Chapter 3
The Norwegian School for All: Historical Emergence and Neoliberal Confrontation

Gunn Imsen and Nina Volckmar

3.1 Introduction

The Norwegian education system has played a prominent role in the development from a relatively poor country at the start of the twentieth century to one of the world's richest at the close of the century. Education has contributed significantly to nation-building, modernisation, welfare and community development. However, growing international influence on education policy, neoliberalism and the growth of individualistic attitudes in public thought around the millennium have altered the conditions for this laboriously constructed school system, causing widespread concern that its fundamental values were under threat. How did this situation develop? What kind of society engendered the Norwegian education model? What were the motivations, the means and the governing systems of that development? What are the new transnational governing systems that have been introduced in recent years? Can we identify specific management systems which may counteract the traditional ideal of 'a School for All'? What does existing research say about the current status of 'a School for All'? What are the threats?

The present Norwegian education system is mainly public, encompassing most pupils aged from 6 to 19. Only a small proportion (2.6 %) of pupils in Norway attends private schools. The public system is divided into three main levels with primary and lower secondary school compulsory for pupils aged 6–16, a 3-year upper secondary school including vocational training for pupils 16–19 and a university/college level offering bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees. From the age of 1, children are entitled to attend kindergarten. Figure 3.1 shows the structure of the two lowest levels of the school system. Most children with special needs are included in the regular system, with only 0.3 % of pupils attending special needs

G. Imsen (✉) • N. Volckmar
Department of Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU, 7491 Trondheim, Norway
e-mail: Gunn.Imsen@svt.ntnu.no; Nina.volckmar@svt.ntnu.no

U. Blossing et al. (eds.), *The Nordic Education Model: 'A School for All' Encounters Neo-Liberal Policy*, Policy Implications of Research in Education 1,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-7125-3_3,

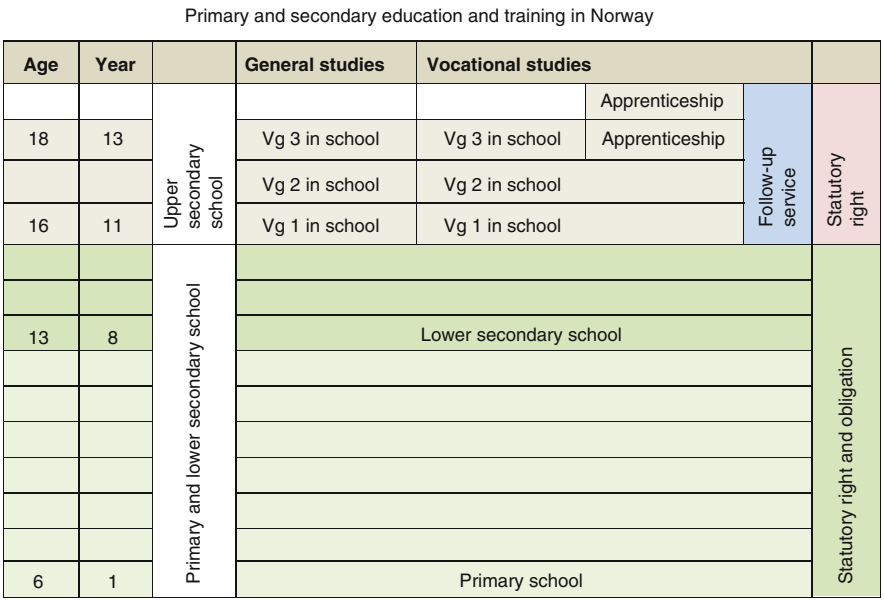

Fig. 3.1 The structure of the Norwegian education system (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2010)

schools. Norway, with only around five million inhabitants, is a geographically dispersed county with 430 municipalities. With 80 % of the population in cities or urban areas, there remains a multitude of small municipalities and small schools in Norway, with local environment varying considerably between different geographic areas.

This chapter focuses on primary and lower secondary school and the education of children aged 6–16. In a Norwegian context, the concept of 'a School for All' is meant to define a common School for All pupils without organisational differentiation based on pupils' abilities. While the meaning of 'a School for All' has changed over time, today it is generally considered to consist of four features. The first regards resources, to which all municipalities and schools should have access in equal quantity and in the quality of economic, material and human resource. The second feature is the social dimension, which addresses schools' ability to facilitate interaction between all groups of pupils. Thirdly, the cultural dimension upholds that the content of the curriculum should be approximately the same for all pupils. The final dimension concerns a respect for diversity: the pupils' right to an education suited to their individual needs must be respected (Telhaug 1994). It should be clear from this list that the Norwegian school system has faced many challenges in advancing these contrasting interests. The greatest challenge has been that of differentiation, or finding a balance that allows pupils to be taught in the same class while accommodating their various cultures and abilities. Another challenge is the question of the schools' universal subject matter, or to what degree pupils should have the same curriculum regardless of the school or its location. This introduces the issue of local variation

and the need to adapt curricula to meet pupils' needs and backgrounds. This is associated with the recurring issue of how the management of schools can be balanced between central and local authorities, and to what degree parents should have a say about the subject matter and teaching methods they use.

3.2 Development of a 'School for All' in Norway

3.2.1 From Pietism to Nation-Building

The public school system with compulsory attendance is generally dated to 1739, when the Danish-Norwegian King Christian VI issued an *ordinance for the rural schools of Norway* as part of his state-controlled pietism.[1] He introduced obligatory confirmation in 1736 as a means of ensuring that everyone had a sufficient basis for living in accordance with pietistic Lutheranism. These steps were also politically motivated as the pietistic sector could be employed to strengthen political control. To further this ambition, the king and the state-pietistic clergy established a public School for All children aged 7–12 who were not already receiving schooling elsewhere. The school was organised as an ambulatory school, emphasising Christianity and reading. Wealthier groups and those living in the cities had access to bourgeois and Latin schools (Telhaug and Mediås 2003).

The Peasantry Education Act of 1860 paved the way for a significant wave of reforms and for the modern breakthrough of the Norwegian folk school; this included an extended period of education, expanded curriculum content and permanent schools instead of the earlier ambulatory schools. The Folk School Act of 1889 established this institution as a 5-year comprehensive school for children from all social classes and marked the final break from the old 'church school'. It was run by municipal politicians and was free. Thus, the Norwegian comprehensive school was a reality as far back as 1889 (Slagstad 1998; Telhaug and Mediås 2003). The old Latin and bourgeois schools in the cities were to some extent replaced by middle schools, and gymnasiums lost their Latin curricula and were developed instead as schools for general education. While the word of God continued to be a central focus in the folk school, preparing pupils for professional work and a secular life in society became equally important (Bull 2011). Liberal education to provide pupils with the necessary skills to participate in society was viewed as equally important to the religious-moral upbringing.

