, because I believe this stays as close as possible to the original form of the term. The idea behind the folk high school was to promote educational freedom and learning for life, and these characteristics were reflected in the range of subjects and the lack of formal, academic examination.
2. Prior to the conference in Elsinore, Denmark, 1929, the NEF had already held four conferences—Calais (1921), Montreux (1923), Heidelberg (1925), and Locarno (1927), (Boyd & Rawson, 1965).
3. Access to these journals has been made possible through University College London's digital archives.
4. Thank you to Professor Harald Jarning for providing me with the physical copies of the summaries of the 11th, 12th, and 13th Nordic School Meetings and of the NEF's edited book by William Boyd (1930), *Towards a New Education: The New Education Fellowship*.
5. An exception to this is the 11th Nordic School Meeting, which was held in 1920 and was delayed ten years after the 10th School Meeting in 1910 due to the First World War (Det 13. Nordiske Skolemøde, 1932, p. 788).
6. This is a direct translation of the terminology used at the time; it does not reflect any personal views of children with increased special education needs.
7. The New Education Fellowship changed its name to the World Education Fellowship in 1966, reflecting the increased globalized nature of education and of their organization at that time (World Education Fellowship, n.d.).
8. For detailed biographical information about Sethne, see Jarning (2009), "Reform Pedagogy as a National Innovation System: Early Twentieth-Century Educational Entrepreneurs in Norway," and Aagre (2016), *Folkeopplyseren: Anna Sethne og den Norske Reformpedagogikken*. For biographical information about Arvin, see Nørgaard (1977), *Lille Barn, Hvis Er Du?: En Skolehistorisk Undersøgelse Over Reformbestræbelser Inden for den Danske Folkeskole i Mellomkrigstiden*.

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5 Integrating, Segregating, Emancipating?

The *General* and the *Specific* in Nordic Sámi Education in the Early 20th Century and Today

Otso Kortekangas

The modern history of Sámi[1] education in the Nordic countries of Norway, Finland, and Sweden is a part of the general impulse toward popular education that the Nordic governments launched in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At the same time, Sámi groups have been targeted in several cases by specific educational policies where their ethnicity—to put it in contemporary terms—played a substantial role in the design of these policies. For instance, the language assimilation carried out in Norwegian schools with Sámi and Kven (Finnish-speaking) pupils during the first half of the 20th century can be viewed as both *general* and *specific*: On the one hand, the goal was to educate the minorities to an equal, common Norwegian and Norwegian-speaking citizenship. On the other hand, the assimilation policies specifically targeted the Sámi and the Kven, aiming to eradicate these languages in Norway (Minde, 2003).

Similar cases can be made about the Swedish and Finnish policies regarding Sámi education. In Sweden, the *nomad school* system has generated a large body of research during the recent years. The aim of this system was to educate the children of the large-scale reindeer herders in segregation in order to bring the pupils up into a "modernized" livelihood of reindeer herding and to persuade them to stay in that vocation (Elenius, 2006; Sjögren, 2010).

Whereas the nomad school system was already being criticized in the 1920s for having patronizing attitudes towards the Sámi, the notion of specificity in Sámi education has been a popular theme among Sámi educators in recent decades. As many scholars (including Sámi scholars) have pointed out, the Nordic school systems should acknowledge the specificity of Sámi culture by offering education that is culturally sensitive and based on and geared toward Sámi culture (Keskitalo et al., 2013; Olsen, 2019; Svonni, 2015). More recently, scholars in the Nordic countries with Sámi minorities have argued that mainstream curricula in all schools of the countries should also include substantial elements of Sámi culture (Ngai, 2015; Kemi Gjerpe, 2018).

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This chapter discusses early 20th-century Sámi criticism toward educational policies against this backdrop of recent debates on Sámi content in education. The chapter lays bare that the question of specificity and generality in Sámi education is not a novel theme. What were the most important points when calling for Sámi specificity in education? What were the assumed advantages of widening the general model of elementary education to the Sámi areas? Discussing the important work of such Sámi teachers and educators as Isak Saba, Per Fokstad, Gustav Park, Karin Stenberg, and Josef Guttorm, this chapter produces a broad narrative of early 20th-century Sámi education, including voices from Norway, Finland, and Sweden, as well as from the Sámi and the majority populations alike. This chapter also serves as a critical comment and call for action to widen the scholarly perspective away from the specific nation-states spanning the Sámi area to the region as a whole. In investigating the general and specific tendencies in Nordic governmental educational policies targeting the Sámi, the chapter scrutinizes the role of the Nordic states in constructing and cementing the conventional view of the Sámi as Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian minority populations rather than as a cross-national population in its own right.

Norway

In a comparative Nordic perspective with Sweden and Finland, Norway was the country with the clearest and most uniform school policy towards the Sámi population. The turn of the 20th century saw a number of laws that codified strong language assimilation, called Norwegianization (*fornorskning*), as a pivotal part of the educational policies in the areas inhabited by Sámi and Kven (Finnish-speaking) pupils. As elucidated in earlier scholarship (Eriksen & Niemi, 1981; Bråstad Jensen, 2005; Minde, 2003; Kortekangas, 2021), this strong ideology of assimilation stemmed from security policy considerations as well as national economic ideals: Non-Norwegian-speaking groups populating the northern areas bordering Finland and Russia constituted a national threat in the eyes of educational authorities. This security policy argument became intertwined with strong Norwegian-nationalist undercurrents and the ideal of agriculture as the base for economy and sustenance, including in the northernmost parts of Norway where Sámi fishermen and reindeer herders traditionally practiced their livelihoods.

These stringent assimilation policies met with a Sámi opposition that was stronger than the more scattered critical Sámi voices in Sweden and Finland. The first wave of Sámi activity, spearheaded by individuals such as the Sámi teachers Anders Larsen and Isak Saba, argued for more Sámi language to be used within the Norwegian elementary school system. Many children were unilingual Sámi-speakers when starting school, and it was, according to Larsen and Saba, a waste of resources to teach the pupils in a language they could not understand (Larsen, 1917; Jernsletten, 1998). In 1906, Isak Saba, who was also the first Sámi member of the *Storting*, the Norwegian parliament, published a proposition for a revision of the Norwegian curriculum as part of his election program as a Labor Party MP candidate. The points of this proposition bear witness to the fact that more inclusive school policies existed prior to the strong assimilation of the early 20th century. Saba's points on education and Sámi language were as follows: "1 a. The [church] service shall in the future be held in Sámi to the same extent as before; 1 b. School books in religion and the Bible and hymnals shall also in the future be published in Sámi" (Saba, 1906, as cited in Jernsletten, 1998).

Saba's points highlight the strong role that Lutheran Christianity held traditionally within the Norwegian (and in general, Nordic) school system. A certain secularization took place in the early 20th century with the establishment of the governmental elementary school systems. In the Nordic countries, this also entailed a shift of responsibilities from the Lutheran Churches to the governments. Notwithstanding, Christianity remained one of the most important subjects throughout the first half of the 20th century, and Lutheran Christianity was the self-evident ethical baseline of all education and upbringing (Buchardt, 2013).

Within Sámi education, the link between Lutheranism and education was possibly even stronger, given that the first Sámi schools in the 17th and 18th centuries were founded by Lutheran missionaries, and mission schools continued to be the main venue for Sámi education until 1900 (and in Sweden and Finland even longer). Many of the Sámi of Norway, Finland, and Sweden also used the mission schools as positive examples of education when faced with the new governmental school system that paid less attention to Sámi culture than the mission schools had done. Saba's program also points to this direction: His ideas should be interpreted as an appreciation of the earlier school tradition and the relatively strong role Sámi language had had in the Lutheran context, where the intelligibility of the Gospel was more important than other educational goals (Elenius, 2006; Norlin & Sjögren, 2016; Kortekangas, 2021; Andresen et al., 2021).

Sámi teacher Isak Saba's claims for more Sámi language in schools were met with vigorous opposition from the side of the educational authorities, most notably the school directors of Norway's northernmost county, Finnmark. According to the leading regional educational authorities, the Finnmark school directors Bernt Thomassen (1902–1920) and Christen Brygfjeld (1922–1933), strong language assimilation rendered tuition in Sámi redundant, as the pupils learned Norwegian quickly in schools with no special arrangements for minority languages. According to the directors, Sámi could, however, be used in certain situations such as Christianity instruction and as an accelerator of Norwegianization (when Sámi was used in order to gain quick acquisition of the Norwegian language; Bråstad Jensen, 2005; Kortekangas, 2021).

A generation after Saba's and Larsen's calls for the extended use of Sámi within the Norwegian school system, another Sámi teacher, Per Fokstad, became a vocal opponent of the Norwegianization policies. Fokstad was, in fact, more than just an opponent of assimilation. Whereas Saba and Larsen had proposed a revision of the existing curriculum to include more Sámi language tuition at the turn of the century, Fokstad wrote a proposition in 1920 for a completely new curriculum and school system in Sámi that would run parallel to the Norwegian curriculum. Fokstad wrote his school plan at the time when a general revision of the curriculum and schools was taking place in Norway. The *Storting* appointed a parliamentary school committee in 1922 that lasted for five years. The work of the committee resulted in a number of laws in the 1930s concerning the elementary schools, with no substantial changes with regard to Sámi education. While the committee was working, Fokstad published his school plan (in 1924) in an attempt to influence the work of the committee in a direction that would be favorable to Sámi education (Bråstad Jensen, 2005; Eriksen & Niemi, 1981; Myhre, 1992).

Finnmark school director Christen Brygfjeld did not understand the proposals in Fokstad's school plan. He interpreted the school plan as a "rehash" of obsolete educational ideals from the 19th century (Brygfjeld, 1925). In a sense, he was right, considering that the 19th-century school system, based on traditional missionary values, had been much more positive towards Sámi language than the contemporary school system of Norway. In other ways, Brygfjeld's critique was off-point, however. Fokstad's school plan was in no way a mere rehash or a revival of the 19th-century context where Sámi language had a freer role within the school system. Fokstad's school plan should, rather, be interpreted as a modernist project, borrowing tactically from the general Norwegian, Nordic, and European contexts of ideas on nations, nationalist pedagogy, and the functions of education.

Fokstad's plan was comprehensive in the sense that he aimed the proposed curriculum at being applied in all schools with Sámi pupils. In the schools with a mixed pupil base, with Sámi, Kven, and Norwegian pupils, Fokstad suggested the Sámi have their own stream within the school system that would run parallel to the Norwegian one. Fokstad wanted Norwegian to enter the curriculum of the Sámi school only in the fifth grade of the elementary school and Christianity instruction to be provided in Sámi throughout the school. This would have constituted a radical break with the Norwegian curriculum in use at the time when Fokstad wrote his school plan; it included Norwegian as the most important school subject, especially in the northern areas with Sámi and Kven pupils. In addition, Fokstad saw boarding schools as an option in the mountain regions where the distance between villages was normally substantial. These boarding schools in the mountain areas operated where large-scale reindeer herding was the most common livelihood, so Fokstad spoke for including the theory and practice of this livelihood in the curriculum. Both in the case of reindeer herding and Christianity, Fokstad considered it paramount that the curriculum included examples from the everyday life of the Sámi, showing that he was well-aware of the reform pedagogy ideals of his time (Fokstad, 1924/2004).

Fokstad's plan never materialized, but he continued his work for Sámi education. Once he was a member of a governmental committee for reforming the school system in the late 1940s, he repeated the basic claims of his 1924 school plan. As Astri Andresen shows, this report was pivotal in changing the course of how the Sámi and Sámi education were viewed and discussed in Norway, thus leading to a period of more acceptance of Sámi culture (Samordningsnemnda for skoleverket, 1948; Andresen, 2016). This shift in perspective was a slow process, and the first separate Sámi curriculum was launched in Norway in 1997, over two decades after Fokstad's death in 1973 (Olsen, 2019). Fokstad's importance both as an inspirational figure and as a pioneer of Sámi education has been important for later generations of Sámi educators and scholars. Despite the fact that his school plan met with vigorous opposition and criticism in the 1920s, Fokstad's pioneering work has borne fruit in the decades following his most active period as an educator and Sámi activist.

Sweden

Swedish policies targeting the Sámi population were twofold. On the one hand, the children of the nomadic reindeer herders of Sweden's mountain areas were sent to a specific school form, the *nomad school*. The nomad school system, established in 1913, aimed to educate efficient reindeer herders. Bishop Olof Bergqvist, of Sweden's northernmost diocese of Luleå, and the elementary school inspector of northernmost Sweden, clergyman Vitalis Karnell, were the main architects and later controllers of the nomad school system. Together with elementary school inspector Karl Lorenz Österberg, they authored a proposition in 1909 that led directly to the establishment of the nomad school system. The nomad school system did not affect the children of the Sámi who were sedentary or not reindeer herders: They attended standard Swedish elementary schools, with assimilation into the Swedish language as the most common outcome. The criticism to educational policies among the Sámi concerned mainly the nomad schools. Some Sámi parents wanted more Sámi to be used in the schools with Swedish as the standard language of instruction (Kortekangas, 2021). The most vocal opposition to the policies, however, regarded the quality and forms of tuition that Sámi critics such as the teacher and clergyman Gustav Park viewed as inferior to the standard Swedish elementary schools.

In a sense, then, whereas the criticism in Norway regarded the fact that the schools had no specific Sámi curriculum or content, in Sweden, the Sámi opposition criticized the fact that the nomad schools stood out from the general Swedish elementary schools. What is paramount to note is that the nomad school was adapted to the ideals of "true Sáminess" of the Swedish educational authorities who planned, implemented, and controlled the system. Even though Sámi parents and individuals were formally consulted both in the planning phase and later on, the form and content of the nomad school system essentially reflected the views of Swedish authorities rather than the Sámi (Sjögren, 2010). Nevertheless, where the generality of education was the focus of Norwegian Sámi criticism, Swedish Sámi activists disliked the specificity of Sámi education in Sweden.

One of the most vocal critics of the nomad school system, and Sámi education in general, was the Sámi teacher and clergyman Gustav Park. In 1918, a number of Swedish Sámi gathered for a nationwide meeting in the town of Östersund in central Sweden. Park, who at the time was a theology student at Uppsala University, used the meeting as a platform for a heavy castigation of Swedish educational policies targeting the Sámi. The main points of Park's criticism focused on the inferior quality of education in the nomad schools when compared to the standard Swedish elementary schools. Park regarded the low quality of education as a path to second-class citizenship for Sámi children. Park also condemned the obligation of the reindeer-herding Sámi of the mountain regions to place their children in the nomad schools. Park considered it a basic right that the Sámi have the choice between the nomad schools and the standard elementary schools. Park also did not promote the Sámi language as a vital part of education. On the contrary, he considered it a healthy development to have Swedish as the main language of tuition for Sámi children. This, again, is to be read in the contexts of the quality of education and, also, equal citizenship. For Park, the most important thing the Swedish school system could provide to the Sámi children was an education that would help them in the best possible way for their future. The other main function of education for Park was that it disseminated civic values—duties and responsibilities—that were common for all Swedish citizens (Tomasson, 1918).

Park's notions need to be read in their rightful context: As Park himself explained during the meeting, the children already knew Sámi, and to learn Swedish was an important extra resource. He never meant to replace the Sámi language with Swedish. According to Park, it was a functional combination that the children learned and spoke Swedish in the schools and Sámi in their home environments.

Karin Stenberg, a Sámi teacher born in the parish of Arvidsjaur, was Park's coeval and, like him, an ardent critic of Sweden's educational policies. In 1920, she published a book called *Dat Läh Mijen Situd* (*This Is Our Will*) together with the Swedish writer Valdemar Lindholm. In its actual context, and especially in retrospect, Lindholm's and Stenberg's criticism appears radical in terms of both rhetoric and context. Like Fokstad in Norway and Park in Sweden, Stenberg was an early 20th-century promoter of the political and cultural rights of the Sámi. During her long career, she participated in the founding of the national Sámi organization *Same Ätnam* (1945) and the Sámi folk high school of Sweden (1942). The folk high school had, among other subjects, instruction in Sámi language and history, and it welcomed students from the whole Nordic Sámi area (Olsen, 2019).

The direct purpose of Stenberg and Lindholm's book was to influence the work of a governmental committee appointed in 1919 that investigated the rights of the Sámi and conditions for reindeer herding in Sweden. According to *Dat Läh Mijen Situd*, there was a need for a Sámi perspective to complement the outsider view of the committee (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920). As Patrik Lantto has discussed in his dissertation, the content of the book resembles very much the main critique that the leaders of the Sámi movement, and mainly Gustav Park, had presented in the first national meeting of the Swedish Sámi in Östersund two years earlier, in 1918 (Lantto, 2000).

In the preface to the book coauthored with Lindholm, Stenberg takes credit and responsibility for all the statements of the publication. The core message is concentrated in the first two lines of the book's conclusion:

> We want to live in our fathers' land as Sámi, but not as a people without enlightenment and prospects of development. We believe in the future of our people and in its development into a nation as cultivated as any.
>
> (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920, p. 88)

Despite this almost separatist tone, it is clear that Stenberg and Lindholm situate the struggle of the Sámi mainly in a Swedish context. However, to bolster their arguments for more extensive self-determination and rights for the Sámi, the book makes international contextualizations (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920).

In the first chapter of the book, the authors state that the Sámi have a "will to live." And this will to live, in the "time of the League of Nations" with all the talk about the rights of the small nations, should in itself be an argument for more right to self-determination. The authors make reference to the question of the Åland Islands, a group of islands in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Finland. Around the time of the book's publication, Sweden was trying to persuade Finland to arrange a referendum on Åland on whether the Swedish-speaking region should be a part of Finland (as it was and would remain via a decision by the League of Nations in 1921) or Sweden. Since the Swedes were so interested in supporting the right to self-determination on Åland, the authors enquired why they should think differently in the case of the Sámi in Northern Sweden (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920, p. 5).

Apart from this reference to the body of international affairs par excellence, the book makes another, radical framing of the Sámi case. In a chapter discussing enlightenment and Swedish school policies targeting the Sámi, the book repeats the critique of the 1918 national meeting of the Swedish Sámi in stating that the Sámi should have the right to choose which schools to attend. Since 1913, the children of the reindeer-herding Sámi were forced to attend the nomad schools where they were taught in Swedish in the basic elementary school subjects and alongside their typical Sámi livelihoods. The book takes a stance toward this obligation and states that the quality of education is not good enough in the nomad schools. In opposing the fact that the Swedish state wanted to decide what is considered a good-enough education for the Sámi, the book cites a colonial framework:

> We have heard both before and after the war how Swedes have criticized England and the English for their way of "subjugating other peoples" and their politics in India and Ireland. But we have heard no Swede that would seriously have worried about how the Swedish "colonial politics" have been.
>
> (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920, pp. 69–70)

In the paragraph, Sweden's patronizing of the Sámi is juxtaposed with other colonizing powers of Europe. After this comparison, the framing of the Sámi as a colonized population continues: "We the Sámi, who since time immemorial like dogs have had to be content with what has fallen from the table of our masters, we can understand both Indians and Irishmen" (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920).

The context is unmistakably Swedish, since the book sought to affect the work of the Swedish governmental committee investigating the situation of the Sámi. At the same time, it is clear that Lindholm and Stenberg view the situation of the Sámi in a much larger context than that of Sweden, the Sámi area, or even Northern Europe. Situating the struggle of the Sámi in a context of European colonialism is a discussion that would really take off some 40 to 50 years after the publishing of Stenberg and Lindholm's book.

Taken together, Stenberg's and Park's criticism portray the patronizing school policies of Sweden as something that would lead to second-class education and citizenship for the Sámi. The ideals of the nomad schools aimed at educating a reindeer-herding population that continued the livelihood of their parents, but this was done in a manner modernized by the school system that was controlled by Swedish educational authorities. Park and Stenberg considered this a disgrace.

Park's, Lindholm's, and Stenberg's criticism was echoed by many Sámi parents who made their voices heard in meetings with the nomad school inspector who was in charge of all the nomad schools in the country.

In these meetings, Sámi parents expressed their discontentment with the school and boarding facilities that were designed by Swedish school authorities to be as “Sámi” as possible. In many cases, these were poorly constructed buildings that were, according to the parents, unhealthy for the children to dwell in. Whereas Park had highlighted the importance of Swedish as the language of instruction, opinions about the main language of education were divided among the Sámi parents. A general pattern indicates that in the areas where Sámi languages were already in a difficult position due to long-time assimilation and Swedish influx, the parents wished for the Sámi language to have a more prominent role in education. In areas where Sámi had a strong standing, many parents acknowledged the benefits of learning more Swedish (Sjögren, 2010; Kortekangas, 2021). The wish for general or equal education was thus conditional in the sense that education in Swedish with the standard Swedish curriculum was a wish of Sámi activists and parents in the context where the future of the Sámi language was secure.

Finland

Finland had the strongest continuation of Sámi educational policies from the 19th to the 20th centuries, and in many ways, also the best situation regarding the use of the Sámi language in schools until the 1940s and 1950s. This was, however, not the result of an active governmental pro-Sámi policy. Rather, the government had neither the resources nor the will to extend the standard elementary school system to the Sámi areas in the beginning of the 20th century. For this reason, traditional catechist schools, a direct continuation of earlier mission schools, constituted the main educational system in the Sámi areas until the late 1920s, and in some regions until the 1950s.

The ecclesial catechist schools often had Sámi-speaking teachers. The number of daily hours and the duration of education in these itinerant schools were substantially lower than in the standard elementary schools. Laura Lehtola, a Finnish teacher who worked as a catechist in the Sámi areas of Inari parish and who used Sámi in teaching, debated in retrospect whether it had been a disservice to allow the Sámi language to live on in and through education. According to Lehtola, the “modernity” brought to other children in Finland through standard elementary schools and their curriculum only reached the Sámi a few decades later with the standard governmental elementary schools. These schools had, as a norm, Finnish as the language of instruction, although a few exceptions to this rule saw Sámi teachers teaching classes in their mother tongue (Lehtola, 1984; Kähkönen, 1989; Kortekangas, 2021).

In Finland, as in Sweden and Norway, opinions were also divided among the Sámi concerning the specificity and generality of school. As the Sámi teacher Josef Guttorm wrote in a letter to Bishop J. R. Koskimies of Finland's northernmost diocese, Oulu, in his home municipality of Utsjoki, many Sámi opposed having instruction in Sámi since, for example, Finnish carried economic benefits with it and made it easier for Sámi children to become full-scale members of the Finnish state. The fact that the Sámi even debated the use and whole existence of the Sámi language in Finnish Sámi areas saddened Guttorm. Guttorm saw the pro-Finnish Sámi attitudes in Utsjoki as subservient to the majority population of Finland, who regarded the Sámi as "nothing other than Lapps." Guttorm used the word "Lapp" here as a pejorative alternative to the word Sámi that he himself used (Guttorm, 1908). As pointed out by Veli-Pekka Lehtola, however, Sámi preference to use Finnish instead of Sámi can also be interpreted as benefitting them because they already knew Sámi from their home environment (Lehtola, 2012). This interpretation is plausible given that Utsjoki was a municipality with a majority Sámi population. This Finnish interpretation fits the examples from Gustav Park and some of the Sámi parents in northernmost Sweden who showed that tuition in Swedish and knowing Swedish was considered a valuable extra resource, especially in the areas and contexts where the Sámi language had a strong standing. When the Finnish standard elementary system gradually expanded to the Sámi areas, the uniform curriculum of the Finnish elementary school replaced earlier ecclesial educational policies based on Lutheran values. With only three exceptions (including Josef Guttorm and his son Hans Aslak, who both taught in Sámi in the Outakoski elementary school in Utsjoki), applying Finnish language and cultural practices was the norm in the standard elementary schools in the Sámi areas (Lehtola, 2012; Kortekangas, 2021).

Conclusions and Discussion

In all three countries, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, the Sámi activists criticizing existing educational policies called for elementary education that was qualitatively as good as the education provided to everyone else in their respective countries of residence. If this general, or egalitarian, educational ideal was active at the cost of Sámi language and culture, however, Sámi leaders and parents reacted negatively. Already in the first three decades of the 20th century, a different line that promoted Sámi as a population and culture with the same kinds of rights as other Nordic populations also became visible. For Sámi educators such as Per Fokstad, Josef Guttorm, and Karin Stenberg, it was obvious that the Sámi language had the right to exist, survive, and develop alongside other languages and cultures in the Nordic region. These teachers criticized government educational policies for ignoring the needs and wishes of the Sámi. At the same time, they viewed education as a positive force that could benefit Sámi children individually through the teaching of certain skills and knowledge (including of the majority languages of each country) that would help the children get by in life, both economically and socially. On a more collective level, the teachers pointed out that elementary education could be harnessed in order to strengthen and uplift the Sámi language and culture. In arguing simultaneously in favor of egalitarian elementary education and an added focus on Sámi language and culture, the opinions of the teachers elucidated the blind eye that state-run egalitarian educational policies turned toward minority contexts. The "good state narrative" of these egalitarian policies had little understanding for minority voices that were critical of elementary education, which many educational authorities viewed as an idealistic project of "uplifting the masses" (see, e.g., Nyyssönen, 2013).

The early 20th-century Sámi teachers and activists were important figures in their own time, but they were also a crucial source of inspiration for the post–World War II Sámi movement as pioneers of Sámi activism and as individuals who kept the debate on Sámi rights alive during the preceding decades. The post–World War II Sámi movement made significant gains in teaming up with the global indigenous movement as the base for Sámi rights and education.

By the turn of the 21st century, it was, at least in principle, possible for Sámi students to attend Sámi-language education from kindergarten to high school and to continue on to the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Kautokeino, Norway. The Sámi educators of today make the point that Sámi children should have the choice to attend schools with curricula that are not translated copies of the curricula of the schools of the majority populations of each country. Rather, Sámi culture and values should permeate the curriculum used in schools with Sámi pupils. These calls for a specific Sámi education are complemented with notions of indigenization—the notion that the general curricula in each country should also include strong Sámi elements (Keskitalo et al., 2013; Kemi Gjerpe, 2018; Svonni, 2015). This is important not only in order to disseminate knowledge about the Sámi to the majority populations but also because a growing number of Sámi pupils attend schools outside of the traditional Sámi areas, where most of the Sámi-speaking schools are located. One hundred years after the important work of Fokstad, Stenberg, and Guttorm, the discussion on the degree of specificity and generality of Sámi education is still active. The debate of today includes strong Sámi voices, with Sámi educators driving the change and development of education rather than being voices marginalized by mainstream educational policies.

Nordic educational policies targeting the Sámi, both today as well as historically, are prime examples of policies that tend to nationalize the Sámi minorities in each country, creating artificial divisions between "Norwegian Sámi," "Finnish Sámi," and so on. These kinds of nationalizations blur cross-national perspectives. Nordic states take great pride in portraying themselves as a highly integrated and progressive region. The example of Sámi education is an illuminating instance of the substantial obstacles that the national borders pose to real intergovernmental co-operation and the very real obstacles they pose to the Sámi, who are living in an area only rather recently divided by national borders. Scholars today should not accept the result of such policies at face value and only study the rights of the Sámi within each nation-state. Comprehensive and cross-national perspectives are imperative to understanding Sámi history in all its complexity and diversity.

Note

1. The Sámi and the Sámi language are umbrella terms for a number of interrelated indigenous Sámi groups speaking one of the several Sámi language varieties. The traditional home area of the Sámi is located in the central and northern parts of Scandinavia, Finland, and northwestern Russia. The total number of Sámi today is around 100,000 individuals. A substantial number of Sámi have or have had half-nomadic reindeer herding as their main livelihood. See, for example, the web page of the Swedish Sámi Information Centre www.samer.se/4529 for more information in English.

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Part 2

Configurations

6 The Nordic Model and the Educational Welfare State in a European Light

Social Problem Solving and Secular-Religious Ambitions When Modernizing Sweden and France

Mette Buchardt

Since the late 19th century, the state education systems across Europe have been central political tools in not only state crafting but also in the solving of social problems. This is not least the case with regard to the Nordic states, where an education system, allegedly "for all," evolved alongside the modernization and consolidation of the currently five Nordic nation-states. Since the mid–20th century, these processes have included the development of what has often been labeled the Nordic welfare state model.

In the words of welfare state historian Mary Hilson, the Nordic model is, however, historically to be understood as a model with five exceptions, each of the states in question being an exception (Hilson, 2008). It can also be questioned to what degree the Nordic model of, for example, education is exceptional. In this same vein, there is also the question of to what degree the Nordic education reforms from the late 19th and the 20th centuries have either been following the same traces or have at least sought to develop answers to the same questions and challenges as in other parts of Europe.

This chapter will focus on the question concerning the exceptionality of the exceptional Nordic welfare state model of education. It puts to the fore an often overlooked but increasingly rediscovered element of the Nordic education systems as they have developed since, especially, the late 19th century, when the current systems started to acquire the basic forms that they have today. More specifically, the chapter will explore the way the systems of education throughout the Nordic states became the arena for renegotiating the relation between state and religion and how this connected to and was part of broader questions about social cohesion in society. I will argue that, in order to understand the becoming of this arena, we need to focus on exactly the late 19th and early 20th centuries,

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before the naming and the heyday of the so-called Nordic—sometimes called Swedish—welfare state model from the middle of the 20th century onwards. We also need to take a broader look across Europe to compare these reform processes with similar efforts in other European states under modernization.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a groundbreaking period for education reforms across continental Europe, the so-called *social question* was such a cross-cutting challenge. Predominantly fueled by the political discovery of urban poverty and the troubles in the ever-growing cities following the Industrial Revolution, the political attention paid to the social question (*det sociale spørgsmål*, *die soziale Frage*, *la question sociale*)—that is, how to handle poverty and undesirable social behavior that has been associated with poverty while still retaining class society and differences in social status and income—was a key political question cutting across the (rising) nation-states and (declining) empires of Europe (e.g., Schick, 1970; Kouri, 1984; Horne, 2002; Hilson et al., 2012; Tröhler, 2016). The effort was also to find ways between a conservatism directed toward yesterday, including support for the declining governing models of absolutism that by many political actors had proven inadequate, and at the same time control the revolutionary forces represented especially by the workers' movements.

In these early efforts to modernize the state into a so-called "social state," "culture state," and "*Rechtsstaat*," education politics, often overlapping with social politics, were seen as a main tool. However, the political efforts concerning the social question did not only address social differences but also, for example, religious differences, something that was increasingly seen as a cultural question: How should different confessional belongings, different denominational divides within the confessions, and different positions with regard to the role of institutionalized religion within and in relation to the state and its institutions be handled? How should such religious difference within the populations be handled? Was religion the opposite of culture, or was it rather part of the culture and, as such, part of the national culture of the state? Also, here, the education systems were considered a means of creating new social and cultural cohesion models which in different ways were aiming at shifting religion from a churchly matter into a cultural and social glue of the state.

Among the central, but often overlooked, allied and key state crafters on what we may name the meso-level (drawing on Luft, 2020) were young ambitious theologian university intellectuals, who were eager to modernize not only religion and the church but also to become useful for creating new modern ways of governing. Their reform ideas included new modes of industrial production, investing in history and psychology as state-crafting tools, and reforming education (Graf, 1984, 1989; Grane, 1987; Buchardt, 2017).

Across the Nordic states—the independent states of Sweden and Denmark as well as Finland and Norway on their way to becoming so—young, modern so-called cultural Protestant public intellectuals together with state crafters from the social democratic parties—democratic socialist parties that were gradually leaving class struggle and radical criticism of religion behind—became central actors in developing such new approaches and strategies implemented through education reform (Buchardt, 2013, 2017; Skogar, 1993a, 1993b, 1999). Not only did such efforts become crucial for the retooling of the state–religion nexus. They are also central to explore in order to understand the educational character of the social state project at large. The social state here means the models that, under different names, for example, "*Wohlfahrtsstaat*," were branded in their particular, more than exceptional, Nordic forms throughout the 20th century (Edling, 2019; Petersen & Petersen, 2013).

The chapter will examine the late 19th- and early 20th-century education reforms in Sweden as a prominent example of the Nordic states, but this is done in comparison to reform efforts from other parts of Europe, most significantly the Third Republic in France. First, the chapter will introduce its methodology, that is, comparing answers to the social question in the two states. Then the chapter will use the French case as a basis for turning our glances back to the Swedish case as an example of the Nordic model. The chapter will then, as its main output, deal with how we can understand the demands put on and the role of the welfare state education systems as educators of welfare state mentalities and as a cornerstone in schooling the population into citizenship. This then includes how welfare state education also aims at educating the population into and thus simultaneously co-producing social imaginaries (drawing on Taylor, 2007) of religious, cultural, and social difference and cohesion in present-day Europe. On this basis, the chapter will address the question of whether and, if so, how to define an exceptional Nordic model for educating citizens in a democratic and allegedly secular society.

A Global History Methodology: Comparing Answers to the Social Question

In the past decades, the welfare state models have increasingly been the object of transnational studies. Thus, the whole issue of the Nordic-ness of the so-called Nordic model has been questioned. Where political science research, in particular, has promoted model-oriented typologizations (e.g., Esping-Andersen, 2005), historical research has rather sought to complicate the picture. That is the case with regard to the question of similarities within the Nordic states, especially with Mary Hilson's previously mentioned description of the "internal" differences and variations within the Nordic states as a prominent example (2008). In addition, transnational history methodologies and conceptual histories have contributed to understandings of welfare state crafting as transnationally produced (e.g., Kettunen & Petersen, 2011; Petersen & Petersen, 2013). Paraphrasing welfare state historian Pauli Kettunen, the welfare state should be understood as a transnationally produced body of knowledge and strategies that became answers to national questions and challenges (Kettunen, 2011a).

Drawing on trans-Nordic historical research about, for example, the impact of Lutheranism on the Nordic welfare states (e.g., Markkola, 2000, 2011), this chapter takes a comparative and partly transconfessional move and compares the relation between welfare state development and the crafting of secularization models in the Lutheran-dominated Nordic states and in Catholic and partly Protestant-dominated France. Where Cady and Hurd (2010) are comparing radical separation models with regard to institutional state–religion divisions across denominations, such as the secularization models in Turkey and France (e.g., Baubérot, 2010), this chapter compares a separation model, namely the French Laïcité model, with the state–religion integration model that seems to be the pattern across the Nordic states.

In doing so, the chapter, however, also focuses on mutual challenges across the European secularization models in the states under modernization, comparing how different solutions were chosen in different political and geographical spaces as answers to the same questions, more specifically the social question. Thus, the chapter draws on a global history approach rather than a transnational one as its point of departure and is inspired by work that understands phenomena such as *enlightenment* and *secularization* as different and contextual reactions to similar circumstances such as local mobilizations in relation to global conditions (e.g., Conrad, 2012, 2018; Sorkin, 2008; Buchardt & Fox, 2020; Buchardt, 2021). When secularizing education reform processes within and across Europe are explored, looking at different national political reactions to the social question and the relation between religious differences and social differences serves as the methodological framework. In continuation, the concrete focus is on the role of meso-level actors in political reform with larger macro-political and social consequences. The main focal points in the chapter will hence be, on the one hand, the reforms passed in education politics as part of the social politics of the states of France and Sweden under modernization. On the other hand, the chapter will show how public intellectual religious modernists as meso-level state crafters engaged in solving the social question through educating efforts (Luft, 2020; Buchardt, 2013).

Late 19th to Early 20th Century: Religious and Secular Reformers Educate Montmartre

In 1913, the Lycée Jules-Ferry for girls opened on Boulevard de Clichy at the foot of the Montmartre hill. The lycée was named after the Third Republic Minister of Education and later Prime Minister Jules Ferry

(1832–1893), also known as the "father" of secularization and hygiene. The new institution connoted the spread of secular enlightenment in the neighborhood, which had been the target of extensive social reform interventions starting in the mid–19th century.

Since 1860, when the northern outskirts of Paris including Montmartre were annexed into the 18th arrondissement of the city of Paris, the French state, the city of Paris, and its city planners had aimed at educating and taming the people of Montmartre, an uncontrolled land populated by politically excitable peasants and workers. During the Franco-Prussian War from July 1870 to January 1871, units of the army and the National Guard inhabited the area, and following the war, Montmartre became a very active site for *La Commune de Paris*, the Parisian attempt at a revolution that mobilized socialists and anarchists as well as secularists and radical republicans. The so-called Communard revolt, which lasted from March to May 1871, was even set off in Montmartre. Further up Boulevard de Clichy, at Place Blanche, where the later iconic temple of pleasure the Moulin Rouge was to open in 1889, a barricade was placed which, according to graphics that form part of the collections at the Musée de Montmartre, was guarded by female Communards (e.g., Hewitt, 2017).

Following the defeat of the insurrection, the construction of La Basilique du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre became part of the efforts to punish, tame, and educate the Montmartre population due to their central role in the Commune. The planning of the building had started after the defeat in the war, and the politically contested plans became part of the ambition of a national and religious renewal in order to restore morality and govern a new moral order (Harvey, 1979) On a propaganda poster, also stored at the Musée de Montmartre, the basilica was pictured as, so to say, placed upon the heads of the disobedient Montmartre population, spreading its neo-Byzantine-Roman functionalist light over them. The basilica was placed in the cityscape so that a direct line from it to the Pantheon was drawn through Baron Haussmann's streamlined boulevard city. This streamlined cityscape was the result of the 1850s' and 1860s' politics of urban planning that had served to make the city healthy through clear-cut lines and also to prevent insurrections (Pinkney, 1955; Harvey, 1979; Rabinow, 1989).

The Pantheon was originally built as a church, and it functioned as one on and off. More than anything, however, it became a civil religious shrine over the remains of distinguished French citizens. In the urban geography of Paris during the Third Republic, the nation and its moral restoration hence connected a restoring as well as reforming functionalist Catholicism to the republic. The colonization of Montmartre had other educational features as well: From 1894 to 1904, for instance, the Saint-Jean de Montmartre Church was constructed on the Rue des Abbesses in the middle of the hill between Boulevard de Clichy and the basilica on the hilltop. This church had a form that connoted a factory in its industrial design. It combined rationalist and progressivist ideas with an Orientalist decor, recalling the colonial sphere of the French empire. The church conveyed military as well as labor imagery and thus signalized crucial key disciplines of French modernity in the educating landscape of the area to be tamed.

Educational institutions in the conventional sense also started to populate the heights of Montmartre as they did across Paris and France following the Education Act of 1882 under Jules Ferry. Education was now "for all" and therefore also secular, thus bringing up the population by means of civic and moral education. One of these was the Lycée Jules-Ferry, which, as already noted, was named after the icon of educational secular morality. In the attempts to act on the social question through urban planning, functionalized Christianity as well as educational secularization, both contributed to—in the wording of the Danish historian Karin Lützen on similar efforts in the Nordic states—"taming the city" (Lützen, 1998) and both projects formed part of the combined religious, secular educational efforts of social problem solving.

Secularization Reform Through the Education System: France, 1880s to 1900s

It is relatively well known that the complete separation of religion and state was passed in France in 1905 under the so-called Laïcité Act. However, other separation laws had already been passed before this, not least the Education Acts of 1881 and 1882 under Minister of Education Jules Ferry, laws that separated religion and school. This went hand in hand with making French education increasingly compulsory and free of charge. The latter was passed with the Law of Free Primary Education, June 16, 1881, whereas the Act of March 28, 1882 made education compulsory and secular. The 1882 act made the topic of religion not only non-confessional but also dissolved it as an independent school subject. Instead, a course in moral and civic education became part of the curriculum. Religion as a historical and cultural phenomenon became a subtopic in history and civic education, where biblical texts stood side by side with other "historical texts" from the history of civilization (Singer, 1975; Mayeur, 2004; Mayeur & Rebérioux, 1987; Baubérot, 2010).

Behind these school secularization reforms was, as shown by, for example, church historian Patrick Cabanel, a considerable liberal and social Protestant influence (Cabanel, 2016; Borello, 2017). In 1878, Ferry made the philosophy- and literature-educated Ferdinand Buisson the director of primary education. Buisson had authored, for example, *Le Christianisme Liberal* (1865)—a liberal and social Protestant manifest. In this post, he became a main force in developing the secularization laws for the school. Also in 1878, Buisson published the *Dictionnaire de Pédagogie et d'Instruction Primaire*—later considered what is often described as "the bible" of secular education. In 1905, after having served as a professor of education at the Sorbonne, he chaired the parliamentary committee to implement the complete separation of church and state.

As was the case with other Christian modernist public intellectuals, Buisson's areas of social and political involvement were broad: The question of war and peace, the question of women (women's suffrage and women's education), the question of education, the question of Jews, and the question of religion were all overlapping questions which were also all sub-questions of the social question. Fueled by the challenge of how to handle poverty, especially urban poverty in the cities among the working classes, questions on how to bridge social difference and create social cohesion across social classes became the point of departure for handling other differences. The solutions were to develop a third way between conservatism, absolutism, and church traditionalism on the one hand and the radical socialism and atheism of the international workers' movement and liberalist atheism on the other. The secularization laws were in that sense also a defense of the churches against themselves. The laws were a way to create social cohesion through making a frame for difference in which difference did not pose a threat: maintaining class society in a decent way, defending society by creating it—and making the state the creator.

What Buisson and Ferry did in education, and what the city planners did in Montmartre, was thus similar to what the social Protestant economist Charles Gide and his fellow Protestant and modernist Catholic colleagues accomplished in what was most likely the world's first think tank: the Musée Sociale. The Musée Sociale was a cradle for the social Christian labor union movement in France, where the question of education, the question of women, and the question of the treatment of Jews also attracted political attention (Horne, 2002; Offen, 2018). These efforts were all leading up to the definition of France as a secular and social state. Similar efforts developed in other parts of Europe. For instance, Christian social ideas of a so-called *Wohlfahrtsstaat* developed in Berlin and in Vienna—just in a more social conservative rather than social democratic form.

In Prussia, the movements of welfare state–aiming social Christians were fronted by, for example, the political anti-Semitic economist Adolf Wagner (Schick, 1970; vom Bruch, 1985; Hübinger, 1994; Stoetzler, 2008; Petersen & Petersen, 2013). In Vienna during the late Austrian Empire, they were spearheaded by cultural Catholic public intellectuals involved in the Vienna Mayor Karl Lueger's *Christlichsoziale Partei* (1893–1934) and in the cultural Catholic *Leo-Gesellschaft* (e.g., Boyer, 1995; Weiss, 2014). This public intellectual society for cultural and social renewal was named after "the workers' pope," Leo XIII, who was sympathetic to workers' social rights and opposing unlimited capitalism—as well as opposing Marxism.

The movements toward the Nordic welfare state models in all their variations started out simultaneously with similar efforts in the Calvinist/Reformed and Catholic-influenced French- and German-speaking states and were considerably inspired by these. What was called the Nordic model during the 20th century was thus crucially inspired by ideas and strategies that developed in other parts of continental Europe.

The Social Question and the Nordic Welfare State Model

Often described—from the inside as well as from the outside—as a third way between the state socialism and planned economy of the Eastern Bloc and the market economy of the Western Bloc, the Nordic model may be characterized as a combination of a state-controlled sector with the support and facilitation of a market economy with the aim to distribute resources across social classes without dissolving class society and with the retention of the division of labor (Hilson, 2008; Kettunen & Petersen, 2011). A certain Nordic model of education has also been identified research-wise and proclaimed politically. This model of educating the population can be described as an ideology across and a collection of historical and contemporary similarities between the systems in the five states in question: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and Finland. As an ideological and strategic program, the model may be said to serve two purposes: to distribute welfare through an education system mainly free of charge and to educate the population into welfare state mentalities, celebrating equality and enhancing social cohesion and societal solidarity through labor and thus also by means of retaining a division of labor through compromises between classes. What became named as the Nordic model, a model that became especially apparent in the heyday of the Nordic welfare state under Social Democrat leadership during the Cold War, actually had its historical roots in late 19th-century state modernizations (Buchardt et al., 2013).

By the end of the 19th century, absolutism as a form of governance had been replaced by democratically oriented models on the road to parliamentarism in the Danish and Swedish realms and Finland and Norway were on their way to becoming independent states. Simultaneously, social and religious differences and contradictions affected the states in question. The church as institution was challenged by, on the one hand, anti-religious and anti-clerical liberal as well as socialist agitation, while on the other hand, not least revivalist movements—the second wave of Pietism—challenged the monopoly of the state church. In general, the role of Christianity in relation to what was increasingly in Nordic and German language debates called the culture was up for discussion (Schjørring, 1980; Grane, 1987; Buchardt, 2013, 2015; Foss, 1990). Also, the growth of the deaconess movement, philanthropic associations, and so-called Social Christianity, the latter inspired by the Christian social political movement in, for instance, Prussia and the English Settlement House movement, meant that neo-Protestant ideas about social cohesion in the worldly sphere became part of the modernization of the Nordic states. Protestant ideas—including Lutheran ideas about all spheres of society as holy—started to influence state politics in new ways (Schjørring, 1980; Markkola, 2011; Markkola & Naumann, 2014; Borioni, 2014; Buchardt, 2015). Likewise, the idea of People's Churches instead of state churches started to develop in, among others, Sweden (Hammar, 1972). All of these efforts draw on, for instance, Prussian social Christian ideas of the social state—as not least formulated by the earlier-mentioned social economist and proponent of Christian state socialism Adolf Wagner, whose ideas influenced, for example, the idea of Sweden as "*folkhemmet*"—"the people's home" (Naumann, 2014).

At the theologian faculties in the North, especially in Copenhagen, Uppsala, Lund, and Kristiania/Oslo (while to a lesser degree in Helsingfors/Helsinki), inspiration from German liberal theology and biblical criticism meant that younger modern theologians started to challenge and reinterpret the relation between state and church and to revisit Luther and Lutheranism.[1] A personal and historical study of the texts was supposed to pave the way back to religion for the modern human being and bridge the growing divide between religion and culture. This led to a Nordic version of cultural Protestantism that influenced the Nordic societies long after liberal theology had been critiqued and left behind. The imprint left by cultural Protestantism was not least that it contributed to the transformation of Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity into the "national culture" and thus to its preservation as part of state crafting in the Nordic countries from the 20th century onwards (Buchardt, 2017).

The school became a central arena for this transformation process. Secularization strategies—efforts to divide state and church institutionally—thus became part of the big comprehensive school reforms that intended to build a comprehensive education system free of charge. This cornerstone was making it possible to—in principle—provide access for the whole population at all levels of the education system, starting with the *Folkeskole*—the People's school—which covered primary and lower secondary school and which should thus develop as a school for all classes under the same school roof. This would become significant for what is today often referred to as the Nordic model of education (Buchardt, 2013, 2015).

On the one hand, this model can be said to provide social equity, not by dissolving class society but by making circulation between social classes possible through free education: *Standscirkulation*—literally "estate circulation"—as the Social Democrat teacher, later head of the Danish teachers' in-service institution, Vilhelm Rasmussen called it (Rasmussen, 1910). On the other hand, the welfare state school can be said to spread the values of equality and class compromise and democracy through education

(Buchardt et al., 2013). Educating to the nation and about the people thus became synonymous with educating social cohesion into welfare state mentalities. The recontextualization of historical studies of Bible Scriptures into the school curriculum and of knowledge from the new university discipline, which was later named comparative religion, into a curricular area and topic in the school are examples of this process.

Secularization Reform Through the Education System in the Nordic States: Sweden, 1880s to 1910s

In Sweden, theologians of liberal orientation such as Frederik Fehr and Samuel S. Fries had, especially since the 1890s, argued that the Catechism in school instruction should be replaced by, for instance, extended reading of biblical texts which should be treated as history. In addition, the young liberal theologian and pioneer of comparative religion Nathan Söderblom took part in this effort (Söderblom, 1895; Skogar, 1993a, 1993b). Söderblom was involved in the young churchmen movement and the student association Heimdal and thus was in this sense leaning towards a nationally engaged modern Conservativism. However, he also engaged in Christian socialist attempts to collaborate with the workers' movement (e.g., Söderblom, 1892). In 1903, he took part in publishing the work of the Prussian social liberal and cultural Protestant politician and pastor Friedrich Naumann, a key figure in the *Evangelisch-Sozialer Kongress*, the central organization in the German-language Christian social movement (Naumann, 1903).

In the late 1910s, Söderblom, who had become the Archbishop of Sweden in 1914, was a central figure in the solution to the question concerning the status of the Catechism in educational policy and school legislation in co-operation with the Social Democrat Minister of Education Värner Rydén. Sweden thus became one of the first countries in which an early version of the history of religions formed part of the school curriculum for religious education (Salqvist, 1947; Moberger, 1961, 1962; Tegborg, 1969; Buchardt, 2013, 2015). However, the secularization elements of the Swedish educational political battles were not unambiguous.

A closer look at the ideas behind the reform efforts, for instance the reform ideas of Söderblom, reveals that the ambition was by no means to dissolve Lutheran Christianity as a central element in state upbringing through schooling. Rather, the history of religion was a way to bring to the fore historical figures such as Luther as a central means of instruction in the upbringing of future citizens. The fact that figures such as Zarathustra were also considered useful in this respect was, in the view of Söderblom—along with his comparative religion scholar colleague and fellow liberal theologian and collaborator, the Danish-Swedish Edvard Lehmann, who was a professor in Lund from 1913—based on the idea that Christianity would prove its strength no matter what. Christianity's special status and the fact that Luther, for instance, should have the status of being considered as historical source material only emphasized this (e.g., Lehmann, 1918; Söderblom, 1912, 1915).

Similar ideas were also mirrored in the understanding of the state and the status of Christianity of the two co-operating theologians. Lehmann, who was inspired by and fascinated with, for instance, Fascist Italy, even described the state as the new church (Lehmann, 1928). At the same time, Söderblom described Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity more moderately as a

> living religious organism . . . so interwoven with Swedish culture [*odlingen*] and the history of the realm [*rikets historia*] that only ignorance or infatuation can see anything arbitrary in the fact that it and nothing else possesses a special relationship with the governance of the realm [*rikstyrelsen*] and is used by the state for religious and other tasks.
>
> (Söderblom, 1918, p. 5)

Both were, in other words, proponents and among the initiators of a culturally oriented neo-Protestantism that sought to make Christianity useful as culture for the state, the nation, and the people (Buchardt, 2013, 2015).

Neo-Protestant liberal university theologians—often, like Söderblom, young modern conservatives in a political sense—hence contributed to the compromise between, on the one hand, conservative church circles and revivalist circles who wanted to preserve the Catechism, and on the other hand, liberal and socialist criticism of religion striving to remove the Catechism from the school of the state. Here especially, the Social Democrat parties—the new state-bearing socialist parties in the Nordic states—became central partners of alliances (Moberger, 1961, 1962; Tergel, 1969; Buchardt, 2013, 2015): in Sweden with the 1919 reform and in, for example, Denmark during the 1930s (Buchardt, 2020). The compromise meant further separation between the state church institution and the state school institution. However, it also meant that Lutheran Christianity was reactualized as culture (and actually also as tradition) and thus as a formative as well as living history of and for the state. A state cultural Protestantism that was to become powerful during the 20th-century history of the Nordic states and up until the present had been consolidated institutionally and was to become part of the layers of Nordic *welfare state mentality* (Kettunen & Petersen, 2011). To the extent that it makes sense to define a distinctive Nordic model for secularization—understood as a separation between church and state—it might make just as much sense to define a distinctive Nordic way of resacralizing the state based on transformed and preserved Lutheranism with the school and the transformed teaching of religion as a central site of production.

