Chapter 2
School Leadership in Denmark: Between Two Historical and Contemporary Discourses

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Abstract Looking back at the history of society, culture and institutions in Denmark can produce snapshots of the foundation of education and educational leadership. In some respects, the history of culture, society and education goes back at least 200 years. Educational theories, institutional structures and leadership practices can be framed as a quest for democracy, participation and knowledge, often based on the ideals of child-centred education and a school for all. School leadership was only a minor concern during this period.

Post-World War II analyses of society and education can be characterised as a struggle between two dominant discourses: a democratic *Bildung* discourse and a competitive outcomes discourse. The former discourse was dominant until the mid-1990s, but over the subsequent 20-year period, the competitive outcomes discourse began to take centre stage. Societal, political and economic developments were the driving force behind this shift. School leadership requirements also changed towards a more technocratic, outcome-based and economy-focused management practice.

Keywords Societies · Discourses · Contracts · Relations · Creativity · Participation

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Introduction

When investigating the roots of school leadership, its cultural and societal foundations, we need to be aware that both culture and society are historical and contextual features that change over time – sometimes quickly and sometimes more protracted. Every now and then, it seems that changes occur over night, such as when certain nationalist, populist world leaders seem to suddenly change the structure and culture of their nation. However, the new situation always has roots in what came before; we just need to be able to see them. Change is not only initiated through legislation, governance or management; it is also dependent on the ethno-symbolic features (Matas, 2017): the myths, memories and traditions embodied in the state and its institutions. Symbolic forces shape the nation and the school, meaning that certain values, norms and practices endure while assimilating new demands from the outer world of state and school. For a period of time, the old and the new exist side by side and struggle to assert their dominance over behaviour and practice.

The analyses and discussions of societal and cultural foundations in this chapter will therefore examine past traits to discover current sources shaping leadership in education. We need to look at developments at a societal, transnational, institutional and professional level because social relations, policy, culture and educational values are the basis for educational discourses (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Two Societal Governance Discourses

Contemporary societal and cultural analyses are framed by two dominant discourses in: the welfare state discourse and the competitive state discourse. The welfare state discourse emerged shortly after World War II, while the competitive state discourse gained prominence in the 1980s. However, rather than the competitive state discourse replacing the welfare state discourse, the two have functioned side by side, albeit with the former gaining dominance within policy and, more gradually, practice. Both discourses are based on a set of political, moral and ethical values or norms that are often not made explicit to the public. Through analysis, this chapter seeks to uncover these values and the interplay between them. Many of the values and norms inherent to the welfare state discourse have been carried over to the competitive state discourse.

Danish society has undergone two major changes in the period since World War II. Initially, successive governments strived to establish a welfare state based on principles of international collaboration. From the 1980s, political interests began to change towards a transformation of state and society into a competitive state (Pedersen, 2011) that could survive in the competitive global marketplace. These societal changes were accompanied by changes in educational and leadership policies.

Following the experiences of the Second World War, there was a global interest in collaboration across borders with most countries joining the United Nations and other international agencies. At the national level, the welfare state vision was first and foremost developed as a project of the Danish social democratic party, which wanted to build a society grounded in science, rational thinking and democratic participation. The state should provide its citizens with healthcare, social security and education. Education was expected to be an important resource in reducing social inequalities, increasing social mobility and teaching democratic values. Therefore, the state was increasingly seen as the most important party in transforming the school.

In the 1980s, a new powerful discourse developed, primarily in the UK and the USA; the governments in both these countries wanted to develop a new neo-liberal world order where the market would have more room for manoeuvre and the state less. Proponents gained crucial assistance from recently formed transnational agencies such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Union (EU), the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – all of which were established in order to further the vision of a global marketplace. Denmark, like other nations, produced political and economic programmes for the modernisation of state and society. The fundamental principles for this process were grouped together under the term New Public Management (NPM) (Hood, 1991; Moos, 2019), which meant governance built on:

1. market thinking: decentralisation, competition, freedom of choice (Moos, 2000);
2. product thinking: outcomes, benchmarks, standards and accountability (Lugg et al., 2002);
3. customer steering: free choice (Andersen & Thygesen, 2004); and
4. new governance and leadership forms: low trust, plans and documentation (Moos, 2016a).

Societal Background in the Welfare State

It is possible to provide a summary description of Danish society and education prior to the 1980s. This is best achieved through comparison; we have chosen to compare to the USA as, already at this stage, the US was very close to be a competitive state.

1. *Social relations:* Social relations in Denmark were characterised by a gradual increase in equality, while the already considerable social divisions in the US continued to grow. Trust was higher in the Denmark than in America.
   - *Equality*: The Gini coefficient: 27/100 in Denmark and 41/100 in USA. (100/100 representing total inequality and 0/100 total equality) (WorldBank, 2015).

