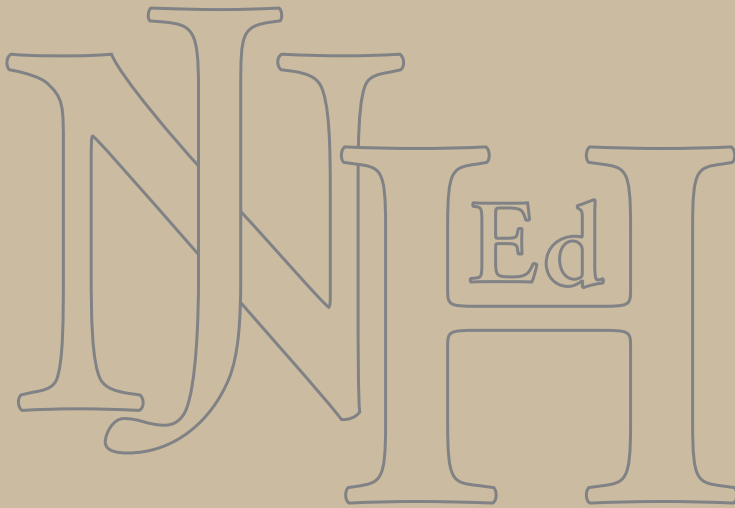


Volume 12

Number 1

2025

Nordic Journal of Educational History





Nordic Journal of Educational History

Vol. 12, no. 1 (2025)

The *Nordic Journal of Educational History* (NJEdH) is an interdisciplinary international journal dedicated to scholarly excellence in the field of educational history. The journal takes special responsibility for the communication and dissemination of educational history research of particular relevance to the Nordic region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and political and geographic entities including the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Sápmi and Åland), but welcomes contributions exploring the history of education in all parts of the world. The publishing language is English and the Scandinavian languages. The journal applies a double blind peer review procedure and is accessible to all interested readers (no fees are charged for publication or subscription). The NJEdH publishes articles as soon as they have been through the peer review and copy editing process, adding cumulatively to the content of an open issue each year. Special issues are normally published as the second issue of any given year.

For guidelines on submitting manuscripts, please visit:
<https://journals.ub.umu.se/index.php/njedh/about/submissions>

Editorial Team

Assoc. Professor **Henrik Åström Elmersjö**, Umeå University (Senior Editor)
Professor **Johannes Westberg**, University of Groningen (Editor/Book Review Editor)
Professor **Anna Larsson**, Umeå University (Editor)
Assoc. Professor **Björn Norlin**, Umeå University (Editor)
Assoc. Professor **Daniel Nyström**, Umeå University (Editor)
Assoc. Professor **David Sjögren**, Uppsala University (Editor)
Daniel Jakobsson (MA), Umeå University (Associate Editor)
Badegül Eren Aydinlik (MA), Umeå University (Editorial Assistant)
Dr **Chelsea Rodriguez**, University of Groningen (Editorial Assistant)

Editorial Board

Professor **A.J. Angulo**, University of Massachusetts Lowell, United States
Professor **Mette Buchardt**, Aalborg University, Denmark
Assoc. Professor **Catherine Burke**, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
Professor **Marcelo Caruso**, Humboldt University, Germany
Professor **Ning de Coninck-Smith**, Aarhus University, Denmark
Professor **Eckhardt Fuchs**, Georg Eckert Institute, Germany
Professor **Ólóf Garðarsdóttir**, University of Iceland, Iceland
Professor **Ian Grosvenor**, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
Professor **Susanna Hedenborg**, Malmö University, Sweden
Professor **Joakim Landahl**, Stockholm University, Sweden
Assoc. Professor **Stephanie Olsen**, Tampere University, Finland
Professor **Merethe Roos**, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway
Professor **Johanna Sköld**, Linköping University, Sweden
Professor **Fredrik Thue**, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway
Assoc. Professor **Kaisa Vehkalahti**, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Mailing Address

Nordic Journal of Educational History
Department of Historical, Philosophical,
and Religious Studies
Umeå University
SE-901 87 Umeå
Sweden

Email and phone

Henrik Åström Elmersjö (Senior Editor)
henrik.astrom.elmersjo@umu.se
+4690 7866816

Webpage

<https://journals.ub.umu.se/index.php/njedh>

ISSN (online): 2001-9076
ISSN (print): 2001-7766

The NJEdH is published with financial support from the Swedish Research Council (*Vetenskapsrådet*).

Table of Contents

Editorial

Notes from the editorial team <i>Henrik Åström Elmersjö</i>	1
--	---

Articles

Common Sense Diagrams: The US Two-Party System in Magruder's American Government, 1917–2023 <i>Janne Holmén</i>	3–33
“The Ideal Dental Health Service for Children.” The Political Development of the Dental Health Service for Children in Denmark, 1960s–1980s <i>Christian Larsen</i>	35–63
“Life” and Democratisation in the Swedish Welfare State School: Experimental Research Projects on Children’s “Life Questions” in Religious Education, Late 1960s to Early 1990s <i>Katarina Kärnebro & Mette Buchardt</i>	65–90
Narrativa konstruktioner av klass: Sociala ordningar och positioneringar i läroverkets studentuppsatser under 1900-talets första tre decennier <i>Johan Wickström & Linn Areskoug</i>	91–118

Book Reviews

Dissertations	
Pontus Folkesson, <i>Att skola en stormakt: Framväxten av 1600-talets skolsystem genom lokalsamhällets aktörer</i> (Stockholms universitet, 2024) Review in Swedish <i>Esbjörn Larsson</i>	119–121
Turid Løyte Harboe, «... dyktiggjøre til at danne mennesker»: <i>En kritisk studie av endringer i norsk lærerutdanning 1930–2010</i> (Universitetet i Oslo, 2024) Review in English <i>Johannes Westberg</i>	122–126
Caroline Sims, <i>From “the Genius” to ‘the Gifted’: The Conceptualisations of Giftedness in Educational Discourse in Sweden</i> (Uppsala University, 2023) Review in English <i>Bjørn F. Hamre</i>	127–132
Ebba Christina Blåvarg, <i>Psykologi på schemat: Formeringen av ett skolämne, 1960–2015</i> (Stockholms universitet, 2023) Review in English <i>Daniel Sundberg</i>	133–136
Moa Lindqvist, <i>Striden om den högre utbildningen: En socioretorisk studie av remissyttranden inför svenska högskolereformer 1969–2007</i> (Uppsala universitet, 2025) Review in Swedish <i>Andreas Åkerlund</i>	136–140

Edited collections

- Hilde Gunn Slottemo (red.), *Barn som gikk ”fra haand til haand”: Oppvekst på skolehjem, barnehjem og internatskole i et historisk perspektiv* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm Forskning, 2024)
Review in Swedish
Daniel Lövheim 140–143

Monographs

- Henrik Björck, *Vetenskap och affärer: Ekonomutbildningens akademisering speglad i Handelshögskolans bana genom 1900-talets första hälft* (Göteborg: Makadam förlag, 2023)
Review in Swedish
Per Wisselgren 143–145

- Maria Simonsen och Mogens Rüdinger, *At bygge et universitet: Aalborg Universitet 1974–2024* (Köpenhamn: Gads forlag, 2024)
Review in Swedish
Janne Holmén 146–147

- Maren Elfert and Christian Ydesen, *Global Governance of Education: The Historical and Contemporary Entangle-ments of UNESCO, the OECD and the World Bank* (Cham: Springer, 2023)
Review in English
Lourens van Haaften 148–153

- Merethe Roos, *The Quest for a New Education: Social Democracy, Educational Reforms, and Religion in Norway after the Second World War* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024)
Review in English
Jonathan Doney 154–155

- Henrik Edgren, *En kungsådra för nationens samhörig-het: Läsebok för folkskolan i det sena 1800- och tidiga 1900-talets skola och samhälle* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2024)
Review in Swedish
Hanna Enefalk 156–159

- Henrik Björck, *Vetenskapshistorisk hattparad I–II: Forskarutbildningarna i det svenska högskolesystemets historia* (Göteborg: Makadam, 2025)
Review in Swedish
Hampus Östh Gustafsson 159–163

- Susannah Wright, *Youth and Peace in England, 1919–1969* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024)
Review in English
Tuva Skjelbred Nodeland 163–165

Announcements

- Reviewers used outside the Editorial Board 2021–2025 167–168



EDITORIAL

Notes from the editorial team

Henrik Åström Elmersjö (on behalf of the editorial team)

As has been the norm for our journal, the twelfth open issue of the *Nordic Journal of Educational History* features articles on a variety of subjects that address historical educational settings, including discussions of class, children's ideas about life, school health services, and the use of diagrams in textbooks. As has become more common, all articles focus on the twentieth century.

In the first article, Janne Holmén examines how the US twoparty system has been presented, explained, and analysed through diagrams and text in US government textbooks over more than a century, from 1917 to 2023. Holmén demonstrates how explanations changed across this period and how the twoparty system was represented in different ways in different times.

Christian Larsen explores the political development of modern school dental health services between 1966 and 1986. By analysing the political negotiations surrounding the issue, Larsen shows that discussions about school dental health services serve as a window into debates over universal welfare, parental free choice, and the idea of using schools as platforms for health provision.

Katarina Kärnebro and Mette Buchardt investigate so-called “life questions,” a studentcentred pedagogical model that was introduced into Swedish religious education in the late 1960s and peaked in the 1980s. Kärnebro and Buchardt reveal a close connection between shifting political interests and the pedagogy of life questions, and they show how secularisation and individualisation were linked to the aim of democratisation in this context.

Finally, Johan Wickström and Linn Areskoug examine how the parallel school system at the beginning of the twentieth century contributed to the formation of social classes by analysing essays written by students at Swedish grammar schools. The authors show that students narratively positioned themselves as members of the educated upper class, charged with educating the “othered” working class.

The review section of this issue is larger than usual, reflecting the vibrancy of our field. We hope you will enjoy the entire issue.



Common Sense Diagrams: The US Two-Party System in *Magruder's American Government*, 1917–2023

Janne Holmén

Abstract • This article investigates how the two-party system is analysed in text and diagrams in US government textbooks. The diagrams are analysed with the help of theories from the cognitive sciences. *Magruder's American Government* has dominated the US civics textbook market since its first edition in 1917. That year, the textbook referred to “the four leading parties,” and the two-party system concept first appeared in a diagram in 1930. From 1939, the two-party system was considered a trait of English-speaking countries and was contrasted to the chaotic multiparty systems in Europe, which could end up in dictatorship. From the 1950s, the two-party system was explained as an effect of the electoral system and as a reflection of the lack of divisions in US society. Diagrams of the party system were gradually simplified until the 1990s, when they implied that Democrats and Republicans had unbroken roots in the late 1700s. From the 2010s, more critical explanations of the two-party system appeared, such as that the major parties issue legislation that hinder the formation of new parties.

Keywords • civic education, common sense, diagrams, textbook research, two-party system

The US two-party system is not a natural condition stemming from the Constitution, the mentality of the US electorate, or even from the single-member districts in the election system. Rather, it is a perception that has gradually been institutionalised in a historical process. Lisa Disch has pointed out the role of political science in establishing the concept “two-party system” as a catchphrase that seems as an inevitable law.¹ The aim of this article is to investigate the role of school textbooks in transforming the idea of the United States as a two-party system into common-sense knowledge. In particular, it strives to reveal how textbook diagrams have contributed to giving the two-party system a tangible spatial form into the minds of the public. Thereby, it combines the established tradition of conceptual history with cognitive history studies of diagrams, a comparatively new field.²

Our ability for abstract thinking rests on spatial thinking, which is revealed by how we use spatial metaphors in language to describe, for example, time, feelings, or logical operations. By directly visualising these spatial analogies, diagrams have an ability to affect us, cognitively and emotionally, at a profound but subconscious level.³ However, so far, the ability to think critically about the composition of diagrams has received much less attention among researchers, including textbook research, than critical

1 Lisa Disch, *The Tyranny of the Two-Party System* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

2 For an overview of conceptual history see Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier (eds.), *Global Conceptual History: A Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); for cognitive history studies of diagrams see the section “Earlier research” in this article.

3 See the section “Catchphrases and diagrams as common sense” in this article.

methods for textual analysis. This article's most important theoretical and methodological contribution is to correct this imbalance.

In order to achieve this, the article investigates 1) when and how the two-party system concept was introduced in textbooks, 2) the reasons given for why the United States has a two-party system, 3) how the minor parties and their political role have been portrayed, and, most importantly, (4) how questions 1–3 are related to how the two-party system has been given spatial form in textbook diagrams with the help of cognitive principles such as primary metaphors and spatial agency bias.

These questions are answered by an analysis of the most influential and long-running US high school government textbook, *Magruder's American Government*, which was first published in 1917 and still dominates the market.

Much of the US political and governance system is regulated by the Constitution, and therefore the Constitution is a natural starting point for textbook chapters describing, for example, the presidency or Congress. However, the party system is an exception since it is not mentioned at all in the Constitution. This means that textbook authors need to find alternative explanations for why the current party system is in place, explanations that vary with time. Textbooks are therefore good indicators of changing attitudes toward the two-party system. In addition, since the party system is not firmly rooted in constitutional law but has been formed through political practices, the system is sensitive to how it is portrayed in, for example, mass education. Thus, textbooks can be expected to not only reflect common attitudes toward the system but also to be actively involved in forming conceptions of the system.

Catchphrases and diagrams as common sense

The most important theoretical concepts used in this investigation are catchphrases, common sense, and diagrams. In his study of the political culture of the early US republic, Ronald Formisano used the concept of a catchphrase to describe “shared illusions” or “unresearched hypotheses,” which set limits for what can be explained, known, and acted upon.⁴ Disch has argued that in the 1900s, “the two-party system” became a catchphrase in the field of US political science.⁵ If such catchphrases spread to wide circles of the population, they might form part of the *common sense* that Stuart Hall and Allan O'Shea have defined as

a form of “everyday thinking” which offers us frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world. It is a form of popular, easily-available knowledge which contains no complicated ideas, requires no sophisticated argument and does not depend on deep thought or wide reading. It works intuitively, without forethought or reflection. It is pragmatic and empirical, giving the illusion of arising directly from experience, reflecting only the realities of daily life and answering the needs of “the common people” for practical guidance and advice.⁶

4 Ronald P. Formisano, “Deferential-Participant Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789–1840,” *American Political Science Review* 68 (1974), 473.

5 Disch (2002), 59–60.

6 Stuart Hall and Alan O'Shea, “Common-Sense Neoliberalism: The Battle over Common Sense is a Central Part of Our Political Life,” *Soundings* 55 (2013), 8–9.

Since common sense “is not the property of the rich, the well-educated or the powerful, but is shared to some extent by everybody, regardless of class, status, creed, income or wealth,” it is to a greater extent shaped by widely distributed publications, such as school textbooks, than by narrower academical treatises.⁷

In Charles Sander Peirce’s semiotics, diagrams are distinct from symbols, such as writing and numbers, as well as from images. Symbols have an agreed upon meaning, while images mimic the spatial relations between the parts of the represented object. Because of this iconicity, similarity to their object, images can be understood without learning. As images, diagrams use spatial relations to convey meaning, and they are both described as icons by Peirce. However, what diagrams represent is decided not by direct mimicking, as in images, but through spatial analogies: spatial relations in the diagram represent abstract relationships between some selected properties of the object.⁸ The diagram’s focus on specific properties contributes to making it valuable in educational settings. Its iconicity, ability to be intuitively understood without learning of symbols, also contribute to its usefulness in teaching.

It can be argued that spatial analogies and diagrams have the potential to create shared illusions of common sense that exceed those of verbal catchphrases. The diagrams underlying our thought process seem even more natural and common than words, which both researchers and the general public are relatively familiar with deconstructing. Therefore, diagrams have remained even less researched than catchphrases.

This lack of research is unfortunate considering the importance that diagrams have in human thought. Peirce argued that we reason by drawing inferences from diagrams that we observe and manipulate in our minds.⁹ This is consistent with a recent trend in the cognitive sciences that gives spatial cognition a fundamental role in abstract thinking. Human cognition makes ample use of analogies and metaphors. This enables us to use knowledge from a familiar source domain to draw conclusions about a novel target domain.¹⁰ Many of our analogies use space as a source domain. Even abstract concepts such as love, happiness, and social status are comprehended with the help of spatial metaphors. You can be in love, feel down, or rise on the social ladder.¹¹ In the realm of politics, a common spatial analogy is the left–right scale, where position on the horizontal axis is analogous to political position on a scale from reformist to conservative.¹²

As with all powerful tools, diagrams can also be used for manipulation and control and might be just as misleading as verbal communication.¹³ Bruno Latour claims that diagrams are powerful inscriptions that corners dissenters into conformity through

7 Hall and O’Shea (2013), 9.

8 See, for example, Frederik Stjernfelt, *Diagrammatology: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Phenomenology, Ontology, and Semiotics* (London: Springer, 2007), 90.

9 Stjernfelt (2007), xiii.

10 Dedre Gentner, “Structure-Mapping: A Theoretical Framework for Analogy,” *Cognitive Science* 7, no. 2 (1983), 155–70.

11 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

12 Jean A. Laponce, *Left and Right: The Topography of Political Perceptions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

13 Matei Candea, “On Visual Coherence and Visual Excess: Writing, Diagrams, and Anthropological Form,” *Social Analysis* 63, no. 4 (2019), 63–88; Nurit Bird-David, “Dis/working with Diagrams: How Genealogies and Maps Obscure Nanoscale Worlds (a Hunter-Gatherer Case),” *Social Analysis* 63, no. 4 (2019), 43–62.

ever more dramatic visual effects.¹⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising that diagrams have been used in school textbooks for civic education. The supposedly neutral spatial form of a diagram might lend it an air of objectivity and common sense that a verbal description of the same phenomenon could not match.

Method and sources

Theories of spatial cognition can be used for diagram analysis.¹⁵ For example, in the late 1990s, it was suggested that we learn a common set of primary metaphors from sensorimotor experience in early childhood. For example, by observing how the water rises in a glass when we pour it in, we conflate that “More is Up.” According to the theory, these simple metaphors become established as permanent neural connections and form the building blocks from which we construct more complex metaphors later in life. The majority of these primary metaphors are spatial, such as Important is Big, Organisation is Physical Structure, Control is Up, Important is Central, and Similarity is Closeness.¹⁶ Other primary metaphors, such as Good is Bright/Bad is Dark, are also relevant for diagrams, since they affect how different entities are contrasted to each other through shading.¹⁷

Spatial agency bias is also relevant in diagram analysis. In cultures writing from left to right, we internalise that action take place in this direction and tend to place more powerful actors to the left in diagrams and images.¹⁸

Regarding the textual analysis, the main challenge is the amount of source material. It has been narrowed down by focusing on the most important textbook. Still, Magruder's *American Government* is a voluminous textbook of 500 pages in the first edition and approximately 900 today. The preface to the 800-page 1967 edition claimed that “[i]f it is a ‘large’ one, it is because its subject is a large and important one.”¹⁹ However, the research is simplified by the fact that the book has always contained a fifteen- to twenty-page chapter on the political parties, which has maintained much of its original structure throughout its 106 years of existence. It begins by explaining what a party is, where after it states that no provisions are made for political parties in the Constitution, but that they are good to have anyway. Thereafter, the two largest parties are described, followed by the other parties.

Although the building blocks of the first edition are still visible in the latest edition, the chapter has undergone an important evolution that reflects how the view of the US party system has developed. Within this narrative frame, some themes have lived for

14 Bruno Latour, “Visualization and Cognition: Thinking with Eyes and Hands,” *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Science, Past and Present* 6 (1986), 1–40.

15 For a longer discussion of this, see for example chapter 2 of Janne Holmén et al., *Diagrams in Civic Education: Visuospatial Models of Society in Textbooks and Teaching* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024).

16 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 46–54.

17 María J. Ortiz, “Primary Metaphors and Monomodal Visual Metaphors,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 43, no. 6 (2011), 1568–80.

18 Anjan Chatterjee, “Directional Asymmetries in Cognition: What is Left to Write About?” in *Spatial Dimensions of Social Thought*, ed. Anne Maas and Thomas W. Schubert (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 189–210.

19 Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1967), vi.

decades, after which they were changed or replaced by new ones, such as the causes of the two-party system and the role of minor parties. This article traces these changes in the text, in combination with an analysis of the accompanying diagrams. The long and uniform publication history of Magruder's book provides a homogeneous background against which relevant changes are easier to discern than if the same development had to be pieced together from dozens of heterogeneous short-lived textbooks. Since the textbook, particularly in its early history, often underwent revisions after election years, I have studied at least one, but often several, textbooks from each four-year election cycle since the 1916 elections, with the exception of 2017–2020, when no new editions seem to have been issued.

Earlier research

Research on the role of diagrams in education is mostly focused on teaching students to understand diagrams. There is plenty of research within the STEM subjects, for example regarding how to promote the understanding of geometrical diagrams or evolutionary trees.²⁰ Research on diagrams in social science education is also focused on the role of charts and graphs as didactical tools.²¹

Less research has been made regarding how politics is portrayed in diagrams, and also there, the focus has been on didactical usefulness. For example, in 1931 Frances N. Ahl suggested that teachers use graphic presentations to illustrate the evolution of the American two-party system.²²

No earlier research exists regarding how textbooks have described the two-party system or how it has been represented in diagrams. However, we can find some studies on parties in textbooks. A 1979 study of four US high school textbooks in history and civics analysed the treatment of political parties and found that history textbooks were more critical of parties, while civics textbooks were more positive. It was also concluded that minor parties were generally ignored.²³

Research that makes critical analyses of diagrams in textbooks, or other media, is also rare. Valentin Rauer's research on HIV infographics focuses on how images and numerical information are combined. His method of isotypical difference has also been used by Daniel Schumann in an analysis of how migration is portrayed in diagrams in German civics textbooks.²⁴

20 See, for example, Justin K. Dimmel and Patricio G. Herbst, "The Semiotic Structure of Geometry Diagrams: How Textbook Diagrams Convey Meaning," *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* 46, no. 2 (2015), 147–95 or Kefyn M. Catley and Laura R. Novick, "Seeing the Wood for the Trees: An Analysis of Evolutionary Diagrams in Biology Textbooks," *BioScience* 58, no. 10 (2008), 976–87.

21 For example, Elchanan Cohn et al., "Do Graphs Promote Learning in Principles of Economics?" *The Journal of Economic Education* 32, no. 4 (2001), 299–310.

22 Frances N. Ahl, "Making Civics Graphic," *The Historical Outlook* 22, no. 1 (1931), 27–28; Henry E. Brady, "The Art of Political Science: Spatial Diagrams as Iconic and Revelatory," *Perspectives on Politics* 9, no. 2 (2011), 311–31.

23 Sue Tolleson Rinehart, "The Mischief of Factions: Political Parties in School Textbooks" (paper presented at the meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 31–August 3, 1979).

24 Valentin Rauer, "Isotypische Differenz: Eine serielle Analyse der symbolischen Formen von öffentlichen HIV-Statistiken (1983–2003)," in *Visuelle Stereotype*, ed. Thomas Petersen and Clemens Schwendner (Cologne: Halem Verlag, 2009), 124–40; Chapter 3 in Holmén et al. (2024).

I have conducted some earlier studies which, as this one, analysed diagrams with the help of theories from the cognitive sciences such as primary metaphors and spatial agency bias. One study investigated how the political spectrum has been portrayed diagrammatically in Swedish civics textbooks and how the horizontal left–right dimension has sometimes been complemented with a vertical dimension that represents the difference between, for example, economy and ecology or between Green/Alternative/Libertarian and Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist.²⁵ Another study compared how diagrams from civic education textbooks from ten countries are used for nation building by displaying unity in diversity.²⁶ The most comprehensive overview of the method is given in my book *A history of diagrams*, where it is also applied to a large number of diagrams used for various purposes in different cultures and time periods.²⁷

Although textbook studies often focus on the conservatism and traditionality of the medium, school textbooks not only reproduce hegemonic ideologies but can also have a progressive function of inducing change, as is the case for civic education in general.²⁸ The establishment of common-sense notions with the help of spatial diagrams can be used for both of these purposes.

Magruder's American Government

Magruder's American Government might be the world's longest running textbook series, since it has appeared in new editions since 1917. No edition numbers have been included in the front matter, but, until the early 1950s, it was claimed that the book was updated at least once a year.²⁹ The preface of some editions has provided information on editions, sometimes based on contradictory attempts at actual counting and sometimes merely based on years since the first edition.³⁰ Nonetheless, the textbook was published in approximately 100 editions between 1917 and 1923.

American Government was revised by Frank Abbott Magruder until his death in 1949. Beginning in 1952, Magruder's friend and colleague from Oregon State University William McClenaghan oversaw the revisions, and since then, the name of the book has been *Magruder's American Government*. McClenaghan also helped with the revisions during the last years of Magruder's life³¹ and updated the book for almost sixty years until he passed away in 2011, when Grant P. Wiggins from the publisher briefly

25 Janne Holmén, "Flipping the Political Scale: Spatial Cognition and Changes in Diagrammatic Representations of the Swedish Party System in Civics Textbooks, 1900–2020," *Journal of Cognitive Historiography* 8, no: 1–2 (2024), 141–67.

26 Chapter 2 in Holmén et al. (2024).

27 Janne Holmén, *A History of Diagrams: Turning Points in the Spatial Representation of Ideas and Information* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

28 Tomas Englund, *Curriculum as a Political Problem: Changing Educational Conceptions, with Special Reference to Citizenship Education* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1986), 70.

29 For example, Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: A Study of Our Democracy at Work*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1951), ii.

30 Magruder (1967); Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1983); Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham Heights, MA: Prentice Hall, 1991); Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1992).

31 Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1956), ii.

took over responsibility for the yearly revisions.³² By 2016, Daniel M. Shea, professor of Government at Colby College, had taken over responsibility for revisions of the book.³³

Magruder's American Government has been studied by several earlier researchers who have referred to the textbook's dominating position, without substantiating that claim.³⁴ James W. Mauch provided a more thorough description of the textbook's market position in his doctoral dissertation. He cited claims from the publisher that the book had held more than 70 percent of the market share since 1917 but noted that this was impossible to verify since not all publishers revealed their sales figures, and some exaggerate them for marketing purposes. However, Mauch believed the figures to be credible since the book was on reading lists in important school districts and states with statewide textbook standards, such as Los Angeles, Texas, and Florida. Los Angeles sets the tone for the rest of California, and these three states not only constitute a large share of the US textbook market but also influence other parts of the country where textbook decisions are made at the school district level.³⁵

Most earlier studies have looked at single editions, either contemporary books or one of the earliest editions. A study of how the Bill of Rights concept has evolved, which utilised a broad range of texts by politicians and political scientists, also investigated the first edition of Magruder. It described Magruder's view on the Bill of Rights as conservative since it held that it limited only the federal power and not that of the states, which some political scientists and politicians had already argued at the time.³⁶ Ronald Stockton described the 1923 edition as an early example of a textbook that promoted civic engagement.³⁷ Arthur Foshay described the 1930 edition as interested in social matters and positive toward nonprofit government enterprises such as canals, railroads, and irrigation projects.³⁸ A 1974 study compared the view of citizenship across a number of contemporary US government textbooks, including Magruder's 1968 edition. The textbook, which the lead author himself used in high school in the 1920s, was categorised as "traditional," in contrast to the problem orientation or disci-

32 Frank Abbott Magruder, William A. McClenaghan, and Pearson Education, *American Government* (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2011), iii.

33 Frank Abbott Magruder and Daniel M. Shea, *Magruder's American Government* (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2016), iii.

34 Arthur W. Foshay and William W. Burton, "Citizenship as the Aim of the Social Studies," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 4, no. 2 (1976), 1–22; Arthur W. Foshay, "Textbooks and the Curriculum During the Progressive Era: 1930–1950," in *Textbooks and Schooling in the United States: Eighty-ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Part I*, ed. David L. Elliott and Arthur Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 23–41; Ronald A. Banaszak, "What Happened to *Magruder's American Government*? The Evolution of a Popular Textbook, 1970–1992" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Nashville, TN, November 1993); Michael J. Douma, "How the First Ten Amendments Became the Bill of Rights," *Georgetown Journal of Law & Public Policy* 15, no. 2 (2017), 593–614.

35 James W. Mauch, *Social Mathematics in the Curriculum of American Civics: An Analysis of Selected National and State Standards and of Magruder's American Government* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University, 2005), 72–80.

36 Douma (2017).

37 Ronald Stockton, "The Magruder Textbook of 1923 on American Government: An Early Version of Civic Engagement" (paper presented at APSA 2010 Teaching & Learning Conference, Washington, DC, February 5, 2010, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1548585>).

38 Foshay (1990).

plene orientation of some of its newer competitors.³⁹ Richard Neumann studied how contemporary textbooks from several subjects treated socialism and corporate influence on the government and chose Magruder to represent US government textbooks. He found Magruder's portrayal of socialism more nuanced than that of history textbooks, which he attributed to differences between the subjects.⁴⁰

Several studies have also investigated the development of Magruder's textbook over time. Ronald Banaszak concluded that the book did not change much between the 1970 and 1992 editions, while Mark Mraz covered an even greater timespan by comparing the 1917 and 1993 editions. He claimed that after seventy-six editions, the landmark textbook still held true to Magruder's intention to portray the fluid and dynamic nature of US democracy.⁴¹

Taken together, these earlier studies show that the textbook displays a great deal of continuity during its publication history and can be described as politically moderate. It seems to view government as a positive force in society, a standpoint possibly left of centre in the US political landscape. However, this bias might be due to self-selection among authors prepared to write 900-page books on the details of government. I have been unable to find any investigation that has looked at more than two editions of the around 100 published thus far. Only a few percent of the approximately 80,000 pages hitherto published under the name *Magruder's American Government* have been the object of research, and none of the earlier studies have approached the US two-party system.

The US two-party system

The concept of a two-party system was used already in the late nineteenth century. One of the first examples was the English philosopher Henry Sidgwick's discussion of the pros and cons of the two-party system in his 1891 *The Elements of Politics*. Approximately a decade later, the concept emerged in discussions on US politics, such as when William P. Trent criticised the two-party system in an 1899 address.⁴²

However, until the 1920s, US political scientists did not study parties on a regular basis. According to Disch, "[t]he institutionalization of political parties that made them respectable objects of academic inquiry relied in turn upon objective scholarly opinion to render that institutionalization legitimate." In the 1920s, "two-party system" had not yet come to dominate as a description of this system. Although it was occasionally used, it competed with other concepts and was not viewed as superior to other systems.⁴³

39 Foshay and Burton (1976).

40 Richard Neumann, "Socialism in High School Social Studies Textbooks," *The Social Studies* 103, no. 1 (2012), 31–38; Richard Neumann, "An Analysis of the Treatment of Corporate Influence on Government by United States History and American Government High School Textbooks," *The Social Studies* 105, no. 2 (2014), 57–68.

41 Banaszak (1993); Mark Mraz, "Magruder's *American Government*: The 1917 and 1993 Editions Compared—A Case Study in Civic Education," *Social Studies Journal* 26 (1997), 48–51.

42 Henry Sidgwick, *The Elements of Politics* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 598–601; William P. Trent, *War and Civilization* (New York: T.Y. Crowell & Co., 1901).

43 Disch (2002), 64–67, quote on 64.

The idea that multiparty systems caused fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany was first put forward in 1935. Thereafter, the two-party system saw its breakthrough in a wave of “party patriotism,” which viewed it as a superior safeguard for democracy.⁴⁴

In the mid-twentieth century, “the two-party system” became established as a catchphrase synonymous with US democracy. In 1954, Duverger’s Law, the proposition that simple majority single-ballot elections favour two-party systems, lent an aura of scientific credibility to the concept.⁴⁵ Similar ideas had been commonplace since the 1880s; for example, it was discussed in a widely spread work by H. G. Wells. However, Duverger’s formulation of a testable hypothesis opened up the field for quantitative empirical studies.⁴⁶

Anthony Downs’ *Economic Theory of Democracy* further strengthened “the two-party system” as a catchphrase and introduced the idea that votes for third parties were wasted.⁴⁷ Thus, it is only through a long multistep process that the idea of the United States as a two-party state has become common-sense knowledge.

Early diagrams of the US parties

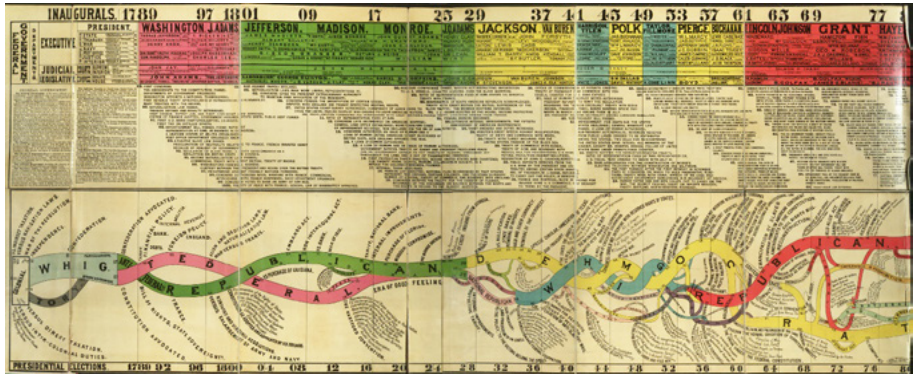


Figure 1. Conspectus of the History of Political Parties. Source: Walter R. Houghton, *Conspectus of the History of Political Parties and the Federal Government* (Indianapolis: Granger, 1880).

In 1880, Walter R. Houghton published an overview of the history of US political parties. It was accompanied by the diagram “Conspectus of the History of Political Parties” (Figure 1) that visualised this development and was also printed separately to market the book. Houghton assigned a line to each party and measured its support with comparatively thicker or thinner lines, with the party in the White House on top.⁴⁸ The pattern of placing the dominating power on top recurs in visual representations

44 William H. Riker, “The Two-Party System and Duverger’s Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science,” *American Political Science Review* 76, no. 4 (1982): 753–66; Disch (2002), 67–69.

45 Disch (2002), 73–75.

46 Riker (1982); Herbert George Wells, *An Englishman Looks at the World* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1914), 251–54.

47 Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957); Disch (2002), 77–79.

48 Susan Schulten, “Charting the Flow of Political Power,” *Mapping the Nation*, July 5, 2012, <http://www.mappingthenation.com/blog/charting-the-flow-of-political-power/>.

of social order across cultures and epochs. It has its foundation in the primary metaphor Control is Up.⁴⁹

Houghton's conspectus has little resemblance to the more orderly diagrams that were later used in textbooks to represent the two-party system. The diagram was produced after the chaotic 1876 elections, which were tainted by accusations of fraud and had to be decided by a committee. It is not an orderly and well-functioning system that it is attempting to visualise.

The meanderings of Houghton's diagram seem to reflect this scepticism toward political parties. It has been noted that overcomplexity can be used in diagrams to discredit a phenomenon,⁵⁰ and this might be what Houghton was doing. Although the party in the White House was always placed on top, the knots and meanders performed by the parties below seem to serve no other purpose than to form a confusing labyrinth.

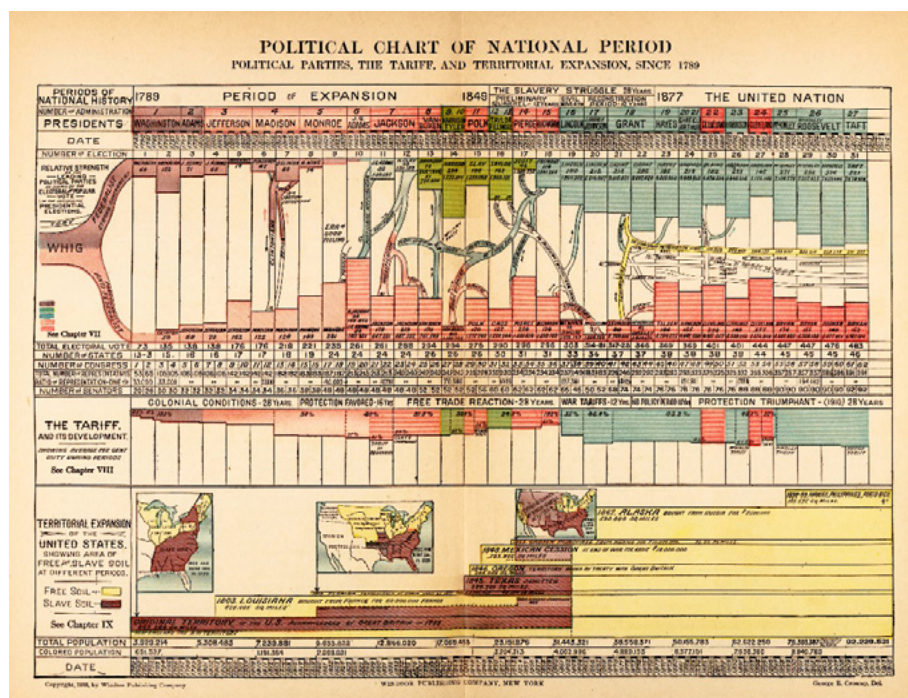


Figure 2. Political chart of national period. Source: George E. Croscup, *United States History with Synchronic Charts Maps and Statistical Diagrams* (New York: Cambridge Book Corporation, [1910] 1915). Cornell University – PJ Mode Collection of Persuasive Cartography. <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343582>.

A more direct forerunner to diagrams of the two-party system was produced by George E. Croscup in 1910 (Figure 2), as he gave visual preference to the two major parties, with smaller parties situated in between them. However, it would still take some time before diagrams of the party system found their way into textbooks.

49 See chapter 30 in Holmén (forthcoming).

50 Holmén (forthcoming), chapter 37.

The two-party system in Magruder's American Government

The party system in the early editions, 1917–1920s

The first edition of *Magruder's American Government* from 1917 contained the chapter "Political Parties and Politics." It claimed that an old ruling party without a formidable opponent tends to outlive its moral justification, where after it faces collapse or splits, such as when the Progressive Party with Theodore Roosevelt broke out from the Republicans in 1912.⁵¹ As a result of that split, Woodrow Wilson of the Democrats became president. From the Civil War until that point, Grover Cleveland was the only non-Republican to have been elected president. This explains why Magruder wrote about *the* ruling party rather than referring to a two-party system. The single-party dominance was even stronger at the state level. Among the questions for discussion at the end of the chapter, the students were asked whether their state was a one-party state and whether they believed that the government would be more efficient if there were two parties of equal strength.⁵² Thus, if the idea of a two-party system can be said to exist at all in this first edition of the textbook, it was a vision rather than a description of contemporary reality.

The text revealed no major difference between the platforms of the Republicans and Democrats, as they agreed on foreign policy, rural banks, and women's suffrage by state action. Four parties were listed in the order of Republicans, Democrats, Prohibitionists, and Socialists. The radical socialist platform for the 1916 elections was given as much space as the other three parties combined.⁵³ This might be attributed to its length and level of detail, in contrast to the vague profiles of the Republicans and Democrats and the single-issue focus of the Prohibitionists. Apart from the fact that they were placed first, no distinction was made between the Republicans and Democrats and the other parties in the early editions of the book. In the end-of-chapter questions, the students were asked to discuss which platform among "the four leading parties" was most progressive.⁵⁴

The view that there were no major differences between the Republicans and Democrats was backed by a long quote from a book on US parties by the historian P. Orman Ray, who in turn had quoted James Bryce, originally from 1888.⁵⁵ Thus, the image of the large parties as machines competing for government rather than as carriers of political ideology or group interests was established already in 1917. It has basically been maintained into the 2020s, although put under increasing amounts of stress from conflicting evidence.

In the next edition, the text was updated with the party platforms for the 1920 elections.⁵⁶ The Republican and Democrat platforms were given close to one page each,

51 Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: With a Consideration of the Problems of Democracy* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1917), 227–28.

52 Ibid., 239.

53 Ibid., 227–31.

54 Ibid., 239.

55 P. Orman Ray, *An Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913), 7; James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, vol.2: *Part III–VI. The Party System—Public Opinion—Illustrations and Reflections—Social Institutions*, rev. 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1889), 23.

56 Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: With a Consideration of the Problems of Democracy* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1921), 227–31.

whereafter “the minor parties” were discussed in one subchapter. Of those, only the Socialist Party’s program was described in detail, also with close to one page of text. The introduction of the concept of “the minor parties” was a first step in a development that distinguished the Republicans and Democrats from the other parties. The students were now also asked to describe the platforms of “the leading” instead of “the four leading” parties.⁵⁷ The context reveals that the Socialists were still considered a leading party, but not the Prohibitionists. No description was given of the Prohibitionist platform, and a question that had asked the students to describe the platforms of Republicans, Democrats, Prohibitionists, and Socialists now only listed Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists.⁵⁸ The introduction of prohibition in 1920 answered the Prohibitionists’ main political question, after which they slid into political obscurity.

In 1927, only the platforms of what were now called “the major parties,” Republicans and Democrats, were described in detail, and the “minor parties” were collectively treated in a short paragraph. Since the Socialist Party had supported the La Follette platform in the 1924 election, there was no longer a separate description of their platform.⁵⁹ Thus, throughout the 1920s, for every election cycle, the textbook increasingly focused on the two major parties. However, the concept of a “two-party system” was still not used.

Emergence of the two-party system as a concept and diagram: The 1930s

The first mention of the two-party system appeared in the 1930 edition. There, a diagram caption read: “In the above chart, note the persistence of the two-party system in the United States.”⁶⁰ Houghton’s diagram from 1880 was a data visualisation that represented voter support with thickness, displaying a relative, quantitative difference between major and minor parties. In contrast, the 1930 diagram indicated an absolute, qualitative difference by representing major parties as straight columns of equal width, regardless of the results of individual elections, with other parties placed around them (Figure 3). The pre-eminence of Democrats and Republicans was conveyed by a combination of the primary metaphors Important is Big and Important is Central. A remnant of the tradition of representing voter support in the diagram might be traced to the depiction of the Prohibitionist Party getting narrower over time. However, it is also possible that the Prohibitionists are simply squeezed to give room to Progressives in the diagram. The fact that Progressives are placed to the left of Republicans rather than to the right where there is plenty of room might be related to an ambition to use a left–right horizontal political scale, although this is not stated in the caption. In Europe, several parties had to form coalition governments, the caption stated, but in the US no other party had managed to seriously affect the two-party system.

The diagram suggested that the difference between Democrats and Republicans was that the former supported state rights and the latter centralisation. However, this difference was not mentioned in the text, which still emphasised the similarities

⁵⁷ Magruder (1921), 239.

⁵⁸ Magruder (1917), 238; Magruder (1921), 238.

⁵⁹ Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: With a Consideration of the Problems of Democracy* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1927), 258–62.

⁶⁰ Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1930), 233.

between the parties. The diagram and the caption remained in the following editions. The only change to the chapter was that the Democratic platform was presented before the Republican, reflecting Franklin D. Roosevelt's victory in the 1932 elections, and his presidency was also added to the chart of the party system.⁶¹ For the 1936 edition, a new but almost identical version of the party system diagram was drawn.⁶² However, now the figure caption disappeared, and thereby the only mention of the two-party system. Updates of this diagram would remain in the book until the late 1940s (Figure 3).

A similar example can be found in a competing high school textbook from the same period. The two-party system was mentioned, but only in the short chapter on Canada, where it was stated that the country had a two-party system, as Britain and the United States did.⁶³ However, the concept was not used in the longer chapter on US parties. The inconsistent use of the "two-party system" in these examples reveals that although the concept was known in the early 1930s, it was neither a catchphrase nor part of common-sense knowledge.

61 Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1934), 405.

62 Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1936), 405.

63 Herman Adolph Spindt and Frederick Lynne Ryan, *The Foundations of American Government: A Textbook in Civics* (Boston: Heath, 1929), 420.

The US two-party system was contrasted with European politics: “European countries have been plagued with too many political parties—racial groups, dynastic groups, and whatnot. This results in instability, and France has a new government every nine months on average. The many parties worked so badly in Italy and Germany that the people reacted in favour of a dictator who permits only his one party.”⁶⁶ On the other hand, the English-speaking peoples generally had two-party systems of conservatives and liberals under different names. At this point, language was Magruder’s only explanation of why the United States had a two-party system.

The narrative established in 1939 remained throughout the 1940s, with the minor changes that economic differences were added to the factors that splintered the European party system, and that the one-party states in Germany and Italy were described in the past tense.⁶⁷ Thus, the idea of a US two-party system developed in contrast to the European multiparty systems, which, during the 1930s, began to be perceived as inferior and dangerous, as they could lead to dictatorship.

The association of two-party systems with Anglophone countries was not unique to Magruder but was common among political scientists at the time. For example, a book from 1939 by W. Reed West,⁶⁸ professor of Political Science at George Washington University, also contained a chapter on the two-party system, which was said to be characteristic for English-speaking countries.

The edition from 1956 no longer proposed that two-party systems were typical for English-speaking countries. However, it still contrasted an orderly US two-party system against European multiparty chaos. In addition to the lessons from Italy and Germany, from then, the text also noted that France had averaged a shift in government every five months since the end of World War II.⁶⁹

By the 1964 edition, the references to the Italian and German dictatorships were removed, but multiparty systems were still associated with chaos: “France furnishes an excellent illustration of the instability produced by a multi-party system. Since the end of World War II, the French have had two new constitutions and been plagued with frequent shifts in party control.”⁷⁰ By 1967, a footnote informed that France had achieved “a semblance of political stability” after De Gaulle instated the Fifth Republic in 1958.⁷¹ In the editions from 1973 to 2007, Italy was used as the single example of frequent shift in government.⁷² By 2009, the book claimed that several European countries have had frequent shifts in government without naming any.⁷³ However, in the

66 Ibid., 412.

67 Frank Abbott Magruder, *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1946), 411.

68 W. Reed West, *American Government* (London: Pitman, 1939).

69 Magruder (1956), 410–11.

70 Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1964), 126–28

71 Magruder (1967), 129.

72 For example, Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan & John S. Gibson (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1973), 137; Frank Abbott Magruder and William A. McClenaghan, *Magruder’s American Government* (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2006), 122.

73 Frank Abbott Magruder and William A. McClenaghan, *Magruder’s American Government* (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2009), 128–29.

2009 edition, Canada was also used as an example of a multiparty system,⁷⁴ in contrast to the older explanation that English-speaking countries in general had two-party systems. The diagram of the Canadian system was not intended to illustrate the instability of the system but to explain how majorities were formed in multiparty systems. By 2016, the German Bundestag was instead used for the same purpose.⁷⁵

By the 1956 edition, the textbook also began to discuss one-party systems. It claimed that, for example, in the Soviet dictatorship, opposition cannot be tolerated, and such a system should therefore be described as a “no party system.”⁷⁶ By 1973, it was added that many US states and local governments were one-party systems.⁷⁷ This description of the one-party system was still maintained in the 2023 edition, although US one-partyism was described as a historical rather than a current phenomenon, as it has been since the 1983 edition.⁷⁸ Thus, even during the Cold War, the European multiparty system rather than the Soviet one-party system was portrayed as the antithesis of the US two-party system.

The revolutionary minor parties, 1950s to 1970s

Early editions of the book were generally positive toward minor parties, although they were ascribed less importance with each edition. Continuing this mildly positive tradition, the 1951 edition claimed that minor parties often introduced new ideas, which were then taken over by the major parties. “A minor party pays the price of rearing a promising child and, when it becomes popular, a major party marries or adopts it.” However, by now the minor parties were also warranted a word of caution. The textbook claimed that new parties were usually more liberal or radical than older ones, and that some might not be satisfied with following democratic processes. “If radicals are not willing to wait for public opinion, and attempt to impose all new ideas overnight, reforms, good or bad, might have to be paid for by revolution or counter-revolution.”⁷⁹ By following how this paragraph developed in later editions, it can be inferred that it was associated with the presidential campaign of the Progressive Party’s Henry A. Wallace in the 1948 election, which was supported by the Communist Party. By 1956, it was claimed that Wallace did not understand the forces behind his party, and by 1967, it was specified that it was influenced by communists. That year, the sentence that linked minor parties to revolution was removed. However, the connections between radicalism and minor parties and between Wallace and communism still held in the 1977 edition. After that, the view of the minor parties became less negative, and they were still described as originators of ideas that can be transformed into policy by the major parties.⁸⁰

74 Magruder and McClenaghan (2009), 128.

75 Magruder and Shea (2016), 509.

76 Magruder (1956), 411.

77 Magruder (1973), 138.

78 Frank Abbott Magruder and Daniel M. Shea, *Magruder’s American Government* (Paramus, NJ: Savvas Learning, 2023), 569; Magruder (1983), 171.

79 Magruder (1951), 426.

80 Magruder (1956), 415; Magruder (1967), 133; Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1977), 141; Magruder and Shea (2023), 570–71.

This scrutiny of the motives and methods of minor parties surfaced during the McCarthy era of the early Cold War, when suspicion could be directed against any actors outside of the mainstream, and it lived on in the textbook for almost three decades. Nevertheless, minor parties never ceased to be portrayed as valuable, and the idea that a vote for a minor party was wasted never appeared in the textbook.

The reasons for the US two-party system, 1956–

By 1956, the two-party system was described as even more common-sensical than before since “of course” was added to the sentence “There are, of course, two major parties in the United States.” With this edition, the idea that English-speaking countries had two-party systems disappeared, but several other explanations were presented. For example, the theory that the election system with majority votes in single-member districts favours a two-party system was introduced.⁸¹ It has remained in the textbook ever since.⁸² Although the principle had been observed much earlier, in the 1950s, political scientists began to more closely study the relationship between election systems and party systems, what would become labelled Duverger’s Law.⁸³ After abandoning language as an explanation, the textbook found a more scientific foundation for the US two-party system. However, other explanations were also given in the same 1956 edition.

The idea that the US political parties did not have any larger ideological differences was presented as a consequence of the two-party system but was simultaneously described as a cause of it. The textbook considered the similarity between the two major parties to reflect the absence of sharp economic, religious, national, ideological, linguistic, or other differences within the United States, which was dominated by the middle class. Therefore, it was a strength and not a weakness that the parties were difficult to distinguish from each other.⁸⁴ The absence of divisions among the American people would, up to the 2020s, remain a leading explanation for why the United States had a two-party system.⁸⁵

However, by 1983, some cracks were beginning to appear in the argument that the parties’ similarity reflected the homogeneity of their voters. It was added that Americans had far from always agreed on all matters and had in fact been deeply divided by the Civil War, the Great Depression, racial discrimination, and war in Southeast Asia. However, the textbook still concluded that “we have not seen long-standing bitter disputes based on factors such as economic class, social status, religious tenets or national origins.”⁸⁶ These paragraphs held for decades with smaller changes. For example, by the 2002 edition, the Vietnam War was exchanged for abortion as a bone of contention. That year, it was claimed that both parties tended to be moderate, although Democrats were more likely to support social welfare programs, government regulation of business, and efforts to improve the status of minorities, and Republicans were

81 Magruder (1956), 410.

82 Magruder and Shea (2023), 566–67.

83 Disch (2002), 73–75; Riker (1982).

84 Magruder (1956), 410–411.

85 Magruder and Shea (2016), 506–7; Magruder and Shea (2023), 569.

86 Magruder (1983), 170.

much more likely to favour free market forces and less extensive federal social welfare programs.⁸⁷

By 1967, a subchapter on party membership had appeared in the book. In an argument similar to that in the subchapter on ideological consensus mentioned above, it claimed that the two major parties drew voters from all layers of the population. For brief periods, some groups could align more with one party than with the other, although these periods were never very long lasting.⁸⁸ In 1973, the statement that group alignment was never very long lasting was removed, and it was added that Blacks and organised labour had voted more for Democrats in recent years.⁸⁹

By 1980, the textbook claimed that Blacks, Catholics, Jews, and organised labour voted more for Democrats, while White males, Protestants, and the business community voted more Republican. Nevertheless, the textbook attempted to convey a message of national unity by stating that “never have all of the members of one race, one creed, or one economic group attached themselves permanently, indivisibly, to one major party.”⁹⁰ However, by then, the argument was so stretched that it could be applied to any political system since a total alignment between population groups and parties can hardly be found anywhere. Still, a version of this sentence remained in the subchapter as long as it remained in the textbook. The chapter was more or less unchanged until in 1996 it was added that people with higher incomes tend to be Republican and those with lower incomes tend to be Democrats.⁹¹ The reference to income remained for some years but was removed by 2002.⁹² The entire chapter on party membership disappeared from the textbook by 2009, but the chapter on ideological consensus remained.

Since 2009, a political spectrum has been used to discuss ideological differences between Democrats and Republicans.⁹³ Thus, a subchapter with the purpose to describe the ideological consensus of the parties was now illustrated with a diagram outlining their differences. By 2023, the subchapter “The American Ideological Consensus” was followed by “Ideology and Political Parties,” which stated that “[o]f late, arguments between the two parties have been bitter and seemingly unresolvable. One of the most important trends in recent years, in fact, has been the increasing role played by those at the extreme ends of the political spectrum.”⁹⁴ However, it was claimed that despite this trend, the two-party system has continued to push the policy agenda toward the middle. Thus, the two-party system was no longer viewed as a manifestation of American unity and consensus but as an antidote for ideological polarisation.

In 1980, “Force of Tradition” was launched as a new explanation for the two-party system: “Most Americans accept the idea of a two-party system simply because it has

87 Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 2002), 120–22.

88 Magruder (1967), 130.

89 Magruder (1973), 139; Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. by William A. McClenaghan and John S. Gibson. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1972), 130.

90 Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1980), 188.

91 Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1996), 107.

92 Magruder (2002), 123.

93 Magruder and McClenaghan (2009), 126.

94 Magruder and Shea (2023), 569–70.

always been with us,” and for the same reason, they reject third parties.⁹⁵ This explanation still remains in the very latest textbooks, by 2016 summated in the common-sensical phrase “America has a two-party system because America has a two-party system.”⁹⁶ Common sense is used to create acceptance for ideas by claiming that everybody already agrees with them. Through this strategy, new ideas can also be presented as founded in tradition.⁹⁷ The force of tradition argument in Magruder’s textbook follows this pattern. In the 1920s, the textbook had not been aware of the two-party system that it in the 1980s claimed had always been there.

In the latest editions, we find a more critical explanation for the persistence of the two-party system: “Much of American election law is purposely written to discourage non-major-party candidates.”⁹⁸ According to the new author Daniel M. Shea, Democrats and Republicans work together to write legislation that makes it difficult for minor parties and independent candidates to win elected office.

Diagrams, 1950s–1990s

The older diagram of the party system from 1930, which had been revised to include new presidents, was, after the 1948 elections, replaced by a new one labelled “Major Political Parties in the United States.”⁹⁹ Here Democrats and Republicans were portrayed as two columns, with time flowing downward, and no minor parties were included.

By 1956, the diagram of the major parties was complemented by a new diagram of “Major and Minor American Political Parties” (Figure 4).¹⁰⁰ It was tilted 90 degrees and ran as multiple timelines up along the page. In contrast to Houghton’s horizontal diagram from 1880, the party in power was signified not through the primary metaphor Control is Up, but through Good is Bright/Bad is Dark. However, the distinction between the major and minor parties was conveyed both through spatial location (Control is Up) and size (Important is Big). The caption stated that all elections except 1820 had been contested by two major parties and that the number of minor parties had increased. In the 1961 edition, the older diagram of the two major parties was removed, and only the newer diagram of major and minor parties remained.¹⁰¹

95 Magruder (1980), 185.

96 Magruder and Shea (2016), 506; Magruder and Shea (2023), 566

97 Hall and O’Shea (2013).

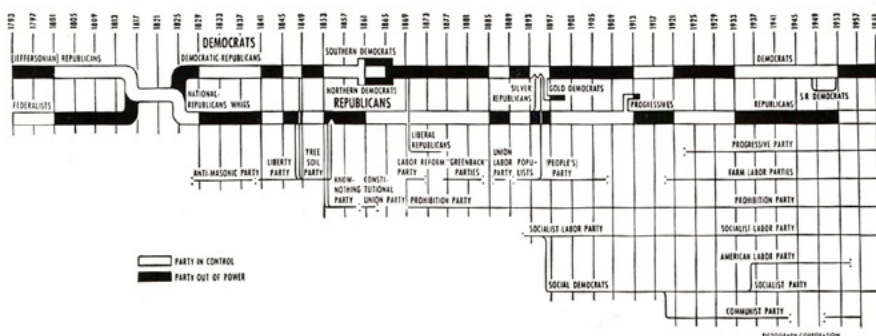
98 Magruder and Shea (2016), 507; Magruder and Shea (2023), 567.

99 Magruder (1951), 423.

100 Magruder (1956), 416.

101 Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1961), 416.

AMERICAN PARTIES



MAJOR AND MINOR AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

With the exception of the election of 1820, every Presidential election has been contested by two major parties. Notice the growth of minor parties since their beginning in 1829.

Figure 4. American parties. Source: Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1961), 416. Original tilted 90 degrees.