Conclusion: The Social Question and European Educational Secularization Reform Around 1900

If we now turn our glance back to the French Laïcité reforms in education that—not to forget—predated and paved the way for the major secularization reform that radically divided religion and state and changed civil law about marriage, divorce, the church's right to property, organization, etc., and compare this with the Nordic model of secularization, the differences are of course obvious. In France, a radical division model was chosen, whereas in the Nordic states an integration model was implemented in the period where the state church of the monarch was changed into state-controlled so-called People's Churches—*Folkekirker*. On the one hand, there was certain independence granted to these churches, and on the other hand, they were under parliamentary control and tied to democracy, "the people," and the nation. Where France divided religion and state, the Nordic states integrated and transformed religion into a national and cultural matter that worked toward "welfare nation-state" cohesion—to phrase it with a concept developed by political historian Pauli Kettunen (Kettunen, 2011b; see also Tröhler, 2020; Buchardt, 2020). Yet, in both cases the social and the religious questions were intersecting in education reform.

If, instead of comparing church–state relations, we take it the other way around and look at how secularization reform in education was part of the answer to the social question, the picture changes and becomes surprisingly more similar. In the Swedish and the French secularization reforms implemented through the education systems in question, the education systems were considered a means of creating social and cultural cohesion that, in different ways, aimed at shifting religion from a church to a cultural matter and into the social glue of the state. Both in the Swedish version of a Nordic model and in the French model, the social and the religious questions were intersecting in education reform. Furthermore, in both the relevant states, these transformations of religion through the education systems took place in the context of the broader political ambition of creating a school "for the whole population" free of charge. The economic and secularizing elements of education reform thus worked interconnectedly in the political project of creating new social cohesion imaginaries and citizenship demands. From this, we may question to what degree the Nordic model of, for example, education is exceptional and conclude that, in several senses, important Nordic education reforms from the late 19th century and the early 20th century followed the same traces and sought to develop answers to the same questions and challenges as in other parts of Europe.

In order to understand education reform as part of state crafting and how the social question framed the conditions for the modern European states and thus the historical conditions for the welfare state models of not least education, we need to look at social politics, education politics, and secularization politics as neighboring and overlapping areas of political strategy. We also need to understand that secularization in the meaning of church–state institutional divisions is only one side of the coin where resacralization of the state, not least through educational efforts, is the other. Last but not least, we need to understand that educational political efforts were not only pursued through the crafting and reforming of the education system, and thus through "education policy," but that the entire character of the modern state aiming at solving the social question by becoming a social or welfare state is at its core educational.

In summary, in the late 19th- and early 20th-century education reforms in the Parliamentarism-governed monarchy of Sweden and in the French Third Republic, the social question was answered with educational efforts addressed through schools as well as through city planning in order to make the social body "healthy." Some of these efforts combined the separation and reintegration of religion and state while aiming at creating a new culture for society across difference. In addition, the Swedish state, as is the case with other Nordic states, did not only educate through the educational system. Rather, educationality can be said to be a feature that has cut across education politics, as well as housing policy, co-operative movements, politics of religion, urban planning, and language policy, just to mention a few. Moreover, the political efforts of education can—as read from their onset in the late 19th century—be said to be social politics at the core. Education politics were to some extent identical with social politics in the quest to find new strategies for solving the key political challenge of the time: how to peacefully bridge the gap between social and cultural difference—including religious difference and class society—without removing them.

These strategies of educational social politics contributed to the national secular social-state of France as well as the nation welfare states of the Nordic states not only becoming sites for transforming religion into a social glue by transforming it into a cultural matter, but also to giving—though not alone—the secular social state as well as the culturally Lutheran welfare state their educating character. This educational social and welfare nation form of state was actually what was instrumentalized when cleaning up and taming Montmartre and when making Luther and Zarathustra historical heroes for upbringing in the secular-religious Nordic welfare state school.

Note

1. In Kristiania, this resulted in a division of the faculty of theology in the beginning of the 20th century.

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7 Rooms of Togetherness

Nordic Ideals of Knowledge in Education

Inga Bostad & Mariann Solberg

One of the unfolding narratives in this volume is the rise (and fall) of some similarities of a Nordic education model developed through reforms: that is, a construction or shaping of the Nordic nations through education, educational acts, curricula, teacher education, or policy—informed ideals and ideas—all of which seem to come from "above." The model should provide social equity with free, publicly provided education (a vertical or meritocratic model of equal [formal] opportunities) and spread values of equality (a horizontal or democratic-oriented model): "Educating to the nation and about the people thus became synonymous with educating social cohesion into welfare state mentalities" (Buchardt, 2022; see this volume pp. 107–124). Most of the contributors in this volume also elaborate on the political and cultural conditions and ideas underlying this model; however, we argue here that there is a need to investigate the more complex context of values and attitudes related to equality and dignity as a culture and as ways of being together—seeing these as overlooked prerequisites for a Nordic education model. The idea of *togetherness* is at the core of Nordic education, even though one could argue that it romanticizes the daily life of schooling. The historical fact of the shared classroom (in Norway, related to the Education Act of 1936) is that all children—except for those who are mentally disabled, as shown in this volume by Moljord and Bondevik (2022, pp. 56–74)—were brought together in the unitary school, independent of social differences and their diverse background and upbringing.

Some central features of the Nordic education model are the tradition of a publicly funded school for all, the emergence and manifestation of ideals and ideas of the right to education, the right to free education, and the historical fact of being together in the classroom across differences and backgrounds. Education for all has been justified and based on the shifting concepts of knowledge defining the aim of education, for instance, understanding knowledge as knowing your bible; as enlightenment for all; as nation-building; as religious and moral development and virtues for the individual; as repeating, remembering, and good grades; as competence, skills, and reflection; as learning to act in your community; or as a global citizen.

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What characterizes the interrelation and dependency between conceptions of knowledge and different forms of schooling? This question opens up many complex perspectives when connected to formal education. Is there a unique Nordic, and in our chapter a first and foremost Norwegian, historically grown tradition of being together that expresses, enlightens, or confronts ideals of knowledge? This demanding question requires both a basic reflection on how conceptions of knowledge are interwoven with cultural and social practices as well as an investigation into the concepts that are connected to the description of knowledge content and knowledge acquisition in school. In addition, there should be an exploration of the ideals and ideas of what the school should emphasize and what kind of societal mandate the school should be based on. Different conceptions of education—both personal and ethical-political—have played various roles in Nordic educational history. We argue that a distinct meeting point arises when these two concepts, knowledge and education, meet in a Nordic school context and that this can best be elucidated in what we call a *room of togetherness*. We assume that a specific discourse on education and schooling—interwoven with the conception of a room of togetherness—delimits and sets the framework for a changing understanding of the Nordic ideals of education. Given this point of departure, we hope to shed some critical light on the context of knowledge, or better, to show that knowledge is situated in relational experiences and integrated in the struggle for defining and regulating different knowledge regimes and traditions.

Our primary aim in this chapter is to point toward a distinct Nordic model for the pedagogical space as a normative idea of togetherness: We assume that this model is both implicit and under-communicated in pedagogical research literature and under pressure due to today's political-economic and pedagogical currents. These latter points are associated with the economic models, goal management, and results orientation of a *knowledge society*. We then detail how, in our search for the norms, principles, and ideals constituting conceptions of this pedagogical room in the Nordic model, we find a complex interconnectedness of different, and often implicit, concepts of knowledge. Finally, from a philosophy of education perspective, we reflect on definitions and conceptions of knowledge and how these play out in shifting ideals and ideas about the societal mandate of education. In order to see how various understandings of knowledge have been brought to bear on the political order of the day, we turn to the concept of *knowledge regime*.

Opposing Knowledge Regimes

Our point of departure is the opposing, yet interwoven knowledge traditions of folk education and the development of knowledge traditions based on liberal rights and opportunities. Enlightenment ideals and ideas of equal opportunities seem to be sharpening against the distinction between vertical and horizontal concepts of knowledge. Keeping a keen eye on changes in the perceptions of knowledge can enlighten our understanding of both cultural and historical changes in a society. A search for the forms of knowledge that are considered to be useful or useless, productive or unproductive, or profitable or unprofitable can shed light on the educationally pertinent dimensions of the societies under scrutiny. Moreover, making explicit and transparent how different kinds of knowledge are to be disseminated can enlighten our understanding of both cultural and historical changes in perceptions of education as well as perceptions of citizenship and social responsibility. In the discourse around these complex and often ambiguous and/or masked changes, conceptual and philosophical theories emerge; these encompass ideals and ideas of education, knowledge, and *danning* (or *Nordic Bildung*).

In the 19th century, in contrast to the German social or class-conscious concept of *Bildung* that was closely tied to the bourgeoisie (Horlacher, 2017, p. 65), the Scandinavian ideals of education were characterized by the idea of folk education, or, the *danning* of the people: Here, *folk* (Norwegian *folkedanning*, Danish *folkedannelse*, and Swedish *folkbildning*) does not refer exclusively to the middle and upper classes, but to the laborers and farmers as well. This can undoubtedly be connected to the socioeconomic orders of the Nordic countries, which are largely egalitarian. It is further conjoined with two key elements: the emergence of the comprehensive (unitary) school and the idea of unifying people across social classes and a state policy tradition of securing equal education with the aim of mitigating inequality. Framed in current rhetoric, Nordic education for democratic citizenship is part of the comprehensive school mandate in the Nordic countries (NOU, 2007). One way of understanding this is to suggest that Nordic education stands out with its specific collective understanding that we cultivate in teams, together, and that the individual's growth, maturation, and learning are dependent on taking part in a room of togetherness.

The concept of the *knowledge regime* is pertinent to our discussion and has been given different meanings and applied in various ways by different scientific disciplines, such as history, sociology, political science, and pedagogy (Slagstad, 1998; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Campbell & Pedersen, 2014, 2015; Gornitzka et al., 2017). We use the term "knowledge regime" to mean a linguistic scheme that covers a policy, practice, or research area relating to knowledge where certain people or institutions dominate a discourse so that specific strategic goals become generally accepted. Just like any linguistic scheme, a knowledge regime requires a sufficient amount of shared basic, supposed ontological categories and related values in order for it to constitute a shared vocabulary with common semantics. Just like any regime, a knowledge regime requires that someone be in a steering position—that is, in a position to effectuate a policy or a strategy.

Our definition is inspired by the Norwegian historian Rune Slagstad's use of the concept of knowledge regime from his 1998 *De Nasjonale Strateger* (*The National Strategists*), where the term describes Norwegian history as a series of changing knowledge regimes. Here, the chosen perspective is from the state's implicit and explicit views of the relationship between scientific knowledge and political power and the status of various disciplines in the relevant bureaucracy. Slagstad argues that the ideals of social enlightenment dominating the "state of the political left" (*venstrestaten*)—that is, from the establishment of the Norwegian constitution in 1884 to the beginning of the Second World War in 1940—makes the whole state into a pedagogical room (Slagstad, 1998, pp. 93–133). However, our use of the term "knowledge regime" is not only historical, but also contemporary, inspired by the concept of "knowledge regimes in pedagogy and education" as used by Erling Lars Dale (Dale, 2005, pp. 15–16), where it is relevant that a discourse community and a "thought collective" (see Thuen, 2002; Fleck, 1980) are involved. A knowledge regime in a scientific discipline like pedagogy dominates, regulates, and standardizes communication so that a common history of discourse and a collective thought community obligated by a specific mood occur (Dale, 2005, p. 17). Our use of the term is not as tightly connected to specific discourse communities or thought communities but is more loosely defined so that it includes ordinary public discourse on references to the status and characteristics of knowledge in schooling and education, thus realizing that ways of perceiving and referring to knowledge are continually transformed in interpersonal spaces. At the same time, we find it crucial to recognize Dale's argument that the critical point arises when other discourses are ignored; in other words, when a collective in the field of education excludes other discourses without admitting—or being aware of—their existence, one ceases to question the validity of the prevailing discourse.

A relevant example of a knowledge regime in education is the competence regime. This regime has its origin in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and has been implemented at all levels of education through the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF). The framework was established as a recommendation by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in 2008 (European Parliament, 2008). The EQF is itself a knowledge regime according to our definition, as it is a linguistic scheme that covers a policy, practice, or research area relating to knowledge. It is also a regulation that has had a seminal effect on teaching practice and learning, and the institutions that are involved and taking part in the discourse are in position to pursue strategic goals. The EQF has been implemented in 39 European countries (Helgøy & Homme, 2015; Karseth & Solbrekke, 2010) and developed as national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). The concepts that are defined in the EQF are the concepts of knowledge, skills, and competence. Since its implementation, competence has been the concept most in focus. Nevertheless, the definitions of all three are as follows:

> "[K]nowledge" means the measurable outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study; "skills" means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems; "competence" means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal "development."
>
> (European Parliament, 2008, p. C 111/4)

In the philosophical tradition of epistemology originally stemming from Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus*, we have the definition of knowledge as "justified true belief" (Plato, 2013; Pritchard, 2009, p. 3). According to this classical notion of knowledge, anyone who claims to have knowledge must be capable of having beliefs. Knowledge is thus in this tradition a connection between someone who has (or may have) beliefs and the content about which the subject has beliefs (Solberg, 2013, p. 62). For an opinion to represent knowledge, it must be true; otherwise, we would not call it knowledge, but think of it as a false belief instead. This definition further implies that one must be able to justify the belief for the belief to represent knowledge. In other words, one must be able to give reasons for one's belief, as we cannot say something is true merely because we believe it to be true.

In both definitions of knowledge—the EQF's and that of the philosophical tradition of analytic epistemology—what we talk about is propositional knowledge: knowledge-that, not knowledge-how. Propositional knowledge is often characterized as something that can be formulated and discussed largely independent of a specific individual's structured emotional beliefs, attitudes, and inner experiences (Solberg, 2013, p. 69). In the definition from the philosophical tradition, it is the "family" of concepts (or neighboring concepts) that together, in a systematic and specifically directed fashion, constitute the concept of knowledge. Justification, truth, and belief are all necessary and sufficient constituents of the concept. When a belief, held by someone capable of holding such beliefs, is both justified and true, then someone is in the possession of knowledge. In the EQF's definition, there is another take on knowledge altogether. It does not seem to be about finding the minimally necessary and sufficient characteristic aspects of the concept nor the essence of knowledge; it is, instead, a description of subject knowledge, or disciplinary knowledge, such as we find in physics, theology, or history.

Any definition of propositional knowledge differs from knowledge as skills—as skills are a quality or a virtue of a specific person. Acquiring and maintaining skills depends on embodied action. While propositional knowledge is closely connected to truth, skills knowledge, in and of itself, cannot be true in the same way. This is because one's skills can be more or less well developed according to practical purposes (Solberg, 2013, p. 69). Tacit knowledge is also, like skills, a form of non-propositional knowledge. When knowledge is tacit, it is not explicit, formal, or classified. Instead, tacit knowledge is generally thought of as knowledge that is difficult or impossible to express or generalize, and thus it is difficult to transfer to others through writing or by verbalizing it. For this reason, it is not generally as easily aggregated as propositional knowledge. One can think of this as personal, embodied, and experientially acquired knowledge, and it is often referred to in connection with concepts such as experience or the acquiring of good judgment, insight, intuition, or wisdom. It is mainly in analytical terms that one can separate and differentiate between propositional and non-propositional knowledge, as the two forms of knowledge in practice will be intertwined.

However, we will maintain that, from the point of view of the knower (the actor), it is not meaningful to set propositional knowledge against knowledge as skills nor theoretical knowledge against practical knowledge. As human beings, we use our cognitive, emotional, and social skills and our tacit knowledge in acquiring propositional knowledge, and we apply our propositional knowledge in exercising our skills and competencies. There are co-dependencies between these forms of knowledge. We could add that, as education is also about having profound knowledge of living human beings, this differs from knowledge of, for example, figures, colors, laws on physics, or fish in the ocean. To know another person—a child—is about relations (over time) and involves sensitivity and diversity of former experiences, as well as knowledge on gender, behavior, psychology, and so on. To refer to someone knowing who, knowing where, knowing why, and knowing oneself does not greatly complicate the picture but places even stronger demands on raising awareness and clarifying what kinds of concepts of knowledge are expressed in political rhetoric about schools, educational strategies, and curricula.

The philosophical tradition of knowledge in the sense of epistemology does not fall under the definition of a knowledge regime. Since epistemology is a research area within the academic discipline of philosophy, there are linguistic schemes connected to it, but it is not characteristically about pursuing strategic goals. It is thus not a regime. As a research area, epistemology is pursued for its own sake, just like any other area of basic research. We seek answers in the research area of epistemology to fulfill our human need to understand and explain the world and ourselves, and it is human knowledge that is under scrutiny. We therefore develop theories and criteria for what knowledge is, how it can be reached, and what its boundaries are. What we as researchers within the discipline of epistemology develop and discover can turn out to be useful or useless depending on our needs for understanding and explanation. Knowledge regimes, just as research programs within epistemology, can build on different concept of knowledge. However, when describing and analyzing knowledge regimes, researchers and others are after an understanding of the strategic and political goals and aims of people or institutions. Without an understanding of the features of the concepts of knowledge involved or an awareness of the implications this may have for pedagogical practice, the regime execution will have unforeseen consequences.

Vertical and Horizontal Knowledge Models

Structures of knowledge—that is, how knowledge is constituted, produced, and differentiated—dominate the educational field. This has been shown, for instance, by Basil Bernstein (Bernstein, 1990, 1999) and in making us see works of knowledge in both the discourses between actors in educational sciences and in the social and symbolic practices they inhabit (Maton, 2006). The way Bernstein distinguishes between a horizontal (everyday or commonsense knowledge) discourse and a vertical (scholarly or professional knowledge) discourse shows how different forms of knowledge originate and are realized and contextualized. According to Bernstein, the horizontal discourse is local and context-driven, and the vertical discourse is specialized and symbolic, inspired by both Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and profane and similar delineations suggested by Bourdieu, Habermas, and Giddens (Bernstein, 1999, p. 158). Furthermore, vertical knowledge is differentiated as either hierarchical (as in the physical sciences, driven by testing hypotheses against data) or horizontal (as in segmented and specialized disciplines with their own thought collectives, language/grammar, methods, and theories).

The model of horizontally distributed knowledge is linked to the Nordic ideal of folk education and folk enlightenment and entails arguments for what kinds of knowledge all individuals should share. The idea historically connects to ideas of a justified and distributed common knowledge for all citizens, resting on principles of inclusion and a right to education for all. In Norway, the writer Arne Garborg was instrumental in shaping the ideals and ideas of Norwegian nationalism, thus articulating "Norwegian consciousness" (Obrestad, 1991, p. 9). In the article "The Movement of the New Norwegian Language and Norwegian Nationalism" ("*Den nynorske sprog- og nationalitesbevægelse*"; Garborg, 1877/1984), Garborg argued that engagement in the rural and traditional Norwegian language, up against the Danish standards, implies the defense and promotion of the "enlightenment of the people" (Garborg, 1877/1984 p. 209). It is not primarily an act for the nation as such, but for the peoples' enlightenment. The arguments for the traditional Norwegian language are not formulated primarily for education, schooling, or politics, but are put forward in favor of a common and collective upbringing and for the empowerment of the people. Our common task is "to save the people from degradation and save our homely nationalism from distortion and dissolution" (Garborg, 1877/1984, p. 209)[1] and to proceed on the

> homeground, the autonomous spirit of life, the rich and fruitful grounds of promoting the fostering of the people and make them sufficiently robust to participate in the common culture of mankind . . . the very product of the people themselves.
>
> (Garborg, 1877/1984, p. 209)[2]

The vertically distributed knowledge model points to knowledge that is hierarchically distributed in the sense that some groups or individuals are designated to learn more (or more deeply and broadly) than other groups, resting on principles of meritocracy and social circulation. In this context, we use these distinctions as tools for clarifying shifting traditions and understandings of knowledge (Gornitzka et al., 2017). However, the concept may also characterize the relationship between education and society and how education is politicized and capitalized (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Olssen & Peters, 2005). In addition, as mentioned earlier, Slagstad (1998) argues that the concept captures and describes Norwegian history as a series of changing knowledge regimes, originating from political strategy and the relationship between scientific knowledge and the political power/status of various disciplines in state bureaucracy (Campbell & Pedersen, 2014, 2015).

Knowledge as a Shadow Concept

To come closer to an understanding of the Nordic education model, a pressing question arises: In what way may specific conceptions of enlightenment, schooling, and education that exist within a knowledge regime (e.g., the social-democratic regime) prevent, conceal, or hinder competing conceptions from arising and flourishing? In the following, our point of departure is that, in education, the concept of knowledge is taken for granted, under-communicated, ambiguous, and fussy; it is seen as both a prerequisite and a result of learning and formation processes. In other words, the concept of knowledge seems to live a life in the shadowy existence, unclear and indetermined. This implies that questions about the significance, role, and dominance of knowledge—its validity, how it is distributed, and what different concepts and forms of knowledge we count on—is seldom approached.

When the term "knowledge society" is used in education policy, "knowledge" sometimes refers to knowledge as a main or overriding productive force, in a classic Marxian sense of the term (Regjeringen Solberg, 2015, p. 10). When we use the term "knowledge" in a connection such as this, we imply that it is not primarily machines or factories that constitute the productive forces, but human knowledge and skills. At other times, "knowledge" refers to theoretical disciplinary knowledge, or it refers to practical knowledge (knowledge—how) or to different forms of tacit knowledge. In these different ways of using the concept of knowledge, we are referring to very different entities or forces with different epistemic statuses and with differently ascribed causal powers. Furthermore, there is a breadth and richness to a full understanding of knowledge that would be missed by an exclusively cognitive or matter of fact–oriented conception, such as with moral, aesthetic, folk-psychological, or religious knowledge (Chappell, 2012). Affective dimensions of knowledge are highly pertinent in education even if their connections to the production lines of the knowledge society are less obvious and less direct.

Furthermore, we argue that the discourse on "learning outcomes" in the form of knowledge, skills, and competence operates with a vague, undertheorized, or masked concept of knowledge: Even though intended and achieved learning outcomes in terms of knowledge can be described as disciplinary knowledge, as in the EQF, its epistemic status is not thematized. Is disciplinary knowledge to be perceived as objectively true belief, as facts and principles discovered by our ancestors, and as our traditions—our cultural heritage—acquired by our young? Or is it used to express something preliminary and fallible, something that may be overthrown by future generations? Is it looked upon as relative to cultures, societies, and classes? Is it that which is proclaimed and taken for granted by those in power? Or is it seen, perhaps, as the beliefs casually constructed, or randomly constructable, by each of the students themselves or by groups of students? All these are possible positions to take in the question of the epistemic status of knowledge, but it is impossible to defend all of them at the same time, as they oppose each other in different ways.

Knowledge, when defined as a learning outcome in the EQF, stems from decisions at the policy and curriculum level. It is in no way neutral—the interests behind such a definition are specifically work-life-related. It is a description of knowledge that is sought by those who need to know what their potential future employees will be able to do. It is a definition that is one in a set of three, alongside skills and competence. In this connection, knowledge is reduced to "input" for competence.

To sum up thus far: Knowledge may be seen as heterotelic—from the Greek *hetero* (other or different) and *telos* (aim)—thus pointing to a human relation to knowledge where knowledge itself is not in focus but where we seek knowledge for the sake of something else (i.e., its usefulness related to what someone is or will be able to do). It is knowledge for an extraneous purpose. The opposite would be an autotelic—from the Greek *auto* (self) and *telos* (aim)—interest in knowledge, which is an interest in knowledge for its own sake. When this is the case, knowledge is seen as containing its own meaning and purpose. Both ways of being interested in or referring to knowledge within education are of course legitimate.

The question is whether we, as a society regulating the common aim of education and forming policy documents and curricula, have lost interest in knowledge as an aim in itself, that is, as a goal of seeking truth, clarity, and insight in an impartial, open, and interest-free way. Furthermore, there are the questions of whether the distinction between heterotelic and autotelic perspectives of knowledge is seen as distinct and relevant in the political rhetoric, policy documents, and curricula for schools and education today and whether the shifting use, interpretations, and understandings of knowledge impose, limit, and frame the organization and structures of togetherness and closeness in schools. Utility-focused, heterotelic knowledge can be a strength for democracy; basic and common knowledge is important for changing society for the better. It can also be a threat if it leads to the exclusion of the intrinsic value of knowledge at the expense of the investigative, critical, and reflective space, thereby including and making room for the recognition of equality, self-reflection, and moral judgment to take place.

When the students' qualifications are points of focus, one would naturally be interested in the skills and competencies of the students. Furthermore, when measurement of knowledge, skills, and competencies are in focus, these qualities need to be made visible. Knowledge in use is visible and thus measurable, while knowledge that is not in use is invisible and not measurable in the same sense. However, as Gert Biesta has pointed out, qualification is only one aim of education; the two others are subjectification and socialization (Biesta, 2011). And perhaps we have also lost interest in what knowledge (heterotelic) can do for the development, maturation, self-wisdom, and life-mastery of young people, outside of what it can help them to do in a work life setting. What can ideals of broad, multifaceted knowledge as know-how and know-why help young people do in their everyday life? What can it help them be and become—as persons, and as friends, daughters and sons, parents, citizens? Moreover, the moral development of young people is currently not the main aim of education, nor is the existential value of knowledge. Neither does the acquisition of knowledge sought after because of basic human epistemic needs and motivation for understanding, truth, and coherence seem to be a goal in itself in the reigning education policy.

To extend this: Is it the case that education—*danning*—as an ideal primarily refers to a lack of knowledge, understanding, insight and experience, or a lack of a special type (value-free, practical, or theoretical) of knowledge? Or is it the case that knowledge presupposes education, in the sense of some existing (individual and cultural, positive, and negative) freedom, a room for reflection, self-reflection, critical inquiry, or aesthetic, ethical, spiritual, and appreciative experiences? Or perhaps it is the case that education presupposes knowledge in the sense of knowledge about precisely which context, frameworks, institutions, and norms facilitate education?

We argue that the understanding of knowledge—and different views on what counts as knowledge—affect, limit, and set the framework for the pedagogical room, ways of being together, and different expressions of ideals of togetherness. However, utility-focused, heterotelic knowledge can be both a strength for democracy in the sense that everyone should learn the same thing (certain basic knowledge is important for improving society) and a threat if it excludes knowledge as intrinsic and unmeasurable. In the following, we will look closer at the belief in and use of a conception of Nordic education as an ability to put knowledge into a reflective and equality-based context.

Togetherness and the Nordic Education Model

A way of being together (no. *være sammen*) is also about bridging the distance between people who live scattered or distanced in social and environmental settings. Moreover, when providing an educational framework, it is about recognizing differences, learning to listen to, arguing against, and be together with fellow human beings. At the same time, this idea of togetherness (no. *felleskap*) includes examples of the stability of class and power relations. For example, in Norway, there was a division between city schools and schools for low-income children until the Education Act of 1889, and in Denmark and Norway, as in most parts of the Western world, disabled children were segregated into special schools. We argue that the survival of the status of and trust in education in the Nordic countries—trust that we should and could be together at schools across religious, political, and social backgrounds—is principally a product of a culturally and environmentally fostered ability to be together. At the same time, being together and learning together does not necessarily lead to more solidarity and unity: It is often quite the opposite, in fact, as it may reinforce differences. Although there are different interpretations of the emergence of the unitary school in Norway as a political project (Thuen, 2010; Telhaug, 1974; Slagstad, 1998; Dale, 2005), it has also been claimed that the unitary school should not only strengthen a social gathering, but create a space for a way of being together across prerequisites and sociocultural backgrounds (Telhaug & Mediås, 2003, p. 76).

The idea of a common school for all in Norway's state policy has undergone historical shifts, from the rule of law of the 19th century (e.g., the Norwegian Education Act from 1860 *Almueskoleloven*), to the social reform and social-democratic ideals of the 20th century, to the liberal welfare state of today (Thuen, 2010). In other words, it has transformed from seeing schools as preparing for an inclusive society and a place to be together as equals, safely and protected, to a foundation for the future knowledge society. At the same time, we see from the education acts in Norway on primary and lower secondary schooling that the "unitary school carried with it the classic dilemma between the individual and community, consideration on the individual student versus community considerations, and civic formation" (Thuen, 2010, p. 279).

That education should strengthen social and cultural identity and thereby also be a tool for democracy was emphasized by the Norwegian education politician Helge Sivertsen in 1946 in his education aims for democracy and the nation, specifically, and with what he called a "fellow human culture" (Volckmar, 2005, pp. 85–90). Sivertsen's emphasis on school as an arena where we learn to be together across differences and backgrounds was indirectly a critique of a more traditional dissemination of knowledge. As Volckmar writes, Sivertsen was engaged in both the content of knowledge in school and school as a form of togetherness for democracy (Volckmar, 2005, p. 86).

Volckmar has characterized the earlier period in Norway (1945–1970) as an era of "solidaric togetherness" (*solidarisk samværskultur*; Volckmar, 2005). This phrase points to a way of being together in solidarity and of being together with reciprocal respect and care: a culture of solidarity. She identifies the socialist and social-democratic movements as sources of this idea in Norway:

> Through togetherness and cooperation in a common school for all, students with different social backgrounds and different interests and facilities should develop tolerance and respect for each other and learn to appreciate difference. Being together and working in groups was valuable in itself. "Our school is on its way to becoming a school that engages the whole personality and not just the learning ability for knowledge," said Sivertsen in the article "Education—A Human Right in 1952."
>
> (Volckmar, 2005, p. 87)

Volkmar identifies the years following the Second World War as the formative period for this form of solidarity. We follow her in pointing to the strong social-democratic cultures of the Nordic countries as key to the historical background and political source of the idea of togetherness in education.

We might ask whether being together is essential in itself. Is it an autotelic interest, a togetherness for its own sake, when we think about it in the context of the school in the Nordic countries? Perhaps not. Still, we uphold the idea that the Norwegian and the Nordic school—perhaps due to egalitarianism and the ideal of equal opportunities—is, or at least has been, characterized by "intentionally constructed togetherness." Togetherness in the Nordic schools is meant to be more than an effective way of organizing education and more than a carefully constructed production line: It is about building a community just as much as it is about developing the individual human being.

In the previous Norwegian government's political platform (Regjeringen Solberg, Political platform for the Norwegian government, 2019), it is the school's meritocratic function that outplays the social mandate of the school in favor of the individual: The school must

> lift all students, regardless of the student's background and starting point. A good school is the most important thing we can give the individual and is also crucial for a Norwegian society with continued high trust, small differences and social mobility.
>
> (Political platform for the Norwegian government, 2019, p. 70)

The school should create a safe environment for each individual that is linked to the benefit of being in a team with others: "An inclusive and safe school environment requires systematic efforts. The school must build a team around the student" (Political platform for the Norwegian government, 2019, p. 71).

The present orientation towards developing the skills and competencies of the future work force—ultimately to secure the nation's position in the global economic competition—is a curriculum for the development of society (and economic success) more than of people. But perhaps the Nordic schools have always been more about the needs of the society than about the needs of people? Perhaps they are more about the useful, heterotelic knowledge than about knowledge in and of itself? Indeed, the contemplative life was never a strong motive in Nordic societies.

The Pedagogical Room

The *pedagogical room* is, on the one hand, a place where we meet—be it in a school, classroom, digital space, or anywhere a pedagogical relationship arises. On the other hand, it expresses goals, objectives, and ideas about the school as an integrative community institution. That is, the pedagogical room is both something that emerges as a practice within a pedagogical context *and* a metaphor or a vision of an abstract space that arises between people. This pedagogical space can thus be described, defended, and critically analyzed on basis of various philosophical traditions, concepts, and theories.

The pedagogical room of togetherness is a room where pupils are together in a concrete physical sense. It is also a room where norms are imparted and passed on spreading ideals of equality and the values of being together. The room is culturally and historically invested, and on this basis, it is further developed according to changing educational policies and curricular reforms. It is a didactical room, where contents of knowledge are disseminated and where strategies for teaching and learning are put to work. At its best, the room can also be an existential room, where we can reflect on knowledge and its value for our being and becoming, and a room for dialogue and critical investigation.

The idea of "knowledge as a value and end in itself" lacks prominence in the Nordic practical and utility-oriented knowledge ideals, even if it was an aim in the early days of folk enlightenment. Similarly, the moral development of young people is no longer the main aim of education. However, we find that the pedagogical room in the Nordic model, shaped by these traditions, is characteristically a room where togetherness is a value in itself. The social dimension of knowledge is still a perspicuous ideational trait, as is "the societal expectation that equal opportunities will be provided for all within the framework of comprehensive schooling" (Klette et al., 2018, p. 58). Our chapter is an attempt to shed light on overlooked prerequisites of Nordic education models—or better, some of its constitutive cultural traditions—and provide philosophical reflections on a way of being together, but with a common "school" framework: one in which the ideas of recognition are to be *experienced* and not (only) the product of political-educational reforms. The ideal and the experience of being together at school across backgrounds and status has survived (even though under pressure) as a cultivation for and mastery of a life in community with others.

As we see it, the pedagogical room emerging in the traditions of a Nordic education model has been large enough to accommodate differences in time and place. Here, having practical knowledge has primarily been useful for the majority of the population, but the generally egalitarian access to theoretical knowledge opened the doors for economic, material, and social mobility—a mobility characteristic of the Nordic countries (although social inequality is also reproduced here). To sum up, opposing yet interwoven knowledge traditions seem to be both at odds with and fit with the distinction between vertical and horizontal concepts of knowledge. Everyday knowledge, experiential knowledge, and useful knowledge have been included in these schools, both in the form of practical-aesthetic subjects (especially in the postwar period) and as local knowledge (e.g., the local adaptations of curricula in the 1970s). This, alongside theoretical disciplinary knowledge, is rooted in the ideals of the peasant movements as well as the ideals of the labor movements.

What Might Become of the Nordic Model and the Ideal of a Reflected Togetherness in the Future?

Our ambition has been to show that the idea of a room of togetherness is not only a core idea in Nordic education, visualizing deeper cultural and historical traditions and values, but that it is also a relevant metaphor for constructing criticism and raising alternative philosophical perspectives on dominating educational policies. The room of togetherness created in the Nordic public school is at its best a room of interdependency, where ideals of folk education and education for life have occupied a prominent place. The ideals of democratic education and educating for active citizenship have also been—and still are—prominent. Qualifications for working life have been mandated in the past, but its present prominence in the justification of schooling in the Nordic countries is new. The idea of building a platform of togetherness in the Nordic public school is not just a togetherness for school itself or for further education: It is a platform for a togetherness beyond the school. It is an experienced and learned togetherness, preparing for a life in the family, in the village, and in society. It has also been about living a life in the nation. Thus, in the Nordic education model, the questions of why and how to educate the younger generations has been deeply connected to the ideas of why and how to live a good life and the ideas of why and how to build a good society. However, we have also found ideas and practices that point in other directions. There is no doubt that the idea of equal opportunities together with an ideal of meritocracy have been prominent in the Nordic model.

Has the very concept of knowledge changed? No. However, its ideals and justifications have. There are two main foci pertinent in the Nordic tradition from which the Nordic (or anyhow the Norwegian) education model arises. First, it has developed from a focus on practical knowledge—emerging from the peasant and labor movements' perspectives on what we need knowledge for, and thus also a plea for recognition of the practical and skills-based knowledge forms. Second, focus has been placed on the need for the peasants' and workers' children to be able to climb social ladders, and thus there has also been the recognition of the need for them to take part in powerful knowledge—understood as propositional knowledge in the form of disciplinary subject matter knowledge. The ideal of togetherness has arisen alongside these two foci. When the Nordic knowledge ideals have met those of international education policy, they have been able to fit together nicely. For example, the practical skills and competence orientation of the OECD's Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations (DeSeCo) program dovetail with the long lines of the Nordic tradition (OECD, 2005). This program has also been the basis for the implementation of the Norwegian competence-based curriculum reform: *Kunnskapsløftet* (the knowledge promotion) in 2006. Nevertheless, the reasons and justifications for this new practical orientation are different, and we will have to search in vain for the kinds of reasons given in the folk and societal enlightenment era of the Nordic countries, where knowledge was to be for the enlightenment and moral and personal development of both the individual and society. The liberal idea of equal opportunities in the education system as a way to move toward a better society is present both in the Nordic education model and in international policies; the way of realizing and fulfilling these ideals can be either through competition or through co-operation in the classroom. The preference for co-operation over competition has emerged through Nordic experiences and the Nordic way of life: hence, the togetherness.

The trouble with this deeply entrenched, internally and externally inflicted utility, competence, and work-life orientation in education is that knowledge as relational content—between a knower and that which they believe to be true—is under-communicated. This is also true of the value of knowledge itself. Our basic psychological need to understand the world and ourselves is removed from the picture. Our need for a coherent world in which we belong and can find a place and a meaningful purpose is not prominent in how governments and authorities communicate about education. Nevertheless, the ideal of togetherness and a world where the young can experience that their contribution and their uniqueness is needed can still be cultivated in the pedagogical room.

Notes

1. "Nedværdigelse og den Hjemlige Nationalitet fra Forkvakling og Opløsning" (Garborg, 1877/1984, p. 209).
2. "Hjemligheden, den selvudviklede Aandslivs, egen sunde og fruktbare Grund at fremme Folkes Opdragelse og at Give det saavidt mulig Del i den almindelige menneskelige Kultur . . . Hvad folket selv har udviklet" (Garborg, 1877/1984, p. 209).

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8 Understanding as Liberation

The Nordic Education Model as a Way to Becoming Independent Citizens?

Anders Lindseth[1]

This book deals with one aspect of what has been called the Nordic model, the Nordic education model, which does not need to be considered if you think primarily of the political and economic aspects of the model. On closer inspection, however, the educational aspect turns out to be a prerequisite for making any sense at all when speaking of a Nordic model. For the essence of the model is expressed in an attitude that has to be learned. It has been acquired as a reflective, critical, and liberating attitude to prevailing knowledge. However, it has not been decided that this attitude should exist as a basic cultural value. The existence of such a value, after all, cannot simply be decided; it rather requires a constant political commitment. Thus, today we see that what we can call a Nordic education model is in danger not only of disappearing, but of being forgotten.

A Perspective From Within

In this essay, I would like to try to unfold a perspective on the Nordic education model from within.[2] I want to reflect on my own experiences from the period I would like to call the heyday of the model. As a Norwegian, born in Bodø in the north of Norway in 1946, shortly after the Second World War, I grew up in the Nordic model, even if I could not have realized that at the time, for hardly anyone spoke of such a model. In any case, I was not familiar with the term. In retrospect, however, I can see a sense of postwar social life that had typical traits. I have experienced these traits as characteristics of an acquired attitude, and it is precisely this attitude that I would like to see as the essence of a Nordic model and of a Nordic education model. From a personal narrative, I will try to shed light on the prerequisites of the model. The narrative is about my experiences as a Norwegian, but I am not concerned with my own biography nor with Norway as a country, but rather with the essence of the model. When I paint a picture of a personally experienced world, I want to elucidate the meaning of the Nordic education model.

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My parents came from a small mining village in northern Norway, near the Swedish border, Sulitjelma, often called Sulis. It was a class society. The upper class consisted of the directors and the engineers of the mining company, who lived by themselves, fenced in with their own tennis court, while the numerous workers and the few functionaries and independent businessmen of the village were outside the fence. In my time after the War, the fence was not maintained, and the tennis court was not in use. I grew up in the town of Bodø on the coast, but my aunt, my mother's twin sister, and her husband, who was an accountant for the mining company, lived in Sulitjelma, and from the beginning of my childhood until the end of my school years, I spent all my holidays there.

Today, it takes an hour and a half by car from Bodø to Sulitjelma. In the middle of the 20th century, the journey took a day, from morning to evening. First, we had to take a smelly bus on a bumpy road along the fjord. Then, we had to travel by ship on brackish lakes from the end of the fjord to the beginning of a narrow-gauge railroad, where a steam locomotive took the train of passengers the last stretch to Sulis. In winter, when the lakes were safely frozen, we traveled on the ice by taxi, after a way had been cleared by the snowplow. The journey, but above all the place itself, were adventurous for me.

Together with my cousins, my best friends, there were seemingly infinite opportunities for doing something exciting, not only in the town, which actually consisted of several small villages along a long lake, but also in the great outdoors around Sulitjelma. My uncle was the conductor of a marching band in which my cousins played wind instruments, and he was also a dedicated director of the tourism association, which made sure that hiking trails with cabins were established for overnight stays. My aunt was active in the gymnastics club, where women performed synchronized movements in rank and file. The Sulitjelma of my childhood was a thriving society, with a short, rapidly changing history, founded and built by my grandparents' generation, until four generations later, the mine was no longer profitable and was closed. Thanks to a few small businesses that still exist, today's Sulitjelma has not completely become a ghost town.

A Communicative Community of Citizens

So, what does the wonderful Sulitjelma of my childhood, which certainly appears more wonderful in my memory than it was in reality, have to do with the Nordic model? To answer this straightaway, it was a socially minded democracy that was able to respect social differences thanks to a lived and experienced equality of citizens.

When the first Norwegian labor union was founded by the workers of the mining company on the frozen lake in Sulitjelma on January 13, 1907, my maternal grandfather, Andreas Lindseth, was part of it. He worked in the smelter where the copper ore was extracted, and he was a quiet, modest, and warm-hearted man who liked to read. He was not the leader of the protests that were taking place, but he participated in an endeavor that could have ended badly. The workers felt oppressed by the authorities, and the management of the mining company saw them as rebels. Armed military personnel were present when the union was founded, but it did not intervene.

This was undoubtedly for historical reasons. For centuries, the inhabitants of Norway had been farmers and—on the coast—also fishermen, and the smaller authorities partly came from a different country, Denmark. Norway had no aristocracy that pursued exploitative interests with military power. The big farmers in the interior of the country and the few owners of the fishing centers on the coast did not do that either. The modern upper class of the industrial society, the engineers, largely came from the people themselves and depended on co-operating with the workers. So, by necessity, one came to an agreement. In this way, a socially minded democracy was able to emerge in Norway. I call it a socially minded democracy rather than a social democracy on purpose because all of Norway's political parties consisted of socially minded democrats, not just the Social Democratic Labor Party, which was the largest. This applied to the so-called Right Party, which had largely conservative values; the so-called Left Party, which was largely socially liberal; the Center Party, which supported the interests of the peasants; the Christian People's Party, which was committed to Christian charity; and the Communist Party, whose members raved about the classless society but often also believed that the best communist of all time was Jesus Christ.

In Sulitjelma, the banners of the communists at the May Day parades were sometimes quite extreme and could be read as a call for revolution, but the authors of these banners were generally smiled upon by their fellow citizens instead of being seen as a danger. Yes, the communists were a bit extreme and naïve, but there were quite honest, sincere, and good people among them; this is how one could express the widespread view. When the mob of a small town in northern Norway, that is, at least most of the male population, gathered shortly after the Second World War to cut off the hair of women who had fallen in love with German soldiers, the town's deputy mayor, who was a Communist, stepped forward and told the people how pathetic they were, whereupon they went home ashamed. There are quite a few stories like that. Therefore, in Norway, we never really had a problem with left-wing extremism. When Stalinists and Maoists from the student movement spoke up after 1968, we already knew they were extreme and naïve, but they could be talked to. They were not bad people. Some of them complained about "repressive tolerance," but they did not take up arms. However, we have had a problem with right-wing extremism in Norway, as in the North in general. Right-wing extremists, the Nazis, had been the enemies during the war, and for a long time after the war, it was almost impossible that there could be any in our own country. If they make themselves noticeable today, the doors to the rooms for open discussion are largely closed.

Hence, I see the essence of a Nordic model in the communicative equality of citizens, an equality that was socially caring and could well lead to economic success. This is an intentional, not an extentional description. If you try to determine a Nordic model from the outside, you not only have the problem that it was never introduced as such, but, above all, you have to ask yourself whether one can also find such a model outside the Nordic countries. I avoid this problem of objective determination by choosing a perspective from within, that is, when I try to carry out an intentional description of the phenomenon of the Nordic model, which wants to show the essence of the model as it moves the minds of the citizens.

As the essence of the Nordic model, I see a social attitude that was not culturally self-evident but that was acquired with the school system of the 20th century. It was the same system for all pupils and students, regardless of their social background. This reduced the differences of social class membership but did not eliminate them entirely. As my mother grew old and gave me greater insight into her childhood, she told me that she and her twin sister got into trouble with their fellow working-class pupils because they became friends with the engineer kids too much. Since they were the best in their school class, some upper-class pupils wanted to be friends with them to get help with schoolwork. So it happened that my mother and her sister were invited to birthday parties inside the fence, causing the envy of their fellow working-class pupils. They saw my mother and her sister as striving upwards, as wanting to appear as something better than they really were.

Classless Knowledge of Nature and History

It has occurred again and again in history that gifted children from ordinary people were supported by the authorities. Yet what happened in the school system in the 20th century, not only in Sulitjelma but in the Nordic countries, was an emancipation of knowledge, a development towards classless knowledge, so to speak. The knowledge that the pupils gained in school was not the preferred knowledge of a specific social class, not an elitist knowledge, but knowledge for everyone. One may wonder what made this development possible.

Undoubtedly, the scientific knowledge of the industrial society was knowledge for everyone, a knowledge that, in the universities, became the applicable knowledge of engineers. The elementary school, which was the same for all who were not considered mentally handicapped, was not specifically aimed at acquiring scientific and mathematical knowledge. Above all, it was committed to a cultural task. The pupils became aware of their history, from the time of the Vikings to the present day. The historical preconditions and the development of Christianity were taught as well. The

Nordic sagas and the Bible were read—more or less. The mother tongue was to be written grammatically correctly and in beautiful handwriting, and the poets of that language were read. Before the Second World War, German was the first foreign language; after the war, English became more and more important. In Norway, after seven years of elementary school, there was the possibility for an apprenticeship or attending a vocational school, junior high school, or high school. In Sulitjelma, the young people had to leave the mining village and go to a city if they wanted to further pursue a path of education beyond secondary school. In my mother's time, this was often not possible for working-class children for financial reasons. A generation later, this obstacle was removed by favorable state loans. I myself started studying in Oslo after high school. In this essay, then, I am trying to become aware of what the essence of the Nordic model and the Nordic education model might be based on my own historical experience. I am mainly familiar with developments in Norway, but I am also somewhat familiar with the conditions in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark and Sweden, whereas I know less about the other Nordic countries, Finland and Iceland.

When I ask myself what had shaped the development of the school in the Nordic countries in the 20th century, I see two opposing yet formative impulses—two different sets of ideas whose time had come. In the beginning, they complemented each other, but in the last half of the century, a certain opposition between—or rather within—them became more evident and posed a threat to the education model. The two impulses I am referring to are the technological knowledge of modern industrial society and the historical identity-forming knowledge of the Nordic nations in the 20th century. Technological knowledge, mainly taken from the natural sciences, has contributed to a matter-of-fact understanding of the world. Even if it took effort and long study to acquire this knowledge, it was knowledge for everyone. It did not require joining a faith community. Thus, no opposition was seen between technological knowledge and historical knowledge of cultural and national development. Both areas of knowledge served the general education of citizens and could be understood as a continuation of the Age of Enlightenment.

Knowledge and Understanding

To explain what I mean, I will go back to my own experiences once again, this time to my experiences from high school. There were subjects I found interesting and subjects that were rather boring. History and—even more—Christianity were interesting subjects. In the subject of Christianity, it was not assumed that we students were confessed Christians, and it was certainly not intended that we should become good Christians. The fascinating thing about the subject for me was the insight into a historical and intellectual movement that has shaped our culture. The interesting thing was a perspective that could not only explain connections but also allow for open questions. Accordingly, I left the Norwegian Lutheran State Church after high school because I could not find satisfactory answers to my questions in it.

Physics, chemistry, and biology were, on the other hand, subjects that I found pretty boring. I only did what was necessary to keep a good grade. At that time, it was not clear to me why the school subjects were experienced as interesting or boring. I certainly thought that it was simply because of me, my conditions and preferences. Today, however, I can say what had been the essential difference between interesting and boring. It was a difference between perspectival subjects, which invited critical questioning and provided an orientation in life, and knowledge subjects, which established facts in such a way that further questions, while not forbidden, were also not desired.

Some years ago, I met a colleague, a Swedish philosopher who was a professor in Norway, who told me that he had investigated why Swedish statistics textbooks were so terribly boring. He concluded that they consisted of a collection of answers without questions. The questions that could make statistical knowledge interesting were missing in the textbooks. This made it impossible to critically discuss the foundations of statistics. It was not shown that statistical knowledge might mislead us. For example, if I learn that I belong to the risk group in this Corona era, I know, because I have studied mathematics, that this is statistical knowledge and does not have to mean that I am in particular danger. The older we humans get, the less defenses we have against infectious diseases, but that is only true on average. It applies for everyone in general and for no one in particular. The question of what is important, threatening, or good for me in life challenges, above all, my life experience and not primarily scientific knowledge.

I, therefore, make a distinction between perspectival, orientation-giving subjects, which invite further questioning, and knowledge subjects, which want to establish facts that should preferably not be questioned. In high school, English was also one of the knowledge subjects for me, while German invited me to find orientation in the grammatical structure of the language. Norwegian opened up access to the world of literature and philosophy; geography opened up access to politics. Yet should not mathematics, which was a major for me along with physics, surely be a prime example of a knowledge subject? For me, it was not; mathematics was an orientation subject as well. Later, when I studied mathematics, I had the pleasure of being able to orientate myself in the wonderful world of mathematics. In doing so, I learned that mathematical theories can be criticized, despite their exactness and correctness. This is connected not least with an old dispute about the foundations of formal logic.

Thus, as a prerequisite for the Nordic education model, I would like to emphasize that two areas of knowledge became accessible to all citizens:

the technological knowledge of the modern industrial society and the historical knowledge of the Nordic nations that sought their cultural identity in the 20th century. It was only with time that a contrast between these areas of knowledge has become apparent. In order to understand it, I have distinguished between knowledge subjects and orientation subjects, and it is important to emphasize that the contrast at issue is not so much between these subjects but rather between tendencies in the subjects that may appear in them to varying degrees. Natural science subjects may want to record the results of their research and not problematize the foundations of the research. Advocates of the subjects may not want to emphasize that the knowledge of empirical sciences is hypothetical, that it is in principle uncertain and always in need of criticism and further research (see Popper, 1972). Thus, the subjects become knowledge subjects in the narrow sense that I have described. Not problematizing the foundations of knowledge is not a trait of the subjects themselves but rather a tendency by which knowledge in practical contexts can be characterized. Subjects in the humanities and social sciences can relativize their research results by problematizing their foundations, but they can likewise be subject to a practical interest in not doing so. In one case, you want to hold onto knowledge, in the other, you want to understand a context that leads to a piece of knowledge or to its problematization. We are dealing with opposite tendencies, either a tendency to know something in a more or less undisturbed way or a tendency to want to understand possible connections. What are these tendencies of knowing and understanding actually about? This is an exciting question that I want to address.

In the Nordic education model, both knowledge and understanding are required, but understanding has priority. In this way, I would like to formulate a thesis that can name the essence of the model. Knowledge is not only knowledge for everyone, it is also knowledge that can be questioned critically. This questioning is not left to experts alone; it is also a task for everyone, although the citizens of a country of course have different possibilities for carrying out this task.

Some will probably say that this thesis is too bold, if not exaggerated. Have the citizens of the North really ever wanted to get to the bottom of their knowledge? But I am not suggesting that the citizens in the heyday of the Nordic education model were clearly aware of this thesis much less that there was a downright willingness to follow it. I am speaking of an attitude, of a tendency that was rather subliminal but which nevertheless made itself felt. Especially in retrospect, when the willingness to critically question can be missed, it becomes apparent to me that it was and still is this attitude that can justify speaking of a Nordic education model at all.

The attitude I mean became tangible for me in an unforgettable way when I began my studies at the University of Oslo in August 1967. I started with mathematics, but above all I finished the first semester with the obligatory *examen philosophicum*. It was great; it was an entry into the intellectual world of Europe. The *philosophicum* consisted of three subsections: history of philosophy, philosophy of science, and—in Oslo at that time—psychology.