- General *trust* in other people. In Denmark, 89% of the population say they trust other people, while this only applies to 49% in the US (OECD, 2011).
- *Power distance* refers to the way in which power is distributed and the extent to which the less powerful accept that power is distributed unequally. In Denmark 18/100, and in the USA 40/100 (Hofstede, 1980)

2. *State-market relations:* From WW II onwards, Denmark, like the other Nordic welfare states, was built on principles of a strong state and strong local communities, such as municipal authorities. In Denmark, a welfare state model with relations between the labour market and the state characterised by 'flexicurity' (a flexible labour market with state compensation for unemployed citizens) has been a cornerstone for many years (Andersen et al., 2007). In the same period, the USA developed a liberal state based on principles of individual rights, a strong market and a weak state.
3. *Education:* A firm belief in comprehensive education developed in Denmark. The main aim of so-called progressive education was to educate for participation in democratic communities, often labelled 'Democratic Bildung.' Educational thinking in the US was characterised by ideas of a science-oriented curriculum with a focus on national goals and measurable outcomes. The main aim was to educate for participation in the labour market (Blossing et al., 2013).
4. *Professionals:* In Denmark, many curriculum decisions were decentralised to schools, school leaders and teachers in order to further the democratic approach to education. Relations were built on trust in professional expertise. In Anglo-American educational systems, less was left to the discretion of local agents in schools because national standards and monitoring were core components of the efficiency-focused, science-oriented approach.
5. *Comprehensive schooling or streaming*: In the Danish system, streaming was gradually abolished in the post-WWII period. In the USA, the system continued to practise segregation.

Two Educational Discourses

The Democratic Bildung Discourse

A discourse is here understood as a way of describing and structuring the world. At present, we see two prevailing educational discourses. The first of these emerged from the welfare state model and may be called the *"democratic Bildung discourse."* It is constructed on the basis of legislation, general development and oft-used theories and practices. The political intentions of the educational system are set out in Article 1 of the Act on the Basic School, the *Folkeskole* (Education, 1993), which states:

> The school shall prepare students for active participation, shared responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The school's teaching and everyday

> life must therefore be based on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy. (Author's translation) (p. 1)

This discourse advocates for democratic equity and deliberation in society and its institutions and is in line with the general societal welfare discourse and describes the post-World War II nation-building endeavours. For students to become competent members of a democratic society, they must acquire knowledge about the parliament, the government, the judicial system, the police, and so on, but they themselves should experience and live a democratic life: *"A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience"* (Dewey, 1916, p. 87). This is particularly important in relations at school, meaning that not all methods of instruction and types of teacher behaviour can be considered appropriate and acceptable.

Education includes the acquisition of skills and the development of proficiency, the assimilation and construction of knowledge, and the development of motives and values. It involves what are traditionally called (school) subjects, liberal education and *Bildung*. A mainstream theory on education stipulates that children must learn to become human beings, and therefore they must be educated so that they are able to function independently in the culture and society in which they live. This and similar theories were devised during the Age of Enlightenment at the end of seventeenth century and are based on a vision of society as enlightened and democratic. Therefore, the ideal human being, the goal of education, was the democracy-minded citizen who was willing and able to be a qualified participant in the local community and in society as a whole (Moos & Wubbels, 2018).

The democratic *Bildung* discourse was developed with inspiration from a broad spectrum of theories, including John Dewey's ideas of democracy and experiences (Dewey, 1916/2005), and German 'reform pedagogy', '*vom Kinde aus*' and didactics (Klafki, 1983). Gert Biesta (2009) provides an inspirational summary of this longstanding, and ongoing, discourse when he argues that schools should concern themselves with three interlocking functions of education when striving for a democratic *Bildung*: students' qualification, socialisation and subjectification. When focusing on qualification, schools emphasise students' need to acquire knowledge, skills and judgement that enable them to act in different spheres of life, be it the sphere of work, the private sphere, the cultural sphere or the political sphere. Socialisation enables students to become members of a diverse range of communities, each with specific values, norms and behaviours. Qualification and socialisation are pivotal in education as they enable students to enter into societies as we know them. However, it is also important to acknowledge each and every unique student as they undergo a process of subjectification, thereby becoming unique and self-acknowledged subjects who are competent in questioning society's order of knowledge and community, and who can and should be both critical and creative in respect to the "givens" of civilisation (Biesta, 2009).

One of the features of the welfare state school is the 'class teacher'. She/he is responsible for the well-being of students, individually and in class groups, and for the collaboration with parents. One lesson was scheduled per class group per week

for pastoral care and discussions between students and their class teacher (Moos et al., 2009).