By 1964, the horizontal diagrams of the two-party system had disappeared, and a new type of diagram emerged (Figure 5). It included both major and minor parties, but in some aspects, the two-party system was portrayed as more self-evident than ever. The importance of the two major parties was conveyed visually not only through the primary metaphor Important is Big, but also through spatial agency bias by placing them to the left, where powerful actors are normally located. In addition, since Houghton in 1880, all diagrams of US parties had visualised the “Era of Good Feeling” in the 1820s, when there was only one party, by twisting or connecting the ribbons or columns representing the parties. However, the 1964 version merely portrayed it as a small gap in the column of what would later become the Republican Party, creating an image of the party histories as two chimney pipes leading straight from the 1790s to the present.¹⁰² From the 1967 edition, the minor parties were removed from the actual diagram and placed in a small table to the right.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Magruder (1964), 127.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

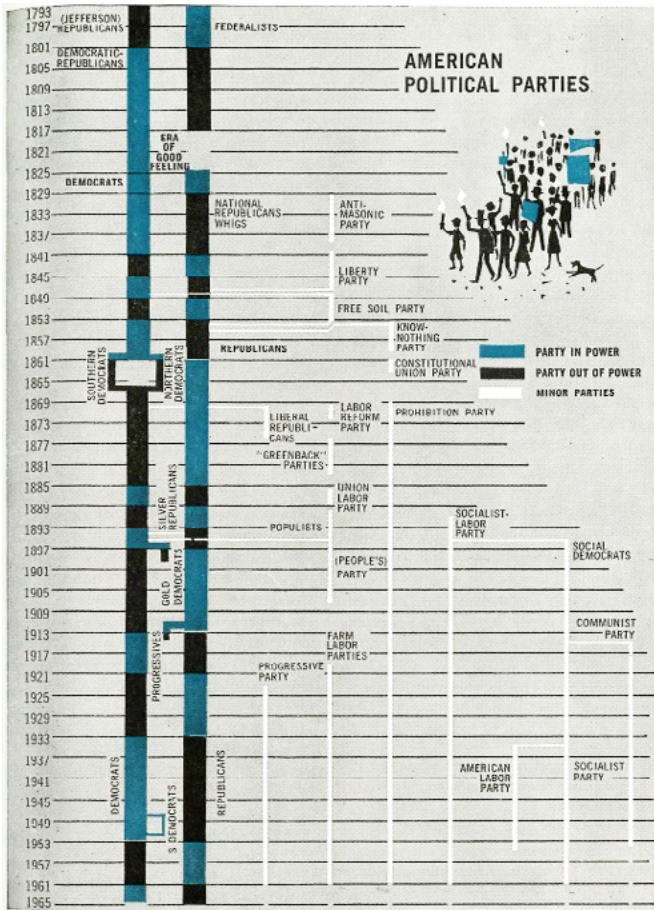


Figure 5. American political parties. Source: Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1964), 127.

This type of diagram remained in the textbook until the late 1980s. By 1991, it was succeeded by a new type of 3D block diagram (Figure 6). As its predecessor, it was labelled "American Political Parties," but in addition to some short offshoots from the stems of the two major parties, it did not contain any information about the minor parties. Additionally, although the one-party "Era of Good Feeling" was still written into the diagram in 1991, the uninterrupted columns gave the impression that there had been a continuity of two parties also in the 1820s. The "Era of Good Feeling" disappeared entirely in 1992 (Figure 7).¹⁰⁴ This was the peak of a development of spatial models that gradually established it as common sense that the United States has always had a two-party system. It also corresponded with the "force of tradition" explanation for why the US had a two-party system which had been introduced in the 1980s.

¹⁰⁴ Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1985), 176; Magruder (1991), 190; Magruder (1992), 111.

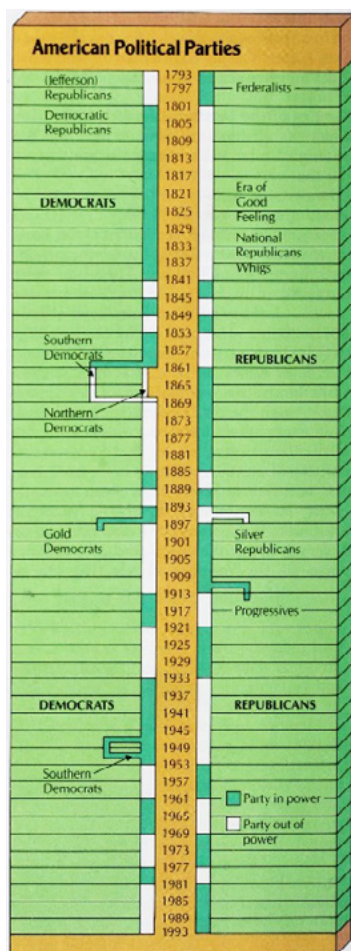


Figure 6. American political parties. Source: Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1991), 190.

The 1991 diagram was projected on a three-dimensional block, and the following year, each party occupied its own 3D block. In neither of these diagrams did the third dimension convey any information, and in 1992, the two blocks were oriented and shadowed in opposing directions, creating a confusing optical effect. A common principle of information visualisation is to display as much information as possible with as little ink as possible. In this respect, the 3D layout was a step backward. According to Tufte, the emergence of computerised publishing led to an increase in diagrams with unnecessary chart junk because it became much easier to produce. He claims that the journal *American Education* was particularly plagued by weird three-dimensional displays.¹⁰⁵ Apparently, American textbooks underwent similar development.

¹⁰⁵ Edward R. Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, 2nd ed. (Cheshire: Graphics Press, 2001), 116–20.

Another sign of the deteriorating quality of the diagrams was that they were no longer directly updated after new elections, as was the case from the first diagram in 1930 up until this time. For example, the double 3D-block diagram was not updated with the Clinton victory in the 1992 election but was an exact reprint of the first version of the diagram until an update was made after two elections in 1997.¹⁰⁶

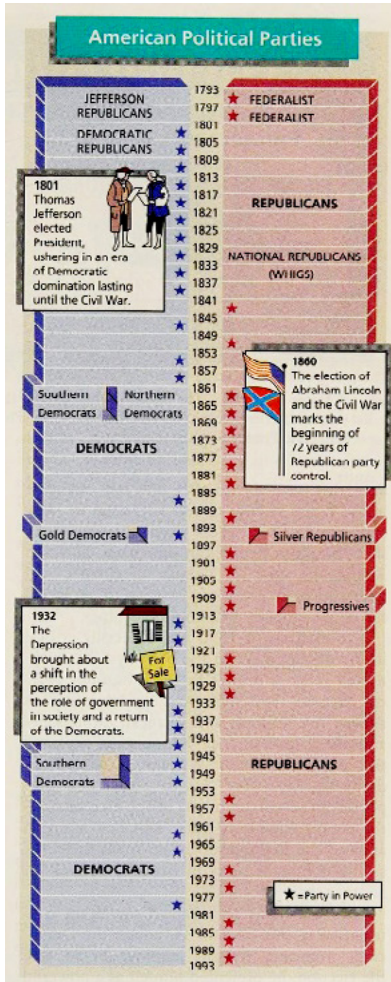


Figure 7. American political parties. Source: Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1992), 111.

The 1992 diagram also highlighted the years 1801, 1860, and 1932. These were associated with the beginning of new periods in the history of the party system.

¹⁰⁶ Magruder (1996), 111; Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1997), 111

Redefining the Eras of the Party System, 1980–

By 1980, a chapter called “The Evolution of the Two-Party System” had been introduced. It divided the history of the US party system into three periods, “The Era of the Democrats, 1800–1860,” “The Era of the Republicans, 1860–1932,” and “The Return of the Democrats, 1932 to Date.”¹⁰⁷ The victory of Jimmy Carter in 1976 was still in the 1980 edition taken as proof for the continuation of the Democratic era. However, later editions changed the name of the last era to “The Return of the Democrats, 1932 to ???” Reflecting the question marks, the textbook asked the rhetorical question whether the Republican Ronald Reagan’s victory in 1980 was the beginning of a new era but concluded that it was too early to decide.¹⁰⁸

After Reagan’s re-election in 1984, the textbook again cautioned to wait and see if a new era had arrived. Still in 1991 there was a question mark at the end of the last era, but the text claimed that the re-election of Reagan in 1984 and election of Bush in 1988 supported the claim that the majority now favoured conservative rather than liberal stands on most public policy questions.¹⁰⁹

In 1992, the textbook finally found an end year for “The Return of the Democrats:” 1968. The following period, named “The Start of a New Era,” was characterised by divided government, with different parties in possession of the presidency and the majority in Congress. This period was, according to the textbook, unprecedented in US history, as victory in the presidential race had generally helped parties gain a majority in Congress.¹¹⁰

Divided government was hotly debated among political scientists around that time and was thoroughly investigated by Gary C. Jacobson. However, already after one year, the textbook claimed that Clinton’s victory in 1992 ended the era of divided government since he was supported by a Democratic majority in Congress.¹¹¹

This was again overturned by the Republican victory in the 1994 midterms. That divided government had returned was considered so important that it was printed on the very first page of the book, as well as in the chapter on the history of the two-party system. Thereafter, the period from 1968 was consistently described as one of divided government until the subchapter disappeared from the textbook.¹¹²

From 2002, a horizontal timeline of the four eras of political parties replaced the columns of the two parties (Figure 8). An updated version of this timeline was still in use until 2007.¹¹³ However, from 2009, it ceased to be a detailed timeline and was transformed into a series of images that represented the four eras (Figure 9).

107 Magruder (1980), 189–93.

108 Magruder (1983), 175–79.

109 Magruder (1985), 179; Magruder (1991), 191.

110 Magruder (1992), 112–14.

111 Gary C. Jacobson, *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government: Competition in U.S. House Elections, 1946–1988* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990); Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder’s American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1993), 110–14.

112 Magruder (1996), i, 112; Magruder, McClenaghan and Pearson Education (2011), 135.

113 Frank Abbott Magruder and William A. McClenaghan, *Magruder’s American Government* (Boston, MA: Prentice Hall, 2007), 128–29.

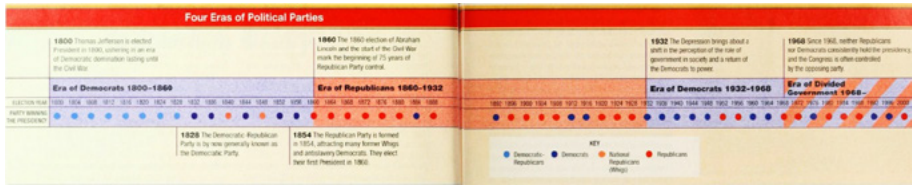


Figure 8. Four eras of political parties. Called a timeline in Frank Abbott Magruder, *Magruder's American Government*, rev. William A. McClenaghan (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 2002), 128–29.



Figure 9. Four eras of political parties. Source: Frank Abbott Magruder and William A. McClenaghan, *Magruder's American Government* (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2009), 134–35.

The replacement of the double timeline of the two major parties by a single in the 2000s took place after the idea that the US had always been a two-party system was cemented in the 1990s. Perhaps the two-party system was now so common sensical that a double timeline seemed superfluous. If it is self-evident that there are only two-party parties, you can conclude who is out of power by looking at who is in power. The double timeline originated in an era where many parties were still relevant, and it developed to give pre-eminence to the two most important of them. However, when the two-party system was firmly established as common sense knowledge and all minor parties were removed, a double timeline did no longer convey more information than a single timeline.

However, by 2016, the entire subchapter on the eras of the party system disappeared, and the image timeline of the party system was replaced by a link to an interactive timeline in the online material.¹¹⁴ This development is probably linked to the increased scepticism towards the US party system revealed in the texts at the same time.

Conclusion

Textbook diagrams played a pivotal role in transforming the idea that the US is a “two-party system” into common-sense knowledge. They did so by providing the concept with a tangible spatial form: the double timeline. It took some time before the idea of a two-party system became a catchphrase in US textbooks. The first edition of Magruder's *American Government* from 1917 warned of one-party dominance and talked about the four leading parties. However, for each edition in the 1920s, increasing focus was placed on Republicans and Democrats, and what became described as the “minor parties” faded into the background. The concept “two-party system” first appeared in 1930, together with the first double timeline diagram. The explanations for why the US have a two-party system have varied. Beginning in 1939, the two-party system was described as particular to English-speaking countries, and it was contrasted

¹¹⁴ Magruder and Shea (2016), 516.

with the chaotic multiparty systems in continental Europe, portrayed as fertile ground for populist dictators. Even after the beginning of the Cold War, European multiparty systems rather than the Soviet one-party system were described as antitheses of the US two-party system. Until the 1980s, the one-party system was also described as part of contemporary US government at the state level.

The link between the two-party system and the English language was replaced by other explanations in the mid-1950s. One, referring to the newly coined Duverger's Law, claimed that the two-party system was a result of the US election system. Another explanation claimed that the system with two more or less similar parties with small ideological differences reflected the homogeneity of the US electorate. With time, the two-party systems old roots also appeared as an explanation: It was there because it always had been. Only in the 2010s was a more critical explanation added: the major parties were issuing legislation that made it difficult for third parties to operate. With time, an increasing number of cracks also appeared in the argument that the US electorate and parties are homogeneous with few ideological differences. Although the 2023 edition of the textbook suggests that the extreme left and right might have taken over the parties, it still supposes that the two-party system will somehow work its magic and produce moderate policies. Thus, the two-party system is no longer seen as a manifestation of the unity of the American people but rather as a Band-Aid for its division.

The minor parties have generally been described positively, and the idea that votes for third parties are wasted never caught on in the textbook. Although not recognised as important political forces by themselves, minor parties have been seen as generators of ideas to be adopted by the major parties. However, after the 1948 election, where the Progressive Party's candidate was supported by communists, a quarter century followed when minor parties were also associated with radicalism and revolution.

In the earliest diagram of the US party system in 1880, Houghton represented it as a chaotic meandering of lines. It was clearly not a diagram of a two-party system or of any orderly system at all. The first diagram of the party system in *Magruder's American Government* appeared in 1930, and the first use of the concept "two-party system" occurred in the legend of that diagram. The diagrams of the two-party system in *Magruder's American Government* are much simpler than that of Houghton. The party histories were mostly represented by straight lines, and although some of the diagrams also followed the trajectories of the minor parties, a clear difference was made between them and the two major parties. This was done through a distinction between thin lines and broad columns, (appealing to the primary metaphor Important is Big), by central location, (Important is Central), by position on top (Control is Up), or through position to the left (where spatial agency bias make us perceive actors as powerful).

While Houghton's diagram was a quantitative data visualisation of voter support for different parties, the textbook diagrams were qualitative representations of the two-party system idea. The diagrams became simplified with time, a development that peaked in the 1990s. Then, no minor parties were represented, and in 1992 the single-party "Era of Good Feeling" in the 1820s was completely eradicated from the diagram.

This was the last step in a gradual establishment of a spatial model of the two-party system where two straight columns lead from the beginning of US history until the present. That this kind of model has for generations been presented in the most commonly used government textbook in the country is likely to have contributed to establishing the US two-party system as common-sense knowledge. In addition,

the spread of seemingly neutral and objective diagrams might have contributed to the establishment of the two-party system as a scientific truth. In this respect, they complemented Duverger's testable hypotheses and Downs's economic calculations.¹¹⁵

The disappearance of timelines of the party system from Magruder occurred in step with the decrease in confidence in the two-party system revealed by the text. Similar diagrams have survived longer in some competing books, such as that of Wilson, DiIulio, Bose, and Levendusky. However, that diagram is found in the chapter "The Rise and Decline of the Political Party," which also tells a story of polarisation and crisis.¹¹⁶

Earlier research on textbooks have mainly focused on texts, while diagrams have often been overlooked, or analysed without help of proper methods. This study has illustrated that conceptual changes are better understood through analysis of the spatial analogies provided by the accompanying diagrams. However, this method requires an understanding of the cognitive principles behind diagram construction.

Acknowledgements

For help with accessing physical books, I am grateful to the personnel at Uppsala University Library, Sweden, the Special collections reading room at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, the American University Library, Washington DC, and the Media & Educational Technology Resources Center as well as the Hunt library at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. I was also helped by digitisation done at my request by the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of South Carolina Libraries, Columbia, SC, the Duke University Libraries, Durham, NC, and the Gutman Collection at Harvard Library, Boston.

This article is an outcome of the project *Figuring politics*, funded by the Swedish National Research Council.

About the author

Janne Holmén is Associate Professor at the Department of Education, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Email: janne.holmen@edu.uu.se

¹¹⁵ Disch (2002), 73–79.

¹¹⁶ James Q. Wilson et al., *American Government: Institutions and Policies* (Boston: Cengage, 2022), 197.

References

- Ahl, Frances N. "Making Civics Graphic." *The Historical Outlook* 22, no. 1 (1931), 27–28.
- Banaszak, Ronald A. "What Happened to *Magruder's American Government*? The Evolution of a Popular Textbook, 1970–1992." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Nashville, TN, November 1993.
- Bird-David, Nurit. "Dis/working with Diagrams: How Genealogies and Maps Obscure Nanoscale Worlds (a Hunter-Gatherer Case)." *Social Analysis* 63, no. 4 (2019), 43–62.
- Brady, Henry E. "The Art of Political Science: Spatial Diagrams as Iconic and Revelatory." *Perspectives on Politics* 9, no. 2 (2011), 311–31.
- Bryce, James. *The American Commonwealth, vol.2: Part III–VI. The Party System—Public Opinion—Illustrations and Reflections—Social Institutions*, revised 3rd ed. London: Macmillan, 1889, 23.
- Candea, Matei. "On Visual Coherence and Visual Excess: Writing, Diagrams, and Anthropological Form." *Social Analysis* 63, no. 4 (2019), 63–88.
- Catley, Kefyn M., and Laura R. Novick. "Seeing the Wood for the Trees: An Analysis of Evolutionary Diagrams in Biology Textbooks." *BioScience* 58, no. 10 (2008), 976–87.
- Chatterjee, Anjan. "Directional Asymmetries in Cognition: What is Left to Write About?" In *Spatial Dimensions of Social Thought*, edited by Anne Maas and Thomas W. Schubert, 189–210. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011.
- Cohn, Elchanan, Sharon Cohn, Donald C. Balch, and James Bradley Jr. "Do Graphs Promote Learning in Principles of Economics?" *The Journal of Economic Education* 32, no. 4 (2001), 299–310.
- Croscup, George E. *United States History with Synchronic Charts Maps and Statistical Diagrams*. New York: Cambridge Book Corporation, [1910] 1915. Cornell University – PJ Mode Collection of Persuasive Cartography. <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343582>.
- Dimmel, Justin K., and Patricio G. Herbst, "The Semiotic Structure of Geometry Diagrams: How Textbook Diagrams Convey Meaning." *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* 46, no. 2 (2015), 147–95.
- Disch, Lisa. *The Tyranny of the Two-Party System*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Douma, Michael J. "How the First Ten Amendments Became the Bill of Rights." *Georgetown Journal of Law & Public Policy* 15, no. 2 (2017), 593–614.
- Englund, Tomas. *Curriculum as a Political Problem: Changing Educational Conceptions, with Special Reference to Citizenship Education*. Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1986.
- Formisano, Ronald P. "Deferential-Participant Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789–1840." *American Political Science Review* 68 (1974), 473–87.
- Foshay, Arthur W. "Textbooks and the Curriculum During the Progressive Era: 1930–1950." In *Textbooks and Schooling in the United States: Eighty-ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Part I*, edited by David L. Elliott and Arthur Woodward, 23–41. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Foshay, Arthur W., and William W. Burton. "Citizenship as the Aim of the Social Studies." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 4, no. 2 (1976), 1–22.
- Gentner, Dedre. "Structure-Mapping: A Theoretical Framework for Analogy." *Cognitive Science* 7, no. 2 (1983), 155–70.

- Hall, Stuart and Alan O'Shea. "Common-Sense Neoliberalism: The Battle over Common Sense is a Central Part of Our Political Life." *Soundings* 55 (2013), 8–24.
- Holmén, Janne, Ann-Sofie Jägerskog, Daniel Schumann, and Malin Tväråna. *Diagrams in Civic Education: Visuospatial Models of Society in Textbooks and Teaching*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024.
- Holmén, Janne. "Flipping the Political Scale: Spatial Cognition and Changes in Diagrammatic Representations of the Swedish Party System in Civics Textbooks, 1900–2020." *Journal of Cognitive Historiography* 8, no: 1–2 (2024), 141–67.
- Holmén, Janne. *A History of Diagrams: Turning Points in the Spatial Representation of Ideas and Information*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming.
- Houghton, Walter R. *Conspectus of the History of Political Parties and the Federal Government*. Indianapolis: Granger, 1880.
- Jacobson, Gary C. *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government: Competition in U.S. House Elections, 1946–1988*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Laponce, Jean A. *Left and Right: The Topography of Political Perceptions*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.
- Latour, Bruno. "Visualization and Cognition: Thinking with Eyes and Hands." *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Science, Past and Present* 6 (1986), 1–40.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott, and Daniel M. Shea. *Magruder's American Government*. Boston, MA: Pearson, 2016.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott, and Daniel M. Shea. *Magruder's American Government*. Paramus, NJ: Savvas Learning, 2023.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott, and William A. McClenaghan. *Magruder's American Government*. Boston, MA: Pearson, 2006.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott, and William A. McClenaghan. *Magruder's American Government*. Boston, MA: Pearson, 2009.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott, and William A. McClenaghan. *Magruder's American Government*. Boston, MA: Prentice Hall, 2007.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott, William A. McClenaghan, and Pearson Education. *American Government*. Boston, MA: Pearson, 2011.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1930.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1934.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1936.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1939.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: A Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1946.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: A Study of Our Democracy at Work*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1951.

- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: With a Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1917.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: With a Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1921.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *American Government: With a Consideration of the Problems of Democracy*. New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1927.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan and John S. Gibson. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1972.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan & John S. Gibson. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1973.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1956.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1961.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1964.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1967.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1977.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1980.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1983.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1985.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1991.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1992.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1993.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Magruder, Frank Abbott. *Magruder's American Government*, revised by William A. McClenaghan. Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 2002.
- Mauch, James W. *Social Mathematics in the Curriculum of American Civics: An Analysis of Selected National and State Standards and of Magruder's American Government*. Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University, 2005.
- Mráz, Mark. "Magruder's American Government: The 1917 and 1993 Editions Compared—A Case Study in Civic Education." *Social Studies Journal* 26 (1997), 48–51.
- Neumann, Richard. "An Analysis of the Treatment of Corporate Influence on Government by United States History and American Government High School Textbooks." *The Social Studies* 105, no. 2 (2014), 57–68.

- Neumann, Richard. "Socialism in High School Social Studies Textbooks." *The Social Studies* 103, no. 1 (2012), 31–38.
- Ortiz, María J. "Primary Metaphors and Monomodal Visual Metaphors." *Journal of Pragmatics* 43, no. 6 (2011), 1568–80.
- Pernau, Margrit, and Dominic Sachsenmaier, edited by *Global Conceptual History: A Reader*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
- Rauer, Valentin. "Isotypische Differenz: Eine serielle Analyse der symbolischen Formen von öffentlichen HIV-Statistiken (1983–2003)." In *Visuelle Stereotype*, edited by Thomas Petersen and Clemens Schwendner, 124–40. Cologne: Halem Verlag, 2009.
- Ray, P. Orman. *An Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913.
- Riker, William H. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 76, no. 4 (1982), 753–66.
- Schulten, Susan. "Charting the Flow of Political Power." *Mapping the Nation*, July 5, 2012. <http://www.mappingthenation.com/blog/charting-the-flow-of-political-power/>.
- Sidgwick, Henry. *The Elements of Politics*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1891.
- Spindt, Herman Adolph, and Frederick Lynne Ryan. *The Foundations of American Government: A Textbook in Civics*. Boston: Heath, 1929.
- Stjernfelt, Frederik. *Diagrammatology: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Phenomenology, Ontology, and Semiotics*. London: Springer, 2007.
- Stockton, Ronald. "The Magruder Textbook of 1923 on American Government: An Early Version of Civic Engagement." Paper presented at APSA 2010 Teaching & Learning Conference, Washington, DC, February 5, 2010, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1548585>.
- Tolleson Rinehart, Sue. "The Mischief of Factions: Political Parties in School Textbooks." Paper presented at the meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 31–August 3, 1979.
- Trent, William P. *War and Civilization*. New York: T.Y. Crowell & Co., 1901.
- Tufte, Edward R. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, 2nd ed. Cheshire: Graphics Press, 2001.
- Wells, Herbert George. *An Englishman Looks at the World*. Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1914.
- West, W. Reed. *American Government*. London: Pitman, 1939.
- Wilson, James Q., John J. DiIulio Jr., Meena Bose, and Matthew Levendusky. *American Government: Institutions and Policies*. Boston: Cengage, 2022.



“The Ideal Dental Health Service for Children:” The Political Development of the Dental Health Service for Children in Denmark, 1960s–1980s

Christian Larsen

Abstract • In 1971, the Danish Parliament passed an act mandating that municipalities establish a Public Dental Health Service for Children, which aimed to provide free preventive and curative dental health services. The Act was part of a longstanding historical progression where school dentists, school doctors, and the provision of school meals, represented a broader movement aimed at reframing perceived social and political issues as educational challenges. This paper examines the political evolution of modern school dental health services within the timeframe of 1966 to 1986. The primary focus of this paper lies in the examination of the political negotiations surrounding the key legislative acts pertaining to school dental health services. Through this scrutiny, this paper aims to illuminate the diverse policy ideas that have exerted significant influence. Therefore, this article adopts the theoretical framework proposed by political scientist Daniel Béland, which conceptualises ideas as historically constructed beliefs and perceptions. To investigate how ideas are incorporated into the political agenda, this paper employs the theoretical model articulated by political scientist John Kingdon with three distinct ‘streams’, which are essential for facilitating the formulation of political decisions.

Keywords • school dental health service, political ideas, educationalisation, privatisation

Introduction

An act passed in 1971 made it obligatory for Danish municipalities to establish a Public Dental Health Service for Children (PDHSC), providing free preventive and curative dental health services from 1972 onwards for pupils in primary schools. The act served as the foundation for a development that, over the past five decades, has witnessed a rise in the proportion of children without cavities from 2% in 1980 to 70% in 2022. Two factors have contributed to this positive trend: the widespread adoption of tooth brushing with fluoride toothpaste and the introduction of free school dental health care services. Despite accessible dental health care services in schools, dental caries remain a societal issue; notably, children from low education backgrounds exhibit significantly poorer dental health compared to those from more families that are affluent.¹ According to the Danish National Health Authority, dental and oral health is regarded as an integral component of overall health and holds significant implications for an individual’s quality of life and functional capacity.² Consequently, the Danish political parties responsible for the 2022 Finance Act, guided by this understanding, decided to provide free dental treatment to individuals aged 18–21.

1 Katrine Rich Madsen et al., *Skolebørnsundersøgelsen 2022: Helbred, trivsel og sundhedsadfærd blandt skoleelever i 5., 7., og 9. klasse i Danmark* (København: Statens Institut for Folkesundhed, SDU, 2023), 108.

2 Sundhedsstyrelsen, *Social ulighed i sundhed og sygdom: Udviklingen i Danmark i perioden 2010–2017* (København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2020), 81.

The 2022 Act is situated within a broader historical trajectory in Denmark, dating back to the 1880s, when the health of children, particularly schoolchildren, gained increasing attention from policymakers and educational authorities. This heightened focus stemmed from the prevailing belief that a healthy physical body is one of the fundamental prerequisites for the development of a sound mind, which in turn is essential for effective education delivery.³ Consequently, there emerged a growing demand for schools to assume a more active role in promoting children's health and wellbeing.⁴ The municipalities responded to these demands by implementing school bathing facilities, the provision of meals for underprivileged schoolchildren, and undertaking the appointment of school doctors (mandated in 1946) and school dentists (mandated in 1972). As noted by British historians Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, the implementation of compulsory health legislation expanded "the powers of the state effectively for the first time over areas of traditional civil liberties in the name of public health."⁵ Austrian historian of education Daniel Tröhler's characterisation of this evolution as "educationalisation" underscores the perception of education as a solution to perceived societal challenges.⁶ Education is seen as a catalyst for modernisation, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and technologies whilst also providing moral guidance to individuals navigating the complexities of modern life.⁷ Similarly, Dutch professor of public education Gert Biesta emphasises the tendency to turn social and political problems into learning problems, and the strong expectation that education can and should radically alter the existing conditions and practices. In that way, pedagogy becomes an active and deliberative intervention in the public sphere.⁸

Academic attention has been devoted to the early phase of school dental health care services, spanning the years from the 1890s to the 1960s, where school dental health care services, along with other components of school medical services, played a central role in addressing health issues amongst underprivileged children as part of the broader

3 Anne Katrine Gjerløff and Anette Faye Jacobsen, *Da skolen blev sat i system: 1850–1920* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2014), 327.

4 Ning de Coninck-Smith, *For barnets skyld: byen, skolen og barndommen 1880–1914* (København: Gyldendal, 2000), 249–90.

5 Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, "The Politics of Prevention: Anti-vaccinationism and Public Health in Nineteenth-Century England," *Medical History* 32, no. 3 (1988), 231.

6 Daniel Tröhler, "The Educationalization of the Modern World: Progress, Passion, and the Protestant Promise of Education," in *Educational Research: The Educationalization of Social Problems*, ed. Peter Smeyers and Marc Depaepe (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 32.

7 Daniel Tröhler, "Educationalization of Social Problems and the Educationalization of the Modern World," in *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 698. Cf. Marc Depaepe, "Educationalisation: A Key Concept in Understanding the Basic Processes in the History of Western Education," *History of Education Review* 27, no. 2 (1998), 16–28; Marc Depaepe and Peter Smeyers, "Educationalization as an Ongoing Modernization Process," *Educational Theory* 58, no. 4 (2008), 379–89; Peter Smeyers and Marc Depaepe, eds., *Educational Research: The Educationalization of Social Problems* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 1–11; David F. Labaree, "The Winning Ways of a Losing Strategy: Educationalizing Social Problems in the United States," *Educational Theory* 58, no. 4 (2008), 447–60. See also Joakim Landahl, "Educationalising Death: The Emergence of Traffic Education in Swedish Elementary Schools," *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 9, no. 2 (2022), 107.

8 Gert Biesta, "Becoming Public: Public Pedagogy, Citizenship and the Public Sphere," *Social & Cultural Geography* 13, no. 7 (2012), 691–93.

process of educationalisation of social problems.⁹ However, little attention has been paid to the more recent 50–60 years of the Public Dental Health Service for Children, despite its significance.¹⁰ This period witnessed the full establishment of the welfare state, resulting in an increased public involvement in citizens' lives, including their health condition and the implementation of preventive health strategies. In Denmark, despite the service becoming mandatory in 1971 and making notable advancements in children's dental health, research in this area remains relatively limited, often without providing a broader contextual understanding or addressing the underlying conflicts between political actors and professionals.¹¹ At the municipal level, publications have emerged from former and current employees of the dental health service, often lacking a broader contextualisation or comparative analysis.¹²

This article, therefore, examines the political debates concerning the evolution of the Public Dental Health Service for children in Denmark from the 1960s to the 1980s, an era widely characterised as the formative phase in the establishment of contemporary public health dental services.¹³ A key milestone during this era was the enactment of

- 9 Coninck-Smith (2000), 256–57, cf Gjerløff and Jacobsen (2014), 329–30; Anne Katrine Gjerløff et al., *Da skolen blev sin egen: 1920–1970* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2014), 232–34. For the United Kingdom, see Stanley Gelbier and Sheila Randall, “Charles Edward Wallis and the Rise of London's School Dental Service,” *Medical History* 26, no. 4 (1982), 395–404; M. M. Gray, “Idle Teeth Get Into Mischief”: The Dental Health of Walsall (UK) School Children 1910–1912 and the Consequent Development of School Dentistry in the Borough,” *Community Dental Health* 6, no. 2 (1989), 153–57; Bernhard Harris, *The Health of the Schoolchild: A History of the School Medical Service in England and Wales* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), 154–55, 177, 190–95; John Welshman, “Dental Health as a Neglected Issue in Medical History: The School Dental Service in England and Wales, 1900–40,” *Medical History* 42, no. 3 (1998), 306–27; Stanley Gelbier, “Dentistry for Pauper and Other Poor Children in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries,” *Dental History* 43 (2006), 43–61. For Sweden, see Nils Bäckmann, Hans Grahnén, and Peter Ollinen, *Tandvård för folket: förhistorien och spelet bakom folktandvårdens tillkomst år 1938* (Umeå: Centraltryckeriet, 1988).
- 10 Anders Hugoson et al., “Caries Prevalence and Distribution in 3–20-year-olds in Jonköping, Sweden, in 1973, 1978, 1983, and 1993,” *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology* 28 (2000), 83–89; Gayle B. McCombs et al., “Dental Hygienists' Contributions to Improving the Nation's Oral Health Through School-based Initiatives from 1970 Through 1999: A Historical Review,” *Journal of Dental Hygiene* 81, no. 2 (2007), 52 (USA 1970–1999); K.M. Milsom, M. Tickle, and A.S. Blinkhorn, “Is School Dental Screening a Political or a Scientific Intervention?” *Journal of Dental Research* 87, no. 10 (2008), 896–99 (United Kingdom 1918–2007); Susan M. Moffat, Lyndie A. Foster Page, and W. Murray Thomson, “New Zealand's School Dental Service over the Decades: Its Response to Social, Political, and Economic Influences, and the Effect on Oral Health Inequalities,” *Frontiers in Public Health* 5 (2016), 1–18 (New Zealand 1905–2015).
- 11 Erik Friis-Hasché, *Child Oral Health Care in Denmark: A Great Success in Health Promotion* (København: Copenhagen University Press, 1994); Brian Larsen, “Organiseringen af den kommunale børnetandpleje: – et valg mellem privat og offentlig,” *Politica* 31, no. 3 (1999), 256–71. Since the completion of this article, memoirs documenting school dentistry in the 1970s and 1980s have been published: Morten Arnika Skydsgaard, and Hanne Fuglsang Nielsen, *Tandbørsten på skoleskemaet* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2025).
- 12 Allerød Kommune, *25 år med Allerød kommunes tandpleje 1963–1988* (Allerød: Social- og sundhedsforvaltningen, 1988); Jørgen Bergmann, *O-huller – tak, Odense Tandpleje 50 år* (Odense: Odense Kommune, 1991); Kurt Hesselgren, *Refleksioner over Frederikssund børnetandplejes resultater 1959–92* (S.n., 1992); Else Svensson, *Svendborg kommunale tandpleje 25 år: Smil i Svendborg* (Svendborg: Svendborg Kommune, 1992); Else Svensson, “Tandpleje gennem tiderne: Kommunal tandpleje i Svendborg 1896–1956: – og et 25 års jubilæum,” *Årbog for Svendborg & Omegns Museum* 1992, 150–57; Birgitte Braa Andersen, “Københavns Kommunes tandpleje fylder 75,” *Indblik* 4 (1998), 20–21; *Brøndby Tandpleje 50 år: tandplejen's historie i Brøndby Kommune 1957–2007* (Brøndby: Brøndby Kommune, 2007); Lene Esmark, *Børnetandplejen på Frederiksberg fylder 100 år: – meget er forandret men grundideerne består!* (Frederiksberg: Frederiksberg Kommune, 2010).
- 13 Larsen (1999), 256.

the 1971 Act, which mandated dental health services for children, the establishment of school dental clinics, alongside the recruitment of dentists and dental assistants, and initiatives such as children rinsing their mouths with fluoride. This article delves into the diverse policy ideas that held substantial sway during the development of school dental health services throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The focus of the article is *not* on the medical or scientific advancements within the field of odontology, nor does it delve into the co-production of science and social order, as this would require a different theoretical approach.¹⁴

By providing the historical backgrounds that have influenced the political evolution of school dental health services, one recognises that educational practices are not only shaped by a contemporary context, as past decisions invariably impact future ones (path dependency).¹⁵ Danish historians Jørn Henrik Petersen and Klaus Petersen posit that this phenomenon can elucidate the persistence of established public welfare provisions and the challenges associated with effecting rapid changes. Once a system is established, deviating from its original trajectory becomes challenging, essentially locking it into a particular path.¹⁶ American sociologist James Mahoney further underscores the significance of the early phases of policymaking, highlighting how the implementation of new initiatives within existing institutional frameworks is influenced by path dependence.¹⁷ By revisiting the political negotiations surrounding the dental health service, this article offers insights into the political trajectories of Danish schooling, from the ideal of education for all, prevalent during the peak of the welfare state in the 1960s, to the enactment of the 1975 School Act amidst budget constraints during the subsequent welfare state crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. By looking at the school dental health services, this article contributes to the scholarly discourse on child health prevention strategies, which emerged as a central political focus area during this period aimed at social justice for all, irrespective of social background. In doing so, the article highlights the ongoing overall educationalisation of social problems within the modern welfare state with an increased focus on prevention and education, emphasising new initiatives regarding diet, exercise, body, and sexuality.¹⁸

Another significant political focal point during the 1970s and 1980s revolved around the parents' choice between private or public dental services. The left-wing parties regarded dental health services as a public good, conceptualised as a resource beneficial for all children, irrespective of their social background.¹⁹ This perspective emphasised the strong role of public institutions in ensuring access to education and healthcare.²⁰

14 For example, Sheila Jasanoff, ed., *States of Knowledge: The Co-production of Science and Social Order* (London: Routledge, 2004); Roger A. Pielke, Jr., *The Honest Broker: Making Sense of Science in Policy and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). I would like to thank one of the two peer reviewers for referring to these works.

15 Johannes Westberg, "What We Can Learn from Studying the Past: The Wonderful Usefulness of History in Educational Research," *Encounters in Theory and History of Education* 22 (2021), 233.

16 Jørn Henrik Petersen and Klaus Petersen, "Dansk velfærdshistorie: Et projekt og dets teoretiske ramme," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 110, no. 1 (2013), 217–20.

17 Brian Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29 (2000), 510–12.

18 Ning de Coninck-Smith, Lisa Rosén Rasmussen, and Iben Vyff, *Da skolen blev alles: Tiden efter 1970* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2015), 239–59.

19 Gerald Grace, "Education: Commodity or Public Good?" *British Journal of Educational Studies* 37, no. 3 (1989), 214.

20 David F. Labaree, "Consuming the Public School," *Educational Theory* 61, no. 4 (2011), 389.

Conversely, right-wing parties tended to perceive education primarily as a commodity subject to market forces (the commodification of education).²¹ With the 1976 liberalisation of the School Dental Act due to financial and practical reasons and the 1982 ascension of a Conservative-led coalition government, policies promoting higher levels of private sector participation and privatisation were introduced. British sociologists Stephen Ball and Deborah Youdell delineate privatisation in education into two primary forms, (a) the privatisation *of* public education, using the private sector to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education, and (b) privatisation *in* public education, with the importing of ideas, techniques and practices from the private sector.²² The 1976 and 1982 changes marked a transition from public-provided school dental health services towards the privatisation *of* public education as municipalities. Later, parents were to opt for private sector involvement (private dentists) to deliver healthcare benefits. Consequently, the political history of school dental health services emerges as an integral component of the development of the past four decades, characterised by privatisation and the commodification of education.²³

Finally, this article contributes to the new social history of education, which explores education *in* society and education *in* culture. This approach emphasises how society shapes education and, in turn, how education shapes society.²⁴ As noted by Swedish historians of education Johannes Westberg and Franziska Primus, this encompasses “not only the richness of discourses, experiences and emotions but also the complexities of economic growth, demographic change and institutional practices.”²⁵ This article explores how school dental health services are planned and perceived, whilst also analysing how the services were implemented amidst the complexities of political thinking, economic recession, and practical challenges.

This article seeks to answer the following research question: How did political ideas of the Public Dental Health Service for Children in Denmark intersect with different political streams during between the 1960s to the 1980s? The article is structured as follows. Firstly, I present the theoretical and methodological considerations and choices. The subsequent sections are organised based on analytically-derived periodisation, which sheds light on the three streams of politics influencing the evolution of school dental health services. The article concludes with a discussion on how school dental health services have contributed to shaping the school's role in the Danish welfare state and what insights this provides regarding the evolution of Danish primary schooling.

21 Grace (1989), 210.

22 Stephen J. Ball and Deborah Youdell, *Hidden Privatisation in Public Education* (Brussels: Education International, 2008), 8–9.

23 Labaree (2011), 389. Stephen J. Ball, “Privatising Education, Privatising Education Policy, Privatising Educational Research: Network Governance and the ‘Competition State,’” *Journal of Education Policy* 24, no. 1 (2009), 83–99; Susanne Wiborg, “Neo-liberalism and Universal State Education: The Cases of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1980–2011,” *Comparative Education* 49, no. 4 (2013), 207; Andy Green, “Education and the State: Whatever Happened to Education as a Public Good?” *Uddannelseshistorie* (2014), 17.

24 Johannes Westberg and Franziska Primus, “Rethinking the History of Education: Considerations for a New Social History of Education,” *Paedagogica Historica* 59, no. 1 (2023), 1–18. Cf. Johannes Westberg, “Combining Global and Local Narratives: A New Social History of the Expansion of Mass Education?” *European Education* 52, no. 3 (2020), 206–14.

25 Westberg and Primus (2023), 7.

Methodological outset

With the focus on how the evolution of the dental health service intersected with various political streams, this article sheds light on the movement and transformation of policy ideas within both political and professional streams. Pivotal actors in this process included central political decision-making bodies, governmental bureaucracies, and Local Government Denmark (*Kommunernes Landsforening*, KL), as well as the Danish Dental Association. Indeed, this study also examines the relationship between politicians and bureaucracy, particularly during the 1980s under the Conservative-led government and the influence of the Liberal Minister of the Interior, Britt Schall Holberg. Her advocacy for managerialist/organisational cultures within the professional public service sector reflects the form of professionalism characterised by commercial awareness, budget-focused management, and entrepreneurship, imposed from above by politicians, as outlined by sociologist Julia Evetts.²⁶ Bureaucratic expertise came under attack as the understanding between politicians and bureaucrats about the knowledge and skills of civil servants was no longer persistent. Danish politicians began employing strategies to alter the dynamics of the expertise to be more in line, either by strengthening greater control over the bureaucracy or by promoting alternative forms of expertise.²⁷

The article explores how political ideas concerning school dental health services have evolved and transformed. As noted by Canadian-US political scientists Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox, ideas play a pivotal role in shaping the understanding of issues and solutions within the realm of politics. They exert an influence by moulding an individuals' perceptions of what constitutes appropriate and legitimate in societal contexts.²⁸ Consequently, the study of policy ideas is important to understanding both the construction of reform imperatives and the content of social legislation.²⁹ However, researchers grapple with elucidating the precise roles that ideas fulfil and how these ideas undergo transformations over time.³⁰ I employ Béland's conception of ideas as an "actors' historically constructed beliefs and perceptions," thus characterising them as narratives that mould an actor's comprehension of an event.³¹ Béland asserts that ideas exert an influence on politics across three levels. Firstly, they are instrumental in framing issues and problems that warrant political attention, e.g., a high prevalence of caries in children. Secondly, ideas may manifest as economic or social presumptions that either validate or challenge prevailing institutions or policies pursued. Thirdly, ideas can be potent instruments in challenging existing institutional configurations and political landscapes, as they possess the potential, with skilful framing, to persuade

26 Julia Evetts, "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World," *International Sociology* 18, no. 2 (2003), 407–8.

27 Johan Christensen, "When Bureaucratic Expertise Comes Under Attack," *Public Administration* 102 (2024), 80.

28 Daniel Béland and Robert H. Cox, "Introduction," in *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, ed. Daniel Béland and Robert H. Cox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

29 Daniel Béland, "Ideas and Social Policy: An Institutional Perspective," *Social Policy Administration* 39, no. 1 (2005), 2.

30 Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008), 305.

31 Daniel Béland, *How Ideas and Institutions Shape the Politics of Public Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 16.

politicians and other stakeholders of the imperative for change.³² The pivotal actors in this article held distinct constructed beliefs and perceptions shaped by historical contexts, influencing their views on the role of education, including children's health services. The Liberals, drawing from principles outlined in the 1849 Constitution and the 1856 Free School Act, prioritised parental freedom of choice within education. In contrast, the Social Democrats underscored the public school's role as a common platform for shaping future citizens, regardless of social background. Local Government Denmark advocated for the constitutional right to manage their affairs independently whilst remaining under state supervision.

This article explores how ideas exerted an influence on the political agenda, identifying when potential policy windows for political action on specific issues arose. Therefore, this article draws theoretical inspiration from American political scientist John Kingdon's multiple-streams model, which consists of the problem stream, the solution stream, and the political stream.³³ Kingdon's streams are useful to highlight how the simultaneous alignment of these three streams is crucial for driving actual policy change within a specific field, such as dental caries in children. The problem stream encompasses the identification of issues deemed significant by bureaucrats, politicians, etc., through statistical indicators, or due to feedback effects from previously enacted policies (creating path dependencies). In the case of this article, the problem stream is represented by the lack of school dental health services in rural areas, which has socio-economic implications. The solution stream, also known as the policy stream in Kingdon's framework, brings together experts from academic institutions, in this study The Royal Dental School, government bodies, and interest groups such as Local Government Denmark and the Danish Dental Association. In this stream, experts engage in a dialogical process, wherein policy ideas are shaped and potential solutions are framed. What transpires in the policy stream plays a pivotal role in determining policy outcomes in the political stream, depending, amongst other things, on the pressures exerted by interest groups and the perceived state of public opinion when politicians seek to legitimise their policy agendas. When these three streams operate in synchrony, they create what Kingdon refers to as a "policy window." This temporal opening presents the ideal conditions for political decision-making and the potential resolution of a specific problem, e.g., a school dental health act or the liberalisation of previous provisions.³⁴

This article thus delves into the intricate connections between policy, economics (finance), and professionalism within the political decision-making process. Economic considerations, for instance, played a pivotal role in both the solution and political streams, influencing the development of school dental health services. This interweaving of elements underscores the article's approach as a "histoire croisée" by examining "des liens, matérialisés dans la sphère sociale ou simplement projetés, entre différentes

³² Ibid., 17.

³³ John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984; 2nd ed., 2014).

³⁴ Kingdon (2014); Béland (2005), 6–11.

formations historiquement constituées.”³⁵ Consequently, the focal points of research are “ne sont pas seulement considérés les uns par rapport aux autres, mais également les uns à travers les autres, en termes de relations, d’interactions, de circulation.”³⁶

As a researcher, one is encouraged to continuously reflect on what one brings to the archives, whilst also remaining open to the questions, interpretations, theoretical insights, and analytical perspectives that emerged during the intra-actions with materials.³⁷ In order to understand the three streams and their interactions, this article is based on case files from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health (established in 1987 as an outgrowth of the Ministry of Interior’s Health Department) and the National Health Authority. Additionally, parliamentary debates and the findings of commission reports constitute a vital part of this study. Reports and papers constitute the foundation for the problem stream, whereas case files represent the solution (policy) stream. The political stream is documented through an examination of policy papers and parliamentary debates. Regarding the research design, source-critical methods were employed to address the specific research questions and to analyse and interpret past worlds in ways pertinent to the article’s objectives, knowing that these methods respond to specific inquiries and agendas.³⁸

School dental care and the emergence of the Danish welfare state

The first decades of the 20th century were characterised by the municipal movement, which viewed the municipality as the optimal setting for implementing significant socioeconomic changes without challenging the political ideology or legal framework of the respective country.³⁹ In Denmark, the Social Democratic Party embraced the concept of “municipal socialism.” In municipalities where the party secured a majority, a series of social reforms were implemented; these reforms encompassed initiatives such as free schooling, the provision of school dentists, school doctors, and school meals.⁴⁰ Some of these reforms were a continuation of the Danish school hygiene movement, which gained prominence around 1880. By the end of the nineteenth century, social hygiene was viewed as a topic of great importance, as the health of children was

35 Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Penser l’histoire croisée: entre empirie et réflexivité,” *Annales* 58, no. 1 (2003), 8. Cf. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2006), 30–50. Translation: “links, materialized in the social sphere or simply projected, between different historically constituted formations.”

36 Werner and Zimmermann (2003), 15–16. Translation: “are not only considered in relation to each other, but also through each other, in terms of relationships, interactions, circulation.”

37 Maria Tamboukou, “Archival Research: Unravelling Space/Time/Matter Entanglements and Fragments,” *Qualitative Research* 14, no. 5 (2014), 617–33; Maria Tamboukou, “Feeling Narrative in the Archive: The Question of Serendipity,” *Qualitative Research* 16, no. 2 (2016), 151–66.

38 Peter Edelberg and Dorthe Gert Simonsen, “Changing the Subject: Epistemologies of Scandinavian source criticism,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 40, no. 2 (2015), 232.

39 Patrizia Dogliani, “European Municipalism in the First Half of the Twentieth Century: The Socialist Network,” *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 4 (2002), 573–96.

40 Søren Kolstrup, *Velfærdsstatens rødder: fra kommunesocialisme til folkepension* (København: Selskabet til Forskning i Arbejderbevægelsens Historie, 1996), 55–67.

of particular concern, as they are the future citizens of the nation.⁴¹ In Denmark, city municipalities, such as Svendborg in 1896 and Esbjerg in 1909, took the pioneering step of establishing organised dental health services for children.⁴² By 1966, there were school dental clinics across 217 out of 1,098 municipalities; the majority of rural municipalities offering dental health services were concentrated within the Greater Copenhagen Region where rural areas had transformed into suburbs.⁴³ A similar trajectory of development unfolded in the Nordic countries and various parts of the Western world. In Sweden, the responsibility for organising public dental services for both children and adults started in 1938; in Norway, Parliament mandated free dental health services for all schoolchildren in 1917.⁴⁴

The evolution of the Danish welfare state was deeply intertwined with the broader international economic growth experienced in the 1950s and 1960s. In Denmark, a significant portion of resources was directed towards the public sector, as the Social Democratic Party (in power 1953–1968, 1971–1973, and 1975–1982) actively pursued their vision for an equitable society through the implementation of a welfare state. Elevated social entitlements and opportunities, coupled with a heightened emphasis on social and gender equality, emerged as central themes. Social expenditure, measured as a percentage of gross factor income, saw a significant rise from 11% in 1964/65 to 21% by 1973/74. Additionally, the share of individuals employed within the public service sector more than doubled, increasing from 9.8% in 1950 to 20.5% in 1970.⁴⁵ In Denmark, during the 1960s, there was a noticeable emergence of a technocratic expert culture characterised by a strong emphasis on rationality, efficiency, and planning within political parties, particularly in the solution and political streams. A notable transformation occurred marked by the increased infusion of scientific principles into social policy, accompanied by its depoliticisation and the emergence of an “ideology of objectivity.”⁴⁶ Within the health sector, there was a notable political shift towards prevention in the solution stream, leading Denmark and many Western countries to transition from a predominantly treatment-oriented approach to one that prioritised preventive measures. This transition aligns with the concept of the “New Public Health,” a term coined by sociologists Alan Petersen and Deborah Lupton in 1996, linking lifestyle-related diseases to various aspects of human behaviour, including unhealthy dietary habits and a lack of physical activity.⁴⁷ In Denmark, this shift led to renewed

41 Ana Fumurescu, “Nurturing a ‘Great Social Organism’: School Hygiene, Body Politics, and the State in Late Imperial Russia,” *History of Education Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2022), 61; Richard A. Meckel, *Classrooms and Clinics: Urban Schools and the Protection and Promotion of Child Health, 1870–1930* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

42 Gjerløff and Jacobsen (2014), 329–30.

43 *Betænkning om offentlig forebyggende børnetandpleje* (København: Statens Trykningskontor, 1966), 11–12.

44 *Betænkning* (1966), 13–16. Eeva Widström et al., “Systems for Provision of Oral Health Care in the Nordic Countries,” *Tandlægebladet* 119, no. 9 (2015), 704.

45 Jørn Henrik Petersen, Klaus Petersen, and Niels Finn Christiansen, eds., *Velfærdsstatens storhedstid: Dansk Velfærds historie: Bind IV: Perioden 1956–1973* (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2012), 11–49.

46 Petersen, Petersen, and Christiansen (2012), 25–33.

47 Lars Thorup Larsen, “The Birth of Lifestyle Politics: The Biopolitical Management of Lifestyle Diseases in the United States and Denmark,” in *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, ed. U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann, and T. Lenke (New York, London: Routledge, 2010), 201.

attention to prevention and public health policies in the solution stream, with official reports and programs reflecting a greater focus on these areas.⁴⁸

The initial policy window: From School Dental Commission to School Dental Act (the 1960s)

This transition towards a prevention-oriented approach was also evident in the field of school dental health services, both in Denmark and across the globe.⁴⁹ This coincided with the breakthrough of the welfare state in the late 1950s and 1960s, including major educational reforms aimed at fostering the holistic development of children. Central to these reforms was the idea that all children should have the opportunity to grow up as harmonious, happy, and virtuous individuals.⁵⁰ However, it was an important prerequisite for harmonious and happy children that the health status of the children was good.

In the late 1950s, the provision of dental health services for schoolchildren by private practising dentists faced discontinuation due to disputes over payment between the Danish Dental Association and municipal authorities. This problem stream constituted the background for the creation of the School Health Service Commission by the Ministry of the Interior in 1959.⁵¹ The commission served as a platform to address the issues surrounding dental health services for schoolchildren. It brought together a diverse group of stakeholders representing the solution (policy) stream, including experts from academic institutions such as the Royal Dental School, governmental agencies like the National Health Authority and the Ministry of Education, as well as interest groups such as associations from the municipalities and the Danish Dental Association. The commission identified caries as a significant issue affecting both children and adults, forming a crucial component of the problem stream. Caries, or dental decay, was found to be highly prevalent, with notable regional variations. For example, in the southern region of Denmark, caries affected approximately 23.8% of the population, whilst in northern Jutland, this figure was significantly higher at 47.4%. In addition to caries, the commission also highlighted other dental issues prevalent amongst children. A significant proportion, ranging from 25% to 50%, exhibited dental problems related to tooth position and secondary developmental anomalies.⁵²

In the solution stream, the commission proposed the establishment of a free public dental health service for children. The aim was to prevent “dental diseases to the greatest extent possible” amongst children, recognising that dental diseases could not be entirely eradicated. Furthermore, the aim was “to provide conservative treatment to maintain optimal oral function, whether it pertained to their deciduous or permanent teeth; as well, to prevent the consequences of dental diseases beyond the dental system alone in the surrounding jaws, organs, tissues, and the overall health of the individual.”⁵³ The envisioned solution encompassed three primary components. *Firstly*, free dental health services for children aged 0–6. This included conducting clinical

48 Signild Vallgård, *Folkesundhed som politik: Danmark og Sverige fra 1930 til i dag* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2004), 119.

49 McCombs et al. (2007), 2; Milsom, Tickle, and Blinkhorn (2008), 896.

50 Ida Juul, “Den danske velfærdsstat og uddannelsespolitikken,” *Uddannelseshistorie* (2006), 80.

51 *Betænkning* (1966), 5.

52 *Ibid.*, 20–33.

53 *Ibid.*, 51.

examinations and treatment, including educational activities. The *second* component extended dental health services to children between the ages of 7 and 14, as this age group would receive more frequent clinical examinations and treatment. Similar to the approach for younger children, lectures and films would be integrated into parental meetings to help raise awareness about oral health. *Thirdly*, the commission emphasised the importance of continuity in dental health services beyond the school years to ensure that young people continued to receive necessary dental care.⁵⁴ In addition, the commission recommended the fluoridation of drinking water as a preventive measure to improve dental health outcomes, a topic that would become the subject of considerable debate in Denmark during the 1970s due to differing views on the potential benefits and risks.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the commission underscored the importance of providing education and guidance in diet planning, with a particular focus on reducing the excessive consumption of sweets. This included imposing tax increases on sugary products and implementing restrictions on the sale of such items in close proximity to schools, in order to change the lifestyles of children (and their parents), using the school dental services as a way of educating on social problems.⁵⁶

The commission proposed that all municipalities were to introduce children's dental health services to ensure equitable access to dental care. As a majority of the country's municipalities voluntarily had already taken responsibility for the school dental care system, it becomes challenging to deviate from its original starting point. Thus, path dependency underscores the importance of the early phases of policymaking, e.g., voluntary school dental health services, as transitions to new policies occur within the context of previous decisions and historical developments.⁵⁷ The full implemen-

54 Ibid., 50–57.

55 See The Danish Environmental Agency (DNA), casefiles 1972–1975, casefile 1973/231–36, casefiles 1975–1983, casefile 25073–3 and casefile 25073–8. There is an extensive literature on the anti-fluoridation movement. For Sweden, see Jonatan Samuelsson, “The State of Tooth Decay: Dental Knowledge, Medical Policy and Fluoridation in Sweden, 1952–1962,” in *Cultures of Oral Health: Discourses, Practices and Theory*, ed. C.L. Jones and B. Gibson (London: Routledge, 2022), 204–21. For the United Kingdom, see Amy C. Whipple, “‘Into Every Home, Into Every Body’: Organicism and Anti-Statism in the British Anti-Fluoridation Movement, 1952–1960,” *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 3 (2010), 330–49. For the USA, see Brian Martin, *Scientific Knowledge in Controversy: The Social Dynamics of the Fluoridation Debate* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991); Gretchen Ann Reilly, *This Poisoning of Our Drinking Water: The American Fluoridation Controversy in Historical Context, 1950–1990*, PhD diss., George Washington University, 2001; Greg Field, “Flushing Poisons from the Body Politic: The Fluoride Controversy and American Political Culture, 1955–1965,” in *The Sixties Revisited*, edited by J. Heideking, J. Helbig, and A. Ortlepp (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2001), 469–85; R. Allan Freeze and Jay H. Lehr, *The Fluoride Wars: How a Modest Public Health Measure Became America's Longest-Running Political Melodrama* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2009); Amy Picard, “Behind the Fluorine Curtain,” in *Making the American Mouth: Dentists and Public Health in the Twentieth Century*, edited by A. Picard (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 117–40; Cathrine Carstairs, “Debating Water Fluoridation Before Dr. Strangelove,” *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 8 (2015), 1559–69; Frank Zelko, “Optimizing Nature: Invoking the ‘Natural’ in the Struggle over Water Fluoridation,” *History of Science* 57, no. 4 (2019), 518–39. For Canada, see Cathrine Carstairs and Rachel Elder, “Expertise, Health, and Popular Opinion: Debating Water Fluoridation, 1945–80,” *Canadian Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (2008), 345–71. For New Zealand, see Jill Wrapson, “Artificial Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies in New Zealand: ‘Magic Bullet,’ ‘Rat Poison,’ or Communist Plot?” *Health and History* 7, no. 2 (2005), 17–29; H. F. Akers, “Collaboration, Vision and Reality: Water Fluoridation in New Zealand (1952–1968),” *New Zealand Dental Journal* 104, no. 4 (2008), 127–33.