Norway was in a royal union with Sweden from 1814 until 1905 and became an independent kingdom in 1905. School represented an important mediating agency for the nationalistic wave that accompanied Norway's move to independence.

[1] Norway was in union with Denmark from 1537 until 1814 and was in practice subordinated the Danish Crown. However, from 1660 onwards, the twin kingdoms had their own separate laws, militaries and systems of finance.

The state's grip on schools was tightened through the introduction of a national curriculum which went a long way towards delineating a detailed subject matter. The structure was strengthened, and a 7-year folk School for All became a reality in 1920 when only those middle schools based on the 7-year folk school system received economic support from the state. The 7-year folk school was later established under the Folk School Act of 1936. This period, from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1930s, is commonly referred to as *the nation-state school* due to the close connection between educational reforms and contemporary nationalism, as well as the heavy emphasis which the schools placed on national culture, history and language.

3.2.2 Strong State Control and the Development of a Compulsory Comprehensive School

The economic crisis of the interwar years weakened public confidence in market liberalism and paved the way for a wider belief in a strong and active state for the Norwegian people, particularly during the years of reconstruction following World War II. During the interwar years, the Norwegian Labour Party had undergone a transformation from being a party for the working class to a social democratic party for the people and took governmental control for the first time in 1935, which it held until 1965 (apart from during the war years and a few short interruptions). The development of the Norwegian education system became a central aim in the Labour Party's restructuring of Norway as a welfare nation.

3.2.3 Expansion of 'A School for All'

Although Norway, compared with other countries, was quite early in introducing the 7-year compulsory folk school, it lagged behind in developing an expanded basic education system after WW2. Both England and the USA had extended children's schooling to the age of 16, and Sweden was well underway towards introducing a 9-year compulsory basic education. A new generation of politicians concerned with education within the Labour Party supported a new school policy in Norway aimed at integrating the older, separate types of continuation schools into a 9-year comprehensive school. In 1954, the Experimental Act allowed this to be tried out, and the 9-year comprehensive school was established as a nation-wide arrangement through the Primary and Lower Secondary Education Act of 1969.

The main motive of post-war education policy was social integration and egalitarianism through establishing an equal right to education, regardless of geographic location or economic and social background. While notions of individual freedom and the idea that every man is the source of his own happiness were

dominant in the decades leading up to the WW2, values of community took hold after the war. Solidarity, cooperation and national integration were seen as the best bases for peacekeeping. A common School for All was the main tool used to achieve all this. Christian upbringing was diminished even further in the content of schooling during this period, and the previous era's emphasis on romantic ideals of Norwegian nationalism gave way to a more international focus, social awareness and a democratic education. Education policy remained closely regulated by the state (Volckmar 2005, 2008).

3.2.4 Differentiation and Inclusion

The challenge in developing a comprehensive primary and lower secondary school was to recognise that pupils are different and that the differences are assumed to increase with age. How long would it be possible to hold a group of pupils together? The basic belief was that in a 9-year compulsory primary and lower secondary education including all pupils, it would be necessary to divide them into levels according to their abilities (organisational differentiation). After several attempts using various forms of organisational differentiation in the final 2 years of lower secondary school, the principle was abandoned in primary and lower secondary schools in 1974 and replaced by internal pedagogic differentiation within the classes and with cohesive classes from the 1st to 9th classes. It was expected that the problem of differentiation would be resolved by the principle of adapted education, which entailed the right of each pupil to an education suited to their individual abilities.

At the same time, work continued on improving the rights of groups which were previously excluded from the 9-year compulsory primary and lower secondary school or who had experienced poor conditions in their own special schools. In 1975 general educational legislation included that on special schools. Separate, special needs schools were closed down and children with special needs were, to some degree, integrated into ordinary schools. While children with Sami or Kven-Finnish ancestry had previously been victims of a dominant policy of 'Norwegianisation', they were given the right to primary and lower secondary education in the Sami or Kven language in the 1970s.

3.2.5 Neoliberal Shift, Management by Objectives and Decentralisation

Starting at the end of the 1970s and continuing into the 1980s, there was a growing opinion within the Labour Party as well as in the wider public that the state-controlled social democratic model of welfare in its current form had in some ways reached its limits and could no longer be sustained in a new and globalised world.

This criticism, which was rooted in a neoliberal stance, was directed primarily against the management of the public sector, which was believed to be bureaucratic and inflexible. In public sectors, the guiding principle of management by regulation was replaced by that of management by objectives, which was introduced as the new principle of governance for the education sector in 1991 (St.meld.nr. 37 (1990–1991)). The aim was to weaken the state's regulation of details and to transfer more authority and responsibility over to the local level: school owners, schools and teachers (Slagstad 1998; Telhaug and Mediås 2003; Volckmar 2005).

As in other western countries, the education system was criticised for not offering people and society the information and the competence needed to participate in a knowledge-based global economy. After a change of government in autumn 1990, the Labour Party began work on far-reaching reforms of the Norwegian education system. A new Municipal Act in force from 1993 freed the way for decentralisation and increased municipal freedom in school administration, which was an essential precursor to reforms that took place 10 years later. Not least, it allowed bureaucrats with a background in economics to structure schools according to the principles of social economics.

Since the 1970s, academic and vocational courses at upper secondary level were integrated and coordinated in a single institution. In 1994, a decision was passed on the statuary right to 3-year upper secondary education, which should either offer vocational competencies or qualify the student for further studies. These reforms went a long way towards giving Norway an integrated education system for pupils aged 16–19. A new Education Act in 1998 established a principle which put the entire age group within a single context: it underscored the policy of decentralisation and of individual pupils' rights and obligations and formed part of a wider process of legislation regarding individual rights which left its mark on all aspects of the welfare state in subsequent decades.

In 1997 the starting age for primary school was lowered from 7 to 6 years, which brought about the extension of the Norwegian primary and lower secondary school from 9 to 10 years. The national curriculum for this 10-year primary and lower secondary school (L 97) was implemented in 1997 and marked a significant step towards a shared body of school content for all pupils (Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskolen 1996). L 97 was a detailed curriculum with clear instructions on what should be taught at each level (Volckmar 2005, 2008). Norway differed from many other countries in this respect (Ahonen 2001). This detailed curriculum, with clear guidelines for the 'what, when and how' of teaching (processes aims), to some extent also broke from the principle of management by objectives. By refusing to specify result objectives, it also went against the grain of the prevailing neoliberal approach.