The Outcomes Discourse

The second discourse is tied to the competitive state model (Moos, 2017a), regarding students' measurable learning outcomes as the fundamental objective of education. In Denmark, the foundation for this discourse developed gradually during the 1980s, to some degree in parallel to the economic and societal development at the time. The trend to standardise learning and measure outcomes at the national level first began around 1990, but was solidified as part of a coherent vision with the Danish school reform of 2013 (Moos, 2016b).

In the outcomes discourse, education is constructed along 'management-by-objective' lines: The government draws up detailed objectives – the 2013 school reform included more than 3000 – and measures the outcomes by prescribing more national tests than ever before, while schools, teachers and students need to learn to answer the test questions correctly. Frequently, the curriculum that is developed in this situation has a scientific structure: experts know how to attain their ends and detail every step to be followed by schools, teachers and students. There is a focus on 'back to basics' and 'back to skills', as such skills are easy to measure compared to the more abstract goals of democratic *Bildung* (Blossing et al., 2013).

The competitive outcomes-oriented discourse and associated practices are subject to a greater number of social technologies at the national level than ever seen before in the history of education and educational theory. Social technologies can be seen as silent carriers of power. They are made for a purpose – often hidden from practitioners – and specify ways of acting. As such, they point to a non-deliberative practice that is steered and managed from the top down (Dean, 1999). The inspiration for many of these social technologies comes from transnational agencies like the OECD. This means that education aims originating in different national contexts are 'going global' and thereby contributing to the spread of a global education marketplace along with tendencies to commodify education:

> The concept discusses social relations conducted as and in the form of relations between commodities or things. … In fetishizing commodities, we are denying the primacy of human relationships in the production of value, in effect erasing the social. (Ball, 2004, p. 4)

The PISA comparison has been imported into the European space as an important means of governing education, providing a readymade package of standards or indicators for learning, measurements of outcomes, and tools for comparing students, schools and countries. This was anticipated, as a working paper produced by the OECD shows (Wilkoszewski & Sundby, 2014).

School Leadership Relations

Relations in education emerge through aspects of equality, trust and power distance. As the data in bullet 1 shows: Danish society in the welfare state epoch is characterised by equity through low power distance between societal groups and individuals, very low GINI and high trust in fellow citizens (Fig. 2.1).

The theme of social conditions, relations and differences. Building on materialistic, sociological theories (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), it is reasonable to take the social conditions in which education is situated as a jumping-off point for educational analysis – it is likewise crucial to remember these conditions when discussing school leadership. The societal relational structure is the foundation for educational relations.

The welfare state, with its efforts to promote equality in society, both in terms of social class and gender, was a very important foundation for school leadership. This is illustrated in the figure above with only three layers in the school hierarchy. This structure shapes the ways school leadership can be conceived of and practised. Democratic leadership or distributed leadership are easy choices.

As mentioned, economic and social policies changed in Denmark, in line with transnational trends, as neoliberal marketplace logics emerged and spread. Schools and other public sector institutions were increasingly treated as small businesses, producing commodities for sale on the competitive marketplace.

Danish public governance was increasingly constructed as contracts, with sharp divisions between levels of governance (Moos, 2020): At the national level between ministries and ministerial agencies, at the municipal level between local councils and education authorities, and at school level between (school)board, principal, deputy, heads of department, team coordinators, supervisors and teachers (only very few professionals are shown in the figure below). Students are always left out (Fig. 2.2).

Such contracts allow many initiatives and social technologies and are therefore a good arena for discussing school leadership's room for manoeuvre and present practice:

- *Objectives and outcomes* are described clearly and in great detail by contractors. They often refer to league tables from transnational comparisons, such as the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) standards, benchmarks and tests. The school reform of 2013 was actually named 'The School Governed by Learning Outcomes'. School leaders need to lead according