One student received a grade of 2.0 in the philosophy of science subsection; this was a good grade, but grades between 1.0 to 1.9 would have been better. He asked for a copy of his written answer to the exam question and took it to professor Arne Næss, who was significantly involved in setting up the *philosophicum* in Norway and who had written most of the textbooks (the textbook in question is Næss, 1963). The student wanted to know why he had only gotten a 2.0 when he had written everything that was in the textbook. Professor Næss looked at the text for a moment and then replied that the book itself was no better than a 2.0 on the point in question.

I have enjoyed telling this story to my students, and it has been my impression that they have become more and more amazed and shocked over the years. Was this supposed to be a bad joke? After all, a textbook would have to contain the right knowledge, and if that is reproduced by a student, surely it should get the best grade. When I heard the story, it was not a bad joke for me but a good one, because it was clear that a textbook does not convey definitive knowledge. Moreover, textbooks must convey reasonable knowledge, that is, understanding, and such reasoning cannot be equally convincing everywhere. Really good students must be expected to be able to critically evaluate their textbooks as well. Even if they are unable to examine a technically advanced body of knowledge for themselves, they should be able to question its presentation. However, this requires a level of expertise that can be lost, and with the transition in recent decades from elite university to mass university, it is increasingly missed by those of us older professors who lived through the exciting period of the Nordic education model's development.

In the summer of 1975, I drove the 1700 kilometers from Oslo to Tromsø in my first car, where, at the world's northernmost university, I first became a teacher for the *philosophicum*, then assistant professor with the philosophers, and then associate professor and full professor at the medical faculty. The *philosophicum* in Tromsø was the best in the country; we who were involved in it were convinced of that. The third discipline at that time was not psychology, as in Oslo in the beginning, but ethics, where the curriculum was not based on an ethics textbook but the *Gorgias* dialogue by Plato (see 454d; Plato, 1997). That was wonderful because students could experience what it meant to perform trains of thought. They were able to experience that philosophy is not about having opinions but rather about being able to reason and argue from experience. If we cannot comprehend philosophizing, even philosophy is reduced to mere opinion.

The essence of the difference between meaning and understanding was emphasized by Plato, not only in *Gorgias* (454d; Plato, 1997) but in several of his dialogues. When we have an opinion (*doxa*), we often dislike being contradicted. This is in contrast to the situation we find ourselves in when we have genuine knowledge (*episteme*). Then a contradiction does not upset us. If the other person has a good argument, we can take that into account and appreciate it, and if we think his view is untenable, we can discuss it calmly. We can also admit when we find connections too complicated or obscure. If we are dominated by *doxa*, we often do not want to admit that we could be mistaken, whereas *episteme* makes us open to the possibility of not knowing. *Episteme* is usually translated as knowledge, or real knowledge, but it is not about such kind of knowledge which consists of answers without questions. So, by *episteme*, Plato meant what we have called understanding. *Episteme* is a virtue, a capability that enables us to critically examine an intellectual landscape and also recognize that we can always ask new questions to which we do not yet have the answers.

In Plato's dialogue *Sophistes* (228–229; Plato, 1997), the stranger of Elea, in his conversation with Theaitetus, states that the problem of deceiving oneself is not that someone does not know the truth, for in that case the problem would be easily solved by teaching that someone the correct beliefs. No, the problem is that the person in question believes something to be true that is not really tenable; in any case, the belief turns out to be problematic upon closer inspection. Therefore, the holding of the *doxa* must be remedied to the point of openness to a different and more justifiable view. For persons to abandon or change their opinions can be very difficult, not necessarily because they are intellectually incapable of seeing more tenable connections but because they would first have to settle accounts with their own prejudices to which they are already emotionally attached, and settling such accounts can be painful for various reasons. Doubting the familiar and the accustomed is something we often experience as dangerous. So, it requires not only knowledge but also courage to better understand the world we live in and the life we lead in this world.

In this essay, then, the Nordic education model is seen as the historically evolved 20th-century classroom attitude of not just taking a body of knowledge for granted but, rather, of wanting to understand how tenable it is and what it can mean in practical terms. The insight that such understanding is a task in life has a long history indeed, which has been emphasized by philosophers since antiquity. It has never been obvious to most people, however, that this is a task for everyone. The guardians of traditions, the authorities, the religious, and, in modern times, also the scientific authorities have always been regarded as guaranteeing the correctness of everyday knowledge. For people outside the elite circles of the knowledgeable, it could be very dangerous to question the prevailing knowledge. It could become a task for citizens to question the prevailing knowledge only with the emergence of the liberal constitutional state.

Luck and Dangers

"Have the courage to use your own mind!"—according to Immanuel Kant, this is the motto of the Enlightenment.[3] It is therefore also a motto of the free citizens of the liberal constitutional state, to which Kant can be seen as a forerunner. He warned against rebelling against grievances of social life. For example, the civil servants of the state should perform their duty in loyalty to the state, but they would also have the duty of naming their grievances in the organs of public life, of criticizing them, and thereby of trying to influence the political discussion in such a way that the grievances could be remedied. Building and maintaining the constitutional state required reasoned criticism and open discussion. Thus, it is always a sign of a transition from a liberal constitutional state back to an ideological authoritarian state when the organs of public life—institutions, organizations of health, education and social welfare, associations, citizens' initiatives, magazines, newspapers, and, nowadays, social media—are slowly losing their autonomous freedom. Representatives of the ideologies of religious, political, and economic life are taking control. Resisting such circumstances requires courage and integrity on the part of the citizens.

The courage to use one's own mind requires general education. Enlightened courage is not a will to suppress through power but rather a will to get to the bottom of things. However, this requires more than general education; it also requires personal education. Virtues are required that are not innate but have to be formed in life, such as courage, humility, and trust. It requires courage to question your own understanding and to put it to the test in conversation with others. It requires humility to realize that we have less control over life than we would like. And, last but not least, it requires trust in life to come to terms with the fact that we were born and will one day die without being able to change this fact in the slightest.

I think the emergence of the Nordic education model was a stroke of luck in history. It was seen as the task of education that general education should be given to all citizens of the Nordic countries, and, at the same time, personal education was made possible for each student. It was possible to develop one's own understanding and thus to find and realize one's own way in life.

A historical precondition of the Nordic education model was undoubtedly the idea of the folk high school of the Danish pedagogue and theologian Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872). Its importance should be mentioned even though I, myself, was not directly involved with this type of institution. The folk high school could be attended between elementary school and later education. There, young people were given the opportunity to take advantage of an educational offer that ranged from a few months to a year, in which they were living together and could reflect on their everyday experiences, relevant to knowledge, in conversation with each other and with their teachers. Pathways to knowledge, history, art, and culture were opened for these young people. The first folk high school was established in Denmark in 1844, in Norway in 1864, in Sweden in 1868, and in Finland in 1889. In Iceland, an attempt to establish a folk high school failed in 1881 but succeeded in 1905. In the beginning, folk high schools were seen as a reaction to the blind drills of state schools, but in the 20th century, they became more of a supplement to these schools and a stimulus for them.

In a book on school reforms in Sweden, Lund University philosophy professor Hans Larsson (1862–1944) argued that school teaching should be changed so that students would not be helpless in life (Larsson, 1922, p. 7). In the subject of history, nothing should be included in the curriculum that could not help us find direction in our life situation (p. 32). Pedagogically, Larsson recommended a "bottom-up" approach (p. 22): Instead of interpreting literature from a "top-down" perspective, the teacher should, theoretically, begin with the students' experiences and questions and, from there, rise to theory. From Kant's philosophical insight that thoughts (concepts) without content (perception) are empty and perceptions without concepts are blind (Kant, 1781/1975a, B75/A48), he makes a motto for teaching: From more perception to clearer concepts! (p. 24) What was taken for granted in the folk high schools was that what was taught was determined by the teacher in his or her relation to the students, and this should also be the case to a greater extent in the national schools so that they are not hindered too much by the overarching curricula (p. 54).

That true education can only be accomplished dialogically was emphasized, among others, by a philosopher who was close to but at the same time critical to Arne Næss and who has greatly influenced my generation of Norwegian philosophers: Hans Skjervheim (1926–1999), a professor at the University of Bergen. More than Næss, he was anchored in the continental tradition of the humanities, hermeneutics, and phenomenology. I consider many of his essays to be foundational texts of the Nordic education model, although they were little known outside Norway. In his 1965 essay "A Basic Problem of Pedagogical Philosophy," he poses the question of how pedagogical science can understand and examine upbringing (Skjervheim, 2002, pp. 103–117). As an empirical science, it will, as is usual and natural in such sciences, first determine the object to be examined. In order for upbringing to be investigated as an object of research, its methods must be precisely defined. Which measures can lead to which results? Such research starts from problematic premises. First, the measures and their possible outcomes must be made measurable, although it is questionable to what extent they can actually be measured. This ambiguity calls into question the validity and reliability of such research. After all, can upbringing be reduced to an applicable method? Secondly, and this is the crucial point for Skjervheim, it is readily assumed that the educator, thanks to the educational method, can shape the object of their education as they wish. That, however, would make upbringing a technical endeavor that most educators must experience as inadequate. A child or an adolescent is not a shapeable material that simply submits to an educator's will to shape it. Thus, as a counter-reaction to the notion of shapeable material, the idea that upbringing should be about allowing children to go through a process of free growth is easily gaining ground. The only catch is that, just as children are not made of dead material, they are also not plants that only need food, light, and good growing conditions in order to flourish. This easily leads to educators tacitly trying to influence or manipulate "free" growth that goes unnoticed in such a way that this development is not too unfavorable. Thus, educators find themselves in a paradoxical situation from which Skjervheim sees only one way out: the dialectical alternative. He refers to Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus* (261a; Plato, 1997), where Socrates determined the true essence of rhetoric as "soul guidance (*psychagogi*) through words." Convincing people or forming them in life can only happen in a conversation in which the other person is perceived in his or her own expression and taken seriously.

Understanding is a personal task. Everyone needs to understand for oneself. Nobody can understand for me, in my place, and thus free me from the task of understanding. However, that does not mean that I can understand independently of others. Mostly, we adopt the supposed knowledge, our views and opinions, from others: family, friends, the widespread way of thinking of the time, authorities in politics and science, a religious community to which we belong. That is why it is also our task as humans and as responsible citizens to critically question our understanding. We understand our world, but we do not necessarily understand it well; we are easily misled by uncritically accepted knowledge and by prejudices and ideologies. Good understanding does not come by itself. It requires the ability to engage in dialogue and critical thinking, which must be trained. The fact that such prerequisites were given thanks to historical circumstances and that they could be further expanded was the luck of the Nordic education model. In the context of the *philosophicum*, correct argumentation was taught (see Næss, 1961). Philosophy of science made the conditions for good and bad science recognizable. The fact that knowledge has historical prerequisites and practical consequences were subjects of the humanities and ethics. At the end of the 20th century, practical knowledge centers were established at Nord University in Norway (see McGuirk & Methi, 2015; Halås et al., 2017) and Södertörn University College in Sweden (see Bornemark & Svenaeus, 2009), where the knowledge of practitioners was examined. Practical knowledge, knowledge that shows up in practice, is not simply applied theoretical knowledge, but it is, simultaneously, an expression of tradition, habit, conditions of co-operation, tacit knowing, conflicts and interests, prevailing morality, ethical ideas, perspectives of production, economic limitations, and so on.

That is why our expectations for putting knowledge into practice do not always come through as expected and hoped. If practice is to be improved, experiences of discrepancy between expectation and reality are a natural and necessary beginning to the endeavor and a fruitful starting point for a reflexive approach to practice-oriented research (see Lindseth, 2020).

What we call a Nordic education model has come under pressure. We see a tendency to prefer knowledge without too much understanding. Where does the resistance to understanding and research that presupposes personal education and critical thinking come from? Why is it so delicate to start from critical self-reflection? This is a big topic that I can only hint at here.

One reason is certainly the objectifying attitude of modern empirical sciences. The inquiring gaze has been directed outward, away from the subject, toward a world of classifiable facts and measurable structures. Around the middle of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, *philosophical hermeneutics* (see Gadamer, 1960/1975; Ricoeur, 1969/1974) and *phenomenology* (see Husserl, 1936/1954; Heidegger, 1927/1975), respectively, drew attention to the fact that we need to know our world through participation in life contexts in order to measure and classify it meaningfully and that we should examine this often naïve familiarity with the world more closely in order to understand what matters in life (see Bornemark, 2018). After this recognition, phenomenological and hermeneutic research became widespread, but it also continued to play a subordinate role and was often marginalized in relation to the objectifying sciences to which we owe the technological progress of modernity. Wanting to understand has sometimes been seen as an unnecessary luxury and, nowadays, as an obstacle to making education programs more effective and as a threat to the profitability of universities as businesses. An accessible knowledge of facts is preferred instead.

The investigation of practical knowledge will naturally include an element of *ideology critique* (see Apel et al., 1977) that might provoke the followers of these ideologies. Under certain circumstances, it has been life-threatening to question practical knowledge, and relativizing understanding has been readily condemned, especially when an elite of knowledgeable people appeared with the claim of being able to say what brings salvation to us humans in life. What does it mean to go to heaven? What can it mean that a certain race threatens the future of mankind? How is it to be understood that a classless society can be achieved through revolution? What does it mean that we can arrive at perfect health and have a good life thanks to research? It has happened that those who dared to question have been, for example, burned as heretics, killed as enemies of the people, or sent to penal camp as reactionaries. It remains to be seen what it can lead to if a knowledge of the possibility to reach health by research is relativized, even without denying the utility of such research.

Philosophers, theologians, and scientists have known that knowledge is power and that this can be dangerous (among others, Grundtvig and Foucault; see Jonas, 2003, p. 134). History has shown how dangerous an understanding can be that relativizes salutary knowledge. That is all the more a reason why we need an understanding that can give orientation to the risky endeavor of human life. The Nordic education model has promised such orientation. Yet does the promise still hold?

Notes

1. The text has been translated from German by Dr. Patrick Neubauer.
2. When I try to investigate the Nordic education model from within my own experience, the method of research is *essayistic*. (*Essay*, meaning a try, an attempt, from French *essayer*, to try. The essayistic style of writing is traced back to the work of Michel de Montaigne from 1580 named *The Essays*; see Montaigne, 1580/2003). It is an attempt through narrating to clarify for myself and others how I have experienced the Nordic education model, and, from this clarification, to determine the essence of the model. The aim of the method, however, is not autobiographic, as by Montaigne who wanted to present himself in his writing, but rather phenomenologically to concretize the meaning of an experience, to show what it is about. Paul Ricoeur (1969/1974, p. 265) referred to such telling as *concrete reflection*. It is the first step of the method of *reflective practice research*, developed at the Centre for Practical Knowledge at Nord University (see Lindseth, 2020).
3. In German: "*Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen*!" (Kant, 1784/1975b, p. 53). The German word *Verstand* may be translated into the English words *mind*, *reason*, or *understanding*.

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9 Trajectories of New Math in the Nordic Countries

Bjørn Smestad & Hilde Opsal

The expansion of compulsory schooling and the move toward more unified school systems and the reform of school mathematics under the label of "New Math" took place almost simultaneously in the Nordic countries. The former emerged in the second half of the 20th century, while New Math arose mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. Researchers disagree on whether international initiatives lead to convergence or whether initiatives are reinterpreted in local contexts to such a degree that the result is divergence rather than convergence (Wiborg, 2016). It has been pointed out that reforms undergo many modifications, yet some of the core logic remains (Moos & Krejsler, 2021). New Math is an interesting study object both for discussing this and for studying how two reforms interact with each other.

In this chapter, we compare four Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. After World War II, schools in the Nordic countries developed and reformed simultaneously (Moos & Krejsler, 2021). Our research question is: How was New Math received and implemented in the four Nordic countries, and how can this be understood in relation to the nation-states' structural reforms that expanded and unified the school systems? The three Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) have many similarities, including, in particular, a high degree of vertical integration and a history of unified school systems (Wiborg, 2016). Therefore, these three countries are promising candidates for comparison. We added Iceland, which has strong historical links to Norway and Denmark and whose mathematics education history has been researched carefully by Bjarnadóttir (2006b).[1]

For this chapter's purposes, we will focus on compulsory schooling, which reaches the highest percentage of each cohort. Also, the final years of compulsory schooling are influenced the most by this expansion. The more complex structure during post-compulsory years—within and across countries—means it would be too space-consuming to include them when comparing four countries.

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New Math as an International Movement in the Context of the Cold War

New Math is a label used to describe an initiative to reform mathematics teaching internationally from the mid-1950s to the 1970s. The main goal was to make compulsory school-level mathematics more like 20th-century research mathematics to better prepare students for further studies in mathematics (Kilpatrick, 2012). Statements put forward for New Math argued that there was a need “to prepare citizens for modern society, for a world of complex challenges, seemingly rapid technological changes and unforeseeable future conflicts” (Phillips, 2015, p. 5). One aspect was basing much of the mathematics teaching on the *set* concept due to sets' centrality in the foundations of mathematics. Other aspects included the introduction of functions, algebra, statistics, and probability theory at much earlier ages than before. It was imagined that New Math would promote understanding instead of rote learning. In addition, it was assumed that New Math was mathematics for all (Phillips, 2015).

After World War II, the education systems in most western countries were reformed (Nadimi Amiri, 2017). The shock from the U.S.S.R.'s Sputnik satellite launch in 1957 gave the reform a boost, as an impression began to form that the West was lagging the Soviet Union in mathematics and science. The Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), precursor of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), arranged a seminar in Royaumont, France, in November 1959, an event widely viewed as the start of the New Math movement in Europe. Each member or participating country was invited to send a delegation comprising one mathematician, one mathematics educator or government official, and one secondary school mathematics teacher. The discussion largely focused on the relationship between goals and means in mathematics teaching. According to Valero (2017), the intention of the OEEC was to discuss fundamental changes in the content and pedagogy of mathematics in order to cover citizens' social and economic needs. Highlighted mathematics goals included general education, preparing for life and work, and preparing for university mathematics studies. An important question was whether one could proceed in the same way to achieve all three goals. The seminar's overall conclusions mostly applied to mathematics in upper secondary school (OEEC, 1961). In the following years, the OEEC and the OECD arranged several meetings, and UNESCO also contributed financially to several international events, during which modernization of mathematics teaching was discussed (Christiansen, 1967, pp. 27–29). The years around 1970 were characterized by protests against authorities across Europe and the United States. These were connected to a loss of faith in science, rationality, and centralized government, which has also been seen as a factor behind the decline of New Math (Prytz, 2018). By the 1980s, the wave of New Math had passed, and parts of the academic content tied to it had disappeared in most countries.

The Nordic participants at the Royaumont seminar agreed to work together to reform school mathematics for grades 1–12, and in 1960, the Nordic Committee for the Modernization of Mathematics Education (NKMM) was formed by the Nordic Council (Solvang & Mellin-Olsen, 1980). The committee comprised participants from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. Iceland did not participate in the Royaumont seminar nor in the NKMM.

Such Nordic collaboration provided many advantages, as these countries were seen to have similar school systems and could share experiences with one another. This collaboration would also help recruit people with relevant expertise, reduce the costs of testing necessary experimental activities, and lead to a more uniform teaching of mathematics in Nordic countries (NKMM, 1967). After writing a preliminary curriculum for the various school years, the committee prepared experimental texts that were tested in schools in all four countries. In 1967, the committee published a report with a proposal for a common mathematics curriculum for grades 1–12.

Despite this collaboration, New Math played out differently in each country. As a rough overview, New Math in Sweden played an important role in school mathematics from 1969 until about 1980, while in Norway, it lasted only about five years (1971–76). In Denmark, such dates are difficult to pinpoint because of the nation's decentralized system. It can be argued that the starting point was 1966–67, and New Math was still being discussed in 1976. In Iceland, it lasted even longer than in Sweden, from 1966 to 1981.

Previous Comparative Research on New Math

There has been a range of comparative international research published on New Math. As a result, several aspects have been suggested to be key explanations for differences across countries. In the following, we summarize these highlighted aspects.

Three circumstances contributed to creating a need for a mathematics curriculum for all students: the expansion of compulsory schooling, the increasing number of students choosing to continue their education beyond compulsory schooling, and a desire not to segregate students by ability. However, this demand was lower in some countries than in others (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b; Kilpatrick, 2012). Among other factors, it mattered whether a country was in the middle of school reforms or had already finished instituting reforms when New Math was introduced. In some countries, the expansion of compulsory schooling created clear conflicts between school cultures that disrupted the implementation of New Math (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b). In some countries, for a long time, there had been stagnation and resistance to reform, which affected the reform process (Gispert & Schubring, 2011). General views on mathematics differed among countries (Gosztonyi, 2015), as did the rationale for New Math reform (Nadimi Amiri, 2017).

Howson et al. (1981) demonstrated that yet another important factor was the countries' governance model, specifically whether power was exercised centrally or locally. Furthermore, countries differed in how detailed and binding their curricula were (Gosztonyi, 2015; Kilpatrick, 2012; Roller, 1975), and some had a great diversity of textbooks to choose from, while others had just one official textbook series (Gosztonyi, 2015). Gispert and Schubring (2011) noted that "spheres of actors" that are important in implementation processes vary over time and between countries. In some countries, individuals play dominant roles, while in others, teacher associations are more prominent (Bjarnadóttir, 2013).

How the implementation process took place must be considered as well; for example, the speed of implementation varied greatly among countries (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b; Roller, 1975). Countries also differed as to whether New Math was presented as a method or as content (Gosztonyi, 2015; Kilpatrick, 2012; Roller, 1975). While textbooks were partly a result of international collaboration, the perceived quality of textbooks varied.

Countries' centrality in international developments also varied (Howson et al., 1981). In Europe, France was at the center of mathematical and didactical developments, while Germany "lagged behind" (Gispert & Schubring, 2011, p. 92). Yet another key factor may be teachers' competence and preparedness. Teachers' general unpreparedness and lack of training have been commented on in many countries (Gispert & Schubring, 2011; Roller, 1975). Teachers' professional development and training varied between countries when it came to content, duration, and whether it was voluntary (Roller, 1975).

Method

Our study was based on existing research on New Math in four Nordic countries. We used this literature to build a narrative of the development of New Math in each country. We focused on the researchers' explanations for the developments to be able to analyze how local circumstances were interrelated with the international trends. In building the narrative, we refer to other researchers' analyses of curriculum documents, textbooks, assessments, political processes, and public reception. While we strove for consistency in our descriptions of the four countries, differences in what has been researched in each country necessarily meant that, for some aspects, research has been done on some countries, but not on others.

The researchers on whose work we based our analysis often took no explicit historiographical stand, but most of the research fit under the headings of either a "history of ideas" or the more social "history of institutions" (Tröhler, 2019). Our own historiographical stand is eclectic, as we wanted to collect and compare explanations given by different researchers.

We now give our narrative of each of the four Nordic countries. Each narrative includes the school reforms they have had in this period, how New Math was introduced, and what arguments have been given in the discussion about the fate of New Math. Thereafter, we point out some key similarities and differences between the countries and discuss what may have led to their different experiences with New Math.

New Math in Sweden

School Reforms

In 1962, the nine-year mandatory and unified *Grundskolan* was introduced in Sweden, gradually replacing the *Folkskola*, *Realskola*, and parts of the *Flickskola* over a 10-year period (Prytz, 2015, 2018). Prytz (2018) viewed this as part of a broader centralization of the school system that started decades before, including more targeted funding, more comprehensive national policy documents, a national textbook review board, surveys of what kinds of mathematics were needed for society, and large-scale development projects. No further reforms of the school structure took place until 1991. The mathematics curricula during the period from 1962 to 1994 were divided into two separate course tracks for grades 7–9: basic and advanced (Prytz, 2015).

The Introduction of New Math

The aforementioned surveys done about society's needs for mathematics did not suggest radical changes to the Swedish curriculum. Therefore, the mathematics curriculum for *Grundskolan* made by the National Board of Education was traditional, except for a reduced emphasis on geometry (Prytz, 2018). In the mid-1960s, however, NKMM materials were tested in Swedish schools. With the arrival of the new *Grundskolan* curriculum in 1969, New Math played a central role, both in content and teaching methods. Concepts from set theory were used in all topics (Engström & Magne, 2003; Prytz, 2018). The syllabus took effect for grades 1, 4, and 7 in the 1970–71 school year and reached all students in 1972–73. Several New Math textbooks were approved and published for the new curriculum, and more than 40,000 teachers finished a distance course on New Math (Prytz, 2018).

Initially, the reform efforts seemed to have broad support among teachers (Lundin, 2008), but early signs of problems surfaced. Teachers viewed the syllabus as too comprehensive, and the results from national tests in 1973 indicated that students following the new curriculum were less-skilled in arithmetic (Prytz, 2017). In 1973, the National Board of Education encouraged teachers to choose teaching methods freely and prioritize "basic skills" (Prytz, 2018). From 1974, mathematics textbooks could be published without first being approved by the national textbook review board. Following this, textbooks were published with far less New Math. Also, in the national exams for grades 3, 6, and 9 (from 1973), little space was dedicated to New Math, and it disappeared completely by the mid-1970s (Prytz, 2018). Bjerneby Häll (2002) even wondered whether the 1969 curriculum could be said to have been implemented at all. When a new curriculum for *Grundskolan* was published in 1980, set theory was mostly gone, but some New Math elements—such as introducing algebra, statistics, geometry, and functions at an early age—remained (Prytz, 2018).

Explanations Put Forth in Research

Many reasons have been cited for New Math's decline. Kilborn (1977) pointed out that New Math ideas did not fit well with the more general ideas from the overall curriculum reform in 1969, particularly the connections between school topics and everyday life. The group that designed the 1969 curriculum had been rife with conflict. Olof Magne withdrew in protest while Matts Håstad withdrew to concentrate on writing textbooks. Kilborn (1977) also argued that the 1969 curriculum was so lacking in detail concerning what students should learn that teachers were forced to use the 1962 curriculum for planning purposes. He further alleged that the curriculum work was done with insufficient personal and economic resources, as well as fragmentary planning. In addition, Unenge (1978) viewed the curriculum's aims as too ambitious and teachers as insufficiently prepared.

While some researchers alleged that student results deteriorated after the introduction of New Math (Engström & Magne, 2003; Unenge, 1978), others disputed that claim (Imsen, 1981; Prytz, 2018). In any case, both the National Board of Education's relaxation of the rules and the new textbooks that were not in the New Math style suggest that many teachers were unhappy with New Math. Sweden had a strong textbook market with vivid competition, and Prytz (2018) stresses its importance for the developments in Sweden. Publishers had an ear for what teachers needed, and when the textbook review was made voluntary, many new textbooks with less New Math content were produced as a result.

Prytz (2018) argued that although the government was powerful, it had little experience in changing content in a major academic subject, such as mathematics. This may explain why the government gave up so easily. In addition, he mentions a loss of faith in science as an additional explanation.

Håstad (1978) argued somewhat differently, alleging that politicians viewed New Math as a solution to a problem: how to teach mathematics to all students in a nine-year compulsory school. New Math promised more emphasis on understanding and less time spent on meaningless tasks. However, as soon as there were signs that New Math did not keep all its promises, politicians abandoned it and turned to basic skills instead. According to Unenge (1999), as early as 1974, Sweden's prime minister, Olof Palme, blamed set theory for bad test scores in mathematics. Teachers accepted New Math at first, then began to protest against it as it was implemented.

New Math in Denmark

School Reforms

Under Denmark's *Folkeskole* Law of 1958, the first five grades of school were common to all students, while sixth and seventh grades had three different variants: a general, a theoretical, and a combined stream. After seventh grade, authorities in the school decided, together with parents, between two different kinds of eighth grades for the students (Bundgaard & Rindung, 1967). For the first seven years, each municipality set its own curriculum. National curriculum documents were just proposals for municipalities to consider.

In 1972, compulsory education in Denmark was extended to nine years (Rønn, 1986). The *Folkeskole* Law of 1975 did not allow students to be divided into different streams, but after long political discussions, mathematics and three other subjects were exempted from this law. Students could choose between two different tracks starting in eighth grade: basic or advanced (Haahr & Jensen, 2008; Niss, 1992; Rønn, 1986). The last step towards a unitary school in Denmark was the *Folkeskole* Law of 1993, when the choice of tracks in mathematics starting from the eighth grade on was removed (Beck et al., 2003).

The Introduction of New Math

The Blue Report from 1960 was a teaching plan proposal connected to the *Folkeskole* Law of 1958 (Haahr & Jensen, 2008). The report's academic content was traditional and did not include typical New Math topics, such as sets, formal logic, or abstract algebra. The report emphasized understanding and less training in skills, more student participation, and a more inductive way of learning. Therefore, it can be viewed as an initiator of the first phase of renewals in primary and lower secondary school mathematics in Denmark (Høyrup, 1979).

In 1973, a proposal for a new curriculum contained many of the reform proposals from NKMM, but it also warned about an early formalization of mathematics (Nordic Council, 1974). Another curriculum proposal was prepared in 1976, after the adoption of the 1975 *Folkeskole* Law. The topics were arithmetic, algebra, geometry, statistics, and probability, with set theory referred to as a professional aid. At the beginning of the 1976–77 school year, four proposed syllabi for arithmetic/mathematics were available that could, in principle, be used as a basis for local syllabi in municipalities, but they differed in their approach to New Math. In addition to the two from the Ministry of Education (the 1973 and 1976 versions), Denmark's Teacher's College and the Danish Mathematics Teachers' Association each had a proposal. The discussion about New Math continued in various media in 1976 and in subsequent years (Haahr & Jensen, 2008). How local curricula treated New Math in the years following the 1976 proposals seem not to have been researched.

Before 1975, mathematics exams at the end of either the 9th or 10th grade were not compulsory. In the theoretical stream, which emphasized intellectual activities and an advanced version of theoretical mathematics, students were expected to pass the exam (Niss, 1992, p. 65). From 1978 on, students from both the 9th and 10th grades from both the general and advanced tracks took the same exam, which included New Math, but only to a limited degree (Haahr & Jensen, 2008).

Explanations Put Forth in Research

We have not found research on local municipalities' curricula in this period. Therefore, we do not know to what extent New Math reached Danish students. Thus, the literature is limited concerning explanations on how New Math played out.

Høyrup (1979) alleges that the backdrop for the transition to New Math in Denmark was a desire for economic strength. From the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, the development of mathematics teaching seemingly spread randomly (Rønn, 1986). The fact that no binding curriculum existed during this period may be one explanation (Niss, 1992). Teachers had wide latitude in their choice of teaching methods and textbooks. The only exception was Copenhagen Municipality, in which it was the school director who authorized all textbooks (Bundgaard, 1967). Niss (1992) alleges that schools were influenced by New Math through conferences, in-service courses, journal articles, and written documents. However, Skovsmose (1979) has alleged that such new ideas found their way to a broader pedagogical context through multifaceted textbook production. Official curriculum proposals probably also made a significant impact, although it is difficult to know the extent.

In the mid-1970s, opposition to New Math in Denmark was led by the School and Society Association as well as teachers (Beck et al., 2003). The arguments used against New Math were based on concerns for children's basic arithmetic skills. In addition, children's rights to be children were emphasized.

New Math in Iceland

School Reforms

In 1946—soon after independence in 1944—Iceland passed several laws that reformed its school system. Education became compulsory for ages 7–15, though rural communities could limit this to ages 11–14, leaving the rest of the responsibility to families. Primary school comprised the first six years. The lower secondary level (starting at age 13) had three variants: two years of youth school (ages 13–15); three years of middle school (ages 13–16); or four years of lower secondary school (ages 13–17). A provisional curriculum was published in 1948, but no national curriculum existed until 1960, and then still only for the compulsory years (ages 7–15) but not for the last two years (ages 16–17) (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b).

A nine-year compulsory school was introduced in 1974, long after the influx of New Math ideas. This reform was followed only by a preliminary mathematics curriculum. No national curriculum documents were published in a final form until 1989 (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b).

The Introduction of New Math

In 1965, OECD representatives visited Iceland and stressed the importance of education for economic progress. New Math had already been introduced at Reykjavik High School the year before, when the head mathematics teacher, Guðmundur Arnlaugsson, had started using a U.S. New Math textbook. At the lower secondary school level, in-service courses in New Math began in 1965, and Arnlaugsson's own textbook, *Tölur og mengi*, was published in 1966 with an accompanying TV series. From 1968, the national entrance exam for high schools was based on this textbook, and New Math was a major part of this exam until at least 1975. Set theory was introduced in the curriculum for the general lower secondary school examination starting in 1969. A new textbook series was introduced in 1970–71, which by 1975–77 had around 90% of the market for the eighth grade classes (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b). However, starting in 1979, new material with a more investigative approach gradually replaced this series, and New Math "retreated without any major conflicts" (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b, p. 380).

In 1966, experiments were conducted at the first-grade level with a translation of textbooks from Danish into Icelandic, with Agnete Bundgaard as the main author. These experiments quickly attracted far more teachers than expected, reaching almost half of Icelandic 7-year-olds between 1969–72. From 1967 to 1971, several large in-service courses were offered. In 1970, a preliminary mathematics curriculum for primary school based on New Math was published, although it had a reduced emphasis on the set concept compared with the Bundgaard textbooks (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b).

The experiments soon faced problems, with parents not being able to help their children with homework (and even being advised not to try) and teachers finding the textbooks too theoretical (Bjarnadóttir, 2006a, 2006b). Starting in 1972, the School Research Department had a new series of primary school textbooks published in which the set theoretical language and notation had been toned down (Bjarnadóttir, 2006a); they were used for nearly three decades (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b). By 1976, the Bundgaard books were no longer used in the first grade. New Math seems to have lasted from 1966 to 1981 for primary and lower secondary education combined (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b).

Explanations Put Forth in Research

Bjarnadóttir points out that two key individuals, Arnlaugsson and his collaborator, Björn Bjarnason, brought New Math into all Icelandic school levels by 1966. Both had originally been high school teachers, and, due to Iceland's small size, no one was in a position to question their decisions. When these central figures moved to other positions, the emphasis on New Math in the curriculum was relaxed. Most ordinary teachers may never have been convinced. The speed of implementation meant that important steps were missing. During the first phase of New Math, schools were invited to participate in experiments and joined enthusiastically, but these efforts were made without formalizing a national curriculum (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b).

Bjarnadóttir (2006b) points to the textbook situation as an important reason for this speed. Starting in 1936, textbooks were provided for free to all students at the compulsory level and were financed by a textbook fee. However, after 1941, the fee was not raised to compensate for high inflation, and few new titles were published. The government textbook publisher, *The State Textbook Imprint*, in practice had a monopoly on textbooks published for students up to the age of 15 until the 1970s (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b). As a result, textbooks originally published in 1927 for primary school still were being printed in the 1970s (Bjarnadóttir, 2006a). With no school reform since 1946 and mathematics textbooks from the 1920s still in use, change was welcome.

Influences from the OECD and the United States, as well as a belief that mathematics was key to economic development, were important. A comparison of mathematics syllabi established the impression that Icelandic students were two years behind their Norwegian and Danish peers. Such findings may have contributed to a willingness to fund scientific research, as funding increased annually from 1967 to 1975, even during economic crises (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b).

Bjarnadóttir (2008) noted tension between mathematical thinking, which university mathematicians emphasized, and technical skills, which parents demanded. "Class stratification" between high schools and general lower secondary schools existed for a long time, and there was a desire for this to change. The Teacher Training College qualified teachers to teach in primary school but did not qualify them for studying at university. Primary teachers "became a united group with great solidarity" (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b, p. 188). Teachers at higher levels than primary school were taught at university or abroad (Bjarnadóttir, 2006b). Bjarnadóttir argues that the perspectives of university-educated teachers and teachers from teacher training colleges clashed and that, in New Math, "the former were the initiators and the latter were expected to implement the university version of mathematics" (2006b, p. 388), although many of them "missed the point of the reform" (2006b, p. 388).

New Math in Norway

School Reforms

Norway's Folk School Act of 1936 mandated seven years of compulsory education. In 1960, an experimental plan for nine years of compulsory school was introduced, and starting in 1969, nine years of schooling became compulsory for all. This nine-year school, *Grunnskolen*, included a national exam. In addition, textbook review boards had been in place since 1908 (Bratholm, 2001). With these tools, as well as with a national binding curriculum, control of schools was centralized in much the same way as they had been in Sweden.

In the experimental plan of 1960, the subject changed its name from "calculation" (*regning*) to "mathematics." However, the mathematics curriculum was completely traditional (Solvang & Mellin-Olsen, 1980). A final *Grunnskolen* curriculum was launched in 1976.

The Introduction of New Math

In the 1960s, texts developed by NKMM were tested in Norwegian schools. Already in 1967, a new textbook series which included New Math was published in Norway. It was based on a U.S. textbook series (Gjone, 1985a).

In 1967, a committee was appointed to prepare a new curriculum that would replace the experimental curriculum from 1960 and be based on "new mathematics." The committee members were mainly teachers and school leaders. All members of the committee were also involved in writing new mathematics textbooks for primary school, and the chairman stated that few members questioned the inclusion of New Math in the plan (Gjone, 1985a). Gjone found that a small group was given responsibility for designing the mathematics curriculum, and they could work relatively undisturbed on the plan.

The committee submitted two draft curricula in 1970, both including New Math. In the debate that followed, there was opposition to the idea of having only one mathematics curriculum and to the new plan's structure (Solvang & Mellin-Olsen, 1980). Many opposed a rapid transition to New Math and referred to skeptical comments about this form of mathematics in other countries (Gjone, 1985b). Based on the committee's proposal and the debate that followed, the basic school council published a temporary curriculum in 1971 that contained two mathematics plans. Alternative 1 was a traditional curriculum, and Alternative 2 was based on New Math. The intention was that Alternative 1 would eventually be phased out, leaving only Alternative 2 as the curriculum for grades 1–9 (Solvang & Mellin-Olsen, 1980).

Following the publication of the temporary curriculum in 1971, there was a reaction from groups within universities/colleges and fueled by newspapers (Gjone, 1985b). Arguments put forth focused on certain weaknesses in the experiments and their implementation and reactions to them in other countries. The Ministry of Education's most important argument for New Math was that it supported Nordic development, but the parliament was unsure. There was agreement that mathematics should prepare all students for society and a profession, but opinions were divided on how this could best be realized (Gjone, 1985b). However, the debate on whether mathematics should be a subject in the ninth grade was even more heated, contributing to a delay in finalizing the curriculum. In 1976, a final mathematics curriculum was approved, with mathematics included in the ninth grade and a reduced role of New Math. Thus, New Math was never a major part of a final curriculum in Norway.

However, it should be noted that several textbook series based on New Math were published between the publication of the temporary and final curricula. During this period, New Math also was on the exam in the ninth grade for students who followed Alternative 2. Moreover, several aspects of New Math remained in textbooks for years to come, even though most New Math concepts had disappeared from the final curriculum.

Explanations Put Forth in Research

Gjone (1985b) has argued that Norway was heavily influenced by other countries—especially the United States—in implementing New Math, both in their desire to decrease the gap between university mathematics and compulsory school mathematics and in the use of concrete materials. Influences from other Nordic countries were also important, particularly through the NKMM. These international influences continued even after support for New Math had shifted to criticism in the early 1970s.

The delay in finalizing the curriculum emanated from controversies concerning the ninth grade. *Lærerlaget*, an organization of mostly teacher's college-educated teachers, wanted no mathematics included in the ninth-grade curriculum while *Norsk Lektorlag*, the organization for mostly university-educated teachers, wanted mathematics to be included. Gjone argued that developments up until 1971 indicate how, in the Norwegian school hierarchy, just a few people could wield great influence. However, developments until 1976 also indicate that people and groups outside the hierarchy could also exert influence.

In addition to writing textbooks for lower secondary schools, Stieg Mellin-Olsen was also actively involved in the debate on New Math in Norway. In a 1966 article (Mellin-Olsen, 1966), he claimed that New Math was not about different mathematics content; only the way mathematics was described was new. He defended this new way of presenting mathematics. However, he later warned against New Math, alleging that it led to deterioration in students' knowledge of mathematics (Mellin-Olsen, 1974). In 1975, Mellin-Olsen and Rasmussen argued that the way schools tried to give all students the same content in the name of "fairness" had resulted in an abstraction and distancing from everyday life that can be viewed as "violence against the students" (Mellin-Olsen & Rasmussen, 1975, p. 101).

Key Similarities and Differences Between the Nordic Countries

Given the strong international currents and Nordic co-operation, one could expect that New Math would lead to convergence, that is, to similar mathematics curricula in the Nordic countries. The NKMM, established by the Nordic Council, even prepared curricula that were meant to be adopted by the participating Nordic countries. However, New Math was introduced differently in the four countries. Taking our cue from Moos and Krejsler (2021), we will discuss the local circumstances that may have interacted with the international trends to cause this. Specifically, we will examine three key issues: views on mathematics, degrees of centralization, and New Math's timing with respect to the expansion of the compulsory school system.

In all four countries, different views on mathematics seem to have been an underlying factor which played out in slightly different ways. In Iceland, this can be seen in the clash between two cultures: university-educated teachers with solid mathematical foundations and teachers who attended teacher's colleges and had less of a mathematical background. Similarly, in Sweden, the conflicts within the curriculum committee seem to have been connected to the differences between the curriculum's overall goal (concerning everyday life) and New Math's more theoretical nature. In the discussions in Norway over whether mathematics should be included in the ninth grade, an important argument on one side was that it prepared students for further education. The two views may also be observed in discussions on whether students should attend the same class or be divided into tracks according to their skill levels. Norway chose to keep students together for all nine years, while there were different tracks in Denmark (from the eighth grade on) and in Sweden (grades 7–9). Unlike Gosztonyi (2015), we are not able to conclude that the opinions varied across countries, but we can conclude that there was variation in the ways differences of opinion played out within countries.

Like Howson et al. (1981), we find variations in governance to be important. While Sweden and Norway had a high degree of centralization with detailed national curricula, textbook review boards, and national exams, in Denmark, power was decentralized. Iceland, in principle, was also centralized, but years had passed since the government had taken an interest in preparing new curricula or funding new textbooks, although it still provided textbooks for free to schools. In addition to high degrees of centralization, Sweden and Norway also had vibrant textbook markets. These two factors had similar effects, both when the government supported New Math and when it did not—either by going back on some key decisions, as in Sweden, or by letting the decision process take years, as in Norway. Denmark's decentralization, including local decisions on textbooks, and vibrant textbook market gave schools the freedom to experiment, resulting in a less-systematic introduction of New Math. In Iceland, the lack of actual use of central power for a long time made initiatives explosive, whereby the implementation of New Math went much more quickly than in the other countries.

In countries with detailed curricula and centralized assessment systems, it makes sense that the public debate centered around curricula and that new curricula marked the introduction and removal of New Math from schools. In countries without detailed curricula and assessment systems, different ideas can coexist, and changes are less abrupt. Thus, an important factor behind New Math's short life in Norway was the attempt to include it in curricula, and this attempt led to reactions that removed it from the final curriculum. However, Sweden is an example that shows that even a centralized government committed to introducing a reform is not a guarantee for success, as a change in mood can undermine implementation. In Iceland and Denmark, curricula did not play such a key role in the process. The role of national exams, on the other hand, is somewhat unclear. Iceland was the only one of the four countries in which New Math entered obligatory exams to any significant degree, and it is hard to establish what role this played in the introduction of New Math. Instead, we can deduce that one of the reasons that the exams in the other Nordic countries were produced with little or no New Math content was government reluctance to enforce the new curricula.

Another difference was New Math's timing with respect to the expansion of the compulsory school systems, as pointed out by Bjarnadóttir (2006b). A common feature seems to have been a widespread wish for 9 to 10 years of compulsory and largely undifferentiated schooling, eliciting the need for mathematics for all. New Math was viewed as a solution to this, but not by everyone and not as a complete solution. In Sweden, the expansion of schooling helped open the door to New Math, but this basis for supporting New Math was fragile, as New Math turned out not to be a quick fix after all. In Norway, the process of expanding obligatory schooling caused a delay in implementing New Math to the extent that New Math was never implemented as fully as in other countries. Also, this argument needs further qualification, as Iceland embraced New Math even without having instituted reforms. However, an increase in the number of students in non-obligatory education led to a similar need for a new approach to mathematics. Denmark, instead, chose a system with two different tracks in mathematics starting with the eighth grade.

As outlined previously, earlier comparative research has given many possible explanations for differences between countries in how New Math was implemented. Not all of these explanations have been stressed by researchers on New Math in the Nordic countries. For instance, the distinction between whether New Math should involve new methods and/or new content (Gosztonyi, 2015; Kilpatrick, 2012; Roller, 1975) has not been prominent in Nordic research.

Conclusion

We started this chapter by asking how New Math was received and implemented in the four Nordic countries and how this could be understood in relation to the nation-states' structural reforms that expanded and unified the school systems. New Math seemed to be a strong force based on a new technology-rich society's needs, with the OEEC as an active supporter and Nordic collaboration, based on the Nordic Council, creating and testing curricula. Still, we have shown that New Math played out very differently in the four countries. We argue that the different trajectories were partly due to different national contexts, including different views of mathematics, forms of governance, and stages of reforms in school systems. Although the Nordic countries are often considered similar, we show that the existing differences between them can play an important role when reforms are implemented.

Our comparative approach also allows for more nuanced arguments when a factor that is seen as important in one country is also present in a country that developed differently or, vice versa, is not present in another country that developed similarly. While the expansion of obligatory schooling seems to have eased the transition to New Math in Sweden, it also complicated the transition in Norway. Also, while a vibrant textbook market has been viewed as an important factor in implementing New Math in Sweden, New Math was also implemented in Iceland, a country with no such market. We have also seen, in the case of Sweden, that while centralized governance can be a factor in implementing New Math quickly, this can also backfire when such central support is withdrawn. Thus, trying to provide explanations based on one single country will often be misguided.

In the long run, like in most other countries, the more controversial parts of New Math, such as basing all of mathematics on the set concept starting in the first grade, disappeared from all four countries. On the other hand, other parts of New Math remained and are part of today's mathematics curricula, such as (in Norway) statistics, approximation, and estimation. Further research needs to be conducted to see whether or not remnants of New Math in the Nordic countries are similar.

Note

1. The fifth Nordic country, Finland, would also be an interesting country to include. We found insufficient research on New Math in Finland in languages other than Finnish, which we are unable to read.

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10 The Educationalization of the Swedish Welfare State and the Expectations of School Teachers

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The Nordic education model, characterized for example by an aim to combine equity with excellence in education for all children, may have been at its strongest from the 1960s to 1980s. For the majority of the postwar period until the 1980s, the Nordic countries were led by "strong social democratic parties with clear visions of a welfare state promoting greater equality, justice, and democracy" (Imsen et al., 2017, p. 78): the Labor Party in Norway and the Social Democratic Party in Sweden and Denmark. In Sweden, the thriving postwar economy provided a solid foundation for social reforms, which may have led to the most extensive welfare system in the world (Carlgren, 2009). There was a great belief in the importance of increased equality, irrespective of social class or gender, in order to strengthen democracy. Page (2007) notes that Western European social democracy was associated with policies designed to secure "redistributive forms of social welfare" (p. 107). Countries such as Sweden "came to be regarded as exemplars of social democratic nations or regimes" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, as cited in Page, 2007, p. 108). New opportunities would follow based on the transformation of society. The Nordic education model "was part of the social democratic project to rebuild society by means of science, rationality, and democratic participation" (Imsen et al., 2017 p. 568).

The establishment of a comprehensive school system in Sweden could be seen as an expression of what in research is called *educationalization*. Educationalization is "the social tendency to behave as if education were responsible for solving social problems" (Fendler, 2008, p. 15). In Sweden, education was seen as "the main vehicle for reducing social differences and increasing social mobility in the population," and the "overarching values were social justice, equity, equal opportunities, inclusion, nation-building, and democratic participation" (Imsen et al., 2017, p. 568). The "goals of the compulsory school in a modern democratic society became focal" (Lundgren, 1987, p. 270) and the implementation of an egalitarian, solidary and at the same time efficient democratic society should be explored, implemented and practiced in school. The question about how

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schools in an egalitarian but still efficient social democracy should be organized was answered by making the schools themselves a place where the desired social values of the society at large were to be practiced and trained. The Swedish school system was to be transformed into what John Dewey once called a "miniature community, an embryonic society": School would become "the child's habitat" where children learn through "directed living; instead of being only a place to learn lessons having an abstract and remote reference to some possible living to be done in the future" (Dewey, 1907, p. 32; see also Telhaug et al., 2006).

This chapter focuses on the central actors in the new comprehensive school, the teachers and the students, and specifically on the designed role of teachers and students to explore if political aspirations for these actors may contribute to changing an education system. The changes in Sweden were far reaching and, with time, attempts were made to mitigate perhaps partly unexpected issues that arose. Today, teachers in many countries are expected to act as a means to mitigate societal problems. "Education, learning, and teaching" have been "central means to solve major economic and social problems in European societies" in recent times (2007–2020; Sorensen et al., 2021, p. 10). If Sweden were a fore-runner, can any lessons be learned about teachers as actors and/or how expectations on students might be balanced against teachers' expectations on their role?

This chapter has five sections, starting with the Swedish development and introduction of the comprehensive school in the 1950s and 1960s. Secondly, the motives behind the change in the light of social change are identified. These motives were designed to be implemented through the desired teacher and the idealized student as a future citizen, both of whom are described in steps three and four respectively. Finally, the consequences of the implemented changes leading to the origin of a changing vision in the 1980s are discussed.

Education as an Equalizer

Two Swedish Governmental Commissions in the 1940s on "expanding and democratizing education" (Härnqvist, 1989, p. 18) led to the organization of the mandatory school becoming a highly debated domestic policy in postwar Sweden. There was disagreement about when to group students according to perceived abilities: Random mixing was accepted during the first five to six years, but when to separate children was in question (Larsson, 2011). In 1950, a decision was made to create a nine-year long comprehensive school to include all children.[1] At that time, most children would leave school at 13 or 14 years old (Härnqvist, 1989); about 10% would attend "lower secondary schools" (Jönsson & Arnman, 1989, p. 106); and 5%, based strongly on family background, took an exam, the *studentexamen*,[2] upon leaving upper secondary school at 19 years old (Härnqvist, 1989). Growing aspirations to attend the more academic school led to the alternative increasingly being seen as a "second-class school." Establishing one school for everyone would block the creation or reproduction of a class society based on intellectual ability (Edgren, 2015).

The comprehensive school was piloted during the 1950s. By 1962, more than a third of the school population attended such a school (Härnqvist, 1989). The main effect measured was whether the comprehensive school would produce equally good results as the traditional selective schools (*läroverken*). In all studies, the latter achieved better results (Edgren, 2015). Still, from the early 1960s, all children would go to school together up to age 15.

According to Wiborg (2004), education is not "the only means for enhancing equality in societies" but many believe it "plays an important role" (p. 83). Fascism in Europe led to a focus on the school's role in providing citizens with democratic training (Lundgren, 1987) and a view that schools must be a support for democracy and contribute to personal development and cultural awareness was emphasized (Edgren, 2015). Ekholm (1976) notes a possibly typical view of the time: Democracy must be more a "form of coexistence" than a "kind of decision-making" and permeate the whole of every day in school.

School focused not merely on knowledge dissemination but also on social values. Children's differing abilities and potentials should become the foundation of the collective development and the progress of society (Larsson, 2011; see also Selghed, 2004). The Scandinavian school was thus a special case of the understandings of the Western world at large to emphasize "the role of schools in sustaining democracy by educating democratic men and women" (Englund, 1989, p. 42).