56 *Betænkning* (1966), 42.

57 Mahoney (2000), 510–12.

tation of the ideal dental health service was estimated to be approximately 28 million Danish Kroner (DKK) initially, equivalent to 39 million Euro in 2022 currency. This figure was expected to increase to 55 million DKK or 78 million Euros in 2022 terms. Additionally, accommodating the expansion in services necessitated a considerable increase in staff, with the school dental workforce needing to more than double from 1,465 employees to 2,890. Given these challenges, practical and financial considerations began to take precedence over the initial health ideals. As a result, in the first year, the service would be introduced solely at the first-grade level in schools, gradually expanding to encompass additional grades in subsequent years until full coverage was achieved over a 10-year period. To address potential challenges, for instance, a shortage of dentists, the Ministry of the Interior was to have the authority to grant municipalities dispensation to engage private practice dentists for a limited duration to supplement the public dental health service.⁵⁸

The introduction of the bill was delayed due to concerns related to the impending municipal reform scheduled to take effect on April 1, 1970. There were apprehensions about whether all municipalities would be able to effectively assume the responsibility for implementing the new dental health service. As a result of these concerns, the School Dental Health Bill was not laid before Parliament until the Spring of 1971.⁵⁹ The bill was heavily influenced by the recommendations outlined in the 1966 report and represented the political stream. The primary objective of this bill was “to promote the health of the population and to prevent diseases” through the implementation of a free Public Dental Health Service for Children.⁶⁰ However, despite the increased financial stability of municipalities following the 1970 reform, many smaller municipalities lacked the necessary administrative and financial infrastructure to support comprehensive dental health services. Due to these economic and practical constraints, the initial focus of the Dental Health Service was directed towards children of compulsory school age, specifically between 7 and 14 years old. Expansion to include children aged 15 and 16 was anticipated with the extension of compulsory education. No compulsory dental health services were initially introduced for younger children (aged 0–6), as the strategy prioritised monitoring the progress of school-age children before considering expansion to younger age groups.⁶¹ Simultaneously, the implementation of the digital SCOR system, initiated by the National Health Authority, played a crucial role in monitoring the oral health of children across all municipalities.⁶² The expansion of the Dental Health Service for Children was entrusted to the municipalities, offering them autonomy in determining the specifics of clinic locations and establishment methods. Rather than prescribing specific guidelines, the act served as a framework, allowing municipalities to tailor their approaches based on local needs and circumstances. County councils were empowered to grant exemptions to municipalities facing unique challenges, such as a scarcity of dentists. These exemptions allowed them to

58 *Betænkning* (1966), 58–83.

59 *Folketings Tidende* 1970/71 (København: Schultz, 1971), Appendix A, 2817–18.

60 *Ibid.*, 2822.

61 *Ibid.*, 2822–25.

62 Sundhedsstyrelsen, *Børnetandplejen i Danmark. 1983/84 og 1984/85: Redegørelse vedrørende revision af børnetandplejens indberetningssystem (SCOR)* (København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1986), 20–22, 28–29.

cover the cost of children's dental health services at private practising dentists. These municipalities were referred to as "dispensation municipalities."

The bill passed through Parliament largely unchanged, despite calls from left-leaning parties to extend the coverage to children as young as 3 years old and to expedite the phase-in process. The Left Socialists stressed the importance of extending efforts beyond the school premises, suggesting restrictions on the placement of ice cream vendors and confectionary establishments near schools.⁶³ Despite these proposals, the Act received Royal Assent in May 1971 and came into effect in August 1972. The passage was a culmination of various factors converging within the problem stream (the widespread prevalence of dental caries amongst children), the solution, and the political stream (the 1966 Commission report and discussions in Parliament). The alignment of these streams created a policy window, providing an opportune moment for the enactment of the legislation, however with a more limited solution than originally intended. Municipalities were tasked with carrying out the provisions of the act; however, they encountered practical difficulties and financial constraints.

Second policy window: Financial reductions and general dispensations (the 1970s)

The early 1970s marked a turning point for the Danish welfare state. The first oil shock of 1973–1974 resulted in widespread unemployment and negative trends in the balance of payments.⁶⁴ Additionally, the structural changes of the 1950s and 1960s fuelled frustration amongst a considerable portion of the population. Many began to question the legitimacy of the welfare state model, framing their criticisms as elite criticism. Therefore, the parliamentary election in December 1973 ushered in the rise of new political parties, including a right-wing populist anti-tax party.⁶⁵

In Denmark, the government formed a group tasked with identifying cost reductions in 1972, led by Per Hækkerup, the prominent Social Democratic Minister of Economy and Budget.⁶⁶ Around the same time, Local Government Denmark (KL) began expressing concerns about the increasing demands placed on municipalities.⁶⁷ The problem streams, including the economic challenges and concerns raised by KL, set the stage for the solutions proposed by Egon Jensen, Minister of the Interior, in his response to KL. Initially, he promised not to burden municipalities with additional tasks.⁶⁸ However, when the National Health Authority issued guidelines for SCOR reporting without consulting KL, KL voiced their concerns directly to Hækkerup regarding the perceived burden of numerous new state requirements, singling out

63 *Folketingsstidende* 1970/71, Forhandlingerne, 5067–70.

64 Niels Kærgård, "The Danish Economy, 1973–2009: From National Welfare State to International Market Economy," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 49, no. 2 (2024), 242, 247–50.

65 Niklas Olsen, "Welfare State Criticism as Elite Criticism in 1970s Denmark," in *Histories of Knowledge in Postwar Scandinavia: Actors, Arenas, and Aspirations*, ed. Niklas Olsen, Johan Östling, and David Larsson Heidenblad (London: Routledge, 2020), 112.

66 Thorsten Boring Olesen, *De danske ministerier 1972–1993: Del 1: Anker Jørgensens tid 1972–1982* (København: Gad, 2017), 28. Petersen, Petersen, and Christiansen (2012), 17, 34.

67 Letter from Minister Per Hækkerup to Minister Egon Jensen, June 29, 1972, DNA, The Ministry of the Interior, casefiles 1968–1972, casefile 1972/020-13 I.

68 Letter from Minister Egon Jensen to Minister Per Hækkerup, September 6, 1972, DNA, the Ministry of Finance, the Budget Department's Budgetary Office, casefiles (BO-sager) 1966–1973, casefile 1972/6050.

the Public Dental Health Service. Therefore, Jensen had to implement a dispensation scheme, particularly regarding regulations related to the construction and interior design of school dental clinics to alleviate the burden on municipalities.⁶⁹ Although the SCOR reporting requirements remained unchanged, municipalities were granted an extension until the end of 1977, when the act was scheduled for revision, for the establishment of dental clinics.⁷⁰ KL's protests and the subsequent introduction of a dispensation scheme had a notable impact on the establishment of clinics. Amongst the municipalities that had requested an extension until the end of 1977 ("dispensation municipalities"), a substantial portion were located in West Jutland, where dental health issues amongst children were particularly acute.⁷¹ In these areas, clinics were predominantly established in the city municipalities with greater financial resources.⁷² The political composition of municipalities also played a significant role in determining their approach to establishing dental clinics or choosing a private solution. Amongst the municipalities granted dispensation, a majority (51 out of 76) had a mayor from the Liberals or a conservative party.⁷³

The debate over "clinic municipalities" versus "dispensation municipalities" held significance within the solution and political streams in subsequent years. In 1975, the Liberals (to which many mayors in dispensation municipalities belonged) proposed extending the dispensation scheme indefinitely as a part of the solution stream. According to the party, the problem stream consisted of the financial burden and practical challenges faced by smaller municipalities in establishing and operating clinics. Additionally, implementing the act's requirements for a fully developed service would lead to the public sector taking over such a substantial portion of the private dental market that many dentists would have had to close their clinics.⁷⁴ The proposal to continue the dispensation scheme as a policy window reflected the ideological orientation towards the privatisation of public education and the commodification of public services. The rejection of the proposal by both the Social Democratic government and other conservative parties reflected a perspective that views school dental services, regardless of individual socioeconomic status, as a public good rather than as a commodity. They also feared that it would undermine the progress of the Public Dental Health Service, emphasising the role of public institutions in ensuring equitable access to education

69 Letter from KL to the Danish Health Authority, October 18, 1972, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, casefiles 1968–1972, casefile 1972/020-13 II. - Memorandum from the Minister of Economics and Budget to the Minister for Housing, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister for Social Affairs, the Minister of Culture and the Minister for Education, November 8, 1972, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, casefiles 1968–1972, casefile 1972/020-13 II.

70 Circular Letter, February 28, 1973, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, casefiles 1968–1972, casefile 1972/020-13 II.

71 Erik Randers Hansen, "Den kommunale børnetandplejes omfang og struktur 1. oktober 1973," *Tandlægebladet* 78 (1974), 147–50.

72 Jens Heidmann and Erik Randers Hansen, "Den kommunale børnetandplejes omfang, struktur og udbygning med klinikker i 1977/78," *Tandlægebladet* 83 (1979), 243–44.

73 Lene Skak-Iversen and Erik Randers Hansen, "Børnetandplejens omfang og struktur i skoleåret 1978–79," *Tandlægebladet* 84 (1980), 187; A. Lund-Sørensen, S.E. Skydt, and H. Roland Hansen, eds., *Kommunal håndbog 1978–79* (København: Mostrup, 1978). See also Larsen (1999), 264, for the period 1972–1986.

74 *Folketingstidende* 1975/76 (København: Schultz, 1976), Appendix A, 2317–18; *Folketingstidende* 1975/76, *Forhandlingerne*, 3260–61.

and healthcare.⁷⁵ Setting a deadline for the end of 1981 was a compromise measure to address the issue of whether to continue with the dispensation scheme, providing a rationale for postponing a definitive decision.⁷⁶

The political stream within the Ministry of the Interior was aimed at establishing municipal responsibility for children aged 0–16, ensuring that those in the 79 municipalities lacking dental health services at municipal clinics would also have access to treatment, thus eliminating differences in the legal status of children.⁷⁷ However, the revised act, passed in 1977, only included provisions for the gradual inclusion of children under school age due to financial and practical constraints.⁷⁸ Whilst the 1976 amendment received support from liberal-conservative parties, they voted against the 1977 Act. For these parties, the principal concern had shifted to ensuring the parents' freedom to choose between a municipal clinic or a private dentist, thus transforming school dental services into a commodity.⁷⁹

In 1980, a similar situation arose when the 1977 dispensation scheme had to be revised. The Social Democratic government maintained its principled stance on dental health services for children as a public good, citing the lower caries incidence and lower operating costs in clinic municipalities compared to those under dispensation.⁸⁰ However, during the mid-1970s, there was a significant decline in the public sector balance, which necessitated greater public cuts to address the rising expenditures in various areas.⁸¹ Economic considerations took precedence over health ideals as fiscal restraint became a priority over health considerations. During the parliamentary debate, the Social Democratic Government and the conservative-liberal parties clashed over the government's calculations regarding the superiority of clinic municipalities, as it challenged the views of the liberal-conservative parties who advocated for the privatisation of education as part of the solution stream and a proper aspect of the political stream.⁸² Within the Danish Dental Association, there was unrest as the subsection representing private practising dentists (PTO) supported the liberal-conservative parties,⁸³ as PTO members earned a livelihood by providing dental services to municipalities. Under pressure and facing opposition from other political parties, the Social Democratic government agreed to extend the expiration of the dispensation

75 *Folketingstidende* 1975/76, Forhandlingerne, 6675–714.

76 *Folketingstidende* 1975/76, Appendix C, 743.

77 Memorandums for the Minister, February 10, 1977, and June 20, 1977, and 1st bill draft, June 3, 1977, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1973–1977, casefile 1977/51230–53. *Folketingstidende* 1977/78 (København: Schultz, 1978), Appendix A, 299–304.

78 Act no. 608, December 12, 1977, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1973–1977, casefile 1977/51230–53.

79 *Folketingstidende* 1977/78, Forhandlingerne, 455–67. *Folketingstidende* 1977/78, Appendix B, 39–41.

80 *Folketingstidende* 1979/80, 2. samling (København: Schultz, 1980), Appendix A, 2875–80.

81 Jørn Henrik Petersen, Klaus Petersen, and Niels Finn Christiansen, eds., *Velfærdsstaten i tidehverv: Dansk velfærdshistorie: Bind V: 1973–1993* (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2013), 23–38.

82 14 questions from the Parliament's Committee on Municipality Affairs to the Minister of the Interior, March 27, 1980, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1978–1982, casefile 1979/5250–14.

83 Letter from the Practising Dentists' Organisation (PTO) to the Parliament's Committee on Municipality Affairs, March 16, 1980, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1978–1982, casefile 1979/5250–14.

scheme until the Act's revision in 1986.⁸⁴ What had initially been a temporary emergency measure during the implementation phase in the early 1970s now became, in reality, a permanent part of children's dental health services as a form of privatisation within education. Additionally, the Ministry announced that reasons beyond purely economic considerations could justify a municipality being granted a dispensation, e.g., if a municipality wished to be a "dispensation municipality" for ideological and/or local reasons.⁸⁵

Despite the 1971 Act's aim to establish clinics under municipal management as a public good, the establishment of municipal clinics stopped around 1980.⁸⁶ This development contributed to the differences in the prevalence of dental diseases amongst children, owing to the varying rates of expansion of children's health services across Denmark.⁸⁷ This disparity impacted children from low-income households. Indeed, a 1976 government report underscored the close correlation between the family's social conditions and the pattern of dental disease amongst children. Children of workers and of clerks with shorter educations had twice as many decayed tooth surfaces as children from socially more advantaged backgrounds (further detailed below).⁸⁸ However, the political discussions in the following decade revolved around liberalisation and privatisation, with a particular emphasis on economic savings.

Third policy window: The liberal paradigm shift (the 1980s)

In 1982, the long-standing Social Democratic government, which had been in power 1953–1968, 1971–1973, and 1975–1982, stepped down and a new Conservative–Liberal government took office, ruling for the next 11 years. This led to what has been called a paradigm shift in politics.⁸⁹ This new government had two main objectives. Firstly, to revive the Danish economy through budgetary reductions and a stringent expenditure policy.⁹⁰ Secondly, to modernise and rejuvenate the public sector, including granting citizens the freedom to choose their public services, framing public services as commodities.⁹¹ Under the new government, bureaucratic expertise came under scrutiny. In both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior, there were initiatives aimed at introducing new approaches to decision-making and policy formulation in the solution and political streams. In the Ministry of Education, Bertel Haarder endeavoured to reduce the concentration of power in centralised government

84 Memorandums for the Minister, April 10, 1980, April 16, 1980, and April 17, 1980, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1978–1982, casefile 1979/5250-14.

85 Letter from the Ministry of the Interior to the Danish municipalities, July 12, 1980, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1978–1982, casefile 1979/5250-14.

86 Larsen (1999), 261–62.

87 Sundhedsstyrelsen (1983), 52. Cf. Friis-Hasché (1994), 41–42.

88 *Betænkning om befolkningens tandsundhedsstatus og tandlægevæsenet: afgivet af en af Sundhedsstyrelsen nedsat embedsmandsgruppe vedrørende tandlægevæsenet* (København: Statens trykningskontor, 1976), 19.

89 Hans Henrik H. Østergaard, *At tjene og forme den nye tid: Finansministeriet 1848–1998* (København: Finansministeriet, 1998), 313.

90 Østergaard (1998), 380.

91 Petersen, Petersen, and Christiansen (2013), 45–47, 79, 123; Finansministeriet, *Den offentlige sektor 1982–1992* (København: Finansministeriet, 1992), 14–18. See also Jesper Vestermærk Køber and Niklas Olsen, "Privatizing the Welfare State: Danish Libertarianism from the 1980s to the 2000s," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 28, no. 3 (2023), 356–57.

and increase market-orientation by giving greater power to the users of education.⁹² This was aimed at a privatisation of public education, using the private sector to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education, as framed by Ball and Youdell.⁹³

For the Ministry of the Interior, reducing overall public expenditure became a priority for Britta Schall Holberg, the new Liberal Minister, in order to implement financial reductions in the general subsidy to municipalities.⁹⁴ During the period from 1966 to 1983, there was a significant decline in the number of children in Denmark, as well as in other countries.⁹⁵ Additionally, the 1971 Act had a notable impact on the improvement of children's dental health.⁹⁶ In response to these factors, Schall Holberg encouraged the municipalities to reduce the per-child expenditure in school dental health services as part of the solution stream to manage costs.⁹⁷ The establishment of the ATFO committee in early 1984 marked a proactive approach to address the upcoming revision of the Children's Dental Act in the 1985/86 Parliament session. As part of the problem stream, she highlighted the changing landscape, including improved dental health and a projected decrease in the number of children. Therefore, the committee was tasked with providing proposals for changes that would ensure the continuation of the positive health outcomes achieved thus far, whilst also accommodating financial reductions. A key aspect of this approach was to reallocate funds from children's dental health services to funding dental health services for the entire population.⁹⁸ The Finance Ministry also highlighted the need for harmonisation and more efficient resource utilisation to align with the broader goals of reducing public spending.⁹⁹

The committee, comprising of government officials, the National Health Board, experts, and the Danish Dental Association, played a pivotal role by harnessing diverse expertise to propose revisions to the dental health service system. Rooted in the vision of promoting lifelong oral health and wellbeing, the committee articulated the recognition of the intrinsic link between oral health and overall physical, psychological, and social wellbeing.¹⁰⁰ To operationalise this vision, the committee established specific targets tailored to different age groups. For instance, for 5–6-year-olds, one of the targets sets was that at least 90% of children should be free from caries, with no more than 5% experiencing caries in 1–3 milk teeth.¹⁰¹ In their report from 1985, the committee presented several models for the future organisation of dental health

92 Wiborg (2013), 417.

93 Ball and Youdell (2008), 8–9.

94 Niels Wium Olesen, *De danske ministerier 1972–1993: Poul Schlüters tid 1982–1993* (København: Gad, 2019), 81–86.

95 Larsen (1999), 261. Sundhedsstyrelsen, *Børnetandpleje i Danmark 1980–81 og 1981–82: status og udviklingslinjer* (København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1983), 53–54.

96 Sundhedsstyrelsen, *Børne- og ungdomstandplejen i Danmark: 1988* (København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1989), 68–70.

97 Indenrigsministeriet, *Aftaler og henstillinger vedr. den kommunale økonomi i 80'erne* (København: Statens Informationstjeneste, 1989), 140, 150–53.

98 Sundhedsstyrelsen, *Modeller for en fremtidig tandsundhedspolitik: Redegørelse fra arbejdsgruppen vedrørende tandplejens fremtidige organisation (ATFO)* (København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1985), 7–16.

99 Memorandums from the Budget Department, January 1, 1984, and February 6, 1984, DNA, The Danish Health Authority, casefiles 1982–1992, casefile 1985/1400-31.

100 Sundhedsstyrelsen (1985), 16–17.

101 Ibid., 16–18.

services. Whilst the committee reached a consensus for treating clinic municipalities and dispensation municipalities equally, thus abolishing the dispensation scheme, they grappled with the differing opinions regarding the preferred model for the revised system. The majority of the committee endorsed a model advocating for the inclusion of all children under the age of 18, along with nursing home residents and individuals with reduced mobility, allocating approximately 125 million DKK for adults. In contrast, the Ministry of the Interior supported the existing solution, which covered all children under the age of 16, as it would allocate up to 245 million DKK towards enhancing adult dental health services, aligning with the political objectives set forth by the Minister and the Ministry of Finance.¹⁰²

The report reignited renewed conflicts within the Danish Dental Association. Municipal dentists strongly advocated for an extended outreach dental health service, advocating for services to be extended up to the age of 20 in municipal clinics and dental services as a public good. Conversely, the Dental Association, influenced by private practising dentists who held a majority on the board, suggested that municipalities should have the option to choose between a municipal or private solution, thereby making dental health a commodity. In line with this, they advocated for limiting the municipality's responsibility for treatment to the age of 16, thus directing older individuals towards private dentists.¹⁰³ This disagreement eventually led to the resignation of the municipal dentists' subdivision from the Dental Association in 1985, prompting the formation of a new association representing their interests.¹⁰⁴

Britta Schall Holberg had to decide on the different models proposed. Despite the expertise possessed by the National Health Authority, Schall Holberg's approach to decision-making reflected a strong inclination towards political leadership rather than relying solely on professional expertise.¹⁰⁵ Instead of engaging with professionals and dental experts in the solution and political streams, she turned to her party representatives amongst the Liberals to seek a political solution. Thus, in the political stream, the Liberals played a significant role in shaping policy outcomes. Their stance was aligned with promoting the view that children's dental health services should be treated as a public good only up to the age of 16; dental care for adolescents and young adults should be regarded as a commodity subject to market dynamics at private dentists rather than as a public good. This perspective aligned with the broader governmental policy of increasing private sector involvement and providing citizens with the freedom to choose their public services. The bill also explicitly enshrined the principle of the municipal freedom to choose between establishing dental clinics or contracting privately practising dentists.¹⁰⁶

The Minister's bill was met with criticism from various quarters. Experts within the ATFO committee strongly argued that it would lead to a deterioration in the dental

102 Ibid., 18–23.

103 Letter from the Danish Children's Dental Association to the Ministry of the Interior, July 30, 1985, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1983–1987, casefile 1985/5250-28 I.

104 Erhvervshistorisk Bureau, "Den kommunale tandpleje," *Tandlægernes Nye Tidsskrift* 1992, jubilæumsnummer, 7, 25–27; Larsen (1999), 260–61.

105 Olesen (2019), 266.

106 Memorandum: The future dental health policy, August 30, 1985, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1983–1987, casefile 1985/5250-28 I. The bill is printed in *Folketingstidende* 1985/86 (København: Schultz, 1986), Appendix A, 2445–68

health service offered to the population by effectively subjecting 16-20-year-olds to commodification.¹⁰⁷ Local Government Denmark (KL) also voiced criticism, particularly regarding the exclusion of 16- and 17-year-olds from municipal clinic services, arguing that municipalities, having invested resources in clinics and dentists, should not be restricted from providing services to this age group.¹⁰⁸ In Parliament, the bill faced opposition from the Social Liberals, whose support the Government relied on, and who advocated for the inclusion of 16- and 17-year-olds in municipal treatment.¹⁰⁹ Negotiations ensued and with the appointment of a new Minister of the Interior, Knud Enggaard from the Conservatives, a compromise began to take shape.¹¹⁰ Enggaard, unlike Schall Holberg, was seen as a practical, non-ideological politician who favoured collaboration and negotiation to achieve results.¹¹¹ In the solution stream, the compromise involved altering the bill to include all individuals aged 0–17 in municipal dental health services. However, 16- and 17-year-olds would have the option to choose between municipal or private treatment, providing flexibility for both municipality and private dentists. Enggaard also indicated a willingness to approach the Minister of Finance to secure funds specifically for the dental health services of 16- and 17-year-olds.¹¹²

With the political stream operating in sync with the problem and solution streams, it created a policy window that presented the ideal conditions for political decision-making and the potential revision of the Act. The 1986 Dental Health Service Act marked the completion of a transition from a dental health service for school children to a health service that also included young children and, ultimately, 16- and 17-year-olds. Thus, it fulfilled the ideals proposed by the 1966 Dental Health Service Commission. However, municipalities that had been providing treatment for 18- and 19-year-olds were required to close this service. This compromise, along with the freedom of choice for 16- and 17-year-olds, was instrumental in securing the passage of the Act.¹¹³

Concluding discussion

The article provides an analysis of the political trajectory of the Danish Public Dental Health Service for Children (PDHSC) within the evolution of the Danish primary school following the ideal of education for all, which was prevalent during the peak of

107 Letter from members of the AFTO committee to Members of Parliament et al., December 5, 1985, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1983–1987, casefile 1985/5250-28 II.

108 Letter from KL to the Parliament's Committee on Municipality Affairs, March 10, 1986, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1983–1987, casefile 1985/5250-28 IV.

109 *Folketingsstidende* 1985/86, Forhandlingerne, 4788–812.

110 Letter from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of the Interior, January 24, 1986, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1983–1987, casefile 1985/5250-28 IV. Memorandum: "On the meeting with the Social Liberals regarding children's dental health services," January 28, 1986, DNA, the Ministry of Finance, the Budget Department, casefiles 1982–1986, casefile 1985/6741-6.

111 Olesen (2019), 267–68.

112 Draft of letter to Member of Parliament Dagmar Mørk Jensen and the Government's members of the Parliament's committee on municipality affairs, May 16, 1986, and letter from Minister of the Interior Knud Enggaard to Dagmar Mørk Jensen, May 16, 1986, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1983–1987, casefile 1985/5250-28 V.

113 Letter from the Ministry of the Interior to the Danish municipalities, June 23, 1986, DNA, the Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office, casefiles 1983–1987, casefile 1985/5250-28 II.

the welfare state in the 1960s, to the enactment of the 1975 School Act, and the subsequent welfare state crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. A central theme of the article is the political role of dental health services as a part of the history of child health prevention strategies. Therefore, the article has a pivotal focus on education as a public good, which has been an integral component of the development of the past four decades, characterised by the privatisation and commodification of education. This article also contributes to the new social history of education by providing insights into the intertwined histories of education, health, and welfare policies in Denmark.

The analysis underscores how the modern Public Dental Health Service for Children originated during a time of optimism and expansive social welfare policies in the 1960s. Although a large number of municipalities had established school dental clinics, in the 1960s, this numbered only 217 municipalities out of 1,098, creating disparities in access to dental health services. The recommendations put forth by the 1959 School Dental Health Commission laid the foundation for addressing these issues by proposing legislative measures to ensure universal access to dental examinations and treatment for children up to 14 years old and to young people. However, the translation of these ideals into policy was shaped by practical and financial constraints, taking precedence over the initial health ideals and leading to a narrower focus on children of compulsory school age in the 1971 Dental Health Service Act. The implementation of the Act during the 1970s reflects a period of significant economic and political upheaval, both domestically and internationally. The backdrop of currency instabilities, rising interest rates, and the first oil shock of 1973–1974 set the stage for a challenging political environment. At the same time, Local Government Denmark (KL) expressed concerns about the increasing demands placed on municipalities, singling out the Public Dental Health Service as indicative of excessive state intervention. Therefore, the government introduced a dispensation scheme to alleviate the burden on municipalities grappling with increased demands.

The debate between “clinic municipalities” versus “dispensation municipalities” continued in subsequent years, underscoring the differing views on the role of dental services, with the Liberals advocating for dental services as a commodity subject to parental discretion. This ideological stance influenced the decision to postpone the deadline for establishing clinics to 1986. The 1980s represented a significant political shift. Under the new Conservative–Liberal government, there was a concerted effort to revive the Danish economy and modernise the public sector; this included measures to introduce competition and grant citizens greater freedom to choose their public services. This shift influenced the approach to the 1986 Children’s Dental Act. In the context of declining numbers of children and the impact on children’s dental health, the Minister of the Interior established the ATFO committee to propose solutions. However, the Minister ultimately favoured a policy approach that viewed children’s dental health services as a public good only up to the age of 16, beyond which adolescents and young adults would be subject to private dentists. A compromise resulted in the inclusion of all individuals aged 0–17 in municipal dental health services, with 16- and 17-year-olds given the option to choose between municipal or private treatment.

The above developments resulted in three different policy windows between the 1960s and the 1970s. The first policy window emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s during a period of optimism and an expansive welfare state. This led to the initial policy

aimed at addressing dental health issues; however, practical and financial constraints became dominant factors shaping the 1971 Act, prioritising cost considerations over health ideals. When the Danish economy faced challenges in the 1970s and Local Government Denmark raised concerns about perceived excessive state interventions, there was a second policy window. This altered the initial window as a dispensation schema was enacted, shifting the intended municipality framework to a public-private partnership model. At the same time, school dental health services began to be politically debated as parental free choice gained prominence. The rise of the Conservative-Liberal government in 1982 marked a Liberal paradigm shift as the government emphasised decentralisation, privatisation, and free choice within the welfare state. This led to a third policy window with general cost reductions and the enactment of the Liberal 1986 Act, which made the dispensation schema permanent and gave 16- and 17-years old the freedom to choose between public and private dental services.

School dental health services have played an important role from the outset in the 1960s, but especially in the 1970s and 1980s in the Danish educational system. The modern evolution of school dental health services reflects the broader trends in an increased public involvement in citizens' lives. Over the past six decades, this has included an emphasis on health conditions and the implementation of preventive health strategies, including child health prevention strategies. This development also influenced the development of the Danish primary school. In a continuing educationalisation process, the promotion of well-rounded pupils and self-responsible individuals became the overarching goal, driving numerous new initiatives in the schools related to diet, exercise, body image, and sexuality. Furthermore, pupils and their parents were increasingly assigned shared responsibility for social interactions both within and outside the classroom. This study has additionally highlighted school dental health services as an integral component of the development of Western primary schooling in the past four decades, a period characterised by the privatisation and commodification of education. In Denmark, this led to a transition towards the privatisation of public education in the 1980s, as policies enacted by the Conservative-Liberal government aimed to cater for the needs of users, with citizens having the opportunity to choose between public and private offerings. Within this context, school dental health services also became subject to commodification, especially during the 1980s.

Finally, this article has contributed significantly to the new social history of education, which explores education *in* society and education *in* culture. Whilst this study has delved into the planning and perception of school dental health services amidst the complexities of political thinking, economic recession, and practical challenges, there remains potential for further research into local development. Although the number of children without cavities experienced a notable increase, social and regional disparities were apparent, as already recognised at the time.¹¹⁴ Additionally, the National Health Board observed geographical variations between Western Denmark (Jutland) and Eastern Denmark (including the capital). This divergence was attributed to the varying pace of expansion of children's dental care services between these regions, alongside differences in dental care traditions, which provided the children's dentists with distinct starting points in terms of promoting dental health.¹¹⁵ Therefore, a central nexus for

114 *Betænkning* (1976), 19.

115 Sundhedsstyrelsen (1983), 52. Cf. Friis-Hasché (1994), 41–42.

the analysis of the local public dental health service for children should be scrutinising the data capable of elucidating the interplay between socio-economic background, geographical location, groundwater fluoride levels, and local tooth brushing traditions.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Curator Morten Arnika Skydsgaard, Aarhus University Science Museums, and Professor Jesper Eckhardt Larsen, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, for helpful comments on earlier drafts of the text.

About the author

Christian Larsen is Senior Researcher at the National Archives, Copenhagen, Denmark. Email: cla@rigsarkivet.dk.

References

Archival sources in The Danish National Archives (DNA)

The Ministry of the Interior (Indenrigsministeriet)

Casefiles 1968–1972

The Ministry of the Interior, 3rd Health Office (Indenrigsministeriet, 3. Sundhedskontor)

Casefiles 1973–1977

Casefiles 1978–1982

Casefiles 1983–1987

The Danish Health Authority (Sundhedsstyrelsen)

Casefiles 1982–1992

The Ministry of Finance, the Budget Department (Finansministeriet, Budgetdepartementet)

Casefiles 1982–1986

Casefiles 1986–1991

The Ministry of Finance, the Budget Department's Budgetary Office (Finansministeriet, Budgetdepartementet, Budgetkontoret)

Casefiles (BO-sager) 1966–1973

The Danish Environmental Agency (Miljøstyrelsen)

Casefiles 1972–1975

Casefiles 1975–1983

Literature and published sources

Akers, H. F. "Collaboration, Vision and Reality: Water Fluoridation in New Zealand (1952–1968)." *New Zealand Dental Journal* 104, no. 4 (2008), 127–33.

Allerød Kommune. *25 år med Allerød kommunes tandpleje 1963–1988*. Allerød: Social- og sundhedsforvaltningen, 1988.

Andersen, Birgitte Braa. "Københavns Kommunes tandpleje fylder 75." *Indblik* 4 (1998), 20–21.

Bäckmann, Nils, Hans Grahnén, and Peter Ollinen. *Tandvård för folket: förhistorien och spelet bakom folktandvårdens tillkomst år 1938*. Umeå: Centraltryckeriet, 1988.

Ball, Stephen J. and Deborah Youdell. *Hidden Privatisation in Public Education*. Brussels: Education International, 2008.

Ball, Stephen J. "Privatising Education, Privatising Education Policy, Privatising Educational Research: Network Governance and the 'Competition State.'" *Journal of Education Policy* 24, no. 1 (2009), 83–99.

Béland, Daniel. "Ideas and Social Policy: An Institutional Perspective." *Social Policy Administration* 39, no. 1 (2005), 1–18.

Béland, Daniel and Robert H. Cox. "Introduction." In *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, edited by Daniel Béland and Robert H. Cox, 3–20. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

- Béland, Daniel. *How Ideas and Institutions Shape the Politics of Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Bergmann, Jørgen. *0-huller – tak, Odense Tandpleje 50 år*. Odense: Odense Kommune, 1991.
- Betænkning om befolkningens tandsundhedsstatus og tandlægevæsenet: afgivet af en af Sundhedsstyrelsen nedsat embedsmandsgruppe vedrørende tandlægevæsenet*. København: Statens trykningskontor, 1976.
- Betænkning om offentlig forebyggende børnetandpleje*. København: Statens Trykningskontor, 1966.
- Biesta, Gert. "Becoming Public: Public Pedagogy, Citizenship and the Public Sphere." *Social & Cultural Geography* 13, no. 7 (2012), 683–97.
- Brøndby Tandpleje 50 år: tandplejen's historie i Brøndby Kommune 1957–2007*. Brøndby: Brøndby Kommune, 2007.
- Carstairs, Cathrine and Rachel Elder. "Expertise, Health, and Popular Opinion: Debating Water Fluoridation, 1945–80." *Canadian Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (2008), 345–71.
- Carstairs, Cathrine. "Debating Water Fluoridation Before Dr. Strangelove." *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 8 (2015), 1559–69.
- Christensen, Johan. "When Bureaucratic Expertise Comes Under Attack." *Public Administration* 102 (2024), 79–94.
- Coninck-Smith, Ning de. *For barnets skyld: byen, skolen og barndommen 1880–1914*. København: Gyldendal, 2000.
- Coninck-Smith, Ning de, Lisa Rosén Rasmussen, and Iben Vyff. *Da skolen blev alles: Tiden efter 1970*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2015.
- Depaepe, Marc and Peter Smeyers. "Educationalization as an Ongoing Modernization Process." *Educational Theory* 58, no. 4 (2008), 379–89.
- Depaepe, Marc. "Educationalisation: A Key Concept in Understanding the Basic Processes in the History of Western Education." *History of Education Review* 27, no. 2 (1998), 16–28.
- Dogliani, Patrizia. "European Municipalism in the First Half of the Twentieth Century: The Socialist Network." *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 4 (2002), 573–96.
- Edelberg, Peter and Dorthe Gert Simonsen. "Changing the Subject: Epistemologies of Scandinavian Source Criticism." *Scandinavian Journal of History* 40, no. 2 (2015), 215–38.
- Erhvervshistorisk Bureau. "Den kommunale tandpleje." *Tandlægernes Nye Tidsskrift* 7 (1992), jubilæumsnummer, 5–34.
- Esmark, Lene. *Børnetandplejen på Frederiksberg fylder 100 år: – meget er forandret, men grundideerne består!* Frederiksberg: Frederiksberg Kommune, 2010.
- Evetts, Julia. "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World." *International Sociology* 18, no. 2 (2003), 395–415.
- Field, Greg. "Flushing Poisons from the Body Politic: The Fluoride Controversy and American Political Culture, 1955–1965." In *The Sixties Revisited*, edited by J. Heideking, J. Helbig, and A. Ortlepp, 469–85. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2001.
- Finansministeriet. *Den offentlige sektor 1982–1992*. København: Finansministeriet, 1992.
- Folketingstidende 1970/71*. København: Schultz, 1971.
- Folketingstidende 1975/76*. København: Schultz, 1976.

- Folketingstidende* 1977/78. København: Schultz, 1978.
- Folketingstidende* 1979/80, 2. samling. København: Schultz, 1980.
- Folketingstidende* 1982/83. København: Schultz, 1983.
- Folketingstidende* 1985/86. København: Schultz, 1986.
- Freeze, R. Allan and Jay H. Lehr. *The Fluoride Wars: How a Modest Public Health Measure Became America's Longest-Running Political Melodrama*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2009.
- Friis-Hasché, Erik. *Child Oral Health Care in Denmark: A Great Success in Health Promotion*. København: Copenhagen University Press, 1994.
- Fumurescu, Ana. "Nurturing a 'Great Social Organism': School Hygiene, Body Politics, and the State in Late Imperial Russia." *History of Education Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2022), 61–83.
- Gelbier, Stanley and Sheila Randall. "Charles Edward Wallis and the Rise of London's School Dental Service." *Medical History* 26, no. 4 (1982), 395–404.
- Gelbier, Stanley. "Dentistry for Pauper and Other Poor Children in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries." *Dental History* 43 (2006), 43–61.
- Gjerløff, Anne Katrine and Anette Faye Jacobsen. *Da skolen blev sat i system: 1850–1920*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2014.
- Gjerløff, Anne Katrine, Anette Faye Jacobsen, Ellen Nørgaard, and Christian Ydesen. *Da skolen blev sin egen: 1920–1970*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2014.
- Grace, Gerald. "Education: Commodity or Public Good?" *British Journal of Educational Studies* 37, no. 3 (1989), 207–21.
- Gray, M. M. "'Idle Teeth Get into Mischief': The Dental Health of Walsall (UK) School Children 1910–1912 and the Consequent Development of School Dentistry in the Borough." *Community Dental Health* 6, no. 2 (1989), 153–57.
- Green, Andy. "Education and the State: Whatever Happened to Education as a Public Good?" *Uddannelseshistorie* (2014), 11–30.
- Hansen, Erik Randers. "Den kommunale børnetandplejes omfang og struktur 1. oktober 1973." *Tandlægebladet* 78 (1974), 147–53.
- Harris, Bernhard. *The Health of the Schoolchild: A History of the School Medical Service in England and Wales*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995.
- Heidmann, Jens and Erik Randers Hansen. "Den kommunale børnetandplejes omfang, struktur og udbygning med klinikker i 1977/78." *Tandlægebladet* 83 (1979), 243–46.
- Hesselgren, Kurt. *Refleksioner over Frederikssund børnetandplejes resultater 1959–92*. S.n., 1992.
- Hugoson, Anders, Göran Koch, Anna-Lena Hallonsten, Johanna Norderyd, and Annette Åberg. "Caries Prevalence and Distribution in 3–20-year-olds in Jonköping, Sweden, in 1973, 1978, 1983, and 1993." *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology* 28 (2000), 83–89.
- Indenrigsministeriet. *Aftaler og henstillinger vedr. den kommunale økonomi i 80'erne*. København: Statens Informationstjeneste, 1989.
- Jasanoff, Sheila, ed. *States of Knowledge: The Co-production of Science and Social Order*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Juul, Ida. "Den danske velfærdsstat og uddannelsespolitikken." *Uddannelseshistorie* (2006), 74–101.

- Kærgård, Niels. "The Danish Economy, 1973–2009: From National Welfare State to International Market Economy," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 49, no. 2 (2024), 241–65.
- Kingdon, John W. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1984; 2nd ed., 2014.
- Kolstrup, Søren. *Velfærdsstatens rødder: fra kommunesocialisme til folkepension*. København: Selskabet til Forskning i Arbejderbevægelsens Historie, 1996.
- Køber, Jesper Vestermark and Niklas Olsen. "Privatizing the Welfare State: Danish Libertarianism from the 1980s to the 2000s." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 28, no. 3 (2023), 355–72.
- Labaree, David F. "Consuming the Public School." *Educational Theory* 61, no. 4 (2011), 381–94.
- Labaree, David F. "The Winning Ways of a Losing Strategy: Educationalizing Social Problems in the United States." *Educational Theory* 58, no. 4 (2008), 447–60.
- Landahl, Joakim. "Educationalising Death: The Emergence of Traffic Education in Swedish Elementary Schools." *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 9, no. 2 (2022), 107–23.
- Larsen, Brian. "Organiseringen af den kommunale børnetandpleje: – et valg mellem privat og offentlig." *Politica* 31, no. 3 (1999), 256–71.
- Larsen, Lars Thorup. "The Birth of Lifestyle Politics: The Biopolitical Management of Lifestyle Diseases in the United States and Denmark." In *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, edited by U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann, and T. Lenke, 201–20. New York, London: Routledge, 2010.
- Lund-Sørensen, A., S.E. Skydt, and H. Roland Hansen, eds. *Kommunal håndbog 1978–79*. København: Mostrup, 1978.
- Madsen, Katrine Rich, Julie Ellegaard Ibáñez Román, Mogens Trab Damsgaard, Bjørn Evald Holstein, Mette Juul Kristoffersen, Trine Pagh Pedersen, Susan Ishøy Michelsen, Mette Rasmussen, and Mette Toftager. *Skolebørnsundersøgelsen 2022: Helbred, trivsel og sundhedsadfærd blandt skoleelever i 5., 7., og 9. klasse i Danmark*. København: Statens Institut for Folkesundhed, SDU, 2023.
- Mahoney, Brian. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." *Theory and Society* 29 (2000), 507–48.
- Martin, Brian. *Scientific Knowledge in Controversy: The Social Dynamics of the Fluoridation Debate*. Albany: Suny Press, 1991.
- McCombs, Gayle B., Cynthia C. Gadbury-Amyot, Rebecca S. Wilder, Karen O. Skaff, and Margaret Lappan Green. "Dental Hygienists' Contributions to Improving the Nation's Oral Health Through School-based Initiatives from 1970 through 1999: A Historical Review." *Journal of Dental Hygiene* 81, no. 2 (2007), 52.
- Meckel, Richard A. *Classrooms and Clinics: Urban Schools and the Protection and Promotion of Child Health, 1870–1930*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013.
- Milsom, K.M., M. Tickle, and A.S. Blinkhorn. "Is School Dental Screening a Political or a Scientific Intervention?" *Journal of Dental Research* 87:10 (2008), 896–899.
- Moffat, S., S. Carrington and M. Morgan. "Part 1: a brief history of New Zealand's School Dental Service" + "Part 2: the 'Oral Health' professions in the 21st Century." *NZDA News* 204 (2021), 25–43.

- Moffat, Susan M., Lyndie A. Foster Page, and W. Murray Thomson. "New Zealand's School Dental Service Over the Decades: Its Response to Social, Political, and Economic Influences, and the Effect on Oral Health Inequalities." *Frontiers in Public Health* 5 (2016), 1–18.
- Olesen, Niels Wium. *De danske ministerier 1972–1993: Del 2: Poul Schlüters tid 1982–1993*. København: Gad, 2019.
- Olesen, Thorsten Borring. *De danske ministerier 1972–1993: Del 1: Anker Jørgensens tid 1972–1982*. København: Gad, 2017.
- Olsen, Niklas. "Welfare State Criticism as Elite Criticism in 1970s Denmark." In *Histories of Knowledge in Postwar Scandinavia: Actors, Arenas, and Aspirations*, edited by Niklas Olsen, Johan Östling, and David Larsson Heidenblad, 111–26. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Petersen, Jørn Henrik and Klaus Petersen. "Dansk velfærdshistorie: Et projekt og dets teoretiske ramme." *Historisk Tidsskrift* 110, no. 1 (2013), 210–24.
- Petersen, Jørn Henrik, Klaus Petersen, and Niels Finn Christiansen, eds. *Velfærdsstatens storhedstid: Dansk Velfærdshistorie: Bind IV: Perioden 1956–1973*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2012.
- Petersen, Jørn Henrik, Klaus Petersen, and Niels Finn Christiansen, eds. *Velfærdsstaten i tidehverv: Dansk velfærdshistorie: Bind V: 1973–1993*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2013.
- Picard, Amy. "Behind the Fluorine Curtain." In *Making the American Mouth: Dentists and Public Health in the Twentieth Century*, edited by A. Picard, 117–40. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2009.
- Pielke, Jr., Roger A. *The Honest Broker: Making Sense of Science in Policy and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Porter, Dorothy and Roy Porter. "The Politics of Prevention: Anti-Vaccinationism and Public Health in Nineteenth-Century England." *Medical History* 32, no. 3 (1988), 231–52.
- Reilly, Gretchen Ann. *'This poisoning of our drinking water': the American fluoridation controversy in historical context, 1950–1990*. PhD diss., George Washington University, 2001.
- Samuelsson, Jonatan. "The State of Tooth Decay: Dental Knowledge, Medical Policy and Fluoridation in Sweden, 1952–1962." In *Cultures of Oral Health: Discourses, Practices and Theory*, edited by C.L. Jones and B. Gibson, 204–21. London: Routledge, 2022.
- Schmidt, Vivien A. "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008), 303–26.
- Skak-Iversen, Lene and Erik Randers Hansen. "Børnetandplejens omfang og struktur i skoleåret 1978–79." *Tandlægebladet* 84 (1980), 186–92.
- Skydsgaard, Morten Arnika and Hanne Fuglsang Nielsen. *Tandbørsten på skoleskemaet*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2025.
- Smeyers, Peter and Marc Depaepe, eds. *Educational Research: The Educationalization of Social Problems*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.
- Sundhedsstyrelsen. *Børne- og ungdomstandplejen i Danmark: 1988*. København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1989.
- Sundhedsstyrelsen. *Børnetandpleje i Danmark 1980–81 og 1981–82: status og udviklingslinjer*. København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1983.

- Sundhedsstyrelsen. *Børnetandplejen i Danmark. 1983/84 og 1984/85: Redegørelse vedrørende revision af børnetandplejens indberetningssystem (SCOR)*. København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1986.
- Sundhedsstyrelsen. *Modeller for en fremtidig tandsundhedspolitik: Redegørelse fra arbejdsgruppen vedrørende tandplejens fremtidige organisation (ATFO)*. København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 1985.
- Sundhedsstyrelsen. *Social ulighed i sundhed og sygdom: Udviklingen i Danmark i perioden 2010–2017*. København: Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2020.
- Svensson, Else. "Tandpleje gennem tiderne: Kommunal tandpleje i Svendborg 1896–1956: – og et 25 års jubilæum." *Årbog for Svendborg & Omegns Museum* 1992, 150–57.
- Svensson, Else. *Svendborg kommunale tandpleje 25 år: Smil i Svendborg*. Svendborg: Svendborg Kommune, 1992.
- Tamboukou, Maria. "Archival Research: Unravelling Space/Time/Matter Entanglements and Fragments." *Qualitative Research* 14, no. 5 (2014), 617–33.
- Tamboukou, Maria. "Feeling Narrative in the Archive: The Question of Serendipity." *Qualitative Research* 16, no. 2 (2016), 151–66.
- Tröhler, Daniel. "Educationalization of Social Problems and the Educationalization of the Modern World." In *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, edited by Michael A. Peters, 698–703. Singapore: Springer, 2017.
- Tröhler, Daniel. "The Educationalization of the Modern World: Progress, Passion, and the Protestant Promise of Education." In *Educational Research: the Educationalization of Social Problems*, edited by Peter Smeyers and Marc Depaepe, 31–46. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.
- Vallgård, Signild. *Folkesundhed som politik: Danmark og Sverige fra 1930 til i dag*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2004.
- Welshman, John. "Dental Health as a Neglected Issue in Medical History: The School Dental Service in England and Wales, 1900–40." *Medical History* 42, no. 3 (1998), 306–27.
- Werner, Michael and Bénédicte Zimmermann. "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity." *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2006), 30–50.
- Werner, Michael and Bénédicte Zimmermann. "Penser l'histoire croisée: entre empirie et réflexivité." *Annales* 58, no. 1 (2003), 7–36.
- Westberg, Johannes and Franziska Primus. "Rethinking the History of Education: Considerations for a New Social History of Education." *Paedagogica Historica* 59, no. 1 (2023), 1–18.
- Westberg, Johannes. "Combining Global and Local Narratives: A New Social History of the Expansion of Mass Education?" *European Education* 52, no. 3 (2020), 206–14.
- Westberg, Johannes. "What We Can Learn from Studying the Past: The Wonderful Usefulness of History in Educational Research." *Encounters in Theory and History of Education* 22 (2021), 227–48.
- Whipple, Amy C. "'Into Every Home, Into Every Body': Organicism and Anti-Statism in the British Anti-Fluoridation Movement, 1952–1960." *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no.: 3 (2010), 330–49.
- Wiborg, Susanne. "Neo-Liberalism and Universal State Education: The Cases of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1980–2011." *Comparative Education* 49, no. 4 (2013), 407–23.

- Widström, Eeva, Helga Agustsdottir, Lars Inge Byrkjeflot, Raimo Pälvärinne, and Lisa Bøge Christensen. "Systems for Provision of Oral Health Care in the Nordic Countries." *Tandlægebladet* 119, no. 9 (2015), 702–11.
- Wrapson, Jill. "Artificial Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies in New Zealand: 'Magic Bullet,' Rat Poison, or Communist Plot?" *Health and History* 7, no. 2 (2005), 17–29.
- Zelko, Frank, "Optimizing Nature: Invoking the 'Natural' in the Struggle Over Water Fluoridation." *History of Science* 57, no. 4 (2019), 518–39.
- Østergaard, Hans Henrik H. *At tjene og forme den nye tid: Finansministeriet 1848–1998*. København: Finansministeriet, 1998.



“Life” and Democratisation in the Swedish Welfare State School: Experimental Research Projects on Children’s “Life Questions” in Religious Education, Late 1960s to Early 1990s.

Katarina Kärnebro & Mette Buchardt

Abstract • “Life questions” (*livsfrågor*) was inserted in religious education in the Swedish curriculum for comprehensive school in 1969. This was in line with the democratisation aspirations of one school for all, in which both modernisation and secularisation were important aspects. In relation to this, the National Board of Education commissioned a large experimental research project on teaching methodology in religious education that was later followed by a series of projects focusing on children’s life questions. This article explores the history of three of these projects and their knowledge production and discusses how the recontextualisation of religious education and the pedagogic interest in life questions related to school reforms during 1960–1990s. Life questions as a student-centred pedagogical model had its peak in the 1980s but lost its central role in the new prescriptive model of knowledge that was launched in the curriculum of 1994. Life questions aspired to the ambitions of democratisation through individualisation and can be seen as a continuation of earlier school reforms aiming at the individualisation of religious practice.

Keywords • existential questions, secularisation, recontextualisation, school reforms, individualisation

Introduction

After World War II, the Nordic societies increased their focus on developing democratic societies. This was, on the one hand, a reaction to European fascism and Nazism and its defeat, but, on the other hand, also in line with the development of the welfare state. Raising democratic citizens through schooling was part of this.¹ This development can be seen in all five Nordic countries, although Sweden seems to have had a leading position.² Simultaneously, an increasing focus on the individual child can be seen in school reforms and school pedagogies, which included an interest in the questions of the child. In 1967–1973, the project of *UMRe: Undervisningsmetodik – Religions-*

- 1 Mette Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola, and Heli Valtonen, “Education and the Making of the Nordic Welfare States,” in *Education, State and Citizenship*, ed. Mette Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola, and Heli Valtonen, NordWel Studies in Historical Welfare State Research 4 (Helsinki: Nordic Centre of Excellence NordWel, 2013), 7–30; Christian Ydesen and Mette Buchardt, “Citizen Ideals and Education in Nordic Welfare State School Reforms,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
- 2 Bo Lindensjö and Ulf P. Lundgren, *Utbildningsreformer och politisk styrning* (Stockholm: Liber, 2014), 61–63; Alfred Ofedal Telhaug, Odd Asbjørn Mediås, and Peter Aasen, “The Nordic Model in Education: Education as Part of the Political System in the Last 50 Years,” *Scandinavian Journal of Education* 50, no. 3 (2006), 248–50.

kunskap, (Instruction Methodology – Knowledge of Religion), was conducted.³ It was a project that was financed by the state through the National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen*) aimed at developing new teaching methods for the new curriculum that was about to be launched in 1969. Within the frame of UMRe, several studies with different scopes were conducted. One sub-study led by Sven G. Hartman aimed at gathering information about 9–12-year-old children's life questions (*livsfrågor*)⁴ and how to integrate such questions in teaching. This was the beginning of a series of experimental studies on children's life questions based on the same methodology carried out over a period of 50 years until today.

The aim of this article is to show how these experimental data-generating projects about children's life questions developed during the first 25 years, and how they evolved in relation to the central school reforms, debates in society, dominant pedagogical ideas, and research interests over time. This is interesting since the first three large projects illustrate what took place at the intersection of commissioned research from the state, researchers, and school reforms in Swedish religious education. Strong state control in the 1960s was seen as important to guarantee a fair society and a modern welfare state, and the projects can be seen as examples of ideological centralisation, aiming at introducing a modern, secularised, and more equal school.⁵ This centralisation was more evident in Sweden and Norway than in the other Nordic countries,⁶ and Sweden was the first Nordic country to introduce non-confessional religious education in compulsory school.⁷ An overall aim of the article is also to discuss how the recontextualisation of religious education and the pedagogic interest in life questions, and thus the life of the students, played along with the intention of raising citizens for a democratic society.

The first part of the article provides a short historical background in the light of previous research. This is followed by a presentation of the material used in this study and the methodological approach for studying it. The three projects chosen for exploration in this article are thereafter historically contextualised and analysed. The analysis of the projects focuses mainly on the aims and aspirations of the projects, as well as their designs and influences. In the last section of the article, conclusions are drawn from the analysis regarding the recontextualisation of religious education, and the knowledge production in the projects. This is discussed in relation to the shifting position of life questions in the curriculum, the shifts in values and pedagogical ideas, and the role of democratisation in Swedish educational policy over time.

3 Mette Buchardt and Katarina Kärnebro, "Experimental Education Projects and their Data Collection: Policy History on Experiments with 'Children's Life Questions' in Welfare-State Sweden Late 1960s to Early 1970s," *Paedagogica Historica* 60, no. 6 (2024), 1144–56.

4 "Livsfrågor" is not easy to translate into English. "Livsfrågor" refers to vital issues but might extend traditional existential questions. "Life questions" is the term used throughout this text to translate "livsfrågor," except when "livsfrågor" is described as a concept; then the Swedish term is used instead.

5 Lisbeth Lundahl, "Sweden: Decentralization, Deregulation, Quasi-markets – and Then What?," *Journal of Education Policy* 17, no. 6 (2002), 687–97.

6 Oftedal Telhaug, Mediås, and Aasen (2006), 250.

7 Karl-Göran Algotsson, *Från katekestvång till religionsfrihet: Debatten om religionsundervisningen i skolan under 1900-talet* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1975), 372–86.

Historical background in light of previous research

In the middle of the century, the Swedish school system undertook many changes according to reforms aimed at educating for democracy. In the 1940s, two major investigations – the 1940s school report and the 1948 School Commission – proposed a completely new structure for the school system that was eventually decided upon and implemented in the 1960s.⁸ The investigations suggested a nine-year compulsory school that was centralised in the sense that the schools should provide the same structural possibilities for learning, and decentralised in the sense that it would make rural and urban schools more equal by handing over some of the responsibility to the municipalities.⁹ The aspiration of the reform was to create a new unified school system in which all students, regardless of socio-economic background, should be given the same possibilities to acquire knowledge. The new generation of students should become all-round educated, and this would increase the affinity between citizens and obliterate traditional class divisions. The overall assignment of the Swedish school should be to foster citizens with democratic values that can be resistant to anti-democratic movements.¹⁰

The Swedish school reforms in the post-war era are often described as unique in the sense that they were carried out in collaboration between the state and pedagogical research.¹¹ Research projects financed by the state were a governmental tool in the preparation and implementation of the new, unified comprehensive school (*Grundskolan*). This transition was prepared for during the 1950s through large-scale trials of the new type of school and launched through the new curriculum in 1962, but the reform was not fully completed until 1970.¹² There was a strong belief in scientific methods as a base for new teaching practices, and theory and methodology from the rather newly formed academic disciplines of sociology, pedagogy and psychology were influential. In line with, for example, Piaget, both student activity and individualisation were foregrounded as methods in the new curriculum.¹³ Individualisation was advocated to accomplish differentiation in an unstreamed school but was also promoted as a means to educate the individual for society.

State funding for research was given through Swedish state agencies according to a sector research model, and the education system thus relied on the National Board of Education for initiation and funding of research projects on pedagogical develop-

8 Gunnar Richardson, *Svensk utbildningshistoria: Skola och samhälle förr och nu*, 8th. rev. ed. (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2010), 72–73.

9 Johan Prytz and Johanna Ringarp, "Local Versus National History of Education: The Case of Swedish School Governance, 1950–1990," in *Transnational Perspectives on Curriculum History*, ed. Gary McCulloch, Ivor Goodson, and Mariano González-Delgado (New York: Routledge, 2020), 131–48.

10 Richardson (2010), 73.

11 Anders Burman, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson, Introduction to *Pedagogikens politik: Utbildningsforskning och utbildningspolitik under efterkrigstiden*, ed. Anders Burman, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2024), 7.

12 Prytz and Ringarp (2020), 135–36; Kjell Härnqvist, "Comprehensiveness and Social Equality," in *Struggle for Democratic Education: Equality and Participation in Sweden*, ed. Stephen J. Ball and Staffan Larsson (New York: Falmer P., 1989), 18–31.