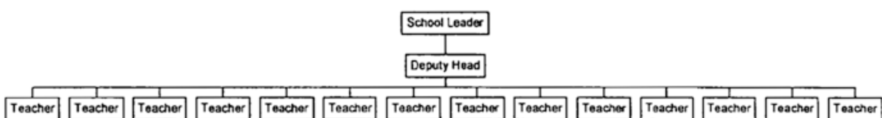

Fig. 2.1 Leadership structure in schools within the welfare state

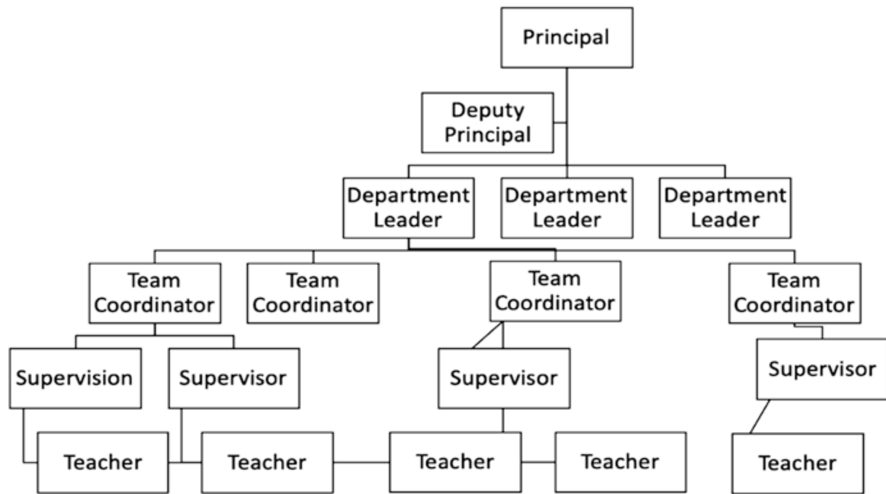

Fig. 2.2 Leadership structure in schools within the competitive state

to these specified goals and measurements hereof instead of in accordance with the previously comprehensive goal of democratic *Bildung*.

- *Numbers:* Policymakers focus heavily on outcomes and evidence as expressed in numbers. They point to the OECD idea of data-driven leadership, where leaders must refer to student outcomes in tests like the PISA comparison (Pont et al., 2008). They are also advised to include examples of international 'best practice' and 'what works' programmes with evidence taken out of context and generalised to global level.
- *Disintegration* of the coherence within schools and the education sector (Dunleavy et al., 2005): leadership relations and communication are replaced by technocratic technologies and competition between actors at each level and between levels. This involves a shift from practising leadership in schools by including all actors in deliberations and decision-making to individual leaders exercising their leadership influence and power. Schools are less likely to develop into democratic communities characterised by democratic practices.
- *Learning focus:* The standards- and outcomes-based school underscores individual student learning and neglects teaching and teachers. Tests and other social technologies promote and ask for individual work in school. Basing classroom practice on the belief that students learn best as individuals, and thus producing and using learning material and methods like electronic tablets, gives teachers a new role and function. They should not interfere in students' learning processes, only assisting if learning problems occur. This has been and remains problematic for many teachers, who view learning as social and contextual (Dewey, 1916/2005).

Relations in Contracts: Mistrust and Trust

The divisions between actors and levels that are created or widened through contract governance produce new relations between leaders and staff. As mentioned, the cracks are mostly papered over using social technologies of benchmarking, measuring and comparison. *Benchmarking* is the process of identifying the level of outcomes seen as satisfactory by the authorities in very narrow areas of basic skill,. These targets are assessed by *measuring*, using measurements that are efficient and fast, target individuals and are expressed in numbers with several decimals (in order to appear more scientific: 'evidence-based'). These numbers are used for *comparison* and for 'naming, shaming or faming' (Brøgger, 2016).

Much of the division between leaders and staff stems from contracts designed as technocratic relations without human interference. Relations and power are hidden or disguised as non-human and value-free technicalities, while at the same time being transformed into monitoring, control and accountability - in short into mistrust.

However, educational leadership in democratic societies must be seen as an issue of trust. Social relations are a fundamental aspect of society and thus of public organisations. According to Warren (1999), democracy is about political relations: social relations characterised by conflicts over goods. Thus, power is a fundamental aspect of social relations. As a result, the social conditions for trust seem to be weak in political contexts, because: *"Trust … involves a judgment, however tacit or habitual, to accept vulnerability to the potential ill will of others by granting them discretionary power over some good. When one trusts, one accepts some amount of risk for potential harm in exchange for the benefits of cooperation…* (Warren, 1999 p. 311).

Traditional and inherited social relations are being contested and are thereby transferred into a political field that is characterised by challenges and conflict, but at the same time by new developments and change. Politics is oriented towards the future. Challenges can bring about change, but also cause uncertainty and risk. Trust is necessary because politics is oriented towards the future. Stable and predictable situations, on the other hand, which secure the conditions for trust, would render trust superfluous.

Warren distinguishes between two forms of trust: firstly, *particular* trust – confidence that emerges in face-to-face situations between people who have common interests, who depend on the same things or who are bound by culture. Particular trust builds on *affective* sources (such as love, friendship or child-parent relations). Secondly, *generalised* trust, which is developed when a society depersonalises functions. Generalised trust must build on cognitive sources: institutions, strangers, business associates and political representatives. An example would be trust in abstract systems (Giddens, 1991).

As such, one can distinguish between *confidence* that is based on experience and, as such, on the past, and *trust* that is not based on experience but rather on the belief that the other person is not going to disappoint expectations.