There were striking similarities between the education systems in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and one significant difference. In Denmark and Norway, an ideal of classes having one teacher in most subjects throughout the comprehensive school years reigned (Osnes, 1982; Løyte Harboe, 2020). In Sweden, however, there were subject teachers for 13 to 15-year-olds (teachers of 7–9 and 10–12-year-olds, respectively, taught most subjects). In the 1970s–1980s, one Swedish teacher's union, *Sveriges lärarförbund*, promoted a teacher role "based on a holistic view of the students rather than an in-depth study" of subjects (Persson, 2008, p. 337). Another union, *Lärarnas riksförbund*, strongly objected to this, stating that such a teacher's role would have "unacceptable consequences" both for teachers' working situations and students' results (Carle et al., 2000, as cited in Persson, 2008, p. 340).

John Dewey's influence on Swedish postwar reforms is recognized (see, e.g., SOU 2014: 5; Wiborg, 2017). Lundgren (1987) comments on the direct influence of Dewey, first in a progressive journal, "The School," in 1902, and then his indirect influence by way of German theorists.

Lundgren notes that "most of the progressive influence" came from the European continent (1987, p. 270) and that educationalists' relation to Dewey can be likened to modern citizens' relationship to the Bible: Many ideas were appreciated but few had read the original (Lundgren, 1987, pp. 265–266). Dewey became "part of the new educational ideology" in Sweden (Lundgren, 1987, p. 273).

The transformation of education in Sweden differed from that in the United States in that the religiously grounded cultural contexts were different: In the United States, the Congregational social values reflecting the ideals of interpersonal interaction and social order were communitarian and local (Tröhler, 2014); in Lutheran Sweden these social values were emphasizing the individual within a more centralized understanding of the state. Dewey's social doctrine and ethics were concerned with bringing the communicative and co-operative potentials of fundamentally socially understood individuals to fruition in order to subject the industrializing society to democratic control (Tröhler, 2010). In the Lutheran north, it became a matter of combining the traditional, strong emphasis on the individual with the idea of social justice, interpreted as egalitarianism and equal opportunities to get an education that suited people's abilities. In Sweden, this vision was implemented primarily between the establishment of the comprehensive school in the 1960s and the early 1990s, when the school's role as an instrument in societal change decreased and its function to "perform defined tasks" increased (Holmberg, 2010, p. 20).

The early comprehensive school focused strongly on social values and creating democratic citizens and arguably less on knowledge dissemination. Supporting everyone to learn based on individual backgrounds and abilities and contributing to societal progress became important aims. The teacher's role changed from being primarily a source of knowledge to being allocated far-reaching additional social responsibilities and differentiating teaching to suit heterogeneous groups. Students were increasingly seen as future citizens with a joint responsibility for shaping the future. Education went from being a knowledge-based function to carrying expectations of teachers and schools being the drivers of a changing world.

Motives for the New Comprehensive School

The stated aim of the comprehensive school was primarily to foster "democratic individuals," not to share "selected quantities of knowledge" (Hansson, 1974, p. 177; see also SOU 1948: 27). Hansson (1974) states that "foster" was a favorite word: Students should get an "aesthetic education" and "benefit from the cultural heritage and thereby live a better life" (p. 177). This followed from Dewey's thoughts, according to which the role of schools was not primarily to "transfer a static cultural heritage" but to give students the opportunity to become "creative individuals" (Samuelsson, 2021, Modernitet och skola). Children would spend more time in the massively extended comprehensive school—more hours per week and more years—so schools' influence would be considerable, and these schools must also take more responsibility for "the growth of personality as a whole" (Sandven, 1969, p. 118). This indicated an extended social role for schools and teachers. A Swedish teacher education committee proposed that the teachers' knowledge transferrer role should be reduced and the social role increased: The supervisor and general supporter role was stressed (Persson, 2008). This cannot (yet) be labeled educationalization, but it might be a step in that direction. The Education Act of 1962, section 1, stated that the:

> teaching of children and young people, managed by society, aims at giving pupils knowledge, allowing them to practice their skills as well as, together with their families (homes/"*hemmen*"), promoting their development to become well-adjusted, capable and responsible members of society.
>
> (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 13)

The focus was on both individual and social roles.

The 1960s education reforms were largely based on national education plans. There was a belief in centralized planning, with standard solutions requiring implementation. These "solutions" were legitimized with research (Carlgren, 2009; see also Wiborg, 2017; Samuelsson, 2021). "Educational researchers were mobilized to provide arguments for political decisions regarding comprehensive school reforms" (Carlgren, 2009, p. 639), for example, relating to how big the "reserve of abilities"[3] might be in different social classes (Husén & Härnqvist, 2000). Research did not clearly indicate the advantages of the proposed working methods in school as it did with the likely effects establishing a comprehensive school would have on society (Carlgren, 2009). However, Carlgren (2009) notes that this did not diminish the belief in introducing different ways of working, some advocated by "central bureaucracy" (p. 639).

The comprehensive school was intended to suit children at all ability levels. School should become a miniature society that includes everyone in order to implement the ideal society of a welfare state. Compared with previously, the intake would be heterogeneous. An important aim was to give all children equal chances of a suitable education based on ability, irrespective of social background (Petersson, 2010). Another aim was to achieve equality between the sexes and to challenge traditional sex role attitudes held by pupils, the idea being that both men and women would "benefit from gender equality" (Wernersson, 1989, pp. 88, 90).

Teachers in selective schools feared that standards would go down and protested against the removal of their schools (Husén, 1965; see also Wiborg, 2017; Larsson & Ringarp, 2021). In selective schools, there had generally been less need for social support. Postponing the creaming off—the separation of students into selective schools—would naturally meet with protests from teachers used to teaching "an intellectual—and social—elite" (Husén, 1965). Their role changed possibly more than other teachers' in a society where educationalization was an aim or a means. (Female) teachers of girls' schools, who would now also have to teach boys, also objected to aspects of the comprehensive school. Some of them were apprehensive of teaching boys from very different social backgrounds (Persson, 2008).

According to the national curriculum from 1962, the "individual student should be the center of school and its work to raise children" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 13). Children are different; hence school must adjust its ways of teaching and working so that everyone develops. Yet, the individual aspect should become socially integrated so that society as such could develop. School must "not only be a societal function that corresponds to current societal needs" but also a "long-term positive creative force in the development of society" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 14). The common responsibility of developing the young people should unite home, school, and society, the curriculum states.

The Home—School—Society section of the 1962 national curriculum (Lgr 62, 1962) included suggestions as to how teachers could get in closer contact with pupils and their families: parents' meetings (*föräldramöten*), where "current issues relating to raising children" could be discussed, such as "pocket money, smoking, night-time curfews, and sleep"; open days (*åhörardagar*), where parents attend classes; and parent-school associations (pp. 26–27). The expected close ties with the extended society were expressed by stressing that local politicians should know "the school, its working conditions and its needs," and schools should share their premises for "youth and mass education purposes as well as for non-profit and political organizations" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 30). "School may become a center of society that most people have a reason to visit" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 30). Not only was school expected to become its own miniature society, but it should also have a societal function for everyone.

Guidelines for the teaching of all subjects were included in the curriculum. This included information on methods, the number of hours each subject should be taught in each respective year, and the knowledge students should gain. Class sizes, the number of hours for half-class teaching,[4] and hours offered by support teachers[5] (*speciallärare*) were also standardized. Schoolbooks and teaching materials were approved by a national authority (Persson, 2008). The teacher's role became more technical: Teachers became "rational planners, implementers and evaluators" with access to "more or less scientifically composed teaching materials" (Selghed, 2004, p. 52).

Bergem et al. (1997) notes that this period was called the "golden era of social engineering," as it was characterized by a belief in science as an instrument to change and develop society (p. 440). School policy should implement the normative visions of a welfare state. Top-down models were used extensively, but in some areas, the ambitions to use science were not realized; attempts to "write syllabuses with prescribed outcomes in behavioural terms" did not succeed (Bergem et al., 1997, p. 440).

The aspirations behind the new comprehensive school were to make society more equal, to let everyone thrive educationally, and to ensure that society made use of its reserve of abilities. Society was expected to become more democratic since all children were supposed to meet in the same educational establishment, which would have a strong focus on fostering children into democratic citizens. This was predicted to improve society for everyone, not just relating to knowledge, but in the long term. These were some general motives. How were they reflected in the expectations for the teacher's and student's roles?

A New Teacher's Role

The changes to the teacher's role due to the increasingly heterogenous intake of students were foreseen. Hansson (1974) noted that almost all selective school students of literature came from "wealthy homes with lots of books" and "well-established reading habits" (p. 178). Their teachers would now face classes where many or most students came from "homes where they do not read any books, never go to the library, never talk about literature, and have never heard words like metaphor, symbol, or structure, or even Shakespeare or Strindberg" (p. 178).

Intense discussions about how teachers would manage the more heterogeneous classes (Persson, 2008) indicated a new role with social expectations. Teaching in selective schools had meant an authoritarian pedagogy—homework, interrogations, and grades—but even those schools had struggled with this (Per Acke Orstadius, 2010). Differentiation of teaching became a concept in contrast to student differentiation. This placed considerable demands on teachers, who found it difficult to teach "at the right level" and individualize the work so that "fast" children would not be bored and "slow" children would be given sufficient time (Carlgren, 2009; see also Opper, 1986). This, together with the fact that students' attitudes toward schoolwork might have more of an impact than good intellectual ability was acknowledged in the second curriculum of 1969 (Lgr 69, 1969, p. 62). Some changes were made to enable more individualization: grouping in certain subjects according to parental/children's preferences combined with (perceived) ability; more choice of subjects for students aged 13–15, although "such outer accommodations do not suffice"; and measures in the classroom would be the most significant. School should acknowledge that "collective teaching, adjusted to suit the 'middle,' always means considerable inconveniences and unsatisfactory results for the weakest as well as for the strongest students" (Lgr 69, 1969, p. 62).

This dilemma led to the growth of organizing schoolwork in new ways. Teachers should make use of "individualized teaching methods" to suit different students or groups of students (Carlgren, 2009; see also Widén, 2010). Proposals were made for teachers to work in teams and reflect on their roles together (Blossing, 2004). Students' circumstances and needs should be the baseline: They should be stimulated and experience school as meaningful (Per Acke Orstadius, 2010). The changes were reflected in teacher training programs, which should "encourage an interest in social questions which extends beyond any particular subject or pedagogical training" (Osnes, 1982, p. 197). Teachers' unions supported a focus on didactics and pedagogy instead of subject specialization that informed teacher training (Wiborg, 2017).

Teaching methods based on children "searching for knowledge" emerged (Carlgren, 2009, p. 639; see also Englund, 1998). *Student active* ways of working (*elevaktiva arbetsformer*) were recommended as an alternative to traditional teacher-led teaching (Carlgren, 2010, p. 4). Such student active ways were presented to teachers who were expected to implement them. Group work and long individual projects were popular. Individual work was a "response to a social situation that teachers have to deal with" (Carlgren, 2009, p. 646). Group work would give children "rich opportunities for social contact" and let them "experience how cooperation in a social community works" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 21). The "single individual's work" emerged in the 1970s–1980s (Carlgren, 2009), with children planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own tasks (Carlgren et al., 2006, p. 306). "Own work" at school might be likened to problem-based learning (PBL) at university, which is often considered "more democratic" (Tholander, 2005, p. 13). Fendler (2008) comments that PBL illustrates educationalization in research and schooling by seeing the world "in terms of problems to be solved" (p. 23). Although PBL is "justified on the basis of its scientific relevance and professional utility," she argues that it is a "radical departure from earlier notions of science and utility" and "reinforces the attitude that education ought to be about engineering: solving existing problems" (Fendler, 2008, p. 23).

According to Carlgren (2009), a redefinition of the teacher's and student's roles ensued by children taking more responsibility and teachers becoming "supporters and advisers" (p. 639). Support materials were produced to enable this (Persson, 2008), and efforts were made to create "self-instructional material" (*självinstruerande material*) that did not require specially educated teachers (Carlgren, 2010, p. 4). These ways of working were influenced by reformist pedagogical movements, but teachers did not push the development; it was mandated from above (Carlgren, 2010).

The strong movement towards student participation in the 1970s and 1980s was also seen as a response to issues with student motivation. School fatigue was common. More resources targeted support classes, a common view being that good education is a right, and school should be adjusted to meet individual needs (Holmberg, 2010). A consequence may be seen in the subsequent curriculum from 1980 (Lgr 80, 1980): "students with special problems" were categorized as needing special attention, and "student participation in planning and evaluation" was emphasized (Carlgren et al., 2006, p. 304).

A 1980 study of teachers of 10–13-year-olds (Törnvall, 1987) found differing views on the new role of teachers based on different philosophies of life. Teachers with "socialist beliefs" favored the 1969 curriculum, were positive about the "pupil being the centre of schooling," and thought one should be "concerned with equality between people" (p. 176). "Pupil-centeredness" was interpreted as students being weak in relation to "commercialism," and in relation to headteachers, teachers, and parents (Törnvall, 1987, pp. 176–177). Therefore, "development of the pupil" towards "self-realization" was a concern (p. 177). "The goals of education are socialist in that it is expected that the pupil shall defer to the common interest of the local community and society in general" (p. 177). Other teachers were negative about the pupil-centered school since "it pushes them [the teachers] to the periphery," and they commented that students could not cope with the demands (p. 177). The changed emphasis, from teachers as "controllers of knowledge" to a pupil-centered school, was felt to displace teacher authority and their "professional expectations" (p. 177). Other studies show how the authority of teachers had "gradually been eroded," requiring a "considerable amount of psychological adjustment" for teachers (Törnvall, 1987, p. 178). The curriculum has high expectations and "assumes that the teacher is equipped with almost superhuman qualities," and teachers' frustrations stemmed from the "difficulty of reconciling . . . visionary goals with the reality of the classroom" (p. 178).

The underlying belief in "centrally planned" teaching methods remained: Recommendations might change, but teachers were still expected to individualize and differentiate teaching. More support classes may have been a compromise to reduce the knowledge and/or ability span a class might contain. Teachers were considered a tool that would ensure that societal changes would follow after the changes to the education system and, with time, contribute to a more democratic society.

New Expectations of Students as Future Citizens

The Swedish comprehensive school brought about a new role for students. Recognizing that children are different and bring different experiences to school was a new consideration. According to Ning de Coninck-Smith, a Danish professor of history of education, a prevailing view in Scandinavia had been that teachers could "pour knowledge" into children without having to consider their capacity to receive it (Leth Stolzenbach, 2016).

Student participation should be "as independent and abundantly varied as possible" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 19; Lgr 69, 1969, p. 16). Although education must cover a lot, whether appealing to students or not, forcing content on them was not seen as conducive to learning. The curriculum emphasized the necessity of motivating students and making learning feel meaningful, for example, by connecting "the material and the pupils' own experiences" (Lgr 69, 1969, p. 16; see also Holmberg, 2010). Knowledge sharing and development could not take place without teachers understanding children's backgrounds and any difficulties they may have. Schools should aim to "seek to promote his [the student's] personal maturing into a free, independent, and harmonious person," (Lgr 69, 1969, p. 10) and "the active participation of the pupil should be sought at all stages" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 19).

The 1962 curriculum stressed the children's right to define educational goals for themselves. Choices between subjects or courses should be free, and children "cannot be allocated a 'study route' based on the school selecting the students" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 35). Students should even be able to choose courses "at odds with their abilities, such as how they are perceived by the school" (Lgr 62, 1962, p. 35). This was a break from the earlier selection process and could be seen as a way to ensure that all students would actively contribute to their society.

To allow students to be involved in school activities, a "class forum"[6] (*klassråd*) was supposed to take place regularly to let students discuss internal class affairs (Lgr 69, 1969, p. 29). School affairs, delegated from the "pupil forum" (*elevråd*),[7] with representatives of all classes, would also be discussed (Lgr 69, 1969, p. 30). Hence, students practiced democracy within their miniature community.

One indication of the changing view of the students comes from the choice words by Ekholm (1976), who commented on students and their "fellow workers" (*arbetskamrater*; p. 20). Ekholm also discussed how the "lack of open contact between two groups" may lead to "prejudice and unfounded perceptions" (1976, p. 23), thus more or less comparing teachers and pupils as two separate but equal groups. He is critical of "teaching traditions that have sprung from previous centuries' attitudes towards children," commenting that it may stem from a view that children are easily tired when they learn and "in need of change that is prescribed by adults" (Ekholm, 1976, p. 49). To make use of socio-psychological research, Ekholm advocated that students must be given more credence and decision-making powers (1976, p. 23), but students rarely influenced "everyday details" such as homework, tests, and school lunches. Students' opportunities to influence school often related to rarer events, such as school dances (Ekholm, 1976, p. 26). Despite ambitions for more student-centered working methods, "the role of pupils today is largely characterized by passivity, above all by extended listening to adult pedagogues" (Ekholm, 1976, p. 97; see also Osnes, 1982). Schoolwork "is practiced on adults' terms" and "serves the interests of adults," thus carrying with it "clear risks," since "school aims at developing pupils" (Ekholm, 1976, pp. 53–54). Drawing on research by Piaget, Ekholm suggested that schoolwork should be more based on children asking questions and "creating new knowledge" (1976, p. 62). Otherwise, he asks, how could students, taught to "know their place" in school, actively contribute to developing democracy (Ekholm, 1976, p. 68)?

Despite finding that the ambitions for the new curriculum did not seem to have emerged by the early 1970s, Ekholm did not conclude that the new expectations of the student's role were mistaken but that schools should continue to strengthen it. The three curricula (Lgr 62, Lgr 69, Lgr 80) continued to emphasize "student influence, student activity, individualization, and students' interests" (Blossing et al., 2014, as cited in Imsen et al., 2017, p. 576). Contrary to earlier beliefs in the school being a forerunner for more democracy in society, Ekholm (1976) stated that "it may not be possible to change schooling until other parts of society have been changed" (p. 125). The teacher's role would be the most important role to change: Those training to become teachers are forced to become passive, resembling students in school (Ekholm, 1976, p. 122), Ekholm argued, and they remain in that role once they get a teaching position (1976, p. 123). This must change to meet "society's ambitions when it comes to pupils' social development" (Ekholm, 1976, p. 125). In the long-run this would lead to students developing their roles as future citizens.

Teachers were expected to increasingly become "advisers," and schools were expected to support children to grow into independent, responsible adults. Students themselves were increasingly expected to take responsibility for their own learning as well as for their miniature society—the school—as a whole. These were the expectations. What happened?

Consequences of the Reform Program and Changes

The organizational changes to the Swedish education sector were completed in the early 1970s. However, it was difficult to change teachers' ways of working. Different actors had different aims: Teachers' unions focused on school working environments and teacher satisfaction, and government and researchers focused on teachers' willingness and ability to teach according to the guidelines. The focus shifted toward changing teachers so that they aligned with the intention of the reforms (Carlgren, 1986, as cited in Bergem et al., 1997).

Prior to establishing the comprehensive school (as early as the 1930s–1940s), school research projects often involved teachers and were "didactic-oriented." New research increasingly focused on central policy making and issues relating to reforming the school system (Lundgren, 1989), such as school organization. Regarded as conservative, teachers became "objects" for research instead of "subjects"; they were "consumers of research results and objects to be changed" (Carlgren, 2009, p. 640). The National Board of Education prescribed what classroom teaching should look like. Teachers "perhaps did not always follow the guidelines to the letter, but the idea was that they should" (Holmberg, 2008, p. 17). Strong central steering meant that teachers became marginalized from discussions on school development, which were led by "bureaucrats, researchers, and policy-makers" instead (Carlgren, 2009, p. 640). Teachers criticized educational research that was "of no use to them in their work" (Lundgren, 1989, p. 201). The centralized framework led to a "passive role for both teachers and pupils" who should "try the approaches without being sufficiently convinced of their usefulness and applicability" (Burns, 1981, p. 39). When the new teaching methods did not end up successful, teachers were considered the problem since they did not manage to implement the results of the research presented to them (Carlgren, 2009).

These differing opinions caused issues, particularly relating to identifying suitable methods for teaching heterogenous groups. In the 1970s, Social Democrats argued that segregating pupils according to their perceived abilities was "socially unfair and even undemocratic" (Carlgren et al., 2006, p. 310). Discipline became an issue, and an education review (1970–1974) prescribed that truancy, fights, and school tiredness should be managed by schools taking greater social responsibility, becoming less academic, and basing teaching (even) more on "the practical experience gained by pupils" (Ball & Larsson, 1989, p. 12; see also Larsson & Ringarp, 2021). The Swedish pupil organization (SECO) argued that the review prepared for too little student influence (Larsson & Ringarp, 2021).

Osnes (1982) noted that the teacher's social role had become more significant and their responsibilities other than teaching had increased. Teachers needed to find different ways of working with students that were "appropriate to their individual interests and abilities" (p. 191). In the "radical '60s," many young people became teachers because they wanted societal change: They wanted "to show the youngest citizens what society looked like and what it should look like" (Holmberg, 2008, p. 8). Later, "school was no longer seen as an instrument in societal change, but rather as a function that performed defined tasks" (Holmberg, 2008, p. 20). Attention was given to the school's apparent inability to manage these defined tasks and "control, evaluations, and reports" were introduced which would indicate if schools and teachers met their targets (p. 20). Alexandersson commented on the eventual identity shift in the 1990s: Previously, schools were expected to be "trailblazers for the future," and teachers had a "project identity" based on them being the bearers of the ideas of radical school reform. This "project" lost in value and school was no longer considered a leading instrument for reforming society (2005, as cited in Holmberg, 2008, p. 20).

The intention that school would be a miniature society may have worked to an extent: teachers did take on new roles, perhaps encouraged by the new teachers desiring social change. However, the focus on knowledge was arguably reduced to benefit social aims and building a democracy. "It may seem paradoxical," Carlgren (2009) notes, that Swedish schools achieved good school results before the 1990s given that "issues of knowledge were so under-emphasized to the benefit of social issues, such as integration and democratic education" (p. 646). The gradual increase in individual work led to an "erosion of unified class teaching," according to Carlgren (2009, p. 646). The requirement for schools to strive for "comprehensively recruited classes" may not have worked: Since there were fixed catchment areas and classes stayed together throughout the comprehensive school, they were often socially separated based on residential segregation (Jönsson & Arnman, 1989).

An OECD review (1981) discussed the "conflict of objectives between overall equality and the needs of individual development" (p. 71). Sweden responded that "equality required a varied curriculum to enable different approaches to be made to the same subject," and changed relationships between teachers and students to enable a "true exercise of choice" (p. 71). Swedish teachers should not see their role merely as "a function of the number of hours spent in the classroom" (p. 73). Social engineering was not enough in itself, but "everyone concerned with change" should be involved and support the changes to the school system (OECD, 1981, p. 88). This may be seen as an aspiration for schools to be a part of society to which everybody relates.

In the 1980s, Sweden started moving from a centralized view of education to discussing teachers' responsibilities and the importance of not politically steering them (Carlgren, 2010). The difficulties with implementing centrally developed solutions had become clear. Since the "standard solutions" appeared to not be reliable, a belief in teachers as professionals with an "ability to solve most problems" emerged. Decentralization was the answer since initiatives to develop ways of working without involving teachers would fail (Bergem et al., 1997; see also Wiborg, 2017). Influenced by new public management, "more economy-based thinking" was "taking hold in the public sector" (Ringarp, 2012, p. 333), and "goal- and result-oriented regulation" would manage the public sector (Hood, 1991, as cited in Ringarp, 2012, p. 333). A decentralized education system emerged which led to the creation of local "school markets" and expectations on schools to compete for applications (Ambrose, 2016). According to Ulf P. Lundgren, professor of educational policy and educational philosophy and director-general of the Swedish National Agency for Schools from 1991–1999, the conditions for managing the public sector changed quickly in the late 1980s. It had grown and was increasingly populated by professionals who were more difficult to control, and the political landscape had changed (Broady, 2006). With the economic downturn in the 1990s, efficiency became a priority "underpinned by a global movement of neoliberalism, New Public Management, and educational policy-setting by the OECD" (Imsen et al., 2017, p. 576.) The 1994 goal- and result-oriented curriculum, organized "according to the logic of management by objectives," influenced the teacher's role considerably (Imsen et al., 2017, p. 576). The neoliberal ideology "stands in harsh contrast to the ideology of social learning and inclusion in the classroom," and the "realization of inclusion in the classroom in a segregated and efficiency-oriented society seems to be hard to achieve for teachers" (Imsen et al., 2017, pp. 577–578).

The continued focus on students' own work in the 1990s can also be seen as a feature of new public management and its goal steering, which influenced the pedagogical methods. The idea of own work has been much criticized in research, but it "can be understood as a practical response to the demands put on teachers in the 1990s" (Carlgren, 2021). The changing view of teachers was drastic (Carlgren et al., 2006). Teachers became a tool to realize the aims of education, and having professional teachers became a requirement. Previously actors implementing political decisions, teachers gradually became responsible for developing the solutions that followed from political decisions (Carlgren, 2010). Bergem et al. (1997) noted that teachers went from being the main obstacle to being the solution to everything and argued that the changes in the teaching role in Sweden from the 1950s to the 1990s is one of the most significant ones seen.

Reforms may have been implemented faster in Sweden than in Denmark and Norway (see, e.g., Carlgren, 2009; Sjöstedt, 2013). The Swedish system may have been more radical, but Klette (2002) argues that it is a trend in all three countries (as well as in Finland) "to make teaching a more collaborative task by emphasizing team teaching and collaborative planning" (p. 266). The search for a solution to the never-ending issue of how to combine equity with excellence continues: How could all students be given the opportunities needed to develop without excluding anyone from a "one size fits all" school system? At the same time, how can we allow differences to flourish in a system that is sometimes constrained by aspirations to create an equal society?

What Next?

"Education is becoming the preferred method for diagnosing and attacking a wide range [of] problems in American life" (Murray, 2007, as cited in Fendler, 2008, p. 25). Hooge et al. (2011) has noted that "Dutch schools are increasingly regarded as focal points at which to address and solve social issues" (p. 297). They explored the professional identity of teachers "with respect to performing a social mission" and identified "addressing social issues" as a dimension of this (p. 297). In a research report published by the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), Sorensen et al. (2021) note that education has become a central means to solving social problems in Europe. The educationalization of social problems "continued to be a part of the educational culture" despite schools being "an ineffective mechanism for solving these problems" (Tröhler, 2016; Educationalization of Social Problems).

Was Sweden a forerunner when it came to using education as a method for solving societal issues and having expectations that teachers should take considerable responsibility for societal issues? Educationalizing a society is often a top-down process, originating from political decisions. Having explored these ideas during the 1960s–1980s, Sweden decentralized its school system, for example, with the decision to move the responsibility for teachers from the state to councils in the late 1980s. This led to more power for headteachers, economists, and bureaucrats, and less professional room for maneuver for teachers (Ringarp, 2011).

Education as a means to create a democratic society has been challenged by a fragmentation of the Swedish school system and increasing social tensions. Imsen et al. (2017) note that the state has gone from primarily a welfare state to becoming "equipped to participate in the global competition for market shares" (p. 569). They also added that the previous "foundations for schooling" still exist, but they have been heavily influenced by neoliberalism (p. 569). The demand for "visibility of learning outcomes" and "documentation of activities and results" has impacted how teachers teach (Imsen et al., 2017, p. 581). Furthermore, tests such as PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS have reduced trust in teachers and legitimized politicians acting "in accordance with the market ideology" (Imsen et al., 2017, p. 580). Schools' intakes vary considerably when it comes to socioeconomic status and parental education levels. Arguments to return to a school system with a bigger focus on "society" have clashed with arguments promoting the right of individuals to plan for their children's education. Some commentators and politicians want a bigger focus on education as a means to create a more democratic society. "Schooling is more than an individual project": Swedish education has been "part of a social movement" (Nilsson, 2002, p. 17). Increasing competition for a growing (aspiring) middle class might still provide support for a school system where individuals position themselves in an increasingly globalized world. Whether or not this aim can be reconciled with an aspiration for schools to be a miniature society, preparing children for their roles as citizens in a future society remains to be seen.

Notes

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1. The comprehensive school, compulsory for nine years starting from the age of 7, replaced all other schools: In the 1980s, only 0.7 % of children attended private schools, "most of them Waldorfian" (Steiner schools; Larsson, 1989, p. x).

2. The *studentexamen* was taken after three years in upper secondary school. The last cohort took them in 1968.
3. The "reserve of abilities" referred to individuals who would have had the "relevant qualities" for education—primarily from social classes not previously able to study—but who had not been given an opportunity to study (Husén & Härnqvist, 2000).
4. Half-class teaching: the class teacher would teach half of the class at a time. For example, instead of 24 children in a class, there would be 12 at a time. The 1962 curriculum (Lgr 62, 1962) stipulates that year 1 (7-year-olds) would have nine hours of Swedish, and up to five hours should be half-class teaching if there were at least 15 children in the whole class. In year 2 (8-year-olds), 2 hours out of 11 could be half-class teaching.
5. Support teachers, *speciallärare,* were a specific teaching category working directly with small groups of pupils in need of extra support. Pupils were removed from their normal class for a number of hours per week.
6. *Klassråd*, class forum: Every class had a class forum where children had opportunities "to handle and solve communal issues in the respective classroom." Matters might frequently "be referred to the school forum" (Lgr 69, 1969, pp. 29–30).
7. *Elevråd*, school forum: The school forum had representatives from each class and might be seen as a "channel for contacts" between pupils and school leadership teams and committees. The school forum might "contribute to improved well-being and a positive attitude to school and school work." School was given a great responsibility to ensure that "school democracy" worked in practice and not only became a technicality (Lgr 69, 1969, p. 30).

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11 Expertise-seeking Arrangements in Education Policymaking

A Comparison Between Norway and the United States

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In the Nordic countries, which have traditionally been characterized as corporatist in their political models, ad hoc advisory commissions have played a significant role in policymaking. The commissions have been the channel for the government to mediate organized interests while seeking technocratic knowledge to solve policy problems (Arter, 2008; Christensen & Hesstvedt, 2019). In addition, in an era of evidence-based policymaking, the commissions not only have instrumental functions but also serve as the source of legitimacy and credibility for policy ideas and proposals. This type of arrangement is also observed outside the Nordic countries, and the forms and structures vary across countries.

Indeed, scientific expertise has become an integral part of modern politics. Today's governments have various expertise-seeking arrangements in which they gather and synthesize relevant knowledge to formulate and legitimatize public policies. These expertise-seeking arrangements often invite individuals and representatives from organizations who are perceived as credible and trustworthy to be experts on a policy issue. Seymour-Ure (1987) introduced the concept *policy advisory systems* to describe the arrangements that offer information and knowledge to policymakers in the form of policy advice. This concept was further developed by Halligan (1995) and has been widely applied to aid in understanding the institutionalization of policy advice. The advisory systems include, but are not limited to, ad hoc commissions, permanent advisory councils, government-funded research institutes, and think tanks (Hustedt & Veit, 2017). Previous studies of the institutionalization of policy advice have found that policy advisory systems vary between and within countries and across policy domains and topics (Craft & Howlett, 2013; Lentsch & Weingart, 2009). Furthermore, different advisory bodies exist at different stages in the policy process.

Despite a growing body of scholarship on policy advisory systems, there are some limitations in the current literature. Here are the three most relevant to the present context: First, existing empirical case studies

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have mainly focused on the countries with the Westminster system[1] such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada (e.g., Craft & Halligan, 2017). Second, there has been a lack of comparative studies on how policy advisory systems are actually structured and function in different political settings. Third, policy domains of analysis were often limited to environmental, medical, and health policy contexts, whereas little is known about how the government seeks knowledge in the education policy process.

This chapter contributes to addressing these gaps by comparing the expertise-seeking arrangements observed in the education policymaking process in two political systems: advisory commissions in the Nordic region and congressional hearings in the United States. According to the extensive previous application of policymaking models (e.g., Blom-Hansen, 2000; Schmitter & Lehmbruch, 1979), the Nordic countries and the United States each represent, on the one hand, corporatist and, on the other, pluralist systems. Both the *Nordic model* and the *U.S. model* of education have gained much attention from numerous international and national policymakers, scholars, and practitioners; the former being a rather recent phenomenon. Although scholars have focused on investigating what each model means, what kinds of characteristics it has, and how and why it has developed, little is known about the expertise-seeking arrangements in policymaking that contribute to building the knowledge base for each education model. By placing the expertise-seeking arrangement in a corporatist country against one in a pluralist country, this comparative study enables a critically questioning of how knowledge bases for education policy models are shaped in each setting. In particular, among the corporatist Nordic countries, Norway provides a suitable case for analyzing the advisory commissions in education policymaking. While advisory commissions in other countries have changed significantly in terms of their forms or have been replaced by other arrangements (e.g., broad-based working groups in Finland), advisory commissions in Norway remained as the main expertise-seeking arrangement in policymaking.

Drawing on the interviews with individuals who served on the expertise-seeking arrangements, this chapter aims to explore the structure, participation, and legitimization strategies of the arrangements from the participants' perspectives. Participants' perceptions and experiences in the institutionalized arrangements help the investigation of how the arrangements actually function, which may be different from how they were designed to function. Furthermore, building on the concept of policy advisory systems, this chapter uses the concept of *expertise-seeking systems* to refer to the settings in which the government seeks expertise from various knowledge sources. While the concept of *policy advisory systems* highlights the *giving* aspect of the arrangements, the concept of expertise-seeking systems emphasizes the *seeking* notion of the arrangements, thus reversing the direction of the information exchange. In addition, expertise-seeking systems include arrangements that deal with additional forms of knowledge other than policy advice.

This chapter is structured as follows. It first provides a background on the two different expertise-seeking arrangements analyzed in this chapter. After describing the research design, it presents the results of the analysis on expertise-seeking arrangements regarding the approaches in expertise-seeking, participation, and legitimization strategies. Finally, the findings are discussed within a broader context of uncertainties and inequalities in the policy process.

Expertise-Seeking Arrangements in Education Policymaking in Norway and the United States

This chapter examines two types of expertise-seeking arrangements that are commonly observed at the education policy development stage in Norway and the United States: ad hoc advisory commissions and congressional hearings, respectively. Because the policy actors who design and formulate education policies are affiliated with the executive body in Norway and the legislative body in the United States, the expertise-seeking arrangements, which are established to provide knowledge and advice for policy formulation, exist in the respective bodies of each country. The Ministry of Education and Research in Norway receives advice from the expert advisory commissions it appoints, and the legislators in the United States collect policy-relevant knowledge through expert witnesses invited to congressional hearings.

In Norway, ad hoc advisory commissions have been perceived as the heart of the institutional expression of corporatism (Christiansen et al., 2010). The government appoints the commissions not only to seek credible and relevant knowledge regarding complex policy matters but also to meet the demands for participation and representation in the policy process. These commissions review existing knowledge on a policy issue and sometimes pursue its own research. After thorough examinations and deliberations, they publish Norwegian Public Studies (*Norges offentlige utredninger* [NOU]) which include their findings and recommendations. Based on the reports, the relevant ministry submits a white paper (White Paper; *Meld.St.*) or proposes a bill (Proposition; *Prop*) to the *Storting*, the Norwegian parliament. Commissions are composed of academics, political actors, and members from interest groups and the private sector.

In the United States, congressional hearings have traditionally functioned as an important and effective expertise-seeking arrangement for the central policymaking body, Congress, to gather and analyze information in the policy process (Arnold, 1992; Kingdon, 1989). Hearings feature witnesses who are invited by congressional committees to testify regarding a particular policy issue. Witnesses are carefully selected because their testimonies affect how policy issues are framed and how Congress develops the content and enactment of a policy (Burstein & Hirsh, 2007; Johnson, 1995). Because congressional hearings are designed to collect knowledge and interests that exist among the U.S. citizenry, the invited witnesses also come from various backgrounds, ranging from government officials, to celebrities, and to students.

The United States also has various federal advisory committees that are similar to advisory commissions in Norway. As of 2021, there are 920 active federal advisory committees, and 139 of them are specifically on national policy issues. According to the 2018 Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) membership database, 77,256 individuals served on federal advisory committees for 48 federal agencies. However, despite the extensive number of advisory committees in the U.S. policy arena, the advisory committee is not the main expertise-seeking arrangement in education policymaking in the United States. For example, out of 77,256 advisory committee members, only 52 individuals provided policy advice and recommendations to the U.S. Department of Education, which is the lowest among all departments. This number is even more striking when compared to the number of committee members serving for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: 40,226. The lack of federal advisory committees indeed reflects the controversial role of the federal government in education policymaking. In the United States, governance and spending in the education sector have traditionally been heavily decentralized, and individual states have been the main responsible body addressing educational matters.

Nevertheless, 2015's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which was a major federal education policy that addressed important issues such as primary and secondary education finance and accountability. ESEA was developed as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" initiatives and emphasized national commitment to providing equal and quality education for all students. Since then, the reauthorizations of ESEA have been discussed, formulated, and implemented at the federal level (e.g., No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). For the formulation of ESSA, the United States did not have expert groups commissioned by the executive branch. However, the U.S. Department of Education organized a committee for ESSA consisting of various stakeholders only after the bill was passed, and the main tasks of this committee were limited to drafting specific regulations for the implementation of ESSA. Instead, knowledge regarding various educational issues (e.g., accountability, assessments, minority education, charter schools, etc.), taken into account during the formulation of ESSA, was presented and discussed in congressional hearings.

In this chapter, I focus on expertise-seeking arrangements that are officially institutionalized in the education policymaking process in each context. As described earlier, although ad hoc advisory commissions and congressional hearings demonstrate different characteristics, they can be compared as they are the main institutionalized bodies that seek external expertise in national education policymaking and in which members are invited by the government.

Research Design

Countries' Political Contexts

The political models in Norway and the United States have been characterized as corporatist and pluralist, respectively. While in corporatist countries the public policymaking process is often viewed as the routinized and deliberate process between a government and a limited number of major interest groups, in pluralistic countries it is viewed as open competition among interest groups (Helgøy & Homme, 2006; Leyva-de la Hiz, 2019; Rust, 1990). On the one hand, the corporatist model allows the government to work closely with a select group of policy actors and organizations who have institutionalized access to policymaking (Schmitter, 2011). Interest groups are seen as independent and equal partners with bureaucracies. On the other hand, the pluralistic model involves voluntary policy actors and organizations that are individualistic and self-interested (Leyva-de la Hiz, 2019; Schmitter, 2011). The role of the government is minimized to facilitating and arbitrating the demands of different interest groups (Rust & Blakemore, 1990). Given these differences in the policy models, I hypothesize that the expertise-seeking arrangements in Norway and the United States would demonstrate differences regarding who participates and how knowledge is sought and decisions are made.

Data and Methods

In order to empirically explore the most up-to-date arrangements, this chapter focuses on the main institutionalized expertise-seeking arrangements used for the most recent school reforms in Norway and the United States: the Renewal and Improvement Reform (LK20), considered by Norway's *Storting* in October 2016, and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by U.S. President Barack Obama in December 2015.[2] These arrangements include eight ad hoc advisory commissions in Norway and 115 congressional hearings in the United States. The eight commissions were selected because their final reports (NOUs) were cited by the two white papers prepared for LK20. The 115 hearings were identified by the ESSA legislative history from the Congressional Information Service as contributory to the development of ESSA.

I created a database of experts who served on the previously described arrangements. The expert database included 94 commission members in Norway (excluding secretariats) and 552 congressional witnesses in the

United States. The occupations and affiliations they had at the time of service were extracted from the NOUs and the congressional testimonies. Some experts may have held multiple titles at the time and have new jobs now; however, for this chapter, I analyzed the occupations and affiliations recorded in the NOUs and the testimonies because they implied which expertise or role the experts were expected to bring or actually brought during service.

The occupations and affiliations were categorized into six groups. I built on but modified the coding scheme from Christensen and Holst's (2017) study. The experts who worked as professors at universities and colleges or as researchers at the programs and centers housed on a university or college campus were coded as "Academics." "Civil Servants" included members of government agencies at all levels, and "Political Parties" refers to elected government officers, including members of Congress. Any expert from a non-governmental organization with an organizational agenda and interests was categorized as "Interest Group Members." These organizations included but were not limited to think tanks, professional organizations, advocacy groups, and media. "Others" included anyone who could not be categorized into one of the existing categories. This includes celebrities and administrators at universities, colleges, and schools. During the analysis, to better capture the participation in the expertise-seeking arrangements, I merged "Civil Servants" and "Political Parties" into one group and added two new groups: "Students/Parents" and "Teachers."

In addition, this chapter draws on interview data with 12 policy experts in Norway and 18 policy experts in the United States. Interview participants were recruited from the list of experts who served on the expertise-seeking arrangements analyzed in this chapter. In the interviews, the participants were asked to reflect on the overall structure and process of their service regarding how they were invited, how the meetings were structured, and how deliberations were made.

After the open reading of the interview transcripts, I identified codes across interviews and developed a preliminary coding scheme (Saldaña, 2016; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Previous literature on policy advisory systems and corporatist and pluralist systems helped me revise and refocus the preliminary coding scheme. The final codes were organized by themes to address the research question.

Results

The results demonstrate that the expertise-seeking arrangements in Norway and the United States reflect the characteristics of corporatist and pluralist models, respectively, regarding the approaches in expertise-seeking (e.g., consensus-building vs. competition), expert participation, and legitimization strategies.

Consensus-Building vs. Competition of Knowledge

The analysis of participants' reflections on their service revealed that expertise-seeking in advisory commissions could be described as consensus-based and guided, whereas the one in congressional hearings could be described as competitive and open. In Norway, advisory commission members convened multiple times throughout the process and discussed different themes and topics. The interview participants recalled that the process was collaborative among expert members and coordinated by the chair and the secretariat members. Each meeting had an agenda which was set by the chair in communication with the secretariat. Based on discussions in the meetings, different versions of the NOUs were drafted and shared with the entire commission. The write-up process appeared to be different across the commissions. Sometimes it was delegated to the commission members based on their areas of expertise, sometimes it was mainly written by the chair, and sometimes it was drafted by the secretariat members. In the latter two situations, individual members were still consulted to comment on specific areas during the process. Once the draft was shared, the commission members would propose revisions about how certain points needed to be phrased in a specific way or that additional or appropriate evidence was required.

Because the commissions needed to produce an NOU, which is the final report that represents commission members' opinions and perspectives as a whole, members spent much time in discussion to reach a consensus. Interview participants shared that commission members deliberated on a series of controversial topics throughout the process because members did not necessarily agree on every issue. This is expected as the design of the commission system is to recruit a group of experts with different bodies of knowledge, backgrounds, and interests. There were sometimes disagreements on perspectives, and the commission members discussed them openly to find consensus. A few interview participants shared that some members even had heated debates about the expected role of commissions whether they should provide a summary of existing discourse and literature or offer new directions that the current research might not already address.

Nevertheless, deliberations did not necessarily result in a consensus that everyone was satisfied with. Several interview participants expressed their frustration during the consensus-building process. They felt that only viewpoints that allied with the majority were reflected in the final report due to political reasons. One interviewee, for example, shared that the chair of their commission addressed the importance of making the report strategic in order to be accepted at the political level. What the interviewee proposed at the time was considered too innovative compared to existing perspectives and ideas and ended up being excluded in order to make the final paper's acceptance by the Ministry of Education and Research and the parliament go smoothly. They shared that throughout their service, it was extremely difficult to get their point across to other members because of the existing hierarchy within the commission. Representatives from privileged organizations tended to have a greater voice in meetings and discussions. They also stated that, in the end, a consensus was reached and the final report was published; however, it was because they gave up, not because they truly agreed with the final decision.

In the United States, the interview participants shared that the overall process of serving as an expert witness at a congressional hearing allowed much room for them to deliver their knowledge in their own ways. There was not much guidance on how and what to say in testimonies, thus allowing diverse formats, styles, and knowledge to be included in the process. The witnesses were only informed that they would have about five to ten minutes for oral testimony on the day of the hearing and that the committee members would ask questions afterwards. In addition to oral testimonies, each witness was required to submit a written testimony in advance; however, the structure or format of the written testimony was not provided. The written testimonies were submitted before the hearings so that the committee members and staff could review them. A few interviewees said that, occasionally, the staff contacted them for minor changes but the revision requests did not significantly influence the content of their testimonies. Throughout the process, congressional committees and their staff never required the witnesses to share particular stances or perspectives in testimonies although it was assumed that the staff must have done extensive research and known about the witnesses' stances before making a decision to invite them. Regardless, the interview participants shared that they felt free to express their thoughts and expertise without having to negotiate with government actors or other experts. Certainly, the format of congressional hearings does not lend itself to in-depth discussion among the hearing attendants.

These different approaches in expertise-seeking in the two countries were set up by and influenced (1) the role of the government and (2) types of knowledge utilized in each arrangement. First, while the government remained as the selector of knowledge in the United States, the government was an equal partner to the commissions in Norway. As previously stated, the U.S. congressional hearings did not set much structure or guidelines regarding how and what the witnesses testified. The involvement of the government was limited to the witness invitation. The premise of the system is that the government will choose the "best" knowledge among diverse perspectives presented at the hearing, embracing the competition of knowledge among policy actors and organizations. By contrast, in Norway, the government partook in creating the consensus knowledge. Each commission had secretariats who were from either the Ministry of Education and Research or the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The secretariats were present in each commission and their role was crucial in facilitating the discussion and assisting the commission in publishing the final report. The secretariat members carried out the administrative tasks of the commissions such as identifying previous bills related to policy issues, keeping meeting notes, and even drafting NOUs. Although interviewees noted that the secretariats did not represent any interests or perspectives other than those of the commissions, they still had an indirect influence because they set up the meeting agenda with the chair and often looked up references to substantiate what experts agreed to in the meetings for the final report.

Second, while U.S. congressional hearings were open in that witnesses could utilize knowledge in an unconfined way, advisory commissions in Norway, which needed to produce a final report that amalgamated multiple people's voices and expertise, were more closed regarding the utilization of "soft" evidence. Many U.S. interview participants reported that soft evidence such as anecdotes, normative and emotional arguments, and professional judgments was actively utilized at congressional hearings to gain policy actors' attention and interest. For the witnesses, use of soft evidence was a strategy to make their testimonies stand out compared to others. By contrast, the Norwegian interviewees reflected that commission members may share anecdotes and professional judgments during meetings; however, when arguments based on them were to be written in a final report, a reference to hard evidence such as numbers and research findings was required. On some occasions, a lack of reference to hard evidence negatively influenced the validity of one's opinion during discussions. For example, a Norwegian interviewee from an interest group was critical of the great emphasis on academic research and statistics. They felt that the group's voices were not reflected, validated, or heard because they did not cite research papers or quantified measures.

The participants' experiences around the utilization of hard and soft evidence reflect the recent tension in evidence-based education policy-making. Some argue that policies should be based on research findings (research-based knowledge), particularly randomized controlled trials, while others argue that policies should also consider tacit knowledge obtained through direct involvement and professional practice (practice-based knowledge) (Slavin, 2002; Thomas & Pring, 2004). In the field of education, the tension between these types of evidence is salient because teaching and learning are perceived to be heavily context-based and hence it is difficult to utilize second-hand knowledge (Thomas & Pring, 2004).

Participation

Looking at the types of experts who served on each expertise-seeking arrangement, Figure 11.1 demonstrates the differences in the participant composition between the Norwegian advisory commissions and the U.S. congressional hearings. In the United States, about 40% of the experts

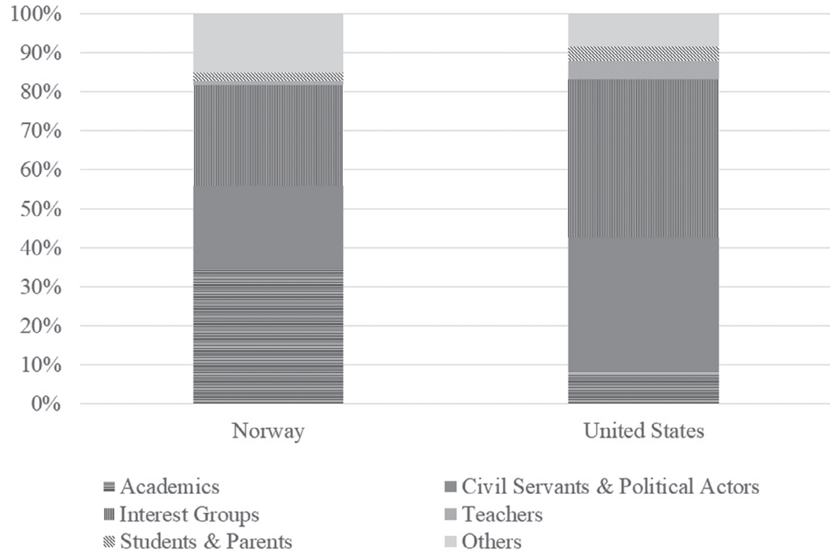

Figure 11.1 Participant Composition of Expertise-Seeking Arrangements

invited in the process were interest group members, 35% were civil servants and political actors, and 8% were academics. In Norway, by contrast, about 26% of experts were interest group members, 22% were civil servants and political actors, and 34% were academics.

Regarding the overall composition of experts, two points draw particular attention: the strikingly high percentage of interest group representation in the United States and the high percentage of academics in Norway. The influential role of interest groups such as think tanks and advocacy groups in the United States has been discussed by many scholars (e.g., Abelson, 1995; Medvetz, 2012). These groups have established a strong relationship with the government over the years by offering policy analysis and evidence to the federal government. This previous working relationship with the government played out as one of the contributing factors for expert selection. When asked why they thought they were invited to testify at congressional hearings, many interviewees shared that the invitation was a reflection of one's expertise or significance for the debate as perceived by the members of Congress and their staff. The perception was established based on the involvement of the actors or their organizations in existing mechanisms in the policy process over a period of time. These various previous working relationships had helped the interest group members become familiar with Washington, DC politics, establish personal relationships with members of Congress and the Senate as well as their staff, and develop an ability to communicate effectively with policymakers.

Similar to the U.S. congressional hearings, the experts in Norway identified their work on a policy topic and previous working relationship with the government as one of the reasons why they were invited to serve on the advisory commission. However, interview participants interpreted that the most critical factor for invitation was if the expert could contribute to representativeness of the commission. Because the number of commission members is limited, it has been important to include a wide variety of voices that reflect diverse organized interests in Norwegian society. As a result, when forming a commission, spots are often reserved to represent certain groups' voices. In an interview with an organizational leader, for example, they shared their experience of winning the spot on the commission as a community to represent the voice of disabled students. This reflects one of the main traditional functions of advisory commissions, which is to have interest representation in the policy process.

However, despite the long tradition of interest representation in Norwegian advisory commissions, Figure 11.1 shows that the percentage of interest group members on advisory commissions for LK20 was not as high as one would expect. Instead, academics represented the large share in advisory commissions. Recent studies have noted that although commissions in Nordic countries are designed to fulfill needs for both interest representation and technocracy, the technocratic function of commissions has become more dominant with the "decline in corporatism" (Rommetvedt, 2017). Furthermore, in their analysis of Norwegian ad hoc advisory commissions appointed between 1967 and 2013, Christensen and Holst (2017) also found the decrease in interest group representation along with the increased participation of academics, suggesting the scientization of advisory commissions in Norway.

Legitimization Strategies

The expertise-seeking arrangements use different strategies to legitimize their structure and outcome. Eyal (2019) wrote that there are four prominent strategies for organizing the political use of expertise: exclusion, inclusion, objectivity, and outsourcing. The exclusion strategy is the boundary work to differentiate experts and laypeople in order to "generate trust in technocratic expert judgement" (p. 105). The government creates various gatekeeping mechanisms that are composed of selected and trusted experts who can create scientific consensus. The inclusion strategy takes the opposite direction by expanding participation beyond the existing expert groups and highlighting transparency in the procedures. The objectivity strategy prioritizes "mechanical objectivity" (Daston & Galison, 1992) with quantification and standardization and intends to replace trust in subjective judgments with trust in mechanical procedures.

