

A CONFERENCE REPORT

NORDIC EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRATICALLY TROUBLESOME TIME

THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Title: NORDIC EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRATICALLY TROUBLESOME TIME
Threats and Opportunities

Co-arrangement by the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research,
the Nordic Ministers of Education and Örebro University 2018-10-30 – 31

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The key note speakers Jennifer Fitzgerald and Bryony Hoskins (to the left) together with seminar leader Cecilia Arensmeier and the conference coordinator Erik Amnå at Örebro University.

BACKGROUND AND AIM

There is a current growth of various threats that seem to jeopardize the future of the Nordic democracies. In particular populism, extremism, racism, hate speech, fake news and increasing inequalities challenge the stability of the Nordic countries.

In the Nordic democracies the schools traditionally have been assigned a specific socializing role. By developing democratic competence in terms of knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour schools have the responsibility to equip young people for a future as active citizens. However, today there is a wide and growing concern that schools are not sufficiently successful in this respect.

With this background, the Government Office of Sweden and the Ministry of Education and Research assigned the Örebro University the task of realizing a conference to inspire both knowledge and practice based reflections on:

- in what ways the Nordic democracies are under real challenges and threats
- in what respects the Nordic schools succeed in performing a powerful civic education
- how schools are developing their practices in order to improve their democratic function
- how national policy makers are handling the current demands to streamline the democratic work of the schools
- if there exists a common Nordic way in civic education worthy of care and improvement through education, teacher training, policy development and research.

DIS-NETWORK

The decision to organize a conference on this topics were made within the DIS-network. Within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers as a result of the Paris Declaration (2015) on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education. DIS stands for Democracy, Inclusion and Security.

The network gathers policymakers from all Nordic countries. DIS promotes exchange and cooperation on topics like the role of education in counteracting violent extremism through education for democracy. The aim

for the DIS-network is to promote a Nordic consensus on education for a resilient democracy in a democratically troublesome time.

CONTRIBUTORS

A group of researchers at Örebro University, coordinated by Professor Erik Amnå, were invited to organize seminars around relevant topics in their fields. Together they recruited colleagues from several academic fields and actors engaged into policy development at various governmental levels preferably in the Nordic countries were asked to present their ideas and findings.

PARTICIPANTS

About two hundred politicians, teachers, students, policy makers and researchers from mainly the Nordic countries attended the conference.

THIS REPORT

With this report we want to give the non-attendees a brief overview of the thematical topics in research and policy development that were addressed in various keynotes and seminar presentations. It is partly based on the keynote lecturers and the seminar leaders' own summaries. But some of the summaries are based upon summaries written by the students Anna Helander and Benjamin Settergren, Bachelors of Arts in political science.

This report does not give full coverage of or justice to everything that happened during the conference but aims at giving a brief overview of the major topics. We hope that this report will give the reader informative, interesting and inspiring thoughts and ideas. In addition, the keynote lecturers as well as some of the seminars were video recorded and are available at:

Education in a Democratically Troublesome Time 20181030
<https://api.kultura.nordu.net/tiny/0wjeg>

Education in a Democratically Troublesome Time 20181031 Part 1
<https://api.kultura.nordu.net/tiny/p1jdb>

Education in a Democratically Troublesome Time 20181031 Part 2
<https://api.kultura.nordu.net/tiny/2wqeb>

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WELCOMING ADDRESS

BY MR. GUSTAV FRIDOLIN, THE SWEDISH MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Distinguished participants, dear friends. I am glad to welcome you all to Sweden and Örebro University. The Swedish presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2018 has the aim to contribute to the forming of an inclusive, sustainable, innovative, safe, and open Nordic Region. Today we focus on education and how we can strengthen it in a democratically uncertain time.

Three years ago, the school Kronan in the Swedish city of Trollhättan was hit by a horrific attack. A young man, radicalized by racist thoughts and ideas, took the life of three innocent citizens. His targets were pupils on their way to class, teachers on their mission – chosen merely by their origin.

The very heart of our society was struck. And attacks of this kind, fueled by different kind of extremism, has hit many of our countries. The attacks are diverse, some act alone, some on behalf of an organization; their conversion to extremist ideas was long-standing or more recent, gradual or sudden. One thing, however, does not change: the despair, grief and bitterness that they have left in their wake. Every violent deed of this kind is meant to strike fear into our community and divide us from each other.

Fear is a natural reaction. Many of us felt fear that day three years ago. However, as the principle of Kronans skola has put it, we can choose not to give in to fear; we can choose not to let fear dictates our view of others. This was the reaction in Trollhättan. The community joined together and helped each other in the most difficult of situations. Of course, there was time to grief and mourning, and some scars of the loss created then will never heal, but the school never let fear paralyze them. Today we see that Kronan is a stronger school than it has been in a long time.

In times of deep threats against our society, we need to see this as well: the proof of the strength in our democratic society. Our schools and our community is so much stronger than individual acts of hate.

Let me give you one more example. In the last couple years, we have seen a small but growing neo-Nazi movement in Sweden, part of it centered in the region of Dalarna. Adult men go to the local schools and try to recruit teenagers to their hate. They purposely target young people who they know are more susceptible to their ideas and more easily persuaded. Their message is one of racial discrimination and the supremacy of one part of the human race over others. But the teachers and principals have been steadfast, they will not accept these ideas to spread in their schools. They, and their families, have been publicly threatened by the extremists and suffer, but they and the local society around them stay determined not to let these forces of fear into the schools. One principal made it very clear to me: “The school is a democratic arena, it says so in the law and for me it is an unquestionable principle. There is no compromise. I will uphold the democratic principles that our schools are founded on.” This again proved to me of how deep the idea of democracy is rooted in our school system and our society.

This is not something we can take for granted. One day the threats could be too many to withstand even for the strongest teacher, the attacks on our schools and democracy so hard that people will give in to fear and hate so widespread that it will become the new norm. Democracy is not a given fact. Therefore, the principles of democracy must be re-won and retaught, every day. The pupils of today will be the teachers of tomorrow.

We are constantly at a crossroads. We must make it clear to the next generation that the choice between democracy and extremism is not a choice between two roads

forward. Extremists, antidemocratic forces and those who promote authoritarian rule do not offer a path to a different future; they mean only to keep us in the past. And if they don't achieve this, they hope that they will, at least, paralyze us or immobilize us by fear.

But we will not let them succeed. Our countries are united in the determination to thoroughly oppose extremism. And I find that there is a strong consensus among us on the democratic mission of our schools. Defending our democracy necessarily involves education and that is what we are here to discuss today.

The Information Society in which we live today has made work of teachers more difficult, but, at the same time, even more crucial. This society is in many ways unexplored territory, where books and journalism are no longer the only references, and in which rumors, lies and myths challenge both fact and science as well as beliefs and values. We are surrounded by constant flows of information, which can enrich democratic debate but also limit and even undermine it. Too often the people we meet online, repeatedly introduced to us by the algorithms of the commercial social media platforms, are the ones that share our own opinions. Living in a digital bubble we are never really democratically challenged, instead we reassure each other that we are right and our views are over and over again reinforced. This constant reassurance can be treacherous, as it can be exploited to catch young people in extremist networks. It can give a sense of normality to deviant and dangerous attitudes.