13 Ingrid Carlgren et al., "Changes in Nordic Teaching Practices: From Individualised Teaching to the Teaching of Individuals," *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 50, no. 3 (2006), 301–26.

ment.¹⁴ Since the National Board of Education was also responsible for teacher education, many of the research projects were assigned to teacher education institutions.¹⁵

The welfare-state reforms during the 1960s also included taking further steps in the secularisation process since the Education Act of 1919.¹⁶ The school subject *kristendoms-kunskap* (knowledge of Christianity) was changed to *religionskunskap* (knowledge of Religion) in the new curriculum for comprehensive school in 1969.¹⁷ The idea was to modernise the school subject, and the content in the new syllabus was supposed to better reflect society and motivate the students' learning, for example by addressing the students' own existential questions. Hence the concept of *livsfrågor* was inserted in the syllabus, which was unique from an international perspective.¹⁸ However, *religionskunskap*, with its new content and demand for objectivity in teaching, was politically contentious and put extra pressure on teachers.¹⁹ This was the reason behind UMRe, which aimed at helping teachers by researching and testing new teaching methodologies.²⁰

As for previous research on the experimental and development projects on life questions, a historical overview of the projects has been presented before, but only by Sven Hartman, who was involved in the projects himself.²¹ Several researchers have also written about the concept of *livsfrågor*. However, these studies predominantly focus

14 Sebastian Piepenburg, "Den politiska styrningen av Skolöverstyrelsens och Skolverkets forskningsprogram," in *Pedagogikens politik: Utbildningsforskning och utbildningspolitik under efterkrigstiden*, ed. Anders Burman, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2024), 169–92.

15 Ulf P. Lundgren, "Educational Research and the Language of Education," in *The Struggle for Democratic Education: Equality and Participation in Sweden*, ed. Stephen J. Ball and Staffan Larsson (New York: Falmer P., 1989), 191–210.

16 Mette Buchardt, "Cultural Protestantism and Nordic Religious Education: An Incision in the Historical Layers Behind the Nordic Welfare State Model," *Nordidactica: Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education*, no. 2 (2015), 131–65; Mette Buchardt, "Lutheranism and the Nordic States," in *Luther: Zeitgenössisch, Historisch, Kontrovers*, ed. Richard Faber and Uwe Puschner, *Zivilisationen & Geschichte* 50 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2017), 285–95; Mette Buchardt, "The Nordic Model and the Educational Welfare State in a European Light: Social Problem Solving and Secular-Religious Ambitions When Modernizing Sweden and France," in *The Nordic Education Model in Context: Historical Developments and Current Renegotiations*, ed. Daniel Tröhler et al. (New York: Routledge, 2023), 107–24.

17 Algotsson (1975), 489–96.

18 Karin Sporre, "Children's Existential Questions—Recognized in Scandinavian Curricula, or Not?" *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 54, no. 3 (2022), 367–83.

19 This was during a period when the position of Christianity and the power of the state church were very much debated in society. Algotsson describes some of the public protests that took place in relation to the reform. For example, over two million people signed a petition against the reduced time for Christianity in the new curriculum. Algotsson (1975), 389–402.

20 Sven G. Hartman, "Children Searching for a Philosophy of Life: A Retrospective Review of Six Research and Development Projects," in *Challenging Life: Existential Questions as a Resource for Education*, ed. Jari Ristiniemi, Geir Skeie, and Karin Sporre (Münster: Waxmann, 2018), 21–45.

21 Hartman (2018); Sven G. Hartman, *Barns tankar om livet* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1986); Sven G. Hartman and Tullie Torstenson-Ed, *Barns tankar om livet*, 3rd ed. (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2013).

on the development of Swedish religious education, or on different interpretations of the concept in Sweden or in other countries.²²

There is extensive research available that describes the welfare-state reforms and the shifts in Swedish governance policy from the 1960s and onward, especially within the field of curriculum theory research, where historical perspectives on governance processes are common.²³ There is also historical research on the relationship between educational research and educational policy during the time of the Swedish comprehensive school reform. For example, Susanne Dodillet and Sverker Lundin show how educational research that was established during the 1960s and 1970s was influenced by a particular view of educational science that had ties to notions of economic growth and technological development, as well as to the idea that educational systems should be constructed, managed, and monitored by scientific experts.²⁴ Sebastian Piepenburg examines the particular role of the National Board of Education and how the sector finance model rose in the early 1960s until it was wound down in the year 2000. He shows how the political interest in controlling research with relevance to school and education was particularly evident during this period and how the finance model contributed to an expansion of research on school and education.²⁵ However, the role of the National Board of Education was already in the 1970s being criticised by the political opposition for not evaluating the school reforms enough. This critique grew and by the end of the 1980s, it was being heavily criticised by educational researchers as well, mainly for excessive bureaucracy and a lack of transparency.²⁶

Johan Prytz and Johanna Ringarp have highlighted New Mathematics, one example of a large-scale experimental project aimed at developing teaching methodologies, driven by the state.²⁷ New Mathematics aimed to modernise school mathematics by suggesting new, detailed teaching models that were based on pedagogic theory and tried out scientifically. New textbooks were produced in the project and were tested in a large number of school classes. Yet a decade later when the results from the large

22 About *livsfrågor* in Swedish religious education: Sporre (2022); Sven G. Hartman, "Hur religionsämnet formades," in *Livstolkning och värdegrund: Att undervisa om religion, livsfrågor och etik*, ed. Edgar Almén et al., Skapande Vetande 37 (Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2000), 212–51. About the concept of *livsfrågor* in Sweden: Sven-Åke Selander, *Livstolkning: Om religion, livsåskådning och etik i skolan i ett didaktiskt perspektiv: En förutsättningsanalys* (Malmö: Lunds Univ., Lärarhögskolan i Malmö, Utvecklingsavdelningen, 1994); Christina Osbeck, *Kränkningens livsförståelse: En religionsdidaktisk studie av livsförståelselärande i skolan* (Karlstad: Karlstads universitet, 2006); Björn Falkevall, *Livsfrågor och religionskunskap: En belysning av ett centralt begrepp i svensk religionsdidaktik* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2010). In other countries: For example, Pia Böwadt has studied the concept of "life philosophy," which is central in Danish religious education, and how "life philosophy" rests on a Lutheran Christian creation theology in Pia Böwadt, "The Courage to Be: The Impact of Lebensphilosophie on Danish RE," *British Journal of Religious Education* 31, no. 1 (2009), 29–39.

23 See, for example, Lundahl (2002); Lindensjö and Lundgren (2014); Eva Forsberg et al., "Curriculum, Code, Arena, and Context: Curriculum and Leadership in Research in Sweden," *Leadership and Policy and Schools* 16, no. 2 (2017), 357–82.

24 Susanne Dodillet and Sverker Lundin, "När skolan blev ett utbildningssystem: Pedagogisk forskning, systemteori och politisk styrning," in *Pedagogikens politik: Utbildningsforskning och utbildningspolitik under efterkrigstiden*, ed. Anders Burman, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson (Hudinge: Södertörns högskola, 2024), 115–45.

25 Piepenburg (2024), 169–91.

26 Ibid.

27 Prytz and Ringarp (2020), 131–48.

project were ready to be implemented, it was soon abandoned as the central authorities decided to open up for alternative teaching methods.²⁸

In relation to this, there are also a few studies on the role of textbook and textbook producers in Swedish governance processes. For example, Henrik Åström Elmersjö has investigated the role of the National Textbook Review Board in the school subject of History from 1938 to 1991. He shows how strikingly little importance new curricula have had for the negotiations on the school subject of History, and finds that, in practice, the changes of textbooks have been slow.²⁹ The development of textbooks that took place in the 1960s was based on the new form of comprehensive school that included all students (unlike the previous parallel school forms), and which demanded new teaching materials that were more self-paced and provided tasks that the students could solve without the teacher needing to direct the work. However, from the 1970s, there was a shift in the teachers' view of textbooks, and the textbooks went from being a clear authority to becoming one text among others that could be used.³⁰

Johan Prytz has analysed the role of textbooks in the reforms of school mathematics from 1919 to 1970.³¹ State-driven development projects in mathematics during the 1960s introduced a science-like process for creating textbooks. This reduced teachers' influence over text production but also provided a new, collective method for textbook creation, allowing more teachers to impact school mathematics teaching through a bottom-up design approach. However, little is known about the experimental projects on life questions, and what agents and influences actually had recontextualising functions in the "new" pedagogic discourse of *livsfrågor*. The ambition with this article is therefore to empirically investigate and contextualise three projects on life questions and contribute to a new understanding of their ideational aspects and their relation to the school reforms of the 1960s to 1990s.³²

The sources: The experimental projects and their context

There were a total of six research projects related to students' life questions carried out from the late 1960s to the turn of the millennium (see Table 1).³³ The collected data and other papers stemming from the six projects are today stored at Umeå University Library, and have Sven Hartman as the archival creator, meaning that the papers written after the projects were selected and collected by Hartman, and handed over to the archive by him.³⁴ Although all projects have been influential on the knowledge

28 Ibid.

29 Henrik Åström Elmersjö, *En av staten godkänd historia: Förhandsgranskning av svenska läromedel och omförhandling av historieämnet 1938–1991* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2017).

30 Ibid.

31 Johan Prytz, "Towards a New Understanding of Swedish School Reforms: A Sociological Analysis of Textbooks' Role in Reforms of School Mathematics, 1919–1970," *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 10, no. 1 (2023), 145–69.

32 Ibid.

33 Hartman (2018), 25.

34 In this sense, our study also follows only the parts of projects that Hartman was involved with himself. This is on the one hand a limitation: it (re)produces a picture of Hartman as the key player in establishing *livsfrågor* in a Swedish context, and it means that different activities of other actors are not included in the analysis. On the other hand, the archival collection gives unique opportunities to follow a development in pedagogical knowledge production and its interplay with the political and social context over three decades.

production of children's life questions, this article will concentrate on the first three of the larger projects: UMRe, BaLi, and Balil. These projects are interesting since they were financed by the National Board of Education and were influenced by both the state and by public debates, as well as by the shifts in pedagogical ideas and in research methodology.

The sources for the explorations are the remains of the projects, such as project descriptions, publications, correspondence between agencies and actors involved in the projects, and the data material the projects generated – most of which were stored in the collections at the University Library Archive at Umeå University, except for a few of the publications that have been traced to other libraries. The emphasis will be on project papers, and less on the concrete data collections, where it is mainly the format of data production that is of interest to this study.³⁵

Table 1: Research projects related to students' life questions

UMRe (1967–1973) Undervisningsmetodik – Religionskunskap [Instruction methodology – Knowledge of Religion]
BaLi (1973–1978) Barn och Livsfrågor [Children and Existential questions]
UBOL (1978–1980) Utvecklingen i barns omvärldsorientering och livsåskådning [Development in children's environmental orientation and philosophy of life]
Balil (1987–1992) Barns livssituation och livstolkning [Children's living conditions and life interpretation]
Balikob (1994) Barns livstolkning i komparativ belysning [Children's life interpretation in a comparative perspective]
Värdeprojektet (1999–2001) Barns och ungdomars livstolkning och skolans värdegrund [Children's and youths' life interpretation and the basic values of the school]

Analytical approach and research questions

A ground for the experimental projects analysed here was the process through which a new concept such as *livsfrågor* was selected, implemented in curriculum, and reshaped to fit as subject content in religious education. According to Basil Bernstein, it is critical to study the practice in which discourses are incorporated in an educational context and transformed into objects of teaching.³⁶ Bernstein's theory of the "pedagogic device" conceptualises how a discourse or concept is pedagogised, i.e. recontextualised into pedagogical practice. The theory highlights the aspects that form official, legitimate knowledge and enables analyses of power and control. The pedagogic device consists

35 The content of the data production has been analysed in other articles by the authors. See for example: Mette Buchardt, Katarina Kärnebro, and Christina Osbeck, "'Outer space' as Cold War Spirituality: Students' Drawings and Texts on 'Life Questions' in 1980s Welfare-State Sweden," *IJHE Bildungsgeschichte* 12, no. 2 (2022), 138–56; Christina Osbeck, Katarina Kärnebro, Annika Lilja, and Karin Sporre, "Children's Existential Questions and Worldviews: Possible RE Responses to Performance Anxiety and an Increasing Risk of Exclusion," *Journal of Religious Education* 72 (2024), 51–72.

36 Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*, Rev. ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 25–39.

of three fields: the fields of knowledge production, recontextualization, and reproduction.³⁷ Bernstein identified two fields of recontextualisation: ORF = the official recontextualisation field, and PRF = the pedagogic recontextualisation field. Both fields contain agents who influence the transformation of knowledge from their origin to pedagogic discourse. ORF consists of national agents and ministries selected for developing curriculum, assessment, inspection, and supervision. PRF consists of pedagogues, researchers, teacher education, journals, textbook writers, and others who transform texts for teachers. These two fields may align with each other or not. If PRF does not have a close connection to ORF, there is usually autonomy and struggle over pedagogic discourse between agents in PRF.

In the light of Bernstein's concept of recontextualisation, this article explores the history of the experimental projects on life questions and how they played into the school reforms and developments in Sweden, which, in the three decades in which the projects took place, had as one of their overarching goals to nurture democratically-minded citizens for the welfare state.³⁸ The following empirical questions are asked: What were the aims and aspirations of the projects? How were the projects designed and conducted? and What were the underlying pedagogical ideas? On this basis, it will be discussed how the education political aim of democratisation influenced the knowledge production about children's life questions, and to which extent results from the projects can be said to have washed back on school reforms.

Three experimental projects on children's life questions

In the following section, the three selected projects will be contextualised and analysed in chronological order with particular focus on the aims and aspirations of the projects, the projects' designs, and their pedagogical ideas and influences.

UMRe – research on instrumental pedagogical methods and the aspiration of studying children's life questions for the first time

UMRe was the first large experimental education research project aimed at teaching in the intermediate stage that was financed by the National Board of Education.³⁹ The appointed subject expert at that time was John Ronnås, who was an important agent in changing the old syllabus for religious education.⁴⁰ He collaborated with a theologian and suggested that the students' life questions should be the starting point for teaching the new, objective school subject. Ronnås conducted research himself to substantiate this direction of teaching. The UMRe project was an extension of his research and was commissioned to the Stockholm Institute of Education in 1967, even before it was decided which people it would involve. All in all, the project involved 22 researchers,

³⁷ Bernstein (2000), 33.

³⁸ Bernstein later became a source of inspiration and collaborator to some of the actors in the projects but was never directly involved in the projects. See the discussion in Buchardt and Kärnebro (2024), 1151.

³⁹ According to Sven Hartman, evidence for this is the large number of publications that were produced in the project.

⁴⁰ Karin Sporre, Katarina Kärnebro, Annika Lilja, and Christina Osbeck, "Livsfrågor' – A Swedish Narrative From the 1960s. What About Its Status in the 2020s?" in *The New Pluralist We in Religious Education: Old Narratives in New Contexts*, ed. Kåre Fuglseth, Ina ter Avest, and Geir Skeie (Münster: Waxmann, 2025).

teacher trainers and student teachers at the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology.⁴¹ At that time, Stockholm Institute of Education was an important arena for research and development programmes, which were characterised by a strong influence from educational technology.⁴²

The UMRe project can also be seen as a response to the public and political debate that raged in the 1960s about the changes to the subject of religious education, and which led to protest actions and agitated voices on the subject's position in school overall.⁴³ Throughout the whole century, the old subject of *kristendomskunskap* and its position, content and space in the curriculum had been under regular debate and this was due to societal changes and increasing secularisation among the population. Religion had more and more become something private for most people, but school was still assigned the job of providing a knowledge basis, especially in Christianity.⁴⁴ The debates were heated several times during the 1960s, mainly about four changes: 1) the demand for objectivity in religious education, which was launched already in the 1957 School Commission and was included in the curriculum of 1962; 2) the change of the subject's name to *religionskunskap* in 1960 for upper-secondary school, which also led to a decrease in teaching hours since church history was included in the school subject History instead.⁴⁵ The integration of themes in other social science subjects was suggested to guarantee objectiveness in the new subject; 3) the control of teaching materials by the National Textbook Commission in 1965, which reported a serious lack of objectivity in textbooks; and 4) the changes in curriculum for compulsory school in 1969 when the subject was named *religionskunskap* here as well, which launched an idea of subject blocks and inserted life questions in the subject, as well as an increased space for other world religions than Christianity.⁴⁶ When UMRe started, the debate about objectivity had petered out somewhat but the new curriculum, Lgr69, was about to be launched, which was a motive for the large investment in UMRe with the intention that the project would develop new methods for teaching and new teaching materials.

Another influence in UMRe was the idea of increased student centring.⁴⁷ The project was grounded on the teaching principles "MACIC" (short for Motivation, Activity, Concretion, Individualisation, Cooperation). These principles had once been developed by progressive elementary school teachers and were elaborated on by researchers at the Stockholm Institute of Education.

41 The Department of Pedagogy and Psychology separated into two departments in 1970 and the UMRe project had its base at the Department of Education.

42 Lundgren (1989), 197–200.

43 Algotsson (1975), 353–508.

44 Sven G. Hartman, "Med eleven i blickfånget – en aspekt av läroplansutvecklingen," in *Livet tillfrågas – teoretiska förutsättningar för en livsfrågeorienterad religionsundervisning*, ed. Gunnar Gunnarsson, Kirsten Grönlén Zetterqvist, and Sven Hartman, Gem-rapport 7 (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2009), 86.

45 Algotsson (1975), 385–86; Martin Berntson "Ämnesområdet kristendomens historia och dess plats i Svenska kyrkans prästutbildning: En historisk undersökning," in *Teologisk utbildning*, ed. Thomas Girmalm (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2020).

46 Gunilla Dahlberg, Sven G. Hartman, and Sten Pettersson, *Barn och livsfrågor: Lärares erfarenheter från förskola, lågstadium, fritidshem* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1977), 19–26.

47 Hartman (2018), 24.

Professor Torsten Husén was the scientific leader of UMRe while Ingemar Fägerlind was appointed as the formal project leader.⁴⁸ Other members of the team were Gordon Westling and Sten Pettersson, both experts on teaching methodology at the department of Pedagogy and Psychology, and the ones who informally directed the work in the project group. Sven G. Hartman was newly employed in the department and became a research assistant in the project. UMRe also involved external experts who reviewed texts and results, for example theologians, culture workers and agents from youth organisations.

The UMRe project was designed to consist of three parts: analysis of the conditions for teaching, teaching methodology development, and try-outs of a teaching material.⁴⁹ The first part, analysis of the conditions for teaching, was the largest part of the project and involved an extensive review of the research field as well as different analyses of the pedagogical problem. For example, the researchers conducted historical analyses of the subject of Christianity with regard to the concept of objectivity, surveys of both students and teachers about students' attitudes and the teaching conditions, surveys and interviews with students about religious concepts and ideas in relation to their age and maturity, research overviews of experimental methods of relevance to teaching, observations of teaching methods, as well as analyses of the syllabus and of commonly used teaching materials and Biblical texts.⁵⁰

The "maturity problem" was particularly in focus in UMRe since religious education included subject matters of an "abstract nature" that the children might not understand due to their immaturity.⁵¹ This was presumed to especially create problems for intermediate children who were in a developmental stage where their ability to think and reason in abstract ways was considered limited. The relationship between children's cognitive development and how to teach religious education was seen as a core problem by many of the researchers. Ronald Goldman's ideas on religious development during adolescence became influential in the project, and both intellectual and emotional factors were considered to interoperate at some level.⁵² At the end of the project, a new understanding of the maturity problem was presented by the project group:⁵³

48 According to project descriptions.

49 Gordon Westling and Sten Pettersson, *Barn och religionskunskap: En bok om barn och undervisning med utgångspunkt från arbetet i religionskunskap på grundskolans mellanstadium* (Stockholm: Esselte studium, 1973), 1–2.

50 The publications from the project show the main research interest areas.

51 Sven Hartman and Sten Pettersson, *Livsfrågor och livsåskådning hos barn: Några utgångspunkter för en analys av barns livsfrågor och livsåskådning samt en presentation av några delstudier inom området*. (Stockholm: Högskolan för lärarutbildning, 1980), 11.

52 Ingemar Fägerlind, Gordon Westling, and Sten Pettersson, *Mognad och undervisning i religionskunskap: En sammanställning av några undersökningar samt en del undervisningsmetodiska synpunkter*, Rapport från Pedagogiska institutionen 52, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm (Stockholm: Pedagogiska institutionen, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, 1970), 1–41.

53 Sven G. Hartman, Sten Pettersson, and Gordon Westling, *Vad funderar barn på? Ett försök att inventera mellanstadieelevers tankar och frågor inför tillvaron och världen*, Skolöverstyrelsens rapportserie Utbildningsforskning 3 (Stockholm: Utbildningsförlaget, 1973), 74.

Perhaps it is a question of underestimating the student's possibilities and interest in engaging in the basic problem of the teaching content [...] The teaching methodology that has been developed in our project is characterised by the conviction that even students at the intermediate stage have the capability to be interested in and engage in questions that are prevalent in different ideologies and worldviews.⁵⁴

Sven G. Hartman's assignment in the project was to conduct surveys among students about their interest in the subject, their interest in existential questions, and overall religious engagement. In 1969–1970, a survey was distributed to 2081 10- to 12-year-old students from 89 random schools.⁵⁵ The results from the survey indicated that the students were interested in religious and philosophical questions, but these results were later questioned for their reliability since the results did not comport with the common views of the intermediate students as immature or unmotivated.⁵⁶ The question was whether a survey with predetermined response options could capture children's real interest in existential matters.⁵⁷ Hence, a follow-up study was conducted. In this study, called the "What do children think about? – study" (*Vad funderar barn på? – studien*), a new research methodology was developed to limit the risk of steering the students' responses in a particular direction. The method developed, later named sentence completions (*satskompletteringar*), was described as an inventory instrument with some psychological projective elements.⁵⁸ The study involved 377 10–12-year-old students from six different schools in the spring of 1970. When asked to finish sentences, the children wrote about a wide variety of themes, many of existential natures. The results showed that the children's life questions were not based on their age or maturity but rather on circumstances of life.

Gordon Westling, one of the teaching methodology experts in the project, was responsible for constructing the teaching material that was developed in UMRe. It consisted of nine parts, three areas of content for each grade in grades 4, 5, and 6, and some were constructed as interdisciplinary with, for example, the school subjects of History and Geography. In addition to the teaching material, guidebooks for teachers were also constructed. 54 teachers and their 1339 students tried out the material in 1972, and it was evaluated through surveys of both the teachers and the students.⁵⁹ Although scientifically tried out, the teaching material that was developed in UMRe did not enjoy widespread use by teachers. Yet it gave examples of how to work in a student-centred way according to the new curriculum.⁶⁰

Both UMRe and the research project that followed, BaLi, were commissioned and regulated research in the sense that they were intended to both investigate ongoing

⁵⁴ Ibid., 74.

⁵⁵ The study was part of Sven G. Hartman's licentiate thesis: *Eleverna och skolans religionsundervisning: En intresseundersökning på grundskolans mellanstadium* (Stockholm: Pedagogiska inst., Lärarhögsk., 1971).

⁵⁶ Hartman (2018), 25.

⁵⁷ Hartman and Pettersson (1980), 13–14.

⁵⁸ Hartman (2018), 24–27.

⁵⁹ Westling and Pettersson (1973), 57–284.

⁶⁰ Hartman (2009), 91.

teaching activities in schools and find new teaching methods.⁶¹ The research commissioned by the National Board of Education at that time was mainly empirical and legitimised by its research methods, and the theories used were predominantly educational psychology theories.⁶² The research was mostly carried out by people who had backgrounds as elementary school teachers, and by some who even were sceptical of academic research.⁶³ However, the arena slowly changed during the time of the projects since they lasted during a period when pedagogy as an academic field eventually emerged from the alliance with psychology.⁶⁴ During the 1970s, pedagogy as an academic field started to change from a social engineering science to a more critical social science discipline, and social theories and factors were gradually introduced into the discipline.⁶⁵ This meant that the researchers in the projects had to relate to these changes. They also had to navigate in the clash between dominant quantitative research methodology and the influence of new qualitative research, while simultaneously developing their own research methods that were workable in studying children's life questions. This undoubtedly affected the researchers' focus in their following project, BaLi, which will be explored in the following section.

BaLi – research on young children and the aspiration of constructing a theoretical base for life questions in a time of tensions

BaLi followed directly upon UMRe and was a consequence of The Childcare Inquiry (*Barnstugeutredningen*), an ongoing public investigation of preschools and leisure centres that launched ideas for pedagogical programmes at that time.⁶⁶ It also proposed the legislation of a public preschool for all in 1973, which led to a lively debate in the media on how this could affect children's conceptions of life and religion. The BaLi project was conducted by a smaller group of researchers at the Department of Education at the Stockholm Institute of Education than the UMRe project and consisted of several sub-studies that replicated parts of the methodology used in UMRe. Those who worked in the project were Sten Pettersson, Sven G. Hartman, Gordon Westling and Siw Vinstrand, all four from UMRe, and, among others, also Gunilla Dahlberg, who was a child psychologist at that time and became a research assistant in the project.⁶⁷ The scientific leader for the project was pedagogy professor Bert-Olov Ljung, who seems to have had a more administrative role in the project. In addition to them, eight students were later involved in both conducting sub-studies and analysing the mate-

61 Inger Green and Sven Hartman, *Barns livssituation och livstolkning: Projektpresentation* (Linköping: Linköping Univ., Institutionen för pedagogik och psykologi, 1992), 17.

62 Tomas Englund, "Nya tendenser inom pedagogikdisciplinen under de senaste tre decennierna," *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige* 9, no. 1 (2004), 37–49.

63 Sven G. Hartman, "Läraryrket: Uppgång och fall – några intryck," *Vägar i skolans historia*, no. 3–4 (2021), <https://undervisningshistoria.se/lararhogskolans-uppgang-och-fall-nagra-intryck/>.

64 Joakim Landahl and Anna Larsson, "Pedagogy and the Humanities: Changing Boundaries in the Academic Map of Knowledge, 1860s–1960s," in *The Humanities and the Modern Politics of Knowledge*, ed. Anders Ekström and Hampus Östh Gustafsson (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 81–103.

65 Englund (2004), 38–40.

66 Dahlberg, Hartman, and Pettersson (1977), 19; Bodil Rosengren, *Vad vill Barnstugeutredningen?: Sammanfattning av betänkandet Förskolan, del 2, SOU 1972:27* (Stockholm: Askild & Kärnekull, 1972).

67 Hartman (1986), 10.

rial. Two experts from the Central Bureau of Statistics were involved in the work with the surveys conducted during the project to make sure that the research could not be questioned. Lennart Koskinen, a theologian at Uppsala University, was involved as an expert on theorising the concept of *livsfrågor*.

As mentioned above, the public investigation of preschools and leisure centres and the legislation of a public preschool for all in 1973 led to a renewed debate about religious education. Some people argued that a public preschool for all would negatively affect children's religious upbringing and worldviews. The criticism was either about the risk that religious education could turn into something insignificant in the pedagogical programme, or about the risk that the pedagogical programme would affect the children's worldviews in another direction than those of their parents. Christian alternatives to a public preschool were campaigned for by certain groups, and the debate was sometimes harsh.⁶⁸ Ideas about the parents' freedom to choose preschools were set in opposition to ideas about a democratic society with less segregation and more equality. The debate mirrored a split between parental authority and religious freedom in society, as well as different views of the role of family and society.

The definitions and concepts used in the curriculum from 1969 and statements from the public investigation were used as starting points for the BaLi project, but the differences between preschool and compulsory school were also acknowledged.⁶⁹ The aim of the project was to study the conditions for preschool children and primary school students to understand and deal with questions within the field of worldviews.⁷⁰ The project also aimed at studying the methodological problems that may arise when these types of questions are discussed.

In BaLi, the researchers stipulated that the field of life questions extends schools' traditional subject borders.⁷¹ The starting point for teaching should be the individual student and his or her world and the existential questions that the student him- or herself carries, not a predetermined subject content. The pedagogy should address these questions in different ways that can give the students new knowledge and experiences that can help them on their way to reach the goal, which is a personal worldview of some kind. A wide definition was constructed in the project: "Life questions is about the fundamental conditions for human life and for existence in general."⁷² It was important though that the teacher did not start in classical existential questions and project them onto the children. The questions should start from the children's concrete lives and their lived experiences, and teachers should give them possibilities to reflect upon these matters. The role of reflection was motivated through ideas of children's cognitive development from Piaget, Bruner, Allport, and Eriksson combined with ideas about cultural and social factors. A key position was to provide the children with "pedagogical supplies."⁷³ In such supply, the teacher should highlight and work with

68 Sven G. Hartman, Gunilla Dahlberg, and Sten Pettersson, *Små barn och stora frågor: En probleminventering bland lärare om livsfrågor i förskolan, på lågstadiet och på fritidshem: En rapport från BaLi-projektet*, Rapport från Pedagogiska institutionen 15, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm (Stockholm: Pedagogiska institutionen, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, 1975), 17–23.

69 Dahlberg, Hartman, and Pettersson (1977), 19–46.

70 Hartman, Dahlberg, and Pettersson (1975), 13.

71 Hartman and Pettersson (1980), 23–77.

72 Ibid., 28.

73 Ibid., 25.

concepts and help the students develop the language that is necessary for a personal worldview and an understanding of others. This means that concepts that can be used as tools to help thinking and reflecting should be developed, not factual concepts. The concepts must be subjectively experienced by the students themselves and cannot be taught otherwise. Here, the project group also was influenced by the ideas on reflection as presented by philosopher Alf Ahlberg and by educational psychologist Björn Sandgren's work on children's cognitive and moral development. Ronald Goldman's influence was still strong in the BaLi project, especially in the ideas on how to teach religious education in relation to different maturity levels.

BaLi was comprised of seven sub-studies.⁷⁴ First, a large survey was distributed to preschool teachers, primary school teachers and leisure schoolteachers. The purpose of this was to capture the teachers' experiences of what happens when questions related to worldviews were actualised in discussion with the children. 1000 teachers answered the survey, and the results were used as a representative base for a pedagogical starting position in the other sub-studies that were conducted. The results from the survey showed that children's questions on concrete topics, such as relationships, were more common than abstract ones. Primary school teachers also reported on fewer life questions than the other teachers. Another result showed that teachers who were religiously active themselves noticed more interest in these types of questions among their students than other teachers did. The teachers also expressed concerns about how to handle the parents' beliefs and wishes when it came to teaching religion.⁷⁵ What became evident was that not only the children's maturity, but also their social background, made teaching religious education to young children a tricky business for the teachers.

In an interview study with 224 children aged 5–9, new experimental methods were used.⁷⁶ The interviews were named "inventory interviews" and were conducted in two parts. The first part consisted of a series of 15 pictures and a story about two children, Pelle and Lena, who were put in eight different situations and emotional moods. During the interviews, the children were asked to talk about what they would think about if they were in the same situation as the children in the stories. In the second part of the study, another series of pictures was shown to the children, but this time without predetermined stories. In addition to this, the children were also asked to fill in 12 sentence completions of the type "I think the best thing is..." The second part was concluded by the children being asked to make up the hardest questions they could think of for a quiz programme on TV. They were also asked to combine pictures of twelve different objects and describe why they thought certain pictures belonged together and others did not. These tests were originally constructed by Björn Sandgren to determine a child's cognitive developmental level. The interview study was followed up with a written assignment in which the children were asked to write about five pictures. This sub-study was a version of the "What do children think about?" – study conducted in UMRe but adapted to younger children. In 1976, children in the ages of 4–6 were also observed by student teachers, to find out what life questions the children might spontaneously come up with.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 93–113.

⁷⁵ Hartman, Dahlberg, and Pettersson (1975), 47–120.

⁷⁶ Hartman and Pettersson (1980), 93–103.

Sven G. Hartman conducted a new survey of 800 children aged 9–13, asking them about what matters in life they thought were relevant.⁷⁷ He also wanted to know more generally what they thought about school, their interests in their spare time, and their thoughts on some questions on worldviews. The intention of this survey was also to compare with previous ones in UMRe. In 1977, Hartman also, with the aid of two students, asked 745 students aged 9–12 to write texts based on the theme: One time when I thought about God.⁷⁸ This method was inspired by a similar study about children's religious views that was conducted in the 1940s. The child was introduced to a theme to write about, and the idea was that the method could give insight into the children's "inner" dialogues, as contrast to the interviews that were more of the character of "outer" dialogues. In the later projects, Hartman and his colleagues developed this method further, calling it theme assignments (*tema-skrivningar*).⁷⁹ Methodological reflections that were discussed in BaLi in relation to this were how to formulate the assignments to suit the children and whether the assignments should also encompass the context of the child.

Gunilla Dahlberg was one of the researchers who were responsible for interviewing the youngest children in BaLi, but she also conducted a sub-study where the focus was on how children's knowledge, values and attitudes were reproduced from generation to generation, particularly how the children's views of the world could be related to their social background and the divisions of labour in society.⁸⁰ This study reflects the influence of the New Sociology of Education, which was critical to psychological theories that did not encompass the child's context or sociological perspectives.⁸¹ Although Dahlberg's study was conducted within the frames of BaLi, the results were not published in the project but became a part of her dissertation in 1985.⁸² The study is still mentioned in the project reports from BaLi as an important part of the project since it takes the children's social backgrounds into account.

The choice to use many and different research methods in the BaLi project was based on the idea that the methods together could describe the knowledge area of children's life questions, which otherwise is hard to study. Another problem that the project group wanted to avoid by using different and rather broad methods was to steer the children to write or talk about things they spontaneously would never do by themselves.⁸³ Sven Hartman later wrote about the challenges in inventing methods that could work in inventorying younger children's spontaneous thoughts.⁸⁴ Not only was it challenging to develop instruments that could work for communicating with young children, but the type of qualitative research methodology that the researchers developed was also

⁷⁷ Ibid., 104.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 106–9.

⁷⁹ Hartman (2018), 32–36.

⁸⁰ Hartman and Pettersson (1980), 111–13.

⁸¹ Englund (2004), 39.

⁸² Gunilla Dahlberg, *Context and the Child's Orientation to Meaning: A Study of the Child's Way of Organizing the Surrounding World in Relation to Public, Institutionalized Socialization* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 1985).

⁸³ Hartman and Pettersson (1980), 128–33.

⁸⁴ Hartman (2018), 38–39.

new and therefore met with some scepticism within the discipline of pedagogy, where quantitative methods were still dominating.⁸⁵

As mentioned previously, Lennart Koskinen, at that time a doctoral student of theology, became involved in the project to help the project group do a conceptual “cleansing” and analysis. The BaLi project group met with him and a group of experts on the philosophy of religion at Uppsala University over a period of time. As a result of the dialogue, Koskinen wrote a report in which the concept of *livsfrågor* and world view were connected to the syllabus and discussed in relation to The Childcare Inquiry.⁸⁶ Hence, the concepts were included in a pedagogical and psychological frame: “The results can be described as a synthesis of a behavioural science view and theoretical considerations of the subject in a sort of philosophy of religion.”⁸⁷

Balil – commissioned research on life questions as part of an evaluation of the curriculum and with the intention to document children’s culture

In the new curriculum from 1980 (*Lgr80*), life questions were given more space.⁸⁸ The new subject was titled “Human beings’ questions about life and existence: The knowledge of religion.” In this curriculum, subject integration was foregrounded and it was recommended that life questions should be the starting point in teaching, to increase the students’ motivation for learning. This change, from subject content centring to student centring needed a follow-up study, and the National Board of Education commissioned this to Sven G. Hartman. The new research project, named Balil, was general in its focus on children’s life questions and attitudes and less focused on teaching methodology than the previous projects, even though a part of the aim was to relate the results to the curriculum.⁸⁹

Sven Hartman became scientific leader of the project, which he conducted together with Inger Green at Linköping University. The project also included student teachers or master’s degree students, who based their degree projects on material from the project.⁹⁰ Balil was less influenced by development psychology than the previous projects. One aim of Balil was to deepen the knowledge of children’s living conditions, and through influences from ethnographic methodology, the project applied a methodology using many different assignments and methods (surveys, sentence completions, theme assignments). The research design also involved some of the assignments being repeated over time. The intention was, among other things, to document different aspects of children’s personal worldviews in a soft database. The material was collected with the aid of teachers. 231 students in grades 3–5 from 12 classes at 8 schools in four municipalities with different characteristics agreed to participate. The intention was to follow the children over a period of three years.

85 Cf. Englund (2004), 38–40.

86 Lennart Koskinen, *Försök till precisering av några termer i livsåskådningsdebatten i avsikt att finna en enhetlig terminologi för BaLi-projektets olika delar* (Stockholm: Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, Stencil, 1975).

87 Hartman and Pettersson (1980), 23.

88 Sporre (2022), 372; *Lgr 80, 1980 års läroplan för grundskolan: inledning: mål och riktlinjer* (Stockholm: Liber Förlag/Allmänna förl., 1980), 127.

89 Hartman (2018), 32–36.

90 Green and Hartman (1992), 13.

The research approach in Balil was signified by a child-centred perspective and more rigorous research ethics than previous projects. The children's parents were informed about the project and the researchers wrote letters to the participating children, calling them assistants in the project. The researchers were also rigorous with the confidentiality of the students' assignments. Although the teachers were instructed to introduce the assignments to their classes, they were not allowed to read what the students had written. The students were instructed to put their texts in envelopes that were sealed and then sent to the researchers.⁹¹

The material that the project collected consisted of a total of 17 assignments over three years. These comprised a survey in three parts, four sentence completions, and theme assignments on the themes: *On justice*, *How I think about the universe*, *One time when I thought about God*, *Things that are good to know*, *How I think one should decide*, *This is me*, *This is how I think about faith and living in other countries*, *What I think about time*, *What is a human being*⁹², *What is school good for*, and *How I think about life and death*. In the last year, there was also an attitude survey, and the assignments on the themes *On justice*, *When I think about God*, and *This is me* were repeated once more. Unfortunately, the material from Balil was never analysed in full as Inger Green passed away.

The results that were reported from Balil were conclusive with previous projects: young students are not simple-minded but rather have many questions about life that reflect their conditions for living and their experiences.⁹³ Existential questions appear together with more trivial everyday questions in the students' texts and the questions vary a lot, both individually and across groups. Life questions are ways to find meaning and construct individual worldviews. Although the form of expression may vary depending on the age group, much of the content is still similar across ages. The results also showed that children's interest in the surrounding world expands when they get older, and some gender differences could be detected due to girls usually maturing before boys. Moreover, the children participating in Balil expressed engagement for other people and for the world; for example, compassion for the weak in society and anger towards injustices.⁹⁴

More school reforms took place during the time of Balil. In a *Riksdag* resolution in 1989, a new model of school organisation was decided on that meant an almost complete redistribution of responsibility from the state to the municipalities. This decision was not without debate, and teachers went on strike.⁹⁵ This conflict affected Balil and at the end of the project in 1989/1990, only 150 children were still participating in the study. The large number of dropouts was caused by several more unpredictable factors. It was, for example, difficult to follow up the students when they changed schools in grade 7 or when teachers were replaced. Some students also got tired of the

⁹¹ According to letters from the archive.

⁹² Material from this assignment has been analysed in Buchardt, Kärnebro, and Osbeck (2022), 138–56.

⁹³ Hartman and Torstenson-Ed (2013), 10.

⁹⁴ Sven G. Hartman, *Små barn i det stora rummet – Om barns kosmologi* (Stockholm: Centrum för barnkulturforskning, 1999), 28.

⁹⁵ Johanna Ringarp, "Skolans lärarkårer," in *Utbildningshistoria: En introduktion*, ed. Esbjörn Larsson and Johannes Westberg (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2019), 368–69.

assignments and wanted to opt out of the project.⁹⁶ Letters in the archive also reveal that some classes with mixed ages were excluded by researchers themselves to downsize the project.

As part of the *Riksdag* resolution in 1989, the National Board of Education was no longer needed, and it was later replaced with a new organisation, the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Statens skolverk*), which was given completely new assignments. The National Board of Education had been criticised for bureaucratisation and lack of transparency in decision-making for some time.⁹⁷ And from a long period in which the relationship between educational research and politics had been closely intertwined, this shifted to them being completely separated.⁹⁸ In 1991–1992, the Swedish parliament made a series of decisions that opened for a market of independent schools. These reforms were not grounded in research in the same way as the previous reforms and not prepared in an ordinary manner.⁹⁹ The reforms of the school system made it necessary to also change the curriculum to better suit the neo-liberal management of schools. The new curriculum (*Lpo94*), was different from the previous ones since it focused on general knowledge in a traditional sense, included all types of schools, only contained goals and guidelines and nothing about methods or specific subject content, and explicitly stated a value system based on Western and Christian traditions. Another major shift was in the view of students' learning, where the responsibility for this was put on the students themselves. Consequently, self-regulative methods of working eventually became more popular methods of teaching, such as "own work."¹⁰⁰

When it comes to the position of life questions in the new curriculum from 1994, it changed drastically, from being considered a centre of the school subject in the syllabus of 1980 to occupying a marginalised position in the new syllabus.¹⁰¹ It is only mentioned once in the syllabus of 1994 as a goal for students in grade 9, prescribing that they should be able to reflect over and express themselves concerning existential questions. Hence, the connection to the students' own lives was no longer put to the front, and emphasis was on knowledge about religions and worldviews instead.

Conclusion

One aim of this article is to explore the history of three experimental projects on life questions and their knowledge production in relation to school reforms, debates in society, pedagogical ideas and research interest over time. The analyses presented in the previous sections show that the projects were involved in the implementation and transformation of life questions and thus have been closely linked to school policy all along. The democratisation of school, the crisis of the subject *kristendomskunskap* in the 1960s, and the debate on secularisation contributed to life questions becoming first a teaching methodology and then a subject area of its own in religious education. Life

96 Green and Hartman (1992), 37–38

97 Piepenburg (2024), 177–81.

98 Burman, Landahl, and Larsson (2024), 8.

99 Nafsika Alexiadou and Lisbeth Lundahl, "The Boundaries of Policy Learning and the Role of Ideas: Sweden, as a Reluctant Policy Learner?," in *Beyond erziehungswissenschaftlicher Grenzen: Diskurse zu Entgrenzungen der Disziplin*, ed. Ulrike Stadler-Altmann and Barbara Gross (Opladen: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2019), 63–77.

100 Carlgren et al. (2006), 304.

101 Sporre (2022), 373–74.

questions can also be seen as a sign of the times of the 1960s concerning new pedagogical ideas that promoted student-centredness and individualisation, MACIC. Among other things, this model of teaching was considered to be a solution to the problems associated with teaching mixed-ability classes that had arisen for teachers in the new comprehensive school for all.¹⁰²

As the analysis of the projects has shown, the first project, UMRe, was designed to help teachers implement the new objective school subject *religionskunskap* by providing expert knowledge that could meet the new pedagogical demands that were put on teachers.¹⁰³ The degree of state involvement was strong in both UMRe and BaLi, and this was not only because the National Board of Education allocated a considerable amount of money for research and development at that time.¹⁰⁴ Both UMRe and BaLi were also carried out in a time when religious education was recurrently debated in society by people with little knowledge about the actual work in schools and where teachers' experiences and children's perspectives were not considered.¹⁰⁵ The aims and aspirations in the projects were closely connected to contemporary reforms or public investigations, and the sanctions from the National Board of Education can be viewed as a top-down process from central school authorities to enforce changes in teaching methodology, and as such, the projects relied on ideas of social engineering and were coloured by the secular climate of the 1960s.¹⁰⁶ The belief that a modern society, in order to be democratic, must take the form of a controllable system that is constructed, managed and monitored by scientific experts, was tied to this.¹⁰⁷

The close connection between The National Board of Education and these two experimental research projects indicates that there was strong alignment and not much struggle between the agents in the official recontextualisation field (ORF) and the pedagogical recontextualisation field (PRF).¹⁰⁸ One can conclude that researchers in PRF influenced ORF, as the new interest in students' life questions from UmRe and BaLi impacted the 1980 curriculum reform, giving life questions a central role and promoting a student perspective in teaching.¹⁰⁹ However, the actual teaching material that was tried out in UMRE seems to have had little influence on the teachers in PRF, possibly due to "objectivity cramp" among teachers, slowing down changes.¹¹⁰ This might also reflect teachers' scepticism towards centralised materials and a general decline in textbook authority that took place during this period.¹¹¹ At least this was the case in other projects funded by the National Board of Education, such as New Mathematics.¹¹² The new curriculum stipulated that the different school subjects should be studied in cohesive work areas, so it was no longer desirable that the teaching materials

102 Carlgren et al. (2006), 302.

103 Cf. Lundgren (1989), 198–200.

104 Piepenburg (2024), 169.

105 Hartman and Pettersson (1980), 10–19.

106 Cf. Englund (2004), 38.

107 Cf. Dodillet and Lundin (2024), 144.

108 Cf. Bernstein (2000), 33.

109 Hartman (2009), 92.

110 Hartman (2000), 246–47.

111 Åström Elmersjö (2017), 278.

112 Prytz and Ringarp (2020), 141.

presented a coherent narrative that could direct the teachers' work. Instead, learning materials with a lot of tasks and references to side reading for the independent student were preferred, since it suited the idea of individualised teaching.¹¹³

The alignment between ORF and PRF weakened in the late 1980s during the Balil project. The Balil project aimed to evaluate the 1980 curriculum reform and study children's life questions. The emphasis on evaluation reflected a shift in research orientation due to criticism against the National Board of Education and the finance model.¹¹⁴ In the 1990s, the National Board of Education was dissolved, new agents emerged, and the centralised governance model's alignment between ORF and PRF did not last long.

The struggles in the pedagogical recontextualisation field (PRF) were mainly disciplinary. Research at the Stockholm Institute of Education was mostly conducted by former elementary school teachers,¹¹⁵ leading to a focus on psychology and pedagogy rather than theology in the new subject of religious education. This was an effect of the social and behavioural sciences having advanced their positions in teacher education, while the humanities and theology had slowly lost their importance.¹¹⁶ Over time, dominant theories in pedagogy shifted as well, with the BaLi project incorporating developmental psychology and sociological theories. Gunilla Dahlberg, and later also Sten Pettersson, collaborated with Basil Bernstein and his research group in sociology of education at the University of London.¹¹⁷ An interesting fact is that both Dahlberg and Pettersson became influential actors in the official recontextualisation field (ORF) in Sweden during the 1990s.¹¹⁸ Despite this, their insights gained from their involvement in the life questions projects were overlooked in the 1994 comprehensive school curriculum reform, resulting in life questions losing its central importance.

Another aim of this article is to discuss how the recontextualisation of religious education and the pedagogic interest in life questions, and thus the lives of the students, played along with the intention of raising citizens for a democratic society. From the 1990s, there was a shift towards individualistic citizenship, focusing on liberty of choice rather than societal education.¹¹⁹ This dramatic change reversed earlier efforts to centralise and equalise the school system. The 1990s reforms introduced independent schools, with secularisation now supporting confessional schools.¹²⁰ Individualisation evolved from the 1960s' educated citizen concept to the 1980s' active citizen idea,¹²¹ and finally to the 1990s' neo-liberal individuality, emphasising personal responsibility, competition, and free choice.¹²² The new curriculum, influenced by German didactic

113 Åström Elmersjö (2017), 264; Carlgren et al. (2006), 306.

114 Piepenburg (2024), 175–78.

115 Hartman (2021).

116 Landahl and Larsson (2022), 81–103.

117 In 1983, their research was published in a book that Basil Bernstein edited together with Ulf P. Lundgren. Basil Bernstein also supervised Dahlberg's PhD thesis work.

118 Sten Pettersson was entrusted with managerial responsibilities at the Swedish National Agency for Education, while Gunilla Dahlberg became influential in the process of curriculum development for preschools.

119 Carlgren et al. (2006), 304–7.

120 Tomas Englund, "Två artskilda perioder för pedagogisk forskning," *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige* 23, no. 5 (2018), 20–42.

121 Englund (1989), 56.

122 Englund (2018), 26–34.

traditions, focused more on subject content and positioned schools as cultural carriers, a move that was criticised for potentially undermining democracy, equality, and citizenship education.¹²³

Bernstein argues that every time a discourse moves from one position to another there is a space where ideology can come into play.¹²⁴ To summarise how the concept *livsfrågor* was selected, implemented in curriculum and reshaped to fit as subject content in religious education it is evident that the process all along has been shaped by school policy, and that its position today is the result of a new social order, neo-liberalism.¹²⁵ Life questions was at the outset selected to meet demands of school policy aiming at democratisation. The student-centred, secularised approach had its peak in *Lgr80* and the broad focus on "life" drew not only on religious education as a singular discipline, but also on a range of other disciplinary sources. It also allowed for a more symmetrical relationship between teacher and learners. That is one reason why life questions were well-suited for the interdisciplinary and constructivist approach of *Lgr 80*, but not that suitable for the more prescriptive model of knowledge that was launched in *Lpo94*.

Final remarks

As such, the analysis of the development in the projects shows a close connection between shifting political and institutional interests and the pedagogical knowledge production on life questions in the Swedish welfare state context, including how secularisation and individualisation were closely linked to the aim of democratisation. Life questions connected these three ambitions through the 1970s and 1980s school reform waves but did not to the same extent meet the more rationalised and sharply disciplinary classified knowledge definitions that were launched from the 1990s onwards. This highlights the significant influence of shifting political interests on educational research, as well as the crucial role that research projects have historically played in shaping educational policies.¹²⁶ While this analysis focuses on Sweden, the insights are also applicable to other Nordic countries due to similarities in school reform processes.

The finding calls for further studies on life questions in relation to school's democratic aspirations and different teaching models; for example, a study of ideological school governance and the role of textbooks in religious education 1960–1994. This article also highlights the significant roles of various people and institutions in influencing the projects and school reforms. A history of knowledge perspective¹²⁷ could enrich our understanding of the life questions approach even more by investigating the circulation of knowledge in relation to political and ideological circumstances

123 It was, for example, criticised by Sven Hartman in *Lärares kunskap. Traditioner och idéer i svensk undervisningshistoria* (Linköping: Linköpings universitet, 1995) and by Bernt Gustavsson in *Bildning i vår tid: Om bildningens möjligheter och villkor i det moderna samhället* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1996).

124 Bernstein (2000), 32.

125 Cf. Lundahl (2002), 687–97.

126 Cf. Piepenburg (2024), 169–91.

127 This perspective is, for example, promoted in *Histories of Knowledge in Postwar Scandinavia: Actors, Arenas, and Aspirations*, ed. Johan Östling, Niklas Olsen, and David Larsson Heidenblad (London: Routledge, 2020).

more thoroughly, and by considering power dynamics between different agents in influential arenas.

Finally, this article suggests that, as a form of knowledge, the life questions approach played highly into the ambition of democratisation, but in a way in which individualisation came to the fore and thereby continued the elements of early 20th century religious education reform, which tended to lean religious instruction more in the direction of morality than in the direction of confessional upbringing. In this sense, it can be argued that the knowledge production concerning children's life questions aimed at producing an individuality-based set of morals for the modern democratic welfare-state society.

Acknowledgements

The study has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (Dnr 2018-03435).

About the authors

Katarina Kärnebro is Associate Professor at the Department of Education, Umeå University, Sweden. Email: katarina.karnebro@umu.se

Mette Buchardt is Professor and Head of Centre for Education Policy Research, Aalborg University, Denmark. Email: buchardt@ikl.aau.dk

References

- Alexiadou, Nafsika, and Lisbeth Lundahl. "The Boundaries of Policy Learning and the Role of Ideas: Sweden, as a Reluctant Policy Learner?" In *Beyond erziehungswissenschaftlicher Grenzen. Diskurse zu Entgrenzungen der Disziplin*, edited by Ulrike Stadler-Altmann and Barbara Gross, 63–77. Opladen: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2019.
- Algotsson, Karl-Göran. *Från katekestvång till religionsfrihet: Debatten om religionsundervisningen i skolan under 1900-talet*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1975.
- Bernstein, Basil. *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. Rev. ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.
- Berntson, Martin. "Ämnesområdet kristendomens historia och dess plats i Svenska kyrkans prästutbildning: En historisk undersökning." In *Teologisk utbildning*, edited by Thomas Girmalm. Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2020.
- Buchardt, Mette. "Cultural Protestantism and Nordic Religious Education: An Incision in the Historical Layers Behind the Nordic Welfare State Model." *Nordidactica: Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education*, no. 2 (2015), 131–65.
- Buchardt, Mette. "Lutheranism and the Nordic States." In *Luther: Zeitgenössisch, Historisch, Kontrovers*, edited by Richard Faber and Uwe Puschner, 285–95. Zivilisationen & Geschichte 50. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2017.
- Buchardt, Mette. "The Nordic Model and the Educational Welfare State in a European Light: Social Problem Solving and Secular-Religious Ambitions When Modernizing Sweden and France." In *The Nordic Education Model in Context: Historical Developments and Current Renegotiations*, edited by Daniel Tröhler, Bernadette Hörmann, Sverre Tveit, and Inga Bostad, 107–24. New York: Routledge, 2023.
- Buchardt, Mette, and Katarina Kärnebro. "Experimental Education Projects and Their Data Collection: Policy History on Experiments with 'Children's Life Questions' in Welfare-State Sweden Late 1960s to Early 1970s." *Paedagogica Historica* 60, no. 6 (2024), 1144–56.
- Buchardt, Mette, Katarina Kärnebro, and Christina Osbeck. "'Outer space' as Cold War Spirituality: Students' Drawings and Texts on 'Life Questions' in 1980s Welfare-State Sweden." *IJHE Bildungsgeschichte* 12, no. 2 (2022), 138–56.
- Buchardt, Mette, Pirjo Markkola, and Heli Valtonen. "Education and the Making of the Nordic Welfare States." In *Education, State and Citizenship*, edited by M. Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola, and H. Valtonen, 7–30. NordWel Studies in Historical Welfare State Research 4. Helsinki: Nordic Centre of Excellence NordWel, 2013.
- Burman, Anders, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson. Introduction to *Pedagogikens politik: Utbildningsforskning och utbildningspolitik under efterkrigstiden*, edited by Anders Burman, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson, 7–18. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2024.
- Böwadt, Pia. "The Courage to Be: The Impact of Lebensphilosophie on Danish RE." *British Journal of Religious Education* 31, no. 1 (2009), 29–39.
- Carlgrén, Ingrid, Kirsti Klette, Sigurjón Mýrdal, Karsten Schnack, and Hannu Simola. "Changes in Nordic Teaching Practices: From Individualised Teaching to the Teaching of Individuals." *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 50, no. 3 (2006), 301–26.

- Dahlberg, Gunilla, Sten Pettersson, and Gunnar Åsén. "Pedagogik och föreställningar om omvärlden." In *Makt, kontroll och pedagogik: Studier av den kulturella reproduktionen*, edited by Basil Bernstein, Gunilla Dahlberg and Ulf P. Lundgren. Lund: Liber förlag, 1983.
- Dahlberg, Gunilla, Sven G. Hartman, and Sten Pettersson. *Barn och livsfrågor: Lärares erfarenheter från förskola, lågstadium, fritidshem*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1977.
- Dahlberg, Gunilla. *Context and the Child's Orientation to Meaning: A Study of the Child's Way of Organizing the Surrounding World in Relation to Public, Institutionalized Socialization*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 1985.
- Dodillet, Susanne, and Sverker Lundin. "När skolan blev ett utbildningssystem: Pedagogisk forskning, systemteori och politisk styrning." In *Pedagogikens politik: Utbildningsforskning och utbildningspolitik under efterkrigstiden*, edited by Anders Burman, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson, 115–45. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2024.
- Englund, Tomas. "Nya tendenser inom pedagogikdisciplinen under de senaste tre decennierna." *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige* 9, no. 1 (2004), 37–49.
- Englund, Tomas. "Två artskilda perioder för pedagogisk forskning." *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige* 23, no. 5 (2018), 20–42.
- Falkevall, Björn. *Livsfrågor och religionskunskap: En belysning av ett centralt begrepp i svensk religionsdidaktik*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2010.
- Forsberg, Eva, Elisabet Nihlfors, Daniel Pettersson, and Pia Skott. "Curriculum Code, Arena, and Context: Curriculum and Leadership Research in Sweden." *Leadership and Policy in Schools* 16, no. 2 (2017), 357–82.
- Fägerlind, Ingemar, Gordon Westling, and Sten Pettersson. *Mognad och undervisning i religionskunskap: En sammanställning av några undersökningar samt en del undervisningsmetodiska synpunkter*. Rapport från Pedagogiska institutionen 52, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm. Stockholm: Pedagogiska institutionen, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, 1970.
- Green, Inger, and Sven G. Hartman. *Barns livssituation och livstolkning: Projektpresentation*. Linköping: Linköping Univ., Institutionen för pedagogik och psykologi, 1992.
- Gustavsson, Bernt. *Bildning i vår tid: Om bildningens möjligheter och villkor i det moderna samhället*. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1996.
- Hartman, Sven G. *Eleverna och skolans religionsundervisning: En intresseundersökning på grundskolans mellanstadium*. Stockholm: Pedagogiska inst., Lärarhögsk., 1971.
- Hartman, Sven G. *Barns tankar om livet*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1986.
- Hartman, Sven G. *Lärares kunskap. Traditioner och idéer i svensk undervisningshistoria*. Linköping: Linköpings universitet, 1995.
- Hartman, Sven G. *Små barn i det stora rummet – Om barns kosmologi*. Stockholm: Centrum för barnkulturforskning, 1998.
- Hartman, Sven G. "Hur religionsämnet formades." In *Livstolkning och värdegrund: Att undervisa om religion, livsfrågor och etik*, edited by Edgar Almén, Ragnar Furenhed, Sven G. Hartman, and Björn Skogar, 212–51. Skapande vetande 37. Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2000.
- Hartman, Sven G. "Med eleven i blickfånget – en aspekt av läroplansutvecklingen." In *teoretiska förutsättningar för en livsfrågeorienterad religionsundervisning*, edited by Gunnar Gunnarsson, Kirsten Grönlien Zetterqvist, and Sven Hartman, 83–107. Gem-rapport 7. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2009.