Norwegian education policy also differed in that it upheld its restrictive stance on the privatisation of state schools. Whereas Sweden passed the Free School Act in 1993, which allowed for new private alternatives to state schools, Norway adhered to the restrictions of the Private School Act of 1985. At the time, safeguarding the comprehensive state school continued to be a central objective of the Norwegian Labour Party (Volckmar 2010).

3.3 Growing International Influence After the Millennium

3.3.1 The Knowledge Promotion Reform

The Norwegian school system came under increased criticism after the publication of the first PISA study in 2000 in which Norway barely scored above average among numerous OECD countries. Norway's disappointing result received considerable attention in the press; the opinion that Norway's education system was not as good as they might have expected was widespread among politicians, educators and the general public.

Whereas reforms after WW2 were mainly attributed to the Labour Party, education reform pertaining to primary, lower and upper secondary education in the 2000s, the so-called Knowledge Promotion Reform, was a bipartisan project involving both the right and the left in Norwegian politics. Since the turn of the millennium, education policy has more notably become an arena for international players; organisations like the OECD, WTO and EU became premises for how national education policies should be shaped, not only in Norway but throughout the world (Karlsen 2002). National education policy is greatly influenced by the statements made by international experts and agencies, among others the OECD's annual report, as well as the results from international tests like PISA and TIMSS.

After the parliamentary election in 2001, the Norwegian government was controlled by a centre-right coalition with a Minister for Education and Research from the Conservative Party. It announced major changes in education policy. The main strategy was decentralisation and delegation of power to the municipalities and individual schools. Moreover, this involved a more coherent management by objective system, greater transparency and a new, thorough national curriculum for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools (St.meld.nr. 30 (2003–2004)). The national curriculum was reformed to specify 'competence aims' pertaining to the pupils' measurable learning outcomes in each subject and devolving responsibility to municipalities and schools to make more detailed curriculum plans. Heavy emphasis was placed on basic skills which should be integrated in all subjects and across all levels of the learning process (Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2006). A curriculum that was developed according to these principles was believed to be more adapted to the new national system for quality assessment and national tests, implemented from 2004 on. The Knowledge Promotion did not lead to considerable structural changes, but the connections between different levels in the entire education system were made even tighter. Greater emphasis was also placed on adapting education individually for each pupil and on local quality assurance systems which involved extensive documentation of the school's activities and results.

After the parliamentary election of 2005, a red-green coalition government consisting of the Labour Party, the Centre Party and the Socialist Left Party came to power. Surprisingly, perhaps, most of the management reforms from the previous government were enacted, including the national tests. The Knowledge Promotion Reform now became a unified political project. The absence of political alternatives to this

prevailing approach to education policy was most likely a result of strong international influence over previous decades, alongside the trend towards convergence of educational issues through the introduction of international evaluations and comparisons.

However, the two governments differed in their view on privatisation. The right-wing government enacted a Free School Act in 2003, partly inspired by the Swedish model. In contrast to the Swedish Act, the Norwegian Act did not allow money to be earned from running a school (Volckmar 2010). The new Free School Act was a red rag for the red-green coalition government. Approval was granted for a new and more restrictive Private School Act which was more in line with that Act of 1985, which stipulated how private schools should operate. In a Nordic and international context, Norway once again took a different route when it came to the question of private schools (Volckmar 2010).

Social equality, an important goal throughout Norwegian post-war education policy in its entirety, is also central to the Knowledge Promotion Reform. In December 2006, the Ministry of Education issued a white paper, St.meld.nr. 16 (2006–2007) *…and no one is left behind. Early intervention for lifelong learning* on measures aimed at preventing social differences between pupils from being further replicated. OECD's national reports and comparative study of pupils' learning outcomes across the 2000s demonstrated that, in Norway, social differences affected pupils' learning outcomes more than might have been expected of an education system that went to such considerable lengths to meet demands for equality in formal rights. Just as surprising was the fact that social differences in learning outcomes were greater in Norway than in other comparable countries (Mortimore et al. 2004; Opheim 2004). Building on a Finnish model, the government concentrated on early intervention among the youngest pupils. Early intervention indicates both that formal teaching must begin as early as kindergarten and continue as a lifelong process, and that measures should be implemented immediately once inadequate development and learning is detected among primary school children (St.meld.nr. 16 (2006–2007)). The old classic aim of social democratic education policy to achieve social equality has in spite of neoliberal shift, persisted until present, although it has adopted some elements from neoliberalism and the American 'No Child Left Behind' policy.

3.4 What Research Indicates About 'A School for All' in Norway

What then does research reveal about how 'a School for All' really works? It was not until the 1990s that school practice was examined systematically by empirical research. An important factor in stimulating research has been the growing international orientation of education policy, and the fact that international bodies like the EU and OECD have increasingly prioritised the field of education in the past few decades. An OECD evaluation of the Norwegian education system in 1989 concluded that Norway demonstrated insufficient knowledge and management of

the education sector (Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet 1989), which resulted in better reporting and registration systems about educational matters. Although not a member of the EU, Norway is affiliated to it by way of the EEA agreement, and it has a tendency to adapt quickly to new agreements with the EU. However, it was not until after the turn of the millennium that more intense empirical studies of the various aspects of schools' operation were put in place in Norway.

3.4.1 International Studies

In the early 2000s, the OECD carried out a larger study on equality in education in a number of member countries (Mortimore et al. 2004; Opheim 2004). It concluded that the Norwegian education structure is a well-functioning system in which equality is a central goal in national education policy. This highlights the fact that Norway spends a considerable amount of money on education, and that the general education level of the public is high. The decentralised system has, among other things, aimed to reduce geographic differences by building schools in rural areas. The heavy emphasis placed on integrating all groups of pupils, regardless of abilities, special needs, gender, social background or ethnicity, is viewed as promoting equality. Nevertheless, the Norwegian system faces many challenges.

First, PISA studies have for many years shown that despite heavy investment in resources, Norwegian school children do not perform better than average in reading, mathematics and natural sciences (Kjærnsli et al. 2004, 2007, 2010). This view is based on the assumption of a linear correlation between economic inputs and results. Due to the high investments in education made in Norway, one would expect high results. This logic should, however, be nuanced in light of the fact that Norway, due to its geographic distribution, has many small schools which are relatively expensive to run. Local conditions, decentralised curricula, a high degree of integrated pupils with low abilities and local variations in support networks also play a role, as does the quality of teaching. Expectations that Norway should perform well in international studies is just as likely to be motivated by a general national pride and a desire to maintain a good reputation in international educational discourses as by sober economic calculations.