Lastly, the outsourcing strategy refers to the effort to outsource expertise to external organizations that are often non-governmental and inclusive. However, Eyal also pointed out:

> [These strategies] are unstable, shot through with tensions and contradictions, and dependent on careful, continuous calibration of framing devices. They also contradict one another, each constituting an implicit, and often explicit, criticism of the other, thereby combining into a tension-ridden, crisis-prone mixture.
>
> (Eyal, 2019, p. 103)

At first glance, the existing structure of expertise-seeking arrangements in Norway and the United States each represents an exclusion and inclusion strategy. In Norway, the logic behind ad hoc advisory commissions is that the members of commissions are credible and are qualified to provide the most relevant and effective policy advice to the government, reflecting the increased focus on the technocratic aspect of decision-making and scientization of advisory commissions. Nevertheless, the main problem of this exclusive, technocratic expertise-seeking arrangement is that the neutrality of the experts invited to the arrangement is often questioned. Furthermore, the experts who are considered neutral may not necessarily be the ones with sufficient qualifications and competence, thus leading to questioning of whether the policy recommendations made by the expertise-seeking arrangement are truly the most effective ones.

Addressing these criticisms, the commissions have recently worked to increase their legitimacy by employing other strategies. Although the exclusionary expert commissions have avoided public scrutiny by keeping their work and discussions behind closed doors, the interview participants shared that in recent years, the commissions have tried to engage with the public by posting summaries of meetings, the progress of the commission's work, and drafts of the reports on their blog. Furthermore, the commissions visited schools and education facilities in different municipalities and counties across the country to open up the policy discussion to a wider population. These strategies would have been avoided in a typical exclusionary approach because they could bring controversies to the public's attention. However, the commissions have decided to take the risk because they could gain greater legitimacy and authority by carrying out more inclusive strategies. They make the commissions' advice and conclusions appear more representative and democratic, regardless of whether the commissions actually took into account what the public or the external policy actors shared in the extended platforms. In line with the inclusive efforts, policy experts sought to draw knowledge and information from diverse sources including research groups, professional organizations, government agencies, and the institute sector. In particular, it was highlighted that organizations in the institute sector, such as the Nordic

Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) and Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), recently played an increasing role in education policymaking through the production of applied knowledge.

The interview participants also noted the systematic effort to strengthen mechanical objectivity in policy decision-making observed over the past 10 to 15 years in Norway. As discussed previously, in commission meetings, experts were expected to support their arguments by making reference to quantifiable measures or scientific literature. This tendency was particularly stronger when the chairperson of the commission was an academic. Several interviewees shared that a list of recommended literature was distributed to the commission members before the meetings, and the members were encouraged to cite the literature during the deliberation.

Compared to ad hoc advisory commissions in Norway, the structure of the U.S. congressional hearings is closer to the inclusion approach. Unlike other fields such as health and medicine, which have traditionally been more exclusive, governments' approach to educational expertise has been more open, particularly in the United States, where the federal government's role in education policymaking is minimal. As of 2021, there are only 10 active federal advisory committees under the U.S. Department of Education, which is significantly low compared to the number of advisory committees under other departments.

The U.S. government sought educational expertise widely in congressional hearings for ESSA instead. The expertise-seeking arrangement in which numerous actors and organizations shared their diverse stances reinforced the notion that the "best" knowledge would survive and vice versa. Furthermore, these congressional hearings achieved legitimacy through their transparency and openness. They were broadcast, transcribed word for word, and available to the public. However, despite this emphasis on transparency and participation, congressional hearings also have the inherent limitation that witnesses attending the hearings have been in fact carefully selected and that the congressional hearings are not truly participatory. Furthermore, by providing diverse and contrasting opinions without consensus among experts, congressional hearings not only allow but also encourage policymakers to cherry pick the information that works for their own political stances instead of selecting the most relevant knowledge.

The United States' expertise-seeking arrangement was also complemented by the other two approaches: mechanical objectivity and outsourcing. Because the structure was open-ended and did not require consensus, many academic experts who participated in the process worked to strengthen their credibility by highlighting their separation from any interest groups. Several interview participants shared that at congressional hearings they often emphasized their separation from the industry and government and that their opinions were not shaped by political associations or values. Additionally, the government outsourced many of its educational projects to the research centers at universities and colleges or research institutes to create a closer collaboration between experts and policymakers.

Remaining Uncertainties and Inequalities in Policymaking

Despite the differences discussed previously, both arrangements were designed and institutionalized to help the governments cope with uncertainty of information and legitimacy in policymaking (Fenwick et al., 2014; Maasen & Weingart, 2005). However, it is questionable whether these expertise-seeking arrangements, shaped by their political models, truly address these uncertainties. On the one hand, ad hoc advisory commissions in Norway that involve a limited number of representative and credible actors can reach policy decisions that meet various groups' interests. However, a consented decision does not mean that it is the most accurate or effective one. Policy decisions can be continuously tweaked while being mediated and bargained, and the final outcome therefore can create false certainties.

On the other hand, congressional hearings invite a variety of information sources into the policy process and increase the total amount and spectrum of information that policymakers receive. As a corollary, the institutional arrangement in the United States may promote decentralization and flexibility in policymaking and advocate inclusion and pluralism of knowledge. However, this flexibility and pluralism of knowledge can compound the political selection of knowledge and consequently increase uncertainties in policymaking.

Furthermore, another important issue that this chapter revealed concerns the inequalities embedded in each arrangement. In both expertise-seeking arrangements, organizations and actors with greater power, resources, and access were more likely to be invited by the government in the first place. For the U.S. congressional hearing attendance, there was no financial compensation or reimbursement for witnesses to testify. A few interview participants shared that they would not have been able to give testimony without financial support from their organizations. This may have prevented policy actors with limited resources from accepting the invitation to testify. In Norwegian advisory commissions, there was also hierarchy within the expert commissions. Interviewees described how actors in prestigious institutions or positions had greater influence in debates. Additionally, hard evidence (e.g., academic literature and statistics) was perceived as more valid than soft evidence (e.g., professional experience and judgment), which consequently limited the contribution of the actors who were not equipped with hard evidence or fluent in the language of science. It implies that the consented knowledge produced by commissions may not even be representative after all. The inequalities reflected in these expertise-seeking arrangements exacerbate the inequalities in the knowledge base for education reforms.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the overall picture of expertise-seeking arrangements in policymaking in Norway and the United States. Analysis of the expertise-seeking arrangements confirms the hypothesis that expertise-seeking arrangements are shaped by the political systems they are embedded in (Hustedt & Veit, 2017). The expertise-seeking arrangement in corporatist Norway integrates a selective, yet representative group of policy actors and organizations into the preparation of education reforms. Ad hoc advisory commissions in Norway limited who participated in the process to a selected number. While acknowledging the opposing views, the arrangement required the disagreement to be sorted out and have an agreed outcome, NOU. There was an institutional practice regarding the styles and format of the reports. Interestingly, academics took up a large share of the membership composition in the advisory commissions for LK20, which reflects a recent trend of scientization of Norwegian advisory commissions (e.g., Christensen & Holst, 2017). Altogether, the arrangements appear to contribute to the accumulation of knowledge through consensus. By contrast, in the pluralist U.S. model, the congressional hearing was one of the mechanisms where various knowledgeable policy actors and organizations competed with each other. The hearing was open to opposing perspectives and involved numerous interest group members in the process. No specific instruction was provided to witnesses on how to write testimonies, suggesting that the practice of how knowledge was to be presented was less coordinated. Furthermore, the role of the government was limited to witness selection. Overall, the U.S. model seemed to embrace the competition of knowledge. Both systems have their own strengths and weaknesses in addressing uncertainties and inequalities in the policy process and employ various strategies for improving their legitimacy.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the expertise-seeking process in each country is much more complex and has numerous layers. This chapter only focused on the institutionalized arrangements and examined how each arrangement was structured, who participated, and what kinds of legitimization strategies were utilized. In addition, the characteristics associated with each arrangement in this chapter was based on how they are alike in comparison to each other and are not mutually exclusive. For example, advisory commissions in Norway and congressional hearings in the United States have features that make them both open and closed. Yet, the structure and participation examined in this chapter show that the Norwegian advisory commissions had a more closed and consensus-oriented expertise-seeking approach than the U.S. congressional hearings did.

Understanding the characteristics of expertise-seeking arrangements contributes to theorizing how knowledge is sorted and utilized in education policymaking. Specifically in the context of the Nordic education model, the results of this chapter offer valuable insights into how a national knowledge base for education reforms in a Nordic country interacts with the international and regional (Nordic). Under the commission system, global policy ideas are more likely to be reshaped by the local circumstances because the final outcomes of the commissions, the NOUs, are based on consensus. Even when international experts are invited to serve on commissions, their opinions and perspectives would be recontextualized in the deliberation process. However, the commissions also sometimes function as the body that transforms international knowledge into a form of national knowledge. Indeed, previous studies have found how OECD policy ideas and recommendations were disguised and recontextualized in commission reports in Norway and Sweden (Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2022). The closed and exclusive feature of commissions may enable this national disguise of international knowledge.

Despite "indigenization" (Phillips & Ochs, 2004), the utilization of international knowledge within commissions is often explicitly stated in the form of bibliographic references in commission reports (e.g., NOUs, SOUs). Perhaps it could be considered as one of the legitimization strategies for commissions to appear as more inclusive or to borrow external legitimacy (Baek, 2022). Interestingly, however, this is not the case for regional knowledge utilization. Scholars have found that whereas expertise-seeking arrangements in Nordic countries make many international references, they do not make many regional references (Baek et al., 2022; Volmari et al., 2022). Saija Volmari and her colleagues (2022) explain that knowledge about the Nordic education model and other Nordic countries may have become an implicit body of knowledge that does not require any explicit acknowledgement and that regional knowledge does not provide as much legitimacy as international knowledge.

The findings and implications of this chapter call for further research on three aspects. First, empirical analyses of the impact of expertise-seeking arrangements on final policy output would be necessary to investigate if and to what extent knowledge produced by such arrangements actually contributes to the knowledge base for education reforms. From a critical perspective of political knowledge utilization, it is possible that governments may institutionalize the arrangements only for window dressing. Second, a historical-cultural analysis of expertise-seeking arrangements in each country would contribute to identifying deeper beliefs that shape policymakers' and experts' understanding and practice of policy knowledge utilization in each country. Third, investigations of different types of expertise-seeking arrangements utilized for the same reform would allow differentiating unique functions of each arrangement. This chapter focused on the two main expertise-seeking arrangements in education policymaking; however, there are additional non-traditional or informal arrangements where policymakers seek expertise. Future studies on such arrangements regarding their approaches in expertise-seeking, participation, and legitimization strategies would be helpful to draw a more comprehensive picture of the education policy process.

Notes

1. The Westminster system refers to the form of democratic parliamentary government modeled after that of the United Kingdom. The name, Westminster system, originated from the area where the United Kingdom's parliament is located.
2. The analysis is part of a larger research project on knowledge utilization in education policymaking (Baek, 2020).

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Part 3

Challenges

12 Trajectories of Assessment and Certification in the North

Grading and Testing Policy in Norwegian and Swedish Basic Education

Sverre Tveit & Christian Lundahl

When the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research recently appointed a committee to review examination policies, the limited research to be found on examinations in Norway was a main conclusion and concern (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). Even though it is intimately related to nation-states' curricular reforms and the modernization of education systems, few historical studies on educational assessment have been undertaken in the Nordic region (notable examples are Lundahl, 2006, 2008; Ydesen, 2011). Some have investigated the history related to grading and examinations in Norway (Jarning & Aas, 2008) and Sweden (Lundahl, 2006, 2008). However, only a few studies (e.g., Lysne, 2006) have combined historical and comparative perspectives on regulations related to formal grading and the associated national assessment instruments.[1]

The aim of this chapter is to fill this gap. By combining historical and comparative perspectives, we analyze Norway's and Sweden's implementation of national policies that moved formal grading and the associated examination and testing instruments used for certification purposes upward in the education system as the education systems expanded. We restrict the comparison mainly to the 20th century, when the assessment practices of contemporary schooling were shaped. We understand formal grading as a grade given by teachers representing the sum of many achievements and not just a single test score (Brookhart, 2015). National examinations and tests are just that: a single achievement that either is reported as a grade on a transcript in its own right or provides a substantial basis for the formal grade the teacher assigns.

Shedding light on the history of formal grading and the associated examination and testing instruments in Norwegian and Swedish basic education enables the demonstration of how tensions and dilemmas regarding grading policies have been tackled quite differently in the Nordic countries. Sweden, in particular, was more influenced by the American

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approaches to standardized testing, resulting in them being the *odd one out* in the Nordic region.

To begin, this chapter briefly frames the notion of formal grading theoretically and contextually in relation to Nordic education. In a second step, it identifies and provides an overview of the development of formal grading and the associated examination policies in Norway. Third, it outlines the corresponding developments in Sweden, including the termination of traditional examinations and the implementation of what are now known as national tests. The fourth section discusses what may explain the different developments related to national assessment instruments and the Nordic legacy of resisting early formal grading.

The Roles of Grading and the Associated Examinations and Tests

In comparison to countries with a long legacy of a significant proportion of private schools (e.g., the United Kingdom and the United States) and European countries that maintain education systems with early tracking (at the age of 10 or 11) into secondary education (e.g., Austria, most Bundesländer in Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy), in the Nordic countries, the post–World War II fights to *defer* the use of grades, examinations, and tests within an (almost entirely) public school system were a hallmark of Nordic ideals of equal opportunity and education for all. By the 1980s, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark had prohibited formal grading in most basic education systems up to the age of 14.[2]

Policies related to grading and the associated examination and testing instruments are highly contested policy fields in the Nordic region (Tveit, 2019). In Norway, a policy prohibiting formal grading in primary schools has been in place since its implementation in the 1970s. Sweden prohibited formal grading in the 1980s, but over the past decade, controversial policy processes and parliament compromises have reinstated formal grading in the last years of primary education. Currently, formal grading is mandated from Year 6, and schools may choose to implement it as early as Year 4.

Like Norway and Denmark, Sweden has a legacy of national examinations, a model whereby the teaching profession gained control over the assessment procedures and ensured fairness and trust by combining internal and external control of the judgments. In the 1930s, however, Sweden embarked on a different pattern from its Scandinavian neighbors with a larger emphasis on psychometric testing, which ultimately led to the termination of the national examinations conducted by *sensors* from the universities in 1968. Norway continued with an examination system in which teachers controlled each other's assessments (Lundahl & Tveit, 2014; Ydesen et al., 2013; Tveit, 2018).

The new Swedish instruments—now known as *national tests* (nationella prov)—were developed based on psychometric principles from the 1930s with the aim of equipping teachers with better tests for making comparable judgments about the students' levels of attainment. The tests are graded by the students' own teacher only. The results form part of the overall judgment of the students' attainment in the subject. In contrast, Norway continued the tradition of using traditional examinations in addition to overall achievement grades awarded by the teachers for each subject.[3] Examination grades are negotiated between two assessors, either two external assessors (for written national examinations) or one internal and one external assessor (for local written, oral, and practical examinations).

Grading can be considered in relation to larger social science discussions on social order and issues relating to the development of ever-larger social systems (e.g., politics and the market economy), on the one hand, and individuals' increasing freedom of action, on the other. In the early execution of grading, grades were pedagogical aids, which gradually came to be used more and more for administrative organizing purposes during the 18th and 19th centuries (Lundahl, 2018). During the 20th century, grades became an increasingly political issue (Lundahl, 2006, 2009, 2010; Hultén, 2019).

The different functions, places, and users of grades and the tensions that can arise between them are related to a number of classic issues that deal with the structure-actor relationship, institutionalization, rationalization, and reproduction (of knowledge, systems, and social positions). On a more general level, they reflect how knowledge arises, how it is used and changed, and who uses it and with what consequences. According to Durkheim, the Jesuits laid the foundation for education as a highly functional discipline: The teacher's constant presence gave the student the confidence to assert their individuality, which, in combination with a system of competition, made the student equipped for and inclined to face a differentiated society (1938/1977, p. 263).

As Parsons (1964) puts it, we can think of assessment as an institution that disciplines pupils to behave along "an axis of achievement." The function of the school as an institution is to contribute through people willing to be differentiated. Of course, this willingness preconditions fairness, and it is very much the questioning of this fairness that causes debate over who should be the legal authority to judge. The willingness to use discipline to differentiate through the tools of examinations and grades is an exercise of power and is never free of conflict.

Throughout history, the following arguments related to requirements and expectations that are attributed to a grading system have emerged in various government investigations and directives (though not necessarily in this order):

- grades are used for checking moral insight and work discipline (see church interrogations);

- grades stimulate competition, which promotes the acquisition of knowledge and makes learning enjoyable;
- grades are a fair way of allocating positions in society and places of education (the meritocratic aspect);
- grades inform the student, the parents, and the school about the student's state of knowledge;
- grades can, from the point of view of legal certainty, provide information about what the school has done and what it is obliged to do for the student's knowledge development;
- grades provide the student, teacher, school, municipality, and state with feedback on their efforts and are thus a central instrument in goal- and results-driven activity and administration;
- grades constitute information prior to selection in an open school market.

(Andersson, 1991; Lundahl, 2006; Tveit, 2019)

In the following, we look more closely at how grading and examination policies in Norway and Sweden developed from a tool for discipline into a way to think about performance-based differentiation, which, in the 20th century, took many different turns in relation to egalitarian reform agendas. We begin in the late 19th century in Norway.

The Emergence of Grading and Testing Policies in Norway

The foundations of the unified education system in Norway were laid by the philologist and educator Hartvig Nissen (1815–1874), who proposed new legislation for basic education (*Allmueskolen på landet*) that was ultimately adopted by the Norwegian parliament in 1860. Nissen crafted his own 100-paragraph draft of the Education Act, which was ultimately embraced by the parliament. Basic schooling became a right and obligation anchored in local communities rather than mainly government-run city institutions. This was a milestone towards unified basic education (Høigård & Ruge, 1971).

From Early Tracking in Year 5 to a Unified 10-Year Basic Schooling for All

Nissen's success also led to a change in the priest's role in school examinations from *administrating* to *overseeing* the exams. This marked the beginning of the detachment of the school system from the church. Seven-year basic education was legislated in Norway in 1889. In 1896, a law stipulated that four years of middle school and three years of *gymnasium* were to complement the five-year basic education. Admission to secondary schools in the early 20th century was thus undertaken after Year 5, when the students were 12 years old. Students who did not transfer to secondary schools continued for two more years of basic education.

The secondary schools were for the privileged class (Lysne, 1999), but unlike Sweden, Norway had neither a nobility (*adel*) nor a substantial financial elite. This implied less need for a designated school system for the privileged class than in Sweden. The fight for unified schooling (*enhetsskole*)—pushed by progressive educators such as Anna Sethne—was, in Norway, above all about terminating the tracked school system for Years 6 and 7. When the parliament decided in 1914 that only middle schools that admitted students who had completed seven years of primary school would receive national funding, this was the beginning of an incremental change toward new arrangements for qualification from primary to secondary school. The new arrangement, with seven years of unified primary schooling as the basis for three years of middle school, was legislated in 1935 (Dale, 2008).

With unified seven-year basic schooling for all achieved, the fight for equal opportunity for all children shifted to extending the length of unified basic education. In 1959, legislation allowed municipalities to begin unified and compulsory nine-year education. This was legislated as a mandatory arrangement 10 years later. Thus, starting in the 1960s, Norway had a unified nine-year school system (expanded to 10 years in 1997) that concluded with exit examinations and the teachers' determination of overall achievement grades for subjects as the basis for qualification to tracked secondary schools at the age of 15.

Grading and Examination Procedures Throughout the 20th Century

Jarning and Aas (2008) noted that the *Examen Artium* in Norway and Denmark (legislated in 1809) and the *Studentexsamen* in Sweden and Finland (legislated in 1824) are functional equivalents of the German *Abitur* and the French *Baccalauréat*. They belong to what Müller et al. (1986) characterized as patterns of key national educational institutions of liberal modernity. These examinations are foundational elements of modern education systems.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the 1889 legislation for urban and rural basic schools did not require schools to offer exit examinations (Lysne, 1999). At that time, it was the overall achievement grade determined by teachers that was the required basis for qualification to further education. For upper secondary schools, however, the Examen Artium was the most significant gatekeeper. As these exam sites were located at universities, the university level maintained control of the certification procedures of secondary schools. In 1884, the Examen Artium was transferred to approved secondary schools, a major and significant recognition of secondary teachers' professional expertise (Lysne, 1999).

In the *Report to Parliament 4 (1902–1903)*, the government proposed a joint grading scale for middle school examinations and the Examen Artium. To qualify for further education, students were required to have performed at least fairly satisfactorily in the subjects. Some exemptions ensured that a poor result in one subject could be offset by good results in the other examinations (Lysne, 1999). With no national examinations and thus only formal grades as the certification procedure in basic schools, teachers' capacity to make comparable judgments was called into question. Ribsskog and other educators undertook a comprehensive evaluation of various types of tests and grading practices from 1935 to 1941. The evaluation identified problems related to grade inflation (Lysne, 1999). To fight grade inflation, the national curriculum of 1939 (Normalplan for byfolkeskolen, 1939) followed the example of secondary school policies, mandating that, over time and over large student groups, the allocation of grades should have the following normal distribution between excellent (4%), very good (24%), good (44%), good enough (24%), and not very good (4%).

Ambivalence of the Grading Regulations for Secondary Education

The second half of the 20th century saw increased dissatisfaction with the grading procedures. The Attempts Council for Schools (*Forsøksrådet for skoleverket*), established in 1954, performed the role of a permanent school commission for 30 years and was a powerful institution in Norwegian school administration (Telhaug & Haugaløkken, 1984). In 1960, the council reviewed and proposed assessment regulations to accompany the curriculum. Their grading guidelines were subject to two kinds of influence:

- the ambition to establish more coherence between schools' goals, the curriculum, teaching materials, and assessment, largely inspired by innovations in American education;
- calls for limiting the practices of formal grading.

This created a dilemma that was reflected in the council's principal guidelines for educational assessment in nine-year comprehensive schools. These guidelines included the following statements:

1. The nine-year school needs, in accordance with its teaching and upbringing principles, a far more versatile assessment than what has been practiced in Norwegian basic education. Several aspects of the students should come to expression.
2. The control function of assessment should be reduced to the practical minimum in favor of assessments of an advisory nature. The

assessment of students' development should not only be relative to other students but also based on personal growth.

3. Subject areas that belong together in terms of teaching should, as far as possible, be subject to an overall assessment.
4. The evaluation should be made as reliable as possible. This applies to both the controlling and the advisory function.

(Melding om forsøk i skolen, 1960–1961, as cited in Lysne, 1999, p. 172)

These principles foreshadowed the disputes over formal grading in secondary education that came to dominate education policy discourse in the 1970s. In both Norway and Sweden, there were strong advocates for abolishing formal grading altogether during this decade. In Norway, two official committees (known as EVA1 and EVA2) reviewed grading regulations and proposed prohibiting formal grading in lower secondary (Years 6–9) and upper secondary schools. However, these attempts fell short of addressing plausible alternatives for qualifying students for further education (Lysne, 2004).

The disputes over formal grading in the 1970s did, however, have far-reaching implications for the basis for determining overall achievement grades in secondary education. They substantiated skepticism towards explicitly stated learning objectives that could be measured and controlled. This became a notion that both left- and right-wing governments complied with when revising the curricula in the 1980s and 1990s (Tveit, 2014).

Changes to Grading Policies in the New Millennium

The 2006 Norwegian curriculum reform entailed a move to an outcomes-based education system with subject curricula stating competence aims. By default, this implied more emphasis on defining the basis for grading students' achievements. It brought an end to the concept of holistic competence, a principle associated with skepticism towards learning objectives. According to the ministry, holistic competence had brought uncertainty regarding the basis of formal grading (Report to Parliament no. 30, 2003–2004).

In both the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate of Education and Training, there were considerable disagreements as to how to approach the *criteria dilemma*. While the most influential teachers' union, Union of Education Norway, opposed further national regulation of grading, many teachers and schools called for more national support to determine assessment criteria and grade levels (Hopfenbeck et al., 2012; Prøitz & Spord Borgen, 2010; Tveit, 2014). Ultimately, the new curricula were introduced without accompanying assessment criteria and standards.

This skepticism towards national mandatory criteria has a solid basis in the education sector in Norway and, in particular, the teachers' unions. The rejection of standardized testing as a basis for grading and the prohibition of formal grading in primary schools should be understood in view of this skepticism. During the first two decades of the new millennium, two periods of majority governments (left wing 2005–2013; right wing 2013–2021) consolidated the now more than 50-year-old policy of prohibiting formal grading in primary and lower secondary education. This is in contrast to Sweden, which, over the past two decades, has legislated earlier formal grading. To understand these differences, we need to come to terms with the historical circumstances of grading and testing policies in Sweden, which is the topic of the next section.

The Emergence of Grading and Testing Policies in Sweden

In Sweden, the fight to ensure education for all represented more fundamental structural changes to the education system, and new grading policies were put in place during the 20th century to support this reform process. A public elementary school system was constituted in Sweden in 1842 and formally took over the position of parish schools and church education. The Church, however, continued to exercise great influence over not only school content but also its teaching and assessment traditions. The assessments in primary and lower secondary schools were largely based on rote learning and oral interrogations. However, as time went by, the assessments were gradually formalized into grades based on the needs of working life.

Grading Policies Through the First Half of the 20th Century

Primary schools initially lacked the motives for examinations and final grades that had long existed within secondary educational institutions. The oral interrogations that were held in primary schools were strongly linked to homework instead. Grading had been practiced in compulsory schooling for a long time, but it was the stricter rules against the use of minors (under 12 years) in industry in 1900 that had an impact on grading (Westling, 1911). Industries were not allowed to employ children who did not have a graduation certificate. The requirements for a final grade from primary and lower secondary schools in order to be employed contributed, together with the introduction of classes and syllabi, to the formalization of primary and lower secondary schools' final grades. Final examinations aiming at graduation had been used since 1877, and, in 1882, it was regulated that the final grade should be given for insight, skills, diligence, and behavior. Graduation grades and specific grades for knowledge, skills, diligence, and behavior were introduced as a result of the 1897 statute for public education.

In 1862, new secondary school policies stipulated that high school teachers' assessments were to be combined with those of external examiners. The new examination order meant that the final degree replaced both the old final examination and the universities' entrance examinations. This new degree changed its name in 1878 to the *maturity degree* and in 1905 to the *student degree* (Sjöstedt & Thorén, 1963, p. 9).

According to the Examination Order of 1862, the teachers themselves would grade the students based on written tests. The censors then participated in oral interrogations of the students in a kind of supervisory function. If their opinions differed from those of the teachers, the censors had a casting vote. In upper secondary schools, co-assessors were also appointed; as a result, before the external examiners entered the assessment, the staff had first unanimously—or by a two-thirds majority—decided on the student's grades. In other words, the system can be seen as a form of *hierarchical internal control*. Until it was replaced in the 1960s, this arrangement remained largely unchanged, with just some minor adjustments in favor of the upper secondary school teachers. For example, from 1910 onward, it became more and more difficult for censors to reject students who had been previously approved by teachers (Sjöstedt & Thurén, 1963).

Unifying the Educational System With the Help of National Tests

In the early 1940s, the ecclesiastical minister Gösta Bagge (1882–1951) suggested creating a comprehensive school system for primary and lower secondary schools, with a simplified transition to upper secondary for those who were able to attend. An important part of creating the comprehensive school thus became the standardization of primary school teachers' grading to replace entrance exams for higher-level studies. The secondary school teachers, however, had low confidence in the primary school teachers' grades, but—they claimed—if it were possible to ensure that these grades were of high quality, then the grades could be accepted for selection. At the time, experiments with standardized tests had been ongoing since the 1930s, not least through the work of Frits Wigforss (1886–1953), a lecturer in mathematics, but these were now intensified. In 1944, the State Psychological Pedagogical Institute was founded with, among other responsibilities, the task of producing scientifically based national standardized tests.

It was not until 1962, however, that the comprehensive school saw the light of day, and in this context, these kinds of standardized tests really came into use. At that time, the work of producing the tests had been transferred to the Stockholm Institute of Education (Lärarhögskolan i

Stockholm) and Professor Torsten Husén. Husén had a background at the Military Psychological Institute, where he mainly worked with intelligence and proficiency tests. Husén and the group of researchers with whom he worked clearly stated that their tests would guarantee objective results (Husén et al., 1956). It was decided that the grades given in comprehensive school would be standardized with the help of national tests. This was carried out using a normal distribution curve based on how students in the country performed on the national tests. This system came to be called the *relative grading system*, and it was applied between 1962 and 1994 in primary schools and from 1966 to 1995 in upper secondary schools. The grades were given in numbers from 1 to 5. Grade 5 corresponded to the 7% of the country's students who had performed best in the current academic year, Grade 4 to the next 24%, Grade 3 to the next 38%, Grade 2 to the next 24%, and Grade 1 to the weakest 7% in the course. The idea was that the national tests would only be indicative of how teachers should distribute grades, but many teachers mechanically followed the distribution for both national tests and their own tests.

During the 1970s, there was criticism in Sweden that the governing of education was diffuse, manipulative, and rigid. Indeed, a social movement that fought against formal grading grew strong (Lundahl, 2006, 2020). In relation to the new curriculum in 1980, formal grading was abandoned in the early years and only assigned in Years 8 and 9. Initially, the idea was to abandon formal grading completely in compulsory schooling so long as admission to gymnasium was open to every child. The decision to abandon grading in the lower parts of compulsory schooling was supported by the Liberal Party but also embraced by the Social Democrat Party. The conservatives opposed this development from the start, arguing that competing for grades was good for motivation and that grades provided solid information to parents on their children's performances in school.

By the mid-1990s, the system of regulating grades with national tests had lost its legitimacy. It was considered too instrumental and was accused of focusing too much on student comparison and competition. A new goal-referenced grading system was thus developed in which students would compare themselves not primarily with other students but with the national standards. An advantage of the goal-referenced grading system, which was based on the national grading criteria stipulated in the curriculum and syllabi, was—it was said—that the grades could be used for the purposes of schools' goal fulfillment (Lundahl, 2006).

The objection was raised that such grades were not so good for selection (Ds [Department Text], 1990, p. 6). However the new goal-referenced grading system was introduced in the mid-1990s in both primary and secondary education. These grades were supposed to be rather low-stakes for students. The state envisioned that all students would be prepared for a place in upper secondary school as long as they had the approved grades, so no selection procedure would be needed in lower secondary school.

Furthermore, the Swedish scholastic aptitude test (SWE-SAT),[4] which had been developed on behalf of the state to function as a complement to grades since 1977, would be increasingly used for university qualification. However, acceptance through the SWE-SAT has been far less than the grading committee had in mind in 1990 (DS, 1990), so grades remain a high-stakes matter in upper secondary education.

Multipurposed High-Stakes Grading in the New Millennium

Following the policy reforms of the 1990s, students were admitted to upper secondary school based on grades rather than proximity to home. Just as upper secondary school grades matter a great deal for further university and college studies, grading in compulsory schooling shapes the possibilities for upper secondary school choice. Grades, therefore, have become indicators that affect schools' attractiveness, competitiveness, and status.

When Sweden adopted an outcomes- and accountability-based school system in the early 1990s, students' grades were used to assess the quality of schools. Since the market-based school system of Sweden builds on a voucher system where every child is *worth* money for a school, there are, allegedly, incitements for schools to give overly high grades. Several studies have shown that there has been grade inflation in Sweden over the last few decades (Tyrefors Hinnerich & Vlachos, 2017; Skolverket, 2019). This has affected the purpose of the national tests. In the beginning of the 1990s, there was a discussion within the school agencies about eliminating the national tests, but they were kept in order to inspire teachers on how to work with the curriculum and assess pupils. This was the tests' new main purpose until 2011, when they were given a more regulating purpose. In 2018, this purpose was turned into a function stipulating that the results of the national tests are supposed to be given a higher weight than teachers' own assessments of the same topic. In 2021, the National Agency of Education proposed a model that recounts the formal merits of pupils based on the average standard of their school's achievements on national tests. This would be a way of returning to relative grading but at a school level.

The return of grading in primary schools can be understood in view of the past decades' movement towards an outcomes- and accountability-based school system. Voices have been raised regarding the need to better evaluate the progress of the lower years. In particular, following the poor PISA results of 2006–2012, reform measures were taken to increase the regulating function of grades through an expanded grading scale reaching from "E" to "A" with "A" as the highest grade and with grades starting in Year 6 instead of Year 8. As of 2021, it is also optional for schools to give formal grades starting from Year 4. Despite strong opposition from teachers, formal grading has returned to Swedish primary education.

The Shifting Grading and Testing Policies of Norway and Sweden

The previous analysis sheds light on how the ideology of comprehensive schooling shaped the grading and testing policies of Norway and Sweden. It enabled moving formal grading higher up in the education system, but the ever-more comprehensive education system inevitably implied more competitive selection procedures higher up in the system. The teacher's role in certification and selection of students is significantly larger than, for instance, in the United Kingdom or the United States, where external instruments (A-levels and SAT tests, respectively) are the most significant gatekeepers.

This *double mandate* of both supporting and controlling student learning continues to spark tensions and conflicts regarding the teacher's role. It can be seen as a paradox that these Nordic countries, with their legacy of opposing responsibility for formal grading in compulsory education, rely largely on high-stakes teacher judgments for their secondary education certification procedures. This ambivalence—being reluctant to embrace the early grading of students while insisting that the responsibility for formal grading should be kept in secondary education—continues to spark conflict regarding the teacher's role.

Two main developments related to testing and grading policies, both of which manifest Sweden as the *odd one out* in the Nordic education model, warrant further discussion. We start by addressing possible explanations to the countries' vastly different approaches to standardized testing.

Different Approaches to Standardized Testing

Lundahl (2008) observed that participation in the International Examination Inquiry (IEI) study in the 1930s helped Swedish researchers and policymakers argue for the need for a modern institution bringing science and educational practices closer together. The psychometric expertise in Sweden emerged under great influence from American scholars in the IEI study and beyond. The State Psychological and Pedagogical Institute (SPPI) was established in 1944 to develop psychometric competence in Sweden with the specific notion that "one important task for the Institute should be to develop new forms of tests that could substitute the entrance tests" (Lundahl & Waldow, 2009, p. 172).

In the subsequent decades, the SPPI was a key institution in the termination of Swedish entrance examinations as part of the reforms in the 1960s when Sweden unified its parallel school system into comprehensive schools (Lundahl, 2009, 2019). Lundahl and Waldow (2009) observed that the SPPI played an important role "as a producer and mediator of a standardised language; connecting diverging interests and creating the techniques to sustain an individualised and meritocratic education" (p. 368). The new standardized tests became the solution for the need to standardize primary school teachers' grading so that it could replace entrance examinations for higher studies. The utilization of psychometric tests was believed to provide more comparable measures and thus gave legitimacy to a transition during which teachers were given more responsibility for grading based on tests developed through psychometric scientific principles.

In Norway, the problems associated with the comparability of grades were overshadowed by skepticism towards the grading function per se. Whereas in Sweden the responsibility became institutionalized in new expert institutions, in Norway, the problems were dealt with in committees and councils with closer ties to the political governance of education. They acted on wide political and professional skepticism towards educational measurement especially in the 1960s and 1970s.

The main institution where new methodological expertise in standardized testing was developed in Norway was the Department of Educational Research (Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt) at the University of Oslo. Johannes Sandven—Norway's Husén—led this department from 1950 to 1972, with the aim of establishing an institutional environment for psychometric testing. While in Sweden the new psychometric tests played an instrumental role in ensuring unified education for all, and the measurement experts had close professional collaborations with school administrators and teachers, in Norway, Sandven and his colleagues worked more with secondary schooling and the academic disciplines (e.g., educational psychology) and had weaker ties to the teaching profession (Jarning, 2009; Jarning & Aas, 2008). In the late 1960s, controversies over the establishment of educational measurement as an academic discipline occurred in conjunction with the democratization of and increased student influence on university policies (Helsvig, 2005). Sandven had to step down in 1972, which manifested the successful opposition to standardized testing. The department's expertise in educational measurement became institutionalized in relation to study programs qualifying students to work (e.g., in psychological counseling services). This expertise was not used in relation to teacher grading, educational certification, or school administration, as in Sweden.

The Nordic Legacy of Resisting Early Formal Grading

The other main point for discussion that this comparative analyses warrants concerns how we should understand the skepticism toward early formal grading in Nordic education and the possible reasons for why it has been sustained in Norway while in Sweden early grading is in the process of returning. As we have seen, the successful expansion of the comprehensive school system enabled deferring the use of formal grades until Year 8 in both Norway and Sweden. Similar developments occurred in Denmark. This policy relied on the wide consensus that while grades can stimulate motivation for high-achieving students, they can undermine the motivation of low-achieving students (Klapp, 2015; Högberg et al., 2021). Including and catering to the low-achieving students have been the priority. Furthermore, teachers find grading highly difficult, and grading procedures steal time that teachers could otherwise use for teaching (Mickwitz, 2021; Falkenberg, 2021).

Nordic educators often face questions from educators elsewhere as to how it is possible not to grade students. How does the student know what is required to move on in their learning? The answer to this question sheds light on the practices of what some call informal grading, whereby students get feedback on their goal attainment and what they need to do to improve. In this case, the absence of formal and standardized procedures determining level of attainment enables teachers to adapt their feedback more to the individual student.

A 2010 reform by the conservative government started Sweden's break from the tradition of opposing formal grading in the primary years. The reform was undertaken even though rigorous investigations had demonstrated that grades did not really serve learning or communication with parents and despite the fact that a majority of the Swedish people were against the reintroducation of early grading (Lundahl, 2020). When reintroduced, there was really no public support for early grading, and there was still no evidence that it helped learning or communication with parents. The policy shift can be understood in view of the PISA shock in Sweden in 2006 when results were falling, followed by poor results in the two subsequent PISA measurements (Tveit & Lundahl, 2018). This created a crisis during which liberal and conservative politicians were able to reintroduce the arguments they had already made in the 1970s and 1980s concerning the motivating nature of high demands on younger children. Accompanied by a misunderstanding of other countries' early grading and its relation to high PISA scores, they managed to turn the clock backwards in a way that was at odds with contemporary research related to the Assessment for Learning movement that challenged education cultures which placed high emphasis on formal grading (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998). The most recent change, which gives schools the option to choose whether they assign formal grades in Years 4 and 5, does not reflect a shift from centralized administration to school autonomy; rather, it was a political compromise by the social democratic government, which disagreed with the parliamentary majority who wanted to mandate earlier formal grading. The grading system has now, perhaps more than ever, become the center of a politics of knowledge in Sweden (Hultén, 2019).

Conclusion

What explains the reasons why governments in the Nordic countries have been inclined to reduce and prohibit formal grading, while in most other countries such a reduction would be seen as utopian? Here we can only speculate. We do not think that any of the dilemmas related to the use of grades addressed in this chapter are unique to the Nordic countries. What is somewhat unique, however, is that, following the expansion of the comprehensive school systems after World War II, grades were no longer needed until the transfer from lower to upper secondary school. Grading has been perceived by many as a "necessary evil." As grading was no longer necessary due to the expansion of comprehensive school systems, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark cleared away grades in Years 1–7, well before grades and testing were put to use in accountability policies to a greater or lesser extent throughout the world from the 1990s onward. The return of early formal grading in Sweden can to some extent probably be explained by schools' stronger accountability and the associated school inspection policies in which the main role of formal grading has shifted from the purposes of disciplining, informing, and motivating individual students to controlling the school and the teachers.

In Parson's functionalist view of the examination system, the valuation must be perceived as fair in order for it to be accepted (1964, pp. 143–145). The school has several structures that ensure that the valuation is perceived as fair. Children/students are socialized into the notion that the adult/teacher, by virtue of their higher knowledge, can make a fair assessment of the child's/student's actions. According to Parsons, the fundamental value of equal opportunities embodies the opportunity for different results. Different results are more easily accepted based on the notion that *we had at least the same chance*. This fundamental value of equal opportunities is consolidated, as we interpret Parsons, by the ability to care for the weak: Our judgment is fair, we follow fair procedures, and we treat you fairly afterwards; we certainly reward the strong, but do not say we do not care about the loser. In Parson's words, "the valuation pattern must be tempered" (1964, p. 144).

Expressed in other words, in school, an institutionalized solidarity arises towards differentiation whereby different achievements are valued differently. Knowledge and morals, or grades and care, could not exist without each other in the modern school. Morality turns knowledge and its pursuit into virtue. Care, like alms, tempers the tension between winner and loser.

However, in reality, it has been shown over and over again that the idea of a comprehensive school based on justice and fairness has been really difficult to achieve in Norway and Sweden. Even when given equal opportunities, children will react individually (Klapp, 2015; Högberg et al., 2021). We also know that teachers and even parents have different views on grading practices and on fairness (Falkenberg, 2021; Vogt, 2021). Moreover, we know that there are incommensurable ideals for a moral upbringing, with some parents and politicians believing that the child should be allowed to be a child for as long as possible and not be subjected to others' judgments. At the same time, others believe that children need to adapt and take responsibility early on for their performance. Needless to say, factors such as this make grading possibly the most political aspect of education, leading to a constant struggle for reform.

Notes

1. Ydesen et al. (2013) examined the history of standardized testing in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, but this study did not include research into grading and examinations.
2. Since 2011, Sweden has reintroduced formal grading for Years 6 and 7 (ages 12–13), and since 2021, it is optional for schools to offer grades for Years 4 and 5.
3. Since the introduction of a new national testing program in 2004, Norwegian compulsory education also has a form of national test (*nasjonale prøver*) that tests the students' skills in reading, English, and mathematics. This is not part of the basis for grading and certification.
4. For admission to higher education in Sweden, it is possible for institutions to combine grade results with a scholastic aptitude test (SWE-SAT). The regulation says that about one third of the students should be accepted based on grades, one third by SWE-SAT, and one third by locally formed rules (SFS 1993, p. 100).

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13 From Knowledge to Skills and Competence

Epistemic Reconfiguration in Nordic Basic Education, 1980–2020

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With a start well before the millennium, clusters of educational reforms have moved comprehensive schooling in the Nordic countries beyond earlier national settlements. After their success with a unified basic school without tracking in the 1960s and 1970s, further debate grew on issues of inner school reform. A range of issues targeting the inner workings of schools and teaching grew strong, among them a focus on epistemic reconfiguration. The epistemic deliberations acted as a gate to the coming generations of curriculum and school reforms. In this chapter, epistemic reconfiguration is presented with schooling in the cases of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The chapter explores how the reconfiguration of schooling in epistemic terms came to play a seminal role in forming a series of national reforms starting in the 1980s and in the transnational turn of educational policies during the most recent decades. Thus, this chapter follows how revised approaches to the knowledge axis of schooling have guided reforms of common and post-compulsory schooling and changed Nordic universalist educational traditions on a number of issues.

Common features of these clusters of school reforms have included shifts of knowledge visions, agendas, and settlements beyond political party blocks and new ways of setting standards by expanding national and local curriculum work. From the national trajectories of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, key differences are seen in the extent to which educational choice, and related mechanisms such as educational markets or quasi-markets, have been part of this reconfiguration. Sources used include school acts, national curriculum guidelines, and green papers, as well as examples from the growing amount of international tests, evaluations, public debates, and scholarly work. In the conclusion, we identify key concerns closely linked to small state challenges of the rising strategic knowledge agendas, as seen from the three country cases.

We argue that the epistemic reconfiguration perspective represents aspects that complement the understanding of the expansion of education

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over these years beyond the formalism of much earlier research, where changes in framing, decentralization, neoliberalism, individualism, and school choice were dominant perspectives in explanations (Dovemark et al., 2018; Lundahl, 2016; Dorf, 2018).[1] We do not argue that the many shades of this interlinked expansion and educationalization are solely directed by the epistemic agendas. Instead, we argue that knowledge issues and more cross-sectoral reform issues clearly intertwine and accompany each other in the overall changes.

Epistemic Agendas During the Rise of the Long Schooling for All

Sweden

The great transformation of the Swedish school system in the postwar decades did not come without problems. Heated public debates were seen in the media already in the 1960s. These were mostly focusing on the lack of discipline and order in classrooms and the lack of appropriate pedagogical methods for tackling the new situation with the comprehensive schools. In the 1970s, a big state commission was launched in order to deal with the internal problems of the new common—primary and secondary—school. The final report from the commission, with its emphasis on the social and pedagogical issues, created heated debates.[2] Some saw the focus of the report itself as a sign of a degrading school system, where all that was important was the social side of education, while issues concerning the academic content of schooling and learning were neglected. It was in this context that Sweden, at the end of the 1970s, saw a short and intense debate on *knowledge* (Hultén, 2021). The question of knowledge must be brought to the forefront of the educational agenda, debaters argued. Even though this debate was reflected in an increased rhetoric on knowledge in political discourse in the early 1980s, it did not immediately transform into new educational policy (Bergström, 1993).

However, during the late 1980s, as the efficiency of public government came into focus more broadly under the influence of new public management, educational policy became one of the targets. In a bill from 1988, the Social Democrat Minister of Education, Bengt Göransson, concluded that the

> system for governance applied so far has been successful in terms of organizationally changing the school system. However, this has not led to teaching being conducted to the desired extent in the way that the parliament and the government have stated in curricula and other legal documents.
>
> (Prop. 1988/89:4, 1988, p. 8)

The reason for this, Göransson argued, was the static influence of tradition (*wisdom of practice*)—what elsewhere has been called *the grammar of schooling*.[3] Finding more effective ways to govern education—to find more powerful ways to make educational policy more influential in practice—became a central theme in the 1990s' reforms, and it is in this context in which knowledge surfaces as an important concept in formulating the new educational policies.

Introducing Learning Outcomes

The Swedish school reforms of the 1990s were part of a restructuring of the whole public sector, with overarching aims to introduce flexibility, alternatives, and choice. This change enabled decentralization and deregulation. The reforms of the 1990s opened up the school system for marketization, with private providers, school choice, and a voucher system. The school choice reform meant that children were no longer assigned to a school based on their residential address but, within certain limits, could freely choose a school. At the same time, the power of the state and national governing bodies were shifted to the local level, to municipalities, and to private providers. A new governing body, the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), was introduced to replace the old National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen*). Whereas the board had been the almighty authority on education, the new agency was to "stay at the municipal border" and only influence through soft governing, by providing information about the schools to the local providers (Magnusson, 2018, p. 105).

The educational reforms of the 1990s coincided with renewed interest in the concept of knowledge, politically as well as scholarly (Hultén, 2019, 2021; Wahlström & Sundberg, 2015). In Sweden, what was specifically addressed among the debaters was a belief that education (*utbildning*) was first and foremost conceptualized through other concepts than knowledge, notably, as fostering (*fostran*). They blamed the comprehensive postwar school reforms for a shift away from knowledge, thus echoing the debates of the late 1970s.

The explicit use of the concept of knowledge in shaping the curriculum and assessment system in the 1990s marks a shift in how knowledge had been addressed in educational policy. As Wahlström and Sundberg (2015) argue, the "question of knowledge was at the centre of the preparatory work for the construction of the [1994] curriculum" (p. 8), and a whole chapter was devoted to "knowledge and learning" in the concluding committee report, *Skola för Bildning* (SOU 1992:94). Ingrid Carlgren, an educational scholar who worked for the committee, wrote the chapter. Deliberations on the conceptualization of knowledge had never been part of any previous curriculum reform in Sweden (Gustavsson, 2002). This was in stark contrast to committee work that had formed the previous foundations for the school system, the 1946 School Commission, where education (*fostran*) and the role of the school in a democratic society served as central themes in the analysis (see SOU 1948:27).

An ambition with the conceptualizations of knowledge presented by Carlgren in *Skola för Bildning* was to bridge previous divides in national curricula between knowledge and skills (*förmåga*). The new conception was said to encompass four forms of knowledge: facts, understanding (*förståelse*), skills (*förmåga*), and familiarity (*förtrogenhet*), thus presenting a more comprehensive knowledge-concept than previous national curricula. The new conception formed the basis for a new national curricula where not only more elaborate objectives (*mål*) were presented but also learning outcomes (*uppnåendemål*) specifying the levels of knowledge standards in different school subjects that the pupils were to reach (as opposed to previous curricula that emphasized content standards and where objectives had only been formulated on a more comprehensive level). An accompanying accountability system was designed around the learning outcomes, as these were linked to a grading system where minimum grade levels for the students to achieve were specified (Hultén, 2019).

In public debate, the new outcome-oriented grading system quickly became seen as the true measure of the performance of the school system, with the big numbers of failing students causing fierce debate (Hultén, 2019; Wahlström, 2002). Even though the new curriculum also included other objectives than those captured by the new grading system formulated in a so-called value foundation, these more overarching aims of schooling slowly faded into the background of both political and public debate. Thus, to put it bluntly, the broad reconceptualization of the objectives of the school system in terms of knowledge together with the new accountability system led to a reduced understanding of the main tasks of the school system in terms of measurable learning outcomes.

A Second Wave of Outcome-Based Reforms

As in its neighboring countries, the Swedish school reforms of the early 1990s were followed by a second reform period during the first decades of the 2000s (ca. 2005–2014). When the international large-scale assessment systems were gaining attraction in the early 2000s, they fitted nicely into what was already an outcome- and performance-oriented understanding of the results of the school system. In 2007–2008, the PISA-crisis hit Sweden and gave further momentum to the already ongoing reforms. Sweden has attested to a declining performance on both TIMSS and PISA since 2000. Where the 1990s reforms have been described as giving much freedom to municipalities and private providers, the reforms of the 2000s successively introduced a stronger state, rule-based governing, and increased school inspection (Magnusson, 2018). In 2011, a new national curriculum was introduced, further strengthening the emphasis on outcomes as compared to the previous curriculum and reintroducing content standards on top of this. Making pupils achieve the learning outcomes (in what the 2011 national curriculum referred to as "knowledge criteria"—*kunskapskrav*) specified in the curriculum and linked to the grading system has become a central part of teachers' activities. But it seems to be an activity that pays little attention to what is important to learn, how to identify what is important to learn, and how to set up the teaching to get there (Florin Sädbom, 2015).

Alongside the second wave of outcome-based reforms, Sweden has seen a growing influence of EU-educational policy, with emphasis on competency-based curricula. However, even though there has been some alignment with the European knowledge discourse, several core concepts have been reconceptualized and given a different meaning in the Swedish context (Nordin & Sundberg, 2016). For example, competencies are being translated to skills (*förmåga/färdighet*), a concept with a long tradition in the Swedish curriculum, which might explain why a shift from a focus on knowledge in specific school subjects to more general competencies was not as significant in Swedish policy as in other EU countries, such as Denmark.

The second wave of reforms, leading up to the 2011 national curriculum, further contributed to the epistemic reconfiguration of the Swedish primary and secondary school system. A thorough analysis of the curriculum objectives and outcomes formed the basis of the revision of the national curriculum with the aim of developing a system with clearer objectives and outcomes (SOU 2007:28). As noted earlier, the notion of knowledge was seen as based on four different knowledge aspects (facts, understanding, skills, and familiarity). Analysis was made by the committee into what percent of each aspect was present in the current curriculum as well as which types of concepts and expressions were used to express different aspects (SOU 2007:28). The aim was to narrow down the totality of expressions used and to reevaluate the balance between different knowledge aspects in the curriculum. What we see in the committee work behind the 2011 national curriculum is a generic analysis of knowledge decoupled from subject specific knowledge and later turned into a new standards and objectives architecture in the curriculum of 2011. Scholarly analysis shows that what we see being introduced with the 2011 national curriculum is an instrumental notion of knowledge (Wahlström & Sundberg, 2015).