There are no miracle cures for this problem, only long, demanding, difficult and rigorous work: the work of education. It is up to education to lay the foundations of critical thinking, to push us to consider our own arguments and those of others, and to make us look outside ourselves and our bubble. In good schools, people from different backgrounds with different values come together and work together, thus create a society.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN ASPECTS THAT I FIND FUNDAMENTAL FOR THIS TO WORK:

First, equality. International studies, such as the recent OECD study “Equity in education” show that inequality is a big challenge for the school systems of many countries,

including our Nordic ones. Academic success is to a large extent influenced by the environment you grow up in. The report shows that differences in school results based on socioeconomic status appear early, evident when pupils are as young as 10 years old, and that these differences in performance have long-lasting effects, on the likelihood of earning a university degree and ability to shape your own future. The path of inequality is a dangerous one. Because without the ability to read and write, to understand the opinions of others and to express your own experiences people will feel helpless and excluded from society. They will be more easily tempted by simplistic responses which, in their worst expression of political or religious fanaticism, could plunge them into crime and acts of terror. We, therefore, to uphold our strong democratic societies, need to make equality a priority. We must allocate more resources to the schools and pupils with the hardest preconditions, and make sure that pupils from all backgrounds meet each other and receive the assistance they need to acquire basic skills.

Next, critical thinking. In addition to other basic skills, it is now essential to be able to distinguish truth from propaganda, facts from opinions. Parts of what has been included in the learning of theory and philosophy of science and reserved for some university students is now essential knowledge, and tools, for every ten-year-old with a smartphone. Schools must teach scientific methodology and the verification of facts in a more rigorous, coherent way than ever before. We must give our pupils the tools they need to combat all forms of manipulation, and the ability to navigate in the explosion of conspiracy theories, different media and sources available to them. This is an absolute necessity in the age of digitalization. In terms of digitalizing much effort, perhaps too much, has been put into upgrading the digital hardware of the schools. But a new computer or tablet will not by itself help a young person sort out truth from lies. In the last couple of years, I have instead worked for putting more emphasis on what kind of skills our pupils need to acquire to manage in the digital era. With this aim, Sweden has for example updated the curriculum of social sciences to clarify and strengthen the mission of the schools to teach digital skills. In a time when each theory and view can be backed by a source found online, schools must help pupils learn how to determine what to trust and not.

Finally, democratic debate. School must be a place where different opinions are compared and questioned. Principals and teachers must be given the capacity and the tools to prepare pupils to become responsible, free citizens, aware of the principles and ground-rules of our democracy. This can however never be fully achieved in a segregated society or a segregated school system. Only when all parts of society are represented and included can we foster a real democratic discussion that can tie our citizens closer together in a contract of democracy and mutual respect. Therefore, breaking segregation is key in strengthening our democracies.

Together with the pupil's families and a strong civil society, schools have the important task of conveying to our young the fundamental values of citizenship, respect, rights and obligations and how we can change the society we live in in a peaceful way. Here, prohibiting racism and preventing it from spreading is a central responsibility. In Sweden we have taken on this task by founding the Segerstedt Institute in Gothenburg, a national resource center for increased knowledge about what leads to racism and violent extremism, and by building teacher training programs on methods of how to prevent racism and detecting signs of extremism.

I would like also to take opportunity to underline how important I believe the contributions made by UNESCO are in promoting education for democratic values and human rights. We must continue to support this organization in their efforts for the realization of shared universal values, such as tolerance, pluralism, the respect of human rights, freedom and dialogue.

To conclude, I would like to quote an article I had the honour of co-writing with the former French minister of Education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem. I quote: "The human spirit is an admirable thing. It's our responsibility to use it in order to create literature, to build spaceships to take us to Mars, to understand cancer so that we can cure it. We can accomplish great things if we continue to advance and make progress. Unfortunately, not everyone wants to follow this road. Small groups exist on the margins of our society, which corrupt the minds of men and women, indoctrinating them with a single-minded, herd mentality. They only need to learn one thing: how

to hate. If they become the majority, everything will come to a halt. Hate will not find a vaccine for Ebola; lies cannot put a satellite into orbit around the Earth; and scorn will never give a roof or food to people in poverty." End of quote.

Democracy must always be stronger than those who hate it, and democracy draws its strength from education. A strong education system, founded on democratic principles, which give everyone the possibility to shape their own future, and not only a destiny to which they must submit, will prevent the extremist networks from prospering. We must give all the support we can to all the teachers and principals at our schools and universities, who through their courage and commitment, by their hard work, protect the cohesion of our society.

I look forward to fruitful discussions on how to promote democracy and counteract extremism through education for active citizenship. I hope this conference will help us to strengthen our Nordic consensus on education for strong and resilient democracy in our nations. I would now like to hand over to professor Erik Amnå who will guide us further in today's activities.

Thank you!

Mr. Gustav Fridolin

The Swedish Minister of Education and Research

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR A STRONG DEMOCRACY

Dr Daniel Wohlgeomuth, Special Advisor at the Division for Democracy and Civil Society at the Ministry of Culture (A student's summary).

The lecture was based on three key concepts: promote, consolidate, and defend. The concepts were presented as follows:

PROMOTE: more people should be involved in democracy

CONSOLIDATE: more people should have knowledge of democracy

DEFEND: more people should stand up for democracy

The second concept, consolidate, had a central role in this conference. Wohlgeomuth emphasized the importance of discussing democratic values. Education in school is very important in this regard. The purpose of the strategy is to present an overview of the current Swedish state, to clarify the challenges facing Swedish democracy and to introduce a framework for government initiatives to address these challenges. Wohlgeomuth described Sweden as a state that sets an example of a strong democracy in comparison with other European countries. Sweden is characterized, among other things, by high voter turnout, independent media and a high level of interpersonal trust. However, Wohlgeomuth argued that there are a number of ongoing global trends that adversely affect Swedish democracy in the long term. According to Wohlgeomuth, one of the global trends take the form of a global decline in democracy and human rights. Other important trends are for example international migration that puts pressure on democratic systems and create polarization, climate change, forcing difficult prioritization that creates conflict between groups, and economic globalisation, which entails decrease in citizens' opportunities to demand accountability through national elections.