Another result from the PISA investigations showed that the learning environment in Norwegian schools is problematic. Norway is second only to Greece as having the world's loudest pupils. Although the empirical basis for this conclusion is exceptionally weak, the results have received considerable attention and have led politicians to prioritise improving discipline in schools and to support for various programmes which improve classroom management. This in turn creates an industry for programmes in which half-private and private providers compete to sell their services to communities and schools. Providers are ready to foster a private support structure where there is little control of quality assurance and economic conditions.

The TIMSS study has shown similar results as PISA (Grønmo and Onstad 2009). Norwegian pupils in the 4th and 8th grades perform poorly in mathematics and natural sciences in comparison to many other countries, though there is some indication of improvement. This study highlights the fact that Norwegian pupils receive little follow-up attention and feedback from their assignments in comparison to other countries. The TIMSS material also indicates that homework in mathematics can have a positive effect on pupils' performance, but that those from lower socio-economic situations do not profit as much from it as other children (Rønning 2010). This conclusion led to a heated debate in the media about homework that ultimately resulted in schools being required to offer to help pupils with their assignments. The intention was to reduce the significance of a factor which could widen social gaps.

It is often the negative results from international studies that receive the greatest attention from the media and which are incorporated into political discourse to legitimise various measures in certain areas. For example, a study of the attention paid by the media to PISA, which compared Norway, Sweden and Finland, showed that awareness of its results among Norwegians caused them to develop a more polarised opinion of the education system. In Sweden and Finland, awareness of PISA did not have a correspondingly polarising effect (Fladmoe 2012). This indicates that the political effect of PISA has been especially strong in Norway. This in turn may cause the debate on education policy to be influenced by guesses and assumptions about what has caused this deplorable situation. This quickly leads the debate about education into the details of teaching, which ultimately may deprive the policy of consistency and coherence.

Another factor is that positive results rarely receive much attention. There has, for example, been almost complete silence within the media and among politicians about Norway's results in the international ICCS study (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study). This study mapped a broad democratic disposition among the participants towards engagement now and in the future based on basic attitudes, necessary skills and knowledge. In 1999, Norwegian pupils on the 13–16 year level did exceptionally well in this study (Mikkelsen et al. 2001). The Norwegian education policy after 2001 has downplayed democracy and civic duty as a curriculum field (Stray and Heldal 2010) and has instead focused even more heavily on improving reading, mathematics and natural sciences, a move that was probably based on the influences of PISA and TIMSS. The ICCS study in 2009 showed that Norwegian 13–16-year-old students still had a good awareness of democratic values. In terms of knowledge, they ranked 5th among 38 countries (Fjeldstad et al. 2010). The media has also been silent about this. In light of the terror attacks in Oslo and Utøya on 22 July 2011, it is surprising that municipality elections a month later continued to focus on national tests in Norwegian, English and mathematics as the main objective areas in school. This illustrates that international influence on the national education policy is selective, and that a filtering takes place on a national level in terms of what is implemented in practical politics. It is not the international studies which are the main problem but rather what the respective countries choose to derive from them and how they are used in the discourse of education policy.

3.4.2 *Differences Between Districts and Between Schools*

One of the premises for the comprehensive school is that schools should have access to the same economic, material and human resources, regardless of their geographic location and municipal affiliation. Considering that municipalities and counties have an economic responsibility for schools, it is not surprising that there are considerable differences among them. Until the mid-1980s, this was compensated for by earmarked state grants to the municipal schools, depending on how many classes the school had. The decentralisation movement of the 1990s gave the municipalities more independent responsibility for the distribution of state funding, and the school sector was forced to compete for funding with the municipal social and health sectors and with the technical sector. This occurred at the same time that municipal school administration in many areas was being restructured and downsized, whilst professional school administrators were pushed aside by engineers and social economists. This created an unavoidable situation whereby differences between the allocations of funds to schools continued to grow. For example, in 2010 children in the richest municipalities received more than double the national yearly average allocated per pupil.[2] By loosening state control over municipalities they also gained greater freedom in determining class size, meaning that the status of resources for an equally valuable school has been weakened in the name of management by objectives and decentralisation.

Studies of pupils' performance have also shown regional differences. This became apparent in the evaluation of the 1997 reform, which showed that differences between the highest and lowest performing counties in Norwegian language and mathematics were more than one standard deviation, in other words substantial differences (Imsen 2003). This finding has been supported by several later studies (Hægeland and Kirkebøen 2007; Utdanningsdirektoratet 2011).

A number of studies have shown significant differences among schools, both in terms of learning outcomes and of students' well-being and motivation (Imsen 2003; Kjærnsli et al. 2007; Olsen and Turmo 2010). On the one hand, from a normative perspective, one could argue that this is unacceptable for a country that strives for equality among schools. According to PISA, one could claim that the differences between schools in Norway are small in comparison to those of a number of other countries, and that the variation between pupils within individual schools is greater than the variation between the schools themselves. This has been used to downplay the importance of differences in quality among Norwegian schools. In other words, the segregated school models we find in a number of central European countries, which naturally show considerable performance differences among schools, are used as a contrast to the Nordic comprehensive school model. But this comparison ultimately obscures the fact that the aim of offering an equally good School for All pupils, regardless of where they live in

[2] Source: KOSTRA, an online register system for Norwegian municipalities and counties.

Norway, has yet to be met. In doing so, it fails to highlight one of the greatest challenges faced by the comprehensive school system.

3.4.3 Differences Between Social Groups

A central motivation for the development of the comprehensive school has been to increase mobility in society and reduce differences among various groups, primarily social disparities. From a historical perspective, there is no doubt that this has been a success. In the mid-twentieth century, there were substantial social differences in terms of theoretical education, to which only the wealthiest had access. In 1963, only 3 % of fishermen's children were prepared for the artium exam needed for access to a university level education. Among academics or higher governmental officials, 60 % of their children received such an education (Vangsnes 1967). In the wake of the substantial school reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, there was a comprehensive expansion of the education system, including in rural areas, allowing the public greater access to education. The establishment of reasonable loan schemes for young people during their education as well as a general increase in the prosperity of the entire population further contributed to this greater access. The aim of providing equally accessible opportunities to education was well on its way towards being achieved by the 1990s, when legislation established a legal right to 13 years of education for everyone.