In the years following the 2011 curriculum reform, Sweden saw a growing debate focusing on the view of knowledge (*kunskapssyn*) that the curriculum is based on and how this view has influenced PISA scores (Hultén, 2019). Arguments in favor of a narrow concept of knowledge, which is focusing on facts, are being raised and also heard. Facts are portrayed as the most important knowledge component (i.e., generating the highest scores in PISA). Thus, what started as a broad take on an epistemic reconfiguration of the Swedish school system in the 1990s has slowly transformed into a narrow and instrumentalized notion of schooling, aligning with an international (e.g., PISA) knowledge agenda (Pereyra et al., 2011).

Denmark

The question of epistemic reconfiguration has been part of recurrent tensions between postwar progressivism, neoliberalism, and national cultural conservatism that have been significant during the last 40 years of educational reforms in Denmark. As in Norway, political initiatives to strengthen the focus on knowledge acquisition were already taken in 1982 by the new Conservative–Liberal coalition government that remained in power until 1993. Since then, the Danish *Folkeskole*, the public basic school, has gone through three major school reforms, in 1993, 2006 and 2014. Although in rather different ways, all of these reforms focused on the status, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge and skills in school education. As in Sweden, the first period of reforms during the 1990s was followed by a second and more profound reform period initiated by the Liberal–Conservative government in 2001 in the wake of the first PISA results that same year and the transnational turn in educational policies.

Modernization and Decentralization

The starting point for these reforms was a policy for the "modernization of the public sector" launched already in 1982. From the end of the 1980s, accountability policies were gradually introduced as strategies in the modernization program that was carried out by the new Social Democrat coalition government from 1993 to 2001. During the period from 1982 to 1993, Bertel Haarder from the Liberal Party was the agenda-setting minister of education, the first minister in the Conservative–Liberal coalition government, and later again from 2005 to 2010 in the Liberal coalition government. Haarder was a fierce critic of the earlier progressive educational policy, and his first action was to dissolve the former Central Education Council, which was founded in the 1970s and represented the progressivist social democratic tradition of the postwar period. Throughout his periods as minister of education, he was engaged in strengthening the national, cultural core subjects: Danish language, history, and Christianity (Telhaug, 2003, as cited in Slagstad, 2003, p. 283; Dorf, 2018). Simultaneously, as a liberal, he was in favor of decentralization, variety, and freedom of school choice, and he was enthusiastic in his support for the special Danish tradition of free independent schools. However, he also ensured that Danish schools participated in international programs for measurement and comparison of student performance, and later, after the turn of the millennium, he strongly supported a centralized administration of subject matters as well as the establishment of a national curriculum and national tests.

During the early 1990s, the Conservative–Liberal government enacted a decentralization of the school system. In 1989, school boards were established to strengthen the influence of parents as customers and users, and parents were given a free choice between local municipal schools and a state-subsidized free school. Freedom of school choice, however, has never been a major political issue due to the firm Danish tradition, dating from the 19th century, of non-profit free schools based on state subsidized civil society initiatives. Although the numbers of free schools and private schools have been rising to the point where they cover nearly 20% of all school-attending children today, the public primary school still occupies the central role as the national institution for both value and educational formation.

The 1993 Reform of the Danish School—From Teaching to Learning and Competencies

A central ambition of the 1993 school reform was not to strengthen subject matters but to promote the development of the individual student as a person as well as a democratic citizen.

> The school shall prepare pupils for active participation, joint responsibility, rights, and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore build on intellectual freedom [*åndsfrihed*], equal status [*ligeværd*], and democracy.
>
> (Folketinget, 1993, § 1)

In a sense, this summarizes the values embodied in the Danish constitution and promotes the idea of democracy as a way of life.

However, the 1993 act was followed by a ministerial order, *Central Areas of Knowledge and Skills* (CFK), that was mandatory and marked the beginning of a stronger centralized management of subject matter in anticipation of the establishment of a national curriculum in 2004 (Dorf, 2018). The decisive catalyst for this turn towards centralized objectives of knowledge appeared in 1994 with the results of a *Reading and Literacy Study* from 1991 conducted by the IEA. The study showed that Danish third graders ranked surprisingly low in terms of both reading speed and reading confidence, and they joined the ranks of children from Togo and Trinidad and Tobago in these subjects. The IEA-study has since gone down in the annals of history as the "Togo shock." Henning Fonsmark followed up Haarder's earlier criticism two years later with his polemic book *Kampen mod Kundskaber* (*The Struggle Against*

Knowledge), which scathingly criticized the postwar reform pedagogy for systematically degrading the value of basic skills and general knowledge (Fonsmark, 1996).

The 1993 act also paved the way for a new understanding of knowledge and for the entry of the transnational concepts of learning and competence. However, the emergence of the learning concept in the 1990s did not break with the progressive or reform pedagogical tradition. It shifted the focus from teaching to learning and required *teaching differentiation*. The student as learner should be able to develop his or her personal potential in a learning environment in which the teacher stimulates, mentors, guides, and encourages the learning and development of each individual student (Hermann, 2007; Korsgaard et al., 2017). This learning concept was based on the learner being constructive, so students could be staged as producers of knowledge and the teacher was assigned the role of a midwife that corresponded to learning styles that were always based on the individual. The starting point and center of teaching and education was now the *self-learning* and *competent individual*, who in principle was self-managing and responsible for their own learning, thus marking a transition to a *pedagogy of individualization*.[4]

This already brings up another aspect associated with this innovation in the 1990s, namely, *competence*. Competencies are commonly defined as knowledge in action, and here, turning to competencies indicates an epistemic shift. A teaching subject, then, shall be designed by descriptors of what the subject is supposed to lead to in each individual student, and assessment of the learning results must be made a test of such competencies rather than a test of the knowledge associated with a syllabus. Competence has thus become the epitome of a *performative knowledge concept*, the crux being not what and how much you know but how you can use and translate what you know into practice (Undervisningsministeriet, 1997, p. 6; Korsgaard et al., 2017, pp. 393–398).

Postmillennial Reforms

Whereas the introduction of the concepts of learning and competence in the 1990s still had remnants of postwar progressivism, the transnational turn in post-millennial school policy has changed their status and strengthened the focus on the school subjects (*fagligbed*) and learning outcomes. In Denmark, objectives were redefined paying special attention to common standards, performance indicators, and learning outcomes and resulting in government initiatives such as the *Clear Objectives* in 2001, the binding *Common Objectives* in 2003 and 2009, and the realization of ten mandatory national tests. As in Sweden and Norway, these initiatives to measure the performance and monitor the learning outcomes of the students in the school system can hardly be understood without reference to OECD's PISA, IEA's PIRLS, TIMSS, the EU's Lisbon Declaration, or the Bologna description of study programs in terms of knowledge, skills, and competencies (Dorf, 2018; Korsgaard et al., 2017; Krejsler, 2021). Nevertheless, this process appeared as a national process that was highly identified with the liberal-conservative reform agenda of Bertel Haarder, linking transnational pressure to national identity and the establishment of national canons in literature, history, and democracy.

In the 2006 reform of the Danish School Act, the purpose clause was again amended, signaling a far more powerful emphasis on the knowledge side of schooling than on values, canons, and personal formation. Above all, the school now had to prepare pupils to acquit themselves along the further education pathway by *giving* them knowledge and skills, now understood to be part of the lifelong learning that prepares each individual to be available to the labor market through further education. For the first time in Danish school history, knowledge and skills have been moved right into pole position in the school, which is now understood to be part of the "the educational continuum 0–18" and the main purpose of which is to prepare the individual for further education. A new reform in 2014 did not reformulate the formal purpose but increased the number of hours and the introduction of "all-day school" (*heldagsskole*) with voluntary homework cafés. It also simplified the *Common Objectives* by turning them into a multitude of specified learning and competence objectives in order to measure and increase the learning outcomes for each individual student (Rasmussen et al., 2015).

Thus, since the 1990s, focus on learning and competencies as the objectives have formed the basis of a chain of reforms and initiatives although in different ways. However, from 1993 to 2014, the pivotal point of the Danish school has moved from the normative purpose containing remnants of postwar progressivism to national competency-based curricula focusing on potential *knowledge in action* as the desired individualized learning outcome. Since 2000, the emphasis in the national curriculum has been on precise objectives to be expected of students in order to create an efficient system of education by tightening up measurement and superintendence. However, the 2014 reform has in no way been a success. It has given rise to heavy criticism during the last decade, and has been partly pulled back by the political parties behind it. Instead, it has brought about a renewed debate on the questions of personal and cultural formation (*dannelse*) and the normative purpose of schooling among politicians as well as among teachers and parents (Kristensen, 2017; Dorf, 2018).

Norway

"The challenge for Norwegian knowledge policy is that the country is not getting enough competence out of the population's talent," a green paper on higher education in Norway stated in 1988 (NOU 1988:28, 1988, p. 9). The rise of a comprehensive knowledge policy from the cradle to the disputation around 1990 represented a reflex to the threat of falling behind in a global knowledge race. However, responses to the global squeeze on small states and the fall of the Berlin Wall included, in the Nordic periphery, seeds of renewed visions of contributions of shared public knowledge and unified schooling. The knowledge-centered agenda has been well received in Norway since the beginning.[5] The chair of the group behind the 1988 blue paper, Sociology Professor Gudmund Hernes, was appointed minister of education within two years of its release by the Social Democrat Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. Two new formative notions from the 1990s, *knowledge solidarity* and the *knowledge commons*,[6] have echoed the quest for equality as parity of the reforms of the 1960s (Stenhouse, 1965); they have also marked a concern for knowledge as an inclusive resource and not solely as a pool of individual talent to be tapped. Under the leadership of Hernes, more structure, more standardization, more work discipline, and more concentration on subject matter content became major priority areas. The line of policy was to bridge the best from the 19th century's popular enlightenment, the unified folk school from the first half of 20th century, and the welfare contributions of the comprehensive school.

In this early strategic turn to knowledge before 1990, the report from an OECD evaluation of Norwegian education policy by a group of international experts played a seminal role as a standard setting analysis. The report noted, among other things, that the expanded mandate of municipalities and other local bodies in the wake of decentralization reforms beginning in the 1970s highlighted the need to reformulate national roles. The report then pointed to a common national information system and quality assurance as possible supplementary functions. As in Denmark and Sweden, issues of distribution of the mandated assessments (Kvale, 1990) and mapping of the output side of schooling became one of the big issues in the generation of school reforms to come after 1990.

National curriculum reforms led by social democratic administrations during the 1990s gave first priority to a broad encyclopedic canon of common school subjects. In line with this, the new general introduction to the national curriculum framed the common school as a nationwide project to initiate new generations to a common core of knowledge and traditions to prepare them for life and work in a *knowledge society* (Jarning, 2020). The knowledge issue was represented by *topoi* (commonplaces) that marked key intellectual, practical, and social epistemic virtues. There were seven commonplaces: meaning-seeking, creative, working, generally educated, co-operative, environmentally concerned, and the integrated human being.

From Corporate Councils to Governance by Data

The democratic mandate of the common school was underscored in a new way. National knowledge priorities should be formulated by political leadership, not by professionals. In line with this, the social democratic government closed all national sector councils for compulsory, secondary, and further education in the early 1990s (Helsvig, 2017, pp. 184–192). By early 1982, the conservative government at that time had started a retreat from corporate state progressivism by dissolving the National Council for Innovation in Education (*Forsøksrådet for skoleverket*; Helsvig, 2017), the body that had been a think tank and a major tool for the implementation of the unified basic school. Thus, over the course of a decade, these bipartisan organizational reforms ended a 50-year-old pattern of incremental corporate partnership[7] in policymaking across the education sector.

However, from 2001 to 2005, a shift to governance based on market and quasi-market principles of accountability and keeping "arm's length" distance between policy and management came into full operation (Helsvig, 2017). One of the interlinked reforms during these years was the introduction of a comprehensive national quality assessment system in 2003. That same year, the Independent School Act (*friskoleloven*) was introduced; it was based on a change in legal terms from being an act of purpose to an act of rights. A basic principle of this act was the possibility to establish a right to state support for independent schools on the condition that the high common norms relating to quality and competence had been satisfied. This program would satisfy national legal and curricular regulations. However, this act of rights only survived for two years, as the former act of purpose was reintroduced when the next national election in 2007 resulted in a left-center compromise. In 2015, a revised law on independent schools reintroduced a modified act of purpose, in combination with a provisional ban on profit to all owners of schools receiving public grants. The Conservative Minister of Education at the time, Torbjørn Røe Isaksen, highlighted the added quality of having broad support for new legislation and added that this "means that our most important task is to make the knowledge school, the public school better. This is task number one" (Jarning, 2020, p. 47).

Towards a National Curriculum Guideline 2.0

In the Norwegian case, there is also a clear shift between the curriculum design of the 1990s and the period after the turn of the millennium. In the first phase, general education was presented as an *enkýklios paideia*, a circle of intellectual, practical, and social epistemic virtues. However, the next generation of national curriculum reforms is exemplary in its polite turn to the knowledge economy language on foundations of education. In practice, the national curriculum framework from 2006 had blacklisted the keyword for human education and self-formation, *danning*. The recent national curriculum from 2020, however, reintroduced an explicit twin mission of common schooling, referred to as *utdanning* (qualification) and *danning* (self-formation/*Bildung*), to mark the care for knowledge and skills as well as for the virtuous side of common teaching and learning.

In 2004, the new central hub in educational administration and governance, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (*Utdanningsdirektoratet*) was set up; and over the next years, a national curriculum framework titled "The Knowledge Promotion" (*Kunnskapsløftet*) was introduced. With this broad reform, the curriculum genre approached the era of platform epistemologies: They were designed to be in tune with accountability-based lines of centralized control and with the local responsibility of results, and they introduced the first vertically integrated curriculum framework for the basic school as well as for post-compulsory, secondary general and vocational education and training. The new form of a national guideline for the digital age has incorporated a prelude and the whole range of subject curricula, in alphabetic order, which have all been formatted from a template of competence descriptors. All subjects have competence descriptions after Grades 4, 7, and 10 in the compulsory part and after each level for the post-compulsory, upper secondary part. With the recent reform from 2020, the digital framework has been furthered; however, the first introductory paragraphs were revised with standardized brief notes about each school subject. The introductions are then followed by long lists of learning outcomes of the parallel single subject syllabuses.

Bringing Knowledge Back in: Comparisons and Discussion

The discussions and reforms in this chapter represent a strive to move beyond major weak spots in the extension of comprehensive schooling. This epistemic revival is bringing back questions of what knowledge is of most worth in a school for all, and how can the realizations of educational outcomes in practice be improved. From 1980 onward, educational change in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway saw a turn to epistemic issues,[8] triggered not least by the limitations of the postwar comprehensive school reforms and by the rise of subject didactics (Smestad & Opsal, in this volume). Educational professionals and researchers from all faculties and fields of school knowledge were on equal footing with the former dominant tribe rooted in the discipline of education. All in all, the changes and the accompanying expansion of schooling have realigned the role of education in today's Nordic countries.

In research on the Nordic common school tradition since the 1980s, changes in organization and framing—decentralization, neoliberalism, individualism, and school choice—have shown the dominant perspectives on the explanations of changes to a universalist Nordic model of education (Dorf, 2018; Dovemark et al., 2018; Lundahl, 2016). As for the last decades of reform, research has pointed to the increased influence of transnational policy flows on Nordic education, more specifically the growing influence of international agencies, most prominently OECD and its PISA (Krejsler, 2021; Pereyra et al., 2011). We argue that the epistemic reconfiguration, as described and exemplified with the three Nordic countries as cases in this chapter, links these two reform periods by showing how issues of epistemic nature addressed in the 1980s and 1990s paved the way for the postmillennial reforms.

This epistemic reconfiguration has been visible in the varied efforts to renew educational knowledge, and it has thus affected the overall Nordic grammar of schooling. In the Nordic region, a heritage of strong educational states (Englund et al., 2012; Slagstad et al., 2003) has historically secured a predominance of modern forms of general education, broad encyclopedic curriculum patterns, little or no specialization in common schooling, and broad upper secondary academic preparatory tracks, while vocational qualification has been based on an apprenticeship tradition in Denmark, a school-based approach in Sweden, and Norway in between. The rise of the epistemology of competence, learning, foresight, and accountability mechanisms that were examined in this chapter depicts the contours of the recent changes to the set menu of long schooling for all in the North.[9]

Already in the 1960s, Nordic patterns of curriculum reform had represented a generalist drift not least by the postponement of tracking and the choice between formerly mutually excluding curriculum paths. Here, the Swedish Urban Dahllöf highlighted the knowledge of most worth in the decades of growth of the unified, basic school for all. First, there is "general education [*allmänbildning*], then comes specialization. This is the overall foundation of our system of education" (Dahllöf, 1984, p. 44). Opportunities for concentration and depth have long been pointed to as a weak spot, not least because it confers the eager generalist postponement of specialization in common school programs.

At an early stage, epistemic reconfigurations are seen to cultivate and balance varied fields and forms of knowledge in basic and post-compulsory schooling, thus countering the former generalist narrowing. In the Swedish case, the reconsideration of schooling and education in epistemic terms played a seminal role from 1990 on as the gateway to a more focused settlement on schooling and public welfare responsibilities. The aforementioned poly-dimensional approach to seminal forms of knowledge was an attempt to bridge earlier divisive and incomprehensive approaches in which the development and upbringing of the child (*fostran*) had been seen as the central task of the school system. A weak aspect here was the coverage of values and moral dimensions, which was treated separately without the linkages to knowing that are a mark of virtues and of conceptions of self-formation, or in other words, *Bildning*.

In parallel, the Danish and Norwegian examples display similarities in how the sets of keywords change, with the concepts of learning and competence as the nexus of schooling after the millennium. From the Danish case, the ways that teaching and pedagogy have become individualized and performance-centered by the dual focus on learning and competencies has become visible. Teaching could no longer be approached as the transfer of knowledge, and competencies here translate knowledge as knowledge in action. In the Norwegian case, general education was first presented as a circle of intellectual, practical, and social epistemic virtues, while the national reforms from 2006 had blacklisted the notion for human education and self-formation, *danning*. The recent reforms in Denmark and Norway, however, have again to some degree marked a concern for the diverse missions of common schooling as the care for general knowledge as well as for the virtuous side of teaching and learning.

The epistemic reconfiguration is also reflected in how the international race for knowledge as a source of competitive advantages has reinforced a vertical integration and regulation of progression in the education sectors. The terms for formal education—*uddannelse* (D), *utdanning* (N), *utbildning* (S)—signal a strong vertical integration and have become the common denominators of formal education from nursery and basic school to university and adult education. In line with the emphasis on vertical integration, early childhood and care institutions in all three nations have been fully included in the portfolios of their ministries of education: in Sweden from 1998, in Norway from 2006, and in Denmark since 2011.

Finally, the epistemic reconfiguration is seen in the rising curriculum foresight that appears around the quest to match schooling with a society in which knowledge and abilities to apply it innovatively increasingly stamp curriculum visions of future generations of innovators. This systemic and personal epistemology to be among the top-ranked presupposes the almost omnipresent care for knowledge as a fragile strategic resource. In the wake of these political and transnational concerns, issues of control, assessment, and accountability have risen to historic heights (Krejsler, 2021). In this sense, the notion of knowledge and schooling as a race is a telling description. Data from systems of quality control, accountability, and international assessments have grown as a one-way collection of tools for the mix of educational control and foresight. In contrast to earlier narratives of civilization, enlightenment, or progress, the presence of the knowledge race marks one of the dominant commonplaces in contemporary education policy with a quest to bridge personal formation, knowledge, employability, and national competitive advantage. The changes include the introduction of a high focus on literacy genres, descriptors of competencies, and a transformation where national curriculum regulations have been given the status as programs of results (Bachmann & Sivesind, 2012) rather than as programs of conditions. However, by the elaboration of standard tools for curriculum design to meet the programs of results, like the newspeak of learning outcomes and competence goals, didactical formalism has paradoxically returned.

Conclusion

This epistemic reconfiguration has marked an attempt in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway to reformulate basic education, centered on what has become a new strategic concern for knowledge, and gradually interact with new forms of public management and later transnational policy flows. The heritage of schooling as a combined public and personal good has met with harder times with the educationalization of meeting notions of the knowledge age. Over the last half century, the vital concern for a solid common and democratic public education has faded with the almost automatic cultural embeddedness of educational institutions, and the general purpose of schooling has met a post-canonical era with an individualization of educational pathways regulated by choice and merit. An economic conception of education has grown from the seedbed of globalizing arenas such as the OECD, the EU, and the World Bank, and all have ambitions to formulate educational policy framed within a post-national culture of no culture. These organizations have increasingly set their agendas and parameters for national educational policies, reforms, and legislation, leaving their stamp on the Nordic grammar of schooling and pedagogical thinking in the process (Krejsler, 2021). However, the recently rising school strikes against global warming mark new examples of civic protest, and bottom-up green initiatives to renew popular education are seen at the fringe of current curriculum reforms. Also, scholars argue that many of the features of the unified school have been sustained during the millennial generation of reforms (Klette, 2018; Wiborg, 2009).

To conclude, a first phase of the epistemic reconfiguration before the millennium saw new and more nuanced ways of formulating knowledge and aligning with older conceptions of self-formation and cultivation, *dannelse* and *bildning*, a term with a broad educational, moral, and personal meaning, often related to notions of general education and virtues. In a second phase, under the vital influence of the 21st-century growth of rapid transnational policy flows, however, the nuances in the knowledge conceptions of the first phase disappear, resulting in a more restricted competitive standardization of schooling in epistemic terms in the three Nordic countries.

Notes

1. We are not the first to acknowledge the epistemic perspective in Nordic educational reform. However, changing discourses on knowledge and schooling in the Nordic region have been addressed mainly through country studies (e.g., Appel et al., 2015; Hultén, 2019; Jarning, 2010; Tröhler, 2011; Volckmar, 2008).
2. This was the SIA-Commission. SIA stood for *Skolans inre arbete*, the internal work of the school. Its final report came out in 1975 (see Larsson and Ringarp, 2021).
3. *The grammar of schooling has* become an organizing term for historical and contemporary research on modern schooling, curriculum, and pedagogies. It was coined by David Tyack and William Tobin (1994) and further developed by Tyack and Larry Cuban (1995).

4. Howard Gardner's theory of "multiple intelligences" and the Norwegian Ivar Björgen's idea of "responsibility for one's own learning" (AFEL) both had great influence on Danish teachers starting in the 1990s.
5. Many of the experts involved in the formulation of the knowledge policy approach also had experience with research policy. In the Norwegian case, commonplace in a knowledge policy agenda including innovation, new technologies, and related fields as first priorities (Jarning, 2010). Academic qualities and standards as well as competencies for skilled practices and renewing efforts are parallel knowledge ideals. A new focus on the output side of knowledge institutions is seen from the establishment of quality assurance systems; more statistical indicators; and a focus on leadership, control, and accountability.
6. Knowledge solidarity, *kunnskapssolidaritet*, was coined by Gudmund Hernes and the knowledge commons, *kunnskapsallmenningen*, by the later Minister of Education Jon Lilletun from the Christian People's Party.
7. This strong corporate pattern started from a bipartisan political and professional settlement on the folk school as a unified school in the early 1930s, and it expanded in the heyday of comprehensive school reforms (Jarning, 2010).
8. Hultén (2019) covers contributions by Broady, Carlgren, and Marton, among others. Jarning (2010) includes contributions by Korsgaard, Kvale, and Skjervheim. Key authors on knowledge issues discussed include Don Schön, Polanyi, and Dreyfus, along with scholars from classical and modern grand theory.
9. *The grammar of schooling* includes research on institutional patterns and keywords which have been furthered in Scandinavia by Bjørg Gundem, Urban Dahllôf, Ulf Lundgren, Tomas Englund, Karsten Schnack, and others.

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14 Gender, Equality, and Education

Are We About to Abandon Our Nordic Ideals?

Elin Rødahl Lie

The Nordic countries are famous for being at the forefront when it comes to gender equality. A political culture as well as a welfare state model favorable for promoting gender equality in work and politics are highlighted as important reasons (Skjeie & Teigen, 2019). This distinctive Nordic gender equality policy was developed in the second half of the 20th century, especially from 1970 onward (Leira, 2002). In this context, the school has played an important role both as an integral part of the Nordic welfare states (Wernersson & Ve, 1997) and as a key contributor to changing culture and attitudes. This became clearly indicated by the fact that the national curricula around 1970, both in Norway and Sweden (Wernersson, 2009), now stated that the school should promote gender equality, or *likestilling*, which is the Norwegian term. Gender equality as an educational ideal went well with the existing philosophy of the school as a "*School for All*" (Blossing et al., 2014), a school that was already aiming for equality and social equalization. The attribution of such a role to the school is a general feature of all of the Nordic countries. However, in this chapter the focus will be on Norway.

Until the turn of the millennium, the Norwegian curricula presented gender equality as a goal for correcting unwanted bias toward girls. In recent times, however, it is not the girls but the boys who have been in the spotlight. Admittedly, not in the curriculum but in the media and on the political agenda. In the Nordic countries, there is a culture of appointing political committees and panels to study political issues in times of perceived needs (see Chanwoong Baek's chapter in this volume). In the autumn of 2017, after a media debate expressing concerns about boys' future prospects, the Norwegian government appointed the National Commission on Gender Equality in Education, also known as the Stoltenberg Committee. Their mandate was "to gather knowledge of the factors contributing to gender disparities in school achievement and to propose measures and policy interventions to counter these disparities" (Regjeringen, 2017). The assignment was to culminate in an Official Norwegian Report (NOU). NOUs are not the adoption of policies. Nevertheless, one

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can consider them to have an "invisible power" in the sense that they participate in setting the agenda. Not infrequently, such proposals do end up as law and policy (Holst, 2019).

What had initially triggered the debate was a newspaper article written by physician and Director-General of The Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Camilla Stoltenberg, whom the government later gave the task of leading the committee. Referring to statistics on boys' lower school performance and predominance among drop-outs, as well as the launching of a questioning hypothesis about the possible significance of gender differences in relation to students' biological maturation, the article expressed great concern for boys. "The education gap between men and women and the long-term consequences for society is one of our major societal challenges," Stoltenberg wrote. "It is urgent to explore this and find out what we are going to do" (Stoltenberg, 2017). Not everyone was excited about the appointment. Gender and school researchers criticized both the committee's work and the premise for it. Critics argued that, instead of promoting gender equality, the committee was contributing to the reinforcement of an abandoned dualistic view of gender and to steering the school further away from its overall ideals of equality and social equalization (Nielsen & Henningsen, 2018; Aasebø, 2021).

What could be the background for these different views? To what extent do they testify to an ongoing renegotiation of what we as society consider the school's responsibilities related to gender, equality, and education? With Norway as a starting point, in this chapter I will present a small conceptual history as well as a critical analysis of a key aspect of the Nordic education model, namely, the ambition from the 1970s that the school should promote gender equality—or *likestilling*—as an educational ideal. The chapter consists of four parts and a conclusion. In the first part, I will outline a historically founded picture of the Nordic ideal of gender equality with reference to a lecture held by Norwegian psychologist Åse Gruda Skard launching the "third act" of the women's liberation movement (Skard, 1953). In the second part, I give a description of the journey the concept of *likestilling* has made through Norwegian curricula from 1974 to the present day. Seen against the different views mentioned earlier of the appointment of the Stoltenberg Committee, some questions now arise: What could be the reason for this concern of boys' future prospects at this moment? Is it a coincidence that this concern arose on the political agenda at about the same time that gender categories were replaced by diversity and the recognition of differences, not only in gender research but also *in* the national curriculum? In the third part of the chapter, I discuss these two questions in relation to two significant developmental features of the Norwegian education system in recent times, the *system change* and the *juridification* of the education system. Here, I find that this change has in fact led to a significant shift in the perception of what the promotion of *likestilling* entails for the school. What this shift can mean for gender equality as an educational ideal is the topic in the fourth part. Then I discuss the chapter's overall question, namely, to what extent does this indicate a possible abandonment of the Nordic ideal of gender equality prevalent since the 1970s?

The "Third Act"

In a lecture given for the Norwegian Women's Association in 1953, Norwegian psychologist Åse Gruda Skard claimed that aiming for the possibility to combine family and professional life should become the "third act" of the women's liberation movement (Skard, 1953). According to Skard, the first act was the 19th century, while the second act was the first part of the 20th century. As an important key to formal qualification and thus access to society, the right to education had played a central role in both of these periods. The first demands for security, education, recognition, civil rights, and responsibilities were claimed during the first act. By the end of this period in the 19th century, girls in Norway had gained access to both lower secondary school (*middelskolen*) and higher education. The demands from the first act were further raised during the second act, and little by little, more of society opened up to women (Skard, 1953). An important milestone in this period was that Norwegian women were given the right to vote in 1913. When Skard, in the middle of the 20th century, gave her lecture, the educational opportunities from the two previous periods had brought forth a first generation of female pioneers in politics and academia. However, pursuing a career for women meant, in most cases, that one had to renounce family life. It was *this* that Skard, who herself tried to combine five children with a career as a researcher (Haavind, 1984), wanted to change. By launching the third act, Skard hinted at a new generation of women, a generation who did not want to choose *between* work and family life, but who wanted both.

Such a message was quite radical in the 1950s, which was later characterized as the "golden age of the housewife" in the western part of the world, including the Nordic countries. At that time, Norway actually had a tax policy encouraging married women to be housewives. The dominant postwar party in Norway, the Labor Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*), considered the housewife to play a central role in the modernization project of social democracy. It thus focused on housewife politics until the mid-1960s (Hagemann, 2005). To some extent, it was also a class issue. While middle-class women had gradually begun to take political positions and paid work, the working class rather wanted to free women from their hard work outside the home. The fact that women could fully dedicate themselves to being housewives and mothers was here seen as progress made possible by improved social conditions (Skard, 1953).

Although Skard's message represented a break with prevailing politics, her voice was not unique. It is more precise to say that she quite early put into words what a few decades later was to become a generational showdown against a given gendered organization of society. The young women of the 1970s saw this focus on being a housewife as unfair. They wanted their own income, and they wanted the possibility to partake in society without having to give up the opportunity to establish a family. A distinctive feature, perhaps the very success criterion of the Nordic gender equality policy as it developed from the 1970s onward, is how it was able to take into account—albeit not sufficiently value—the work that had hitherto been carried out by women. For the pioneering women in what Skard called the first and second acts, this work had been "absent." Now the idea was to redistribute the responsibility for it. The third act thus not only raised an ideal of equality between women and men in important areas of society in which women had previously been discriminated against. At the same time, it raised an ideal of *redistribution* (Fraser, 2013). In practice, this meant a fairer distribution of the housework between women and men, as well as the state.

In the ensuing decades, not only the personal but also the political support for such gender equality thinking increased in all Nordic countries. There were two areas in particular that had to be changed, both considered important features of the *Nordic model* to this day. The first was that one had to transfer parts of the responsibility for the home, such as childcare during working hours, from the individual to the state. Aided by a strategy in which activists took part in state administration with the aim of influencing from within as "femocrats" (Ros, 1998), the work of building the welfare state to what, in the 1980s, was nicknamed a "women-friendly" state or society (Hernes, 1987, p. 15) began. To this date, this implies a distinctive Nordic equality policy "primarily [associated] with family policy as well as welfare policy, designed to promote parental, and especially mothers', participation in both work and family life through extensive parental leave schemes and publicly subsidized kindergartens" (Holst et al., 2019, p. 14). The other thing that had to change was that fathers had to take greater responsibility at home. It was primarily the latter that Skard had argued for in her lecture in 1953 when she proclaimed the third act. In her view, it was clear that men had to start doing their share of housework, based on a sense of responsibility but also as a right (Skard, 1953). The third act's gender equality ideal thus entailed not only changes in the female role but also in the male role.

Institutional measures, such as those mentioned in the quotation previously, would gradually create the necessary social infrastructure for the ideal. Equally important, however, were changes in attitudes and culture. Political initiatives, such as earmarking parts of the parental leave to fathers, were, and still are, considered important in promoting this change of attitude (NOU 1991: 3, 1991; Leira, 1998). Skard, however, claimed education was the most important means.

> If we want to reach a society where men and women can take an abundant share of responsibility and joy, we must try to raise them so that *all* children, both boys and girls, have healthy self-esteem, get the right measure of ambition, get such a personality structure that they can make good use of their power and energy, intelligence and other abilities, follow their interests and find joy in the work they choose, become loyal and show solidarity both at home and in the workplace. (Skard, 1953, p. 23)

In the first and second acts, access to formal education for females had been the central goal. The third act gave the school a new and perhaps more radical mission. Not only should girls now be encouraged and motivated to embrace the ideals of gender equality, in addition, one hoped that boys would be educated and motivated to partake in this change of society by adapting to a more caring and family-oriented male role. A couple of decades after Skard's speech, ambitions like these had actually reached the national curriculum: Included in the description of the aim was that the school should *promote* gender equality.

Likestilling as Part of the National Curriculum

Around 1970, access to education was a formal reality for both boys and girls. However, cultural practices and norms, or *the hidden curriculum*, continued to create barriers for girls. With the curriculum of 1974 (M74), it was stated for the first time that the school should also actively promote gender equality (Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, 1974, p. 23). Since the end of the 19th century, ideals of *equality* and *social equalization* had been political and educational ambitions for the Norwegian school system (Myhre, 1988). Now, the gender aspect had been included in these ideals.

The term used in Norwegian to denote gender equality is *likestilling*. *Likestilling* belongs to a distinct Scandinavian concept. Both Swedish and Danish have similar expressions, *jämställdhet* and *ligestilling*, respectively. The term does not refer to equality understood as "sameness" or "identical with" but more as "being on equal footing." *Likestilling* could also be described as indicating a qualitative equality, in contrast to the quantitative equality used in mathematics (Owesen, 2021). Although for historical reasons *likestilling* is often associated with gender justice (Holst, 2013), it is not a concept that necessarily has to deal with gender. In the school context, for example, the term was previously used in the pursuit of equally good schools in cities and in the countryside. Fundamentally speaking, *likestilling* is about justice (NOU 2012: 15, p. 57). However, as a marker of justice, it is an ambiguous concept. This is partly due to the fact that it contains both similarity *and* difference. Politically and educationally, this opens itself up for arguments for both similar and dissimilar treatment depending on what one perceives as fairest in the context. An example of this ambiguity is how both the 1970s' emphasis on equality among girls and boys and thus equal treatment and the 1980s' emphasis on difference founded in equity among two distinct gender cultures that in certain contexts could be requiring different treatment, were claimed to promote *likestilling* (Imsen, 2000). The fact that the term by definition is ambiguous means that, both as an ideal and as a guide for educational practice, its focus may change in line with political and cultural changes. The development the term has undergone through the various national curricula that have been launched since it was included in 1974 testifies to this. This has become particularly clear after the introduction of the current curriculum.

Since the 1970s, Norway has had a revision or a completely new national curriculum approximately every ten years. The 1974 curriculum (M74) was replaced in 1987 by a revised version (M87). A new curriculum was then introduced in 1997 (L97), which again was replaced in 2006 by the Knowledge Promotion Reform (LK06). The latter still applies, but it has recently undergone a major revision. The revised version (LK20) came into force in the autumn of 2020.

For both M74 and M87, *likestilling* was about the relationship between girls and boys. Both curricula expressed analyses of the various roles and opportunities society offered women and men in the public and private spheres. The educational task involved helping to even out an existing imbalance in society. This meant, among other things, encouraging non-traditional gender career choices as well as emphasizing boys' and girls' shared responsibility for the home (Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, 1974; Ministry of Education and Research, 1987). The following quote from M87 illustrates the wording characteristic for these documents:

> As a group, men have a far stronger position than women in most of the areas that directly influence social development. To create a more correct balance, the school must actively promote equality between the sexes and avoid perpetuating and strengthening traditional sex roles.
> (Ministry of Education and Research, 1987, p. 36)

The subsequent curriculum, L97, continued to testify to a quite similar ambition by also emphasizing that the school should encourage participation in society and career choices regardless of traditional gender role expectations (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1999). Compared to the curricula of the 1970s and 1980s, the topic was devoted considerably less space in L97.

A more significant change, however, seems to have come with the introduction of the next decade's LK06 curriculum reform, the Knowledge Promotion Reform. While the curricula of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s all expressed ambitions of contributing to a more gender-fair society, the concept of *likestilling* now seemed to point in a slightly different direction. This change of direction has become more apparent after the recent LK20 revision, which, among other things, included a new core curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) to replace the former one, which in LK06 had been continued from L97 (Kunnskapsdepartementet & Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006). *Likestilling* is, as before, included here as part of the overall or general ideas of Norwegian education. However, the socially motivated future orientation the concept was previously rooted in has, in this latest version of the core curriculum, been replaced by a description of a value fought for throughout history which the school must pass on to the pupils. Another striking change is that the category "gender" has disappeared from the description of the term. While before the turn of the millennium *likestilling* undoubtedly denoted a relationship between boys and girls—at least concerning the category of *gender*—this now appears less clear. Instead, the curriculum emphasizes diversity and recognition of difference:

> All pupils shall be treated equally, and no pupil is to be subjected to discrimination. The pupils must also be given equal opportunities so they can make independent choices. School must consider the diversity of pupils and facilitate for each pupil to experience belonging in school and society. We may all experience that we feel different and stand out from the others around us. Therefore we need acknowledgement and appreciation of differences.
>
> (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 5)

The focus on recognition and diversity in today's curriculum reflects changes in society as well as in relevant fields of knowledge. These changes really began to dominate debates in Norway towards the end of the 1990s. At the beginning of the new millennium, when the LK20 Knowledge Promotion Reform was in the making, the Norwegian society had changed significantly compared with when gender equality was first included in the curriculum. After more than thirty years in which various groups of labor immigrants, asylum seekers, and family immigrants had settled in the Nordic countries, the previously ethnically, culturally, and linguistically homogeneous Nordic nations (Telhaug et al., 2006) had gradually gained identities as multicultural societies. That the Norwegian school's traditional Christian values was put under debate in the early 2000s on the grounds that the country had now become multicultural (NOU 2007: 6, 2007), can stand as an example of this change of identity. The 1997 curriculum also reflects this change. Compared with the two previous curricula, L97 had shown a more diverse view of both gender and society as such by emphasizing that education should not only foster "equality between the sexes" but also "solidarity among groups and across borders" (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1999, p. 20).

At the turn of the millennium, diversity perspectives had also become widespread in the field of knowledge on gender. Research on gender and education had essentially shifted focus from the relationship between boys and girls as groups in favor of analyses of changes and variations in gender patterns, preferably through qualitative methods (Öhrn, 2000; Wernersson & Ve, 1997). The more overriding theories based on patriarchy or other descriptions of structural discrimination of women that one had previously leaned on were eventually both criticized and rejected. New and more varied images of gender and gender patterns made the descriptions from the 1970s and 1980s curricula seem outdated. During the first two decades of the 2000s, which is the period when LK06 functioned as a national curriculum, trends in the field of gender theory have in various ways meant a dissolution of the former female–male dichotomy through a greater focus on diversity and various forms of gender identity. Gender and difference perspectives have also dominated in gender policy debates. Both the category of gender and analysis of discrimination have largely been understood qualitatively. Today, one considers multidimensional perspectives on gender, often referred to as *intersectional*, to prevail in the field (Jensen & Christensen, 2020).

Given this knowledge development as well as the change in curricula's description of *likestilling*, it is quite interesting that the two traditional gender categories were to still be objects of a major educational debate in the media and among prominent politicians. It is also interesting that this was around the same time as the latest curriculum revision. So, what could be the reason for this concern of the boys' future prospects at this moment?

Educational Changes: *System Change* and *Juridification* of Education

From the 1980s on, the transition from industrial economics to knowledge economy gradually began to show in Norway. This would eventually also leave its mark on the school system. The knowledge society gives education a more crucial role in relation to ensuring the country's competitiveness in a globalized economy. This has led to demands for new and higher qualifications among the next generation, including in Norway (Thuen, 2017). Until the 1990s, the Nordic countries had a tradition of indicative curricula with a focus on content. Although the curriculum functioned as a governing body at the state level, it was primarily guiding and normative, not legally binding. There was room for local freedom and adaptation (Sivesind et al., 2003; Møller et al., 2013).

The curriculum reforms in Norway of the 1990s, which L97 reform was a part of, represented a change in direction. New was a greater focus on students' knowledge and educational results. L97 emphasized knowledge in the form of a common knowledge base as well as subjective competence in the form of general skills. Behind the reforms was a political intention to develop the Norwegian unitary school in the direction of a more standardized, knowledge-intensive school *for all*. In this way, one would meet the knowledge society's requirement to raise students' actual performance, while taking into account the Norwegian school's two main motives: social integration on the one hand and utility-oriented knowledge on the other (Thuen, 2017). Gender equality was included as part of the common knowledge base: "Education should foster equality between the sexes and solidarity among groups and across borders. It should portray and prove knowledge as a creative and versatile force, vigorous both for personal development and for humane social relations" (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1999, p. 24). In line with a greater focus on students' qualifications in general, the school's overall ideal of equality was more explicitly measured in relation to students' educational results (Volckmar, 2016), while earlier emphasis had been placed more on "formal equality" and "equality in opportunities" (Hernes, 1973). The subsequent curriculum reform, the LK06 Knowledge Promotion Reform, which came in 2006, represented not only a change in direction; it represented a "system change" (Volckmar, 2016; Thuen, 2017). The students' learning results came further into focus now under the concept of competence. The LK06 replaced the traditional content-related and school-based approach to the subjects with a competence-based assessment system that emphasized what the students should master rather than with what they should work (Sivesind, 2013). The argument was that in a knowledge-driven society, there was more use for acquiring basic skills, learning methods, and having a willingness to learn than for academic breadth (Møller et al., 2013).

The increased focus on students' school performance thus has to do with a society that places greater emphasis on educational results. The fact that boys in particular are in the spotlight is probably due to the fact that boys on average do a little worse than girls in school. With the exception of math and physical education, on average, boys have had lower school results than girls in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark since the first half of the 20th century (de Coninck-Smith, 2017; Backe-Hansen et al., 2014). More interesting for this analysis than statistical differences in boys' and girls' educational outcomes, however, is that the LK06 Knowledge Promotion Reform has also been understood to mark a shift in the understanding of equality. When it came, according to the Norwegian education historian Harald Thuen, LK06 represented a further reduction of what until then had been the Norwegian unitary school's understanding of equality. From previously being rooted in societal motives and solidarity, the school's equality ideal was now more explicitly rooted in the interests of the individual and aimed at the demands of a knowledge-demanding society (Thuen, 2017).

When gender became an educational topic in the 1970s, the object of concern was the girls' lack of developmental opportunities (Bakken et al., 2008). With reference to classroom research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, one claimed that boys were allowed to dominate the classroom in a systematic way at the expense of girls. This, one thought, was probably decisive for girls' declining motivation for school towards the end of upper secondary school as well as the low academic ambitions they had at that time (Nielsen, 1988). The main concern at the time, however, was not really directed at how girls' failing motivation for school would limit future career opportunities for the individual girl. The main concern was more directed toward the girls' future as a group, towards their common opportunity to participate in society. By systematically allowing boys to dominate the classroom, the school thus contributed to the continuing of the dominance of men in society. Whether such an argument would be valid today is not my point here. My point is that the increased focus on pupils' school performance that we see today, especially that aimed at boys, does not only reflect a society where educational results are emphasized to a greater extent. It also testifies to the turn Thuen describes, a turn towards a school that focuses to a greater extent on individual interests and achievements and which seems to have removed the gaze for more socially oriented arguments.

So, is it a coincidence that this concern for boys arises on the political agenda at about the same time as the gender categories are replaced by diversity and recognition of differences, not only among gender researchers, but also *in* the national curriculum? The shift away from social arguments toward individual interests has also left its mark on the approach to diversity in the curriculum. The description of *likestilling* in the core curriculum from 2017 not only testifies to an increased focus on diversity, it also testifies to an increased focus on the rights[1] of the individual. Interestingly, the increased demands on students' educational performance following the rise of the knowledge society have actually gone hand in hand with a strengthening of the individual student's rights related to education. An example of this is how the unitary school (*enhetsskolen*), as part of the knowledge intensification in the 1990s, was expanded by introducing *a right* to upper secondary education for all. The fact that individual rights at this time should become more prominent in the context of education can probably be attributed to a simultaneous societal development towards legalism, often referred to as *juridification*. This development has had an influence on the education system (Novak, 2016) and can be seen in the context of a legalization of welfare policy in general and in Norwegian society as such (Graver, 2012). Formally, a significant consequence of the juridification of the education system has been that the national curriculum, previously considered a guiding and normative document, has now been given a more obvious legal status. In principle, such a change means that educational issues that were previously understood pedagogically can now be understood as legal and thus also as followed by legal consequences (Hall, 2019). In this regard, this can also apply to the concept of *likestilling*, which means that *likestilling* can be understood as something individuals would be entitled to by law and that the school actually has the (legal) responsibility to act in relation to it.

Although the L97 curriculum formally had legal status, it continued to portray *likestilling* primarily as an educational, normative ideal. This is evident, for example, from the fact that the description in the curriculum clearly expressed certain normative ambitions towards gender equality, solidarity across groups, personal development, and humane forms of interaction (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1999). Because the core curriculum from L97 was continued in LK06, the description of *likestilling* also followed. An important reason for the recent revision, however, was indeed a desire to get rid of the remains of L97. The argument was a wish for a better coherence between the various parts of the curriculum. The result has maybe become a more coherent national curriculum, but it has also become a curriculum that, to a greater degree than before, now emphasizes the individual's rights: the right to recognition and equal treatment, to not be discriminated against, and to be given "equal opportunities so they can make independent choices" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 5).

The fact that one has sharpened the legal protection in school of course has its positive sides. It means, for example, that the school has a duty to act if a student should experience discrimination. From a minority perspective, this is an important principle. However, whether it is possible to impose such a responsibility on the school in practice or if it actually is desirable is debatable. A general problem with the legalization of social rights is, for example, that it requires resources to assert them (Gloppen, 2003). Consequently, such legalization will primarily benefit students who previously had the most resources. To what extent it is actually possible or desirable to order the school to be legally responsible for its students, I will not go further into here. What I find interesting though is how this change has in fact led to a significant shift in the perception of what the task of promoting *likestilling* entails for the school. One has gone from understanding this task as a contribution to the struggle for a more (gender) just society to being more about safeguarding the individual student's rights in the education system. Such a change not only has consequences for the school's actions, it also has conceptual consequences. However, what does such a shift actually mean for gender equality as an educational ideal?

Is the School About to "Abandon" Its Previous Ideal of *Likestilling* (Gender Equality)?

The Norwegian legal practitioner Helga Aune's (2019) attempt to concretize the school's task to promote *likestilling* could be said to testify to the change of focus described earlier. *Likestilling*, according to Aune, translates as equal learning opportunities for boys and girls. This definition is interesting for multiple reasons. Although the curriculum now expresses a quite general and diversity-oriented ideal, this definition nevertheless refers to the relationship between the two categories: "boys" and "girls." However, that the curriculum appears "gender-neutral" does not necessarily mean that gender is not a relevant factor, for example, in relation to discrimination. *Likestilling* is, as already mentioned, an ambiguous concept. It can potentially accommodate gender, even if it is not specifically mentioned. On the one hand, the general and individual-oriented formulation in today's curriculum can be said to reflect knowledge saying that gender is a complex category that is difficult to generalize. Seen in such a perspective, the advantage of the wording of today's curriculum is that it is hardly perceived as excluding or offensive to anyone. On the other hand, that the curriculum does not provide further clarification of the meaning of gender in relation to *likestilling* potentially opens it up for interpretation.

Similar to Stoltenberg, Aune takes statistics as her starting point, showing that the category "boys" scores, on average, lower than the category "girls" and also showing the fact that girls now also do better later in the education system. *Likestilling* understood as equal learning opportunities for boys and girls is thus assessed according to the learning outcomes of these two groups. At first glance, such a move seems both logical and reasonable. To a certain extent, this is also the case. Of course, the fact that many boys struggle with schoolwork should not be underestimated. For a traditionally equality-oriented school like the Norwegian one, it is of great importance to help struggling students, regardless of gender. Since 1974, this aim has also been formally rooted in the school's values. However, the "problem" arises when one, on the basis of girls' and boys' average school results, both assumes and creates a narrative that these results will consequently lead to a gender gap, with boys as the losers of the future. There are three reasons, in particular, why such an assumption is problematic.

Firstly, it testifies to a simplified, unvarnished, and unreflective understanding of the category of gender. Instead of taking into account the insight that exists today about how diverse and varied the gender category is, the assumption reinforces an outdated dichotomous gender model. A significant consequence is that the focus on difference between genders moves the attention away from other, more significant factors for the student's school performance, such as the students' social background (Backe-Hansen et al., 2014, p. 20; Vogt, 2018; Aasebø, 2021; Similar criticism was also directed at the Stoltenberg Committee's mandate and work (Nielsen & Henningsen, 2018; Aasebø, 2021).

Secondly and partly related to the previous, such an assumption of *likestilling* can actually help to legitimize a given view on education that might be contrary to the school's traditional idea of equality. As a dominant narrative, the story of boys as losers risks overshadowing other narratives about why the school is unable to promote its ambition of social equalization (Aasebø, 2021). The fact that the students' social background has actually become more important after the introduction of the LK06 Knowledge Promotion Reform is an example of a narrative made invisible (Aasebø, 2021). In the past, concerns about students' social inequalities have often led to criticism of the education system. Today, one directs the focus towards the students. Instead of proposing changes for school, the Stoltenberg Committee suggested various measures aimed at adapting the underperforming boys to school through various forms of early and adapted efforts (Aasebø, 2021; NOU 2019: 3, 2019). Such measures actually do correspond with *likestilling* understood as promoting equal learning opportunities for boys and girls. However, to what understanding of equality does this really testify? Today's education policy contains a paradox, according to Aasebø. On the one hand, one conveys a rhetoric about equality and social equalization. However, on the other hand, thanks to a growing tendency towards the individualization of teaching and learning processes resulting from market and neoliberal thinking, one gives the students an increasingly individual and personal responsibility for whether they succeed or not (Aasebø, 2021). From the point of view of equality, one might ask whether measures, such as those proposed by the Stoltenberg Committee, really are beneficial for the individual student or whether they actually primarily reflect the interests of someone else.

Thirdly—and this is my main point in this chapter—the assumption that today's gender differences in educational results will necessarily lead to a gender gap in the future represents an obvious shift away from the gender equality ideal promoted by the third act. At the very least, it testifies to a limited understanding of how the Nordic ideal of gender equality, in the tradition since the third act, includes and in fact presupposes an ideal of distribution. Both Stoltenberg and Aune have assessed students' future prospects solely on the basis of their school achievements, that is, on the basis of the formal qualification the school will be able to provide to the students. Gendered challenges that are likely to arise in the students' futures, and to also possibly become crucial to their actual chances of success, are not taken into account. Although the future of students is the object of concern, the debate is limited to questions concerning the students time in the education system. This is a significant change from previous curricula's understandings of gender equality. That there is still a pay gap between women and men (Statistics Norway, 2021) or that challenges with combining work and family obligations are particularly experienced by women, also among highly motivated women in couples characterized by gender equality (Haavind, 2006; Halrynjo, 2010; Halrynjo & Teigen, 2016; Smeby, 2017), is no longer considered relevant for education. Somewhere along the way from an educational normative ideal to a concept of rights, this part of the concept of *likestilling*, what we might call the legacy of the third act, seems to have disappeared.