Furthermore, Wohlgeomuth discussed the specific challenges facing Swedish democracy. Democratic exclusion was

identified as a challenge that has affected voter turnout. A relatively large proportion of the population (i.e., 1/5) feel they cannot participate in the democratic process or lack the tools to do so. There are also large differences in the degree of trust in democratic institutions between social groups, with education being an important determining factor. Another challenge facing Sweden is the threat to democratic discourse.. Wohlgeomuth emphasized aspects such as the consumption of increasingly fragmented media, with the news journalism industry being under economic pressure. There has been polarization of the degree of trust in the news media, with increasing propaganda and hate speech and abuse online. Hate speech, abuse and threats are targeting participants in democratic discourse. Threats and hatred affect actors with important functions in the democracy, such as journalists, elected representatives, opinion makers, artists, and representatives of civil society organisations . The third challenge is the so-called anti-democratic actors. Violent extremists have become more visible in public. According to the Swedish Security Service the number of people in violent extremist environments has increased in recent years, from a few hundred to around 3 000 people. Some alarming statistics concerning racism, hostility, and hate crime were also presented.

THE DEMOCRATIC VALUE OF BEING IN SCHOOL

Dr. Jennifer Fitzgerald, Associated Professor in Political Science at Colorado University (Boulder)

Across many European and American societies today, the foremost threats to democracy are: 1) low and declining political participation rates and 2) the growth of extremist parties. In this talk I address these challenges with an eye toward the ways in which educational environments and experiences can confront and perhaps even reverse these trends. I draw on evidence from a range of surveys to ground the discussion.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN DEMOCRACY

Educational institutions have proved to be important bulwarks of democratic systems. Decades of research in comparative political science tell us that highly educated, participatory citizenries tend to support democratic processes and hold democratic values. Education is particularly important for society given the current threats to democracy. In particular, it is one of the few major intermediary institutions still operating at full capacity; other societal venues for bringing citizens together have in many cases weakened in popularity and size over time. For generations, unions, churches and mainstream political parties connected people in meaningful ways to the broader society. But these venues' centrality for social, economic and political life has diminished across a range of democratic countries. Educational institutions remain an important structure for helping people to connect with each other and to public life more broadly. As such, our schools provide a critical arena for encouraging engagement in and support for democracy. They can also offer opportunities for people to find a sense of voice and a feeling of belonging.

DISENGAGEMENT THREAT AND EDUCATION

One domestic challenge to democracy is low political engagement. Most established democracies have witnessed diminished political and civic participation as well as deficits in political knowledge in recent decades. Many

young people are among the least engaged in public affairs today. And yet, the Nordic countries stand out in Europe for maintaining relatively high levels of citizen participation. Research by the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) and the European Quality of Life Survey, for instance, show that Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland have high levels of political engagement and civic knowledge in comparison to other European countries. Per the European Union's report on the ICCS index of students' civic knowledge, Denmark, Finland and Sweden anchor the high end of the scale in Europe. These countries stand out for their excellent outcomes on this metric. Furthermore, there is evidence that civic knowledge among students increased between 2009 and 2016 in Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway ("Education and Training Monitor 2018," European Commission). Thus, while there should be care taken in promoting engagement and knowledge in reference to politics, the Nordic countries are doing an exemplary job in this regard.

POLITICAL EXTREMISM AND SCHOOLS

The second significant challenge to modern democracy is political extremism; radical populism's variants threaten central tenets of liberal democracy such as tolerance and equality of opportunity. The Nordic countries are not immune to this creeping phenomenon. In my 2018 book, entitled *Close to Home*, I ask: who is most likely to support radical right parties in Europe? From this research comes a key finding associated with schools: being a student makes an individual less likely to support a radical right party. This result is robust to controls for age, educational attainment and key attitudes related to the radical right such as attitudes about immigration and opinions on the European Union across twenty European countries in which these parties compete relatively successfully in legislative elections. This further under-

scores the importance of educational experience and context for diminishing the appeal of these parties. I think this speaks to the above-mentioned role of educational institutions for bringing people together and encouraging them to think and act democratically. Schools help students to develop and exercise their voices and they provide critical public spaces for participation and interaction. This research signals the critical role of schools for providing an environment that keeps the radical right at bay for their students.

EXAMINING THESE THREATS IN TANDEM

Related research by Erik Amnå and myself investigates the link between the two threats to democracy- specifically in relation to young people. We ask whether taking an interest in a radical right party can make politics seem more engaging. Data from the Swedish Political Socialization Survey (Amnå et al. 2009) reveal that in 2014 the Sweden Democrats drew first-time voters into politics through the course of the election, boosting their levels of political interest from the pre-election to the post-election time points. Notably, the far right invigorates political interest the most among those teens who think that leaders do not listen to people like them and who feel left out of decision-making by their families at home. This raises an important theme of “voice” as it relates to young people and politics. Where and when youth feel that they are not heard, they are more likely to turn to far right parties that use engaging, outsider rhetoric to appeal to voters. This insight further underscores the importance of ensuring that young people can find their voices and exercise them. Educational environments are in many ways uniquely structured to help in this regard in that they can provide a venue for students to be heard.

INTERGENERATIONAL “POLITICAL” COMMUNICATION

The empirical findings described above highlight the importance of voice and communication for young democratic citizens. In the final phase of my talk I presented results from an additional study with an eye toward improving discussions about politics across generations. In my research I ask people to clarify what the term “political” means to them (the study is published in a 2011 article in *Political Behavior*). The results show that Americans and Canadians hold a wide range of ideas about

what “political” means and which topics qualify in their minds as “political.” People define “political” differently depending on factors such as their gender, education level, nationality, and political ideology. Ongoing, follow-up research with Viktor Dahl of Örebro University shows that these differences are also quite pronounced across generations: younger and older people conceptualize “politics” differently. This may pose challenges for “political” discussions between members of different generations. But it also offers an opportunity for teachers to run exercises through which a mutual understanding of how people think about the boundaries of the political can emerge. Through this research I provide a tool for finding a common vocabulary between teachers and students when it comes to the very definition of politics.