A formal right to education does not, however, mean that all receive equal benefits or are equally pleased with the education system. There continue to be differences among social groups in terms of education outcomes. This is already apparent in primary and lower secondary school, that is to say up to 16 years of age. The results of a national investigation in 2010 showed that the parents' level of education clearly correlated with their children's results, both at the 5th and 8th levels (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2011). This study showed that pupils who perform poorly at the 5th level continue to do so at the 8th. There is little change in the pupils' relative performance levels throughout their education, and the same pupils continually achieve lower than their higher-performing classmates. PISA 2009 demonstrated a correlation between pupils' abilities to read and their socio-economic status. Some consolation can be found in the fact that this correlation was weaker in the Nordic countries than in other OECD countries (Olsen and Turmo 2010). An analysis of school results in 2006 showed the same pattern: the higher the education of the parents, the better their children's grades. In 2006, the average difference between the highest and lowest education groups was a little over half a grade on a scale from 1 to 6; whether this discrepancy is large or not is debatable, but it would be likely to play a role in admissions to special courses of study in upper secondary school.

The student's gender was also a factor in differing academic performance, despite the fact that gender equality has been a clearly articulated objective in public school policy since the mid-1970s. In this, Norway has followed a pattern that has long been established across much of the western world. Traditionally, girls

have performed better in language subjects, while boys have done better in maths, natural sciences and social studies. As in many other countries, this began to change in the mid-1990s as girls caught up with, and in some cases surpassed, boys in their average performance. Generally speaking, one could say that since the turn of the millennium girls have exceeded boys in all school subjects except physical education. This must be toned down a little. Gender differences exert a greater influence upon overall grade achievement than on formal assessments, such as national tests or written exams. In mathematics there is no gender difference in the exam results: PISA 2009 shows that, in this subject, boys do better in all countries included in the sample, except for Sweden, in which girls do better, whereas in Denmark the boys' results s are sometimes even higher. These results have consistently been stable in most countries (Olsen 2010), which indicates that motivation within individual subjects depends on the local cultural values associated with both gender and social background.

The extent of non-western immigration to Norway is relatively moderate and occurred later than in many central European countries. The number of pupils who speak a minority language is largest in the cities, especially in Oslo. From the left-wing political stance, an inclusive comprehensive school has been seen as one of the most important tools for the successful social and cultural integration of immigrants. Not unexpectedly, the children of immigrants perform somewhat lower than Norwegian pupils, yet there is a tendency for second generation immigrants partly to overcome this disadvantage, particularly in mathematics (Hægeland and Kirkebøen 2007; Bachmann et al. 2010).

Many of the differences in terms of social background, place of residence, gender and ethnicity have been stable over time. There is a complicated interplay of causes behind the changes we have observed throughout the 2000s, where child and youth culture beyond school plays an important role in how its learning environment changes, as do new pedagogies and new governance structure. The transition from the process objectives of the national curriculum of 1997 to the outcome-oriented objectives of the Learning Promotion Reform of 2006 has, together with an increased municipal expectation of higher achievement on national tests, undoubtedly placed greater pressure on schools to focus on those theoretical subjects that are most liable to being tested. The considerable media attention given to the poor PISA results has also contributed to this. Theoretical subjects have been strengthened through an increased number of lesson hours in schools since 2005. Practical and aesthetic-oriented elective subjects, being an important component in the differentiation policy of the 1970s and 1980s, disappeared in 1997, and these subjects received little time and attention in the 2006 plans. Varied content is essential for realising a school which is intended to accommodate all pupils, and there is little doubt that the new administrative systems and the international competition for knowledge bear responsibility for having given schools a more theoretical profile.

Cooperation with parents has always been an important principle in the Norwegian school system and has, to some degree, been strengthened over several decades through both laws and regulations. The parents' right to decide their child's education is also stipulated by article 26.3 in the human rights declaration, which

states that 'parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children'. Other motives include the notion that parents' engagement will contribute to a good learning environment for the children and that more active participation from parents can help counteract the push for a stronger private school system. Parental participation has also been stimulated by the political right as a means of creating greater customer orientation. The neoliberal social ideology is considerably affected by the principal agent theory, which downplays the welfare element and reduces all relations to dealings between customers and providers. In this relationship the customer is always right, that is to say the pupils and parents. Stimulating customer or user orientation among parents thus becomes more than a matter of facilitating learning for individual pupils. It is within the capacity of the customer to present clear, individual demands on the school. With this, cooperation between schools and parents is no longer an equal relationship between partners but rather one in which the parents represent hegemony.

Social differences have always affected parental participation in schools. Research has shown that not all parents view cooperation in an equally positive light, and there appears to be a connection between differing attitudes towards cooperation and the parents' own educational level (Nordahl 2000, 2004). A form of management built on a working relationship with parents, one which goes in the direction of customer orientation, will probably widen the social gaps which already exist in schools. The question of who should have authority over a school, whether the state, the teaching profession or the parents, is thus unresolved and politically volatile, one whose answer will undoubtedly have consequences for the future of the comprehensive school.

3.4.4 The Problem of Differentiation

The models for organisational differentiation in the 13–16-year age groups that were tried out in the 1960s, with a segregation of levels in the main theory subjects, were abandoned because (among other reasons) most parents wanted the highest course plan for their children and because the groups therefore became so heterogeneous that differences among pupils had to be addressed by the teaching strategies used within the classroom. Since the 1970s, considerable school-based developmental work has been undertaken that includes approaches such as pupils' activity, individual work, teaching pupils at the same level in smaller, temporarily organised groups, multidisciplinarity, project work and storyline, all of which have their roots in a progressive pedagogic tradition. The idea was that within a varied teaching and learning environment it would be possible to facilitate teaching assignments which suit the individual pupil. Adapted education has been the main principle in the Norwegian comprehensive school for the past three decades and remains an individual right embodied in the 1998 Education Act. Yet it remains unclear how far this right extends in practice and whether individual parents can demand 'tailored' teaching for their children.

Norway currently maintains a special school system in which pupils with special needs have access to additional instruction after this has been deemed necessary through expert evaluation. The principle of social inclusion remains strong, and most pupils requiring special instruction are integrated into normal schools.