Conclusion

Internationally, today's prevailing educational discourse directs particular attention towards students' outcomes. Such a focus has also gradually gained a foothold in the education systems of the traditionally egalitarian Nordic countries, in this case Norway. That this, for a traditionally equality-oriented school, has put students' varying school results higher on the agenda than before is perhaps not so strange. The issues I have wanted to address in this chapter, however, are not only concerning equality. They are concerning *gender equality*, which has been an educational ideal in Norwegian education since the 1970s. What consequences has this increased focus on students' learning outcomes actually had for gender equality as an educational ideal? Does the debate surrounding the Stoltenberg Committee testify to an ongoing renegotiation of how we understand this ideal? Could we actually be in the process of abandoning previous Nordic educational ideals on gender equality?

The answer is probably both yes and no. As before, equal opportunities for education, regardless of gender or other variables, do play an important role in the promoting of gender equality. The appointment of the committee as well as the mandate it received confirm how society still considers this issue important. However, the appointment may also indicate a significant change when compared to earlier. It may indicate that we have forgotten the legacy of the third act, namely, the recognition that gender equality actually presupposes *more* than formal educational qualifications alone. An ideal of equality between men and women, or others in comparable constellations with joint care for young children or other close persons who need care, does not solely involve questions of formal qualifications. Equal opportunities for building up a career or for simply participating in society also presuppose an ideal of the distribution of necessary tasks. Moreover, that women and men in fair distribution with the support from the welfare state, in addition to paid work, together take care of tasks traditionally performed by women is not just a cultural legacy traceable back to the third act. Such a "distribution cabal" is also considered an important key to the relative success of the Nordic gender equality model as such.

As I have shown in this chapter, until recently, an ideal of redistribution was actually integrated into the Norwegian curricula's description of *likestilling*—albeit to a varying degree. However, with the transition from L97 to the LK06 Knowledge Promotion Reform, which was finally completed with LK20, this has indeed changed. However, this change is not only a result of a greater emphasis on learning outcomes, even though this is an important aspect. The conceptual change is probably also a result of a juridification of the education system. Today, both the education act and the national curriculum of Norway confirm that the school shall promote *likestilling*. The ideal of distribution, however, is not part of the descriptions of this educational ideal in these documents. What remains seems to be a rights-oriented ideal, emphasizing diversity and the recognition of difference in a school where both equality—also gender equality—and social equalization are governed and measured according to students' educational results.

What does this actually mean? Does this indicate a breach of Nordic gender equality ideals developed by the third act, or is the current perception still compatible with these? In an educational discourse where individual learning outcomes and achievements are considered the seemingly only way to future success, ideals on redistribution are given rather poor conditions. However, an ongoing renegotiation of the school's tasks related to gender and education does not mean that the last word has been said about this. The concept of *likestilling* is, as already mentioned, ambiguous. It has the potential for new political and pedagogical interpretations. Maybe this rather means that it is time now to start thinking about a fourth act?

Note

1. In fact, in the English translation of the core curriculum of 2017, the word *likestilling* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, p. 5) has been replaced with "equal rights" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 5). Whether this is a deliberate move on the part of the ministry or whether it is the result of a slightly imprecise translation of a document that is primarily used in Norwegian is unclear.

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15 From Active Members of the School Community to Active Knowledge Acquirers

The Rhetoric on Students in Norwegian Curricula Across Time

Bernadette Hörmann & Berit Karseth

From a cultural-historical perspective, one common feature of a Nordic reference point is the Protestant pietistic cultural legacy that has been shaping the Nordic area since the Reformation. Within a pietistic mindset, education is regarded as an ambition to empower each individual's soul and to prepare each student for making a contribution to the community (or, in religious terms, for realizing God's empire; see Markussen, 1995; Tröhler, 2011). Schooling may therefore be understood as an endeavor to support the development of the students' individual needs and at the same time to consider their relations to and their future participation in a local community. This deeply grounded idea of schooling has not only grown from a pietistic cultural heritage, but it has been fostered and cultivated in a political climate shaped by social democracy and under geographical circumstances with spatially large and sparsely populated countries at the periphery of Europe. Under the influence of social democracy, Nordic countries have established comprehensive school systems free of charge with the aim to educate the whole population (Buchardt, 2015, p. 137).

Norway is one example of such a Nordic culture shaped by Protestantism, social democracy, and geographical challenges. As pointed out by Volckmar (2019), attending the same school has been a long-standing value in Norway because of a fundamental belief in the fact that it would enhance collaboration, solidarity, national identity, and integration in society. Accordingly, adapted education, although revised through history, became a core term for the handling of all students and at the same time adjusting teaching to the needs and interests of the individual learner (Fasting, 2013). In addition, and due to Norway's involvement in the international progressive movement, active learning approaches have been a core feature of Norwegian curricula for a long time. Active learning was already formulated as a core principle in the curriculum starting in 1939 (Broadhead, 2001; see also the chapter of Afshan Bibi in this volume), indicating an early emphasis on engaging the younger generation in

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learning. In general, students and their needs have played a prominent role in Norwegian discourse on education (Midtsundstad & Hopmann, 2010).

In line with other Nordic countries, Norwegian school policy follows the tradition of focusing on the local school and the local community (Granheim & Lundgren, 1991; Gundem, 1993; Sivesind, 2008). Not only is the single school considered an essential part of the local community in a specific place, but the students' learning is also anchored in and directed towards the community at hand. Local curriculum work, for instance, was a core recommendation in the curriculum reform of 1987, allowing teachers to adapt the curriculum according to the learning opportunities on the specific place where the school is located. Gundem (1993) describes local curriculum work in that period by stating that:

> There is an intimate relationship between the recommendations for local curriculum work and the explicit linking to and warranted fulfilment of school improvement, student-adapted teaching, professionalization of teachers, teacher co-operation, school autonomy, parents' and students' influence, and local-culture influence. Embedded in the notion of local curriculum work are all the "goodies" of progressive education sponsored by the socialist and liberal policy makers of Norwegian education.
>
> (p. 259)

In its essence, schooling in Norway may be understood as an endeavor directed at the individual's needs, while at the same time the individual is regarded in the context of a social and local community. In a framework of schooling that projects learning as a collaborative experience anchored in the local community (Gundem, 1993; Sivesind, 2008), students are regarded as "diverse, but equal" (Midtsundstad & Hopmann, 2010, p. 437), meaning that they have different histories and contexts, but, at the same time, they are regarded as members of equal value of a social group. This way of thinking about schooling—something like the Norwegian epistemology of schooling—thus always, simultaneously implies two dimensions: the individual and the social.

Yet, in recent decades, global ideas like competence- and performance-based standards and standardized testing have gained increasing influence in reforms in the Nordic countries as well (Baek et al., 2018; Karseth et al., 2022; Karseth & Sivesind, 2010; Møller & Skedsmo, 2013). These global ideas provide an interesting and at the same time ambivalent contrast to what have been described as the typical features of Nordic—and more specifically in the case of this chapter, Norwegian—schooling. Competence- and outcome-based curricula orient teaching towards the fulfillment of predefined goals which unfold a "paradigm of individualisation" (Hörmann, 2015), where learning is primarily regarded as an individual process for which each student is held accountable (Biesta, 2009). A recent study from Sivesind (2019) has revealed a distinct emphasis on student learning and development in Norway's recent core curriculum (LK20), which was prepared and issued in 2017 and finally implemented in 2020.

This raises the general question of what has happened to the idea of the social situatedness of learning when the focus is now on the individual students and their performance. In a different and more provocative way, the question is about how to reconcile a tradition that is so ambitiously responsive to students' needs in their communal context with a reductive understanding of schooling that focuses on individual achievement and qualification. The chapter therefore examines how a two-dimensional understanding of schooling has been reshaped and renegotiated over time by an individually, performance-oriented framework. By tracing conceptualizations of the students in rhetoric on Norwegian education, we intend to reveal the students' embeddedness within the individual and social dimensions of schooling and what kinds of pictures of the students is underlying different curricula. We have three research questions: How is the student's role in class constructed over time in three different Norwegian core curricula, issued in 1987, 1993, and 2017[1] (M87, L93, and LK20, respectively)? How does a Nordic understanding of schooling appear in these three core curricula? And how is this renegotiated in the light of competence- and performance-oriented frameworks of schooling?

The subject of our analysis will be three Norwegian core curricula that stand for a rhetoric on the values and priorities in education at Norwegian schools and therefore form policy discourse on the ideas, purpose, and ends of schooling. Next to the subject curricula, core curricula present overarching goals and the common core of a curriculum, based on the aims stated in the acts governing the Norwegian education system. By clarifying and explicating the purpose of education in Norwegian schools, core curricula legitimate the expectations formulated in the subject curricula and relate them to the national education acts. Norwegian core curricula have comprised different stages of schooling at different points of time.

The text corpus of the three core curricula can be regarded as a representation of the social knowledge of agents who aim to gain legitimacy and recognition of their own interpretations of the world. By analyzing the texts produced by policy makers and bureaucrats, we focus on the emergence of collective orders of knowledge, that is, we reconstruct the order and relations of knowledge on education in the specific context of Norwegian curriculum documents (Keller et al., 2018). We assume that the language of education is conditioned by cultural and historical mindsets and differs in different times and spaces (Tröhler, 2011, p. 17). Analyzing the language instead of arguments (Tröhler, 2011, p. 17) might help us unpack a culture-related mode of situating students in the context of learning at school and ask what cultural transformations have been intended over the past 20 years by the stakeholders.

In the following section, the chapter presents deliberations on a didactical understanding of the student's role in schooling and how this can be reflected in curricula. The third section gives an overview of the three curricula and how they are connected to different reforms within the given period. The fourth section presents the framework of analysis, and the fifth section discusses and compares the three curricula with each other. In the last section, we discuss our findings and present answers to our research questions.

Students as Subjects of Curricula

Curricula as formal documents on the organization of schooling and teaching and as a compendium of content that is supposed to be addressed in class are one of the core pillars on which school systems are built. They provide essential and legitimizing conditions for the teachers' work and express at the same time a society's expectations towards its schools and the future citizens that are educated in these schools (Karseth, 2019; Sivesind, 2019). At the same time, they both implicitly and explicitly convey a picture of the student with regard to what is expected of them, how they are related to other persons within the school community, and what needs they have. Understanding the "conception of the human being that is underlying the process of intellectualization at our schools" (Langeveld, 1960, p. 121) is of high relevance whenever we aim for a form of education that meets the needs of the students and can therefore be a fruitful basis for future discussions on the school's mandate, scope, and practices. In Tröhler's terms, curricula can be "understood against the background" of, for instance, "the respective [emphasis removed] child as a learner, respectively as a becoming citizen" (Tröhler, 2016, p. 282) and thus shed light on the society and the cultural context of the respective nation-state or other political or local entities.

Norwegian core curricula can be regarded as an expression of a discourse that forms normative images of the school, its scope, and its purpose. They mirror implicitly constructed relations between the main components of schooling, that is, the content or knowledge to be learned, the student(s), and the teacher(s). A didactical conceptualization of learning and teaching in class regards students as being embedded in relations between their classmates, the teacher, and the content matter. By interacting with the teacher and classmates, students develop the meaning of the content matter that has been introduced to the class by the teacher and that originates from the current curriculum. This meaning-making process allows not only each student to expand their own knowledge and skills, but it also invites students to participate in developing a collective understanding of the world, and in so doing, meaning making also allows for the social inclusion of students (Hopmann, 2007; Hörmann, 2011). As a consequence, the student's role in class unfolds within the social interactions with their classmates, depends on the teacher's actions, and is directed towards content matter presented by the teacher. An important presupposition for being a partaker in meaning-making processes is the student's autonomy. By granting each student autonomy, teachers acknowledges that students bring along their own experiences and histories which serve as a breeding ground for further learning experiences (Hörmann, 2015). Due to the student's self-activity and self-consciousness, the outcome of meaning-making processes cannot be defined in advance and can vary among the students (Hopmann, 2007). From a classical didactical perspective, students are autonomous individuals nested within a social group. Their role is not only to interpret and make meaning of content matter for their own purpose but to become part of a social community and develop a collective understanding of the world (Hopmann, 2007).

Competence-based curricula and standardized testing redefine a classical didactical understanding of learning by setting performance goals in terms of testable, transferable, and applicable skills that students are supposed to develop. Students are not only expected to acquire the predefined competencies and skills, but the main goal lies in steadily increasing their performance. A focus on the qualification of each individual positions the student in the context of the knowledge to be learned rather than in the context of a social environment where students develop a collective understanding of the meaning of content (Hörmann, 2015). As shown by Hilt et al. (2019), the characteristics of the "ideal student" in such a model of schooling are self-regulated, responsible, co-operative, engaged, and self-motivated. Students become addressees of individualized instruction that is directed towards their needs for acquiring the next competence level. This leads to a situation in which the risk of failing is handed over to the students themselves, who then become accountable for their learning progress (Bachmann et al., 2021; Hopmann, 2007; Hörmann, 2015).

While comparing them across time, the Norwegian core curricula provide different stories about the construction of the students as learners and future citizens, namely, stories on how they are embedded in the daily life of schooling and what is expected of them. The didactical framework described earlier helps to structure and arrange these stories in a way that allows insights into the developments and consistencies of these curricula over time.

Curriculum Reforms in Norway

This chapter investigates three Norwegian core curricula enacted within the period from 1987 until 2020. We have chosen this time frame because it comprises the transition from the typically value-based policymaking of a Welfare state to a more outcome-based governance of the education system. Table 15.1 gives an overview of curriculum reforms in the given

Table 15.1 Overview of the Core Curricula and Their Contexts in the Period 1987–2020

Year	*Title of Core Curriculum*	*Abbreviation*	*Curriculum Context Information*
1987	*General part of the Curriculum Guidelines for Compulsory Education*	M87	Part of the *Mønsterplan 1987: Curriculum Guidelines for Compulsory Education in Norway*
1993	*Core Curriculum for Primary, Secondary and Adult Education*	L93	The core curriculum L93 was a part of the 1994 reform for upper secondary education; the curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school in Norway from 1997 (L97); and *The Knowledge Promotion Reform for Primary and Secondary Education*, 2006 (LK06).
2017	*Core Curriculum—Values and Principles for Primary and Secondary Education*	LK20	Part of the curriculum renewal reform known as *Knowledge Promotion 2020* (LK20)

period in Norway. We decided to include M87, L93, and LK20 in our analysis because each of them introduced a new and distinct core curriculum. Furthermore, the sample reflects the transformation from a core curriculum for compulsory education to a common core that contains the overall values, principles, and aims for compulsory school, upper secondary school, and adult education.

The first reform in this period was the curriculum from 1987, which was called *Mønsterplan 1987* (M87). The name "*Mønsterplan*" was chosen because the curriculum was considered a framework that sets the pattern (*mønster*) for teachers who could choose from among the content according to their own professional judgment. As emphasized in the whole reform, this allowed for the local adaptation of teaching content, which is often considered a specific feature of a Nordic understanding of schooling. "Local school planning," "local curriculum work," and "local school-organization" were essential features of M87 that involved not only teachers and principals, but also students, their parents, local associations, and organizations (Engelsen, 2003). The curriculum was prepared in an era where societal movements had a big impact on public discourse, such as the women's rights movement and the promotion of cultural diversity. It therefore addresses topics like gender equality, minority languages, and social inclusion. A further important part of the public discourse was the promotion of the unitary, comprehensive school, which is also reflected in the curriculum. It gives extensive room to the principle of adapted teaching and emphasizes in general the inclusive mandate of schools.

As a further measure, a large education reform was implemented in 1994 for upper secondary education that also included the core curriculum for compulsory school, upper secondary school, and adult education, which the ministry had approved the year before. This core curriculum became a central part of the next curriculum reform, L97, for compulsory education. While M87 emphasized the school's local community, L93 aimed at ensuring common knowledge, traditions, and values.

In 2006, the fundamental reform known as *The Knowledge Promotion Reform* (*Kunnskapsløftet*) was implemented. The curriculum was clearly competence based and performance oriented and thus rang in a new era in Norwegian curriculum policy. However, only the subject curricula were revised, not the core curriculum. In 2020, the revision of LK06 was implemented and called both the *Knowledge Promotion Reform 2020* and the *Curriculum Renewal Reform* (*Fagfornyelsen*; LK20). For LK20, the core curriculum was thoroughly revised in addition to the subject matter curricula.

Like its predecessor, the official rhetoric of the LK20 reform is to provide students with the competencies and skills needed for succeeding in an undefined future. The main ambition for LK20 was to make the whole framework more consistent and provide more orientation towards content within the competence framework by reducing the number of competence-aims and better integrating basic skills into the curriculum. LK20 is in fact still oriented towards learning outcomes and competencies, and it redefines the frame for the understanding of schools as a societal institution and the focus of their professional practice (Karseth, 2019).

As different as the three core curricula of our analysis are from each other, they are unified by their ambition to provide the next generation of Norwegian society with education and knowledge that allows for a continuing history of the nation-state, both in terms of maintaining what has been reached so far and of further development. Even though the national-building character has been opened to international and global thinking, the national narrative is still the foundation for Norwegian curricula (Karseth & Sivesind, 2010; see also Tröhler, 2016). Thus, it is of interest to learn to what extent the concept of the student has been consistent or changing over time.

Methods and Framework of Analysis

Depending on varying societal and political contexts, curricula reflect what is considered the knowledge of most worth in a given society at a specific point in time. They document the results of negotiation processes between different actors within a school and education system in a nation-state. Usually, experts, practitioners, bureaucrats, and the public in general are involved in curriculum-making processes and contribute to curriculum discourse (Hopmann, 1991). They bring their positions into the struggle for the definition of situations and hope to gain support and create coalitions among the participants (Keller et al., 2018). By investigating three core curricula over time, the analysis reveals a discourse that has been changing due to its exposure to different societal and political conditions and contexts. Each of the three points of time represents its own characteristics with regard to how the discourse is constituted and structured and what kind of language is used. At the same time, the discourse reveals a continuous construction of a national narrative on the purpose of schooling (Tröhler, 2016). The relation between the continuous and changing constructions is of specific relevance to our analysis, which focuses on the role of the students in these discourse(s) from a historical-diachronic perspective. However, it has to be made clear that the analysis cannot give insight into how the curricula have been accepted in the practical field or which impact or effects they have had. Instead, we focus on the emergence, circulation, and manifestation of collective orders of knowledge in terms of conceptions on education and their shifts over time as they have been presented in the respective core curriculum. Instead of examining the actual propositions and arguments (see Tröhler, 2011, p. 17), we reconstruct the implicit and explicit understandings and imaginations of how students work with content, what kinds of relations they are expected to have with their teachers and classmates, and what is considered the students' tasks in the curriculum documents. How are the expectations towards the students formulated and embedded in the daily life of schooling? How much autonomy is granted to the students, and how is their participation in class anticipated? And eventually, how is the relation between the individual and social aspects in learning created? By investigating the discourse in three Norwegian core curricula, we show how the student's role in class is constructed over time in the period from 1987 until 2020. In addition, our analysis reveals how a Nordic understanding of schooling appears in the three core curricula, and how it is renegotiated in the light of competence- and performance-oriented frameworks of schooling.

Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of the three core curricula in chronological order. By starting with the oldest core curriculum in the given time span, the M87, the chapter continues with L93 and eventually LK20 and compares the three curricula with each other.

M87: The Student as a Member of the School Community

The core curriculum of M87 (Ministry of Education and Research, 1987)[2] is the most extensive text among the three core curricula of this analysis.

The English version comprises 91 pages in 13 chapters, starting with describing the mandate of basic education and the school's role in society. The following chapters deal with specific issues and societal challenges for the school's work.

Students are mentioned in many different chapters and contexts, and they are always described as being nested into the web of relations in school. The student is regarded as a part of and as a future member of a (local) social community, and the school's mandate is to provide conditions in which the student can grow into this community: "The life and work of the school must be such that all learn to respect each other and cooperate in spite of differences" (Ministry of Education and Research, 1987, p. 19). This sentence formulates a clear task to all those involved, but not in terms of instructions on what to do or learn. Rather, it points out the responsibility of all to contribute to a common effort. Another example makes clear that the students are constructed as partakers of their environment:

> From the first year the pupils should be actively involved in the efforts to shape the school environment. It is an objective of the activities of the school that the pupils learn to accept responsibility for themselves, seen in relation to others and the environment in which they find themselves. . . . The pupils must be encouraged to care for others in a way that teaches them in a concrete fashion what this responsibility implies. In this connection, valuable experience is to be gained from accepting responsibility for fellow pupils or for persons in the local community.
>
> (Ministry of Education and Research, 1987, p. 20)

While the formulations imply a responsibility on the part of the school, the question of whether and to what extent students live up to these expectations is kept open. It seems that the students are granted a high amount of autonomy in the way they can respond to the expectations.

The purpose of teaching is described as enabling students to understand and find their way into societal and cultural life and to prepare them for taking over responsibility and tasks in tomorrow's society as well as maintain their precious heritage from earlier times (Ministry of Education and Research, 1987, p. 17). In addition, the school is required to give weight to the goal that students learn to talk, read, write, and calculate and that they are open to dialogue and collaboration with others (p. 43). The argument is that these basic skills are of essential meaning for the personal and social development of each individual in relation to the needs of the society (Ministry of Education and Research, 1987, p. 43). The balance between the individualistic necessities for each student (who is supposed to learn the basics like reading, writing, and math) and the social requirements (becoming a part of the community and being able to communicate with members of this group) plays a considerable role throughout the whole text of the curriculum. However, what exactly students should learn or which path should lead into the future is not defined, and this grants a lot of power to the teachers and their professional judgment.

In M87, students are considered people who originate from a local community (i.e., where they live), and, likewise, the schools are considered an active part of the same community. M87 promotes the students' own experiences from earlier times in their environment as the starting point for further learning and suggests actively using the local environment to extend students' experiences (Ministry of Education and Research, 1987, p. 24). This approach to learning is not only in line with child-oriented concepts such as reform pedagogy but also with didactical theory that regards the student's personal experiences as a basis and resource for learning in terms of meaning-making (see Hörmann, 2015). The next section discusses the core curriculum L93 and points to relevant differences and similarities when compared to the analysis of M87.

L93: The Student as a Knowing and Educated Human Being

In many aspects, the core curriculum L93 (The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997) carries on the ideas of learning and the role students play from M87. A fundamental difference lies in the structure of the core curriculum, which had been derived from the "Objectives" clauses of the Education Acts for Primary and Lower Secondary Education, the Upper Secondary Education/Vocational Training Act, and the act on Adult Education (*formålsparagrafene*) for Norwegian schools. The English version of L93 comprises 40 pages for its seven chapters: "The Spiritual Human Being," "The Creative Human Being," "The Working Human Being," "The Liberally-Educated Human Being," "The Social Human Being," "The Environmentally Aware Human Being," and, finally, "The Integrated Human Being."

Even if the content of the chapters often contains similar elements to M87, the new structure sets an interesting focus on the development of the students. More precisely, the text focuses on the future grown-ups and how they are supposed to be, namely, meaningful, creative, working, educated, collaborating, environmentally aware, and integrated. The emphasis on the student's future role becomes clear with the very first sentence in the introduction:

> The aim of education is to furnish children, young people and adults with the tools they need to face the tasks of life and surmount its challenges together with others. Education shall provide learners with the capability to take charge of themselves and their lives, as with the vigor and will to stand by others.
>
> (The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997, p. 5)

The wording in this example is more direct than in similar paragraphs in M87. The *aim of education* is more precise than the descriptions of the school's tasks in M87, and *furnishing* students with *tools they need* is more imperative than *enabling* them to learn. The students appear as those who need to be educated and who have to learn with the purpose of mastering their future lives.

L93 focuses on the cultural heritage and what students should know and learn from it. By being exposed to different topics, values, and content, students are expected to develop and "reach higher" in terms of making progress in their learning:

> Education in this second tradition entails training in thinking—in making conjectures, examining them conceptually, drawing inferences, and reaching verdicts by reasoning, observation and experiment. Its counterpart is practice in expressing oneself concisely—in argument, disputation and demonstration.
>
> (The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997, p. 13)

Compared to M87, this is clearly a more precise idea of how students are supposed to learn. They should be trained in the use of various techniques that help human beings to not only understand better, but to also make themselves better understandable. The social dimension of schooling is still present in L93, but it tends to be more in the background as compared to the descriptions of the educative meaning of content matter. In the chapter "The Integrated Human Being," it says that "[t]he ultimate aim of education is to inspire individuals to realize their potential in ways that serve the common good; to nurture humanness in a society in development" (The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997, p. 40). Students therefore appear as learners who are eager to discover the world and who are supposed to reach for a specific, predefined understanding of the world at a higher level. The teacher's role is to guide them and provide them with adequate training and exercise. The learning process can therefore be described as an instructive approach in which the teacher aims to make the educative meaning of content matter clear to the students. The picture of the student is not necessarily the same as in M87, where the student's local origin and previous experience are the starting point for further learning. L93 says that "Education shall meet children, adolescents and adults on their own terms and so lead them to the borderland where they can encounter the new by opening their minds and testing their skills" (The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997, p. 11), which only refers to the students' different abilities and presuppositions but not to their previous experiences. Therefore, the students are constructed as individuals who differ from each other with respect to their characteristics and as social human beings who are supposed to learn how to communicate and collaborate with each other.

L93 positions the student in a knowledge framework rather than in a social context (as in the case of M87). This also becomes visible in the pictures of historical artwork that are added to the curriculum emphasizing the meaning of the text (Sivesind et al., 2003; Trippestad, 2011). The following section presents the last and most recent core curriculum, LK20, and brings it into relation with the analysis of the two prior core curricula.

LK20: The Student as a Future-Oriented Learner

The core curriculum LK20 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) includes a significantly shorter core curriculum than its predecessors. The English version comprises 22 pages and its chapters present "Core Values of the Education and Training," "Principles for Education and All-Round Development," and "Principles for the School's Practice." LK20 continues with a number of values and concepts from the previous core curricula, but it presents them in a different way. Students are still regarded as active members of a social community that need to be prepared for their future in society, but the focus lies on learning and developing competencies. The principles for education and development are described in the context of values and ideas, but they are eventually broken down into specific skills and competencies. As shown by Sivesind (2019), students are most often mentioned in relation to terms like "learning" and "development potential" in LK20. They are addressed as those who should achieve specific goals, which becomes apparent in formulations such as "The pupils must be able to assess different sources of knowledge and think critically about how knowledge is developed" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 7).

The social dimensions in the core curriculum LK20 deal with encounters with others and the ability to collaborate. The chapter "Social Learning and Development" starts out with statements representing both individual and social dimensions of schooling by saying that "[a] pupil's identity and self-image, opinions and attitudes grow in interaction with others. Social learning takes place in both the teaching, training and in all the other activities at school" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 10.). The individual student is situated in close relation to their classmates and the students' developments are considered as being mutually dependent on each other. In the further course of the text, the idea is again broken down into specific competencies that students should acquire, such as to "learn to cooperate, function together with others and develop the ability to participate and take responsibility" (p. 13).

Very similar to M87 and L93, LK20 presents the value of democracy by emphasizing that students are human beings on equal terms. However, LK20 specifies competencies that students should acquire for succeeding in education for democracy. While the relation between the individual student and the class as a whole is omnipresent throughout the whole text in M87, LK20 specifies this relation only in specific sections, such as in "Democracy and Participation," within which it states that "[p]upils shall learn in school to respect the fact that people are different and learn to solve conflicts peacefully" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 10).

Transforming values into cognitive goals has consequences for students' autonomy, which is constrained by a limited opportunity to participate in a collaborative negotiation process on the meaning of, for example, democratic rules of decision-making. Whenever the outcome of education is defined, the learning process becomes individual and linear because others' interpretations and understandings become irrelevant for achieving the predefined goal. Within this framework, the student's role can be described as that of a learning individual who is supposed to become qualified by reaching defined goals, disregarding the student's origins, their previous experiences, their social embeddedness, or their own ambitions.

The student's and the school's local embeddedness is almost absent in LK20. There is one sentence in the section "An Inclusive Learning Environment" that states that the local environment "may contribute positively to the development of the school and the pupils," but it relativizes this by saying that "[v]arious forms of local, national and international cooperation will add up-to-date relevance to the pupils' learning" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 17).

Discussion

This contribution set out to investigate the student's role in the core curricula of three different Norwegian curricula over time between 1987 and 2020. In addition, we were interested in how far a Nordic understanding of schooling appeared in the three core curricula and how this has been renegotiated in light of competence- and performance-oriented frameworks of schooling.

The discourses on the values and ideas of schooling in the core curricula of Norwegian curricula present some common narratives whose details have been subject to change. First, and in line with a traditional Nordic understanding of education, the core curricula present students as active members of a social community that learn together and interact with each other in school. The extent, however, to which the student is constructed as an autonomous partaker in their social life at school diminishes in the course of time. The picture of the student changes from a social to a learning human being who is confronted with clearly specified learning expectations. However, the social dimension is not absent in LK20, but instead, it appears to be subordinate to the learning discourse and its overall goal to achieve progress.

Emphasizing social togetherness in Norwegian schools can be traced back to a pietistic understanding of teaching that is focused on each individual's needs and at the same time based on the idea of "teaching the class as a whole," where special attention is paid to the school climate and culture (Midtsundstad & Hopmann, 2010; see also Bostad & Solstad in this volume). It can be regarded as a Nordic way of situating the child in the context of the school, which appears to be a contradiction to a paradigm in which each student's individual progress is at the center of attention. Tröhler places the origin of competence standards into a Presbyterian/Methodist milieu in the United States, where experimental psychologists laid the groundwork for modern empirical educational sciences (Tröhler, 2011; Tröhler & Maricic, 2021). He argues that, in line with Protestant mindsets, standards are a means to support the individual's developments and to help them in finding their way into their future lives (Tröhler, 2011). From this perspective, an individualistic and performance-oriented understanding of schooling is reconcilable with a social concept of teaching and learning because both aim at supporting the individual in developing future perspectives. With regard to the student's role in Norway's three core curricula, we conclude that the discourse is not fundamentally changing under the framework of competence and performance-oriented policies, but rather, it has been accentuated in a new way. By redefining the school's social mandate as competencies that students need to acquire, the balanced understanding of the individual and social dimensions of schooling can be maintained, albeit on the premise that it rests in the students' hands to realize it by acquiring the necessary skills.

A second narrative that runs like a thread through the three core curricula is the picture of students as members of equal value within the school community who need to be actively engaged through teaching. Due to Norway's early interests in reform pedagogy and child-centered approaches, the high value of the child and the consideration of its needs is a core, omnipresent feature in Norwegian education (Midtsundstad & Hopmann, 2010). This genuine interest in and recognition of the child might, on the one hand, have contributed to keeping the variety of children's needs in mind even within a performance-oriented framework. On the other hand, it might have also opened the door for reinterpreting an individualistic, performance-oriented, and hence reduced understanding of children's needs as a means for the students' own good. Hilt et al. (2019) have come to a similar conclusion in a Norwegian study that examined the picture of the "ideal student" in Norwegian policy papers. They state that there has been a "coexistence" of "social democratic progressivism" and "neo-liberal market economy" (p. 394), where the competence trend as an expression of neo-liberal thinking promotes an understanding of the ideal student that was easy to adapt to the earlier ideal of the independent and self-regulated child as promoted by social democratic progressivism. Eventually, the competence trend promoting the self-regulated, self-motivated, and co-operative student has only reinforced something that was already there (Hilt et al., 2019, p. 394).

The third narrative is about the picture of the student as a human being with its own history embedded in a local community. It is present in all the core curricula, but it fades over the course of time. While L93 promoted both the local anchoring of teaching and learning and learning opportunities from an international and globalized understanding of the world, LK20 is based rather on an understanding of the students who differ from each other with regard to their abilities, interests, and ambitions. The students' own previous experiences originating from their local situatedness as resources and starting points for collective learning in terms of meaning-making only plays a subordinated role in LK20.

In conclusion, Nordic themes and priorities in education like student activity and the social community as an essential condition for learning become visible in each of the three Norwegian core curricula. At the same time, the local anchoring of teaching and learning has been downgraded over the course of time, social aspects have become cognitive, and a focus on individual learning progress and knowledge acquisition are promoted by the most recent core curriculum. Even if it still bears the hallmarks of a Nordic understanding of education, the changes in the language of schooling imply far-reaching consequences for the theoretical conceptualization of the school as an institution. What does the disengagement of teaching and learning from its local context mean for the student's search for identity and their subjectification processes (Biesta, 2009)? How can schools deal with the increasing demand for individual qualifications in a cultural context that has been focusing on the cultivation and socialization of students? Given that this chapter deals with policy ideals, it leaves aside the question of how schools and practitioners actually react to the framework presented by LK20. Instead, the chapter uncovers ongoing dynamics in Norwegian policy discourse in which different traditions and paradigms are striving to find new relations to each other and, in so doing, are challenging old traditions. After uncovering the developments from 1987 until 2020 in the analysis presented in this chapter, it will be interesting to see how distinct and "Nordic" the future Norwegian education discourse will be despite an evident international orientation in Norwegian school policy.

Notes

1. While the core curriculum was already published in 2017, the complete reform with revised subject curricula was implemented in 2020. Therefore, the name of the reform, LK20, refers to the year 2020.
2. All references and citations originate from the English versions of the Norwegian curriculum documents.

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16 International Legitimations of the Swedish School Reform 2015/2018

Andreas Nordin

The use of evidence has become central to national educational policymaking in the Nordic countries. The word *evidence* signals a solid empirical foundation upon which politicians want to make well-informed decisions about the future. However, evidence is by no means a homogenous concept, and what counts as evidence in educational reforms differs over time and in different contexts. No matter what changes, the environment must perceive the evidence as legitimate. In terms of national politics, social interactions between politicians and the public shape the answer to the question of what counts as evidence (Waldow, 2012). What the public perceives as legitimate evidence becomes relevant and useful evidence to politicians as it gains legitimacy for political action. In the wake of World War II (WWII), science has become an increasingly important provider of reliable evidence in the Nordic region because it was seen as legitimate by its citizens and thus useful to politicians. The scientific advancements of that time fostered a positive view of the future and a strong belief among politicians in the possibilities and potentialities of rational social planning (Hallsén & Nordin, 2020). In the Swedish case, this development led to close collaboration between politicians and national researchers, particularly in education, where building a nine-year comprehensive school for all was central to the overarching project of building the modern state (Husén, 1989). However, despite a strong public belief in truth, objectivity, rationality, and neutrality, the indistinct boundary between science and politics in practice meant that educational research was guided by a social democratic project built around ideals of equality, solidarity, co-operation, and the possibility of social mobility (Telhaug et al., 2006). This close relationship between politics and the national research community in realizing social goals became an important part of the conceptualization of the Nordic education model in Sweden. Thus, a political trust in domestic research to provide legitimacy for political action when it comes to education is inherent in the post-WWII Nordic model of education. This does not mean that there were no references to international sources in Swedish educational policymaking during this period. On the contrary, Sweden has a long history of policy borrowing and lending as well as of

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being part of international dialogues (Waldow, 2009), as is also visible in political documents from this post-WWII period (see Wahlström & Nordin, 2020). However, it seems that referring to international sources did not provide enough legitimacy for political action during this period.

In the last couple of decades, the use and relevance of scientific research informed by geographical context, history, culture, and ideology have come into question in light of the growing production and use of decontextualized and comparable knowledge, thus changing the conditions for national policymaking. Internationally, policy makers have increasingly sought out scientific knowledge that "works" in the sense that it can provide statistically significant knowledge or causal explanations and predictions following an experimental-quantitative rationale without regard to contextual conditions (Smeyers & Depaepe, 2006). In this development toward an increased production and use of comparable educational statistics, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has come to play a prominent role since its inception in 1961 (Tröhler, 2014). Since the introduction of its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests in 2000 and the development of new infrastructure for data generation and analyses that followed, the influence of the OECD over national policymaking has expanded significantly (Lingard & Sellar, 2016). In the wake of this development, decontextualized evidence such as educational statistics and a national strive for global competitiveness have replaced the contextually informed domestic research fundamental to the Nordic model of education and the post-WWII project of building a strong state. Decontextualized statistical knowledge now provides the necessary legitimacy for politicians to take action (Porter, 1995), offering a seemingly neutral spot from which politicians can calculate the future and make impartial decisions (Gorur, 2015).

Against this background, this chapter takes an interest in the use and effects of international points of reference as sources of legitimation in Swedish educational policymaking, with special attention given to the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform and the expanding role of the OECD in setting the political agenda in Sweden. The discussion draws on empirical findings from the Nordic comparative research project Policy Knowledge and Lesson Drawing in Nordic School Reform in an Era of International Comparison,[1] which studied the functionality of references in the larger context of evidence-based policy planning. Some results discussed in this chapter have been examined in the following publications from the project: Wahlström and Nordin (2020), Nordin and Wahlström (2022), and Steiner-Khamsi et al. (2022).

The chapter is structured into five sections. The theoretical and methodological points of departure are explicated in the next section, followed by a short history of policy borrowing and lending in Swedish educational policymaking. The subsequent section includes a discussion of the OECD as a central organizational point of reference to the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform as well as a discussion based on bibliometric analyses of the explicit international references used to legitimate the reform. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks and an outlook.

Points of Departure

A focus on the use and effects of international references in legitimating educational reforms directs analytical attention to complex processes of policy borrowing and lending, which take place all the time, more or less explicitly, and with different purposes. However, regardless of whether what is selectively borrowed and/or lent serves the purpose of legitimization or de-legitimization, the borrower expects the borrowed policy to gain legitimacy when recontextualized in the new social and/or geographical space (Waldow, 2012). The basic assumption is that any organization or political body in a democratic society must be perceived as legitimate by its environment in order to survive. Additionally, maintaining this legitimacy sometimes involves drawing on sources outside of one's own environment. The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann discussed these processes in terms of "externalization" and described modern society as functionally differentiated into sub-systems made up of internally linked communications following separate strains of logic. Luhmann directed attention to the importance of understanding policy borrowing and lending as a discursive practice. Furthermore, he argued that external aspects cannot link directly to any sub-system but must be imported and discussed within a specific sub-system, showing the importance of acknowledging the borrowing context as the main site for understanding processes of policy borrowing and lending (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Schriewer (2003) described this context sensitivity when making use of international references for legitimation purposes in policy and politics as "a selective description and synthesising interpretation" (p. 276). External points of reference can be of different kinds, such as organizations, countries, values, scientific evidence, or world situations (Waldow, 2012). This chapter focuses primarily on two kinds of external points of reference in relation to the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform. First, it focuses on the OECD as an organizational point of reference to the reform. This point is of special interest since the reform marked the first time the Swedish government explicitly turned to the OECD for help, thus strengthening the role of the organization as a co-producer of Swedish policy in planning for new educational reforms (Grek, 2020; Pettersson et al., 2017; Wahlström, 2018). Second, the chapter focuses on international references as shown in the reference lists of the source documents and used as evidence in legitimizing the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform. References in their functionality are here understood as authoritative sources of evidence used to legitimate educational reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2022). Finally, Waldow's (2009) concepts of "silent borrowing" and "undeclared imports" are used

Table 16.1 Distribution of References in the Policy Documents of the 2015/2018 Swedish School Reform

ID	*Type*	*Title*	*References*
1	WP	Prop. 2017/18:182 *Samling för skolan* [White paper 2017/18:182 Gathering for School]	86
2	GP	SOU 2017:35 *Samling för skolan—Nationell strategi för kunskap och likvärdighet. Slutbetänkande av 2015 års skolkommission* [Gathering for School—National Strategy for Knowledge and Equality. Final Report From the 2015 School Commission]	337
3	GP	SOU 2008:52 *Legitimation och skärpta behörighetsregler* [Certification and Stricter Eligibility Rules]	230
4	GP	SOU 2013:56 *Friskolorna i samhället* [The Independent Schools in Society]	169
5	GP	SOU 2015:22 *Rektorn och styrkedjan. Betänkande av utredningen om rektorernas arbetssituation inom skolväsende*t [The Principal and the Steering Chain. Report From the Commission of Inquiry into the Principal's Work Situation in the School System]	69
6	GP	SOU 2016:59 *På goda grunder—En åtgärdsgaranti för läsning, skrivning och matematik. Betänkande av Utredningen om en Läsa-skriva-räkna-garanti* [On Good Grounds—An Action Guarantee for Reading, Writing, and Math. Report of the Inquiry Into a Read-Write-Count-Guarantee]	234
7	GP	SOU 2016:94 *Saknad! Uppmärksamma elevers frånvaro och agera. Betänkande av Att vända frånvaro till närvaro—En utredning om problematisk elevfrånvaro* [Missing! Pay Attention to the Students' Absence and Take Action. Report of Turning Absenteeism Into Attendance—An Investigation Into Problematic Student Absenteeism]	334
8	GP	SOU 2017:51 *Utbildning, undervisning och ledning—Reformvård till stöd för en bättre skola* [Education, Teaching, and Management—Reform Care in Support of a Better School]	156

Note: ID = identification number of included source documents; WP = white paper; GP = green paper.

for a discussion on the political strategies of using international references as a source of legitimation in the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform and its effects on educational policymaking in Sweden.

When proposing new laws and regulations in Sweden, the Ministry of Education and Research presents its proposals to the parliament in the format of government bills (*Propositioner*), also referred to as white papers. These are preceded by government official reports (*Statliga offentliga utredningar* [SOU]). These are also referred to as green papers that are produced by government commissions of inquiry, which are ad hoc commissions appointed by the government to elaborate on different topics as a first step in the formal policy process. Taken together, white and green papers thus represent the "official knowledge" (see Baek et al., 2018) underpinning a political reform, and the policy knowledge represented by the references in those documents forms the evidence base legitimating the proposed reforms.

The white paper underpinning the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform is Prop. 2017/18:182 *Samling för skolan* (Prop. 2017/18:182 Gathering for school), which refers to several green papers. However, not all green papers have been included in the analyses for this chapter. Some were removed for being interim versions or duplicates, and others were eliminated for not focusing on comprehensive schooling. As a result, one white paper and eight green papers form the basis for the bibliometric analyses in this chapter. One of the green papers (SOU 2016:66) lacked a reference list, so those references were not included in the total number of references, and it is not included in the table next. An explicit reference list was a selection criterion for references to be included. In the first step, the total number of 1,615 references found in these documents was entered and analyzed. In the second step, the number was adjusted since references that were cited by multiple sources were counted only once. This process resulted in a total of 1,421 references, which have been analyzed quantitatively.

The reference distribution was classified according to location and type of document. The category *location* distinguished between domestic, regional, and international references, with *regional* referring to the Nordic context. The category *type of document* distinguished between the subcategories: reports, books, academic publications, governmental publications, and others. However, due to the argument of this chapter, the reports and books subcategories have been included in the others subcategory. Taken together, these classifications allow for a discussion on what kind of evidence, in terms of international references, the Swedish government used to legitimate the 2015/2018 school reform.

A National History of Policy Borrowing and Lending

Sweden has a long history of policy borrowing and lending in education. In the late 19th century, the Swedish school system was displayed to the world through exhibitions and world fairs. At these world fairs, nation-states put their modern achievements on display for others to see and be inspired. Educational ideas and practices materialized in the form of educational artifacts such as texts, charts, desks, and even complete schoolhouses. A good example of the latter is the "Swedish cottage" in Central Park in New York City, a remnant saved from the World's Fair in Philadelphia in 1876. The full-scale schoolhouse, including a variety of teaching materials that won several prizes at the fair, was eventually sold to Central Park (Lundahl & Lawn, 2015). It is reasonable to assume that the positive responses that the Swedish school system received at these exhibitions and world fairs became constitutive elements in constructing a national self-image of being a progressive country in terms of education. The international interest in the Swedish school system continued when Sweden entered a reform period after WWII. This period involved extensive investigations, planning, and experimentation leading up to the realization of a nine-year comprehensive school in 1962. During this period, the state established a close relationship with the research community (Husén, 1989), and education was seen as a governmental tool for "social engineering" (Forsberg & Pettersson, 2014). Building a modern school system became an important part of the overarching ambition of building a modern state, and visitors from all over the world came to study the many experiments that took place in Sweden (Hallsén & Nordin, 2020).

Borrowing ideas from other countries seems to have been a natural part of Swedish educational policymaking (Wahlström & Nordin, 2020). For example, the green paper SOU 1948:27, *1946 års Skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling* (*The 1946 School Committee's Report With Guidelines for the Development of the Swedish School System*), which paved the way for the nine-year comprehensive school, referred to some of its members and experts as having undertaken study trips to Denmark, Norway, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and the United States of America. The Nordic focus was primarily directed toward Denmark and Norway, and the green paper emphasized that the new school system should be able to equip students with enough language skills for them to understand written and spoken Danish and Norwegian to such an extent that they could even be experienced as enjoyable. Regarding the school's inner work, the commission referred to a Norwegian study discussing the importance of child-centered teaching and taking the interest of the child as a point of departure for a more individualized and diversified classroom. This report mentioned Finland only in relation to the issue of teacher exams and as an example, together with Denmark, of countries with a school system differentiated into separate tracks from the age of eleven. Of the Nordic countries, only Iceland was not mentioned at all in the report. The work of the 1946 School Committee also played an important part in making English a mandatory school subject from 1950 onward and emphasized the importance of Swedish youths developing language skills to be able to participate in building a new Europe with Sweden as an active partner.

In line with a more general trend of restructuring bureaucratic states along managerial principles, known as "new public management," Sweden experienced a period of vast reforms during the early 1990s that decentralized power from the central state to the local authorities. For example, 290 municipalities took over responsibility from the state for mandating comprehensive schooling. In addition, a new goal-oriented curriculum was introduced, and teachers became increasingly responsible for the selection and organization of what was to be taught in schools. A globalized vision emphasizing education as a tool for building a strong and competitive knowledge economy replaced the modern vision of post-WWII Swedish society. In the green paper SOU 1992:94 *Skola för bildning* (SOU 1992:94, School for Bildung), the Curriculum Committee (*Läroplanskommittén*) proposed a new national curriculum for the decentralized goal-oriented comprehensive school. A whole chapter of this report was devoted to aspects of internationalization. The report emphasized several aspects of importance to people in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world: information and communication technology, media, and the environment. All of these issues connect people from different parts of the world in common cross-border challenges. If people are to take part in such a globalized world, the report argued that the school must foster a dual identity. According to the report, while a national identity firmly rooted in one's own culture, history, and language is still important, schools must simultaneously foster a Nordic, European, and global identity. The report concluded that national prosperity could be combined with global competitiveness only with the development of such a double identity.

In 2000, the OECD launched PISA to measure 15-year-old school pupils' performance in mathematics, science, and reading. In the first round of PISA, Sweden performed well above the OECD average. However, in the following assessments, the Swedish results started to decline, with its lowest result in 2012. This development triggered a national crisis discourse calling for new reforms (Nordin, 2019). Central to this criticism was the argument that the decentralized school system launched in the early 1990s had not been able to provide the expected results. The PISA results also revealed that the decentralized school had failed to maintain national equality throughout the school system; as a result, radical measures had to be taken. This national crisis resulted in a whole range of fundamental reforms launched in 2011 with a new national school law, a new teacher education program, and a new national curriculum for the comprehensive school with a strengthened focus on learning outcomes. The green paper SOU 2007:28 *Tydliga mål och kunskapskrav i Grundskolan* (SOU 2007:28 Clear Goals and Knowledge Demands in Compulsory School) described the Swedish school as being too ideological and too vague, as well as providing too much space for local and individual interpretations of national steering documents. The solutions proposed in the report aimed at reducing the space for interpretation, which included writing the national curriculum in simpler language that would be easier for practitioners to understand as well as introducing more well-defined knowledge requirements and more national tests. The measures taken in the 2011 school reforms aimed at strengthening central governmental control over a decentralized school system and standardizing teaching and testing to achieve an increased level of equality. Another prominent feature of the national crisis was the criticism directed toward the national educational research community, arguing that it had not provided the useful knowledge needed by policy and practice but instead had become part of the problem (Grek, 2020). Critics argued that politicians should turn more actively to the OECD to secure a more reliable and non-ideological evidence base for political decision-making. In 2014, the Swedish government, stressed by the continued national crisis discourse, turned to the OECD for support. This move led to the focus of this chapter, the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform, which was an incremental reform following up on the fundamental reforms launched in 2011.

International References in the 2015/2018 Swedish School Reform

In 2014, the Swedish government explicitly asked the OECD for help in addressing the causes of its disappointing PISA results. In the commissioned report delivered to the government the following year (OECD, 2015), the OECD confirmed the bad state of the Swedish school system, saying that no other country had experienced such a rapid decline from 2000 to 2012. However, the OECD also offered hope. In the foreword, Andreas Schleicher stated the following:

> Across the world, Sweden was once seen by many as a model for high quality education, and it possesses many of the ingredients to become that again. Among these is the unwavering commitment of its citizens and policy-makers from across the political spectrum to do whatever it takes to provide all children with the knowledge, skills and values that they need to succeed in tomorrow's world. The OECD is there to help Sweden rise to that challenge.
>
> (OECD, 2015, p. 3)

In the report, the OECD both defined the problems of the Swedish school system and prescribed the necessary measures to overcome those problems. This report exemplifies the expanding role of the OECD and how the organization increasingly becomes intertwined in national politics (Lingard & Sellar, 2016). The report (OECD, 2015) discussed "disappointing results" (p. 7) and the need for "urgent change" (p. 7), the report generated reform pressure and set the stage for policy intervention. The solutions offered by the OECD brought along a statistical language promising salvation and control that was unfamiliar to many politicians (see Tröhler, 2006). In this discursive shift, Sweden, which had been somewhat of a role model and a representative of the Nordic model of education, was positioned as a nation in need of advice (see Pettersson et al., 2017). As representatives of both the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA; Hegarty, 2014) and the OECD (Schleicher & Zoido, 2016) have pointed out, an important measure in these kinds of policy-aid processes is to replace politics, ideology, tradition, and culture with evidence (i.e., educational statistics) as the basis for political decision-making. Schleicher and Zoido (p. 374) argued that context-dependent resources operate as "walls" hindering context-independent evidence from permeating all areas of the political process. In Sweden, both the diagnosis and the solution offered by the OECD soon became the dominant discourse uniting political parties, irrespective of ideological position, along with the mass media in such a way that Grek (2020) likened it to religious fundamentalism. However, tearing down the "contextual walls" of ideology, culture, and tradition to release decontextualized evidence into the educational system as proposed by Schleicher and Zoido arguably means depriving national politicians of their main resources for making policy and politics. Despite this loss of political independence, the Swedish case shows that the expansion of the OECD's power over national policymaking does not necessarily have to be the result of only external pressure; rather, it may be a multidirectional process where uncertain politicians turn to the OECD in their strive for political legitimacy. As context-dependent resources lose their ability to provide legitimacy for political action in times of crisis, international organizations like the OECD thus offer a way out of the political predicament.

In order to follow up on the suggestions in the OECD report, the Swedish government appointed a Government Commission of Inquiry in April 2015. The 2015 School Commission was led by Jan-Eric Gustafsson, a professor of education at the University of Gothenburg. The government directed the commission to make policy recommendations on how to strengthen the results of the Swedish school by improving teaching quality based on the conclusions and recommendations made in the 2015 OECD report. In doing so, the government confirmed the position of Sweden as a nation in need of advice and the OECD as a fundamental organizational point of reference in legitimating the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform. As Steiner-Khamsi et al. (2022) noted, the 2015 School Commission provided a scientific stamp of approval for OECD-informed national education policies in Sweden. Understanding the fundamental role of the OECD is thus central to understanding the 2015/2018 school reform as a whole.

The Distribution of References in the 2015/2018 Swedish School Reform

Examining the references as presented in the reference lists of the source documents that made up the evidence base for the 2015/2018 school reform reveals several patterns.