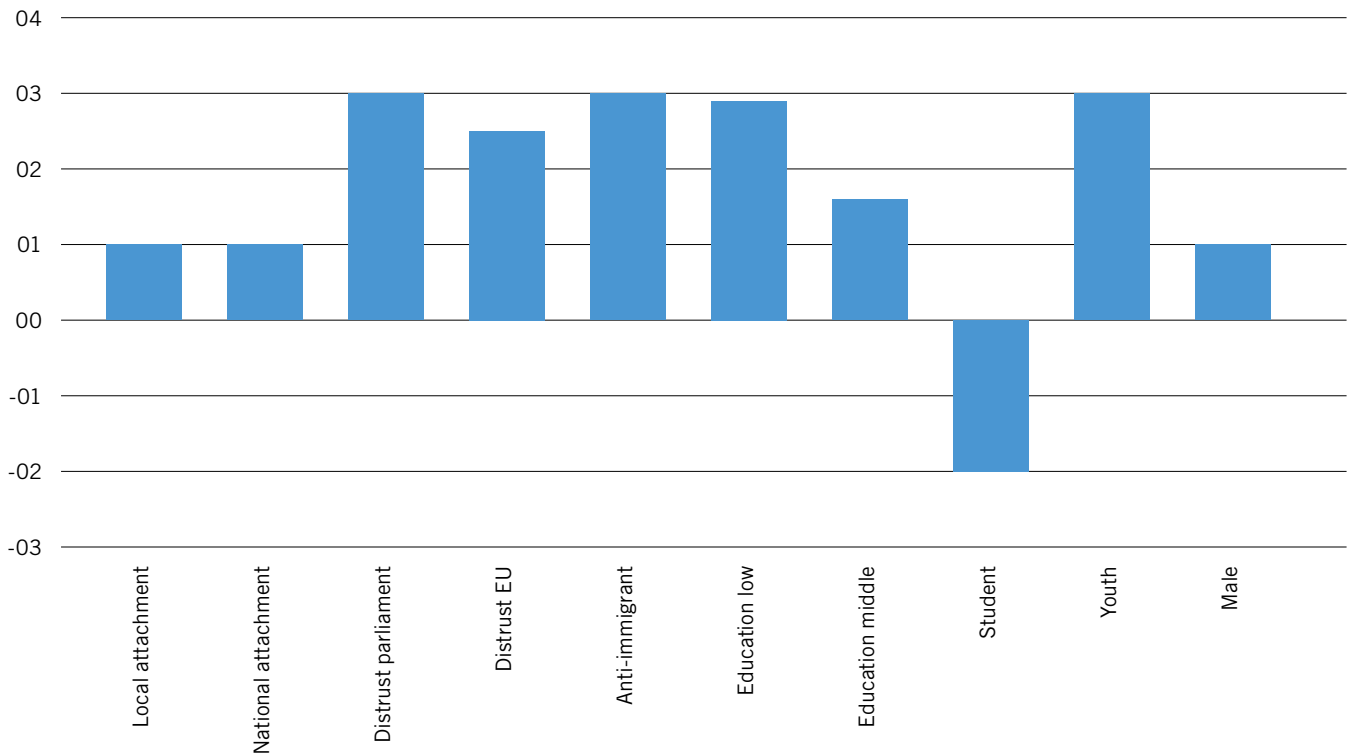
IN CONCLUSION

Democratic institutions and norms in Europe and the Americas face societal disengagement and sharp critique from political elements that have emerged from ultra-fringes of politics. In response, I advise that we consider ways in which educators can approach their day-to-day activities with an eye toward promoting informed and dynamic democratic citizenship and helping to minimize the social and psychological appeals of radical politics. The support of our governments and institutions in reinforcing these opportunities will also be essential. Each of the talk’s touchstones serves to provide insight and ideas for those committed to helping our young people find and exercise voice within democratic contexts.

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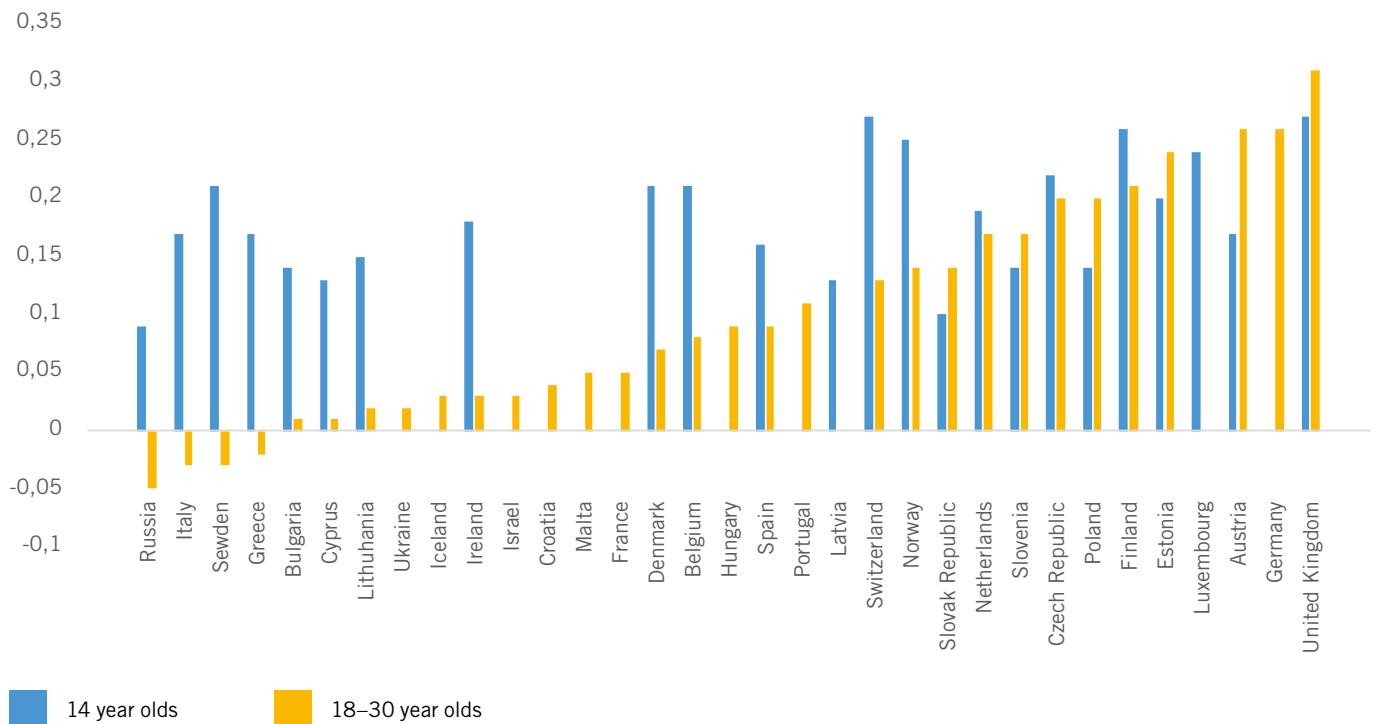
WHAT CAN SCHOOLS REALLY DO?

Dr. Bryony Hoskins, Professor in Comparative Education at Roehampton University (A student's summary)

Professor Bryony Hoskins gave a presentation on how to understand inequality in civic education, and how this affects society in the form of political engagement. She started her presentation by illustrating how social class is a key factor in voter turnout by presenting statistics from the latest UK general election. Other worrying statistics were presented regarding voter turnout among young people (see figure further down). In this group, social class has an especially strong effect when it comes

to voter turnout. Hoskins argued that non-participating groups perceive democratic institutions as unresponsive and illegitimate, making disadvantaged youth feel alienated, powerless, and distrustful of politicians. She also discussed the social reproduction of inequality in political engagement, and how economic, human, social, and cultural forms of capital are transmitted from parents to their children. This transmission makes it a challenge to change the spiral.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL BACKGROUND & VOTING IN EUROPE



European Social Survey (2008–2014)
 ICCS 2009 for the 14 year olds;
 SES measured parents education & occupation

After presenting the problems facing today's democracy, Hoskins moved on to examine the role of schools in addressing those problems. She argued that political learning happens in school in two ways: one is through participatory learning processes such as school councils/parliaments, debates, mock elections, and an open learning environment, while the other is through citizenship education classes. One problem is that not all schools provide the same access to learning. For example, schools of lower social status simply do not provide the same political learning opportunities as do other schools. This results, in turn, in the reproduction of inequality in political engagement.