It was not until an evaluation of Reform 97 took place that it became clear that the practical application of the adapted education principle had not entirely lived up to its ideals. In many classrooms there was little variation in instruction and therefore little adaption to individual abilities, while variations among the classes themselves were quite large. Much of the teaching continued to be done in the form of whole-class teaching in which all pupils worked with the same learning material and at the same pace. Another widespread practice involved pupils working individually with a work schedule, often following instructions from a workbook on how to complete assignments, while the teacher went around the classroom helping each individual pupil. It was further shown that most individualised classrooms distinguished themselves through increased use of written assignments and a reduced use of the classroom as a learning arena (Imsen 2003; Klette 2003).

In educational policy, the principle of adapted education is considered as a key to realising a School for All. But, at the same time, the principle is under pressure from many sides. Firstly there is pressure from ambitious parents who demand more for their children than teachers can manage. Secondly, pressure comes from municipal authorities who lack the economic means to match the high demand for resources associated with adapted education. Thirdly, the political right continues to push for a segregated school built on a formal division of levels. The right-wing municipality of Oslo offers a good example of this. In the autumn of 2011, the municipality established special classes for particularly gifted children in subjects such as music, mathematics and natural sciences, which conflicts with state regulations; this illustrates the political power play taking place over the future development of the comprehensive school. This also illustrates the weaknesses of management by objectives when it comes to the broader, most important sides of education policy.

The problem of differentiating the comprehensive school remains unresolved, and it is still unclear how the principle of adapted education should be understood in practice. It is wavering in the tension between community and individuality, and there are many interpretations of it, both on more principle and practical levels (Bachmann and Haug 2006). It can, at one extreme, be perceived in a very narrow way, for example, as specific forms of organisation in which individual work plans are combined with individual supervision. On the other hand, it could be viewed as a wide concept in which adapted education is meant to improve the school's practice to allow all pupils access to the best possible teaching within the common social setting. With the recent Knowledge Promotion Reform, there has been a shift in the meaning of the term adapted education away from an orientation towards the community and, instead, towards a more heavy emphasis on individualisation. As long as this ambiguity exists, there will be room for both political and practical tugs-of-war. Adapted education is a political term which

changes its practical meaning depending on the time and place (Haug in Dahl and Midtbø 2006). That means that the principle of a School for All is continually put on trial.

3.4.5 Paperwork and a Waste of Time

The ideal of adapted education demands a great many resources in order to be realised, regardless of what meaning one associates with it. The most important resources are teacher competencies and time. If the teacher is to have time for each individual pupil, then there must be a limit on the number of pupils in each classroom. This has been subject to discussion and negotiation among teacher organisations and school authorities for years. Teachers complain that they have more to do, that they are uneasy about their inability to offer the necessary help to individual pupils and that there never seems to be enough time.

Norwegian teachers and school leaders have working hours based on the annual number of hours stipulated in negotiations between school owners and teaching organisations. This is largely consistent across the country. Within the annual framework there are further local negotiations to decide how time is distributed between teaching, group planning, collaboration and meetings, and time for individual preparation of teaching as well as subject-related continuing education. How time is divided between these types of work varies depending on the pupil's age, but on average about three quarters of the time is spent on work directly related to the school and around one quarter on independent, individual work. Studies of how teachers use their time show that the age of the 'lonely teacher' is long gone. More time is now dedicated to group planning and to personal contact with pupils and their parents than previously, *and teachers feel that they spend more of their time on all their tasks.* Much of that time is used for nonsubject-related activities such as discipline and conflict solving. The material decided upon in group lesson planning is often viewed as being largely controlled by the head teacher, something which breaks from the traditional autonomy which has characterised teaching as a profession. The main impression is that working time is now under far greater control by the employer than previously (Nicolaisen et al. 2005; Strøm et al. 2009). From a wider perspective, this appears to be part of the national effort to consolidate control over the education system, a venture which started towards the end of the 1980s and was stimulated by the OECD. Whether or not the decentralisation of government power to the municipalities was the right move is debatable. It was introduced without a price tag and has ended up costing teachers dearly in the form of a greater workload inside and outside the classroom.

The importance of school leaders in the development of a good school has been recognised since the 1970s. Norway is no exception to the international development in the role of school leaders, a process that has seen bureaucratic and administrative school leaders being replaced by pedagogic leaders and has focused on the school's organisation, its development and the quality of teaching. At the same time

school leaders have assumed the main responsibility for school-based development, for quality, and for pupils' learning outcomes at their own schools. There is a general perception that these new tasks exceed the time frame available to school leaders, that the administrative support functions are too weak and that the technical and administrative leader functions consume time which should have been used for pedagogic development work (Møller et al. 2006).

For many years, a number of structural factors have crept in and sapped up time. On a national level, a large number of action plans from various ministries have been developed which are barely coordinated and which eventually create more work for schools. School-based development work, being at the core of efforts for adapted education, requires greater cooperation between teachers. The development of school-based curricula which supplement national curricula has become more formalised with the introduction of goal-oriented management and result objectives. Goal-oriented management demands evaluation and control which, in the context of teaching, is a significant task on the municipal level, on the school level and with respect to individual pupils. Most municipalities and counties have implemented programmes for quality assurance which consists of a large number of documents about objectives and evaluations. Furthermore, more individual-oriented, rights-based legislation puts high demands on schools and teachers to document both their activities and their results. Accountability has become an important principle for most municipalities, school leaders and teachers as it has become essential to demonstrate exactly what kind of job they have been carrying out. Professional pedagogic work is increasingly being embraced by legislative frameworks, placing a much greater burden on teachers. Almost everything has to be documented; as a result, an all-encompassing paper mill has developed within which teachers are forced to work.

The Ministry for Education and Learning has taken teachers' lack of time seriously and offered a series of solutions. A committee in 2008 intended to alleviate the problem (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2009; Meld. St. 19 (2009–2010)). Teachers want to spend more time on lesson planning, subject-related follow-ups on pupils and competence building and less time on group meetings and documentation. This highlights the importance of good school leadership and shows that school leaders need to withhold local demands for charting and documentation which exceed the demands of the law. When the issue came before Parliament in 2010, a series of good suggestions aimed to strengthen the competencies of leaders and teachers was put forward.

3.5 Reflections

The Norwegian comprehensive school, or the ideal of a School for All, has constantly been changing and has been the object of political contention since the mid-nineteenth century. A central theme in the history of Norway's education system, up to the turn of the millennium, has been the extension of the comprehensive school, both in terms of the number of years of instruction offered and in the desire to

include all pupils. In practice, Norway now has a 13-year mandatory education which aims to stimulate the majority of youths to complete the final 3 years of upper secondary education. The idea of a common School for All remains strong in Norway, and there is bipartisan support for the 'comprehensive school'.