Trust is a modern phenomenon, according to Seligman (in Warren, p. 323), because with Modernity came individuality as an element of human activities that is not totally congruent with the role one plays. An element of choice, discretion and freedom has been injected into social relations. Here, morality, and thus trust, enter into the picture.

Today, confidence must be supplemented by trust. Luhmann (in Warren, p. 323) writes that the complexity of the social order creates a need for more coordination and therefore the need to determine the future; this in turn creates a need for trust because the need for future coordination is seldom met with confidence. As such, there is a need for new forms of trust that no longer emerge from an immediately experienced world and are no longer secured by tradition: *"In democratic relations, trust ought to have cognitive origins because individuals ought to be able to assess their vulnerabilities as one dimension of self-government"* (Warren, p. 331). The truster needs to be able to judge the *interests* of the trustee without losing the advantages of trust: *"The benefits of cooperation, the possibilities for new kinds of collective action, the securities of reduced complexity for the individual, and the advantages of increased complexity for society as a whole"* (Warren, p. 332).

There are, writes Warren, important and clear connections between democratic institutions and trust. Institutions rely on trust and, through communication with their environment, can strengthen and support the development of trust by negotiating with individuals and through the transparency and legitimacy of their decisions. At the same time, trust can lend support to deliberation as a way of solving political conflicts, and political discussions can generate trust (Ibid. p. 337).

More than many other institutions, educational institutions rely on trust and, by communicating with their contexts, by negotiating with individuals and through the transparency and legitimacy of their decisions, can strengthen and support the development of trust.

Relations: Sensemaking

Considering the 'new' hierarchy in schools and the gaps between levels, we need to reconsider the importance of formal positions: People in leading positions do not automatically perform leadership or power. Power is relational, according to Foucault (Foucault, 1976/1994). Power is the energy, the glue, that sticks relations together and defines the poles, the positions. A person is only a leader if she/he reaches colleagues, followers; if his/her actions reach and include other actors, first and foremost teachers. School leaders are members of a professional group, an organisation, who communicate and interact with each other and their environment to make teaching and all other educational activities work. According to Weick, the formal structure of schools is not the organisation. He argues that the concept of the organisation needs to be changed to organising: It is not important to have fixed structures and provisions; it is important to remember that organising is about communication:

> An organization is 'a network of intersubjectively shared meanings that are sustained through the development and use of common language and everyday social interaction' (Weick, 1995) quoting (Walsh & Ungson, 1991)

Ten years later, Weick put it as follows:

> When we say that meanings materialize, we mean that sensemaking is, importantly, an issue of language, talk, and communication. Situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence." (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409)

Organisations and positions need to be replaced with organising and communication: They are not permanent features, but are constantly recreated through sensemaking processes where participants strive to make sense of their situation, relations and practices. This is one reason why we often talk about distributed leadership, leadership stretched across several actors (Spillane et al., 2004).

Weick point to insights that are also pivotal to education generally: Students need to participate in sensemaking communication with each other and their teachers in order to gain deep knowledge. Learning is social and thus communicative (Dewey, 1937; Moos & Wubbels, 2018). A focus on organising and sensemaking may give school leaders – at all levels - tools for managing hierarchies.

Education for Creativity

Multiple analyses have shown that testing – and especially high-stakes testing – is changing the ways educational systems, schools and teachers conceive of and practise teaching (Hopman, 2008; Lund et al., 2011; Nichols & Berliner, 2007). Tests can make teachers think and act more narrowly or distort curriculum in such a way that issues of content are vulgarised, focusing on facts and instrumental skills rather than problem-based learning and creativity, which are key elements of a democratic *Bildung* discourse. Political statements on the need to get back to basics, for instance by focusing on literacy skills, underscore a tendency to teach to the test; teachers want to support their students in line with official expectations and to perform well in the national league tables.

When the core emphasis in schooling shifts from learning processes to the outcomes of learning as measured in tests and the like, there is a risk that teachers will adapt their teaching to the ways the tests are constructed. As most standardised tests test skills and active knowledge that can be reproduced on command, there is a tendency to hand over the information to students, leaving little time or space for creativity: for curiosity, testing ideas in practice, experimentation and self-reflection. Creativity can be defined as a combination of cognitive-social processes and personal competencies, defined as the ability to think outside the box and conceive new ideas, methods, materials, products and actions (Norden, 2011).

Closely related to the concept of creativity is the concept of innovation: a social process in which risks and possibilities are identified and creativity is used to find new solutions or products. This concept is more often connected to industries and

labour: the development of products and services for an ever-changing market. An overarching concept is entrepreneurship, which is sometimes understood as the competencies to start up a new enterprise, and sometimes as the competencies to be flexible and creative when encountering and coping with social and economic changes (Norden, 2011).