Hoskins continued by presenting her findings about how and when differences in learning political engagement are influenced by social background in the school environment. One of Hoskins' findings is that disadvantaged students report lower levels of involvement in participatory forms of learning political engagement, with reference to political activities in school and participation in the open classroom climate. Hoskins gave some advice at the end of her presentation. She argued that an open classroom climate and political activities in school are likely to be effective in enhancing political engagement, though these strategies would have a stronger effect on students of higher socioeconomic status. Hoskins listed ways to facilitate the engagement of students of lower socioeconomic status:

- compulsory political activities in all schools for all students
- teachers should encourage disadvantaged students to participate
- greater focus on political activities in schools of lower socioeconomic status
- improved teacher training, including a focus on disadvantage by social class

Hoskins ended the presentation by pointing out that the effectiveness of citizenship education can be measured in terms of enhanced voting intentions.

Reflections from a student's perspective. As a presentation observer, it became clear just how essential the school's role is in a democratic society. Schools help equip future citizens with the necessary tools in order to become democratic citizens. The presentation stressed the importance of not forgetting to involve all groups of students when teaching them to be active democratic citizens.

THE NORDIC SCHOOL IN A LIGHTHOUSE ROLE

A GLOBAL GLANCE AT COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS, CHALLENGING TENDENCIES, AND FUTURE ASSESSMENTS

Mr Ralph Carstens, Co-Head of the International Studies Unit at IEA Hamburg and
Dr Barbara Malak, The project advisory committee of IEA Civic Education Studies
(A student's summary)

Ralph Carstens presented the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) and its aim of investigating how adolescents are prepared to assume their role as citizens. Furthermore, it aims to monitor trends in civic knowledge, attitudes, and engagement over time, detecting changes in democratic context both locally and globally. ICCS involves 24 countries, 16 in Europe, three in Asia, and five in Latin America. It involves over 94,000 students, around 4000 per country, as well as 37,000 teachers from 3800 schools. Carstens stated that each country has different starting points, needs, and intentions, but that to develop civic knowledge they will all benefit from empirical insight. According to level of civic knowledge, Denmark ranks number 1, Finland (3), Sweden number 4, and Norway number 5. Increased levels of civic knowledge have been found in recent studies, but there are considerable differences within and across countries. There is actually more variation within most countries than across them all. For example, female students tend to have higher levels of civic knowledge and civic engagement than do male students. Carstens states that one of the main findings is the link between civic learning in school (e.g., via open classrooms and student civic engagement) and outcome variables.

Barbara Malak-Minkiewicz presented the Nordic countries that have been active participants in the IEA civic and citizenship education studies: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Malak-Minkiewicz discussed how this education takes place not only in school, but in families, organizations, and institutions as well as “on the street”. Civic education reflects the context of societies, and this context is constantly changing over time. She pointed that because of changed civic and citizenship education

is pursuing constantly moving targets, which makes comparing collected data between countries and over time challenging. Examples of important events in recent past that had negative impact and should be taken under consideration by civic and citizenship education were the end of the Arab Spring, financial crises and growing financial inequalities, large streams of immigrants coming to developed countries.

Malak-Minkiewicz argued that they contributed to growing populism facing democratic societies and civic education at present . There is a broad spectrum of issues in which populist movements are gaining control: starting from social and economic functioning of their countries and moving to the basic principles of liberal democracy. A hot topic now is the absence of young people from political debates. Malak-Minkiewicz argued that it is important to keep in mind that youth are political, but that they are now politically active using different tools, means, and platforms. Young citizens are part of the development of technology whereby they can be politically active through the Internet. Populist parties are taking advantage of this, by spreading false information and propaganda on the Internet. Malak-Minkiewicz noted that use by young people of different tools to be politically active, should be an important subject for future studies. Otherwise, we will not know how to understand future generations’ political activities and participation.

SEMINARS

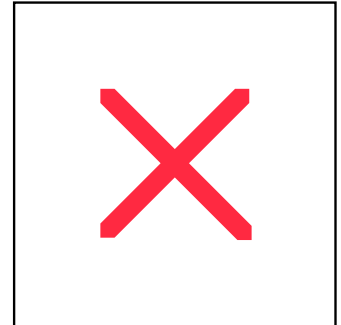
EDUCATING FOR CIVIC KNOWLEDGE: UNDERSTANDING, MAINTAINING, AND IMPROVING THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF NORDIC SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT

Enlightened understanding is central to the definition of the ideal democracy proposed by one of the most prominent scholars of democratic theory (Dahl, 1989). Education is therefore a key aspect of democracy. International comparative studies of school performance such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) have been paid extensive attention in recent decades. With the exception of Finland, which often performs well, the results have given input to discussions of schools as in crisis in the Nordic countries. The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) of 2016 paints a different picture. The four participating Nordic countries (i.e., Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden) are all top ranked in civic knowledge and are also characterized by attitudinal patterns favourable to democracy. Although there are also aspects that can be problematized, democracy and societal issues seem to be strongly featured in Nordic schools. How can this be understood, what should be done to maintain this relative strength, and how can our schools develop further in this respect?

Cecilia Arensmeier introduced the seminar by giving a short presentation of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) and contrasting the Nordic outcome in this to the less successful PISA results.

ICCS maps students' civic knowledge, values and engagement. The seminar focuses the knowledge dimension, which is measured by a knowledge test with multiple choice items and some open-ended questions. The results are standardized with an international mean score of 500 in 2009.



SUMMARY BY JENS BRUUN (DENMARK)

Jens Bruun argued that, from a Danish point of view, it is remarkable that the average Danish score is the highest of all countries participating in ICCS regarding the scales for “open classroom for discussion” and “taking part in political discussions outside school”. These results support the general impression that the type of democracy endorsed by Danish students, as captured in the ICCS results, is a kind of “deliberative democracy”. This is even more significant in light of other Danish results, especially the scale showing the lowest support for the “social-movement-related citizen”. It seems that Danish students very much perceive “participation” as “participating in discussions” rather than as active participation in political activities and events other than elections. As Bruun observed, across all eighteen scales, another noteworthy Nordic result is that Finland is below the international average on thirteen scales (very significantly below on seven scales and significantly below on a further six scales). In other words, there are some profound differences between the Nordic countries, with relatively