In the past few decades, and particularly since the turn of the millennium, there has been little talk of the 'School for All'. Like education systems in other countries, the Norwegian system has increasingly been influenced by a clear transnational, neoliberal take on education policy which views knowledge as the most important step towards functioning in a knowledge-based, competitive economy. In light of this, school is valued first and foremost for its ability to produce knowledge in the form of learning outcomes. This corresponds in some ways with the increased emphasis placed on human rights. Views on justice have contributed to a greater demand for individually adapted teaching programmes, private solutions and the parents' simple right to choose the type of teaching for their children. Although wide differences in the school's practice have been documented, both between districts and schools, the 'comprehensive school' has, on a rhetorical level, been passed off as treating all children equally without sufficient room for difference and diversity.

On the whole, there is bipartisan support for the national reform of 2006, the Knowledge Promotion Reform, which is the Norwegian education policy's answer to transnational influences and the introduction of a transnational system of governance. These reforms shift the emphasis in education from process to results. With its emphasis on competition, it plays on external and not internal motivations. It promotes individualism and not community and moves policy from state to local governance, accountability and customer control.

While there was previously little awareness of the quality of Norwegian schools, international tests have revealed that they are not as good as expected. This has led to purposeful measures to improve teaching in the most important areas. Politicians, schools and teachers know more about where schools need improvement. At the same time increased focus on learning outcomes and demands for documentation have drawn attention away from other academic areas, such as practical-aesthetic subjects and an upbringing in the ideals of democracy, solidarity and unity. The teachers' freedom of action has been eroded by increasing bureaucracy and time-consuming documentation. The school's main aims are formally broad and take into consideration that pupils should learn skills for life. In practice, the neoliberal policy reduces the notion of quality to a narrow list of numbers of results on the next national or international performance tests.

In this landscape of education policy, the Norwegian comprehensive school finds itself in an uncertain and changing situation. How open should it be to private alternatives? How much should one break from the principle of combined classes and allow for a permanent differentiation of levels? How should one meet the demands for adapted and varied education for all pupils, both within and outside the framework of the classroom community? And to what extent should teachers' professionalism be supervised by reports and documentation? These questions define a notable dividing line between the right and the left of Norwegian politics; the practical

answers they demand should provide the key to deciding which type of School for All is to be realised.

The development of a School for All must therefore constantly be followed empirically and ideologically and with an analytical eye. It is heavily challenged by new systems of governance and quantified demands for legitimacy which systematically infiltrate the autonomy and the pedagogic skills teachers need in their daily work.

References

Ahonen, S., et al. (2001). The end of the common school? Change in the ethos and politics of education in Finland towards the end of the 1990s. In L. Rantala & L. Rantala (Eds.), *Nordic lights. Education for nation and civic society in the Nordic countries, 1850–2000* (pp. 175–203). Helsinki: Tammer-Paino Oy.

Bachmann, K., & Haug, P. (2006). *Forskning om tilpasset opplæring* [Research on adapted Teaching]. Høgskulen i Volda og Møreforskning Volda, rapport 62/2006.

Bachmann, K., Haug, P., & Myklebust, R. (2010). Med rett til å prestere [With a right to achieve]. In E. Elstad & K. Sivesind (Eds.), *PISA – sannheten om skolen?* [PISA – The truth about schools?] (pp. 298–317). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Bull, I. (2011). Industriousness and development of the school-system in the eighteenth century: The experience of Norwegian cities. *History of Education, 40*(4), 1–22.

Dahl, M., & Midtbø, R. (2006). Nytt perspektiv på tilpasset opplæring. Intervju med Peder Haug [A new perspective on adapted teaching]. *Bedre skole, 2*, 30–33.

Fjeldstad, D., Lauglo, J., & Mikkelsen, R. (2010). Demokratisk beredskap. Kortrapport om norske ungdomsskoleelevers prestasjoner og svar på spørsmål i den internasjonale demokratiundersøkelsen [Democratic preparedness. Short report on Norwegian 13–16 aged students' achievements and answers to questions in the international democracy investigation]. *International Civic and Citizen Education Study* (ICCS 2009). Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, ILS.

Fladmoe, A. (2012). Education in the news and in the mind: PISA, news media and public opinion in Norway, Sweden and Finland. *Nordicom Review, 33*(1), 99–116.

Grønmo, L. S., & Onstad, T. (2009). *Tegn til bedring. Norske elevers prestasjoner i matematikk og naturfag i TIMSS 2007* [Signs to improvement. Norwegian students' achievements in mathematics and science]. Oslo: Unipub.

Hægeland, T., & Kirkebøen, L. J. (2007). *Skoleresultater 2006. En kartlegging av karakterer fra grunn- og videregående skoler i Norge* (Notater 2007/29) [School results 2006. A report on marks from lower and upper secondary school]. Oslo: Statistisk sentralbyrå [Statistics Norway].

Imsen, G. (2003). *Skolemiljø, læringsmiljø og elevutbytte. En empirisk studie av grunnskolens 4., 7. og 10. trinn* [School environment, learning environment, and students' outcomes. An empirical Investigation of Level 4., 7., and 10 in Norwegian comprehensive schools]. Trondheim: Tapir akademisk forlag.

Karlsen, G. (2002). *Utdanning, styring og marked* [Education, government and the economy market]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet. (1989). *OECD-vurdering av norsk utdanningspolitikk* [OECD investigation of Norwegian educational policy]. Oslo: Aschehoug.

Kjærnsli, M., & Roe, A. (red.). (2010). *På rett spor. Norske elevers kompetanse i lesing, matematikk og naturfag i PISA 2009* [On the right track. Norwegian students' competence in reading, mathematics, and science in PISA 2009]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Kjærnsli, M., et al. (2004). *Rett spor eller ville veier? Norske elevers prestasjoner i matematikk, naturfag og lesing i PISA 2003* [Right track or wild roads? Norwegian students' achievements in mathematics, science, and reading in PISA 2003]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Kjærnsli, M., et al. (2007). *Tid for tunge løft. Norske elevers kompetanse i naturfag, lesing og matematikk i PISA 2006* [Time for heavy Lifts. Norwegian students' competence in science, reading, and mathematics in PISA 2006]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Klette, K. (2003). Lærernes klasseromsarbeid: Interaksjons- og arbeidsformer i norske klasserom etter Reform 97 [Teachers' classroom work: Interaction and working patterns in Norwegian classrooms after Reform 97]. In K. Klette (Ed.), *Klasserommets praksisformer etter Reform 97* [Working patterns in classrooms after Reform 97] (pp. 39–76). Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt.

