A critical comparison of the two new examination goals for Swedish teacher education

The aim of this study is to analyze the two in 2021 new examination goals for Swedish teacher education, concerning a strengthened capacity building for future teachers regarding a. handling and detecting neuropsychiatric difficulties, and b. managing issues on sexuality and identity. Departing from critical discourse analysis as theory and analytical method, arguments for each goal are examined and compared in the Swedish government's promemoria. The research questions are: why and how are the goals supposed to be implemented in schools, as well as for, and together with, whom.

The results shows that even though both goals depart from rights- and equity motives, the arguments for respectively differ according to dominant imaginaries of sexuality respectively neuropsychiatric disability in the Swedish society. Influences from an, in Sweden prominent, intersectional norm critical approach to education is noticeable in the promemoria arguments. However, it only includes sexuality and gender as dimensions of power, leaving out dis/ability. While sexuality is described as an issue of normativity, applying to all pupils, the normalcy of ability is only addressed as an issue for disabled students. Hence, even though aiming at strengthening pupil's rights and equity as well as increasing the study results of disabled pupils, disability is not addressed as an issue regarding power, reflection, normality, identity, or even harassment, as is sexuality. Even though not explicitly uttered, the goal on sexuality indicates an aim of hampering the effects of heteronormativity and homophobia. This while ableism as structural violence, as well as ground for harassment and bullying, is not visibly voiced in the neuropsychiatric goal. Similarly, while pupils are depicted as active, involved subjects regarding sexuality and identity, pupils in neuropsychiatric difficulties are predominantly portrayed as passive beneficiaries of help, support and discovery.

Both of the new examination goals are urgent and critical in meeting the educational and social justice challenges of today. However, there is a query why the two goals are motivated with significantly different arguments. This raises questions about how they will interpellate pupils respectively, and what subjectivities, considering the purposes of equity and rights, are formed. It also raises questions about how such a gap between discourses on LGBTQI and neurodivergence could occur as well as be challenged.