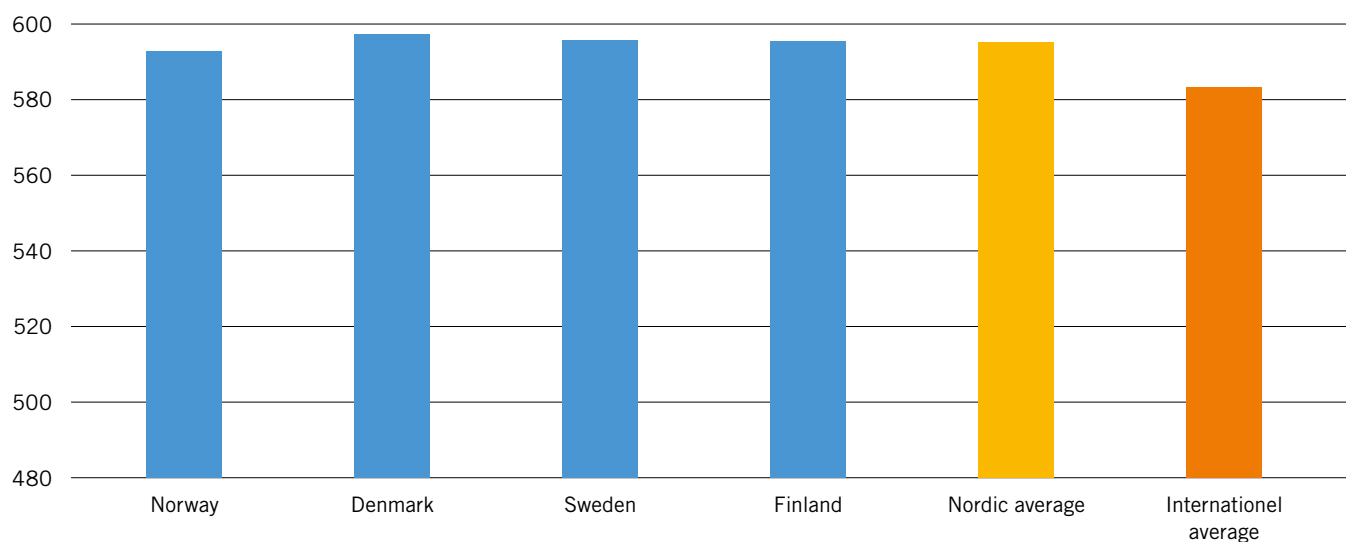
high Swedish results on attitudinal scales, relatively high Danish results in areas of political discussion (both inside and outside school), and relatively low Finnish results across all the participation scales being among the most striking ones. On five scales, Nordic average scale scores are both above and below the international averages (i.e., the scales for support for ethnic groups, the personally responsible citizen, political discussions outside school, electoral participation, and open classroom for discussion). Some of these differences are substantial. Nevertheless, looking at the overall Nordic tendencies, relative to international averages, it is fair to conclude that there is a specifically Nordic profile across the range of results. For example, there is a clear tendency for all four countries to be located in the same main area of an international scale (above or below the international

average). On seven of the eighteen scales, all four Nordic countries are in precisely the same position relative to the international averages (in one case all above and in six cases all below). Of the remaining scales, in five cases the Nordic countries are mainly below the international averages (but not significantly so for one or two countries).

SUMMARY BY LIHONG HUANG (NORWAY)

Lihong Huang presented the average student achievement scores for civic knowledge from ICCS 2016 in the four Nordic countries relative to the International averages (see Figure 2). Students of all four Nordic countries have average scores that are significantly higher than the international average. In fact, the four Nordic countries are ranked among the top five of the 24 countries participating in the ICCS 2016 study (Schultz et al., 2017).

FIGURE 2. NATIONAL AVERAGE SCORES ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT TEST ON CIVIC KNOWLEDGE



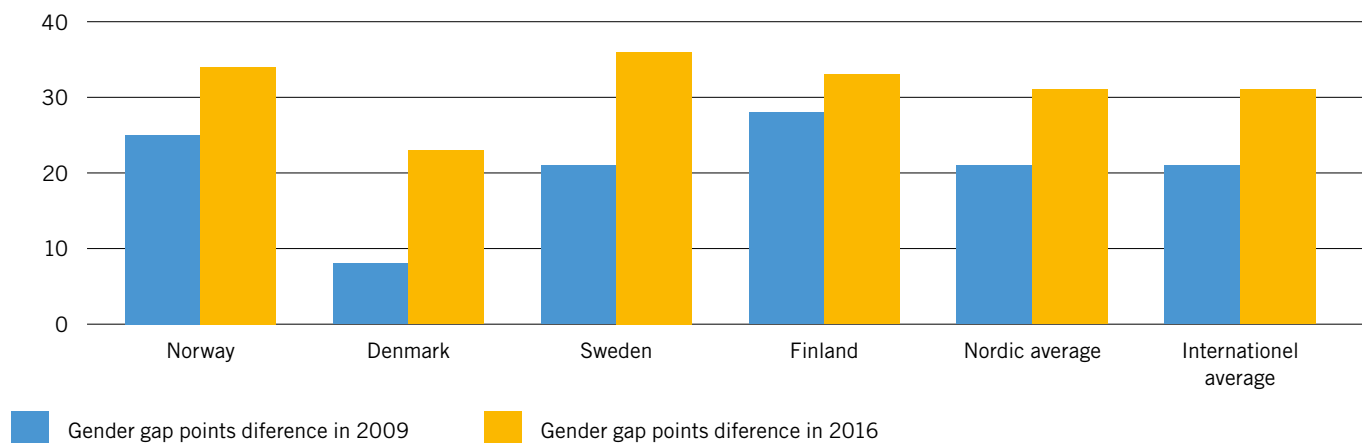
Another important aspect noted by Huang is the greater growth in achievement for girls and the increasing achievement gap between boys and girls. Girls achieved better results than did boys in the ICCS study, in both 2009 and 2016 (Schulz et al., 2017). Table 1 shows that both boys and girls had significantly higher average civic knowledge scores in 2016 than in 2009 in Norway and Sweden, with girls increasing their scores more than

boys did. There is no significant change in the difference between boys' and girls' achievement in Finland from 2009 to 2016, while in Denmark there is no change for boys but a significant increase in the average civic knowledge score for girls from 2009 to 2016. One can observe a growing gender gap in achievement in favour of girls in all Nordic countries and internationally (Table 1).

TABLE 1. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ACHIEVEMENT ON CIVIC KNOWLEDGE TEST

	Boys		Girls		Points change in average 2009–2016	
	2009	2016	2009	2016	Girls	Girls
Norway	527 (4,6)	547 (2,6)	552 (4,5)	581 (2,4)	20 (5,3)*	29 (5,6)*
Denmark	573 (4,5)	575 (3,7)	581 (3,4)	597 (2,9)	2 (5,9)	16 (4,3)*
Sweden	527 (4,2)	562 (3,9)	549 (3,4)	598 (3,1)	35 (5,4)	49 (4,5)
Finland	562 (3,5)	561 (3,4)	590 (2,9)	594 (2,3)	-1 (4,9)	4 (3,6)
International	489	505	511	530	16 (1,1)	19 (1,1)

FIGURE 3. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ACHIEVEMENT ON CIVIC KNOWLEDGE TEST 2009 AND 2016



Huang argued that more research is needed. The comparative analyses of student achievement in civic knowledge from ICCS 2009 to ICCS 2016 indicate a persistent achievement gap between the genders. There is also a gap between students from homes speaking the majority language and students from homes speaking minority languages in all four Nordic countries. The achievement gaps between the genders and between majority and

minority language groups in the Nordic school systems follow an international pattern, but there are significant differences between the four countries. Future research on the achievement gaps between the genders and social groups should not only investigate the factors and mechanisms that could maintain or increase the gaps, but also search for potential ways to reduce the gaps.