- Hartman, Sven G. "Children Searching for a Philosophy of Life. A Retrospective Review of Six Research and Development Projects." In *Challenging Life: Existential Questions as a Resource for Education*, edited by Jari Ristiniemi, Geir Skeie, and Karin Sporre, 21–45. Münster: Waxmann, 2018.
- Hartman, Sven G. "Lärarytbildningens uppgång och fall – några intryck." *Vägval i skolans historia*, no. 3–4 (2021). <https://undervisningshistoria.se/lararhogskola-uppgang-och-fall-nagra-intryck/>
- Hartman, Sven G., and Sten Pettersson. *Livsfrågor och livsåskådning hos barn: Några utgångspunkter för en analys av barns livsfrågor och livsåskådning samt en presentation av några delstudier inom området*. Stockholm: Högskolan för lärarytbildning, 1980.
- Hartman, Sven G., and Tullie Torstenson-Ed. *Barns tankar om livet*. 3rd ed. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2013.
- Hartman, Sven G., Gunilla Dahlberg, and Sten Pettersson. *Små barn och stora frågor: En probleminventering bland lärare om livsfrågor i förskolan, på lågstadiet och på fritidshem: En rapport från BaLi-projektet*. Rapport från Pedagogiska institutionen 15, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm. Stockholm: Pedagogiska institutionen, Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, 1975.
- Hartman, Sven G., Sten Pettersson, and Gordon Westling. *Vad funderar barn på? Ett försök att inventera mellanstadieelevers tankar och frågor inför tillvaron och världen*. Skolöverstyrelsens rapportserie Utbildningsforskning 3. Stockholm: Utbildningsförlaget, 1973.
- Härnqvist, Kjell. "Comprehensiveness and Social Equality." In *The Struggle for Democratic Education: Equality and Participation in Sweden*, edited by Stephen J. Ball and Staffan Larsson, 18–31. New York: Falmer P, 1989.
- Prytz, Johan. "Towards a New Understanding of Swedish School Reforms: A Sociological Analysis of Textbooks' Role in Reforms of School Mathematics, 1919–1970." *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 10, no. 1 (2023), 145–69.
- Koskinen, Lennart. *Försök till precisering av några termer i livsåskådningsdebatten i avsikt att finna en enhetlig terminologi för BaLi-projektets olika delar*. Stockholm: Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, Stencil, 1975.
- Landahl, Joakim, and Anna Larsson. "Pedagogy and the Humanities: Changing Boundaries in the Academic Map of Knowledge, 1860s–1960s." In *The Humanities and the Modern Politics of Knowledge*, edited by Anders Ekström and Hampus Östh Gustafsson, 81–103. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022.
- Lgr 80, 1980 års läroplan för grundskolan: inledning: mål och riktlinjer*. Stockholm: Liber Förlag/Allmänna förl., 1980.
- Lindensjö, Bo, and Ulf P. Lundgren. *Utbildningsreformer och politisk styrning*. Stockholm: Liber, 2014.
- Lundahl, Lisbeth. "Sweden: Decentralization, Deregulation, Quasi-markets – and Then What?" *Journal of Education Policy* 17, no. 6 (2002), 687–97.
- Lundgren, Ulf P. "Educational Research and the Language of Education." In *The Struggle for Democratic Education: Equality and Participation in Sweden*, edited by Stephen J. Ball and Staffan Larsson, 191–210. New York: Falmer P, 1989.
- Oftedal Telhaug, Alfred, Odd Asbjørn Mediås, and Petter Aasen. "The Nordic Model in Education: Education as Part of the Political System in the Last 50 Years." *Scandinavian Journal of Education* 50, no. 3 (2006), 248–50.

- Osbeck, Christina. *Kränkningens livsförståelse: En religionsdidaktisk studie av livsförståelselärande i skolan*. Karlstad: Karlstads universitet, 2006.
- Osbeck, Christina, Katarina Kärnebro, Annika Lilja, and Karin Sporre. "Children's Existential Questions and Worldviews: Possible RE Responses to Performance Anxiety and an Increasing Risk of Exclusion." *Journal of Religious Education* 72 (2024), 51–72.
- Piepenburg, Sebastian. "Den politiska styrningen av Skolöverstyrelsens och Skolverkets forskningsprogram." In *Pedagogikens politik: Utbildningsforskning och utbildningspolitik under efterkrigstiden*, edited by Anders Burman, Joakim Landahl, and Anna Larsson, 169–91. Huddinge: Södertorns högskola, 2024.
- Prytz, Johan, and Johanna Ringarp. "Local Versus National History of Education: The Case of Swedish School Governance, 1950–1990." In *Transnational Perspectives on Curriculum History*, edited by Gary McCulloch, Ivor Goodson, and Mariano González-Delgado, 131–48. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Richardson, Gunnar. *Svensk utbildningshistoria: Skola och samhälle förr och nu*, 8th revised edition. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2010.
- Ringarp, Johanna. "Skolans lärarkårer." In *Utbildningshistoria: En introduktion*, edited by Esbjörn Larsson and Johannes Westberg. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2019.
- Rosengren, Bodil. *Vad vill Barnstugeutredningen?: Sammanfattning av betänkandet Förskolan, del 2, SOU 1972:27*. Stockholm: Askild & Kärnekull, 1972.
- Selander, Sven-Åke. *Livstolkning: om religion, livsåskådning och etik i skolan i ett didaktiskt perspektiv: en förutsättningsanalys*. Malmö: Lunds Univ., Lärarhögskolan i Malmö, Utvecklingsavdelningen, 1994.
- Sporre, Karin. "Children's Existential Questions—Recognized in Scandinavian Curricula, or Not?" *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 54, no. 3 (2022), 367–83.
- Sporre, Karin, Katarina Kärnebro, Annika Lilja, and Christina Osbeck. "'Livsfrågor' – A Swedish Narrative From the 1960s. What About Its Status in the 2020s?" In *The New Pluralist We in Religious Education: Old Narratives in New Contexts*, edited by Kåre Fuglseth, Ina ter Avest, and Geir Skeie. Münster: Waxmann, 2025.
- Westling, Gordon, and Sten Pettersson. *Barn och religionskunskap: En bok om barn och undervisning med utgångspunkt från arbetet i religionskunskap på grundskolans mellanstadium*. Stockholm: Esselte studium, 1973.
- Ydesen, Christian and Mette Buchardt. "Citizen Ideals and Education in Nordic Welfare State School Reforms." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1450>
- Åström Elmersjö, Henrik. *En av staten godkänd historia: Förhandsgranskning av svenska läromedel och omförhandlingen av historieämnet 1938–1991*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2017.
- Östling, Johan, Niklas Olsen, and David Larsson Heidenblad, eds. *Histories of Knowledge in Postwar Scandinavia: Actors, Arenas, and Aspirations*. London: Routledge, 2020.



Narrativa konstruktioner av klass: Sociala ordningar och positioneringar i läroverkets studentuppsatser under 1900-talets första tre decennier

Johan Wickström & Linn Areskoug

Abstract • Narrative constructions of social class: Social orders and positions in student essays from the Swedish Grammar School during the first three decades of the twentieth century The article studies class formation in Swedish Grammar School, and how the parallel school system contributed to the forming of social classes. The source material consists of student essays dealing with industrialism, the rise of the working class, the labour movement, and the future lives of students from their own perspective. The research questions focus on how the social structures were described in these essays and in what way various discourses from school textbooks influenced the student essays. The study is based on Althusser's concept "interpellation", which is a point of departure in our understanding of the essays as an act in which students negotiate narratives of the textbooks and position themselves within the society. In this discursive act, the working class was constructed as the Other, mainly carrying pejorative characteristics. Furthermore, the student essays paint a picture of the educated upper class, i.e. the social group of students, having the task of morally educating the lower classes. Thus, the student essays bear witness to how young men of the privileged class, positioned themselves in the social topography of their time.

Keywords • social class [social klass], class formation [klassformering], social representation, student essays [studentuppsatser], Grammar School [läroverk]

Inledning och bakgrund

I kölvattnet av den agrara revolutionen och industrialismen utvecklades ett parallellskolesystem i Sverige med skilda skolformer för olika samhällsklasser.¹ Detta system fungerade som en överbyggnad och en del av en ideologisk statsapparat i det framväxande klassamhället,² där skolan inte bara reproducerade befintliga klasskillnader utan också aktivt deltog i konstruktionen av sociala klasser. Parallellskolesystemet bidrog till att forma olika sociala grupper både som "klasser i sig" och som "klasser för sig".³ Det förstnämnda avser klassformering som ett socialt faktum, där grupper etablerades som klasser i relation till produktion och ägande. Det sistnämnda handlar om hur individer konstruerar eller blir medvetna om sin egen och andras klasstillhörighet.

1 Bengt Sandin, *Hemmet, gatan, fabriken eller skolan: Folkundervisning och barnuppfostran i svenska städer 1600–1850* (Lund: Arkiv, 1986); Lars Petterson, *Frihet, egendom, jämlikhet, egendom och Bentham: Utvecklingslinjer i svensk folkundervisning mellan feodalism och kapitalism, 1809–1860* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992); Christina Florin och Ulla Johansson, *"Där de härliga lagrarna gro": Kultur, klass och kön i det svenska läroverket 1850–1914* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1993).

2 Louis Althusser, *Filosofi från en proletär klassynpunkt* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1976).

3 Karl Marx, *Filosofins elände* (Göteborg: Proletärlitteratur, 1981), 186; Magnus Nilsson, "Från klass i sig till klass för sig," *Clarté: Partipolitiskt obunden socialistisk tidskrift* 15, nr 1 (2015).

Klassformeringen skedde således både konkret och ideologiskt.⁴ Parallellskolesystemet fungerade i praktiken som en sorteringsmekanism där en konkret klassformering ägde rum, då de olika skolformerna skapade skilda framtidsutsikter för sina elever. Läroverkseleverna fostrades för intellektuella arbeten, medan folkskolans elever förbereddes för manuella yrken. Läroverken öppnade dörrar till karriärer inom stat, kyrka och näringsliv.⁵ Folkskolan gav inte sådana möjligheter, även om det så småningom etablerades kopplingar mellan folkskolan och läroverken.⁶

Hur skolsystem i kapitalistiska samhällen fostrar vissa barn till arbetare och andra till överordnade positioner i samhället har analyserats i tidigare forskning.⁷ Inom brittisk marxistisk forskning har särskilt E.P. Thompson studerat hur arbetarklassen format sig som en historisk aktör genom kultur och klasskamp.⁸ För svenskt vidkommande finns studier som studerat social representation i läromedelstexter⁹ och studier som har visat att folkskolan präglades av kristen och nationalistisk fostran samt framhöll arbetardygder som punktlighet, skötsamhet och lydnad.¹⁰ Samtidigt är frågan om hur skolans undervisning bidrog till att konstruera, rekonstruera eller ifrågasätta de sociala ordningarna i det framväxande svenska klassamhället förhållandevis obeforskad. Denna artikel bidrar till forskningen genom att undersöka hur läroverkselever i sina studentuppsatser beskrev sociala ordningar i Sverige och hur de placerade sig själva i dessa ordningar.

Den samtida forskningen om klass har ofta formulerats i polemik mot marxistiska klassbegrepp under intryck av feministisk, postmodern och poststrukturalistisk teori.¹¹ Den postmarxistiska klassforskningen utgår i regel från konstruktivistiska klassbegrepp, det vill säga den uppfattar klass i termer av *social klassificering*.¹² Med detta avses att klass skapas genom språkliga konstruktioner på olika arenor.¹³ Denna forskning är kritisk mot äldre statiska klassbegrepp och betonar att sociala ordningar inte

4 Ulf P. Lundgren, *Att organisera omvärlden: En introduktion till läroplansteori* (Stockholm: Utbildningsförl., 1989), 39ff, 52, 65.

5 Esbjörn Larsson och Johan Prytz, "Läroverk och gymnasieskola," i *Utbildningshistoria: En introduktion*, red. Esbjörn Larsson och Johannes Westberg (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2024).

6 1894 bestämdes att realskolans tredje klass motsvarade folkskolans första klass. 1909 kunde folkskoleelever genom att delta i mellanskolan ta realexamen. 1927 blev de första åren i folkskolan i praktiken en bottenskola för alla elever. Se Larsson och Prytz (2024), 143–47.

7 Samuel Bowles och Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

8 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1963).

9 Se Johan Wickström, *Våra förfäder var hedningar: Nordisk forntid som myt i den svenska folkskolans pedagogiska texter fram till år 1919* (Västerås: Edita Västra Aros, 2008); Anne Berg och Esbjörn Larsson, "Diligent and Docile Workers: Descriptions of the Working Poor and the Social Order in the *Läsebok För Folkskolan*, 1868–1920s," *Paedagogica Historica* 59, nr 1 (2023), 19–35.

10 Herbert Tingsten, *Gud och fosterlandet: Studier i hundra års skolpropaganda* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1969); Sven Hartman, *Det pedagogiska kulturarvet: Traditioner och idéer i svensk undervisningshistoria* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2005), 44.

11 För en översikt av klassforskningen, se Peter Calvert, *The Concept of Class: An Historical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982) samt Ulrika Holgersson, *Klass: Feministiska och kulturanalytiska perspektiv* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2011).

12 För en översikt, se Holgersson (2011); Carl-Filip Smedberg, *Klassriket: Socialgruppsindelningen som skillnadsteknologi under 1900-talet* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet), 23–25; David Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998).

13 Holgersson (2011), 31; Smedberg (2022), 26.

är ekonomiskt deterministiska utan att de förhandlas och konstrueras på olika arenor, som i undervisningen med läroböcker.¹⁴ I den här artikeln utgår vi visserligen från att parallellskolesystemet på ett övergripande plan bidrog till reproduktion av klass-samhället, men vi hävdar samtidigt att klassformeringen genom skolväsendet måste förstås som en process där utgången inte är given på förhand. Skolväsendets narrativ om sociala ordningar ser vi som en del av denna klassformering, vilken kan studeras i såväl folkskolans som läroverkets läroböcker. Med didaktisk terminologi förstår vi dessa sociala ordningar som *meningserbjudanden* till eleverna gällande samhället och deras sociala positioner inom det.¹⁵

Läroverkseleverna under slutet av 1800- och början av 1900-talen rekryterades främst ur över- och medelklasserna.¹⁶ Elevernas tolkning av och sociala positionering i relation till dessa meningserbjudanden kan undersökas empiriskt i texter som eleverna själva producerade under sin skolgång. Läroverksstadgorna från 1862 och framåt föreskrev att läroverkseleverna skulle genomföra ett skriftligt prov i form av en uppsats i modersmålet.¹⁷ Dessa uppsatser finns i hög grad bevarade i landsarkiven, och utgör ett rikt material med berättelser om samtiden, samhället och historien. I artikeln studeras studentuppsatser i modersmålet skrivna av läroverkselever under 1900-talets första decennier. Studentuppsatserna som valts ut behandlar samhällsfrågor och innehåller beskrivningar av befolkningen förr och nu.¹⁸ För läroverken finns förteckningar över vilka läromedel som användes i undervisningen, vilket möjliggör ett studium av hur undervisningsinnehåll mottogs och behandlades av eleverna själva.

Syftet med artikeln är följaktligen att studera hur läroverkselever förhandlade de sociala ordningar som erbjöds av läroböckerna och hur de, genom att själva berätta om sociala ordningar, därmed medskapade både klassamhället och sig själva som en "klass för sig"¹⁹. Artikeln ämnar besvara följande frågeställningar:

1. Vilka sociala ordningar med olika sociala grupper förekommer i uppsatserna och hur konstrueras dessa i relation till varandra?
2. Hur förhåller sig uppsatsernas sociala ordningar till meningserbjudandena i de läroböcker som läroverkseleverna läste?
3. Hur positionerar läroverkseleverna sig själva i relation till de sociala ordningar som skildras i uppsatserna?

Material

Det primära källmaterialet består av 37 handskrivna studentuppsatser från läroverken i Uppsala landsarkivs upptagningsområde, nämligen från de högre allmänna läroverken i Uppsala, Strängnäs och Falun samt från den privata, kristna Fjellstedtska skolan

14 Holgersson (2011), 159ff.

15 Se Tomas Englund, "Undervisning som meningserbjudande," i *Didaktik – teori, reflektion, praktik*, red. Michael Uljens (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997).

16 Florin och Johansson (1993), 206.

17 Birger Thorén, "Studentexamen 1864–1963" i *Studentexamen 100 år*, red. Birger Thorén (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1963).

18 John Landquist, *Så skriver man A i modersmålet: 50 A-uppsatser i studentexamen 1946–1951 samt systematisk förteckning över ämnen för svensk uppsats 1864–1951* (Stockholm: Medén, 1951).

19 Nilsson (2015).

i Uppsala.²⁰ För läroverken i Uppsala och Falun finns årsredogörelser där det framgår vilka texter som använts i historieundervisningen, och studien omfattar även några av de läroböcker i historia som uppsatsförfattarna läste under sin tid i läroverket.²¹

Urvalsperioden är den industrikapitalistiska epoken från 1860 till 1930-talet, men samtliga uppsatsämnen som studeras är från 1900-talets första decennier.²² Under en stor del av denna period tilläts endast pojkar att gå i läroverken.²³ Urvalet har dels styrts av vilka uppsatser som är bevarade, dels av ämnesinnehåll utifrån förteckningar över uppsatsämnen för modersmålsskrivningarna under varje termin.²⁴ Eleverna fick välja bland uppsatsämne utifrån en av Skolöverstyrelsen fastslagen lista.²⁵ Uppsatser med ämnen om samhälle, klassfrågor, socioekonomiska förändringar och relationer mellan sociala grupper har inkluderats, men också uppsatser där eleverna självständigt reflekterar kring sig själva och sin framtid.

Eftersom valet var fritt, varierar antalet uppsatser med relevanta ämnen stort mellan läroverken. Långt ifrån alla studentuppsatser finns bevarade. Även om samtliga skrivningar i svenska skulle sparas, är många uppsatser utgallrade. För vissa läroverk finns endast skrivningar bevarade för de år som slutar med 3 och 8. Gallringarna har dock inte skett konsekvent.²⁶ Vi har därför manuellt undersökt vilka uppsatser som finns bevarade genom att beställa in häftena med uppsatser från de aktuella terminerna. Urvalet landade i två kategorier av uppsatser. Den första kategorin skildrar klassamhällets framväxt med ämnen som ”Industrialismens inverkan på samhällsförhållandena” (vårterminen 1919, 19 uppsatser), ”Arbetsgivaren och arbetstagaren” (vårterminen 1930, 12 uppsatser) samt ”Den svenska arbetarklassens väg till politiskt inflytande” (vårterminen 1933, 6 uppsatser). I dessa uppsatser har vi funnit sociala ordningar med tillhörande klassifikationer. Den andra kategorin består av uppsatsämnet ”Vid skiljevägen – två nyblivna studenter samtala om sina framtidsplaner” (vårterminen 1931, 16 uppsatser). Denna kategori ger möjlighet att studera elevernas sociala positionering och hur de skriver in sig i sociala ordningar. Urvalet gör inte anspråk på att vara uttömmande. Däremot inringar avgränsningen ett analyserbart corpus med signifikanta exempel på elevernas sätt att konstruera sociala ordningar.

20 Se Arkivförteckningar för Högre allmänna läroverket i Falun 1643–1966, Högre allmänna läroverkets i Strängnäs arkiv (1850–1966), Högre allmänna läroverket i Uppsala med föregångare, Förteckning över Stiftelsen Fjellstedtska skolans arkiv i Landsarkivet i Uppsala (Riksarkivet).

21 Se Redogörelse för allmänna läroverken i Upsala, Norrtelje och Enköping samt pedagogien i Öregrund under läsåret 1879–80; dito 1880–81; Inbjudning till årsexamen och slutförningarna vid Högre Elementarläroverket i Falun den 3 och 4 juni 1878, del 1. Årsberättelse om Högre Elementarläroverket i Falun; Redogörelse för Uppsala Högre Allmänna läroverk under läsåret 1926–1927; Redogörelse för Högre Allmänna Läroverket i Uppsala under läsåret 1918–1919; Redogörelse för Högre Allmänna Läroverket i Uppsala under läsåret 1929–1930; Inbjudning och Årsexamen och slutförningar vid Högre Allmänna Läroverket i Falun den 3 och 4 juni 1880, del 1. Årsberättelse om Högre Allmänna Läroverket i Falun; Redogörelse för Högre Allmänna Läroverket i Falun Läsåret 1918–1919; Redogörelse för Högre Allmänna Läroverket i Falun Läsåret 1930–1931.

22 Avgränsningen av den industrikapitalistiska perioden i Sverige bygger på Lars Magnusson, *An Economic History of Sweden* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000).

23 Kvinnor fick gå i allmänna läroverk från år 1927, se SCB, *Flickor och pojkar i skolan: En historisk översikt* (Örebro: Statistics Sweden, 2021), 47.

24 Landqvist (1951).

25 Olof Petersson, *Studentexamen* (Stockholm: SNS förlag, 2010).

26 Ina-Maria Jansson, *Lärdom och fostran: En guide till skolarkiven på Landsarkivet i Uppsala*. Landsarkivet i Uppsala, småskriftserie nr 9 (Uppsala: Landsarkivet, 2013), 26.

Studentuppsatserna utgör ett sammanhängande källcorpus och även om vi refererar till enskilda uppsatser har inte uppsatsförfattarna studerats individuellt. Vi har istället studerat uppsatserna tematiskt utifrån artikelns frågeställningar. Vi har heller inte gjort jämförelser mellan läroverken, vilket hade varit möjligt och fruktbart för att studera regionala skillnader. Uppsatserna har skrivits under en period av fjorton år mellan 1919 och 1933. Den politiska händelseutvecklingen under denna period var dramatisk. Det första världskrigets slut, ryska revolutionen, hungerkravaller, klasskonflikter och revolutionsstämningar präglade samtiden, samtidigt som den allmänna rösträtten etablerades och socialdemokratin gjorde sitt segertåg.²⁷ I förekommande fall har vi noterat kronologiska skillnader i uppsatsernas sociala klassifikation och därvid gjort samtidshistoriska noteringar.

Studentuppsatserna i modersmålet är en genre med särskilda karaktärstika. Uppsatserna skrevs som en del av den skriftliga examinationen inför avgångs-, mogenhets- och studentexamen.²⁸ För att få delta i den muntliga prövningen för studentexamen var modersmålsuppsatsen tvungen att bli godkänd.²⁹ Uppsatsen var således viktig för elevernas möjlighet att avlägga examen, och för deras framtid. Vi kan förutsätta att eleverna ansträngde sig för att skriva så bra uppsatser som möjligt. Uppsatsen skrevs för hand i en skrivsal under en tidsrymd av sex timmar³⁰ och bedömdes av läraren som satte betyg och gjorde markeringar i marginalen.³¹ Vid bedömningen togs särskild hänsyn till den språkliga framställningen men efterhand kom det ämnesmässiga att bli mer betydelsefullt.³² Flera forskare har dryftat frågan om hur man bör se på genren studentuppsatser i relation till elevernas författarskap.³³ Frågan är central för föreliggande artikel eftersom vi är intresserade av elevernas egna sociala positionering samt hur de sociala ordningar som de läst om i sina läroböcker behandlas. Vissa forskare har betonat uppsatsernas instrumentella karaktär. Studenterna skrev på ett visst sätt eftersom de skulle bli bedömda.³⁴ Utifrån ett sådant perspektiv har uppsatserna ett lågt källvärde för elevernas "självständiga ventilerande av sina uppfattningar och erfarenheter".³⁵ Förvisso kan man betona att studentuppsatserna kan ses som en strategisk skrivhandling i relation till själva examinationen, samtidigt var uppsatsskrivandet

27 Lars-Arne Norborg, *Sveriges historia under 1800- och 1900-talen: Svensk samhällsutveckling 1809–1992* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 178–93.

28 Denna examen hade olika benämningar under undersökningsperioden. Se Thorén (1963), 90.

29 Evert Ullstad, "Modersmålet," i *Studentexamen 100 år*, red. Birger Thorén (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1963), 90.

30 Thorén (1963), 9.

31 Anna Sahlée och Mikael Kalm, "Bedömningspraktik i förändring. Lärares markeringar i studentuppsatser under 100 år," i *Svenskans beskrivning 37: Förhandlingar vid trettiosjunde sammankomsten Åbo 8–10 maj 2019*, red. Sara Haapamäki, Ludvig Forsman och Linda Huldén (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 2020), 284. Betyget kunde dock fram till år 1910 underkännas av universitetets censorer även om lärarna satt ett godkänt betyg.

32 Lena Lötmarker, *Krian i förvandling: Uppsatsämnen och skrivanvisningar för läroverkets svenska uppsatsskrivning* (Lund: Lunds universitet, 2004).

33 Se exempelvis Kjell Lars Berge, *Skolestilen som genre* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1988), 19; Sten-Olof Ullström, *Likt och olik: Strindbergsbildens förvandlingar i gymnasiet* (Stockholm/Stehag: Brutus Östlings förlag, 2002), 27–29; Christopher Pihl, "Hjältarnas död och frihetens fortbestånd: Historiemedvetande i uppsatser från Högre allmänna läroverket i Uppsala 1930 och 1950," självständigt arbete på avancerad nivå (Sundsvall: Mittuniversitetet, 2016), 6.

34 Berge (1988), 19.

35 Pihl (2016), 6.

också rituellt. Studentexamen var en initiationsrit med syfte att bevisa ”förmågan att bemästra den vuxna, kultiverade borgerlighetens kulturella repertoar och förmågor i en rad avseenden”.³⁶

Vi uppfattar studentuppsatsen både som en sluten och öppen textgenre. Den är sluten eftersom den var instrumentell och bedömdes gällande form och innehåll, men samtidigt är den öppen eftersom det fanns både förväntningar på och en reell möjlighet för eleverna att sätta sin prägel på texterna. Eleverna kunde välja stil, hur ämnet skulle behandlas, vilka källor som skulle åberopas samt i vilken grad de själva positionerade sig i relation till de frågor som behandlades. Detta är särskilt tydligt i ”Vid skiljevägen”, där studenterna förväntas fantisera om framtida möjligheter för människor tillhörande deras egen sociala kategori. Uppsatserna betraktas alltså som en arena där studenterna hade möjlighet att själva narrativt (åter)skapa sociala ordningar och sina positioner inom dessa ordningar om än utifrån uppsatsgenrens begränsningar och med beaktande av att eleverna säkerligen också försökte behaga de bedömande lärarna.

De studerade läro- och läseböcker i historia har använts i de berörda läroverken. Eftersom de är skrivna för undervisningen i en specifik skolform och innehåller vad som ansetts värt att veta inom ett givet område, kan deras sociala narrativ betraktas som starkt normativa med statligt sanktionerad kunskap om samhället.³⁷ Vi studerar avsnitt i böckerna med samhällsskildringar och sociala narrativ som har bäring på berörda uppsatsämnen. Detta är alltså inte en förutsättningslös studie av läromedlens sociala ordningar, utan ett neddyk i meningserbudanden som sannolikt har utgjort avstamp för läroverkselevernars skildringar. Detta leder oss till frågan om hur relationen mellan läroverkseleverna, läromedlens sociala narrativ och staten ska förstås, alltså vilka teoretiska utgångspunkter som styr undersökningen.

Teoretiska utgångspunkter och metod

Teoretiskt bygger artikeln på en kombination av strukturalistisk marxistisk teori och en konstruktivistisk ansats.³⁸ Från strukturalistisk marxism hämtar vi den övergripande synen på att klasstrukturer är reellt förankrade i ägande- och produktionsförhållanden. Detta är den yttersta basen för vilka konstruktioner av sociala grupper som är möjliga. Samtidigt är vi öppna för variationer i hur dessa klasstrukturer formuleras på olika arenor, exempelvis inom skolväsendet.³⁹

36 Ullström (2002), 28.

37 Staffan Selander ”Pedagogiska texter och andra artefakter för kunskap och kommunikation: En översikt över läromedel – perspektiv och forskning,” i *Statens Offentliga Utredningar* (SOU 2003:15, 2003), 184; Niklas Ammert, ”Om läroböcker och studiet av dem,” i *Att spegla världen: Läromedelsstudier i teori och praktik*, red. Niklas Ammert (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2018); Eckhardt Fuchs, Inga Niehaus, Almut Stoletzki, *Das Schulbuch in der Forschung: Analysen und Empfehlungen für die Bildungspraxis* (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2014), 23.

38 Vissa klassforskare har argumenterat för att överge det marxistiska klassbegreppet till förmån för postmodernt influerade klassbegrepp, se Ulrika Holgersson, ”Klass och postmodernism,” *Tidskrift för Genusvetenskap* nr 3–4 (2008).

39 Problemet med hur relationen mellan bas och överbyggnad ska förstås har diskuterats livligt inom marxistisk forskning. Vissa forskare, som Gramsci, Althusser och Thompson, lämnar aldrig tesen om basens primat även om de förespråkar olika grader av autonomi för överbyggnaden. Andra, postmarxistiska forskare som Chantal Mouffe och Ernesto LaClau, har övergett tesen. Se vidare Robert Paul Resch, *Althusser and the Renewal of Marxist Social Theory* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1992), 53–54; Holgersson (2011), 139; Marianne Winther Jørgensen och Louise Phillips, *Diskursanalys som teori och metod* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2000), 25–28.

Vi studerar en begränsad del av klassamhällets framväxt genom att fokusera klassformeringen i läroverkets undervisning, närmare bestämt i en specifik typ av artefakter, nämligen läroverkselevernars uppsatser och deras läroböcker. Parallellskolesystemet betraktas som en överbyggnad i det klassamhälle som växte fram under slutet av 1800-talet och början av 1900-talet. Begreppet *ideologisk statsapparat* hämtas från Louis Althusserns uppdelning mellan den repressiva respektive den ideologiska statsapparaten. Den *ideologiska statsapparaten* utgörs av institutioner, exempelvis skolväsendet, som försökte få befolkningen att uppfatta klassamhälle som legitimt.⁴⁰ Althusser utgick från en gramsciansk förståelse av hegemoni, alltså utifrån frågan om hur samförstånd skapas och upprätthålls med hjälp av ideologiska medel i ett samhälle präglad av motsättningar mellan ägande och arbetande klasser.⁴¹ Ideologi fungerar således medierande mellan maktutövningen och individerna.⁴² I enlighet med Althusser utgår vi från att ekonomin bestämmer innehållet i de ideologiska statsapparaterna ”i sista hand”.⁴³ Inom skolväsendet skedde en ideologisk reproduktion av klassamhället, där eleverna från olika samhällsklasser mötte *meningserbjudanden* om klassamhället. Begreppet synliggör att undervisningens innehåll och dess resultat (i form av elevernas lärande och uppfattningar) inte är samma sak⁴⁴, utan ett erbjudande om mening som eleverna kan förhålla sig till på olika sätt. Särskilt i läroböckernas innehåll om samhälle och historia erbjöds eleverna skildringar av nutida och historiska sociala ordningar, vilka de förväntades bearbeta och internalisera i sina egna förståelser av samhället och deras egen position inom detsamma. Detta skedde explicit när de beskrev samhället i studentuppsatserna. Begreppet *meningserbjudanden* sätter fokus på att läroverkseleverna tillika uppsatsförfattarna kunde förhålla sig till och tolka läroböckernas narrativ med sociala ordningar *på olika sätt* när de producerade egna sociala skildringar. Samtidigt innehöll de statligt sanktionerade läroböckerna auktoritativa och kraftfulla sociala ordningar som läroverkseleverna behövde förhålla sig till när de själva skrev om samhället, vilket leder oss till att även läromedlens sociala narrativ behöver studeras i samband med analys av läroverkselevernars uppsatser.

Vi menar att när läroverkseleverna uppmanades att skriva om samhället så skedde samtidigt en interpellationsprocess. För att komma åt hur individerna internaliserade ideologi myntade Althusser begreppet *interpellation*, förstått som en ”constitutive process where individuals acknowledge and respond to ideologies, thereby recognizing themselves as subjects”.⁴⁵ Vid *interpellationen* blir individerna subjekt, och inrangerade, i en social ordning.⁴⁶ Interpellationen är en händelse där individen ”svarar” på ett rop och i samma stund redan existerar som social varelse inom ramen för en klass-

40 Louis Althusser, ”Ideologi och ideologiska statsapparater,” i *Filosofi från en proletär klassynpunkt*, Louis Althusser (Lund, 1976).

41 Antonio Gramsci, ”Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc,” i *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916–1935*, red. David Forgacs (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 195.

42 Althusser (1986), 162.

43 Resch (1992), 53.

44 Englund (1997); Tomas Englund, ”Om relevansen av begreppet didaktik,” *Acta Didactica Norge* 1, nr 1 (2007).

45 Cindy Nguyen, ”Althusser, Ideology and Interpellation,” in *The Chicago School of Media Technology* (odat), <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/interpellation/> (access 20 augusti 2024)

46 Ibid.

ordning.⁴⁷ Interpellationen är en ständig process och måste förstås holistiskt i relation till läroverkets utbildning, men det är ändå möjligt att betrakta uppsatserna som delar av "svar" på de "rop" (meningserbjudanden om sociala ordningar) som skolan sänt ut. I samma stund som eleverna "svarar" tolkas och omförhandlas skolans narrativ och de bidrar därmed diskursivt till klassformering och deras egen positionering inom samhällets sociala ordningar.

Interpellationen kan förstås med hjälp Michael W. Apples distinktioner mellan tre sorters responser på läromedelstexter, nämligen *dominerade* (dominated), *förhandlande* (negotiated) och *oppositionella* (oppositional) läsningar.⁴⁸ Genom dessa tre begrepp analyserar vi hur uppsatserna tolkar och förhandlar läroböckernas sociala ordningar. Begreppen utgör verktyg för att studera variationen i hur uppsatserna förhåller sig till läroböckernas sociala narrativ. I en *dominerad läsning* övertas budskapet och tendenserna i läroböckerna och behandlas som ett faktum. I en *förhandlande läsning* accepteras visserligen huvudbudskapet, men uppsatsen ifrågasätter eller modifierar någon detalj i läroböckernas framställning, medan en *oppositionell läsning* motsätter sig budskapet och tendenserna i texten.

Den textanalytiska studien består av två delar: I den första delen studeras sociala ordningar i de tre uppsatskategorierna "Industrialismens inverkan på samhällsförhållandena" (1919), "Arbetsgivaren och arbetstagaren" (1931) samt "Den svenska arbetarklassens väg till politiskt inflytande" (1933). Olika versioner av sociala ordningar kartläggs samtidigt som uppsatsernas socionym, sociala klassifikation och hierarkisering undersöks. Med *socionym* avses namn och beteckningar på de olika sociala grupper som skildras i uppsatserna.⁴⁹ Med *social klassifikation* avses vilka egenskaper som knyts till de sociala grupper vilka befolkar de sociala ordningarna. Utöver detta undersöks hur studentuppsatserna förhåller sig till läroböckernas meningserbjudanden. I den andra delen studeras hur eleverna skriver fram sin egen sociala position i relation till de sociala ordningarna. Dessa uppsatser tillhör kategorin "Vid skiljevägen" (1931). Artikeln avslutas med en sammanfattande diskussion där studiens frågeställningar diskuteras.

Sociala ordningar under industrialismens framväxt

Meningserbjudanden om industrialismen och dess sociala konsekvenser förekommer i de flesta läroverksläroböcker från hela undersökningsperioden. Dikotomin mellan "arbetare" och "arbetsgivare" förekommer även som rubrik i en av de tidiga historieläroböcker som läroverkseleverna läste under den aktuella perioden.⁵⁰ Flera andra läroböcker skildrar industrialismens framväxt och dess sociala konsekvenser i form av nya klasser.⁵¹ Även i själva uppsatsrubrikerna förekommer sociala ordningar, vilka

47 Ibid.

48 Michael W. Apple, "The Text and Cultural Politics," *Educational Researcher* (1992), 10.

49 Begreppet är hämtat från Wickström (2008), 165.

50 Claes Theodor Odhner, *Lärobok i fäderneslandets historia samt grunddragen av Norges och Danmarks historia för realskolan* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1908), 297.

51 Se exempelvis J.R. Pallin, *Lärobok i fäderneslandets historia för allmänna läroverkens högre klasser* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1918), s. 273; A. Rydfors, *Allmän historia för realskolor, samskolor, flickskolor o.d.* (Stockholm: C.E. Fritzes Bokförlags Aktiebolag, 1912), 314–15; J.R. Pallin och Gustaf Jacobson, *Lärobok i nya tidens historia för allmänna läroverkets högre klasser* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedts & Söner, 1925), 216–18.

också ska ses som meningserbjudanden. Rubriken "Arbetare och arbetsgivare" (1930) anslår en social dikotomi och i "Den svenska arbetarklassens väg till politiskt inflytande" (1933) förekommer ett klassbegrepp. Det finns negativa värderingar av industrialismen i läroböckernas narrativ, men ingen tydlig legitimering av sociala hierarkier per se. Det är därför intressant att konstatera att uppsatserna gör förhandlade läsningar genom att avge förklaringar till de sociala ordningarna med att antingen förstärka eller tona ned sociala motsättningar. De flesta uppsatserna från tidsperioden anslår att det existerar sociala ordningar och berättar hur de har växt fram och förändrats över tid.⁵² De flesta uppsatserna tar dock inte sin utgångspunkt i ett avlägset förflutet, utan skildrar i enlighet med uppsatsrubrikerna framväxten av en ny social ordning i samband med industrialiseringen och framväxten av arbetarrörelsen.⁵³ Flera uppsatser från såväl 1910-talet som 1930-talet förankrar sina sociala ordningar i naturen⁵⁴ eller historien.⁵⁵ Linderman (1930) gör en historiserande tolkning:

Sedan urminnes tider, så långt historien går tillbaka, ha alltid den ena människan gjort den andra till sin slav och tjänare. Över denne har hon sedan styrt med egen-mäktig hand. Slaven har att utföra det så kallade "grovgröt", medan husbonden skördat frukterna av mödan.⁵⁶

Här proklameras att social skiktning alltid har ägt rum och kategorierna "slav" och "husbonde" förankras i ett långt förflutet. Tydligast motiveras dock en social skiktning i Holmgren (1919) som framhåller det ovillkorliga i social över- och underordning:

Det har alltid funnits 'stark' och 'svag', herre och slav, över- och underklass. Den ena människan är mindre väl utrustad än den andra, fysiskt och intellektuellt, och hon dukar följaktligen under för den starkare och blir dennes tjänare [...] Slaveriet upphävdes, men icke så skillnaden mellan stark och svag; över- och underklass funnos ändå: frälse och ofrälse [...] istället kom skillnader mellan arbetare och icke arbetare. Livet är således en strid mellan starka och svaga, en kamp för tillvaron, och det är ju alldeles givet, att det icke är frivilligt och utan knot, den svage underkastar sig den starke eller finner sig i sin underordnade ställning.⁵⁷

Citatet belyser en deterministisk och socialdarwinistiskt präglad syn på den sociala ordningen, där skillnaden mellan stark och svag förklarar såväl förflutna som samtida sociala ordningar. Enligt uppsatsen kan inte sociala hierarkier utplånas, men mildras.⁵⁸ Socialdarwinismens idé att kampen om tillvaron även innefattar människans värld⁵⁹ är

52 Se exempelvis Johansson (1919); Matsson (1919); Holmgren (1919); Åkerfeldt (1930); Blomkvist (1930); Svensson (1930); Olsson (1933); Björkgren (1933).

53 Detta gäller i stort sett alla uppsatser. Det finns några undantag, exempelvis Enderlein (1927) som har en subjektiv beskrivning som inleds med läsning av morgontidningens rubrik om strejk och strejkbrytare.

54 Johansson (1919).

55 Holmgren (1919); Linderman (1930).

56 Linderman (1930).

57 Holmgren (1919).

58 Johansson (1919).

59 Richard Weikart, "Was Darwin or Spencer the Father of Laissez-Faire Social Darwinism?" *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 71 (2009), 21.

dock inte det enda ideologiska inslaget i framskrivningen av de sociala ordningarnas fundament. Det finns också exempel på motsatsen, nämligen uppsatser som skildrar ursprungstillståndet som ett egalitärt samhälle bestående av ”fria män”,⁶⁰ vilket samtidigt förstås implicerar en osynliggjord kategori av ”ofria män”. Det finns också belägg för sympatier för forntidens arbetare, vilka sägs ha behandlats godtyckligt i relation till samtidens arbetare.⁶¹ I andra fall framställs det förflutnas sociala hierarki som mer harmonisk då arbetaren var sin egen arbetsgivare.⁶² Ljungar (1919) beskriver ett idealiskt förhållande mellan ”mästare och gesäller, arbetare och arbetsgivare” i det förflutna.⁶³ Samtliga dessa yttranden är formulerade under mellankrigstiden, då Sverige präglades av stora klassmotsättningar mellan konservativa och radikala grupper.⁶⁴ När socialdemokratin fick regeringsställning under början av 1920-talet framträdde motsättningarna mindre tydligt.⁶⁵ Arbetarrörelsens och liberalernas krav på rösträtt och jämlikhet bildar dock en fond mot vilken vi kan förstå ytterlighetspositionerna i uppsatsernas motiveringar till den sociala ordningen vilken skildras på två huvudsakliga sätt: som en agrart baserad ordning eller som en skrämmässig social ordning.

En ursprunglig agrar social ordning

Ett vanligt motiv i skönlitteratur från sekelskiftet är negativa skildringar av industrialismen där det finns ett tydligt ”före” och ”efter” med moraliska konsekvenser för människorna. En samtida trop för industrialismens konsekvenser var att ställa lantlig lycka och ett enkelt liv på egen gård i skarp kontrast till en olycklig och rotlös kosmopolit.⁶⁶ Tropen återkommer i läroböckerna i form av ett meningserbjudande om industrialismens konsekvenser. Läroboken Pallin och Jacobson (1925) beskriver såväl positiva som negativa följder av industrialismen. Industrin skapade arbetstillfällen och bekvämligheter.⁶⁷ Samtidigt skildras hur industrins människor förlorat fotfästet ”och hemfallit åt en oro och rastlöshet, som ej befordrar det som plägar kallas lycka” och lider av ”missmod, missnöje och jäktande”. Det förekommer förvisso positiva utsagor om industrialiseringen i uppsatserna, men tyngdpunkten ligger på det negativa, vilket visar en förhandlande hantering av läroböckernas meningserbjudande.

Den agrara sociala ordningen innebär att ursprungstillståndet är ett jordbrukssamhälle befolkat av ”vår stora, redbara och fosterlandsälskande bondeklass”,⁶⁸ ”landsbyggens arbetsfolk”,⁶⁹ ”den kraftiga och friska lantbefolkningen”,⁷⁰ ”bonden och drängen”,⁷¹

60 Svensson (1927).

61 Andersson (1927).

62 Åkerfeldt (1927).

63 Ljungar (1919).

64 Norborg (1995), 76.

65 Ibid.

66 Linn Areskoug, *Den svenske mannens gränsland: Manlighet, nation och modernitet i Sven Lidmans Silfverståhlsvit* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2011).

67 Pallin och Jacobson (1925), 217.

68 Bergengren (1919).

69 Tunell (1919).

70 Ibid.

71 Ghylenius (1919).

”bonde”,⁷² ”friska människor”,⁷³ ”bondesöner”,⁷⁴ ”en gammal folkklass med historiska anor”,⁷⁵ ”lantbrukarna”,⁷⁶ ”husbonden”,⁷⁷ ”gamla samhällsklasser”,⁷⁸ ”jordbrukare”,⁷⁹ ”adel”,⁸⁰ ”de fyra stånden”,⁸¹ ”bondeklassen”,⁸² ”Bonden” tillskrivs en rad positiva egenskaper och är den sociala kategori som bildar norm i jordbrukssamhället i linje med den bondeidealiserings som präglade det tidiga 1900-talets samhälle i Sverige.⁸³ Samtidigt placeras ”bonden” i flera fall in i en agrar social ordning där det också finns andra sociala grupper. Såväl stånd- som klassbegreppet används också för den agrara sociala ordningen i texter från hela undersökningsperioden.

I flera uppsatser beskrivs den ursprungliga ordningen som harmonisk och idyllisk. Särskilt i några tidiga uppsatser idealiseras bönderna som social grupp samtidigt som uppsatserna undviker konfliktperspektiv. I Vallin (1919) skildras ett urtillstånd i Uppland där huvudnäringen var jordbruk och där alla ”höllo tillsammans som en familj”.⁸⁴ Yttrandet måste förstås mot bakgrund av den turbulenta politiska situationen i det samtida Sverige. Hungersnöd och kravaller, hot om revolution och krav på allmän och lika rösträtt hade förstärkt klassmotsättningar och klasskamp retorik. När Vallin (1919) manar till sammanhållning istället för splittring utgör det ett samtidspolitiskt inlägg. Samtidigt formulerar uppsatsen en kritik mot den kapitalism som är förbunden med industrialiseringen. Landet befolkades ursprungligen av ”folk av den gamla stammen”⁸⁵ vilka kontrasteras mot ett ”nytt släkte” av ”mammonsdyrkare”.⁸⁶ Det är inte endast kritik mot ”kapitalisterna” som är förhanden i uppsatserna, även den framväxande arbetarklassen klassificeras negativt. I Kilian (1919) konstateras att industrialiseringen haft både positiva och negativa konsekvenser. Inledningsvis skildras positiva aspekter av förändringen, där bönderna får nya tekniska redskap, men efter ett par år märks de negativa konsekvenserna. Uppsatsen nämner växande barnaskaror med barn som är fula i munnen och har trasiga kläder, sjukdomar, fattigdom, sjunkande inkomster, slitsamt arbete, avundsjuka, bristande laglydnad, bristande gudstro, nöjeslystnad och jakt efter rikedomar.⁸⁷ Om människorna sägs att de ”lämnar ’allas vår moder’ och skyndar att giva sina krafter i industriens tjänst”.⁸⁸ Uppsatserna gör en förhandlade läsning av läroböckernas mer balanserade narrativ, och konstruerar den framväxande

72 Kilian (1919); Ljungar (1919); Ericsson (1930).

73 Kilian (1919).

74 Ibid.

75 Ljungar (1919).

76 Ljungwe (1919).

77 Lindermalm (1919).

78 Olsson (1930).

79 Björkgren (1930).

80 Ibid.

81 Larsson (1930).

82 Ibid.

83 Se Wickström (2008), 313ff. för en översikt.

84 Vallin (1919).

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Kilian (1919).

88 Ibid.

industriarbetarklassen med pejorativa egenskaper och attribut. Som samtidsideologiska uttryck i en tid präglad av stora klassmotsättningar framstår uppsatsernas narrativ om en förlorad, harmonisk agrar ursprungsordning som högtintressanta.

En skråmässig social ordning

Den andra versionen av ett socialt ursprungstillstånd beskrivs som en skråmässig social ordning då hantverksskrået förändras i och med industrialiseringen. Läroböckernas meningserbudanden var såväl talrika som disparata.⁸⁹ Vissa lärobokstexter beskriver hur lärlingar fick motta stryk och vilka begränsningar som fanns i skråsystemet.⁹⁰ Andra neutraliserar maktrelationerna: "I hantverkets och skråväsendets dagar hade det ej varit någon sträng skillnad mellan arbetsgivare och arbetstagare. [...] De hade alla samma intresse, bodde i samma hus och arbetade i samma verkstad."⁹¹ I uppsatserna befolkades skråsamhället av tre sociala grupper i fallande ordning, nämligen "mästare",⁹² "gesäller"⁹³ samt "lärlingar" eller "lärlingar".⁹⁴ Även begreppen "hantverkare"⁹⁵ och "hantverkets utövare"⁹⁶ förekommer. I några uppsatser används också begreppet "arbetare"⁹⁷ och "arbetsgivare"⁹⁸ vilket är förståeligt utifrån de normerande uppsatsrubrikerna. Samtliga socionymmer förekommer under hela undersökningsperioden, så det finns ingen tydligt kronologisk tendens. Den sociala klassifikationen av grupperna inom den skråordningen är sparsam. I någon uppsats fastslås att "mästaren" hade makt och uppsikt över gesäller och lärlingar.⁹⁹ I övrigt betonar flera uppsatser att det rådde ett patriarkaliskt förhållande mellan mästare, gesäller och lärlingar.¹⁰⁰ I några fall uttrycks att det fanns ett ömsesidigt ansvar och ett personligt intresse i relationen.¹⁰¹ I någon text sägs att gesällerna och lärlingarna skulle bli sin egna herrar¹⁰² eller så uttrycks att mästaren visserligen var överordnad, men att han "stod i själv i arbetet som arbetarna."¹⁰³ Det sistnämnda yttrandet kan tolkas som en jämlikhetstanke applicerad på ursprungsordningen. Men det finns också uppsatser som beskriver de patriarkala maktförhållandenas fördelar:

89 Se exempelvis Odhner (1908), 276, 297–98; Rydfors (1912), 314.

90 Odhner (1908), 314.

91 Rydfors (1912), 314.

92 Johansson (1919); Ljungar (1919); Åkerfeldt (1930); Svensson, E (1930); Svensson, O (1930).

93 Ibid.

94 Johansson (1919); Åkerfeldt (1930); Svensson, E (1930).

95 Holmgren (1919); Gustavsson (1919).

96 Eneman (1930).

97 Ljungar (1919); Svensson, O. (1930); Haglund (1930).

98 Haglund (1930).

99 Svensson (1930).

100 Gustavsson (1919); Svensson, E. (1930); Haglund (1930).

101 Ljungar (1919).

102 Åkerlund (1930).

103 Svensson (1930).

Hos mästaren ingick i lönen så mycket, som man ej satte värde, medan man hade det, men som man så mycket mera saknade, då det var borta. Gesällen hade levat rätt bekymmerslös som medlem av mästarens familj och hade ej behövt bry sig om varken husrums-, mat- eller klädbekymmer.¹⁰⁴

Det fåtal uppsatser som behandlar skråordningen förhandlar således läroböckernas divergerande meningserbjudanden. Uppsatserna konstruerar narrativ som i flera fall betonar den egalitära dimensionen i relationen mellan arbetsgivare och arbetstagare genom att neutralisera och idyllisera den sociala ordningen. Dessa förhandlande läsningar som osynliggör kritik mot skråsystemet och dess avarter inrangeras i en större berättelse där den skråmässiga sociala ordningen med dess sociala relationer framställs som bättre än den framväxande, samtida sociala ordningen.

En samtida social ordning

Både den agrara och den skråmässiga sociala ordningen används för att teckna bilden av ett harmoniskt uttillstånd som bryts upp genom framväxten av den nya och samtida sociala ordning som huvudsakligen, men inte alltid, skildras pejorativt. Uppsatserna använder en rad olika begrepp för den samtida sociala ordningen som helhet och samhällets indelning i olika sociala grupper. I några uppsatser används de allmänt hållna begreppen "befolkningen"¹⁰⁵ och "inbyggarna",¹⁰⁶ men det finns också exempel där den sociala hierarkin är uttalad, exempelvis i "sociala rangskillnader".¹⁰⁷ Klassbegreppet används genomgående i uppsatserna från 1919 till 1930-talet, och det finns ingen kronologisk tendens i klassbegreppets nyttjande under undersökningsperioden. Flera uppsatser använder kort och gott begreppet "klass",¹⁰⁸ men det förekommer än mer frekvent i kombinationen "samhällsklass"¹⁰⁹ samt i kombinationer som "folkclass"¹¹⁰ och "över- och underklass".¹¹¹ Hur ser denna samtida sociala ordning ut? Vilka klasser befolkar samhället?

Arbetare

I elevernas läroböcker skildras relationen mellan arbetare och arbetsgivare. Det är en påfallande nyanserad och icke-pejorativ bild av arbetarna som framträder. Genomgående skildras arbetarnas krav som förståeliga utifrån deras utsatta position samtidigt som lärobokstexterna är noga med att framhålla att arbetarna har fått det bättre under senare tid.¹¹² Samtidigt tar lärobokstexterna avstånd från samhällsomstörtande rörelser som socialism och anarkism som uppkommit i kölvattnet av industrialismens och arbe-

104 Johansson (1919).

105 Tunell (1919); Kilian (1919).

106 Hallén (1919).

107 Björkman (1919).

108 Näslund (1919); Gustafsson (1919); von Reidlich (1919); Björkgren (1933); Westerberg (1933).

109 Tunell (1919); Tolstoy (1919); Björkman (1919); Lindström (1919); Ljungar (1919); Ljungwe (1919); Enderlein (1930); Olsson, O (1933); Ericsson (1933); Larsson (1933); Lindgren (1933).

110 Holmgren (1919).

111 Ibid.

112 Se exempelvis Odhner (1908), 298–99; Pallin och Jacobson (1925), 217.

tarnas krav.¹¹³ I en lärobok sägs att de sociala missförhållanden som lett arbetarna till socialism, anarkism och syndikalism har bemötts av "det moderna samhället" genom socialpolitiska åtgärder som arbetarskydd, försäkringar och pensioner m.m.¹¹⁴ Som vi påtalat tidigare präglades 1900-talets första decennier av utpräglade klassmotsättningar. I läroböckernas narrativ framförs en förståelse för arbetarnas utsatta position, men böckerna neutraliserar samtidigt klasskonflikten genom att beskriva hur arbetarna har fått det bättre samtidigt som de kritiserar radikala ideologier. Huvuddelen av de undersökta uppsatserna är primärt upptagna med att skildra arbetarklassens framväxt, karaktär och ståndpunkter vilket är anmärkningsvärt eftersom det potentiellt sett hade varit möjligt att i lika hög grad skildra och diskutera framväxten av medelklassen och borgerligheten och dess betydelse för samhällsutvecklingen. Sådana skildringar förekommer, men får inte lika stort utrymme.

I uppsatserna tillskrivs den sociala gruppen "arbetare" flera olika socionyper. Många uppsatser använder de allmänna "arbetarklass",¹¹⁵ "verklig arbetarklass",¹¹⁶ och "arbetarkåren",¹¹⁷ men det förekommer också bestämningar av yrkesinriktningen, såsom "industriarbetare",¹¹⁸ "fabriksarbetare",¹¹⁹ "grovarbetare",¹²⁰ och den "kroppsbetande klassen".¹²¹ Flera socionyper konstruerar en obestämbart massa, närmast ett slags pöbel, vilket kan ses i socionyper som "arbetarskaror",¹²² och i det pejorativa "de naiva samhällslagren".¹²³ I något fall används det marxistisk influerade socionyper som "arbetarproletariat", "proletariat" samt de "egendomslösa klasserna".¹²⁴ De flesta belägen för detta finns i 1919 års uppsatser, alltså i nära anslutning till den ryska revolutionen. Undantaget är en uppsats från 1930 som tydligt präglas av en saklig men positiv inställning till arbetarrörelsen.¹²⁵ Det förekommer också socionyper som verkar vara influerade av uppsatsämnenas dikotomi men som inte nödvändigtvis klassificerar "arbetare" i socioekonomisk mening, nämligen "löntagare"¹²⁶ och "arbetstagare".¹²⁷ I nästan samtliga uppsatser skildras en manlig social grupp. I några uppsatser omtalas

113 Se exempelvis Pallin (1918), 273.

114 Pallin och Jacobson (1925), 220.

115 Hallén (1919); von Reidlich (1919); Lindström (1919); Gustavsson (1919); Ljungar (1919); Andersson (1930); Enderlein (1930); Eneman (1930); Hellsvik (1930); Olsson (1933); Björkgren (1933); Ericsson (1933); Larsson (1933); Lindgren (1933); Westerberg (1933).

116 Gustavsson (1919).

117 Lindström (1919).

118 Holmgren (1919); Bergengren (1919); Tunell (1919); Näslund (1919); von Reidlich (1919); Ljungwe (1919).

119 Johansson (1919); Lehlin (1930); Westerberg (1930).

120 von Reidlich (1919).

121 Westerberg (1933).

122 Tunell (1919); Lindström (1919).

123 Holmgren (1919).

124 Johansson (1919).

125 Westerberg (1933).

126 Björkman (1919); Enderlein (1930).

127 Svensson (1930).

dock "fabriksarbeterskor"¹²⁸ respektive "arbetarflickor",¹²⁹ men också "husmödrar" och "mödrar".¹³⁰

Klassificeringen av arbetare som kollektiv och individer är rikhaltig gällande såväl utseende och karaktärsegenskaper. Även miljöbeskrivningar ingår i klassifikationen. Beskrivningen av arbetarnas miljö och situation är samstämmig under hela undersökningsperioden. Däremot förekommer olika typer av läsningar av arbetarna. En oppositionell respons till läroböckernas balanserade klassifikation finner vi under hela undersökningsperioden, med en tonvikt i de äldre uppsatserna. I dessa uppsatser finns talrika beskrivningar av arbetarnas utseende. Män, kvinnor och barn beskrivs som "bleka",¹³¹ "magra",¹³² "smutsiga",¹³³ "osnygga",¹³⁴ "svaga",¹³⁵ samt som "sjukliga", "hälsovådliga" och "osunda".¹³⁶ Beskrivningen av fysiska karaktäristika är pejorativ, exempelvis i beskrivningen av "den moderne arbetargentlemanen" med "cigaretten mellan läpparna" och "klädd efter sista modet".¹³⁷ Hustrun är "en arbetarflicka som aldrig lärt sig sköta ett hem, och hon är ungefär lika usel som han i alla avseenden."¹³⁸ Inga fysiska förtjänster lyfts fram, utan det är genomgående negativa beskrivningar som förekommer. Detta har sin motsvarighet i flertalet skildringar av arbetarnas karaktärsegenskaper och beteenden. Arbetarna beskrivs som råa och fula i munnen,¹³⁹ begivna på rusdrycker,¹⁴⁰ karaktärssvaga,¹⁴¹ självhävdande¹⁴² och naiva.¹⁴³ De är obildade och okunniga.¹⁴⁴ Arbetarkvinnorna är förstörda både till "kropp och själ" av arbetet i fabrikena.¹⁴⁵ I några fall beskrivs också arbetarna som ett "svagt släkte" eller som en svagt utrustad skara¹⁴⁶, som försummar hem och barnuppfostran¹⁴⁷ och är njutnings- och nöjeslystna varelser som lever utsvävande liv.¹⁴⁸ De är lata eller saknar arbetsglädje¹⁴⁹

128 Bergengren (1919).

129 Hallén (1919).

130 Israelsson (1919).

131 Hallén (1919); Holmgren (1919); Kilian (1919).

132 Holmgren (1919).

133 Israelsson (1919).

134 Bergengren (1919).

135 Holmgren (1919); Bergengren (1919); Tunell (1919); Ljungar (1919).

136 Kilian (1919); Bergengren (1919); Gustavsson (1919); Blomqvist (1930); Larsson (1933); Ljungar (1919); Svensson (1930); Westerberg (1933).