The basis for creativity is a critique of the existing state of affairs (Lundvall, 2008). In schools, culturally diverse environments leave more space for creativity if they build on respect for other cultures. Education should be based on practical and experimental educational theory, with room for experiments, mistakes, criticism, reflection, deliberation and collaboration. Innovation involves the creation of new knowledge or new combinations of existing knowledge. It is the result of interaction between people with diverse talents, interests, insights and experiences in open communication: generalised trust and participatory democracy contribute to creativity.

In many ways, ideas about the purposes of schooling follow ideas about the functions of states and their institutions. Societies are facing major challenges today: environmental problems, climate changes, migration, poverty and inequality – or the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We do not need past solutions because they did not solve problems. We need more people to be creative and critical. We need to be critical in order to better analyse what is needed, and we need to be creative in order to find new solutions. The contemporary OECD-initiated ideas of education point in the wrong direction.

Education for Equality

The formation of class groups has gone from streaming into two student-groups on all levels toward a non-streamed, comprehensive school. The pro and cons in the discussion framing this development were extremely complex: Students' social background and cognitive capacities, and political and educational ideas and visions are just some of the relevant aspects. Therefore, in the following, I can only outline this discussion briefly and somewhat superficially.

One key topic of debate has been the exclusion or inclusion of student in mainstream schools and classes. Since the UNESCO conference on special needs education, the Salamanca agreement (UNESCO, 1994) stipulated two needs that must be followed: Governments should ensure that no child is excluded from the community while also being attentive to the rapidly increasing costs of special needs education.

Another aspect is the ideal that education ensure social equality. Such arguments have been presented in various ways, as a moral foundation for society or as a means of producing capable citizens. The dominant political buzzwords of the sixties were '*social equality through education*' (Hansen 2003, s. 101) and '*mobilization of the pool of talent*' (Olsen, 1986, p. 83; Husén, 1968). As pointed out by the Swedish researcher Torsten Husén (1968, p. 19), *'capable hands are in short supply and the economy expects the educational system to tap the pool of talent, more*

efficiently'. One of the premises for this was found in a flexible school system, in which a definitive choice between various educational paths was postponed for as long as possible. In such a system, it was considered possible to take better care of talent from all walks of life than in a rigid system with an early selection, largely dependent upon social background.

The development towards the comprehensive school was slow and cautious. Agreement to group by ability was obtained by making it a general principle, but giving schools the possibility to refrain if they chose to do so. By means of this compromise, it was expected that schools would gradually become more comprehensive through school practice, which is exactly what happened.

In the following years, a number of schools refrained from ability grouping in the four subjects. This was not necessarily due to a conscious belief that schools should be comprehensive; the omission of ability grouping was also due to certain pedagogical considerations, and due to the fact that more pupils than expected chose advanced courses. Thus, classes following the basic course were often very small and the ability gap among students following the advanced course was be just as great as on non-streamed courses. On this basis, many schools contemplated whether it would be better to abandon ability grouping. As such, in practice, the flow of pupils had a considerable influence on school structure (Olsen, 1986).

During the last decade, there has been a lengthy discussion about education's inherited social inequality: Education, say critics, was developed in accordance with middle-class values, language and qualifications, what Basil Bernstein (2000) named elaborated codes, and education therefore failed working-class students, who were thought to learn according to restricted codes.

The Danish Ministry for Education commissioned the 'National Research Centre for Welfare', VIVE, to evaluate the outcomes of the 2013 reform after 5 years of implementation. The report was published early 2020 by (Jensen et al., 2020).

The report's overall conclusion is that student learning and well-being have not improved based on the results of national tests constructed on the basis of aforementioned the 3000 national objectives. Policymakers drew up the legislation in the hope that schools and teachers would integrate these objectives in their daily work.

The 2013 school reform did not explicitly address the comprehensive-streamed challenge; nor did it tamper with parents' longstanding option to choose their child's school – and to establish private, contract-governed schools. The legislation also gave schools the continued option of forming special classes in music and sports.

Education for Community Participation

The welfare state needed education to support its nation-building processes in order to gain acceptance and support from all citizens. The main aim of this education was education for active participation in a democracy; thus, it builds on a social-democratic concept of strong relations between individuals and communities, leaving many curriculum decisions to professional teachers in collaboration with

students and parents. Danish education was for decades part of the Nordic education history. In an analysis of 'The Nordic Model in Education', Telhaug and colleagues write:

> In the golden age of Nordic social democracy, social virtues such as equal opportunity, co-operation, adaptation and solidarity were considered to be the main goals of compulsory schooling. Mainly for this reason, the ideal was that the adaptation of education to the individual should take place within the framework of the school class. The argument for the comprehensive school was made both directly and indirectly, using, in addition, a third objective to which considerable attention was paid in the post-war period. This was the political objective, or the democratic socialization of pupil. (Telhaug et al., 2006)

Based on European educational theories, one can describe the Nordic approach as a *Bildung* approach; the purpose of education is comprehensive *Bildung*. According to this understanding, children need to understand themselves as members of larger communities and, at the same time, as authoritative individuals by acquiring common knowledge, insight and historical, cultural and global understanding.