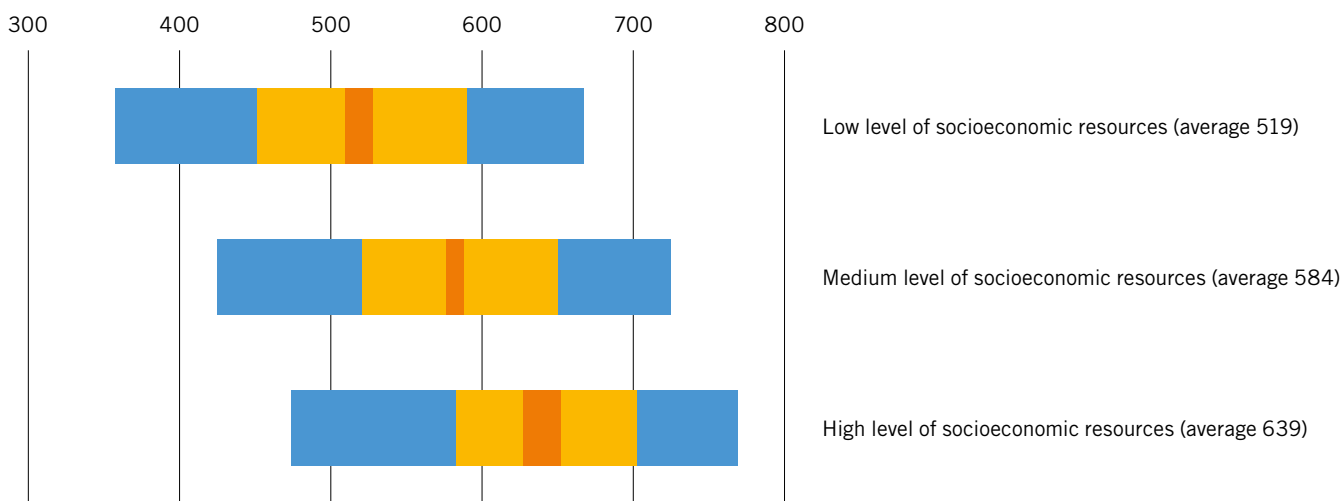
SUMMARY BY JUHANI RAUTOPURO (FINLAND)

Juhani Rautopuro gave a picture of the Educational steering in Finland, and how learning outcomes are assessed. Focus lies on assessing the achievements of the educational system, rather than individual students or schools. International studies like ICCS are also used in this manner and good results are seen as an indication of a working comprehensive education for all children. The Finnish results in ICCS have been stable between 2009 and 2016 (compared to increases in the other Nordic countries). A particular strength for Finland is a low proportion of students with low test scores.

Summary by Ellen Almgren. Ellen Almgren argued that the theoretical underpinnings of the ICCS study relate very well to the Swedish curriculum regarding the education of

democratic citizens. In the ICCS assessment framework as well as in the Swedish curriculum, there is a focus on three main aspects of civic and citizenship education: knowledge development, attitudes, and engagement. From the results of ICCS 2016, it is clear that Swedish students perform well in this area. Sweden is among the top countries when it comes to performance on the ICCS 2016 cognitive test. Sweden is also one of the countries with the largest increase in average test scores since ICCS 2009. Also, when it comes to endorsing equality and equal rights for all groups of people, Swedish students are among the most tolerant, often together with Taiwanese students. When it comes to engagement, the Swedish students are not among the most active, but in some respects – for example, preparedness to vote in elections – there has been improvement since ICCS 2009.

SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES



However, when looking at the distribution of knowledge between different socioeconomic groups of students, the picture darkens. Students whose parents are highly educated perform substantially better than do students whose parents have a low level of education. Students of immigrant background also perform worse than do students with an all-Swedish background. It is obvious that schools are not realizing their compensatory mandate in this area. Although the ICCS study is well aligned with

the Swedish curriculum, there are challenges in assessing students in this area. The first challenge is that it is not uncontroversial to assess students' attitudes and values – especially from a governmental perspective – since one of the most fundamental democratic principles is freedom of opinion. There has also been the development of international large-scale efforts (especially PISA) to assess socio-emotional skills, which would perhaps be even more controversial in this respect. Accordingly, a second chal-

challenge facing international assessments, not least ICCS, is that cross-cultural differences can be difficult to overcome when formulating items intended to capture certain aspects. Especially when it comes to broader and more diffuse areas such as civic and citizenship education (e.g., compared with mathematics), such challenges can be serious. The third challenge facing all assessments is that some of the most pressing educational issues cannot be assessed and measured without seriously breaching personal integrity. For example, when it comes to civic and citizenship education, one may well wonder how well we manage to educate children with various disabilities, since they also form part of the future democratic citizenry. However, laws protecting personal integrity prevent us – for good reasons – from identifying persons with disabilities, according to Almgren.

Cecilia Arensmeier summarized the seminars with some ‘lessons learnt’ from the presentations.

DENMARK: emphasis on open classrooms/school discussion – voice

FINLAND: system quality assessed (not schools, individual students) – equality

NORWAY: decrease of really low performances, smaller gaps between minority/majority language speakers (but also increased gender gaps) – improvement (but not really clear why...)

SWEDEN: increase of higher performances (and fewer low performers) – improvement (but not really clear why...)

COMMON CHALLENGES: knowledge gaps related to socio-economic background, immigrant background and gender, lack of knowledge concerning the ‘success factors’ making civic education work so well in the Nordic countries

Reflections from a student’s perspective. During the seminar, presentations of ICCS test results were given by representatives of all participating Nordic countries. The ICCS test results were similar in all Nordic countries, which are the top ranked of all participating countries. While the representatives were proud of this achievement, most agreed that research is still needed in the field. From an observer’s point of view, these high results give a first impression that the Nordic countries have already reached some kind of goal when it comes to the ICCS tests.

However, listening to the representatives made it clear that work remains to be done. Some problems identified were the sometimes large gaps between lower- and higher-scoring students. How can we better understand this disparity in order to improve the performance of the lower-scoring students? Another finding is that female students perform better than do male students. Do we understand why? The seminar showed that we need more research into this gender gap, and that cooperation within the Nordic countries is essential in order to progress on this front. We are all happy that the Nordic countries have such high ICCS test scores, but how can we maintain this positive trend in the future?