137 Hallén (1919).

138 Ibid.

139 Hallén (1919); Kilian (1919).

140 Hallén (1919); Svensson (1930); Åkerfeldt (1930).

141 Hallén (1919).

142 Gustavsson (1919); Lehlén (1930).

143 Holmgren (1919).

144 Gyhlenius (1919); von Reidlich (1919).

145 Bergengren (1919).

146 Tunell (1919); Bergengren (1919); Holmgren (1919).

147 Hallén (1919); von Reidlich (1919); Bergengren (1919); Israelsson (1919); Kilian (1919).

148 Bergengren (1919); von Reidlich (1919); Israelsson (1919); Kilian (1919).

149 Israelsson (1919); Åkerfeldt (1930).

och är ute för att tjäna så mycket pengar som möjligt.¹⁵⁰ Beskrivningar av arbetare som råa, smutsiga, obildade och styrda av känslor var, enligt tidigare forskning, ett vanligt inslag i borgarklassens självmedvetande under den aktuella perioden.¹⁵¹

I uppsatsernas oppositionella läsning av läroböckernas sympatier med arbetarnas situation reproduceras en borgerlig diskurs om arbetarklassens behov av disciplinering. Arbetare och arbetarrörelsen kom sedan att anamma dess ideal inom ramen för vad historiker har kallat ”den skötsamma arbetaren”.¹⁵²

Några uppsatser lyfter i skildringen av socialismen också fram arbetarnas fientlighet mot kristendomen.¹⁵³ I något fall framställs också socialismen som orsak till att de ursprungligt ”medgörliga” arbetarna började bråka och ställa krav.¹⁵⁴ Enligt Hellsvik (1930) har arbetarna förmåner som de inte lyckas förvalta varvid de blir klandervärda:

Arbetarna ha fått bättre levnadsförhållanden, men huru använda de sig av sina förmåner? Många av dem slösa bort sin avlöning, så fort de fått den. De leva endast för dagen och tänka ej på att spara en slant till ålderns dagar. Under tiden ropa de efter högre löner, och det finns ju arbetare, som aldrig lyckas bli nöjda.¹⁵⁵

Här gör uppsatsen en oppositionell läsning av läroböckernas utsagor om att arbetarna under senare tid fått det bättre. Enligt Israelsson (1930) är arbetarna giriga, slösaaktiga och omoraliska människor, offer för kamrattryck och begivna på osunda nöjen, varvid deras fysiska och moraliska karaktär tecknas på nedsättande vis.¹⁵⁶ Uppsatsernas negativa skildringar av arbetarna har ingen direkt motsvarighet i lärobokstexternas meningserbjudanden, vilka snarare skriver fram en förståelse för arbetarnas utsatthet.¹⁵⁷

Den pejorativa tendensen är dominerande under hela undersökningsperioden, men det finns också andra läsningar. Dessa motbilder utgör med Apples terminologi dominerade läsningar på läroböckernas beskrivning av arbetarnas svåra situation.¹⁵⁸ Den mer positiva klassificeringen av arbetare förekommer främst i uppsatser från 1930-talet. Det är intressant mot bakgrund av socialdemokratins segertåg under 1920-talet, och den allmänna rösträttens införande under samma årtionde. Arbetarrörelsens politiska inflytande verkar ha gjort intryck på uppsatsförfattarna, som i flera fall lyfter fram arbetarnas goda egenskaper. Vi har inte undersökt uppsatsförfattarnas sociala bakgrunder, men det finns tydliga sympatier för arbetarrörelsen bland 1930-talets

150 Israelsson (1919); Kilian (1919); Enderlein (1930); Eneman (1930).

151 Anne Berg, ”En demokratisk revolution: De tidiga arbetarorganisationerna och formandet av demokrater från 1840-tal till 1880-tal,” i *Utbildningens revolutioner: Till studiet av utbildningshistorisk förändring*, red. Anne Berg et. al. (Ödeshög: SHED, 2017), 86; Gary Day, *Class: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2001), 36–38.

152 Björn Horgby, *Egensinne och skötsamhet: Arbetarkulturen i Norrköping 1850–1940* (Stockholm: Carlssons förlag, 1993); Ronny Ambjörnsson, *Den skötsamma arbetaren: Idéer och ideal i ett norrländskt sågverkssamhälle 1880–1930* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2001).

153 Hallén (1919); Gustavsson (1919).

154 Hellsvik (1930).

155 Ibid.

156 Israelsson (1930).

157 Pallin och Jacobson (1925), 298.

158 Ibid., 217.

läroverkselever. Uppsatserna berömmar arbetarnas organisationsförmåga, beslutsamhet och starka självkänsla.¹⁵⁹ I Lehlin förklaras arbetarnas ”självhävdelse” utifrån hur arbetarna förr behandlades av arbetsgivaren under kapitalismens logik.¹⁶⁰ Uppsatsen prisar socialdemokratien för att ha omdanat arbetarna från vild strejk till organiserat och lugnt arbete för sin sak. På detta förlorade den enskilde arbetaren

ekonomiskt men ingalunda moraliskt, om jag så får säga. Städat och hyfsat gick arbetaren tillväga. Med båda parter medgivande var det allmänt spritförbud under tiden strejken pågick. Denna kamp kostade vårt land åtskilliga miljoner kronor, men den hade visat världen, hur lugnt den svenska arbetaren kämpade för sin sak.¹⁶¹

I en uppsats från 1930 tillskrivs arbetarna ökad ”bildning och klassmedvetande”.¹⁶² Efter att ha skildrat arbetarnas miserabla förhållanden tillägger uppsatsen att arbetarna bemäktigade sig med ”en stark revolutionär anda, ett bittert hat mot det kapitalistiska samhället, ett väl utbildat klassmedvetande och en kraftig solidaritetskänsla”.¹⁶³ I en annan uppsats från samma år finns en motbild till den oppositionella läsningen av arbetaren som slösaktig då författaren berättar att nöden kan infinna sig trots flit och sparsamhet.¹⁶⁴ Samtidigt tillägger uppsatsförfattaren att fattigdomen är lättare att bära för en fattig eftersom ”om man ständigt varit fattig [...] [m]an vet då inget annat om.”¹⁶⁵ Generellt sett verkar de uppsatsförfattare som klassificerar arbetarna mer positivt etablera en bild av arbetarna i samtiden som mer hyfsade än tidigare arbetare, vilket också är i linje med läroböckernas meningserbudanden om statens ingrepp för att förbättra för arbetarna.¹⁶⁶

Arbetsgivare

Det finns ett tydligt meningserbudande i läroböckerna som berör den ekonomiska klyftan mellan arbetare och arbetsgivare. I Odhner (1908) omtalas ”dessa nödlidande arbetarmassor”.¹⁶⁷ I Pallin (1918) fastslås att ”Storindustrien och börsspelet hava skapat ofantliga rikedomar, i förhållande till vilka fattigdomen och nöden [hos arbetarna] framstår som ännu mer upprörande”.¹⁶⁸ Meningserbudanden betonar alltså arbetsgivarnas rikedom i kontrast till arbetarnas fattigdom. I uppsatserna är klassificeringen av arbetsgivarna i jämförelse med arbetarna mindre omfattande och variationsrik, trots att arbetsgivarna närmast undantagslöst skildras i samband med framställningen av arbetarna. I flera uppsatser från 1919 beskrivs inte ”arbetsgivarna” överhuvudtaget.¹⁶⁹ Den knappa, i vissa fall obefintliga, klassifikationen av ”arbetsgivare” medför att när

159 von Reidlich (1919); Andersson (1930); Åkerfeldt (1930).

160 Lehlin (1930).

161 Ibid.

162 von Döbeln (1930).

163 Ibid.

164 Haglund (1930).

165 Ibid.

166 Odhner (1908), 299.

167 Ibid., 298.

168 Pallin (1908), 273.

169 Vallin (1919); Hallén (1919); Levén (1919); Bergengren (1919); Kilian (1919).

industrialismens eller arbetarklassens framväxt och egenskaper skildras, blir det ett ensidigt fokus på arbetarklassen samtidigt som övriga klassers betydelse tonas ned. Senare uppsatser har emellertid i större utsträckning mer utvecklade klassifikationer av arbetsgivarna.

Nästan samtliga uppsatser som skildrar denna sociala grupp använder socionymen "arbetsgivare". Några socionymen synes etablera ett tredelat klassamhälle genom att omtala "medelklassen"¹⁷⁰ och "överklass"¹⁷¹ i relation till arbetarna. Socionymerna konstrueras i flera fall utifrån rikedom, ägande och sysselsättning, såsom "de besuttna klasserna",¹⁷² "fabriks- och bruksägarklass",¹⁷³ "fabriksägare"¹⁷⁴ "industriidkare",¹⁷⁵ "byggmästare"¹⁷⁶ samt "den, som ägde fabriker, gruvor eller andra produktionsmedel".¹⁷⁷ Det är alltså ägare av fabriker, gruvor, bruk och byggnader som ingår i den sociala gruppen. Den sistnämnda socionymen är tydligt influerad av klasskamp retorik, vilken också återkommer i "kapitalister",¹⁷⁸ privilegierad samhällsklass,¹⁷⁹ "den liberala borgarklassen"¹⁸⁰ samt "borgerliga".¹⁸¹ I något fall konstrueras gruppen i motsats till "arbetare" som "icke-arbetare"¹⁸² respektive "de bildade klasserna".¹⁸³ Det förekommer direkt nedsättande socionymen som "fin[a] Herr[ar]"¹⁸⁴ och "storpamparne",¹⁸⁵ men också sådana som värderar arbetsgivarna positivt genom att betona deras lärdom och resurser, såsom "de bildade klasserna"¹⁸⁶ respektive "lönegivare".¹⁸⁷ Det går inte att belägga någon kronologisk förändring bland socionymerna. De socialistiskt influerade klassbegreppen förekommer såväl i tidiga som senare uppsatser från undersökningsperioden.

När det väl sker en social klassifikation beskrivs gruppen som rik eller förmögen.¹⁸⁸ Detta utgör en dominerad läsning av läroböckernas meningserbjudanden. I övrigt följer den sociala klassifikationen av arbetsgivarna två motstridiga linjer.

Den ena linjen följer i huvudsak läroböckernas dominerade meningserbjudande om arbetsgivarnas överdådiga rikedom. I flera fall beskrivs rikedom som en orättvisa. Holmgren (1919) konstaterar:

170 Tunell (1919); Olsson (1933); Ljunggren (1933); Björkgren (1933)

171 Holmgren (1919).

172 Mattsson (1919).

173 Gustavsson (1919).

174 Gustavsson (1919); Gyhlenius (1919); Eneman (1930); von Döbeln (1930).

175 Tolstoy (1919).

176 Åkerfeldt (1930); Svensson (1930).

177 Blomqvist (1930).

178 Björkman (1919).

179 Ibid.

180 Ericsson (1933).

181 Tolstoy (1919).

182 Holmgren (1919).

183 von Reidlich (1919).

184 Kilian (1919).

185 Ibid.

186 von Reidlich (1919).

187 Enderlein (1930).

188 Mattsson (1919); Gustavsson (1919); Lindermalm (1930); Haglund (1930).

Arbetsgivaren erhåller, vill det tyckas, utan strängt arbete eller något arbete alls den största förtjänsten. Visserligen ha de en viss vilja att stå, men orättvist kan det tyckas i alla fall. Dessa penningar använda de ofta på njutningar, lyx och nöjen och detta, medan stora skaror kanske svälta.¹⁸⁹

I en annan uppsats uttryckligen att "fabriksägarna, [...] ofta låta vinstbegäret taga överhand över rättskänslan."¹⁹⁰ De beskrivs även som "hänsynslösa industriidkare"¹⁹¹ vilka "ensamma fingo njuta frukterna av sina underlydandes arbete".¹⁹² Vi kan erinra oss om att dessa yttranden formuleras med hungerkravallerna år 1917 i färskt minne.¹⁹³ Några uppsatser talar uttryckligen om en kapitalistisk utsugning av arbetarna från arbetsgivarnas håll. Lindermalm (1930) talar om "den despotiska kapitalismen".¹⁹⁴ I Björkman (1919) sägs att arbetarna behandlades efter fabrikanternas gottfinnande, och att det "tedde sig som ett fullkomligt utsugningssystem på arbetarnas bekostnad."¹⁹⁵ Svensson (1930) hävdar att "arbetsgivarna kräva alltför mycket arbete för en lön, som var minimal. Arbetarna blevo därför föremål för en hänsynslös utsugning och exploatering."¹⁹⁶ Lindermalm (1930) anger i klandrande ton att " [...] de, som ej led nöd, det var arbetsgivarna! Tack vare arbetarna skaffade de sig dessa oerhörda inkomster och grundlade millionförmögenheter. Kapitalismen växte fram på industrialismens bas".¹⁹⁷ Dessa yttranden kan ses som dominerade läsningar på ett tydligt meningserbjudande i läroböckerna och som kritiserar arbetsgivarna då flera av dem berör den ekonomiska klyftan mellan arbetare och arbetsgivare. Samtidigt sticker utsagorna ut eftersom de avslöjar långtgående sympatier hos läroverkseleverna för arbetarklassens situation och krav. Under 1900-talets första decennier fördubblades antalet studenter i läroverken.¹⁹⁸ Möjligen har den breddade rekryteringen satt avtryck i läroverkselevernas uppfattningar om samtidens sociala och politiska konflikter.

Den andra linjen i uppsatserna gör oppositionella läsningar av läroböckernas meningserbjudanden och tar tydligt parti för arbetsgivarna gentemot arbetarna. I en uppsats från 1919 fastslås att medelklassen drabbats hårdast av de stigande löner och ökade matpriser som blivit en konsekvens av arbetarnas "häpnadsväckande" lönekrav.¹⁹⁹ Det är ett anmärkningsvärt yttrande avgivet två år efter de stora hungerkravallerna. Men även under 1930-talet, präglad av socialdemokratins vinnande av regeringsmakten och kohandeln med Bondeförbundet, finns uppsatser som tar ställning för arbetsgivarna mot arbetarnas krav. I Andersson (1930) berättas att ett storföretag

189 Holmgren (1919).

190 Gustavsson (1919).

191 Tolstoy (1919).

192 Ibid.

193 Håkan Blomqvist, *Potatisrevolutionen och kvinnoupploppet på Södermalm 1917: Ett historiskt reportage om hunger och demokrati* (Stockholm: Hjalmarsson och Högberg förlag, 2017).

194 Lindermalm (1930).

195 Björkman (1919).

196 Svensson (1930).

197 Lindermalm (1930).

198 Henrik Skrak, *Folket moget förklarar: Det demokratiska genombrottet i svenska läroböcker 1920–2010* (Lund: Lunds universitet), 48.

199 Tunell (1919).

gjort stora uppoffringar för sina arbetare i form av donationer och sommarstugebygge. Uppsatsen präglas av en välvillig paternalism, men arbetarna ser inte mellan fingrarna med arbetsgivarens snedsteg och konstruerar arbetsgivaren som en garant för de otacksamma arbetarnas liv och välfärd och framställs som den närande sociala gruppen i samhälle:

[m]ånga gånger söker han [arbetsgivaren] att komma i intim kontakt med sina arbetare och lära känna dem och förstå deras levnadsvanor, för att med mera förståelse sätta värde på det arbete, de utföra under hans ledning. [...] Det är han, som genom goda handelsavtal och andra affärsförbindelser söker hålla orderströmmen uppe, och är därför den, som ej minst ivrar för de underlydandes välfärd [...] otack är världens lön.²⁰⁰

Uppsatsernas polariserade konstruktioner av arbetsgivarna kan förstås mot bakgrund av den turbulenta politiska situationen i Sverige under 1900-talets första decennier med stora klassmotsättningar. Vi ser också en spridning av dominerade läsningar och oppositionella läsningar.

Sociala positioneringar

I de hittills analyserade uppsatserna har eleverna skrivit fram befintliga sociala ordningar. Hur fabulerar studenterna om tänkbara sociala positioner för sig själva och andra i en nära framtid? I uppsatsämnet "Vid skiljevägen" skildrar läroverkseleverna ett samtal om framtiden mellan två nybakade studenter. Eleverna skriver fram sina potentiella framtider och därmed sig själva i sociala ordningar, vilket gör att uppsatserna kan ses som en del av en interpellation. Nedan undersöker vi vilka sociala positioner i form av yrken som eleverna skriver fram, vilka egenskaper som tillskrivs dessa olika positioner och hur de knyts till sociala ordningar.²⁰¹

Vilka framtider tänker sig studenterna? De yrken som uppsatserna nämns är, i fallande skala, "präst",²⁰² "lärare",²⁰³ "läkare",²⁰⁴ "affärsman",²⁰⁵ "jurist" eller "advokat",²⁰⁶ "tandläkare",²⁰⁷ "professor",²⁰⁸ "ingenjör", "bergsingenjör" eller "väg- och vattenbyggnadsingenjör",²⁰⁹ "bankman" eller "bankdirektör",²¹⁰ "journalist" eller "tidningsman",²¹¹ "flygare",²¹²

200 Andersson (1930).

201 Endast i en uppsats skriver en författare fram sig själv som en av de samspråkande studenterna genom att använda sitt eget namn, se Eriksson (1931).

202 Bergh (1931); Wetterberg (1931); Eriksson (1931); Alenius (1931); Haglund (1931); Sjöstrand (1931).

203 Bergh (1931); Wetterberg (1931); Forsell (1931); Wally (1931); Westman (1931).

204 Bergh (1931); Haglund (1931); Kemner (1931); Östergren (1931).

205 Eriksson (1931); Kemner (1931); Wally (1931); Isenberg (1931).

206 Bergh (1931); Wetterberg (1931); Isenberg (1931); Sjöstrand (1931).

207 Sjöstrand (1931); Östergren (1931); Isenberg (1931).

208 Bergh (1931); Kemner (1931).

209 Bergh (1931); Reuterswärd (1931).

210 Bergh (1931); Kemner (1931).

211 Wetterberg (1931); Östergren (1931).

212 Bergh (1931); Wetterberg (1931).

”officer”,²¹³ ”apotekare”,²¹⁴ ”idrottsproffs”,²¹⁵ ”gymnastikdirektör”,²¹⁶ ”sjukgymnast”,²¹⁷ ”kemist”,²¹⁸ ”apotekare”,²¹⁹ ”bonde”,²²⁰ ”direktör”,²²¹ och ”godsägare”.²²² Elevernas interpellation, alltså svar på det metaforiska rop om framtiden som uppsatserna utgör, blir en provkarta på prestigefyllda och välavlönade medel- och överklassyrken. Med undantag av ”bonde” (och kanske ”godsägare”) nämns uteslutande borgerligt intellektuella yrken i avsaknad av ansträngande kroppsarbete. Uppsatserna konstruerar alltså sin framtida sociala positionering i kontrast till den kroppsarbetande arbetarklassen, till vilken den också i många uppsatser också har en moraliskt uppfostrande funktion. Klassifikationen av framtidens yrken är dock inte odelat positiv utan avslöjar både förhoppningar och farhågor om framtiden. Flera uppsatser vittnar om elevernas osäkerhet inför framtiden genom att konstatera att det råder konkurrens om arbeten och svårigheten att få anställning.²²³ Dessa yttranden kan tolkas mot bakgrund av den stora massarbetslösheten under 1930-talet, vilken alltså gör avtryck i uppsatserna.

Många uppsatser etablerar en dualism mellan traditionella yrken associerade med det förflutna, tradition, stabilitet, trygghet och landsbygd och mer moderna yrken knutna till framtid, modernitet, äventyr, pengar, industri, stadsliv och utlandsvistelser. I dialogerna tar ofta den ena studenten en mer traditionell position, vilken den andra studenten utmanar med mer våghalsiga och moderna framtidsplaner.²²⁴ Exempelvis beskriver Eriksson (1931) hur en av studenterna ämnar bli prästvigd och få ”något trevligt och fridfullt pastorat på landsbygden” medan den andre avser att studera på handelshögskola, få anställning på en finare firma och få möjlighet att resa till utlandet.²²⁵ I Wally (1930) väljer den trygga studenten istället lärarbanan, medan den mer vågade ämnar bli affärsman, fara till Sydamerika och tjäna pengar.²²⁶ Det är genomgående lärar- och prästyrkena som beskrivs som traditionella och trygga. Det är särskilt lärare i moderna språk som beskrivs som ett traditionellt alternativ i flera uppsatser,²²⁷ men även lärare i naturvetenskap förekommer.²²⁸ Det framställs i något fall som tråkigt²²⁹ och i ytterligare fall som hopplöst att ”proppa i dumma ungar”²³⁰ kunskap. I

213 Westman (1931); Östergren (1931).

214 Bergh (1931).

215 Ibid.

216 Ibid.

217 Ibid.

218 Ibid.

219 Wetterberg (1931).

220 Alenius (1931).

221 Hultgren (1931).

222 Isenberg (1931).

223 Bergh (1931); Wetterberg (1931); Alenius (1931); Haglund (1931); Sjöstrand (1931); Hultgren (1931); Segnestam (1931).

224 Bergh (1931); Wetterberg (1931); Eriksson (1931); Haglund (1931); Sjöstrand (1931); Hultgren (1931); Kemner (1931); Segnestam (1931); Westman (1931); Isenberg (1931).

225 Eriksson (1931).

226 Wally (1931).

227 Berg (1931); Forsell (1931); Segnestam (1931); Westman (1931).

228 Forsell (1931).

229 Westman (1931).

230 Bergh (1931).

en uppsats framställs grekiska och latin som förlegat²³¹ medan aversionen i en annan uppsats riktas mot språk till förmån för geografi och biologi.²³² I de flesta fall tänker sig uppsatsförfattarna en framtid inom läroverket,²³³ men det finns också framtidsblickar mot en akademisk karriär.²³⁴

Klassificeringen av prästerna är mångtydig. I en uppsats säger sig en av studenterna vara "för revolutionär för vår konservativa statskyrka."²³⁵ I en annan uppsats påstås det att det inte är så kinkigt med prästens kall,²³⁶ medan en tredje anslår yrkets vidgade arbetsfält och stora ansvar som ett problem.²³⁷ I samma uppsats spås kyrkan skiljas från staten varvid prästerna kommer att få det svårt att få arbete.²³⁸ Prästerna knyts alltså såväl till agrar stabilitet och lugn som till en förändrad arbetssituation. Flera uppsatser anslår att prästerna har en viktig folkuppfostrande uppgift. I Haglunds (1931) dialog har den ene studenten blivit bedrövad av de "lägsta klassernas"²³⁹ primitiva liv i stadens gränder, varför han skulle bli en präst med en uppgift:

Särskilt de unga och gamla skulle han arbeta för. Det var ungdomarna, som framtiden skulle byggas på. Hos dessa måste ett sedligt religiöst begrepp inplanteras redan från barndomen. Man måste lära sig tala sanning, Man måste lära sig arbeta och göra sin plikt. Man måste bli handlingskraftig och självständig. Genom att inpränta detta skulle det uppväxande släktet gå en ljusare framtid till mötes. Det skulle få en större kärlek till hemmet. Hemmet skulle inte blott bi en boplat, utan en plats, till vilken man kände längtan, en plats, där man kunde känna vila för både kroppen och själen. Blevde hemmet allt detta, skulle inte så många dragas till dansbanor och uti dåliga sällskap.²⁴⁰

Samma klassifikation av arbetarklassens omoraliska leverne som i uppsatserna om arbetarrörelsen förekommer alltså i uppsatser om läroverkselevernars egna framtida värv. Samtidigt som läroverkselevern klassificerar "lägre klasser" negativt positionerar de sig som moraliskt mer högtstående med en uppgift att uppfostra. Detta är i linje med läroverkets klassformerande funktion att uppfostra eleverna till ledande positioner i samhället.

Inte endast prästen har ett uppfostrande kall. Läkare bör inte endast ägna sig åt kropp och själ, utan också arbeta "mot de sjukdomar, som angripa samhället, och då närmast dryckenskapen". Vidare sägs att superiet är en samhällsfråga. Uppsatsen etablerar ett samband mellan superi, minskad arbetsinkomst, arbetslöshet, fattigvård och fängelser. Barnen ärver sina supande föräldrars brister. Den som tagit studentexamen sägs ha en uppgift, och att det är läkarens plikt att arbeta mot alla sjukdomar, med vilka förstås såväl kroppsliga som samhälleliga sjukdomar som drabbar lägre klasser.²⁴¹ Läkaryrket

231 Ibid.

232 Westman (1931).

233 Bergh (1931); Forsell (1931); Wally (1931); Westman (1931).

234 Forsell (1931); Wally (1931).

235 Wetterberg (1931).

236 Bergh (1931).

237 Alenius (1931).

238 Ibid.

239 Haglund (1931).

240 Ibid.

241 Ibid.

knyts alltså till en social mission i relation till de arbetande klasserna, men i klassifikationen av läkaryrket finns också en ambivalens. Kemner (1931) tecknar två framtider för blivande läkare. Den mindre tilltalande varianten är att studenten måste "hålla på och läsa och arbeta i cirka tio år för att sedan gå som dåligt betald underläkare på ett sjukhus".²⁴² Det kontrasteras mot "en berömd läkare – kanske professor – med en stor praktik och stora inkomster".²⁴³ Andra uppsatser lyfter tandläkare som ett klokt framtidsval där man via en med.kand kan nå framgång.²⁴⁴

Affärs- och bankmän är framtidsyrken som klassificeras positivt i flest uppsatser. De knyts till framtidstro och till möjligheten att bli rik och att få resa utomlands.²⁴⁵ I samband med beskrivningen av affärsmännens framtid förekommer i en uppsats en fråga som kan tolkas som en interpellation i relation till det kapitalistiska samhället: "Varför skulle icke jag instämma i hela mänsklighetens sug på pengar?"²⁴⁶ Även juristbanan knyts till en tryggad framtid.²⁴⁷ Detsamma gäller ingenjörer, som i en uppsats beskrivs som "rätt högt avlönade".²⁴⁸

Det är en stor bredd i de yrken som avhandlas i uppsatserna. Gemensamt för de flesta är att de aldrig inkluderar den kroppsarbetande arbetarklassen. Elevernas interpellation och klassformering sker alltså i kontrast till den arbetarklass som de i framtiden har att vårda och disciplinera. Vi finner tydliga belägg i uppsatserna för en tudelad beskrivning av elevernas tänkta framtider mellan tradition och modernitet. Den ena är trygg, traditionell och förknippad med landsbygd och präst- och lärarkall. Den andra är äventyrlig, förmögen och förknippad med yrken som affärsman, jurist och ingenjör och ser framtiden an.

Sammanfattande diskussion

Artikeln studerar klassformering inom den ideologiska statsapparaten, nämligen i läroverkets studentuppsatser där läroverksgossarna skrivit fram sociala ordningar och sina egna sociala positioner i det framväxande industrisamhället. Studien visar, med hjälp av Apples (1992) tre distinktioner av läsningar, hur läroverkselever i sina studentuppsatser förhåll sig till läroböckernas meningserbudanden om sociala ordningar och därmed bidrog till att inom ramen för den ideologiska statsapparaten återskapa och legitimera klassamhället.

Utmärkande i uppsatserna är att en tidigare idylliserad tillvaro ersätts av ett nytt och sämre samhällstillstånd. Därtill infinnes sig också en polarisering mellan då och nu, i vilken friska bönder ställs mot förklenade arbetare. Detta ställs i relation till läroböckernas meningserbudanden som visar både sympati för arbetarnas utsatthet och strävanden och avståndstaganden från radikala rörelser. Uppsatserna uppvisar således en *oppositionell respons* till läroböckernas mer nyanserade narrativ, genom sina pejorativa klassificeringar av arbetarna. Här klassificeras arbetarna negativt gällande såväl utseende som karaktärsegenskaper. Till skillnad från arbetarna ser vi i beskriv-

242 Kemner (1931).

243 Ibid.

244 Sjöstrand (1931); Östergren (1931); Isenberg (1931).

245 Bergh (1931); Wally (1931); Kemner (1931); Segnestam (1931).

246 Kemner (1931).

247 Sjöstrand (1931).

248 Reuterswärd (1931).

ningarna av arbetsgivarna en *dominerad respons* på det meningserbjudande som förekommer i läroböckernas narrativ, vilket tar ställning mot arbetarnas nöd och mot den stora ekonomiska klyftan mellan arbetare och arbetsgivare. Från och med 1930-talet förekommer ett slags oppositionell interpellation som istället tar ställning för arbetarklassen både gällande egenskaper och politiska strävanden. Här skildras en medveten, bildad och mer städad arbetarklass lugnt kämpade för sin sak och bilden av den skotsamme arbetaren har slagit igenom i uppsatserna. Vår tolkning är att arbetarrörelsens politiska landvinningar under den studerade perioden har gjort ideologiska intryck hos några läroverkselever.

Läroverkselevernas sociala positionering framträder som allra tydligast i uppsatserna där de skriver om sina framtider under uppsatsrubriken ”Vid skiljevägen”. Uppsatsämnet torde vara inspirerat och tydligt hänsyftande till Georg Stiernhielms lärdomsdikt *Hercules* (1658)²⁴⁹ i vilken den unge hjälten Hercules ställs mellan å ena sidan lättja, kättja och rus och å den andra sidan dygden. Dikten bygger på antika förlagor och har tolkats som en uppmaning till ynglingar att eftersträva ett ädelt liv.²⁵⁰ Vi håller det för sannolikt att läroverkseleverna antingen har läst verket eller har blivit undervisade om det, varvid det dualistiska temat är givet till såväl form som innehåll. Den sociala positioneringen konstrueras närmast uteslutande med borgerliga intellektuella yrken i kontrast till den kroppsarbetande arbetarklassen. Därutöver ser vi hur 1930-talets massarbetslöshet präglar uppsatserna i oron inför framtiden. Polariseringen finns kvar i idylliseringen av den trygga landsbygden mot lockelsen till det moderna affärslivet och utlandsäventyr. I detta spänningsfält mellan tradition och modernitet infinner sig också en paternalistisk hållning till arbetarklassen. När läroverksgossarna ser framtiden an, om än i narrativ form, ser vi en tydlig konstruktion av ett uppdelat samhälle med klasser var för sig. Läroverksgossarna har i det narrativ om samhällets sociala ordningar, befolkade av arbetare och arbetsgivare, som uppsatserna utgör härvidlag deltagit i en interpellation (Althusser, 1976). Simultant positionerar de sig själva som en medel- och överklass med den specifika uppgiften att i framtiden fostra och disciplinera den framväxande arbetarklassen.

Artikelns resultat bidrar till två forskningslägen. Det första handlar om klassformering. Studien visar hur ett marxistiskt klassbegrepp i kombination med en konstruktivistisk ansats synliggör narrativa aspekter av klassformering i ett svenskt utbildningssammanhang. Studien bygger vidare på metoder för att studera social klassifikation som formulerats av konstruktivistisk klassforskning²⁵¹ samtidigt som den inte överger de traditionella klassbegrepp som återfinns i texter av Marx, Althusser och Thompson och som betonar att klassformering ytterst återgår på en materiell verklighet.²⁵² Det andra forskningsläget handlar om sociala representationer i skoltexter. Studien av hur elever förhandlade de sociala meningserbjudanden som de mötte i skolans läroböcker kompletterar den begränsade forskning som tidigare studerat social klassifikation i läroböcker och som därmed endast fokuserat på en del av

249 Georgi Stiernhielmi, *Hercules* (Upsala: Academiae Typog, 1658).

250 Nils Ekedahl, ”Dygdeval och apoteos: Stiernhielms Hercules som dikt och drama,” *Sammlaren: Tidskrift för svensk litteraturvetenskaplig forskning* 121 (2021).

251 Se exempelvis Calvert (1982); Holgersson (2011); Smedberg (2022).

252 Marx (1981); Althusser (1976); Thompson (1963).

hur klass konstruerades i läroverken.²⁵³ Vår studie visar att läroverkseleverna, under intryck av samtida politiska händelser och processer, förändrade sina beskrivningar av klassamhället samtidigt som de genomgående under undersökningsperioden tillskrev sig själva uppfostrande uppgifter gentemot arbetarna. Bidraget till befintlig forskning i fältet består således i att sammanföra två olika teoretiska ansatser i analysen av klassformeringens narrativ och lyfta in och belysa ett tidigare ej undersökt material som också var en väsentlig del av det tidiga 1900-talets klassformering.

Forskningsfinansiering

Artikeln är skriven inom ramen för forskningsprojektet ”Den klasskapande skolan: Det statliga skolväsendet och skapandet av klassidentiteter i skoltexter från 1860–1930” finansierat av Vetenskapsrådet.

About the authors

Johan Wickström is Associate Professor of Studies in Education and Curriculum Studies at the Department of Education, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Email: johan.wickstrom@edu.uu.se.

Linn Areskoug is Senior Lecturer of Studies in Education and Curriculum Studies at the Department of Education, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Email: linn.areskoug@edu.uu.se.

253 Se särskilt Wickström (2008), 306–20, samt Berg och Larsson (2023) med referenser.

Referenser

Otryckta källor

Riksarkivet Uppsala

Högre allmänna läroverket i Falun, F 2 A (Skriftliga prov i studentexamen), vol. 51 (1918–1919), vol. 71 (1930–1931), vol. 75 (1933).

Högre allmänna läroverket i Strängnäs, F II aa (Studentexamen, skriftliga prov, ej gallringsbar serie), vol. 11 (1918–1924), vol. 13 (1929–1931), vol. 14 (1932–1937).

Högre allmänna läroverket i Uppsala med föregångare, F 5 A (Skriftliga prov vid avgångs- och studentexamina), vol. 76 (1919 Vt), vol. 94 (1930 Vt), vol. 96 (1931), vol. 98 (1932–1933 Vt 1933).

Stiftelsen Fjellstedtska skolan, F 4 b (Studentskrivningar), vol. 12 (1919–1921), vol. 16 (1929–1930), vol. 17 (1923–1932), vol. 18 (1932–1934).

Tryckta källor

Odhner, Claes Theodor. *Lärobok i fäderneslandets historia samt grunddragen av Norges och Danmarks historia för realskolan*. Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1908.

Pallin, J.R. *Lärobok i fäderneslandets historia för allmänna läroverkets högre klasser*. Stockholm: P. A. Norstedts & Söner, 1908.

Pallin, J.R och Gustaf Jacobson. *Lärobok i nya tidens historia för allmänna läroverkets högre klasser*. Stockholm: P. A. Norstedts & Söner, 1925.

Rydfors, Anton. *Allmän historia för realskolor, samskolor, flickskolor o.d.* Stockholm: C.E. Fritzes Bokförlags Aktiebolag, 1912.

Litteratur

Althusser, Louis. *Filosofi från en proletär klassynpunkt*. Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1976.

Ambjörnsson, Ronny. *Den skötsamme arbetaren: Idéer och ideal i ett norrländskt sågverkssamhälle 1880–1930*. Stockholm: Carlsson, 2001.

Ammert, Niklas. "Om läroböcker och studiet av dem." I *Att spegla världen: Läromedelsstudier i teori och praktik*, red. Niklas Ammert. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2018.

Apple, Michael W. "The Text and Cultural Politics," *Educational Researcher* 10, 1992.

Areskoug, Linn. *Den svenske mannens gränsland: Manlighet, nation och modernitet i Sven Lidmans Silfverstååhlssvit*. Skrifter utgivna av Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen vid Uppsala universitet, 46. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2011.

Berg, Anne. "En demokratisk revolution: De tidiga arbetarorganisationerna och formandet av demokrater från 1840-tal till 1880-tal," i *Utbildningens revolutioner: Till studiet av utbildningshistorisk förändring*, red. Anne Berg, Esbjörn Larsson, Madeleine Michaëlsson, Johannes Westberg and Andreas Åkerlund. Ödeshög: DanagårdLITHO Ab, 2017.

Berg, Anne och Esbjörn Larsson. "Diligent and Docile Workers: Descriptions of the Working Poor and the Social Order in *Läsebok för folkskolan*, 1868–1920's." *Paedagogica Historica*, 59, No 1, 2023.

Berge, Kjell Lars. *Skolestilen som genre*. Oslo: Cappelen, 1988.

Blomqvist, Håkan. *Potatisrevolutionen och kvinnoupploppet på Södermalm 1917: Ett historiskt reportage om hunger och demokrati*. Stockholm: Hjalmarsson och Högborg förlag, 2017.

- Bowles, Samuel och Herbert Gintis. *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books, 1976.
- Calvert, Peter. *The Concept of Class: An Historical Introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.
- Cannadine, David. *Class in Britain*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Day, Gary. *Class: The New Critical Idiom*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2001.
- Eckhardt, Fuchs, Inga Niehaus och Almut Stoletzki. *Das Schulbuch in der Forschung: Analysen und Empfehlungen für die Bildungspraxis*. Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2014.
- Englund, Tomas. "Undervisning som meningserbjudande." I *Didaktik: Teori, reflektion, praktik*, red. Michael Uljens. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997.
- Englund, Tomas. "Om relevansen av begreppet didaktik." *Acta Didactica Norge* 1, nr 1 (2007).
- Florin, Christina and Ulla Johansson. '*Där de härliga lagrarna gro*': Kultur, klass och kön i det svenska läroverket 1850–1914. Stockholm: Tiden, 1993.
- Gramsci, Antonio. "Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc." I *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916–1935*, red. David Forgacs. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Hartman, Sven G. *Det pedagogiska kulturarvet: Traditioner och idéer i svensk undervisningshistoria*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2005.
- Holgersson, Ulrika. *Klass: Feministiska och kulturanalytiska perspektiv*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2011.
- Holgersson, Ulrika. "Klass och postmodernism." *Tidskrift för Genusvetenskap* 3–4 (2008).
- Horgby, Björn. *Egensinne och skötsamhet: Arbetarkulturen i Norrköping 1850–1940*. Stockholm: Carlssons förlag, 1993.
- Jansson, Ina-Maria. *Lärdom och fostran: En guide till skolarkiven på Landsarkivet i Uppsala*. Landsarkivet i Uppsala, Småskriftserie nr 9. Uppsala: Landsarkivet, 2013.
- Landquist, John. *Så skriver man A i modersmålet: 50 uppsatser i studentexamen 1946–1951 samt systematisk förteckning över ämnen för svensk uppsats 1864–1951*. Stockholm: Medén, 1951.
- Larsson, Esbjörn och Johan Prytz. "Läroverk och gymnasieskola." I *Utbildningshistoria: En introduktion*, red. Esbjörn Larsson och Johannes Westberg. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2024.
- Lundgren, Ulf P. *Att organisera omvärlden: En introduktion till läroplansteori*. Stockholm: Utbildningsförl., 1989.
- Lötmarker, Lena. *Krian i förvandling: Uppsatsämnena och skrivanvisningar för läroverkets svenska uppsatsskrivning*. Lund: Lunds universitet, 2004.
- Magnusson, Lars. *An Economic History of Sweden*. London/New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Marx, Karl. *Filosofins elände*. Göteborg: Proletärlitteratur, 1981.
- Nguyen, Cindy. "Althusser, Ideology and Interpellation." I *The Chicago School of Media Technology*, <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/interpellation/>, odaterad.
- Nilsson, Magnus. "Från klass i sig till klass för sig." *Clarté: Partipolitiskt obunden socialistisk tidskrift* 15, nr 1 (2015).
- Norborg, Lars-Arne. *Sveriges historia under 1800- och 1900-talen: Svensk samhällsutveckling 1809–1992*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995.

- Petersson, Olof. *Studentexamen*. Stockholm: SNS förlag, 2010.
- Petterson, Lars. *Frihet, jämlikhet, egendom och Bentham: Utvecklingslinjer i svensk folkundervisning mellan feodalism och kapitalism, 1809–1860*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992.
- Pihl, Christopher. "Hjältarnas död och frihetens fortbestånd: Historiemedvetande i uppsatser från Högre allmänna läroverket i Uppsala 1930 och 1950." Självständigt arbete på avancerad nivå. Sundsvall: Mittuniversitetet, 2016.
- Resch, Robert Paul. *Althusser and the Renewal of Marxist Social Theory*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: California University Press, 1992.
- SCB (Statistiska centralbyrån). *Flickor och pojkar i skolan: En historisk översikt*. Örebro: Statistics Sweden, 2021.
- Sahlé, Anna och Mikael Kalm. "Bedömningspraktik i förändring: Lärares markeringar i studentuppsatser under 100 år." I *Svenskans beskrivning 37: Förhandlingar vid trettiosjunde sammankomsten Åbo 8–10 maj 2019*, red. Sara Haapamäki, Ludvig Forsman och Linda Huldén. Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 2020.
- Sandin, Bengt. *Hemmet, gatan, fabriken eller skolan: Folkundervisning och barnuppföstran i svenska städer 1600–1850*. Lund: Arkiv, 1986.
- Selander, Staffan. "Pedagogiska texter och andra artefakter för kunskap och kommunikation: En översikt över läromedel – perspektiv och forskning." I *Statens Offentliga Utredningar* (SOU 2003:15), 2003.
- Skrak, Henrik. *Folket moget förklarar: Det demokratiska genombrottet i svenska läroböcker 1920–2010*. Lund: Lunds universitet, 2019.
- Smedberg, Carl-Filip. *Klassriket: Socialgruppsindelningen som skillnadsteknologi under 1900-talet*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Uppsala Studies in History of Ideas 58. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2022.
- Stiernhielmi, Georgi. *Hercules*. Upsala: Academiae Typog., 1658.
- Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1963.
- Thorén, Bengt. "Studentexamen 1864–1963." I *Studentexamen 100 år*, red. Bengt Thorén. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1963.
- Tingsten, Herbert. *Gud och fosterlandet: Studier i hundra års skolpropaganda*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 1969.
- Ullstad, Evert. "Modersmålet." I *Studentexamen 100 år*, red. Bengt Thorén. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1963.
- Ullström, Sten-Olof. *Likt och olikt: Strindbergsbildens förvandlingar i gymnasiet*. Stockholm/Stehag: Brutus Östlings förlag, 2002.
- Weikart, Richard. "Was Darwin or Spencer the Father of Laizzes-Faire Social Darwinism." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 71 (2009), 20–28.
- Wickström, Johan. *Våra förfäder var hedningar: Nordisk forntid som myt i den svenska folkskolans pedagogiska texter fram till år 1919*. Religionshistoriska forskningsrapporter från Uppsala, 19. Västerås: Edita Västra Aros, 2008.
- Winther Jørgensen, Marianne och Louise Phillips. *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2000.

Book Reviews

Review Editor

Professor Johannes Westberg

Dissertations

Pontus Folkesson

*Att skola en stormakt: framväxten av
1600-talets skolsystem genom lokal-
samhällets aktörer*

Stockholm: Stockholms universitet
(PhD diss.)
2024, 322 pp.

Mycket av svensk utbildningshistorisk forskning under de senaste årtiondena har på olika sätt rört framväxten av den moderna skolan under 1800- eller 1900-talen. Mot bakgrund av detta utgör Pontus Folkessons avhandling *Att skola en stormakt* ett välkommet tillskott då den tar sig an reformeringen av svenskt skolväsende under perioden 1620–1649 i vad han beskriver som framväxten av ett skolsystem.

Syftet med avhandlingen är att analysera skolreformerna under denna period med fokus på frågor som: Varför genomfördes reformerna? Hur såg skolornas ekonomiska förutsättningar ut? Hur tolkades reformplanerna på lokal och regional nivå? Hur såg skolornas elevrekrytering ut?

Utgångspunkten för avhandlingen är tydligt utbildningshistorisk, även om den också tar spjörn mot statsformeringsforskning och urbanhistoria. Teoretiskt hämtas inspiration från läroplansteoretisk forskning rörande 1900-talets skola, även om Folkesson också använder sig av Jan Gletes begrepp intresseaggre-

gering som ett sätt förklara hur olika intressenters intressen koordinerades för att uppnå ett gemensamt mål. Det läroplansteoretiska perspektivet framstår emellertid som det främsta teoretiska redskapet då avhandlingens empiriska delar är uppdelade efter grundbegreppen formulering, förutsättningar, transformering och realisering.

Vad gäller de empiriska studierna ligger huvudfokus på skolorna inom Västerås och Strängnäs stift även om avhandlingen i frågor om exempelvis elevrekrytering också inkluderar skolor i andra stift. Avhandlingen bygger även på en rad olika arkiv som gör att undersökningarna av de utvalda stiftens också belyser såväl centralmaktens som kyrkans och städernas agerande.

Utöver den ovan nämnda indelningen av avhandlingen är de empiriska undersökningarna även uppdelade i tre kapitel varav det andra och tredje empiriska kapitlet i sin tur är uppdelade i två delar. Avhandlingens empiriska undersökningar inleds med ett kapitel om skolreformerna 1620, vilket görs med bland annat utgångspunkt i vad som beskrivs som reformens formuleringsarena. Som Folkesson visar innebar reformen inte bara att det skapades en rad gymnasier i landet utan att detta var en process som skedde i samråd mellan kungen och prästerskapet, där kungen även hade ambitionen att skapa skolor för att utbilda ämbetsmän.

I avhandlingens andra empiriska kapitel som tar upp förutsättningarna för att

genomföra reformen behandlas skolornas finansiering såväl generellt som specifikt för stiftet i Mälardalsregionen. Som framgår av detta kapitel fanns det en rad intäkter som finansierade skolornas verksamhet, varav de viktigaste var kronotondet och sockengången. Genom undersökningarna av skolorna i Mälardalen visar undersökningen att skolreformen innebar att en del skolor i köpstäderna förlorade intäkter när dessa omfördelades till fördel för de nybildade gymnasierna i Västerås och Strängnäs. Detta gjorde att ödet för skolorna i köpstäderna blev avhängigt möjligheten att skaffa annan finansiering.

I det därefter följande kapitlet beskrivs relationen mellan lokal, regional och central nivå i det som benämns en transformeringsfas. Här undersöks såväl domkapitlens och borgerskapets agerande lokalt som deras agerande i relation till kronan. Denna undersökning visar att även om stiftsbiskoparna initialt var ganska ointresserade av köpstädernas skolor kom de med tiden också att agera i deras favör. Vidare går det även att se en förändring i kungamaktens inställning till borgerskapets utbildningsbehov, vilken bland annat visar sig i införandet av en skriv- och räkneklass i trivialskolan.

När det kommer till det som Folkesson beskriver som realisering undersöks det genom en närmare analys av elevrekryteringen inom ramen för det sista empiriska kapitlet. Här undersöks dels elevantalets utveckling samt elevernas geografiska och socioekonomiska bakgrund, dels elevernas utbildningsvägar och synen på skolutbildningens funktion. Dessa studier visar på en ökning av antalet elever under den aktuella perioden samtidigt som det blir tydligt att barn- och trivialskolor hade ett mer begränsat rekryteringsområde medan gymnasierna hämtade sina elever

inom ett område som omfattade hela stiftet. Vidare visar avhandlingen att eleverna framförallt kom från landsbygden och flertalet var bond- eller prästsöner. Till skillnad från tidigare studier kan Folkesson också visa att även bondsöner använde skolan som ett sätt att förbereda sig för en karriär som lärare eller präst. Intressant att märka är även att det under första hälften av 1600-talet till och med uppstod ett överskott på präster.

När Folkesson summerar sin avhandling kan konstateras att det han beskriver som lokala aktörer (borgerskapet och stiftsstädernas biskopar) hade ett stort inflytande över de skolreformer som kom att kodifieras genom 1649 års skolordning. Detta gör att utvecklingen beskrivs som en sammanvävning av olika intressen som kom till uttryck i konflikter och förhandlingar mellan kungamakten, stiftet och borgerskapet. Resultatet av denna process beskrivs vidare som framväxten av ett utbildningssystem där olika skolformer var relaterade till varandra samtidigt som man mot bakgrund av variationer inom olika stift kan tala om förekomsten av regionala skolsystem.

När det kommer till en värdering av avhandlingens bidrag kan framhållas att Folkesson med *Att skola en stormakt* ger ett viktigt bidrag till vår förståelse av 1600-talets skola. Genom grundliga undersökningar av framförallt skolorna inom Västerås och Strängnäs stift bidrar avhandlingen till att vi nu har en mer fullödlig bild av tillkomsten av de skolformer som var utgångspunkten för exempelvis 1800-talets reformer på skolområdet.

Vad gäller avhandlingens teoretiska utgångspunkter och anknytning till tidigare forskning blir dessa aspekter emellertid lidande av bristen på aktuell forskning på området. Detta gör att Folkesson återkommande försöker koppla sin egen forskning till forskning

om skolans utveckling under andra tidsepoker, vilket inte alltid låter sig göras. Tydligast blir detta i försöken att använda sig av läroplansteori för att förklara skolreformerna under 1600-talets första hälft. Som avhandlingens resultat visar kan denna process knappast beskrivas med begrepp som formulerings- och realiseringsarena.

Istället kunde avhandlingen på ett tydligare sätt tagit utgångspunkt i hur tidigare forskning beskrivit den tidigmoderna skolväsendets utformning. Om man exempelvis går till Margret S Archers modell för de moderna skol-systemens framväxt utgör tanken om den tidigmoderna skolan som del av ett mono-integrerat förhållande mellan kyrka och skola, där kyrkan i praktiken monopoliserade makten över skolan och där det var kyrkan som påverkade skolan och inte tvärtom, en utgångspunkt (Archer 2013, s. 60–74). Med stöd i vad *Att skola en stormakt* bidrar med till vår förståelse av den tidigmoderna svenska skolan framstår inte Archers bild av skolan såsom fångad i ett mono-integrerat förhållande som helt tillämplig på svenska förhållanden. I och för sig hade kyrkan stor makt över skolans verksamhet och utformning, men kungamakten kunde även ställa krav och i vissa fall också styra över skolans resurser. Vidare kan noteras att borgerskapet i och för sig hade väldigt lite direkt inflytande över skolan, men det innebar inte att de helt saknade möjlighet att påverka.

Med detta sagt vill jag emellertid framhålla att avhandlingen *Att skola en stormakt* utgör ett viktigt tillskott till forskningen om den svenska skolans historia och med den som utgångspunkt finns det nu möjlighet för fler att ge sig in i forskningen om den tidigmoderna skolan.

Referenser

Archer, Margaret S. *Social Origins of Educational Systems*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

Esbjörn Larsson
Uppsala universitet
esbjorn.larsson@edu.uu.se

Turid Løyte Harboe

«... dyktiggjøre til at danne mennesker»

En kritisk studie av endringer i norsk lærerutdanning 1930–2010

Universitetet i Oslo (PhD diss.)

2024, 316 pp.

Turid Løyte Harboe has written a comprehensive dissertation on the history of Norwegian teacher education 1930–2010. Harboe takes her point of departure in the tradition of new cultural history influenced by Michel Foucault, which has a special interest in the linguistic and power-related dimensions of history (for a contextualization of this tradition, see Westberg and Primus 2023). The focus is on the political debate on eight basic teacher education reforms. In line with such a Foucaultian perspective, a special interest is given to the shifts and changes in the way in which teacher education is understood and discussed.

Harboe's thesis is based on extensive source materials. In line with many studies in this field of research, Harboe has chosen to study government policy and report texts to be able to handle a comparatively long period of study. This source material includes Norway's public inquiries (NOU), parliamentary material from the parliament (*Storting*), laws and regulations, as well as a wide range of other documents concerning various forms of investigations and evaluations. It is an impressive empirical investigation that Harboe has carried out.

After an introductory part, which consists of three chapters presenting the dissertation topic, its method and a historical background on Norwegian teacher education 1826–1929, the results of the dissertation are presented in three parts. The first part (chapter 4) deals with the discussions of the 1930s on teacher

education in connection with two teacher education reforms: LU30 and LU38. This chapter draws attention to the conflict that arose regarding the basis and function of teacher education. Traditionally, teacher education had been regarded as a public education institution, where concepts such as people, the people's culture and nation were central. Nevertheless, the debate during the 1930s shows that teacher education also began to be viewed in new ways. The international context was highlighted, and teacher education was linked to an international competitive situation between states. The scientific basis of teacher education also began to be noticed, and the development of science and psychology was used as an argument for a teacher education reform. Harboe describes this as an expression of an interwar optimism about science, in which, among other things, attention was paid to Wilhelm Wundt's experimental psychology, and where the importance of the teachers' scientific knowledge was emphasized. Science could both help to combat the bad reputation of the old teacher training institutions, and also make teachers more confident in their professional practice.

The question that thus arose was whether teacher education should be based mainly on a national culture, or whether it should be international. This debate also included the question of the position of the English language in teacher education and the development of teacher education during the interwar period. International child psychology, European reform pedagogy and school hygiene came to influence the content of teacher education. With the interest of reform pedagogy and child psychology in children's natural development, Harboe also draws attention to how a conflict was created between the representatives of these ideas, and those who advocated

a religious Christian understanding of education.

In this context, Harboe draws attention to the concept of “two-culture” (*tokultur*) that has been used to describe Norway’s two-tier culture during this period: a Danish-oriented urban and elite white-collar culture, which was contrasted with a rural, Norwegian and hereditary peasant culture. Harboe sees the debate on teacher education as an extension of this discussion and as a struggle over what values the Norwegian nation should be built on.

An important issue that attracted attention during the 1930s was thus also the political role of teacher education. Harboe argues that regardless of political background, the relationship between public education and democracy was emphasized in connection with LU30: democracy requires enlightened citizens who can act as democratic subjects. However, Harboe argues in this regard that the debate had a Danish Grundtvigian starting point, where academic education was not required for taking the role of a citizen. Instead, everyone was equally qualified to participate in the public debate. In this respect, popular education was about realizing such an equal political vision.

As a result, Harboe argues that the purpose of teacher education during this period was that it should form teacher personalities who could strengthen the people’s culture through public information and popular education. The teachers were perceived as cultural personalities and mediators of popular national culture, who intended to develop the people by strengthening their own culture. Therefore, they should also be close to the culture that the children have come to know in their homes.

The second part of the dissertation deals with the period 1945–1987 in two

chapters: chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 has the appropriate title: the welfare state. The starting point is the emerging Norwegian welfare state, with faith in an efficient state administration, the modern social sciences, and the importance of a so-called educational society. The chapter thus deals with how teacher education became an important part of both the development of the Norwegian comprehensive school and of the Norwegian welfare state. Teacher education thus began to be interpreted in utilitarian terms, with an emphasis on the social function of education.

Teacher education thus became less a question of public education and *Bildung*, and more of a question of education and training. An important concept in the debate that Harboe draws attention to here is “general education” (*allmennutdanning*). It was a concept that emphasized that teacher education should convey objective knowledge that could form the basis for teachers’ teaching methods in the classroom. This concept thus placed greater emphasis on teacher education as an education in methods and techniques – a vocational education, that is – rather than a teacher education that developed the teacher’s personality.

Harboe draws attention to how the concept of class teacher became important in the debate. This concept reflected a development in which teacher education would contribute to the development of a socially equal and democratic unified school, where teacher education would develop teachers’ work in school. The teachers should not only convey knowledge but should also be able to meet students with different social backgrounds. In this respect, attention was also paid to the recruitment of student teachers, and voices were raised for a broader social and geographical recruitment of these. Regarding this period,

Harboe also analyzes the discussion around the question of whether teachers should be trained as class teachers or subject teachers.

In this quest to educate teachers who could stimulate the development of all students, regardless of social background, psychological and methodological knowledge became important, according to Harboe. She links this to a widespread scientific optimism in the post-war period, where scientific attitudes were linked to the democratization of post-war Europe. In this context, the concept of applied research, which had previously been used in the United States in medicine and technology, also became important, along with the notions of applied educational-psychological science.

Chapter 6 "Welfare State Criticism" deals with the discussion of teacher education from the beginning of the 1970s to the end of the 1980s. The historical background presented here is the culturally critical social debate related to the student uprisings of the 1960s, the criticism of the Vietnam War, and the emphasis on economic growth that characterized the welfare society in the post-war period. In relation to such a socially critical debate, the question of the autonomy of teacher education vis-à-vis the state was discussed, but also the influence that teachers and students should have over the direction of teacher education. In contrast to a belief in scientific knowledge, a broader concept of practice was now launched, where the interaction between theory and practice was emphasized, and where practical experiences were valued. Concepts of reflective practice were applied, which Harboe links to a broader reflexive turn in the field of professional theory, represented by American theorists such as Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, where the latter's book *The Reflective Practitioner*

How Professionals Think in Action (1983), came to have a major influence on Norwegian teacher education.