Looking at the category *location* in Table 16.2, it is worth noting that no more than 19% of the total number of references were international despite the fundamental role of the OECD in launching the 2015/2018 school reform. Instead, the dominant category was domestic references, referring to various kinds of laws and regulations dealing with overall issues related to school governance. This result indicates that, despite international influence over the Swedish policy process, the domestic procedure of referring to laws, regulations, and previous commissions seems to operate relatively independently in an almost ritualized way. However, this finding should not be mistaken for a general absence of international influence. It might well be that international references were being translated and transformed in the writing of commissioned reports, becoming part of domestic discourse. As a result, they might not show up in the reference list, but they would still be ideationally present in the text (see Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2022). This situation becomes evident when looking at the most central report to the 2015/2018 reform, the SOU 2017:35, with its explicit directive from the government to make suggestions based on the 2015 OECD report. In this document, 74% of the references were domestic, while no more than 23% of the references were categorized as international, and some of those were to organizations other than the OECD, such as the United Nations (UN). The same finding holds true for SOU 2016:94. While containing an even smaller percentage of international references (18%), this green paper drew the most heavily of all sources (aside from SOU 2017:35) on OECD knowledge, with separate sections discussing both PISA and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). Thus, OECD knowledge comes in many forms, sometimes translated and transformed into domestic discourse rather than operating as an explicit reference on its own.

Table 16.2 Reference Distribution in the 2015/2018 Swedish School Reform

ID	*Total*	*Location*			*Types of Documents*		
		Domestic	*Regional*	*Int'l*	*Academic*	*Gov't*	*Others*
1	86	86%	0%	14%	0%	77%	23%
2	337	74%	3%	23%	9%	62%	29%
3	230	85%	2%	13%	0%	52%	48%
4	169	96%	0%	4%	0%	90%	10%
5	69	84%	0%	16%	6%	42%	52%
6	234	67%	1%	32%	22%	47%	31%
7	334	81%	1%	18%	13%	50%	37%
8	156	92%	0%	8%	0%	84%	16%
Total	1421	80%	1%	19%	9%	58%	33%

Note: ID = identification number; Int'l = international; Gov't = governmental.

References to the Nordic region made up as little as 1% of the total number of references, and four of the source documents included no explicit Nordic references at all. However, as previously mentioned, the lack of explicit references does not mean that reference to the Nordic was totally absent. SOU 2008:52 discussed the certification of and stricter eligibility rules for teachers and used Denmark, Norway, Finland, France, Italy, Spain, Scotland, and Ontario, Canada as international examples of how other countries or provinces have resolved the issue of teacher certification. Although all of these countries were used as examples, the report noted especially that both Canada and Finland have had better results than Sweden on PISA in all respects and, therefore, presumably should have special attention paid to them. The green paper SOU 2016:59 used Finland as a reference society and revealed that Swedish delegates had made visits to Finland to study the Finnish school system (Nordin & Wahlström, 2022). Like Norway (Sivesind, 2019) and many other countries, Sweden thus used Finland as a reference society due to its success in PISA when searching for policy solutions abroad.

Turning to the category *types of documents*, the results show that different kinds of government publications were dominant in the reference lists. Except for John Hattie's book (Hattie, 2008), the most cited international document in all categories was the UN *Convention of the Rights of the Child*, which was ratified by the Swedish government in 1990 before becoming part of Swedish law on January 1, 2020. The many citations to the UN convention can be interpreted as an expression of a longstanding Swedish commitment to human rights issues. Another distinct feature of the analyzed sources was the low number of academic references despite a general advocacy for evidence-based policymaking (see Addey et al., 2017). Only 9% of the references were to academic sources, and two publications stood out as the most cited. The first one is *Visible Learning* by John Hattie, cited six times, and the other is *Utmärkt undervisning* (*Excellent Teaching*) by Jan Håkansson and Daniel Sundberg, cited five times. Both publications are overviews of international research offering synthesized knowledge on what works in educational policy and practice. Thus, it seems that in making use of academic knowledge, policy makers prefer it is in a condensed format, offering general and decontextualized knowledge similar to that of the OECD.

Concluding Remarks

In recent decades, the Nordic model in education that grew out of a dominating social democratic post-WWII discourse emphasizing equality, solidarity, and cooperation has been under constant renegotiation. Neoliberalism and governing education along managerial principles have challenged the understanding of comprehensive schooling as an integral part of building a strong welfare society, instead emphasizing schooling as a personal and national investment for increased prosperity and competitiveness on a global market (Telhaug et al., 2006). The introduction of international large-scale assessments, such as the OECD's PISA, further promoted an understanding of comprehensive schooling as something for nations to compete with. The guiding idea was that the results of these tests communicated the competitive status of the participating country. However, as shown by Telhaug et al. (2006), taking part in these assessments led to national crises in all Nordic countries, except for Finland, since their performances did not match their national self-perceptions. Sweden's PISA results continued to decline until 2012. This development united political parties from the entire ideological spectrum, mass media, and the public in an almost hegemonic national crisis discourse (Nordin, 2019).

Along with the other Nordic countries, Sweden shares a national self-perception of being a pioneer in the field of education, and Waldow (2009) has talked about the Swedish post-WWII strategy of policy borrowing as being a silent borrowing of undeclared imports since borrowing policy from abroad seemed unattractive to a country already among the best in the world. Borrowing policy from others did not lend legitimacy to political action; rather, it was seen as a sign of weakness. Irrespective of the volume of previous strategies, international references were now borrowed explicitly in the wake of the crisis discourse, and the volume was turned up. In 2014, when the Swedish government decided to turn to the OECD for help and political guidance, it marked something of a shift in Swedish educational policymaking, positioning the OECD as "the policy actor and influencer par excellence in Sweden" (Grek, 2020, p. 176). Although the OECD has had influence over Swedish educational politics for a longer period, the organization began to take on a more fundamental and profound role in the domestic political process, acting not just as an external partner lending policy, but as co-producer of national education policy. The OECD was involved in every step of the formal policy process, from agenda setting to policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. In the context of the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform, the OECD became the unquestionable international point of reference legitimating the reform.

However, making the OECD a central organizational point of reference to the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform was by no means a neutral act. As the context-dependent political language was replaced by a context-independent statistical language, unfamiliar to many politicians, they were to some extent alienated from their everyday practice and became increasingly dependent on organizations and/or people acting as "intermediaries" (Lubienski, 2019) that operate between science and politics in collecting, interpreting, and presenting useful evidence. Obviously, the OECD functioned as just such an intermediary organization in the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform, but so did members of the research community. The two most used academic references in the reform were research overviews presenting synthesized knowledge where researchers selected, interpreted, mapped, and presented research in an accessible format. Like the statistics produced by the OECD, the result was a kind of generalized and decontextualized knowledge operating at an abstract meta-level.

In the context of a national school crisis, decontextualized knowledge, presented in a condensed and simplified way, thus offers moral relief in providing a seemingly neutral spot from which stressed and insecure politicians can make impartial decisions. In the OECD context, the close cooperation between the state and its national research community characteristic of the Nordic model of education during the social democratic era was described as a problem that must be resolved. The contextually informed national educational research community is characterized as part of the problem (Grek, 2020). These researchers are building bricks in those contextual walls that Schleicher and Zoido (2016) argued must be torn down so that context-independent evidence can permeate all areas of political life. Identifying anything contextually informed as problematic also seems to apply to the Nordic dimension, which was silent in the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform in terms of explicit references. When such references did appear, they were mostly discursively embedded within the wider OECD discourse, where Finland, due to its PISA success, was the most frequently used.

To conclude, it is evident that what was perceived as a useful international point of reference lending legitimacy for political action in the 2015/2018 Swedish school reform was one providing decontextualized knowledge. Educational statistics have undoubtedly become the new educational language in Sweden, promising salvation and control to uncertain politicians (Tröhler, 2006). In the context of the OECD, political attention is redirected from regarding the school as an extension of the state in building a strong welfare society to understanding it as an investment in building a strong and competitive knowledge economy capable of delivering excellent results on international large-scale assessments. Educational goals are transformed and placed outside the national educational context as something that takes shape in the interactions between nations, league tables, and ranking lists.

With the 2015/2018 school reform, Swedish educational policymaking thus enters a path already typical for Norway and Denmark since the beginning of the new millennium where the OECD explicitly operates as a co-producer of national education policy. New visions of education are being built around ideologies of economic efficiency and positivistic performance (Cowen, 2018), thus replacing values such as equality, solidarity, and co-operation as the Nordic education model is being renegotiated. This is a problematic development as it runs the risk of narrowing down the educational imagination to what can be expressed in a decontextualized and statistical language.

Therefore, looking ahead, critically examining this development and making room for alternative languages and futures seems to be of utmost importance. In this chapter, I have made use of the theoretical lens of policy borrowing and lending as a possible starting point. However, it does not tell the whole story. Different theoretical and methodological approaches must be adopted in order to scrutinize the multiple forms of power exercised by the OECD and like organizations shaping and re-shaping education policy and practice today (see Cowen, 2018).

Note

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17 Surveying Policy Discourses Across Time and Space

Internationalization of Knowledge Providers and Nordic Narratives

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New forms of political authority evolve through global networks, various types of partnerships, and multilateral initiatives. Within these networks and alliances, policy makers develop expertise and convey messages about "international standards" and "best practices" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2013). Building on political interests in developing civic engagement, policy makers mediate global messages that drive performance agendas in governments across countries (Ozga, 2011). This practice leads to the next step to the dissemination of images that shape narratives of the Nordic. Although the literature suggests that international politics both exert influence on national politics and transform the way in which national policy makers and experts receive and translate global messages, there is little knowledge of how this process unfolds. To study this process, our empirical focus will be on how narratives of the Nordic change along with the evolvement of international education policies that national school authorities in Norway receive and translate.

Our first reason for focusing on the Nordic is that current researchers regard the Nordic as an institutional, political, and educational culture and practice that gained international attention in political discourses from the 1970s onward (see the introductory chapter in this volume). Researchers look upon the Nordic as a cultural-ideational trajectory that speaks to both international and national actors so long as they share ideas and values associated with the model. Second, because of strong historical ties and geographic proximity, policy makers, researchers, and others often perceive the Nordic countries as learning from their neighbors. This topic receives attention in current research discourses on the borrowing and lending of best practices within the Nordic region, not least because of Finland's reputation for academic excellence and young students' performance on assessment tests from the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OECD).

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In addition, developments labeled as *marketization* have created new conditions for organizing education in the Nordic countries, leading to current transformations of the school systems (Dovemark et al., 2018). Research has demonstrated how international comparisons lead to the recognition and projection of various constellations of reference societies that symbolize ideals or state affairs that either set standards for excellence or serve as an "anti-model" within a national policy space (Waldow, 2019). Notwithstanding, evolving conceptions of the Nordic can both reflect strong state traditions (Christensen, 2003) and grand cultural narratives that do not necessarily fade away but strengthen their roles within ongoing globalization processes (Karseth & Sivesind, 2010; Tröhler, 2011).

In particular, this chapter examines if and how policy makers in Norway share an interest in what is associated with memories of the Nordic along with international policy programs and practices. We ask the following questions: How do policy makers in Norway create thematic areas across time by producing and referencing official documents authorized by the government? How are thematic areas semantically shaped by the ways national policy makers acknowledge international organizations and their agenda-setting policies? How do they innovate new ideas and conceptions of the Nordic across reform periods? We address these questions by examining bibliometric networks and semantic patterns in policy documents that were written between 1988 and 2017.[1] A core aim is to study how public inquiry reports, which we call green papers, and white papers, published by governmental ministries in Norway, conceptualize the Nordic.

We define white papers as official documents about political issues authored by policy officials in the Ministry of Education on behalf of the government. White papers[2] are sent to the parliament for further deliberations and discussions without necessarily prosing a resolution to be made within parliament. Thus, white papers are further subjects for consideration that result in bills that recommend resolutions that the parties vote for within parliament. Green papers[3] are defined as public inquiry reports produced by government-appointed commissions that have the mandate to evaluate particular topics of interest and provide recommendations without being sanctioned by the government. Authors of both white and green papers are obliged to reference earlier white and green papers if they are relevant for enlightening the political discourse.

The chapter is organized as follows: (1) an overview of basic theoretical concepts in international policy transfer with a particular focus on longitudinal and spatial dimensions; (2) an overview of data and analytical strategies; (3) the presentation of findings that visualize how groups of policy documents reference each other to form clusters of documents that vary in terms of both thematic areas and temporal orders; (4) a comparison of narratives in terms of word associations and semantic patterns related to international organizations (IO), their comparative studies, and the Nordic; and (5) a discussion on existing research to rethink the conceptualization of the Nordic within a global context.

International Policy Transfer

Due to globalization and network governance, a growing body of academic literature examines how public policies and practices change through international policy transfer processes (Legrand, 2021; Nordin & Sundberg, 2014). The way of developing national policies could be a matter of international influence but is more likely characterized by locally constructed socio-cultural patterns. These patterns have developed over time, both within and among national institutions and through interaction with regional politics and policies. This interaction has generated narratives of the Nordic education model, or what we refer to in this chapter as simply *the Nordic*.

Based on this, we consider at least two ways in which international policy transfer processes unfold. First, national and regional actors can mediate conceptions of international programs and policies that they borrow from outside or inside the Nordic. Indeed, one way of observing policy transfer across social spaces is to closely examine processes of policy borrowing and lending where "actors borrow policies developed in one setting to develop programmes and policies within another" (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 357). The use of international assessment studies in national policymaking contexts may serve as an illustration of this particular form of policy transfer. When national governments and their administrations are attracted by comparative studies (e.g., those launched by the OECD) that help them rethink their own policies based on what is presented in reports about successful policies (e.g., demonstrated by test winners such as Finland), they may borrow ideas and develop their own schemes and scenarios for solving their own political problems. A core aim of this effort is to make policy planning and global monitoring of national developments "evidence-based" (Baek et al., 2018; Steiner-Khamsi, 2019).

Actually, the OECD[4] has officially referred to this type of policy transfer as a key rationale behind comparative studies. Their core ambition is to "allow educators and policy makers to learn from policies and practices applied in other countries" (OECD, 2020, back cover). Their policy is legitimized by a cognitive-scientific ambition to govern countries' national policies through hard data, quantified measures, assessment standards, and recommendations, a goal which they share with several international organizations. For example, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) is another IO that suggests its own assessment as a tool for global standard-setting policy. Actually, the IEA has provided comparative studies in mathematics and natural sciences since 1964, while the OECD first launched its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study in 2000 (Sivesind, 2019).

Other comparisons of IOs with transnational and evolutionary undertones focus more profoundly on normative ideas to change national and regional policies (Stone, 2002). A core theme is human rights education in which national and global aspirations merge (Russell & Tiplic, 2014). For example, the United Nation's (UN) international research units proposed frameworks for studying and developing 21st-century skills during the 1970s. Their goal is to use research and evaluations to set the agenda for future policies that urge nations to solve global problems. In this case, policy transfer structures education policy through global cultures and expectations (Drori et al., 2003; McEneaney & Meyer, 2000). With this backdrop, international policy makers, including civil servants, researchers, and others, develop and use country comparisons for creating global narratives that focus on transnational political-ethical questions. In both cases, applying cognitive schemes and defining normative agendas, policy actors make use of comparative studies for instrumental purposes to improve and change education for the betterment of individuals and society. In this effort, data, numbers, and narratives urge policy action due to new knowledge about the current state of affairs as well as global messages about future developments and problems. Thus, we address the empirical question of if and how national policy actors *actually change* their policies as a result of their interaction with IOs and their aspirations.

Second, national and regional actors can work to retain established socio-cultural roots of actions. Indeed, despite the trend to govern education through policy transfer from cognitive measures or normative goals, there are good reasons for considering education policy as configured by national and regional reform initiatives as well. For example, national governments in Nordic countries regularly appoint experts to participate in advisory commissions, to identify survey issues, and to find the most effective solutions for solving various policy issues (Christensen & Hesstvedt, 2019). Experts author formal reports, or green papers, with recommendations for how to develop policies in particular areas. Moreover, the national government authors its own white papers to share their knowledge and views on political problems. They also legitimize recommendations that politicians review and debate through processes that lead to new recommendations and resolutions within the parliament (Hörmann & Sivesind, 2022).

Recent research has shown that differences exist between school reforms within and across the Nordic countries (Baek et al., 2022; Volmari et al., 2022). These differences are most noticeable in terms of institutions, policy mechanisms, and governance (Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006). The differences are explained by the conditional variation under which reform makers develop and enact national policies as well as their success or failure within the international rankings (Seppänen et al., 2019). Moreover, policymaking practices in Nordic countries vary based on the institutionalized forms of policymaking, degree of self-referentiality, and reform type (Baek et al., 2022). Finally, national policies are sensitive in terms of how they reference Nordic policies when they address so-called reference societies (Sivesind, 2019; Waldow, 2019). As Tröhler (2016) has revealed through historiographic inquiries, recontextualization occurs when global policies are translated within regional and local contexts. In this process, nation-states create mindsets that are shaped by linguistic styles of reasoning (Tröhler & Horlacher, 2019; Tröhler, 2020). Therefore, contextual differences and semantic patterns across countries may affect policymaking processes and lead to policy outcomes by the ways in which national policy makers interpret and translate ideas about the Nordic.

Data and Analytical Strategies

Our sample consists of all 423 official policy documents from Norway, that is, white and green papers published by the Ministry of Education in Norway between 1988 and 2017. We also included all white and green papers referenced in these documents, the first published in 1978. We included these referenced papers to guarantee that publications from other ministries that were highly cited by other documents were included in the sample. Due to this sampling procedure, the documents we have collected address topics across grades in the education system from kindergarten to higher education as well as aspects of society beyond educational politics. Therefore, our study can provide an overview of broad themes and areas in Norwegian education policy. We regard these themes as both shaped through the dynamic interplay between actors within a national context and through governance via the interaction with international policy actors and their expertise.

Through bibliometric network analysis, we identified which documents frequently cite each other. The analysis resulted in a network configured by 11 clusters or groups of documents (see Appendix 1 for an overview of four of the clusters). Based on the titles of the documents, we used content analysis to identify which policy areas and time periods the clusters cover. We used the Louvain algorithm (Blondel et al., 2008) to compute clusters of documents and ran the texts through a text analysis program to observe terms and the frequency of word use. Since the clusters essentially constitute a collection of sub-groups that determined temporal and thematic contexts or spaces, we used these clusters to generate images that we then compared through interpretations. We discovered conceptions by examining the distributions of the most frequently used words and word collocations—that is, how words are associated with other words (Johnsen, 2016). By comparing word collocations for groups of documents, we identified policy receptions and translations by considering how the word associations reflected both internal conceptions of the Nordic and orientations to external policy spheres that construct politics, technology, pedagogy, and economic and humanistic discourses. Since the clusters contain documents from different time periods, we could identify semantic shifts such as, in this case, between the 1990s and the 2000s. Finally, by interpreting the word collocations and the images they create, we were able to interpret the semantic patterns and shifts as expressions of policy transfer as well as narratives of the Nordic.

Findings

Network Clusters and the Formation of Policy Areas

Bibliographic network analysis helps us explore how a text corpus configures citation patterns that can be used to analyze reference and meaning spaces that shape policy areas and issues over time. In the first step of our analysis, we identified eleven clusters of documents through bibliometric network analysis. Appendix 1 shows an overview of 4 of the 11 clusters and describes these thematic areas by providing information on how many publications are in each cluster, which publication years they cover, and the thematic areas they address. Appendix 1 also provides an overview of the most central documents for each of the four clusters that we will focus on this chapter. For our selection, we have used the measure of centrality and the measure of betweenness centrality for the whole sample. Moreover, based on the titles, we have examined the content of the titles of the most prominent documents included in each cluster and determined 11 thematic areas, one for each cluster. Figure 17.1 illustrates the size of the clusters, as well as the overall themes and the time periods identified through the content analysis (see note to Figure 17.1). The *y*-axis represents the number of documents.

In this chapter, we are focusing on four clusters or groups of documents: *education for welfare* (Cluster 1), *the knowledge promotion and renewal reform* (Cluster 2), *systemic education reform* (Cluster 8), and *Sami education policy* (Cluster 9). Clusters 1 and 2 include documents from the 2000s and clusters 8 and 9 from the 1980s and 1990s. We chose to focus on these four clusters for their topical relevance. Two of the clusters contain documents written to legitimize comprehensive changes in basic education, which researchers have often mentioned as a typical feature of the Nordic welfare state model. Since Clusters 2 and 8 focus on education reform of basic education and contain documents from various decades, we considered these clusters to be suitable for comparisons between time periods. We also compared citation patterns for Clusters 1 and 9. Cluster 1 contains the most recent documents associated with education policy that focuses on the welfare state, which is a highly relevant theme in the Nordic context. Cluster 1 includes documents across grades in the education system, indicating that it does not concentrate only on

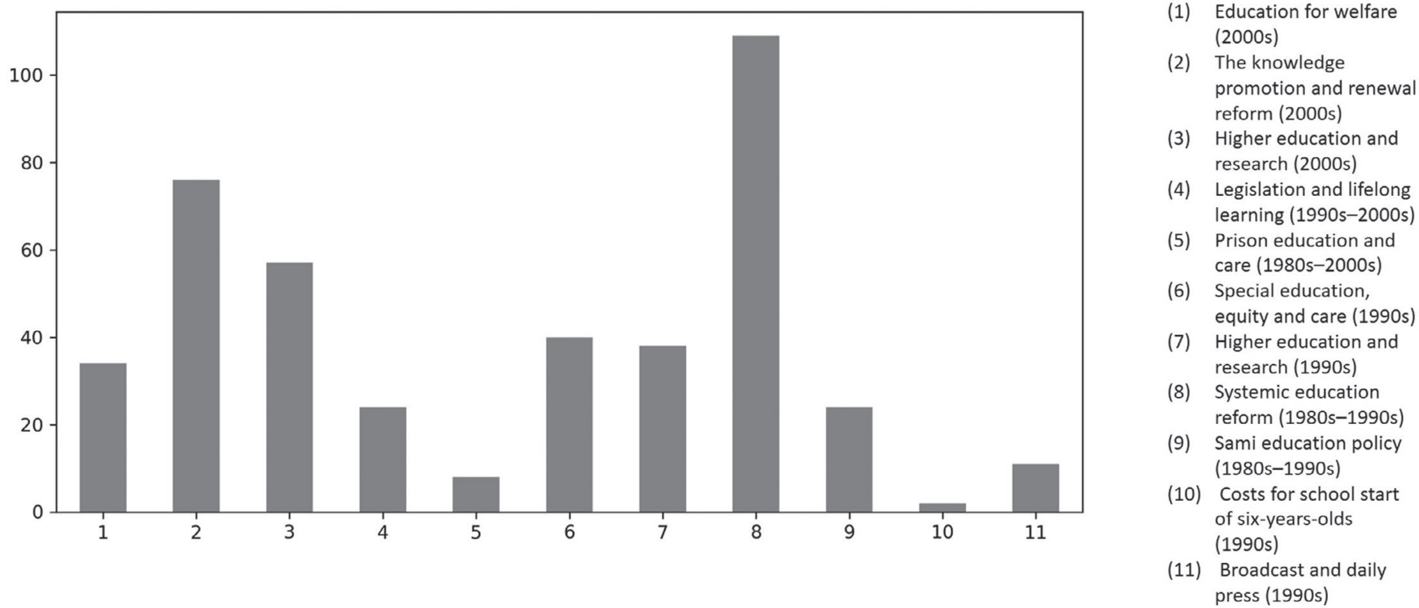

Figure 17.1 Diagram of Norwegian Ministry of Education White and Green Papers, 1988–2017

Note: Diagram of the size of 11 clusters based on a bibliometric network analysis of white and green papers published by the Norwegian Ministry of Education, 1988–2017 (y-axis = number of documents; x-axis = the clusters by number).

compulsory education. Cluster 9 addresses education policy relevant for the Sami population in Norway, with both geographical and cultural ties to other Nordic countries (especially Finland and Sweden). Therefore, we also find this group to be thematically relevant for our study.

The visualization in Figure 17.2 is expressed by graphics that measure the centrality of documents within our dataset based on how they reference each other. Each document in the dataset is a node in the graph, and it is connected to another node if the former cites the latter. Thus, this graph helped illustrate which documents are central within the network.

The size of the node indicates the centrality of each document. The numbers on the nodes identify the 11 reference clusters. In Figure 17.1, Clusters 1 and 2 are located to the left and Clusters 8 and 9 to the right, as is the case for Tables 17.1 and 17.2. In Figure 17.2, Cluster 1 on welfare and education is placed to the far right. It connects with Cluster 2, which contains documents on the knowledge promotion and renewal reform, located in the center-right. The illustration shows that the latter contains core prominent documents in the database, as the group contains many large nodes. Clusters 8 and 9, with documents from the 1980s and 1990s, appear on the left side. Cluster 8's many large nodes are spread out and connect to several of the other groups, indicating that they are central in terms of being often referenced (in-degree centrality) and in connecting clusters in our document corpus (betweenness centrality). In contrast, Cluster 9 on Sami education is more peripheral. The Cluster 9 nodes are

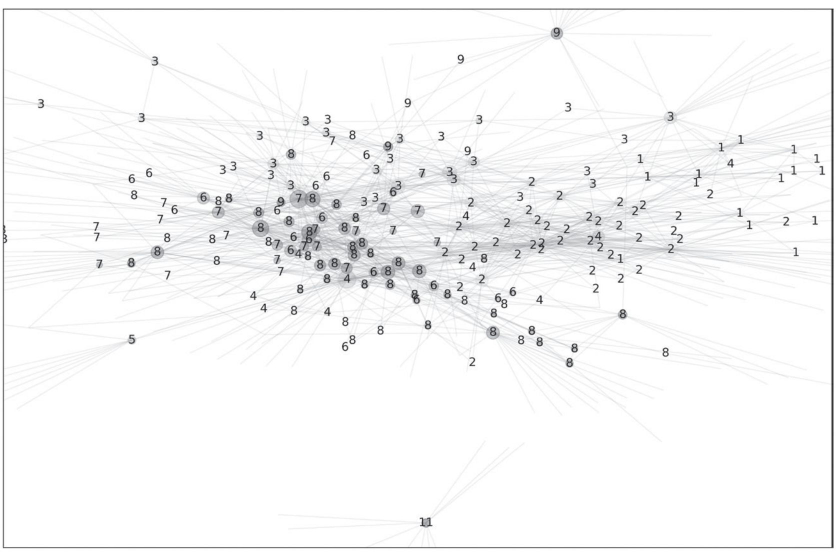

Figure 17.2 Visualization of Norwegian Ministry of Education White and Green Papers, 1988–2017

Note: Visualization of clusters based on a bibliometric network analysis of white and green papers published by the Norwegian Ministry of Education, 1988–2017.

Table 17.1 Relative Frequency of Keywords Symbolizing International Influence

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*
FN	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.17	0.00	0.00
UNESCO	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.00
IEA	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OECD	0.44	0.13	0.20	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.18	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.01
TIMSS	0.022	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PISA	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PIRLS	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note: Relative frequency of keywords that symbolize international influence in clusters measured in parts per thousand. Dark grey indicates a higher relative frequency of each keyword in parts per thousand compared to those with a lighter grey color.

Table 17.2 Relative Frequency of Nationality Terms

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*
Norwegian	1.79	1.62	1.86	1.11	1.22	1.45	1.94	1.91	3.04	0.00	1.26
Finnish	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.47	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.30	0.00	0.11
Swedish	0.03	0.07	0.04	0.13	0.20	0.05	0.06	0.09	0.34	0.00	0.31
Danish	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.20	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.00	0.13
Nordic	0.18	0.15	0.27	0.15	0.47	0.23	0.15	0.39	0.97	0.00	0.13
Norway	2.38	1.10	1.52	0.53	0.54	0.82	1.42	0.88	1.12	0.00	0.83
Sweden	0.23	0.13	0.23	0.17	0.47	0.11	0.21	0.15	0.37	0.00	0.26
Denmark	0.21	0.11	0.12	0.09	0.34	0.10	0.14	0.09	0.03	0.00	0.29
Finland	0.07	0.08	0.16	0.06	0.27	0.07	0.10	0.06	0.31	0.00	0.20

Note: Relative frequency of nationality terms in clusters measured in parts per thousand. Dark grey indicates a higher relative frequency of each nationality term in parts per thousand compared to those with a lighter grey color.

near the top of the figure, and only two of the 24 documents connect with the other groups in our dataset. These two, however, are prominent due to their betweenness centrality (see Appendix 1). Based on these overviews (Figures 17.1 and 17.2) as well as the overview in Appendix 1 and the thematic profiles, we argue that the selected group of four clusters is of key significance for studying conceptions of the Nordic.

The Recognition of International Organizations

To unravel how the document clusters reflect citation patterns, images, conceptions, and orientation to politics, education, and human affairs, we first looked into the frequencies of words that served as citation patterns that reflect international influence. In this case, we have mapped the usage of acronyms for IOs and their international large-scale assessment programs. In short, we have searched for evidence of whether and how the white and green papers make reference to IOs and their comparative assessments. Table 17.1 presents an overview of how frequently our text corpus mentions four IOs (the OECD; United Nations [UN]; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]; and IEA) and three comparative large-scale international studies (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS], the Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA], and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS]).

We measured the frequency of each keyword in parts per thousand (see Table 17.1) and standardized the numbers into a relative frequency. To be more precise, we have not simply counted the frequency of the acronyms, but we have also calculated the frequency relative to the occurrence of the same acronyms in an external Norwegian archive that contains all of the available documents digitalized by the National Library in Norway. Thus, we standardized the scores with a probability measure that helps identify the typical features of the texts we have collected and grouped into sub-corpora that make up the clusters.

Surprisingly, compared with the other clusters, Cluster 1 on welfare policy contains documents that emphasize the OECD with the highest frequency (see Table 17.1). The collocation analysis reveals that Cluster 1 documents on education for welfare refer to the OECD in conjunction with cultural terms (i.e., *foreign-born*, *migration*, *immigration*, and *inequality*) and economic themes (i.e., *employment*, *labor productivity*, and *entrepreneurship*), but also welfare and health-related issues. We have also observed that *PISA*, *surveys*, and *reforms* appear as co-terms with *OECD* in this cluster.

The quantitative study confirms that documents in Clusters 1 and 2 mention PISA more frequently than in other clusters. Documents in both Clusters 1 and 2 refer to TIMSS, but only Cluster 2 documents refer to PIRLS. The differences in these scores are relatively marginal compared to the large variation in emphasis on the OECD. Interestingly, in Cluster 2, the OECD is referenced slightly differently, as the narrative is more technologically oriented, using terms such as *indicators*, *policies*, *diagnostic*, *strategy*, *quality assessment*, *gap*, *outcomes*, *students*, and *surveys*. Also in this cluster, the documents address political challenges and opportunities that are associated with *immigration*, *minorities*, *language*, *diversity*, *settlements*, *employment*, and *adult and welfare policy*.

The OECD is also more entangled with national organizations in Cluster 2 on knowledge promotion and renewal reform than in Cluster 1. In addition, there are names of experts associated with the OECD in Cluster 2. Finally, documents in Cluster 8 on systemic education reform associate the OECD with terms that reference the organization's policies. In Cluster 8, conceptions of the OECD include words like *member countries*, *industrialized*, *petroleum sector*, and *oil business*, which are economic terms.

This pattern initially indicates a much broader orientation to the OECD than a focus on test scores. However, we also observe that the OECD has gained prominence in recent policies from the early 2000s by providing international comparisons that test students in literacy and skills (e.g., reading, mathematics, and science). The single most striking observation to emerge from the collocation analysis is the emphasis on technology in the 2000s' clusters on school reform policy that the older sample of documents on systemic education reform from the 1990s does not address to the same extent.

Interestingly, Cluster 9, which includes documents on Sami education policy from the 1980s and 1990s, does not mention either the IEA or the OECD. Instead, Cluster 9 documents mention the UN more frequently. It is plausible that the Sami sample acknowledges the UN more than the others given that the mission of this organization is to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights for all and, in particular, indigenous rights that have been set forth in international law.

We systematically compared collocations for UNESCO as well, which are referenced in Cluster 8. We found that documents on systemic education reform were internationally oriented but less focused on technology than the OECD collocations for documents from the 2000s. This cluster also pays attention to statistics and legislation. As a result, Cluster 8 seems to be oriented more toward formal institutionalization than Clusters 1 and 2. Altogether, these results indicate a semantic shift in which the OECD and comparative large-scale studies have strengthened their impact on education reforms for basic education in particular and on welfare policy more generally, however, with less institutional orientation than in the 1990s. A question, then, is whether we find parallel shifts in how the clusters reference regional and national dimensions.

The Orientation Toward the Nation and the Nordic

We have compared the vocabulary in the documents used to conceptualize the Nordic as well as interest for the nation or nationalism. For this purpose, we have surveyed how national and regional dimensions appear in the four clusters of interest (see Table 17.2). The most striking result is the highly relative occurrence of the word *Norway* in Cluster 1 on welfare policy. In this cluster, Norway is associated with terms such as *welfare*, *working immigrants*, *foreign-born*, *OECD country*, *time of residence*, *European Economic Area* (EEA),[5] *migration*, *financial crisis*, and *labor immigration*. It is a highly political discourse reflected by an image in which Norway is associated with other European countries. Interestingly, attention to *Norwegian* is more visible in the Cluster 9 Sami policy (3.04) than in the others. Additionally, an educational orientation appears in relation to *Norwegian*, as this word is associated with pedagogical terms such as *teaching*, *education*, *special measures*, and *development*. The plural form of Norwegian implies a more institutionalized concept that belongs to other discourses, as it connects with terms such as *cultural funds* and *regional research*.

Other clusters emphasize *Norwegian* as a key term (scores vary between 1.79 in Cluster 1 to 1.91 in Cluster 8). For Cluster 1, *Norwegian* is again used to call attention to societal concerns, as the word associations conceptualize both an economic discourse and a human discourse. Cluster 8 raises technological issues in relation to *Norwegian* that reference PISA, TIMSS, and basic education. In addition, the role of municipalities and legal entities as well as educational concepts are recognized.

However, compared to Cluster 2 on the knowledge promotion and renewal reform, Cluster 1 on education welfare policy reflects a less educational discourse. For example, the narrative of the Norwegian that derives from Cluster 2 is oriented towards knowledge domains and school subjects rather than towards political issues. Moreover, institutional dimensions are present in legal issues related to *the Human Rights Act* and in awareness of *first language*, *mother tongue*, and *minorities*. In addition, Cluster 2 conceptualizes not only technologies but also competence-oriented policy.

In Cluster 8, the narratives of Norwegian address educational issues. The narrative also indicates a more comprehensive orientation towards welfare policy than the narrative of Norwegian in Cluster 2. We also find an institutional discourse reflected by the narrative of Cluster 8. Drawing on the data presented in Table 17.2 and the collocation analysis of words that are typically associated in each cluster, we also found that *Nordic* is more visible as a key term in the Cluster 9 Sami policy (0.97, marked with dark grey) than in the others. When we further examined the collocations, we found that the narratives of the Nordic are somewhat different compared to other clusters. The Cluster 9 Sami policy narrative of the Nordic contains terms that reflect an institutional trajectory, such as the *Council of Ministers*,[6] *bilateral*, *convention*, and *citizens*. The plural form of Nordic is associated with neighboring countries and national borders, which means a geographical and national conception of the Nordic dimension.

For other clusters, the term *Nordic* varies in visibility. The 1980s' and 1990s' documents on systemic education reform (Cluster 8) reveal a surge in interest in cultural and political topics. In contrast, the reform documents from the 2000s (Cluster 2) connect the Nordic with terms that are normative in their connotations that imply global governance, such as *labor immigration*, *foreign-born*, *migrant workers*, *immigrants*, and *welfare schemes*. Moreover, narratives of the Nordic reflect a highly internationalized discourse by naming place names such as *Oceania*, *EU countries*, *Central America*, *Eastern Europe*, *EEA countries*, *OECD countries*, *Western Europe*, and *North America*. Thereby we identify a combination of policy transfer strategies within the documents on school reform from the 2000s.

Cluster 1 associates the Nordic with a highly internationalized discourse as well. Overall, the documents from the 2000s (Clusters 1 and 2) have a larger number of words per narrative of the Nordic. This finding indicates that, although *Nordic* is less referenced as a keyword in the clusters from the 2000s, the word collocations are broadened by their vocabularies and terminology that make up the conceptions. Images of the Nordic for Clusters 8 and 9 with documents from the 1980s and 1990s do not have the same scope in terms of variation in vocabulary.

We also examined word patterns that relate to place names, indicating attention towards other Nordic countries. By comparing the scores between narratives within clusters, we found that the word *Finland* is less prominent than *Sweden* and *Denmark* (see Figure 17.2). Similarly, the term *Finnish* is less used than *Swedish* and *Danish*. *Finland* is slightly more present in the 2000s' reform in Cluster 2 than in the 1990s' reform in Cluster 8, which may indicate that the Finnish success on PISA has made Finland more prominent as a society to reference. However, compared with citation patterns in the Cluster 9 Sami education policy, Finland has a less prominent role in Cluster 2. We assume that a possible reason for Finland's prominent role in Cluster 9 is due to the geographic location of the Sami population, which has strong ties to Finland both culturally and geographically.

What stands out as the main finding from the collocation analysis is the dominance of Sweden as a reference society. Both *Swedish* and *Sweden* connote with a broad set of terms, which is particularly evident for Cluster 1 in the area of education for welfare. The vocabulary of narratives of Swedish and Sweden in Cluster 1 projects the welfare state by mentioning *council regulation*, *EU law*, *labor productivity*, *export of goods*, and *immigration policy*, among others. For *Denmark* and *Danish*, we found a similar pattern, with connotations to *immigration*, *competence environments*, *municipality of residence*, *medical service*, and *elderly care*. Undoubtedly, Sweden and Denmark serve as key references in Norwegian policy documents referenced in education policy documents in the welfare area.

Narratives of the Nordic Within an International Policy Context

In this chapter, we have examined citation patterns, images, and discourses derived from our interpretation of Norwegian policy documents. We were interested in how policy makers and experts form narratives of the Nordic through word associations that also include conceptions of regional and global societies and their systems. Using digital methods and tools, we have identified a set of 11 document clusters that differ according to reform decade and thematic area of interest. We have focused on four of these clusters. The findings illustrate the existence of policy realms in ways that documents evolve and merge in groups based on their reference patterns. Moreover, the recent clusters of documents illustrate the influence of international organizations as standard-setters (Abbott et al., 2015; Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Drori et al., 2003) while visualizing historicized memories of national identities that include conceptions of Norwegian and the Nordic (Tröhler, 2016). We would like to emphasize several interesting findings.

First, based on a bibliometric network analysis, the present study has identified policy realms, or thematic areas, that evolved in the period from 1988 until 2017 in Norway. The policy realms are illustrated by 11 clusters, each involving the most prominent documents and themes in Norwegian policy documentation. The clusters are also differentiated by their temporal structure, as some groups include documents from the 2000s, while others include documents published in the 1980s and 1990s. We have compared the semantic patterns between four clusters that are characterized by their thematic focus. Some of the clusters focus on the topic of welfare policy (Cluster 1), while others center on basic education (Clusters 2 and 9) and Sami education (Cluster 9). Clusters 1 and 2 include more recent documents (those from the 2000s) as opposed to Clusters 8 and 9, which involve older documents (those from the 1980s and 1990s).

Prevailing themes in the Cluster 1 welfare policy are those of lifelong learning, working life, and educational phases from preschool to university level. In other words, the welfare policy documents in the 2000s are devoted to political issues or challenges such as inequality and diversity. The Cluster 2 knowledge promotion and renewal reform documents are devoted to subject areas like teaching in knowledge domains, such as mathematics. Several themes in Cluster 1 are highly promoted by IOs through the norms of equality, quality, and standardization. This finding supports previous research on national actors mediating international programs and policies that are borrowed from outside the Nordic region (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Maroy & Pons, 2019; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). At the same time, Cluster 1 concerns the welfare model that remains a feature of the Nordic countries, suggesting a highly innovative view that transforms the prevailing influence of contextual and historical system features. A highly nationalist orientation that associates the Nordic with a range of countries outside the region indicates that an international orientation to the Nordic dimension is changing (Tröhler, 2016).

Second, a semantic analysis of the policy realms that focus on school reform helped us explore how national education policies frame learning aspirations by leaning on organizations such as the OECD, the IEA, and the UN. By examining narratives of how patterns of closely interconnected concepts signal the relevance of reference countries as standard-setters, we explored how national and regional education policy shapes national reform agendas that draw on their own historical trajectories as well as the significance of international "others." One may consider the national narratives as representing an inter-frame pattern, where each country serves as a unit of attention parallel to the others. Nationalization is thereby created within a highly internationalized environment where organizations and their programs play an important role by focusing on individual nations or economies.

Our findings support previous research on the increasing influence of known IOs in education policy (e.g., the OECD, UNESCO, IEA) and their projects (PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS). They are highly represented in the clusters of recent documents (Clusters 1 and 2). In particular, our findings confirm earlier evidence from Abbott et al. (2015), who argued that IOs have become orchestrators of global governance. As an IO, the OECD targets actors in pursuit of its own goals. Being an organization that launches international programs and includes actors from all over the world, the OECD thereby becomes a global orchestrator. Unlike traditional hierarchical governance, where states govern education by law, an IO targets their addressees through tools such as through other organizations or documents. Since IOs are present to a larger extent in Clusters 1 and 2 with documents from the 2000s compared to Cluster 8 and 9 with documents from the 1980s and 1990s, our results demonstrate a semantic shift in which the OECD and comparative large-scale studies have strengthened their impact. This shift indicates globalization through soft governance.

However, policy actors and processes can reject borrowing concepts and models when implemented in new fields and contexts (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012), and historical trajectories of nationalism and nationhood may serve as a counter-force in this regard (Karseth and Sivesind, 2010; Tröhler, 2016). Indeed, the semantic analysis in our study also revealed that the words Norwegian and Nordic are actually present in both recent documents (Clusters 1 and 2) and older documents (Cluster 9). Although the documents from the 2000s (Clusters 1 and 2) have a larger number of words associated with the Nordic, our findings from word collocation analysis also show that the Nordic is associated with larger social and cultural questions related to, for example, the OECD. Generally speaking, we have observed semantic shifts from an institutional-educational orientation of politics in the 1990s that reflect economic discourses toward a more expert-oriented usage of language in the Cluster 2 knowledge promotion and renewal reform from the 2000s, which is characterized by words associated with the use of technology (such as *credits* and *curricula*). Cluster 2 involves specific subject areas different from the welfare Cluster 1 from the same time period. Moreover, this observation confirms that the two clusters from the 2000s represent different thematic areas of interest.

In summary, the narratives of the Nordic illustrate both international influence and historical memories merged in one reference space. As a cultural path, the model can translate any global and international influence posed upon the education system by international standard-setters. As a constellation of reference society, the Nordic model can, either individually or in combination, reframe what are considered standards and best practices and thereby serve as a filter in policy transfer processes. Consequently, we do not see policy transfer as a linear move from the global to the local, but as a highly reconfigured and renegotiated process that is shaped through time-space relationships. In this case, policy transfer emerges through semantic shifts that embrace modes of governance through the constellation of word-associations, images, discourses, and narratives that result from our interpretations of the documents. Interestingly, we find, for example, a surge in interest in the OECD and comparative studies in Clusters 1 and 2 from the 2000s, but without a corresponding increase in explicit attention to Finland and Finland's PISA success. Accordingly, the Nordic dimension seems to change with a national orientation toward international expert knowledge.

Therefore, the Nordic can be considered both a recognized, established model and an innovative enterprise. It does not represent one reform model but a multitude of structures, ideas, and actions. On the one hand, the clusters and their images reflect discourses that position national policy documents within a larger transnational policy space that is globalized by the mediation process in which IOs interact. A key theme is a cultural reorientation to immigration and the challenges and possibilities that are generated by themes associated with diversity (Christensen, 2003). On the other hand, these spaces and subsequent translations are shaped by the semantics materialized within the clusters of documents that provided us with core information about national and regional orientations.

A systematic variation between clusters in terms of word associations and thereby of policy narratives and the time periods they covered leads to semantic differences as well as shifts in terms of how global, regional, and local actors served as signifiers. To the degree that words and word associations signify a national and regional orientation, the documentation for various time periods likewise exposes or constrains meaning spaces for policy translation processes beyond path-dependent action routes that imply innovation and change. Independent of this pattern and as far as the Nordic is acknowledged as a reference in policymaking processes, the Nordic may become a standard-setter itself for how other societies or systems can develop their own policies and practices. In addition, policy makers may be seen as bridges between policy realms and areas as they take up roles as adapters and translators for non-national policy knowledge.

Appendix 17–1

No.	*Thematic Area*	*Time Period*	*Total No. of Doc*	*Bcent*	*Cent*	*In Degree*	*Out Degree*	*Title*
1	Education for welfare	2000	34	0.055	0.069	23	6	St.meld. No. 13 (2011–2012) Education for welfare. Interaction in practice
				0.018	0.038	16	0	St.meld. No. 21 (2016–2017) Desire for learning—Early intervention and quality in school
				0.016	0.045	18	1	St.meld. No. 9 (2016–2017) Professionals for the future. Vocational school education
				0.014	0.038	16	0	St.meld. No. 16 (2016–2017) Culture for quality in higher education
				0.009	0.031	10	3	St.meld. No. 16 (2015–2016) From exclusion to a new chance. Co-ordinated efforts for adult learning
2	The knowledge promotion and renewal reform	2000	76	0.089	0.102	34	9	NOU 2009: 18 Right to learning
				0.054	0.076	31	1	NOU 2012: 1 For the children's best. New legislation for kindergartens
				0.053	0.083	22	13	NOU 2003: 16 First and foremost: Enhanced quality in basic education for all
				0.048	0.095	32	8	NOU 2010: 7 Diversity and mastery: Multilingual children, young people, and adults in the education system
				0.040	0.066	25	3	NOU 2015: 2 To belong. Instruments for a safe psychosocial environment

(*Continued*)

(Continued)

No.	*Thematic Area*	*Time Period*	*Total No. of Doc*	*Bcent*	*Cent*	*In Degree*	*Out Degree*	*Title*
				0.039	0.066	11	18	St.meld. No. 30 (2003–2004) Culture for learning
				0.026	0.069	24	5	NOU 2014: 7 Pupils' learning in the school of the future. A knowledge base
				0.023	0.055	16	7	NOU 2007: 6 Purpose for the future: Purpose for kindergarten and education
				0.021	0.038	12	4	St.meld. No. 20 (2012–2013) On the right track. Quality and diversity in the joint school
				0.020	0.057	20	4	NOU 2015: 8 The school of the future. Renewal of subjects and competencies
				0.020	0.066	7	21	St.meld. No. 16 (2006–2007) . . . and no one was left behind. Early efforts for lifelong learning
				0.018	0.052	14	8	St.meld. No. 11 (2008–2009) The teacher, the role, and the education
				0.015	0.045	9	10	St.meld. No. 44 (2008–2009) Education strategy
				0.014	0.031	7	6	St.meld. No. 23 (2007–2008) Language builds bridges. Language stimulation and language learning for children, young people, and adults
				0.011	0.038	14	2	NOU 2016: 7 Norway in transition—Career guidance for individuals and society
				0.011	0.040	9	8	NOU 2008: 18 Vocational training for the future
				0.007	0.026	9	2	St.meld. No. 28 (2015–2016) Subjects—Specialization—Understanding. A renewal of the Knowledge Promotion
				0.005	0.040	14	3	St.meld. No. 18 (2010–2011) Learning and community. Early intervention and good learning environments for children, young people and adults with special needs

				0.004	0.009	0	4	Report to the Storting no. 19 (2009–2010) Time for learning—Follow-up of the Time Use Committee's report
				0.004	0.017	0	7	St.meld. No. 47 (2008–2009) The co-operation reform. The right treatment—in the right place—at the right time
				0.004	0.036	13	2	NOU 2010: 8 With a desire for research and a desire to play: Systematic pedagogical offer for all preschool children
				0.002	0.031	8	5	St.meld. No. 22 (2010–2011) Motivation—Mastery—Opportunities. The youth stage
				0.001	0.036	4	11	St.meld. No. 31 (2007–2008) Quality in school
				0.001	0.026	2	9	NOU 2002: 10 First class from first class: Proposal for a framework for a national quality assessment system of Norwegian basic education
				0.001	0.001	0	4	St.meld. No. 17 (2002–2003) On state supervision
				0.001	0.022	8	1	NOU 2016: 14 More to get. Better learning for students with great learning potential
8	Systemic education reform	1980–1990	109	0.075	0.078	11	22	NOU 1988: 28 With knowledge and will
				0.065	0.081	13	21	St.meld. No. 40 (1990–91) From vision to work. About higher education
				0.061	0.090	30	8	NOU 1999: 33 Useful lessons—On education financing through the Loan Fund
				0.059	0.057	18	6	NOU 1986: 23 Lifelong learning
				0.042	0.062	8	18	St.meld. No. 37 (1990–91) On organization and management in the education sector

(*Continued*)

No.	*Thematic Area*	*Time Period*	*Total No. of Doc*	*Bcent*	*Cent*	*In Degree*	*Out Degree*	*Title*
				0.039	0.055	18	5	NOU 1989: 13 Boundless learning reception of foreign students, student exchange, and internationalization
				0.037	0.064	11	16	NOU 1991: 4 The way forward: To study and vocational competence for all
				0.037	0.045	15	4	NOU 1996: 22 Teacher education. Between demands and ideals
				0.030	0.047	14	6	NOU 1993: 24 Act on Universities and University Colleges
				0.028	0.047	5	15	St.meld. No. 43 (1988–89) More people for more
				0.024	0.057	11	13	St.meld. No. 29 (1994–95) On principles and guidelines for 10-year primary school—New curriculum
				0.020	0.026	9	2	St.meld. no. 51 (1988–89) In addition to St.meld. No. 45 for 1987–1988. On research, experiments, and development work in education
				0.020	0.031	11	2	NOU 1991: 24 Organization for wholeness and diversity in Norwegian research
				0.017	0.028	3	9	NOU 1988: 32 For an educational society
				0.015	0.043	12	6	NOU 1995: 12 Education in a multicultural Norway
				0.013	0.021	4	5	St.meld. No. 19 (1986–87) Supplement to Report to the Storting. No. 66 (1984–85) On higher education
				0.013	0.031	9	4	St.meld. No. 14 (1993–94) Student financing and student welfare
9	Sami education	1980–2000	24	0.075	0.029	10	2	NOU 2000: 3 Sami teacher education—Between different knowledge traditions
				0.069	0.045	18	1	NOU 1985: 14 Sami culture and education

Notes

1. Our dataset has been collected and analyzed as part of the POLNET project (Policy Knowledge and Lesson Drawing in Nordic School Reform in an Era of International Comparison). NRC no: 283467.
2. In our chapter, white papers are identical with what in Norwegian are labeled *stortingsmedinger* (STM) or *meldinger til stortinget* (St.M.).
3. Green papers are equal to Norwegian Official Reports (*Norges Offentlige Utredninger*; NOU).
4. This organization conducts an international large-scale assessment study, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), every third year and publishes reports that present how 15-year-olds perform in reading, the natural sciences, and mathematics. By comparing aggregated test scores, the OECD aims at becoming a world standard-setter by endorsing the excellence of top scorers, such as China, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Finland.
5. The EU Member States and the three *European Economic Area* (EEA/EFTA) states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, are formally obliged to comply with the same basic rules as an internal market (European Economic Area, 2021).
6. The Nordic Council of Ministers was founded in 1971. This council still assembles Nordic ministers and experts for yearly meetings.

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Note: numbers in *italics* indicate a figure. Numbers in **bold** indicate a table.