Kunnskapsdepartementet. (2009). *Rapport fra tidsbrukutvalget* [Time-use committee report]. Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskolen (L97) [National Curriculum for Primary and Lower Secondary School] (1996). Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet (LK06) [National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training]. (2006). Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

Meld. St. 19 (2009–2010). *Tid til læring – oppfølging av Tidsbrukutvalgets rapport* [Time to learn – Follow-up of the time committee report]. Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

Mikkelsen, R., Buk-Berge, E., Ellingsen, H., Fjeldstad, D., & Sund, A. (2001). Demokratisk beredskap og engasjement hos 9. klassinger i Norge og 27 andre land. Civic Education Study Norge 2001 [Democratic preparedness and involvement among 9th graders in Norway and 27 other countries. Civic Education Study Norway 2001]. *Acta Didactica,* 1.

Møller, J., et al. (2006). *Skolelederundersøkelsen 2005. Om arbeidsforhold, evalueringspraksis og ledelse i skolen* (Report) [The school leader investigation 2005. On working conditions, evaluation practice, and leadership in schools]. Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for lærerutdanning og skoleutvikling.

Mortimore, P., et al. (2004). *Equity in education: Thematic review*. Paris: OECD.

Nicolaisen, H., Nyen, T., & Olberg, D. (2005). *Lærernes arbeidstid. Evaluering av avtale om arbeidstid for undervisningspersonalet i skoleverket 2004–2006*. Fafo-rapport 508. [Teachers' working time. Evaluation of agreement on working time for school teachers 2004–2006]. Oslo: Fafo.

Nordahl, T. (2000). *Samarbeid mellom skole og hjem – en kartleggingsundersøkelse* (NOVA Rapport 8/2000) [Home – School cooperation – A survey].

Nordahl, T. (2004). Makt og avmakt i samarbeidet mellom hjem og skole [Power and powerlessness in home – school cooperation]. In G. Imsen (Ed.), *Det ustyrlige klasserommet. Om styring, samarbeid og læringsmiljø i grunnskolen* [The unruly classroom. On management, cooperation and learning environment in comprehensive school.) (pp. 221–236). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Olsen, R. V. (2010). Matematikk i PISA [Mathematics in PISA]. In M. Kjærnsli & A. Roe (Ed.), *På rett spor. Norske elevers kompetanse i lesing, matematikk og naturfag i PISA 2009* [On the right Track. Norwegian students' competence in reading, mathematics, and science in PISA 2009] (pp. 138–158). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Olsen, R. V., & Turmo, A. (2010). Et likeverdig skoletilbud? In M. Kjærnsli and A. Roe (Ed.), *På rett spor. Norske elevers kompetanse i lesing, matematikk og naturfag i PISA 2009* [On the right track. Norwegian students' competence in reading, mathematics, and science in PISA 2009] (pp. 207–225). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Opheim, V. (2004). *Equity in education*. Country Analytical Report Norway. Oslo: NIFU STEP rapport 7/2004.

Rønning, M. (2010). *Homework and pupil achievement in Norway. Evidence from TIMSS* (Reports 1/2010). Oslo: Statistisk sentralbyrå.

Slagstad, R. (1998). *De nasjonale strateger* [The national strategists]. Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S.

St.meld.nr. 16. (2006–2007). *…og ingen stod igjen og hang. Tidlig innsats for livslang læring* [… and no one was left behind. Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning]. Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

St.meld. nr 30. (2003–2004). *Kultur for læring* [Culture for learning]. Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

St.meld.nr. 37. (1990–91). *Om organisering og styring i utdanningssektoren* [On the organisation and management in the education sector]. Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

Stray, J. H. (2010). *Demokratisk medborgerskap i norsk skole? En kritisk analyse* [Democratic citizenship in Norwegian schools? A critical analysis]. Ph.D. dissertation. Pedagogisk forkningsinstitutt, Universitetet i Oslo, Oslo.

Strøm, B., Borge, L.-E., & Haugsbakken, H. (2009). *Tidsbruk og organisering i grunnskolen: Sluttrapport* (SØF-rapport nr. 04/09) [Time spending and organisation in comprehensive schools]. Trondheim: Senter for økonomisk forskning.

Telhaug, A. O. (1994). *Utdanningspolitikken og enhetsskolen* [Education policy and the unified comprehensive school]. Oslo: Didakta.

Telhaug, A. O., & Mediås, O. A. (2003). *Grunnskolen som nasjonsbygger. Fra statspietisme til nyliberalisme* [Compulsory school as a nation builder. From state pietism to new liberalism]. Oslo: Abstrakt forlag.

Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2010). *The Education Mirror 2009.* Analysis of primary and secondary education and training in Norway. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and training.

Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2011). *Karakterer for grunnskolen 2009–2010* [Marks in the comprehensive school 2009–2010]. http://www.udir.no/Tilstand/Analyser-og-statistikk/Grunnskolen/Karakterer---grunnskolen/Karakterer-for-grunnskolen-2009-2010/. Retrieved 27 Aug 2011.

Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2011). *Utdanningsspeilet 2011. Tall og analyse av grunnopplæringen i Norge* [*The Education Mirror 2011*. Numbers and analysis of Norwegian comprehensive education].

Vangsnes, S. (1967). *Rekruttering av artianere og karakterer til examen artium. En undersøkelse av fire artiumskull* [Recruitment and marks from upper secondary school. An investigation of four cohorts]. Oslo: Norges allmenvitenskapelige forskningsråd. *Utredninger om forskning og høyere utdanning.* Melding nr. 1.

Volckmar, N. (2005). *Fra solidarisk samværskultur til kunnskapssolidaritet. Det sosialdemokratiske skoleprosjekt fra Sivertsen til Hernes* [From solidary public spirit to knowledge solidarity. The social-democratic school project from Sivertsen to Hernes]. Doctoral thesis, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, Trondheim.

Volckmar, N. (2008). Knowledge and solidarity: The Norwegian social-democratic school project in a period of change, 1945–2000. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 52*(1), 1–15.

Volckmar, N. (2010). *En skole for alle"og privatisering – en analyse av de skandinaviske landenes privatiseringspolitikk* [«A school for all» and privatisation – An investigation of privatisation in Scandinavian education policy]. *Uddannelseshistorie 2010. Fellesskab og elite: Skolen mellem det offentlige og private*. 44. Årbog (s. 33–49). Århus: Selskabet for Skole- og Uddannelseshistorie.