The third part of the thesis deals with the period 1988-2010. In chapter 7 "The Knowledge Society," the focus is on the 1980s and early 1990s. The background to the debate on teacher education outlined here consists of the increasing market ideology and the market reforms that are being implemented in Norway, and the discursive changes that are taking place in the public debate. Here, concepts such as the post-industrial society, the information society and the knowledge society gain entry, while at the same time issues of multiculturalism are being addressed.

Harboe also draws attention to a broader educational policy context, where inequality in Norwegian schools is discussed, and poorer learning outcomes in Norwegian schools are criticized. References are made here to the American school crisis report *A Nation at Risk* (1983), which influenced the education policy debate worldwide, and the OECD's criticism of the Norwegian school system.

As a response to this societal and cultural context, the discussion around teacher education changed. In relation to the national and international school crisis debate, and how this was understood in terms of quantifiable and testable knowledge that in accordance with American Human Capital thinking was linked to economic growth, the need to strengthen quality and performance requirements in higher education was presented. At the same time as this neoliberal vision of education and teacher training gained ground, the debate was also marked by a national-conservative turn that emphasized the importance of nation-building and common cultural traditions. Teachers became expected to understand the value of belonging to

a culture and the value of passing this culture on to the next generation. Harboe again links this debate to a broader international context, where the importance of the cultural canon and a “back to basics” thought has been formulated by American neoconservative political thinkers, among others.

In this context, which emphasized knowledge and knowledge requirements, arguments were presented for teachers to be trained as subject teachers, with strong subject knowledge. It was also in this context that the exclusive right of teacher education to train teachers was questioned, and proposals were made that teachers in universities and colleges should also be allowed to teach in school. It was also in this context that the concept of “basic knowledge” becomes important: teacher education should educate teachers who can provide children with basic knowledge that gives students a basic and common cultural understanding.

This also provides an understanding of the changes in how the teacher and its abilities were discussed. During the 1990s, concepts such as the good teacher became important. These were terms that described teachers with an ability to engage students through their personal qualities. Unlike the teachers of the interwar period, this was not about the teacher’s education, but about the teacher’s teaching ability. Rather than emphasizing the teacher’s knowledge, Harboe argues that a kind of craftsmanship ideal was advocated. The teacher’s personality and teaching skills were primarily interpreted as a means for the students to achieve certain knowledge achievements.

In the concluding empirical chapter 8 “Kompetansesamfunnet” (The Competence Society), Harboe discusses the discussion of the teacher education reforms LU03 and LU10. Harboe points

out how these discussions were shaped by concepts of higher quality and better governance, and the discussion that followed the Norwegian results of the PISA surveys. In line with an international debate, this meant that concepts such as knowledge promotion, quality, quality form, and knowledge school became recurring.

In this context, the debate around teacher education continued to change. According to Harboe, professional specialization became central, and the ambition was to create a research-based vocational education with professional weight. The teacher was described as the one who would lead the students’ learning, and the concept of the profession became even more central together with concepts of the teachers’ competencies. The teacher’s competencies – professional competence, development competence, professional ethical competence, didactic competence and social competence – could thus be presented as the core of the teacher’s professional knowledge. Again, Harboe places this in a broader international context, where the OECD-led project “Definition and Selection of Competencies” has developed a theoretical framework for conceptualizing key competencies for the twenty-first century.

As this summary of Harboe’s thesis indicates, it is certainly a good PhD thesis. As with all such theses, critical remarks can nevertheless be made. Questions can be raised about what function the theoretical framework based on Foucault really has in this thesis, and whether other theoretical concepts would have been more useful and given the analysis greater precision. For example, would concepts taken from curriculum theory, history of knowledge, critical policy analysis or studies of educational transfer have given further depth to the analysis? This question is raised not least by the

important role that both trade union and political actors are given in the analysis.

Above all, I would have wished that this thesis was placed in a broader international research field. Studies of, for example, Swedish teacher education and teacher debate (Linné 1996; Persson 2008; Ringarp 2011) would have been able to provide additional context and contribute to the analysis. Further references to international research, would also have enabled Harboe to show the important contributions that this thesis could make to international research on teacher training and education (for an introduction to this research, see Lefty 2019).

However, these remain minor remarks on a very well-executed piece of work. As this review has shown, it is a rich thesis, full of ideas for further study. It is also a thesis that is well-written and well-structured, and consequently easy to read. The choice of a long period of study also appears to be successful: it allows the thesis to make real use of the opportunities for overview that historical studies can offer. This also gives us a better understanding of how teacher education and our way of understanding it has developed over time. Thanks to Harboe's ability for a precise and detailed analysis, we thus gain an understanding of the major changes in the public debate on teacher education.

References

- Lefty, Lauren. 2019. "Teacher Education and Teachers' Colleges." In *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education: Debates, Tensions, and Directions*, edited by Tanya Fitzgerald, 1-15. Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- Linné, Agneta. 1996. *Moralen, barnet eller vetenskapen? En studie av tradition och förändring i lärarutbildningen*. Stockholm: HLS förlag.
- Persson, Sofia. 2008. *Läraryrkets uppkomst och förändring: En sociologisk studie av lärares villkor, organisering och yrkesprojekt inom den grundläggande utbildningen i Sverige ca. 1800-2000*. Göteborg: University of Gothenburg.
- Ringarp, Johanna. 2011. *Professionens problematik: Lärarkårens kommunalisering och välfärdsstatens förvandling*. Stockholm: Makadam.
- Westberg, Johannes, and Franziska Primus. 2023. "Rethinking the History of Education: Considerations for a New Social History of Education." *Paedagogica Historica* 59 (1): 1-18.

Johannes Westberg
University of Groningen
b.a.j.westberg@rug.nl

Caroline Sims

From "the Genius" to 'the Gifted': The Conceptualisations of Giftedness in Educational Discourse in Sweden

Uppsala University (PhD diss.)
2023, 302 pp.

“You must not think you are anything special,” reads the Danish-Norwegian author Axel Sandemose’s (1899–1965) description of the Law of Jante. The Jante Law is a literary critical description of rules of conduct that can be said to define the other side of the Scandinavian egalitarian mentality, where those with better abilities, finances or resources should not believe that they are better than the majority, but instead should show humility and restraint (Sandemose 1936 [orig. 1933]).

Caroline Sims’ PhD thesis *From 'the Genius' to 'the Gifted'* can be read as a problematization of the dominance of the idea of equality in the school system, and an effort to promote giftedness and the gifted child as an important agenda in the Swedish school system. In an era that has focused on measuring student performance through international surveys conducted by operators such as OECD, PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS in recent decades, it may seem obvious to focus on the opportunities for the highly gifted in the school system. Given how much research has focused on testing, special education and inclusion, gifted students appear to be a somewhat overlooked issue. Against this background, Caroline Sims’ thesis is an important and necessary pioneer-work, internationally important and at the same time a particularly Swedish contribution to the analysis of the school system’s handling of the issue of giftedness in the Swedish welfare state that has historically been characterized by the ideal of equality.

Caroline Sims’ thesis is about how giftedness has been conceptualized in the educational reforms in Swedish education from 1820 until 2022. This is a period characterized by two parallel systems which was later integrated into a single school system for all (*grundskolan*), and Sims’ thesis explores giftedness in three different school settings: the Swedish national educational curriculum (*den nationella utbildningen*), the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, and three versions of Peak Program. The analysis in the thesis thus consists partly of a historical text study, and partly of a contemporary study based on interviews with teachers. This study examines how teachers are enacting giftedness in their practice.

The thesis is structured around four research questions: 1) How is giftedness conceptualised in a selection of significant policy documents? 2) How is giftedness conceptualised in a sample of enacted teaching practices? 3) What rationalities are these conceptualisations based on? 4) What tensions, if any, can be found in the conceptualization processes? The thesis is organized into four sections, which are further divided into 14 chapters. Researching giftedness is a complicated matter, partly because of the terminology. How should one, for example, translate the Swedish term *särbegåvning* [special giftedness]. This is translated in the thesis to *giftedness*, which has a slightly different and more general meaning as it simply means to be gifted. Here we are not only dealing with a conceptual but also a methodological and analytical challenge, that Sims is managing in an original way.

Section 1 of the thesis describes the main problems of the analysis, the construction of the analysis and the research field itself to which the thesis positions itself. Through Sims’ thorough

analysis of the concept of giftedness, we understand that we are confronted with a concept that include different meanings depending on the historical context and the practice in which it is embedded. Therefore, Sims argues, the concept must be examined through discourse analysis that relates giftedness to the different *practices* through which the concept giftedness is articulated and attached with meaning. Sims methodologically approaches the complexity of the concept by applying a “cluster model” that contains eleven different meanings and associations to the concept of giftedness: some meanings are, for example, dominant in some periods, while others are predominant in other periods. This model provides the opportunity to both examine 200 years of Swedish school history vertically, but also horizontally in relation to three different contemporary school practices, and at the same time across different types of material such as historical documents and interviews with school professionals.

Sims’ methodology can, consequently, be described as predominantly discourse analytical, constituted through an analytical position that is primarily based on Michel Foucault’s concepts, but which is expanded with the use of related analytical positions such as Stephen J. Ball, Ian Hacking and Peter Conrad. Based on Ball et al, she argues that political agendas are phenomena that cannot be reduced to policy seeping into practice. Instead, educational policy is a phenomenon that is enacted by different agents: policy makers, organization and teachers. This approach becomes particular important in the sections where Sims’ analysis focuses on the contemporary school settings. The perspective inspired by Ball gives Sims the possibility to exemplify that giftedness is enacted through the school system and its professionals,

thus materialized in school settings. This analysis points towards enabling as well as constraining factors in the teachers work with implementing giftedness in their practice.

In addition to the specific analysis of giftedness and the position of the highly gifted in the school system, the thesis thus provides insight into the fundamental and recurring question of how to differentiate between pupils in a school system. The question of how the school should differentiate is a thread throughout the thesis. For example, when it comes to how differentiation should be practically handled according to legislation, and whether differentiation of gifted students should preferably begin early or late in schooling.

Section 2 of the thesis is structured as a text analysis of educational reform documents to answer the research question: How is giftedness conceptualised in selecting significant policy documents? The section is organized into four separate chapters. Chapter 6 analyses documents from 1820 to 1928, researching the parallel Swedish school system covering both the grammar school (*läroverk*) and the early primary school (*folkskola*). Interestingly, the term ‘genius’ appears early in the investigated period, but disappears soon again from the official documents after 1856. According to Sims, discipline was a more important issue in this period than giftedness. The latter hardly appears to be an issue in this period, although some very general categories appear like the students being competent and having extensive knowledge of different subjects.

Chapter 7 explores the period from 1940 to 1968. According to Sims, key elements in this period are integration and psychologization. Two major commissions were appointed in 1940 and 1946 to propose how the school system

could be reformed. Four professors presented their views on the questions of differentiation in the school system. One of these professors, Rudolph Anderberg, argued for early identification of talented students as well as early differentiation so that these students' potentials were not wasted. Instead, it was another of the professors, John Elmgren, who, inspired by Jean Piaget, called for a late differentiation of students, whose viewpoints were included in the reform of the educational policy and the work of the next school commission. These processes of differentiation were also promoted through the general use of psychometric testing and a psychologization of the schooling system enhancing the possibilities of categorizing the students. According to Sims, this whole process of differentiation in these periods of school reform focused on students at risk, neglecting to address those particularly gifted. According to political documents of the period, teachers were encouraged not to set too high expectations towards student performances, avoiding the feeling of failure among students.

This development continued after the introduction of the nine-year comprehensive school in 1962. The discussion concerning giftedness focused on those students with difficulties and neglected those specially gifted. The school system as such, nevertheless tended to benefit those who were gifted. The new development brings the question of differentiation even more into focus in the development of the Swedish school system in the modern era. Chapter 8 analyses this question of differentiation in policy documents from the period 1969 to 2022 with a focus on differentiation on special education and high performance. Key themes that Sims highlights are the ambition to avoid too abstract teaching, to secure the well-being of students,

and the whole idea of individualization, which was connected mainly to students in difficulties rather than high performance students. The general student population and the students in difficulties were given priority.

More recent policy documents from 2009 and onwards seems to present a break with the existing understanding of "school for all" in the school system. This shift took place through the emergence of so-called cutting-edge education. In the Education Act of 2010, a new category of students was described: students who easily reach the minimum knowledge requirements. This was a recognition that some students needed a specific stimulating education to reach their full potential. This was without explicitly mentioning high performance students. The most recent curricula included in this PhD thesis (2022) still reflects typical Swedish values of democracy, diversity and participation, but also includes the ambition to give all student the conditions to "develop the full extent of their ability." Despite these indications of a greater focus on students' potential in the recent period, the specific focus on giftedness and high ability is still quite absent from the curriculum and in the educational policy texts of the period.

In Chapter 9, which is the last chapter in the text analysis of the historical period (1820–2022), the analysis moves to a more horizontal analysis of giftedness in three key operators in contemporary Swedish educational policy: SNAE, (Swedish National Agency for Education, *Skolverket*), Swedish National School Inspectorate and the SPSM (the National Agency for Special Pedagogy). Generally, the documents from SNAE seem to include a comprehensive understanding of giftedness, with several positive attributions such as creative and fast learners. Still however, they are also related to

problematic diagnostic descriptions like being at risk, sensitive or in need of care. The second operator, Swedish National School Inspectorate, reflects a gradually acceptance of giftedness in the selected documents, without applying giftedness explicitly, rather referring to students as highly able, fast in their learning. Contrary to SNAE, the Swedish National School Inspectorate appear more critical towards the lack of possibilities for high ability learners in the schooling system. This is not the case when it comes to the analysis of SPSM, since working with giftedness is not considered a task for special education, rather the focus of SPSM has been students at risk and related diagnostic issues.

The general impression of Sim's historical analysis gives a picture of a lack of focus on giftedness and gifted students. The period 2009–2015 seems to present a higher degree of acceptance of giftedness through categories of high performance and high ability, but still with scarce support for teachers working with gifted students. The documents of the three different operators, with different valuations of giftedness leave, according to Sims, the schools and the teachers with a lack of clarity in the work with gifted students.

Section 3 in the thesis examines the second research questions about how giftedness is conceptualized in contemporary policy making and in different schooling practices, which is analysed through unstructured interviews with three types of teachers: teachers in the Swedish national system stating that they work with gifted students, teachers on the IB Diploma Program and teachers teaching in the Peak Program. The analysis in the section draws on Ball's theories of enacting. The first chapter in the section, chapter 10, examines the teachers' practices in relation to issues

of factors enabling or constraining the teachers work with giftedness. The analysis of the interviews points hints at some common factors enabling the work with giftedness such as the importance of allocating resources to this and giving this priority through training, support, meetings etc. The teachers in the IB Diploma Program and those teaching in the Peak Program benefit from the existing structures in their educational policies. In the analysis Sims hints at a common constraint in the sample which "is an expectation of conformity or a force acting on initiatives that are helpful to gifted students to bring them back into line with the general curriculum" (Sims 2023, p. 182). The chapter gives the impression that making giftedness a priority in the school structure and policy as well as dedicated principals is key in making the work with giftedness successful in practice.

In chapter 11 Sims addresses the specific lesson strategies towards gifted students in the three different school settings aiming to challenge the students. In the National Education, the teachers' main methods were acceleration of the learning processes, and enrichment, for example through motivating student's curiosity. In the sample from the IB Diploma Program, factors like acceleration, ability grouping and enrichment activities were built into the program, which Sims claims enhanced high expectations towards the students. Critical thinking and independent work in the program are other elements contributing to the high expectations, according to Sims. Some of these features also apply to the teachers in the Peak Program. Acceleration and leading students to the limits of their ability seems to be a common teacher strategy in challenging the students across the three different settings. The teachers' willingness to

challenge the learning abilities is another key factor.

The following chapter 12 examines how categorization practices play into the identification of the students and the concept of being gifted, and whether teachers are teaching with a gifted perspective. In National Education, according to Sims, there seems to be a pattern of teachers categorizing gifted students in vulnerable categories rather than speaking about them as fast learners or highly able. Often special educational professionals are involved in the identification processes, and categorizing students as gifted often relates to special educational issues. According to Sims, the IB program presents a different picture, as teachers set high expectations, foster students' intellectual autonomy, and generally adopt a more positive approach to recognizing giftedness. Following Sims, there are low expectations in the ordinary municipal schools, while the expectations in the IB program is high. Generally, the teachers succeed in categorizing the students through academic aspects of their learning, rather than through diagnostic terms. These practices have similarities with the teachers in the Peak Program; instead of directly articulating giftedness these appear through concepts like ambitious, interested or fast learners. According to the analysis the teachers in the national program connect giftedness with diagnosis, whereas the IB and the Peak program enacted giftedness in educational practices without directly applying the concept, thus redefining the concept in their professional practice through avoiding a diagnostic terminology in their practice. This underlines the point of Balls that teachers have agency to redefine educational practice, though still influenced by the policy.

Section 4 in the analysis consists of chapter 13 about giftedness in policy as

discourse and the conclusion (chapter 14). In this section, Sims seeks to answer the last research question about the rationalities underpinning the current state of giftedness in schooling. The most important rationalities seem to be the balance between ideals of equity and excellence, which can be traced to the beginning of the Swedish school system. Simple equity seems to hinder the work with students' excellence, which has turned into a form of subjugated knowledge in the Foucauldian sense. This means that giftedness has been a sort of hidden knowledge. This manifests in the fact that the gifted subject has been invisible in educational policy and practice until recently. The invisibility has supported late differentiation in the Swedish school system. In some cases in the modern educational Swedish history, giftedness has even been related to medicalization and observations, for example by being interpreted as autism or ADHD. The gifted subject thus risks becoming the diagnosed subject according to Sims' analysis.

Following Sims, the Swedish educational system still seems to suffer from the lack of will to accept the gifted subjects as *educational* rather than *medical* subjects. This was to do with the value of "sameness" in Swedish educational policy that paradoxically contains hiding dividing practices, excluding giftedness as a category challenging the culture of equity in the schooling system. False dichotomies are constructed when giftedness is positioned as part of a culture of elitism according to Sims. The teachers in the IB and Peak Programs provide a positive example of enacted practices for gifted students without applying the word gifted, thereby avoiding further categorization. This could also be enforced through an interpretation of inclusive education based on rights rather than needs. Individual potentiality should

not be restrained by hidden rationalities of collective equity in the schooling system seems to be the message according to Sims. Teachers can play positive roles as gatekeepers for gifted students. Sims' application of the cluster-model points towards new pathways to study gifted subjects and, should I say, labelling of difference in general, by connecting the related meaning of a given concept across the historical context

In her examination of giftedness Sims several times refers to the differentiation question in educational policy: how, why and when to differentiate the gifted students. In this effort, the thesis crosses similar tracks compared to that of special education. Even though the underpinning argument is that gifted students should not be an issue of special education. This may be true. However, both students classified as having special educational needs and those identified as gifted may be subject to biologicistic interpretations of student ability. In both cases, certain abilities—or the lack thereof—are often naturalized in their narratives. These naturalizations of differences may serve as important normalizations in the schooling system, and the handling of phenomena threatening the norms of being the right student or citizen in the Swedish welfare state. The Swedish school system may thus contain solid normalizing procedures securing that those termed risky or gifted do not shake the rationality of the system in general. Sims' work gives us an important lesson in the historical analysis of giftedness in the Swedish school system. Her analyses of the current practices in the school system provide key insights for all professionals in the school system when it comes to the necessary reflections on how to improve the learning possibilities for those theoretically gifted as well as for those more practically talented.

References

Sandemose, Aksel. *Fugitive Crosses his Tracks (En flyktning krysser sit spor)*. Trans. Eugene Gay-Tifft. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1936 [orig. Norwegian 1933].

Bjørn F. Hamre
University of Copenhagen
hamre@hum.ku.dk

Ebba Christina Blåvarg
*Psykologi på schemat: Formeringen av
 ett skolämne, 1960–2015*

Stockholms universitet (PhD diss.)
 2023, 312 pp.

Ebba Christina Blåvarg's dissertation *Psychology on the Schedule (Psykologi på schemat)* is the first comprehensive analysis of the psychology school subject in Swedish upper secondary schools. Today, psychology is the largest non-compulsory school subject at the upper secondary level in Sweden, measured by the number of students who receive grades in the subject. Although the subject has been part of the national upper secondary school (*gymnasieskolan*) since 1965 and has continued to be part of it through various reforms, a historical review of the psychology subject has been lacking until now.

Blåvarg's dissertation fills this gap by offering an in-depth analysis of how the psychology subject has developed and been shaped over time. By examining three different discursive practices where the discourse about the psychology subject has been present, the dissertation provides a comprehensive picture of the subject's history and its role in Swedish upper secondary schools.

Firstly, state policy documents are analyzed: various preparatory documents, investigations, steering documents, and reports. Curriculum, course, and subject plans related to the psychology subject are also included. These public documents provide insight into the subject's development over time and serve as guidelines and frameworks for the subject. By studying these documents, we can understand how state intentions and educational policy goals have influenced the design and construction of the school subject psychology.

Secondly, teaching materials texts have been analyzed. Over 200 books from the period 1950–2020 have been studied, providing a broad overview of how the subject has been presented and conceptualized in teaching. Teaching materials play a central role in shaping students' understanding of the subject and contribute to framing what is considered important knowledge within psychology.

Thirdly, the discourse of the teaching profession about the subject has been analyzed, such as discussions about the subject within subject associations and professional journals. During the studied period, various associations and interest groups have influenced the formation of the subject. For example, the Subject Association for Philosophy and Psychology Teachers (FPF) and its journal SOPHIA have played various roles. The Continuing Education Department in Umeå and their journal *PS-aktuellt* have also been central actors. These professional discussions and debates provide insight into how teachers and other educational actors have interpreted and influenced the subject's development.

The purpose of the dissertation is to highlight these three different discursive practices and examine how the school subject psychology has been formed. The research particularly focuses on the period from the preparatory work for the upper secondary school reform in 1965 to after the implementation of the upper secondary school reform in 2011. The psychology subject has a long history in Swedish schools and has been part of the national upper secondary school since its inception in 1965. The dissertation particularly focuses on questions such as: What is the psychology subject in upper secondary school? Why should students study psychology? By analyzing these texts, the project provides an increased

understanding of the subject's development and role in Swedish schools.

In her PhD thesis, Ebba Christina Blåvarg highlights discrepancies between the subject's purpose and its actual content in curricula and program plans. By bringing these discrepancies to light, the dissertation contributes to a critical discussion about how the psychology subject has developed, but also more generally how to understand and analyze the historical trajectories of school subjects for upper secondary schools.

Research on the psychology subject in Swedish upper secondary schools has been limited, and this dissertation aims to fill that knowledge gap. By using a discourse analytical perspective, the researcher has explored the subject in an unbiased manner, without relying on previously established theories or assumptions. The discourse analysis focuses on three different spaces where the discourse about the psychology subject has taken place: the bureaucratic governing space (policy documents that affect the subject); the practice-oriented space (textbooks and teaching materials used in the classroom); and the professional space (discussions within subject teacher associations and other teacher union contexts).

Blåvarg has examined who has spoken about the subject and what position these individuals have held. Where the statements have been made and which discursive space they belong to also affect the subject's legitimacy. Politicians, researchers, and teachers have different roles in shaping the subject.

During the period that begins with the 1960 upper secondary school investigation, when psychological knowledge was highly valued in society, the psychology subject underwent several changes. During the 1970s, there was an intense

shift. The subject was reformulated, and different parallel versions were created for different educational tracks in the secondary school. The textbooks during this period focused on the student's personal development and applications of psychology in professional and societal life. During the 1990s, a silence discourse around the psychology subject emerged, according to Blåvarg's analyses. This silence is complex and affects the subject through changed content and the absence of speakers and advocates. After 1979 and the new subject plan, Supplement 48, the silence becomes particularly noticeable. Towards the 2000s and 2010s, a fourth discourse order takes shape, where new actors take control of the subject. The psychology subject transforms into something that "more resembles a catalog of opinions and a subject that may need to be questioned." The spread of different theoretical directions within psychology during this period was influenced by the silence discourse, which according to Blåvarg gave the subject the freedom to take different directions. The choice of three theoretical directions within psychology (psychodynamic, humanistic, and behaviorist) and four additional additions in the curriculum of 2000 (Gy 2000) contributed to the subject's diversity and complexity.

Overall, a nuanced, well-founded, and credible picture of the subject's formation over time emerges. I would like to emphasize the rich knowledge contribution of this dissertation; it is pioneering work on the school subject psychology that is important. It is also an important approach to what a subject is at universities and how such a subject interacts with school subjects that have the same label. How should such linkages be understood? How should the "kinship" (p. 43) between academic discipline and school subject psychology be understood? (an

essentialist view, a dialectical, and a post-structural etc.).

Here, the historical case study approach that Blåvarg uses is necessary. But it is also appropriate to raise some questions. What possibilities and limitations might there be in the choice of theoretical framework that Blåvarg has made? The subject historical approach combined with Foucauldian analysis would have had a different framing in, for example, a curriculum theoretical/historical perspective. The psychology subject can become a monolithic entity - for example, the dissertation refers to the subject's objective and subjective side. From a broader curriculum theoretical perspective, there is constantly a struggle between school subjects to take place in curricula and how the subject is delineated in relation to other subjects. In the chosen approach, we do not see much of such aspects of subject formation. A subject's strength may not manifest in active interaction but rather in silence. It is interesting to note that there are parallels between the formation of the subject and the scientific discipline. By studying the psychology subject, we can also increase understanding of the psychology discipline as a whole.

To conclude, Ebba Christina Blåvarg's dissertation *Psychology on the Schedule* offers a pioneering and comprehensive analysis of the psychology subject in Swedish upper secondary schools. This work not only fills a significant gap in the historical understanding of the subject but also raises critical questions about the processes and structures that have shaped its development.

One of the intriguing aspects of Blåvarg's analysis is the periodization of the psychology subject's formation. The dissertation prompts us to consider how these periods relate to curriculum reforms and the broader educational

landscape. The cause-effect relationships and the potential lagging effects between reforms and the subject's evolution are complex and multifaceted. Why were there four distinct periods identified in the dissertation? Could there have been more, perhaps eight, reflecting overlapping chronologies and time sequences? These questions invite further exploration into the temporal dynamics of educational change.

The order in which Blåvarg examines the discursive spaces—first bureaucratic, then practice-oriented, and finally professional—also warrants reflection. Could the discourse have moved in the opposite direction, starting from the professional space and influencing the bureaucratic and practice-oriented spaces? This consideration opens up possibilities for understanding the fluid and dynamic nature of educational discourse and its impact on subject formation. The concept of the bureaucratic space as an authority, presumably national, raises questions about the visibility of struggles within this space. Why is the struggle not apparent here? Is it because it did not exist between subjects, or because the analysis did not capture it? Comparing this with potential interviews of curriculum constructors could provide deeper insights into the bureaucratic processes and their influence on the psychology subject.

During the studied period, a significant shift occurred as psychology teachers took over textbook writing. This shift led the subject to look inward, focusing on critical approaches to psychological perspectives and their explanatory models. Blåvarg's analysis highlights how questioning the subject, its theories, content, and truth value became central to its identity. This introspective turn is crucial for understanding the evolving nature of the psychology subject and its

role in fostering critical thinking among students.

The identification of four discourse orders raises further questions about the nature of these discourses. Are they distinct or interconnected? What are the struggles within and between these discourses? Who are the actors involved, and what are their motivations? The expansion and differentiation of the psychology subject from its parent discipline reflect broader trends in educational specialization and the inevitable consequences of growth. The notions of vacuum and silence in the discourse are particularly thought-provoking. What do these silences signify? Could they represent background ideas so strong and self-evident that they do not need articulation? Blåvarg's work invites us to consider the implications of these silences and how they shape the subject's identity and development.

In conclusion, Blåvarg's dissertation is not only a historical review but also an invaluable resource for future educational reforms and those engaged in improving psychology education. It provides a nuanced and well-founded understanding of the psychology subject's formation, highlighting the complexities and dynamics of educational discourse. This work serves as a foundation, theoretically and empirically for ongoing critical discussions and reflections on the nature and purpose of psychology education in Swedish upper secondary schools.

Daniel Sundberg
Linnaeus university
daniel.sundberg@lnu.se

Moa Lindqvist

Striden om den högre utbildningen: En socioretorisk studie av remissyttranden inför svenska högskolereformer 1969–2007

Uppsala universitet (PhD diss.)
2025, 211 s.

Vad är egentligen poängen med högre utbildning? Vad ska den syfta till? Vad ska den omfatta? Hur ska den organiseras och finansieras? Syftet med Moa Lindqvists avhandling i utbildningssociologi är att förstå hur svenska lärosäten och samhällsaktörer definierade och motiverade den högre utbildningens "idé och funktion" från slutet av 1960-talet till och med det tidiga 2000-talet. Med idé och funktion avser Lindqvist just de fyra aspekter som nämndes inledningsvis: den högre utbildningens syfte, omfattning, organisation och finansiering.

Det material som används är remissvaren på fyra utredningar som legat till grund för omfattande högskolereformer, nämligen Universitetskanslersämbetets utredning om utbildningslinjer vid de filosofiska fakulteterna som låg till grund för den så kallade UKAS-reformen; 1968 års utbildningsutrednings betänkande Högskolan (SOU 1973:2), som var grunden till 1977 års högskolereform; SOU 1992:1 och Ds 1992:1, två betänkanden från 1989 års högskoleutredning (även kallad Grundbulten), vilka resulterade i 1993 års högskolereform, samt Utbildningsdepartementets slutrapport om Bolognaprocessen (Ds 2004:2).

De fyra reformer som undersöks i avhandlingen har inneburit stora förändringar för det svenska systemet för högre utbildning. UKAS idé om fasta utbildningslinjer infördes i och för sig inte fullt ut, men kan ändå ses som startskottet för transformeringen mot en tydligare programstruktur. 1977 års högskolere-

form innebar både ett nytt resurstilldelningssystem och att all eftergymnasial utbildning skulle behandlas som ett sammanhållet system, manifesterat av tillblivelsen av den nya myndigheten Universitets- och högskoleämbetet. 1993 års högskolereform gav lärosätena en ökad kontroll över och därmed större ansvar för det egna utbildningsutbudet, samtidigt som ett resursfördelningssystem som baserades på mängden antagna studenter och dessa studenters avklarade högskolepoäng infördes. Den så kallade Bolognaanpassningen slutligen innebar att den svenska högre utbildningen, i alla fall delvis, anpassades till ett EU-gemensamt system för poängberäkning och betygsättning i syfte att göra högre utbildning jämförbar inom unionen.

Avhandlingens bärande tanke är att dessa omfattande reformer fick såväl universitet och högskolor som andra aktörer att ta ställning, inte bara till reformerna som sådana, utan även till vad den högre utbildningen var och borde vara. Dessa ställningstaganden finns nedlagda i de remissyttranden som skickades in i respektive utrednings remissomgång, yttranden som utgör studiens huvudsakliga källmaterial. Genom en analys av dessa kan de olika aktörernas syn på den högre utbildningens "idé och funktion", för att använda Lindqvists eget vokabulär, synliggöras och förstås. Avhandlingens första kapitel innehåller, förutom en syftesformulering och forskningsfrågor, en diskussion av tidigare forskning med tydligt fokus på den universitetshistoriska och utbildningspolitiska forskningen. Forskning om den svenska statsförvaltningen i allmänhet och kommittéväsendet i synnerhet ges påfallande mindre utrymme.

Avhandlingen är enligt undertiteln en socioretorisk studie. Utifrån Ruth Amoss argumentationsteori bygger Lindqvist en analysmodell i fyra steg som i

tur och ordning fokuserar en utsagas sociohistoriska kontext, vilken genre en utsaga tillhör, utsagans intertextualitet, det vill säga till vilka andra texter eller utsagor en utsaga är relaterad till samt en förståelse av talarens position på ett specifikt fält. Givet avhandlingens fokus på hur den högre utbildningens idé formuleras så förefaller det teoretiska och metodologiska ramverket väl valt. I kapitel två presenteras denna modell och de olika stegen åskådliggörs också på ett utvalt yttrande, vilket är ett pedagogiskt mycket lyckat grepp.

Kapitel tre är en förlängning av metoddiskussionen i relation till materialet. Här argumenterar Lindqvist för sitt val av material och hur detta material behandlas. Remissomgångarna har först och främst valts ut utifrån reformernas påverkan på högre utbildning snarare än forskning samtidigt som de fångar den diskussion som föregick reformen, vilket undviker en historieskrivning där själva reformen framställs som en historisk brytpunkt eller vändning. Vidare argumenteras för urvalet av remissinstanser. Att majoriteten av de svenska lärosätena inkluderas är en självklarhet och här finns goda argument för vilka lärosäten som tagits med och de sällsynta fall där något lämnats utanför. En mer komplex diskussion rör urvalet av andra remissinstanser, där Lindqvist landar i tre grupper av intressen. Statskontoret och skolöverstyrelsen får stå för förvaltningspolitiska intressen, SAF, Sveriges industriförbund, LO och TCO representerar arbetsmarknadsintressen och SACO och SFS akademiska intressen. Därmed utesluts ett stort antal remissyttranden, där lejonparten utgörs av lokala och regionala instanser som länsstyrelser, landsting och kommuner, men även akademier, forskningsråd och förvaltningsmyndigheter som SCB eller CSN. Argumenten för uteslutning varie-

rar något, men handlar i huvudsak om att aktörerna endast är begränsat intressanta i relation till den högre utbildningens idé, vilket ju är avhandlingens fokus.

Kapitlen fyra till och med sju är avhandlingens empiriska hjärtstycke. Här analyseras i tur och ordning de externa aktörernas remissvar (kapitel 4), utvecklingen av högskolestyrelsernas remissförfarande relaterade till förändringar i de svenska lärosätenas interna organisation (kapitel 5), lärosätenas remissvar (kapitel 6), samt det interna remissförfarandet på Uppsala universitet (kapitel 7). Detta är en pedagogiskt lyckad ordning, då varje kapitel fångar en aspekt av den förändring i den högre utbildningens idé som sker under undersökningsperioden. De externa aktörernas svar speglar en förändrad syn på högre utbildning, som Lindqvist beskriver som en förskjutning från en kollektiv och samhällsinriktad syn till en individcentrerad och marknadsinriktad. Styrelserna började över tid hantera remissförfarandet annorlunda och gick från att sammanfatta de synpunkter som inkom från institutioner och fakulteter till att istället agera mer som en "strategisk ledning, vars främsta syfte var att ta fram lärosätessammansatta visioner och värderingar." (s. 119).

Avhandlingen visar också att det var de nyare och mindre högskolorna som gick i spetsen för denna process. Ett av de främsta tecknen på en förändrad förståelse av den högre utbildningens idé och funktion återfinns i begreppet frihet. Diskussionen om UKAS under 1960-talet rörde studenternas frihet att själva välja studiebanor, ställt mot förutbestämda och sammanhållna utbildningslinjer som skulle främja att studierna avslutades med examen, helt inom områden där det fanns arbetsmöjligheter. Relationen till arbetsmarknaden var central även under 1990-talet, men

då handlade det om relationen mellan lärosätenas ämnen och kraven på arbetsmarknadsrelevans, ett krav som antogs vara svårare att uppfylla för exempelvis humanioraämnena. Parallellt växte en annan frihetsfråga, nämligen den om lärosätenas autonomi gentemot staten. Detta gällde särskilt det egna ansvaret för att hantera och allokera resurser internt.

Det är en intressant betraktelse Lindqvist gör att denna process går hand i hand med ledningens professionalisering och hon menar att detta hänger samman med lärosätenas utveckling mot vad hon betecknar som "fullvärdiga organisationer". Denna process accentueras också av beskrivningen av Uppsala universitets inre remissförfaranden, som kan beskrivas som en fallstudie i hur den högre utbildningens idé förhandlas fram lokalt. Utvecklingen gick här, kort sagt, från att den pluralism som fanns i de interna remissomgångarna även återfanns i universitetets svar, till att de olika åsikter som framfördes internt glättades ut i den slutgiltiga texten.

Avhandlingen är en god genomgång av ett som det verkar rätt spretigt och stökigt material. Greppet att analysera remissvar är välfunnet och ger både tydliga och intressanta resultat som snarare stärker än ifrågasätter den forskning inom området som handlar just om universitetets idé, den högre utbildningens autonomi och relationen mellan debatt om och organisationen av högskoleväsendet under efterkrigstiden.

Lindqvist har genomfört en intressant undersökning och presenterar den i en välskriven text. Jag har dock invändningar mot det urval som gjorts, både vad gäller tidigare forskning och material, där jag anser att en utökning av litteratur och material hade stärkt avhandlingen. Jag vill även peka på vad jag ser som svagheter i metod- och resultatdiskussion, där jag tvärtom tror

att viss återhållsamhet vad gäller främst resultatens räckvidd hade gjort avhandlingen mer koherent. I detalj handlar det om förankringen i tidigare forskning om offentlig förvaltning, om urvalet av aktörer i remissomgångarna, om ett metodologiskt grundantagande som handlar om publik och om vilka slutsatser om organisatorisk förändring som är möjliga att dra utifrån valt material och metod.

Tidigare forskning om högre utbildning omfattar sexton sidor och har en framträdande plats i avhandlingens kapitel 1 samtidigt som forskningen om det svenska kommittéväsendet avhandlas på tre. Av Lindqvists genomgång framgår dock att kommittéernas sammansättning förändrats över tid. Andelen forskare och politiker i kommittéerna har minskat samtidigt som andelen tjänstepersoner har ökat, vilket i sin tur indikerar en förändrad beredningsprocess. Här borde denna förändring både ha kontextualiserats mer genom ett bredare grepp över befintlig forskning. Hur hänger detta ihop med andra förändringar i svensk offentlig förvaltning? Med förändringar i det praktiska lagstiftningsarbetet? Med allmänna organisatoriska förändringar inom den svenska myndighetsvärlden? Både den efterföljande metod- och materialrelaterade diskussionen om remissyttranden och avhandlingens slutsatsdiskussion hade vunnit på en bredare kontextualisering.

Ett av avhandlingens intressantaste resultat är att det var de mindre högskolorna som gick i bräsch för en starkare linjestyrning vilket gick hand i hand med lärosätesledning som såg sitt uppdrag som främst strategisk styrning och mindre som talespersoner för och jämkare av en kollegial vilja. De mindre högskolornas regionala förankring framhävs också på flera ställen i avhandlingen. Därför är det synd att remissvar från regionala aktörer som länsstyrel-

ser, landsting och kommuner helt utesluts ur undersökningen. Här hade man antagligen fått delvis andra perspektiv på den högre utbildningens idé och funktion än hos de nationellt övergripande aktörerna.

Avhandlingen har ett socioretoriskt perspektiv. Fokus ligger på utsagorna i remissyttrandena, de värden som där kommer till uttryck. Det finns också en relation mellan den som står för utsagan, den som har bett om ett ställningstagande och en tänkt tredje part som Lindqvist benämner publik. En av poängerna med att analysera remissvar är att man enligt Lindqvist därigenom kan rekonstruera vilken typ av publik remissvaren riktar sig till (ett resonemang som förs på s. 45–47). Grundantagandet är att remissvaren genom att framhäva vissa värden gällande den högre utbildningen också riktar sig till och stärker grupper som delar dessa grundläggande värderingar. Jag är inte helt övertygad av detta resonemang, eftersom det missar vad jag ser som en grundläggande aspekt av retorik, nämligen att övertyga de obeslutsamma. En publik består sällan bara av de som håller med, utan oftast av en majoritet som ännu inte bestämt sig helt.

Genom hela undersökningen löper också frågan om organisatorisk förändring. Det är tydligt att varje remissrunda sker utifrån andra organisatoriska förutsättningar än den föregående. I botten finns ett grundantagande att lärosätena över tid har utvecklats från löst sammansatta kollegiala sammanslutningar till att bli vad som benämns fullvärdiga organisationer, alltså mer hierarkiska och uniforma i både värderingar och organisationsstruktur. Här lutar sig Lindqvist främst mot organisationsteoretisk forskning av Nils Brunsson och Kerstin Sahlin. Det förblir dock oklart hur man ska förstå relationen mellan den orga-

nisatoriska förändringen och yttrandena i remissomgångarna. Här blir det ett uppenbart problem för förståelsen av resultaten att organisationsteori inte är en del av teori- och metoddiskussionen och som nämnades tidigare behandlas organisatorisk förändring av svenska myndigheter och statsförvaltning heller inte i avsnittet om tidigare forskning. Detta är synd, då avhandlingens i sig spännande resultat hade fått en helt annan tyngd om undersökningen på ett mer systematiskt sätt hade relaterat den socioretoriska till den organisatoriska nivån.

Min kritik är som synes mer av det fördjupande än det grundläggande slaget. Jag tror inte att en bättre förankring i en förvaltningshistorisk forskningskontext, i organisationsteori eller ett inkluderande av regionala aktörer hade förändrat huvudresultaten Lindqvists avhandling. Huvudfokus är ju trots allt kampen om den högre utbildningens idé och funktion och här är undersökningen ett välkommet bidrag till forskningen om den svenska universitets- och högskolevärldens 1900-talshistoria.

Andreas Åkerlund
Södertörns högskola
andreas.akerlund@sh.se

Edited collections

Hilde Gunn Slottemo (red.)

Barn som gikk "fra haand til haand":

Oppvekst på skolehjem, barnehjem og internatskole i et historisk perspektiv

Oslo: Cappelen Damm Forskning

2024, 293 pp.

År 1896 antog det norska Stortinget en lag som gjorde det möjligt för statliga och kommunala myndigheter att ingripa och överta vårdnaden om barn vars föräldrar av olika anledningar ansågs försumma sitt fostransansvar. Denna lag, kallad "Vergerådsloven", bildar utgångspunkt för antologin *Barn som gikk 'fra haand til hand'*. I boken studeras uppförandet av sådana offentliga institutioner som följde i kölvattnet av de nya bestämmelserna och som sorterade under kategorier av typen "barnehjem", "skolehjem" eller "pleiehjem." Gränserna mellan dessa olika inrättningar var i flera fall var flytande, men med få undantag rörde det sig om lösningar som utformats efter internatliknande modeller. De var konstruerade som ett "hem" där barn och ungdomar bodde, arbetade och i många fall också fick sin skolgång.

Antologins elva kapitel är skrivna av norska och svenska historiker och innefattar perioden från 1840 till efterkrigstidens första decennier. Källorna består av arkivhandlingar till de olika enskilda institutionerna samt tryckta reseberättelser, riksdagsprotokoll, utredningar och samtida tidningsartiklar. Även om många av bidragen skildrar enskilda platser riktas inte uppmärksamheten i första hand mot institutionerna, utan de individer och grupper som vistades vid dem. Till viss del ges arbetande personal och föreståndare utrymme, men framförallt handlar det om de barn och ungdomar

som i åtskilliga fall blev föremål för ett omhändertagande mot sina föräldrars vilja. Vad de olika kapitlen tydligt visar är också att denna ofrivilliga form av "in loco parentis" – internatskolans grundprincip – i högre grad riktades mot individer som tillhörde arbetarklassen och i vissa fall etniska minoriteter som samer eller romer.

Antologins fokus på resurssvaga barn och ungdomar ger den en särskild sorts samhällsrelevans som knyter an till de senaste decenniernas återkommande rapporter i både Norge och Sverige om skandaler och vanvård på barnhem under efterkrigstiden. En fråga som dröjt sig kvar efter dessa debatter och som redaktören Hilde Gunn Slottemo berör är den om hur sådana institutioner skall värderas idag. Hon ställer behovet av kritiska maktstudier och svagas gruppers representation mot risken att romantisera de förhållanden som många av barnen befann sig i vid sitt omhändertagande. Samtidigt blir det tydligt att antologins syfte är akademiskt motiverat, snarare än att vara moraliserande och ta ställning. Det är en föredömlig ambition som gör det möjligt för den enskilde läsaren att bilda sin egen uppfattning i frågan.

Boken är uppdelad i två delar där den första innehåller bidrag som ger en mer övergripande förståelse av hur formerna och legitimitetsgrunderna för institutionaliseringen av barn och ungdomar förändrades under 1800-talets senare hälft. I ett kapitel skriver Harald Thuen om de femtio år som föregick Vergeråd-sloven och som till stora delar utgjorde den idémässiga bakgrunden till inrättandet av skolhemmen. Under denna period dominerade privata välgörenhetsinitiativ som ofta var religiöst förankrade. Denna filantropiska period menar författaren möjliggjordes dels genom kristendomens budskap om kärleken till sin nästa,

dels genom den klassiska liberalismens tanke om återhållsamhet vad gäller statlig omsorgsverksamhet. Thuen exemplifierar med inrättandet av den så kallade "Toftes Gave" i Kristiania 1846 för att visa hur en räddningsanstalt tillkom, för "forladte, forsømte eller moralsk fordærvede Børn og unge Mennesker af begge Køn." Vad beträffar driften av anstalten stod olika modeller mot varandra – å den ena sidan framhölls det så kallade familjesystemet som inspirerats av Pestalozzis intima skolverksamhet i Schweiz, å den andra sidan lovordades det militärt modellerade kasernsystemet med brittiska förlagor. Medan det förstnämnda dominerade till en början hade det disciplinära kasernsystemet tagit över vid tiden för Vergerådsloven.

En av de aspekter som kännetecknade filantropins epok var det stora utbytet av idéer över nationsgränserna. Detta framgår i Thuens bidrag, men får särskilt stor plats i det nästföljande kapitlet av Jon Reitan. Denne visar hur det intellektuella tankegodset bakom utvecklingen av olika anstaltsmodeller spreds och cirkulerade genom kongresser och inte minst studiebesök som möjliggjordes genom resestipendier. Genom berättelser skrivna av norska stipendiater blottlägger Reitan hur omdömen och förslag på anpassningar till specifikt inhemska förhållanden spelade roll för utvecklingen av de olika norska institutionerna. Han påpekar också att de statliga resestipendierna bidrog till en demokratisering av vilka som gavs möjlighet att resa ut i Europa. Under perioden 1897–1947 var det inte endast högre uppsatta myndighetspersoner som fick besöka utländska anstalter, utan också exempelvis lärare och husmödrar.

I ett kapitel av Jan Messel skildras en betydelsefull förändring i början av 1960-talet när det handlar om synen på "problematiske ungdom." Messel inriktar

sig på förhållandena vid ett par institutioner – Bjerketun verneskole för flickor och Foldin verneskole för pojkar – där det befanns råda oacceptabla förhållanden för omhändertagna barn. De krav på reformer som följde används i kapitlet för att studera olika konkurrerande paradigm beträffande behandling och vård. Ett av de områden där perspektiv bröts mot varandra var vilken typ av utbildning den arbetande personalen skulle ha vid dessa behandlingshem och specialskolor. Nya idéer utmanade här äldre gränsdragningar och Messel visar hur vedertagna medicinska behandlingsformer i form av psykiatri och psykologi ställdes mot mer socialpedagogiska förståelser av individerna.

Bokens andra del domineras av fallstudier. Falstad skolehjem för pojkar studeras under åren 1912-1922 av Ingrid Bugge Dystland. Hon undersöker de intagnas bakgrund och orsakerna till varför de hamnade på hemmet. Perioden präglades av den privata socialhjälps successiva tillbakaträdande och det offentliga allt större ansvar. De 206 pojkar som finns upptagna i elevprotokoll beskrivs främst som arbetarklassbarn varav många redan var kända av myndigheterna innan de kom till platsen. Orsakerna till deras omhändertagande anfördes oftast som "tjuveri" eller "dåligt uppförande", inte sällan i kombination. Bland de vanligast förekommande förklaringarna till ett sådant beteende märktes "dåligt sällskap" och "försummad uppföstran." En av slutsatserna som författaren drar var att interneringen lika mycket skedde för att skydda samhället som för att ge barnen en bättre uppväxt.

I sitt bidrag om den privata organisationen Norsk misjon blant hjemlose undersöker Elisabeth Teige arbetet med att framförallt omhänderta romska barn vid institutionen Rostad barnehjem mellan åren 1900-1952. Författaren

pekar på att det var ovanligt att myndigheterna överlät ett så specifikt uppdrag till en privat organisation. Inrymmandet av barnen vid Rostad placerar hon in i en större assimileringspolitik som handlade om att försöka förmå den romska gruppen i Norge att upphöra med sin livsföring och bli nyttiga samhällsmedborgare, vilket bland annat innebar att bli bofasta på en plats och påbörja reguljärt lönearbete. Barnen behövde – som en del i denna strategi – flyttas från familjen och placeras på anstalter. I en intressant kontrast gentemot andra liknande institutioner karaktäriserar Teige förhållandena vid Rostad som goda och i avsaknad av missförhållanden. Som faktorer bakom en sådan utveckling anför hon en stark ekonomi, stabil ledning och kontinuerlig uppföljning av verksamheten.

Om *Barn som gikk "fra haand til haand"* generellt kan sägas att många av bidragen är intressanta och perspektivgivande i ett aktuellt och samtidigt känsligt ämne. Den har därför goda förutsättningar att komma till nytta i flera olika sammanhang. En förhoppning är att den får användning som underlag i den återkommande debatten om barnhem och dess följder. Även om fokus ligger på Norge och i någon mån Skandinavien är detta en global diskussion som behöver fortsätta att föras med historiker som aktiva deltagare.

Flera av texterna ligger dock lite väl nära varandra för att varje kapitel skall upplevas som helt relevant. Bakgrunder och förklaringar upprepas ibland på ett sätt som inte alltid gynnar läsningen. Volymen har också en empirisk slagsida och lider underskott på mer teoretiskt drivna förståelser och koncept som kunnat ge större tyngd till de enskilda kapitlen. Därutöver saknas det en mer ambitiös positionering gentemot annan forskning med vilken boken söker kommunicera. En sådan dialog hade

exempelvis kunnat föras med andra studier av internatskolor för att påvisa den mångfald som präglade dessa miljöer. Antologin bidrar tveklöst till insikten om att sådana inrättningar inte endast existerade för barn till sociala och ekonomiska eliter under perioden. För varje Eton och Lundsberg finns ett Rostad och ett Bjerketun som påminner oss om att vistelser vid den typen av – mer eller mindre – totala institutioner kunde motiveras på många olika sätt. Det kvarstår som en viktig uppgift för utbildningshistorisk forskning att visa vilka dessa motiv var, i syfte att också kunna diskutera deras konsekvenser.

Daniel Lövheim
Stockholms universitet
daniel.lovheim@edu.su.se

Monographs

Henrik Björck

Vetenskap och affärer: Ekonomutbildningens akademisering speglad i Handelshögskolans bana genom 1900-talets första hälft

Göteborg: Makadam förlag
2023, 211 s.

Historien om Handelshögskolans tillkomst i Stockholm och företagsekonomiämnets utveckling kan framstå som en riktig framgångssaga. Handelshögskolan, grundad i början av 1900-talet, är idag en av Sveriges mest utpräglade elitutbildningsinstitutioner, medan företagsekonomi är landets i särklass största universitetsämne räknat i antal helårsstudenter. Att denna historia är långt ifrån så linjär och okomplicerad som en kan förledas tro framgår dock med all tydlighet av Henrik Björcks bok *Vetenskap och affärer*. I den skildrar han ekonomutbildningens akademisering under 1900-talets första hälft med särskilt fokus på just Handelshögskolan i Stockholm och företagsekonomiämnets tidiga formering.

De viktigaste hållpunkterna i denna berättelse – från Handelshögskolans inrättande 1909 med familjen Wallenbergs aktiva roll både framför och bakom kulisserna, över dragkampen mellan ämnena nationalekonomi och företagsekonomi under mellankrigsåren, till den första disputationen med Folke Kristenssons avhandling 1946 – är delvis bekanta sedan tidigare. Detta tack vare studier av företagsekonomer som Lars Engwall, Elving Gunnarsson, Eva Wallerstedt och Mikael Holmqvist.

Björcks bidrag till detta huvudsakligen internt disciplinhistoriska forskningsläge är dubbelt. För det första vill han bidra

med ett mer utpräglat vetenskapshistoriskt perspektiv, baserat på ett grundligt arkivarbete, vilket bland annat betonar närvaron av doktorsgradens införande som en återkommande och mer långsiktig strävan redan från Handelshögskolans start utifrån dess ändamål "att genom vetenskaplig undervisning och forskning befrämja affärsverksamhetens höjande inom landet" (s. 58). För det andra vill han erbjuda ett syntetiserande helhetsperspektiv vilket kombinerar fem begreppsliga infallsvinklar. I kort-het innebär detta att Handelshögskolan betraktas som en *institution* bland flera, inom ramen för ett föränderligt högre utbildningssystem, där ekonomutbildningens utveckling sätts i relation till formeringen av *professionella* intressen och ämnesmässiga *gränsdragningar* samt med en lyhördhet för de *språkbruks-historiska* betydelseförskjutningarna i företagsekonomiämnets skiftande benämningar från "handelsvetenskap" till "handelsteknik", innan den nuvarande beteckningen etablerades 1932.

Inom denna löst sammanhållna tolkningsram, som presenteras utförligt i inledningen (s. 11–17) men som sedan medvetet tonas ned i framställningen, läggs särskild tonvikt vid professionsperspektivet, där två bärande teman gäller samspelet mellan kunskapsbildning och kårformering respektive avvägningen mellan teoretisk vetenskaplighet och praktisk nytta.

I sin tillämpade form innebär perspektivet att Björck tecknar en förhållandevis ingående bild av Handelshögskolans bredare tillkomstsammanhang, eftersom "institutionen genom en stigberoende utveckling kom att bära med sig avtryck av sina tillkomstbetingelser" (s. 18). I bokens fyra inledande kapitel får vi lära oss mer om 1800-talets praktiskt inriktade handelsinstitut som efter sekelskiftet omvandlades till handels-

gymnasier; samtidens internationella handelshögskolor, av vilka de tyska *Handelshochschulen* och särskilt den i Köln kom att fylla en förebildlig funktion; nationalekonomiämnets dåvarande ställning vid universiteten i Uppsala och Lund, högskolorna i Stockholm och Göteborg samt vid KTH; samt inte minst de många vändorna med olika initiativ från skilda aktörsgrupper som föregick Handelshögskolans bildande. I det sistnämnda avseendet brukar, som antytts, särskilt det privata näringslivets aktiva insatser framhållas. Här bidrar dock boken till att nyansera denna uppfattning genom att ingående visa på det upprepade och minst lika avgörande stödet från det allmänna, även om, som Björck konstaterar, "det var lättare att uppskatta de enskilda insatserna" (s. 102).

Angående utbildningens innehåll lyfter Björck fram den centrala och återkommande motsättningen mellan de teoretiska och praktiska inslagen. Ett tidigt kritiskt fall gällde det nya ämnet bokföring som inte ansågs tillräckligt vetenskapligt av nationalekonomerna och juristerna vid Uppsala universitet, medan andra nationalekonomer, som Gustav Cassel vid Stockholms högskola, betonade vikten av att ett praktiskt orienterat ämne som handelsteknik kombinerades med teoretiska studier i nationalekonomi. När den första examensordningen fastställdes gavs också just nationalekonomi och handelsteknik en särställning som obligatoriska huvudämnen, medan övriga kurser i ekonomisk geografi, statskunskap, juridik och språk kunde kombineras på olika sätt – en ordning som i det stora hela låg i linje med motsvarande internationella handelshögskolor. Av detta skäl kom också Handelshögskolans tidiga lärare – Eli Heckscher i nationalekonomi med statistik, Ernst Walb och Oskar Sillén i handelsteknik, Gunnar Andersson i

ekonomisk geografi samt Carl Hallendorff i statskunskap och ekonomisk historia, tillika Handelshögskolans förste rektor – att få en särskild riktningsgivande betydelse, där Björck särskilt lyfter fram Hallenberg som en relativt undanskymd institutionell entreprenör.

I bokens andra hälft får vi följa Handelshögskolans fortsatta utveckling under halvseklet. Ett kapitel skildrar undervisningen i de olika ämnena liksom lärarkårens förnyelse och successiva förstärkning. Ett annat kapitel erbjuder en jämförande sidoblick på tillkomsten av Handelshögskolan i Göteborg 1923. De efterföljande kapitlen belyser hur utbildningen under 1920-talet utvidgas mot organisation och management under inspiration av amerikanska *business schools* och hur den nya ämnesbeteckningen "företagsekonomi" etableras 1932; införandet av titeln "civilekonom" i början av 1940-talet; student- och diskussionsföreningarnas aktivt pådrivande roller i dessa processer; hur forskningen förstärks med tillkomsten av de affärsekonomiska och ekonomisk-historiska instituten; samt hur utbildningen byggs på med licentiat- och doktorsexamensrättigheter, för att krönas med Folke Kristenssons nämnda disputation 1946.

Bokens avslutande kapitel erbjuder dels en kortare redogörelse för företagsekonomiämnets etablering vid universiteten i Lund och Uppsala i samband med det högre utbildningssystemets och ekonomutbildningens kraftiga utbyggnad efter undersökningsperiodens slut, dels en diskussion om ämnets fortsatta expansion och fragmentering samt i vad mån ekonomutbildningen och Handelshögskolan egentligen kan sägas leda fram till en "profession" eller ej, och i så fall i vilken bemärkelse.