Classrooms as Communities

Teachers and educational researchers have known for at least half a century that the ways life in classrooms is arranged, the ways teaching is conducted, and the ways students' learning is organised have a profound impact on what is learned. In his seminal study of what he termed the 'hidden curriculum', Philip W. Jackson (1968) showed how students learned to be patient while waiting for teachers to find the time to communicate; to practise self-control as members of a large group of peers; to distinguish between work and leisure-time activities; to get used to being bored etc. through common approaches to the teaching of literacy and other subjects in 1960s US classrooms.

Today, classroom observations and analysis show similar results: When students are asked to write assignments individually, or take tests individually, it accustoms them to working and thinking individually. This individualistic trend is not only seen in classrooms; it is also a very common societal and cultural trend (Baumann, 1999) that is reinforced in schools.

One of the challenges in teaching classes is to establish and maintain good working, teaching and learning conditions for everybody. This seems to be a universal challenge, but it is addressed using different means and different social technologies across different times and cultures. Per Fibæk Laursen (2007) has made a very interesting analysis of the ways Danish teachers have tried to maintain good working conditions over time. From the beginning of the nineteen century and for a 100 years or so, there were strict rules for good behaviour in classrooms and teachers made students obey them using corporal punishment and humiliation. From the beginning of the twentieth century, a new set of social technologies was developed: classroom discipline. Across the board, actions were based on a code of behaviour

that the teacher prescribed or negotiated with students. For some 20 years now, we have seen the emergence of a spectrum of classroom management or leadership styles. At one end of the spectrum, there is a continuation of the disciplinary trends, often labelled classroom management; at the other end are approaches characterised by more inclusion, more negotiation and interaction between students and teacher.

Subjectification

At the core of contemporary educational thought is the belief that children have to learn to become human beings and must, therefore, be educated to function independently in the various communities to which they belong and in the wider society. They cannot live with their parents indefinitely, but must eventually leave the childhood home and make a living and have a family of their own. However, this ideal rests on a fundamental paradox that continues to occupy theorists and practitioners to the present day:

> How is it possible – through external influence – to bring human beings to a state where they are not controlled by external influences? (Nelson, L. (1970) in Oettingen (ed.) (2001), p. 9)

This perplexing question, first addressed by educational theorists a century ago, is still at the heart of the debate about schooling in a democratic society. We know from experience that young children are not able to take care of themselves; they must be educated. Parents educate children and expect schools and other institutions to educate on their behalf. Education is, inescapably, an external influence. As such, how is it possible to provide a truly liberating education?

Von Oettingen (2001) suggests two fundamental principles in resolving this paradox: the ‘*Bildsamkeit’* of the child and the request for ‘self-reflection’. *Bildsamkeit* refers to a fundamental, innate ability to be open-minded and to participate in a shared praxis. The concept acknowledges the child’s ‘not-yet-condition’ – it has not yet become what it is going to be, but it must participate in the educational interaction in order to become human. The second principle is *self-reflection,* which means that the self is able to focus its attention on something in the outer world and at the same time on itself. This ability enables the human being to act and to reflect on the action and thereafter initiate other actions. A primary task for teachers is, therefore, to encourage and help children to engage in self-reflection (Moos, 2003).

Communication and Participation

For students to develop the necessary competencies to function in the globalised world, they should not only be taught how a democratic society functions at a structural level (i.e. acquiring knowledge about one’s own parliament, about the

government, the judicial system, police, and so on); they themselves should experience and live a democratic life, accruing communicative experiences (Dewey, 1916/2005, p. 87). This means that not all methods of instruction and types of teacher behaviour are appropriate and acceptable.

Education for the communities thus needs to build on forms of democratic *Bildung* in order to capture the cultural understanding and acknowledgement of "*the other*" (Kemp, 2011; Moos, 2017b). Furthermore, it should include a global worldview and the idea of a global community in education, rather than an approach to globalised education based only on common standards and measurements drawn from comparison tools such as PISA. Democratic education (Moos, 2014) is described by Gert Biesta (2003, 2009) as *"creating opportunities for action, for being a subject both in schools and other educational institutions, and in society as a whole"*. Besides the opportunity for action or participation, the most important concepts related to democracy are critique and diversity, because they give a more precise direction to the concept of participatory and deliberative democracy.

The theoretical or philosophical background for these educational theories (Moos, 2006, 2013) is a basic understanding of democracy and communication developed by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. In his theory of universal pragmatism, communication is seen as legitimised if it strives for *"the strange unconstrained force of better argument"* (Habermas, 1996, p. 306). Communication is in the centre of Dewey's pragmatic understanding of learning (Dewey, 1916/2005). This means that communicators must aim for mutual understanding and empathy while minimising domination in what, in bureaucratic organisations, will always be asymmetric relations. The potential for rationality in communication is inherent in communication itself. Thus, communicative rationality refers primarily to the use of knowledge in language and action, rather than to a property of knowledge.

In order for an argument to work as a better argument, it must build on a thorough knowledge of the content at hand, and of the culture of all parties in communication – both one's own and that of the other. Building on this line of argumentation, general education should strive to further students' capacity for deliberation and assessing the better argument as one major aspect of democratic citizenship education.

The interplay with peers and, most importantly, with teachers is pivotal. School leaders must collaborate with teachers to develop school practices that support students' democratic *Bildung*.

Borrowing: Comparisons and 'Best Practice'

International comparisons act as mirrors – just like educational outcomes or best practice – enabling policymakers to reflect on the level of educational outcomes in their own systems and decide on appropriate reforms. Increasingly often, we see policymakers argue for the need to comply with global or international standards or best practices, such as PISA (Normand, 2016). Policymakers want ground-level

practitioners to comply fully with policy regulations and intentions. However, as Gita Steiner-Khamsi (2010, p. 332) argues, policy transfer is not a passive process. It is mediated, shaped, and given form by local policymakers, so the travelling reform undergoes many modifications depending on the political situation. This means that, unless we refer to local contexts, structures, cultures and values, any comparisons made in an international research project will be complicated, intricate, senseless and absurd: *"Without contextual comparison it is impossible to understand the political and economic reasons why traveling reforms are borrowed"* (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p. 339).

If we change our point of observation from top-down interest in governance towards bottom-up interest in the inner life of institutions and agents' points of view, we can take individual, social and institutional contexts into account. As a result, 'the "policy activity" of negotiations and coalition building that somehow links texts to practice are erased' (Ball et al., 2012, p. 2). If these processes are seen only as implementation processes, linear links between text and practice, pivotal aspects of practice are ignored: the insights into how policies become 'live' and enacted, or not, at schools when practitioners 'do' policy, as Ball et al. frame it.

By introducing the concept of 'policy enactment', Ball et al. wish to remind us of the complexity of schools and education, and of teachers' and principals' agency and professional histories. Schools do not have one culture and one mode of practice, or even one policy, but (in most cases) a myriad of cultures, traditions, communities of practice and artefacts (buildings, material, furniture etc.) that coexist at any time. Likewise, teachers have diverse educational backgrounds, experiences, educational and human histories, and worldviews (Coburn, 2004, 2005). We need to look at agents, at other governance levels, in much the same ways.

Policies are negotiated, interpreted and contextualised through 'enactments': collective and collaborative interactions and inter-connections 'between diverse actors, texts, talk, technology and objects (artefacts)' (Coburn, p. 3). One might add the schools' 'infrastructure' (Spillane et al., 2015) that is made into schools' and teachers' property or rejected, reformed, mediated, translated (Røvik, 2011). Enactments also involve different groups, teams, combinations of agents, interests and artefacts, meaning that many cultures and policies are active at any given time. These processes may be seen as micro-policy, and thus as erasing the sharp demarcation between policy and implementation, in very sharp contrast to the basic ideas of contract governance, where policy is produced at the top and implemented down the hierarchy among ground-level practitioners.

Going back to the basics of governance: How do certain educational agencies/agents try to influence other educational agencies/agents to think and/or act in specific ways? We can see similarities and differences between a post-structural, Foucauldian perspective and a critical political perspective. The similarities are that these approaches are essentially concerned with similar questions, while their differences lie in their perceptions of the size of the room to manoeuvre at the individual, organisational and societal levels:

> Policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes are set … and that putting policies into practice is a creative and sophisticated and complex process. Policy work has its pleasures, satisfactions and seductions and for some it has personal benefits. Policies are suffused with emotions and with psychosocial tensions. (Ball et al., 2012, p. 12)

Taking the perspective of policy enactment, it is still important to remember that governmental agencies and agents strive to influence how schools and educational professionals work, reflect and negotiate. To this end, they do not only make use of financial frameworks and other regulations, but also of discourses and other soft means of governance, and they increasingly do so through the use of social technologies such as contracts based on testing of national standards and national measures, as well as various manuals, guides, learning materials and digital learning tools and platforms.

Transnational and national policymakers are working hard to construct governance tools that work according to their intentions by detailing and describing prescriptions, manuals and social technologies again and again.

One can only hope that educational practitioners will prove that Gita Steiner-Khamsi and Stephen Ball are right.

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