Vetenskap och affärer är en empiriskt gedigen studie som i själva verket

väver samman tre potentiellt olikartade ämnen – rörande ekonomutbildningens akademisering, Handelshögskolan i Stockholm respektive företagsekonomiämnets utveckling. En styrka med glidningen mellan de tre analytiska nivåerna är att Björck därigenom kan visa hur Handelshögskolan förmådde skapa sig en nisch som en fristående institution utanför de etablerade lärosätena och i praktiken kom att fungera som ett slags kuvös för den nya disciplinen företagsekonomi innan den utvecklades med full kraft inom det expanderande högre utbildningssystemet efter undersökningens slut. Baksidan är att det ibland blir en aning otydligt vilken nivå som faktiskt står i huvudfokus. Här vill jag tro att en mindre nedtonad tillämpning av tolkningsramen och förtydligade kapitelrubriker hade gjort det enklare att orientera sig i analysen. Å andra sidan är det just de ingående skildringarna av de många olikartade förhandlingarna och besluten på skilda nivåer som vittnar om den tidiga ekonomutbildningens allt annat än linjära och okomplicerade historia.

Per Wisselgren
Uppsala universitet
per.wisselgren@idehist.uu.se

Maria Simonsen och Mogens Rüdinger
At bygge et universitet: Aalborg
Universitet 1974–2024

Köpenhamn: Gads forlag
 2024, 304 s.

Universitetshistoriken är en särskild genre som redan har några hundra år på nacken. I samband med jubileer skriver såväl unga som gamla universitet regelbundet om sin historia, med varierande vetenskapliga ambitioner. År 2024 fyllde Ålborgs universitet 50 år, vilket bland annat uppmärksammades med utgivningen av Maria Simonsens och Mogens Rüdingers *At bygge et universitet*. Det är ett påkostat band med ett rikt bildmaterial, som också innehåller en ordentlig notapparat och källförteckning för den som vill fördjupa sig. Det är inget vetenskapshistoriskt verk, som historiker över äldre lärosäten tenderar att vara. Det har snarare beröringspunkter med regionalhistoria och näringslivshistoria, och är populärhistoriskt skriven.

De flesta nya universitet har bildats kring en kärna av äldre yrkesinriktade högskolor, så också Ålborg. Till universitetets första rektor utsågs emellertid den svenska historikern Jörgen Weibull, som med sin bakgrund från Lund representerade den gamla akademiska universitetstraditionen. Ålborg försökte också kombinera element av förnyelse och tradition. Man kallades inledningsvis för universitetscentrum istället för universitet, vilket skulle avspejla en närmare koppling till näringslivets och samhällets behov. Det inrättades ändå fakulteter enligt gammal modell, vilket var baserat på erfarenheter från ett misslyckat försök att avskaffa fakulteterna vid universitetscentrat i Roskilde. Undervisningen kom emellertid att baseras på ett gemensamt basår, och man drev också på för att införa problembaserad undervisning i hela organisationen. Man bytte namn

från universitetscentrum till universitet år 1995. Basåren har sedan länge försvunnit från alla fakulteter, men det problembaserade lärandet finns kvar.

Historiken beskriver Ålborgs universitet som ett centrum i periferin. Universitetet har alltid haft en stor andel första generationens studenter, och det har funnits ett uppdrag att samverka med det lokala näringslivet. Författarna beskriver hur universitetets roll som regionalt centrum genomgått tre faser: först en av uppbyggnad, sedan en period som etablerad aktör i regionen och slutligen en fas av nationell och internationell expansion. Denna internationalisering står inte på något sätt i motsättning till det regionala uppdraget, betonar författarna.

Ålborgs universitet spelade en viktig roll i omställningen av näringslivet på norra Jylland efter att varvsindustrin lades ner under sent 1980-tal. Bland annat samarbetade man med uppbyggnaden av vindkraftsindustrin i regionen, men man har också samarbeten med hundratals företag över hela landet, fler än något annat danskt universitet förutom Danmarks tekniska högskola. Samarbeten förekommer också med större företag i grannländerna, som Nokia och Ericsson inom mobiltelefoni.

En av bokens styrkor är att den inte begränsar sig till att beskriva Ålborgs universitet, utan ett kapitel ger en översikt över hela det danska universitetssystemets historia, från och med grundandet av Köpenhamns universitet 1479. Framväxten av ett enskilt universitet som Ålborg vore mycket svår att förstå utan den större kontext det härstammar ur. Något man känner igen från övriga nordiska länder är de regionalpolitiska ambitionerna bakom utbyggnaden av universitetsväsendet. I fallet med Ålborg är detta mycket tydligt, eftersom norra Jylland länge varit ett eftersatt område

som hade långt till goda utbildningsmöjligheter. Vad som däremot är speciellt för Danmark är att nya regionala universitet ger sig in i direkt konkurrens med de gamla genom att etablera satellitcampus i huvudstaden, vilket både Ålborg och Århus universitet gjort. Dessutom konkurrerar Ålborg och Århus med varandra genom satellitcampus i Esbjerg på södra Jylland.

När Ålborgs universitetscentrum inrättades 1974 hade det tidigare professorsväldet vid danska universitet nyligen ersatts av en maktindelning mellan lektorer och studenter. Efter några få år minskades studenternas inflytande, då de fick dela sina platser i universitetsstyrelserna med den icke undervisande personalen. Boken innehåller flera exempel på hur studenterna särskilt under den första perioden var mycket politiskt radikala, vilket skapade friktion i samarbetet med näringslivet och den socialdemokratiskt dominerande fackföreningsrörelsen.

Under de senaste årtiondena har Ålborg liksom Danmark som helhet fått uppleva universitetsreformer som motiverats med frihetsretorik men åtföljts av ökat extern inflytande i universitetsstyrelserna och utbyggnaden av statliga styrsystem. Det här är en del av ett större mönster som återfinns med smärre variationer också i grannländerna och över stora delar av världen.

Med tiden har Ålborg växt till ett riktigt stort universitet, då studentantalet ökat från ett par tusen vid starten till runt 20 000 idag. 50-årshistoriken beskriver hur ett nytt universitet uppstår i spänningsfältet mellan traditioner och försök till förnyelse, där slutresultatet verkar vara att Ålborgs allt mer växer in i en traditionell universitetsroll. Berättelsen känns igen från liknande universitet runt om i världen, men Simonsen och Rüdinger lyckas skildra den på ett bra sätt. Boken kan erbjuda mycket både

för den som inifrån letar efter igenkänning och hågkomster och den som likt mig betraktar universitetet utifrån med komparativa glasögon.

Janne Holmén
Uppsala universitet
janne.holmen@edu.uu.se

Maren Elfert and Christian Ydesen
*Global Governance of Education: The
 Historical and Contemporary Entangle-
 ments of UNESCO, the OECD and the
 World Bank*

Cham: Springer
 2023, 230 pp.

This book explores the role of three key international organisations—UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank—established in the aftermath of the Second World War as part of the multilateral world order, in promoting and shaping education and educational policies across the globe. Over the past decades, a substantial body of scholarship has shed light on the influence of these organisations in the global education landscape. Researchers have highlighted their role in setting policy agendas, establishing frameworks to evaluate and compare educational performance across national boundaries, and producing powerful educational imaginaries that define what education should achieve on a global scale. These organisations operate within what scholars often refer to as a “globalized education complex”—a system where educational norms, goals, and metrics are increasingly standardised and informed by transnational policy networks.

Although these organisations have already been the focus of significant scholarly attention, this book makes a compelling contribution in two critical ways. First, it offers an approach that moves beyond viewing these organisations as either isolated entities or a homogeneous network. By taking their distinct political mandates, ideological commitments, and interactions seriously, the book provides rich insights into the converging and diverging characteristics of UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank. Secondly,

by adopting a historical lens, the authors address a critical gap in understanding how these organisations emerged, how their roles evolved, how power dynamics between them shifted over time, and how this influenced their institutional identities and policy agendas.

This book is uniquely grounded in two complementary research projects: Christian Ydesen’s work on the OECD and Maren Elfert’s research on the history of educational planning, particularly focusing on UNESCO and the World Bank. By combining their expertise and extensive historical data, the authors provide a nuanced analysis of the complex entanglements between these organisations. Its rich narrative is supported by comprehensive archival materials. Additionally, interviews with around 40 educational professionals provide unique and sometimes salient insights into the dynamics and inner workings of these organisations.

Conceptually, the book is equally strong. The book is grounded in the concept of “global governance” as an analytical perspective, which has its roots in International Relations and critiques the limitations of realist accounts that centralise the role of nation-states in governance practices. A global governance perspective focuses on the dynamic interplay between local, national, regional, and global levels. As described by John Ruggie, it represents “*governance in the absence of government*,” encompassing actors characterised by their diverse involvement and reach within global networks of relations among institutions, individuals, and technologies (Ruggie 1982; 2014). These networks form complex assemblages that shape governance structures and outcomes. The book adopts a constructivist approach, emphasizing how these structures are socially constructed and constantly evolving.

The book consists of eight chapters, following a largely chronological structure, with some chapters having a more conceptual focus. The first chapter sets the stage by outlining the stakes of the study and presenting the conceptual framework that guides the analysis, introducing constructivist-ideationalist and materialist theories of global governance as the key lens to analyse the unfolding interactions of the IOs.

The second chapter delves into what the authors describe as the epistemic and ontological underpinnings of UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank, presenting these organisations as distinct yet interconnected actors in global education governance. UNESCO, initiated in 1946 as a specialised agency of the United Nations, is portrayed as the “idealist” of the trio. Its mission reflects a vision of education as a universal right and a public good, rooted in its humanistic and philosophical foundations. The OECD, by contrast, is characterised as the “master of persuasion,” embodying a pragmatic and instrumental approach to education. For the OECD, education is primarily a means to achieve economic and societal goals, such as workforce development and global competitiveness. The World Bank, established in 1944 within the Bretton Woods framework, is described as the “master of coercion.” Initially focused on post-war reconstruction, it expanded into education through lending tied to human capital theory. By the 1980s, it leveraged its financial power to align educational investments with economic reforms and structural adjustment policies. This chapter sets a critical foundation for the rest of the book, illustrating how each organisation’s historical mandates and ideological commitments continued to shape their strategies and influence in global education governance.

The third chapter explores the divergent development trajectories of UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank during the 1960s, a period referred to as “the heydays of educational planning” (p194). This era combined boundless optimism about education’s transformative societal potential with its strategic deployment as a tool in Cold War rivalries. The chapter situates the origins of global education planning within this context, highlighting the introduction of metrics, public management tools, and outcome-oriented approaches as foundational elements in the emerging governance framework. A central focus of the chapter is the establishment of key institutions such as the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), a semi-autonomous UNESCO institute aimed at training educational professionals from developing countries, and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), an autonomous body within the OECD. The authors describe how UNESCO’s role as the leading authority in global education planning was increasingly challenged by the OECD. In the politically charged environment of the Cold War, UNESCO was gradually pushed into a developmental role, while the OECD successfully positioned itself as a key player in shaping education policies through a more technocratic and data-driven approach.

The fourth chapter examines the ideological and structural tensions between UNESCO and the World Bank over education for development from 1960 to 2015, focusing on two key initiatives: the Cooperative Programme (1964–1989) and the Education for All initiative (launched in 1990). Despite a shared commitment to education for development, the organisations operated with divergent approaches—UNESCO championing education as a human right and public

good, and the World Bank viewing it as an investment in economic growth. The first section details the Cooperative Programme, revealing that, despite mutual respect, the collaboration was strained by contrasting governance logics. UNESCO's educators and philosophers supported newly independent nations' political aspirations, while the World Bank's economist-driven agenda aligned with U.S. foreign policy and prioritised productivity, particularly under Robert McNamara. By the late 1970s, these epistemic divides and methodological shifts led to the Programme's collapse. The second section explores the Education for All initiative, a renewed but equally complex collaboration that reflected ongoing tensions between the organisations' differing visions for education's role in development.

Chapter five positions education statistics as "a particular area of negotiations, resistances, inertias, and modifications within the UNESCO-OECD-World Bank triangle" (p. 109). The authors argue that the development of education statistics reflects broader global governance dynamics, shaped by conflicting assumptions, narratives, and bureaucratic priorities. The chapter provides a compelling account of the intense struggles between international organisations over methodologies, indicators, and the production of comparable data. The authors highlight UNESCO's initial leadership in the 1960s, when it introduced input-output analysis to assess educational efficiency. However, they trace a significant shift in influence over the following decades. By the 1980s, the OECD had begun to assert dominance, promoting international comparative indicators that gradually side-lined UNESCO. By the 1990s, the OECD had established itself as the leading authority in education statistics,

reshaping the field with a focus on quantifiable performance metrics.

Far from a celebratory narrative of the OECD's rise, the chapter presents the pursuit of comparability as an elusive "fata morgana" (p. 134)—a mirage of standardization that remains fraught with statistical inaccuracies and persistent incommensurabilities. The analysis offers a fascinating glimpse into how the ongoing quest for universal metrics has been driven by institutional competition and tensions, exposing the contradictions and unresolved disputes that continue to shape global education governance.

In chapter six, the authors turn to the policy concept of lifelong learning, showing how UNESCO's humanistic ideals converged—and sometimes clashed—with the utilitarian economic frameworks of the OECD and the World Bank. Lifelong learning emerged as a response to the challenges of modern society in the late 1960s, including educational inequality and the critique of capitalism. However, the 1970s economic crises and the rise of neoliberal policies shifted the focus toward efficiency and measurable outcomes, further entrenching indicators as central to education governance.

Chapter seven shifts focus to a conceptual exploration of the global governance architecture in education, examining the interactions and entanglements between UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank. Drawing on the concepts of "knowledge brokers"—intermediaries facilitating knowledge exchange—and epistemic communities, the authors highlight the creation of networks across these organisations, with conferences serving as key sites for coordination and exchange. A prominent example is Philip Coombs, whose career exemplifies the fluidity of transnational governance. Coombs began as director of an insti-

tute linked to the Ford Foundation, later served as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs under President Kennedy, and ultimately became UNESCO's first director of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). The authors describe figures like Coombs as part of a "sparsely populated caste of bureaucrats" (p. 188), whose influence was pivotal in shaping global education governance. His ability to navigate seamlessly between government, academia, philanthropic organisations, and international institutions illustrates the fluid and permeable boundaries of the emerging transnational governance space.

Chapter eight serves as the book's conclusion by highlighting what the historical analysis reveals about contemporary relationships and developments in global education governance. It underscores how UNESCO has gradually lost influence to the OECD and the World Bank. The chapter draws attention to the evolving relationship between IOs and powerful nation-states, explaining how nation-states can leverage these organisations for promoting their interests and agendas. The authors emphasise how the entanglement of these IOs contributes to the creation of universalised global agendas, formulating overarching targets designed to unite all relevant actors within the global education space. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the ongoing process of cooperation and competition among UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank, as they continually negotiate their distinct roles, areas of expertise, and institutional boundaries. This "boundary work" not only allows each organisation to assert its unique contributions but also shapes the broader landscape of global education governance, reinforcing their legitimacy and influence in

an increasingly complex and contested policy environment.

The book has several strengths. It offers a compelling and well-documented account, supported by extensive archival research and enriched by insightful interviews that provide interesting details and add depth to the analysis. A notable strength is its ability to bridge empirical data with political science debates, offering a nuanced perspective that situates the evolving roles of UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank within broader institutional and geopolitical contexts. Another key strength lies in the book's skilful interweaving of institutional history with the broader geopolitical dynamics of the Cold War and its aftermath. This approach offers a sophisticated understanding of how these international organisations both influenced and were influenced by shifting global power structures, illustrating the complex and reciprocal relationships that have shaped global education governance over time. In doing so, the book sets a benchmark for future research, providing a valuable model for how transnational histories can meaningfully engage with broader questions of global governance.

The authors themselves acknowledge some limitations of the book. First, while it offers an impressive account by focusing on three key organisations that shaped post-World War II educational realities, it does not aim to be exhaustive. Other influential actors, for example the European Union, which also played significant roles in global education, fall outside its scope. Likewise, the impact of business, consultancy, and philanthropic organisations is not a central focus (Ball 2008). Additionally, the book does not extensively explore how specific policies were enacted, resisted, or adapted within local or national contexts. These aspects, while beyond the study's scope,

are important areas for further exploration and provide opportunities for future research by other scholars.

Apart from these caveats, there is more that can spark academic discussion. One potential critique concerns the book's choice of "global governance" as an analytical lens. For decades, globalization narratives have emphasised convergence and the diminishing role of the nation-state, with international organisations increasingly shaping global policies. The authors say that to some extent, the book aligns with this literature, explicitly acknowledging its affinities with the widely discussed—yet contested—World Culture Theory (Ramirez, Meyer, and Lerch 2016, p. 5). However, contemporary developments such as geopolitical tensions and the resurgence of neo-nationalism challenge this perspective. Some critics even question whether the multi-lateral world order ever existed beyond the aspirations of these organisations. In this light, the book's title raises important questions about the continued relevance of "global governance" as a framework, particularly in an era where nation-states are reasserting control over education agendas.

That said, such critiques would not do the book's argument justice. While it highlights processes of isomorphism and convergence, it offers a more nuanced perspective on global governance. Rather than presenting a deterministic globalization narrative, the book carefully examines how the influence of international organisations is mediated by national and regional contexts. The authors highlight how the politics of convergence operate differently across countries, shaped by local material resources, cultural traditions, and political structures. By foregrounding these complexities, the book moves beyond simplistic interpretations and encoura-

ges a more critical and context-sensitive engagement with global governance in education.

One final point that warrants discussion is the prominent weight attributed to the United States in the creation of the global education governance system. For historians of the Cold War—and beyond—the book's strong emphasis on U.S. influence may raise questions, as it aligns, to some extent, with a centre-periphery perspective that positions the U.S. as the primary driver of international organisations and educational agendas. This perspective resonates with theories of Pax Americana, which highlight the dominant role of U.S. geopolitical interests in shaping the agendas of UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank.

However, contemporary historical research increasingly moves beyond such narratives, emphasizing the complex interplay of multiple actors in shaping international organisations. Interactions with other states, field-level experiences, and regional dynamics have also played crucial roles in co-constructing educational policies and governance structures. While the book primarily focuses on headquarters-level decision-making and shared conference spaces—providing valuable insights—it may not fully capture the diverse and decentralised processes that have influenced these organisations from the ground up. Further research that incorporates the agency of other actors and contextual dynamics could add greater depth to our understanding of how global education governance has evolved over time.

In conclusion, this book makes a well-researched and significant contribution to multiple scholarly fields, offering a multi-faceted perspective that appeals to a diverse audience, including historians, sociologists, and policy analysts. Its cross-disciplinary approach enhan-

ces the analytical depth of the study and provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which educational norms and practices have been shaped at both global and local levels. By bridging the history of international relations, education policy, and educational governance studies, the book positions itself as a benchmark study that will undoubtedly serve as an essential reference for scholars examining the evolving role of international organisations in shaping global education. Beyond its historical insights, the book presents valuable perspectives for political scientists, sociologists, and scholars of global studies, particularly those exploring the complex interplay between international organisations and national education systems. Furthermore, it is a highly relevant resource for contemporary educational researchers, policy analysts, and practitioners who navigate the challenges of educational governance and transnational policy networks in their daily work.

References

- Ball, Stephen. "New Philanthropy, New Networks and New Governance in Education." *Political Studies* 56, no 4 (2008), 747–65.
- Ramirez, Francisco O., John W. Meyer, and Julia Lerch. "World Society and the Globalization of Educational Policy." In *The Handbook of Global Education Policy*, edited by Karen Mundy, Andy Green, Bob Lingard, and Antoni Verger, 43–63. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2016.
- Ruggie, John Gerard. "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order." *International Regimes* 36, no. 2 (1982), 379–415.
- Ruggie, John Gerard. "Global Governance and 'New Governance Theory': Lessons from Business and Human

Rights." *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 20, no. 1 (2014), 5–17.

Lourens van Haaften
University of Groningen
l.w.van.haaften@rug.nl

Merethe Roos

The Quest for a New Education: Social Democracy, Educational Reforms, and Religion in Norway after the Second World War

Berlin: De Gruyter
2024, 176 pp.

In this volume, Merethe Roos sets out a very clear and specific aim: “to address the role of Christianity in Norwegian compulsory education in the years following World War II” (p. 1), an aim which is met – and exceeded – with significant success. Roos manages to weave together (with great impact) detailed narratives of particular individuals (most centrally Helge Sivertsen and Eva Nordland) with unfolding policy developments, and interactions between state, church, secular groups, and others. In doing so, she brings the spotlight into focus on the role of educational policy analysis as a crucial step forwards in better understanding Nordic models of welfarism, building on the work of Mette Buchardt.

The first chapter (The Book and its Background: Christian Education in Post-War Norway) takes the form of an extended (and very detailed) justification for the work. Here there is a thorough contextualisation of the study, explaining the relation of the work to the current context of KRLE (religious education) in Norwegian education. This segment clearly answers the “so what?” question than can arise with historical work. Here, the relevance of this book is very clear: understanding this history helps us understand how we got to where we currently are, and in turn influences our understanding of where we might head to next. Moreover, this chapter offers some tantalising snippets of information (developed in later chapters) which draw

the reader further into the debates and the complexity of the history. In doing so, the author clearly defends this work as occupying a unique space in the broader discourse, pointing out where the work differs from work that has gone before. Finally, there is a very clear articulation of the theoretical framework that guides the work. Not only does Roos consider which words were used in the narratives she explores, (for example, effectively problematising taken-for-granted terminology, such as “secular” (e.g. p. 11)), she also reflects on what those words were meant to communicate, in other words, what the authorial intention was. In addition, a discussion of the sources used is a very valuable addition to the work (augmented by an extensive bibliography).

The broader context in which the narratives unfold is set out in chapter two (A Social-democratic Order, the School, and the Secular State. A Diversity of Contexts). Like the other chapters in the book, this demonstrates a significantly detailed and forensic exploration of the political, cultural, and theological conditions that created the circumstances in which the post-war curriculum was able to develop. Rather than deal with each of these conditions as a separate, “siloe,” discussion, Roos very effectively captures the huge complexity of the interactions between them. The coverage is wide and comprehensive, extending from the Hell Debate, the development of the National Humanist Association (and civil confirmation), through the language disputes of the 1950s, and the variously differentiated political and theological factions, movements, and divisions that rose and fell in prominence over the period under focus. The changing tensions between autonomy, religion, education, and secularism (or de-Christianisation) are accounted for here with great sensitivity, and with significant rigour.

Helge Sivertsen and Eva Nordland are the central characters for Chapter three, which starts with the claim that there is a “fundamental assumption that [these two] play a significant role in the development of the social democratic school project in post-war Norway” (p. 91). Initially, I was unsure about this claim, and wrote in the margin “this claim needs to be substantiated!”. However, this is exactly what the chapter does; alongside detailed biographical portraits of these two characters, there are meticulously detailed discussions regarding, for example, the intertwined nature of Norwegianness and Christianity and broader considerations of what schooling *is for*. For both Sivertsen and Nordland there are thorough reviews of their published works, and the influence/impact that these generated. The one question that remained for me at the end of this chapter is why did each character not have their own chapter?

The final chapter of the work brings its readers back to the key questions, with an encouragement to consider these through the lens of authorial intention; again the chapter is packed full of detail, rigour and clear contributions “to making the history of Norway in the aftermath of World War II into a prominent example of how Protestant Christianity blends with culture” (p. 147). The articulation of the relationship between education and the development of the welfare state is masterful, and the imperative to see “more research on the intersection of theology, culture, politics, and education” (p. 155) is very timely.

Across the volume, one aspect of particular note (which I very much appreciated in reading) was that whenever a name is mentioned, the person’s dates are included, and often a brief pen-portrait is added in the text (not relegated to footnotes). This is a minor detail, often

overlooked in other volumes, which on the one hand helps the reader construct the narrative timeline more accurately in their mind, and on the other, reassures the reader that every statement, sentence, phrase, is based on very detailed, rigorous, and comprehensive research.

There is a huge amount of detail densely packed in this work, yet it is articulated in a very accessible manner, all of which leads to a very significant contribution. At one level, the contribution to knowledge of Norwegian KRLE and how it developed to become what it is. But at a much deeper – perhaps wider – level, there is a significant contribution here in relation to understanding the role of Protestantism (in a variety of forms) in the political context of post-war reconstruction. This gives the book an appeal to a wide range of audiences; those in training to teach KRLE in Norway for example would benefit significantly... but more widely, historians, theologians, those interested in secular movements of public opinion, those interested in detailed life histories, and cultural historians, as well as those interested in methodological matters.

Jonathan Doney
University of Exeter
j.doney@exeter.ac.uk

Henrik Edgren

En kungsådra för nationens samhörighet: Läsebok för folkskolan i det sena 1800- och tidiga 1900-talets skola och samhälle

Lund: Nordic Academic Press
2024, 398 s.

Alla som ägnat sig åt svensk utbildningshistoria är nog bekanta med *Läsebok för folkskolan*, landets mest inflytelserika läromedel genom tiderna näst katekesen. *Läseboken* har genererat en omfattande forskningslitteratur, till vilken Edgrens bok *En kungsådra för nationens samhörighet* sluter sig.

Edgrens arbete är klart och enkelt upplagt. Han börjar med en utbildningshistorisk kontext, baserad på tidigare forskning om det svenska skolväsendet. Därefter återberättar han innehållet i *Läsebokens* första upplaga från 1868, ger exempel på pressens omdömen om den, studerar folkskoleinspektörernas rapporter om hur den användes, diskuterar de remissvar som sändes in inför omarbetningen av *Läseboken*, jämför den resulterande revisionen från 1891/92 med originalet, samt granskar slutligen mottagandet av den uppdaterade läseboken i pressmaterial och folkskoleinspektörsrapporter.

Teoretiskt har Edgrens arbete många likheter med den forskning som bedrevs i Uppsala under 00-talet kring professor Torkel Jansson (1947–2018). Liksom hos Jansson är övergången mellan ett undersåttligt och ett medborgerligt Sverige central för Edgren. Också betoningen av den fortsatta kulturgemenskapen mellan Sverige och Finland efter ”rikssprängningen” 1809 känns igen från nestorn. Edgren anknyter emellertid även till ett färskare historievetenskapligt fält genom att rama in sin studie som kunskapshistoria.

Här skulle Edgren kunna vara något nytt på spåren. En del av den hårda kritik Arne Jarrick nyligen riktade mot kunskapshistorien gick ut på att den stipulerar att kunskap cirkulerar, medan den empiri som presenterats tyder på att det oftast handlar om ganska enkelriktad spridning av tankegoods (Jarrick, 2024). Edgrens undersökning av hur remissvar och annan kritik påverkade *Läsebokens* revidering verkar faktiskt vara ett exempel på just den kunskapscirkulation som Jarrick menar saknas. Exemplet hade dock fått större tyngd om Edgren redovisat sin metod. Som fallet är nu, vet inte läsaren om hans resultat vilar på en systematisk genomgång av källorna, eller om de åberopade citaten i boken valts för att passa argumentationen. Den teoretiska förankringen i den kunskapshistoriska fältet är också ganska grund; den består mest av ett kort kapitel i bokens inledning och några meningar i slutet. Huruvida arbetet hade vunnit på en tydligare kunskapshistorisk anknytning vill jag dock lämna osagt. Som Jarrick och även Karin Sennfelt (2021) påpekat är det kunskapshistoriska angreppssättet inte nödvändigtvis det mest givande i alla lägen.

I och med att *Läseboken* är så flitigt beforskad är uppgiften att mjölka ut ytterligare kunskap ur den ganska svår. Dess lutherska och explicit nationalistiska agenda är väl kartlagd, vilket bland annat påpekats av Anne Berg och Esbjörn Larsson i en artikel som publicerades året före Edgrens bok. Berg och Larsson siktar in sig på *Läsebokens* framställning av klass och klassidentiteter, som med deras ord ”have remained relatively unmapped” (Berg och Larsson, 2023, s. 25). Ändå är även deras slutsats – att avsikten med *Läseboken* var att fostra en medgörlig arbetarklass – närmast en bekräftelse av Herbert Tingstens läromedelskritik från 1960-talet.

Även Edgren kommer fram till att *Läsebokens* politiska agenda var konservativ. Men hans empiri visar att den reviderade utgåvan från 1890-talet också tog intryck av modernare pedagogiska idéer. Hans resultat stämmer således överens med Lars Furulands uppfattning från 1988:

Ingenting är lättare än att [beskriva *Läse-boken*] som ett väl planerat försök att hålla de fattiga nere som lydiga tjänare. Går vi in i det historiska skeendet visar sig emellertid situationen vara mer komplicerad och samtidigt mer spännande än så. Starka motståndare till folkupplysningstanken ville hejda utvecklingen vid katekesläsning och konfirmationsförberedelse. [...] *Läseboken* innebar trots allt det viktigaste brottet dittills med katekes-traditionen. (Furuland, 1988, s. 276, 279.)

När det gäller formalia och riktighet i sak finns en del avvikelser i Edgrens arbete. Bland annat ligger referaten ur källor och tidigare forskning väl nära originalens ordalydelse; denna tendens att "smycitera" är utbredd även bland våra studenter och det hade varit fint om Edgrens bok varit ett bättre föredöme härvidlag. Några faktafel har också smugit sig in. Även om det kan verka futtigt att anmärka på enskildheter vill jag påpeka att Wilhelm Peterson-Berger inte bodde i Värmland utan i Jämtland, och att reumatism inte beror på brister i den personliga hygien. Jag kan heller inte hålla med om att Sverige vid industrialiseringens intåg var "ett religiöst och patriarkalt enhetssamhälle som föga hade förändrats sedan 1600-talet" (s. 38) – ett antagande som speglar en äldre historisk uppfattning om bondesamhället som mer eller mindre statiskt. Den agrara revolutionen och skiftena hade ju omdanat landsbygden i grunden och man brände inga häxor på bål under 1800-talet, för att nämna ett par skillnader.

Också ämnets litteraturhistoriska

aspekter hade kunnat behandlas med större omsorg. Carl Michael Bellman, till exempel, var verksam under den epok vi kan kalla Upplysningen, men var han en "upplysningsdiktare" (s. 131)? Och C.J.L. Almqvists och Viktor Rydbergs författarskap – mångfacetterade, omfattande, motsägelsefulla, och centrala för det svenska 1800-talets idéhistoria – kan de verkligen beskrivas som "socialrealistiska", ett ord som Edgren använder om både Almqvists senare produktion och om Rydberg och Carl Snoilsky? Påståendet att 1800-talsförfattaren Pehr Thomasson ansågs skriva dålig litteratur är definitivt missvisande: hans arbeten fick ofta ett välvilligt mottagande och han beviljades till och med en årlig pension av riksdagen.

Vidare hade jag gärna sett en noggrannare redovisning av begreppet "socialdarwinism." Edgren beskriver *Läsebokens* bild av samer som just socialdarwinistisk. Det vore i så fall exempel på en mycket snabb spridning av – låt oss inte kalla det kunskap, utan kunskapsförvanskning. Herbert Spencers teorier om "the survival of the fittest" bland människor formulerades för första gången i skrift under 1850-talet, och Darwins *On the Origin of Species* kom ut 1859. Båda teorierna var radikala och omtvistade, och skulle någon av dem återfinnas i en bok för barn, i den nordeuropeiska periferi som var Sverige, redan 1868, vore det ett fynd värt en grundligare genomlysning.

Flera av de ovan nämnda tveksamheterna kan bero på att Edgren inte är så noggrann med varifrån han hämtar sin information. I vissa fall är referenserna föråldrade. Framställningen av emigrationen färgas således av litteratur som skrevs före det stora emigrationsprojektet under 1960- och 70-talet. En märklig utsaga om spetälskeutbrott i Älvdalen är hämtad från en artikel i *Populär historia*: "När djurens utdunstningar blandades

med ångan från sörpa (ett slags djurfoder) skapades en osund miljö, vilket kan ha förenklat smittspridningen bland människor”, skriver Edgren (s. 224). Här har det dessutom uppstått ett missförstånd: det aktuella stycket i *Populär historia* beskriver inte hur smittan faktiskt spreds, utan hur 1800-talets människor resonerade om smittspridningen.

Översiktsverk som till exempel *Litteraturens historia i Sverige* av Olsson och Algulin (upplagan från 1995) används i flera fall som enda stöd för centrala resonemang. Det är förstås inte fel i princip att hänvisa till synteser – vissa är mycket bra, och är det bara någon allmänt känd sak man behöver en not till kan även läromedel duga. Men för en kvalificerad analys av 1800-talets skönlitteratur räcker det inte till att referera till en sammanfattning som spänner från järnålder till postmodernism i ett enda band.

Min avslutande synpunkt på *En kungsådra för nationens samhörighet* rör Edgrens slutsats att *Läseboken* var ”pietistisk.” Här är frågan till att börja med vad som egentligen avses med begreppet. I en redogörelse på sida 86 skriver Edgren att pietismen krävde att kristna måste ”utföra goda gärningar”, och att *Läseboken* i denna pietistiska (?) anda uppmanade sina läsare att vara flitiga, ordningsamma och fromma: ”Om detta infriades vanns Guds kärlek” (s. 86).

Med detta resonemang är Edgren inne på riktigt trixiga teologiska frågor som undertecknad inte kan påstå sig behärska fullt ut. I den litteratur Edgren hänvisar till – Christer Hedins lärobok *Kristendom: Lära, fromhetsliv och historia* – finns emellertid inte något stöd för att pietismen skulle kräva goda gärningar eller stödja uppfattningen att Guds kärlek kan erövrats genom mänsklig ansträngning. Om jag uppfattat mer utförlig litteratur rätt är pietismens främsta kännetecken det innerliga förhållandet mellan Kris-

tus och den troende: ett förhållande där Kristus vunnit den troende (genom sin offerdöd på korset), och den troende aldrig av egen kraft kan göra sig förtjänt av en så stor nåd.

Tolkningen att *Läsebok för folkskolan* är pietistisk är alltså inte övertygande belagd av Edgren. För att bedöma riktigheten måste läsaren gå till källan, vilket jag gjort. Jag hade givetvis inte möjlighet att göra om hela Edgrens studie, men *Läsebokens* första upplaga är digitaliserad och jag använde mig av en sökning på Krist*, Jesu* och Frälsa* som proxy för pietism. Det visade sig att Jesus var förbluffande frånvarande – i *Läsebokens* första upplaga är Gud en Fader och inget annat. Resultatet var så tydligt att man nästan kan fråga sig om *Läseboken* medvetet markerade mot den frikyrkliga fromheten, där kristusgestalten ju var central.

Därnäst tog jag fram *Läsebokens* reviderade upplaga – och upptäckte till min förvåning att en total vindkantring skett. I 1890-talets nya läsebok är den svärmiska tron på Jesus högst närvarande! Hur detta gick till hade varit intressant att få veta mer om. Kanske har det att göra med att Gunnar Wennerberg – eklestiastikminister och representerad som författare i *Läseboken* – försvarade den nyevangeliska fromheten? Även akademisekreteraren Carl David af Wirsén, politiskt stockkonservativ och beskriven som renlärig lutheran i äldre forskning, var uppenbarligen öppen för en mer innerlig tro när han förde pennan i egenskap av poet. Ett par av de dikter i *Läseboken* från 1890-talet som verkligen erinrar om pietismen, med uttryck som ”Lammets bröllop” och liknande, är skrivna av honom.

Med förbehållet att jag kan ha missat någon kyrkohistoriskt inriktad läromedelsanalys som redan uppmärksammat saken verkar Edgren alltså ha snubblat

över något nytt: Första upplagan av *Läsebok för folkskolan* var allt utom pietistisk – men i den reviderade versionen tycks i all tysthet en dörr ha öppnats mot väckelserörelsen.

Även om Edgrens bok har sina brister och huvudsakligen bekräftar de slutsatser som dragits i tidigare forskning, kommer den säkert att finna läsare. Våra lärarstudenter gör ju ofta läromedelsanalyser i sina examensarbeten, och här finns en stor efterfrågan på lättillgängliga, svensk-språkiga översiktsverk. *En kungsådra för nationens samhörighet* kommer troligtvis att hamna i litteraturförteckningen i många framtida studentuppsatser.

Referenser

- Berg, Anne, och Esbjörn Larsson. "Diligent and Docile Workers: Descriptions of the Working Poor and the Social Order in the *Läsebok För Folkskolan*, 1868–1920s." *Paedagogica Historica* 59, no. 1 (2023).
- Furuland, Lars. "Folkskolans läsebok." I *Den Svenska Litteraturen 3: De liberala genombrotten 1830–1890*, red. Lars Lönnroth och Sven Delblanc. Stockholm: Bonnier, 1988.
- Jarrick, Arne. "Att kasta ut barnet med badvattnet: En kritisk granskning av svensk kunskapshistoria." *Historisk tidskrift* 144, no. 4 (2024).
- Sennefelt, Karin. "Bortom kunskapens gräns: Ett svar till Anna Nilsson Hammar och Kajsa Weber." *Historisk tidskrift* 141, no. 4 (2021).

Hanna Enefalk
Karlstads universitet
hanna.enefalk@kau.se

Henrik Björck
*Vetenskapshistorisk hattparad I–II:
Forskarutbildningarna i det svenska
högskolesystemets historia*

Göteborg: Makadam
2025, 344/388 s.

En forskarutbildning är lång, men även andra böcker än avhandlingar kan ta många år att skriva. I vissa fall är de verkligen mödan värda.

Idéhistorikern Henrik Björcks magistrala verk om den svenska forskarutbildningens historia är ett välkommet bidrag till forskningen om högre utbildning, vilken i sig vuxit i takt med att utbildningssystemet kommit att omfatta allt större samhällsproportioner såväl i Sverige som globalt. Med sina två volymer, vilka spänner över 700 sidor, är studien tung och innehållsrik, och framför allt mycket användbar för vidare forskning. Det är kanske främst de specialintresserade som kommer att läsa böckerna från pärm till pärm. Men de kan, av såväl lärare och forskare som personer verksamma i högskoleförvaltningen, läsas selektivt och med fördel användas lite som ett uppslagsverk. Som sådan informationskälla kommer den under lång tid vara ett standardverk inom de olika studie- och professionsområden som behandlas.

Björck har konsulterat ett digert källmaterial, samtidigt som det ska sägas att inte alla delar bygger på egen grundforskning. Det syntetiserande arbete författaren genomför har likväl stort värde. Sammantaget ges en ovanligt bred överblick som visar på längre mönster och zoomar in på särskilt betydelsefulla förändringar och problem. Genom sitt ambitiösa grepp fungerar verket som ingång till universitets- och högskolehistoria mer generellt, och just med tanke på forskningens och den högre utbildningens expansioner under de senaste

hundra åren blir verket också ett prisma till Sveriges moderna historia och framväxten av ett så kallat kunskapssamhälle. Som författaren slår fast existerar doktorsgraden givetvis "inte i ett vakuum utan behöver en värdinstitution, som i sin tur behöver acceptans av akademiska krafter och finansiering av politiska". (I, s. 20) De vidare kontexterna fångas upp genom att Björck närmar sig forskarutbildningshistorien som del av ett större, relationellt "socio-akademiskt system", vilket bidrar till en välbehövlig historiografisk "decentrering" av universiteten.

Undersökningen har sin upprinnelse i Björcks tidigare studier av vetenskaps- och högskolepolitik samt framväxten av en teknisk doktorsgrad. Det primära studieobjektet den här gången är just "rätten att kreera doktorer". Som han konstaterar är disputationen "en nyckelkomponent i systemet och en gemensam nämnare för de läroanstalter som definitivt tagit plats i det. Den kan hållas konstant på ett sätt som möjliggör jämförelser både mellan utbildningsinstitutioner och över tid". (I, s. 18). I tretton kapitel får vi följa hur olika institutioner, främst fackhögskolor, eftersträvade disputationen och erhöll denna. Det innebar i de flesta fall invecklade och segdragna turer i en kamp om resurser och legitimitet – en kamp som huvudsakligen drevs av pragmatiska idéer i kontrast till många universitetsdiskussioner som genom historien annars har tenderat att bli överdrivet högstämde. Som Björck underfundigt konstaterar har han "inte sett några utläggningar av tandläkarinstituts idé". (II, s. 297–298)

1870-talet framtonar som den egentliga startpunkten med införandet av doktorsgraden vid filosofisk fakultet (1870) och milstolpen som följde snart därpå när en doktorsdisputation för första gången genomfördes utanför

universiteten, i det fallet på Karolinska institutet (där man emellertid fick vänta till 1906 för att också erövra promotionsrätten). Genom valet att "laborera med de långa tidslinjer som synliggör förändring" erbjuds också tillbakablickar mot universitetens betydligt äldre, förmoderna historia. (I, s. 39) Vad man hade kunnat önska mer av är internationella utblickar och jämförelser av forskarutbildningens utveckling i andra utbildningssystem. Nu förekommer sådana främst i bakgrundshistoriska upptakter eller hänvisas till på fotnotsnivå. Mer systematiskt integrerade hade de kunnat precisera värdet av undersökningens resultat genom att synliggöra eventuellt avvikande inslag i det svenska systemet. Man kan hoppas att Björck även väljer att kommunicera delar av sina resultat inför det internationella forskarsamfundet och då prövar att höja blicken ännu mer. Om inte annat finns här ett spännande underlag att ta spjörn emot för framtida komparativa ansatser.

Rent framställningsmässigt är språket tydligt och Björck går mycket grundligt tillväga, även om jag emellanåt kan önska han skulle ha prioriterat själva textflödet framför en del aningen omständliga förtydliganden och reservationer. I den långa hattparaden ges alltså ingående redogörelser för hur olika fackområden och deras utbildningsinstitutioner i tur och ordning tillförskansade sig disputationen och promotionsättet och hur doktorsgrader inrättades. Efter kirurgerna vid KI följer kapitel om: tekniker (tekn.dr 1927), veterinärer (vet.med.dr 1935), agronomer (agr.dr 1942), ekonomer (ekon.dr 1946), tandläkare (odont.dr 1950), jägmästare (skog.dr 1950), farmaceuter (farm.dr 1954) och så slutligen konstnärer (konstnärlig doktorsexamen 2009). Alla dessa skeenden sätts in i relevanta politiska kontexter genom analyser av otaliga utredningar och debatter.

De föregås också av ett längre kapitel om "akademikerna" och utvecklingen vid universiteten, och ramas in av mer övergripande inlednings- och avslutningskapitel samt ett där Björck guidar oss genom 1900-talets snåriga serie av högre utbildningsreformer. I den här recensionen finner jag ingen anledning att gå djupare in i de specialiserade kapitlen, utan lägger istället tonvikten vid de mer övergripande resultat och resonemang som framkommer.

Sedan Birgitta Odéns *Forskarutbildningens förändringar 1890–1975* (1991) har det funnits ett stort behov av studier som tar ett större grepp om forskarutbildningens historia, särskilt med tanke på att Odéns undersökning avgränsades till ett urval av discipliner. Samtidigt har vi på senare år sett ett växande antal utbildningssociologiska studier. Forskarutbildning som studieobjekt tilldrar sig uppenbarligen allt större intresse, i viss mån till och med som ett självständigt forskningsfält markerat genom exempelvis tidskriften *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* (2006–) som Björck nämner. Jag vill dock påstå att undersökningar som bygger på en ordentligt genomtänkt teoretisk grund och samtidigt vågar röra sig längre tillbaka i tiden med utgångspunkt i rejäl empiri är mer sällsynta. Här hittar Björck en bra balans. Närmare bestämt presenterar han fem specifika utgångspunkter som tillsammans bildar en större tolkningsram, vilka han sedan tydligt återkopplar till i bokens slutsatser. Dessa innefattar anläggandet av ett "systemperspektiv" på högre utbildning, "institutionalistiska perspektiv" på systemets delar, ett "professionssociologiskt perspektiv" på dess aktörer, "marginalistiska perspektiv" för att fånga gränsdragningsarbeten och slutligen "språkbrukshistoriska perspektiv" för att närma sig de diskussioner som fördes. (I, s. 19)

Björck har tidigare utmärkt sig som begreppshistoriker. Den kompetensen tas tillvara i den språkbrukshistoriska analysen av hur själva begreppet forskarutbildning uppkom. Intressant nog härleds begreppet inte till de gamla, fullskaliga statsuniversiteten, utan istället till det tekniska studieområdet och de två regeringstillsatta kommittéer som på 40-talet hade i uppdrag att utreda ordnandet av högre teknisk undervisning och forskning. I detta skede – och inte minst mot bakgrund av det världskrig som brutit ut – artikulerades brist på forskare som ett akut problem. För detta krävdes en organiserad och aktivt understödd "forskarutbildning". Snart kom forskarutbildning att framtona som en allmän angelägenhet av betydande mått. Som Björck visar utgjorde det explicita begreppet redan i 1955 års universitetsutredning "ett självklart inslag" i den problembild som ställdes i centrum för en alltmer framtidsorienterad politisk diskurs med fokus på den högre utbildningens och forskningens planmässighet. (II, s. 183–184) Bara några år senare, 1963, kom så en separat utredning att tillsättas med fokus på forskarutbildning och forskarkarriär som så småningom ledde fram till den stora forskarutbildningsreformen 1969.

Det är av särskilt värde att Björck följer dessa skeenden fram till 1969 års reform (som ofta hamnat i skymundan av UKAS, studentprotesterna och H77) då en enhetlig doktorsexamen, omfattande fyra års studier, sjuöskades och därmed ersatte den brokigare uppsättning av doktorsgrader och licentiatexamina som dithills brukats. Detta förenhetligande genomfördes inte utan motstånd, men motiverades mot bakgrund av tidsenliga ideal om ökad effektivitet och genomströmning. Kritiker såg inte minst risker i att kvinnor, till följd av familjeåtaganden, skulle ha svårt att anpassa sig till ett ökat

tempo, och det befarades också att forskningens originalitet skulle äventyras med ett mer strömlinjeformat system.

Björcks undersökning stannar emellertid inte vid denna reform. Han följer utvecklingen in i vår egen tid med avstamp i nästa stora reform som genomfördes 1998, och som av naturliga skäl tycks finnas i betydligt mera färskt minne på akademiska institutioner runtom i landet. Dess konsekvenser är välkända. Många institutioner, inte minst inom humaniora, har under de senaste decennierna kämpat med krympande doktorandvolymen och bristen på en kritisk massa vid seminarierna till följd av de nya kraven på garanterad finansiering. Björck pekar även på vikten av de skärpta krav på uppföljning, framför allt i form av den individuella studieplanen, som tycks ha ändrat forskarutbildningens dynamik. Detta enligt ett mönster som känns igen på den högre utbildningens olika nivåer i ett historiskt skede präglad av tilltagande marknadslogik: "kontrakt sluts mellan parter som inte riktigt känner tillit till varandra". (II, s. 239) Tack vare de långa tidsperspektiv som tecknas blir det tydligt hur akademiska normer ständigt omförhandlats i takt och otakt med utbildningens organisatoriska förändringar.

I dubbelvolymens sista empiriska kapitel behandlas den konstnärliga doktorsexamen som utmanade den uniforma ordning som dessförinnan etablerats genom det mödosamma reformarbetet: "Om de många doktorsgraderna i ett tidigare skede innebar en pluralitet av forskarutbildningar så införde reformen 1969 en homogenisering, även om de reella divergenserna var betydande. Den formella enhetligheten bröts upp av konstnärerna, som alltså återinförde ett mått av mångfald 2009". (II, s. 244) Björck påpekar vidare att: "Konstutbildningarna lämnas gärna

utanför skildringar av högskolans historia. Att konstnärerna komplicerar genom att bryta mönster gör dem här bara mer intressanta. Deras position på marginalen av systemet ger en blyxtbelysning av skiljelinjer som kan vara svåra att uppfatta för blicken från centrum." (II, s. 243) Denna konsekventa pendling mellan centrum och periferi utgör en av de främsta styrkorna med *Vetenskapshistorisk hattparad*. Trots dess omfattning och många snirkliga utläggningar glömmar författaren inte bort att återkoppla till stora och även dagsaktuella frågor.

Så var står vi då idag? Och vad tillför Björcks undersökning till den rådande situationen? Som han inledningsvis skriver är bokens huvudsyfte "att ge perspektiv på vår samtida belägenhet genom att utforska den historiska utveckling som lett fram till dagens komplexa position". (I, s. 16)

Internationalisering och publiceringspråk, finansierings- och arbetsvillkor, valet av monografi eller sammanläggningsavhandling är bara några exempel på frågor som befinner sig i centrum för nutida diskussioner om forskarutbildning. Som Björck visar har några av dessa djupt löpande historiska rötter. Han reser även intressanta och möjligen kontrainuitiva frågor om de senaste årens utveckling – där vi till exempel ser doktorander samlas (eller inordnas) i forskargrupper, eller mötas av stärkta förväntningar om postdok-vistelser hos internationella "mästarlärare" – på sätt och vis innebär en återgång till äldre lärlingsbetonade utbildningsformer. Trots tydliga inslag av stigberoende och isomorfism rör sig forskarutbildningens moderna historia därmed inte alldeles tydligt i en enkel riktning, utan präglas av såväl kontinuitet som brott och eventuella återkomster. Här tangeras stora och viktiga frågor om hur mycket av samhällets kunskapsöverföring som bör akademiseras, och

hur likformig den högre utbildningen bör vara: ja, vad är egentligen huvudsyftet med forskning och högre utbildning?

Avslutningsvis kan vi notera att de två mest genomgripande reformerna av forskarutbildningen genomfördes med 30 års mellanrum. Den senaste generationen av doktorander har nu verkat i enlighet med de villkor som fastställdes i slutet av 90-talet. Snart har 30 år passerat på nytt; en del spänningar har uppenbarligen börjat hopa sig och sätter press på det befintliga organisatoriska ramverket. Man blir därmed frestad att ställa sig frågan när vi nästa gång kommer att få se en reformering av forskarutbildningen av motsvarande magnitud. Om någon politisk kraft skulle få för sig att ta ett dylikt initiativ föreligger nu åtminstone ett mycket gediget historiskt kunskapsunderlag.

Hampus Östh Gustafsson
Uppsala universitet

hampus.osthgustafsson@idehist.uu.se

Susannah Wright

*Youth and Peace in England,
1919–1969*

Cham: Palgrave Macmillan
2024, 226 pp.

In *Youth and Peace in England, 1919–1969*, Susannah Wright sets out to address both the marginalisation of children and youth in broader histories of the British peace movement, and a relative neglect of peace activism in the history of childhood and youth. Drawing on a diverse range of sources, she explores how young people in England have engaged with ideas of peace across five decades and multiple generations. The result is an empirically rich study that helps bring everyday experiences of peace activism to life, from interwar hopes of a new and peaceful international system to nuclear fears among 1960s youth.

While formal peace organisations are at the centre of the narrative, this is not an organisational history. Instead, Wright uses peace organisations as gateways into the lived experiences of children and youth. The organisations studied under the umbrella of the “peace movement” encompass both liberal internationalist bodies such as the League of Nations Union (1918–1939), the United Nations Association (1945–present), and the Council for Education in World Citizenship (1939–2008), as well as more radical and countercultural movements like the Peace Pledge Union (1934–present) and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (1957–present). In discussing these organisations, Wright takes a resolutely bottom-up approach, drawing on a rich variety of sources: oral history interviews (both archival and newly conducted), autobiographies, school magazines, Mass Observation material, and the records of peace organisations.

While the book intersects fruitfully with a range of fields, historians of education will perhaps find greatest value in Wright's treatment of schools as arenas for extracurricular activism and engagement. She contrasts more institutionalised, "safe" expressions of peace education—endorsed by teachers and headteachers—with more oppositional forms of activism, such as anti-nuclear protest, which could bring young people into conflict with school authorities. The League of Nations Union and the Council for Education in World Citizenship, for instance, offered structured spaces within which children could experiment with civic ideas of peace, sometimes under adult supervision. In contrast, youth sections of the CND could meet resistance within school settings, and youth living out strict forms of pacifism in times of war could experience social sanctions. Yet, Wright avoids simplistic binaries and shows how across these different formats, youth engagement could be fleeting or profound, compliant or resistant. Her approach is consistently nuanced and attentive to the complexities of children's and adolescents' motivations.

The book's analytical structure reflects the methodological challenges of working in the history of childhood and youth, where child-produced source material is often fragmentary and uneven. As Emily Gallagher has recently noted in her study of Australian archives, researchers must cast wide nets to locate child-authored or child-related material (Gallagher, 2023). Wright embraces this eclecticism. The result is not a tightly structured, systematic analysis but rather a mosaic of source-driven examples that shed light on individual experiences. This patchwork quality is both a strength and a limitation: while it may lack a clear analytical through-line, the book succeeds in capturing what Wright herself describes

as the "variety, messiness, and complexities, alongside commonalities of young people's engagement with peace" (p. 5). For historians of education – particularly those interested in perspectives from below and informal or extracurricular dimensions of education – the book therefore offers both methodological insights and rich empirical content.

Wright's transparency about the limitations of her source base, her personal investment in the topic, and her engagement with thorny questions of agency and children's genuine voices is commendable. Rather than imposing an artificial structural coherence, she allows the available sources speak for themselves, assembling them into a vivid social history of how peace was lived, contested, and imagined by young people. At the same time, the book's multifaceted source base reflects certain social and institutional filters. Wright herself points out some of these biases in her introductory chapter: preserved school magazines, for instance, often come from better-resourced schools (p. 17) and the organisations had a predominantly white, middle-class membership (p. 12). These factors inevitably shape the portrait the book offers. For a fuller picture, explorations of how peace was conceptualised and enacted among youth in other ideological milieus might be a fruitful avenue of further research – especially considering how central the rhetorical concept of "peace" was among communist youth groups in the West, and in Soviet cultural youth diplomacy (e.g., Neumann, 2022).

In sum, *Youth and Peace in England, 1919–1969* offers an empathetic and source-driven account of youth's engagement with peace and internationalism. Wright has done the hard (and often underappreciated) work of assembling a dispersed source base, a necessary effort to be able to make claims about the

significance of children in youth in larger historical questions. She can therefore weigh in on larger debates about whether children only exist on the edges of adult-driven processes of historical change, or in themselves could be significant contributors to such change by shaping adult decisions through the very nature of their age (Gleason, 2023). In Wright's account, young people gain such significance by contributing to shaping hopes and emotional investments of adults around them. Therefore, while an enjoyable reading experience as a cultural and social history of modern Britain in itself, the book also provides valuable inspiration to historians of education who want to access and accentuate the importance of youths' experiences.

References

- Gallagher, Emily. "Hidden in Plain Sight: Child-Authored Material in Australian Museums and Archives." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 16, no. 3 (2023), 384–419.
- Gleason, Mona. "Children Obviously Don't Make History": Historical Significance and Children's Modalities of Power." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 16, no. 3 (2023), 343–60.
- Neumann, Matthias. "Peace and Friendship': Overcoming the Cold War in the Children's World of the Pioneer Camp Artek." *Diplomatic History* 46, no. 3 (2022), 505–26.

Tuva Skjelbred Nodeland
University of South-Eastern Norway
tuva.s.nodeland@usn.no



Reviewers used outside the Editorial Board 2021–2025

Astri Andresen, University of Bergen
Thom Axelsson, Malmö University
Anne Berg, University of Gothenburg
Sophy Bergenheim, Aalborg University and University of Helsinki
Diana Berthén, Stockholm University
Emil Bertilsson, Uppsala University
Dunja Blazevic, University of Bergen
Johan Boberg, Uppsala University
Cecile Boss, University of Geneva
Åsa Broberg, Stockholm University
Peter Yding Brunbech, Aarhus University
Tomislav Dulić, Uppsala University
Samuel Edquist, Mid Sweden University
Tomas Englund, Örebro University
Per-Olof Erixon, Umeå University
Jakob Evertsson, Uppsala University and Stockholm University
Inês Félix, Umeå University
Yulia Gradska, Södertörn University
Sofia Grunditz, Stockholm University
Isak Hammar, Lund University
Johan Hansson, Umeå University
Jan Frode Hatlen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Simon Holleufer, Aalborg University
Annelie Holmberg, Uppsala University
Janne Holmén, Uppsala University
Magnus Hultén, Linköping University
Ethan Hutt, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Harald Haraldsson Jarning, University of Oslo
Lisa Jarvinen, La Salle University
Lars Bang Jensen, Aalborg University
Roger Johansson, Lund University
Karin Jonsson, Mid Sweden University
Essi Jouhki, University of Jyväskylä
Caroline Klintborg, Stockholm University
Christian Larsen, Danish National Archives
Esbjörn Larsson, Uppsala University
Germund Larsson, Uppsala University
Jin Hui Li, Aalborg University
Anne-Li Lindgren, Stockholm University
Björn Lundberg, Lund University
Iva Lučić, Uppsala University

Christian Lundahl, Örebro University
Amalie Olga Lyngsted, University of Copenhagen
Daniel Lövheim, Stockholm University
Gunnlaugur Magnusson, Uppsala University
Emil Marklund, Umeå University
Madeleine Michaëlsson, Dalarna University
Tuva S. Nodeland, University of South-Eastern Norway
Ulrika Norburg, Stockholm University
Jukka Nyssönen, Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research
Anders Persson, Dalarna University
Magnus Persson, Malmö University
Sara Backman Prytz, Uppsala University
Johan Prytz, Uppsala University
Lina Rahm, KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Henrik Román, Uppsala University
Anders Råde, Umeå University
Linda Rönnberg, Umeå University
Carina Rönnqvist, Umeå University
Linus Salö, Stockholm University
Johan Samuelsson, Karlstad University
Jonatan Samuelsson, Umeå University
Maria Simonsen, Aalborg University
Laura Skouvig, University of Copenhagen
Carl-Filip Smedberg, Uppsala University
Lina Spjut, Umeå University
Anna Sténs, The Archive of Popular Movements in Västerbotten
Lars Petter Storm Torjussen, University of Bergen
Matilda Svensson, Malmö University
Sofia Österborg Wiklund, Örebro University
Nina Volckmar, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Per Wisselgren, Uppsala University
Christian Ydesen, Aalborg University

Thank you very much for your efforts!