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

Jens Bruun, Associate Professor, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Copenhagen, Denmark

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Lihong Huang, Research Professor, Youth Research, Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

Ellen Almgren, PhD, Director of Education, Department of Analysis, Swedish National Agency for Education, Stockholm, Sweden

Cecilia Arensmeier, PhD in Political Science, Department of Humanities, Education, and Social Science, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

POLITICIZED RELIGION AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE SECULAR STATE

ABSTRACT

Citizenship education as part of political socialization is conditioned by shifts in the political context, especially during periods of migration, shaping the pattern of political culture and subcultures. It can therefore be argued that the secular state is under pressure, and that the nation is undergoing transformation through increased religiously based cultural diversity. This raises complex questions about assimilation and integration, questions in which school and citizenship education occupy a significant position. Politicized religion converts itself into an integral part of the struggle for cultural identity, while in its extreme form, it represents a force potentially counteracting secular society and its political culture – i.e., liberal democracy. The relationship between the state and citizens is thus becoming increasingly complex. From a Nordic perspective, one can ask how the state can maintain the institutionalized public sphere of education based on universal principles against the backdrop of a specific religion, Christianity? How can this be done while maintaining far-reaching respect and tolerance for cultural differences, including other religions and cultural identities? In more concrete terms, to what extent can citizenship education be adapted to a historically developed national identity, and to what extent can it affirm values, habits, and traditions based on the diversity of existing religiously based norms?

SUMMARY BY CARSTEN LJUNGGREN

The relationship between the state, society, and citizens has become increasingly complex in these times of migration and cultural change, especially regarding the existence and accommodation of different religions. In the case of Sweden, one can ask how the state in one of the most significant immigrant-receiving countries in the world can maintain the institutionalized public sphere of education based on universal principles against the backdrop of a specific religion, Christianity. This question is germane given that the state (cf. society) proclaims secularism. Furthermore, how can this public sphere be

upheld while also maintaining far-reaching respect and tolerance for cultural differences, including other religions? In more concrete terms, to what extent can citizenship education be adapted to a historically developed national identity, and to what extent can it affirm values, habits, and traditions based on the diversity of existing religiously based norms?

Carsten Ljunggren argued that Sweden currently seems to be experiencing the immigration of people with religious beliefs that are alien to its national, cultural, secular, and religious heritage. Some immigrants are potentially strangers to a secularized state that requires a commitment to pluralism and fallibilism, while they themselves require certitude in their religious belief. This opens up potential for conflict between religious practice and political authorities requiring that even fundamentalists view rival faiths and beliefs as equal in worth to their own. In such a situation, religious citizens could experience a conflict between their identity as citizens, and being religious adherents. A principle way of resolving this conflict is to argue that one aspect of their identity should take priority over the other. As we know, in a constitutional state defined by liberal democracy, citizenship is superior to religious affiliation. However, today we are witnessing a growing trend in the reverse direction. Religion is no longer a private matter. With reference to various representative sources, we note that religion is returning to the public sphere through the opportunities offered by the process of integration, in which the system of individual rights overrides citizenship defined by the nation state. It is also true that the revitalization of religion can be understood as a strategy to build a national, cultural, and religious other (or perhaps rather as a consequence of the application of individual rights). The current situation in which religion is becoming politicized through education can be illustrated by three examples. In all three, religion assumes political power, based on a mix of cultural and religious demands and expectations confronting the official curriculum.

1. *Resistance*: In France, in the so-called Obin report published by the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Research, it is stated that Muslim students in various schools are refusing to be taught about the Enlightenment period. They are refusing to read the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Molière, and Flaubert, rejecting history teaching as biased, condemning evolutionary theory as false, etc. This example from France is dramatic but not unusual.
2. *Supra nationalization*: In Norway, a group of parents, supported by the Norwegian Humanist Association and the Islamic Council of Norway, initiated litigation against the state in the UN. The case concerns the mandatory teaching of religion that, by having a clear connection to Christianity, was found to be in contravention of the UN Convention on Human Rights (Paul, 2015). The case can be seen as a post-national affair, a superstructure built on the domestic battle between different religious representatives and interests, and between them and the secular state.
3. *The return of religion*: Eighteen years ago, in 2000, the Swedish church was separated from the state; however, when the syllabus for Religionskunskap (Religious knowledge) was rewritten, Christianity retained its special position. Despite the fact that the National Agency for Education suggested the opposite, expert groups and other strong forces fought for the special status of Christianity. In 2014, the official commentary on the upper-secondary school syllabi states that “Christianity and the other world religions are treated separately to emphasize that Christianity has a special meaning in the Swedish context” and that “skills and understanding of Christianity and its traditions are of particular importance, since this tradition has shaped the value base underlying Swedish society”, i.e., the tradition referred to as liberal democracy (Skolverket, n.d.).

On a general level, a liberal, pluralistic, and democratic society has to deal with the shift from diversity, i.e., multi-cultural society, to segregated society. On one hand, in school, teachers have to deal with the official curriculum expectation of imparting and reinforcing shared political values. On the other hand, students make claims for the acknowledgment of distinct values that they sometimes consider unconditionally valid ethical imperatives.

Historically, political authorities and others have assumed that citizens of a constitutional state can acquire the functionally requisite attitudes by embarking on “complementary learning processes”. That happens in most western states as part of the naturalization process by which individuals become formal citizens. This assumption of complementary learning processes is not unproblematic.

Regarding citizenship education, it is hard to imagine that we can claim from any perspective that the actual transformation of the political community can be traced back to learning deficits. However, citizenship education is part of the political public sphere, shaping political opinions and the formation of citizens. External and internal influences and impacts that may affect citizenship education are all vital and fateful when migration and cultural differences challenge the relationship between the state, society, and citizens.

SUMMARY BY JASNA JOZELIC AND GORANA OGNJENOVIC

Jasna Jozelic and Gorana Ognjenovic argued that the freedom of religious belief is playing a new role in society. Giving religion a new public role as a unifying “power” has resulted in a much closer relationship between religion and politics, which has been expressed in the education system and in society at large. Actual societal complexity has been reduced to a set of simple contrasts. Again, internal similarities are under-communicated in the act of systematically demonizing the Other. An institution, as a form of social contract, has to be designed to reduce the salience of divisions in order to minimize their potential as a source of inter-ethnic conflict. By manipulating religion and the role of religion in the self-understanding of ethnic and national identities, education has the role of an agent in rebuilding these ethnic and national identities, in addition to being a political strategy for delegitimizing segregation in schools and in society more generally.

General education transmits social and cultural values to new generations, and these values may convey positivity and encourage attitudes that explicitly or implicitly generate unity through diversity and as such minimize further division in society. Education is doubtless the most significant factor in the development of the individual, communities, and society at large. It not only empowers the individual but also accelerates the progress of society

as a whole. It concerns the cognitive development of the individual, including developing and reflecting on the value system on which society depends. As such, education is a powerful tool that may be used/misused for various purposes. In this context, education takes on a political dimension and schools become a lab for nation building. Through the promotion of standardized languages, national educational curricula, forced assimilation, expulsion, and extermination, the nation, or the people, becomes one with the state. The nation as a discursive construct is constituted and legitimized not only in response to what the elite dictates but also according to the contingencies of everyday life.

SUMMARY BY PER MOURITSEN

Per Mouritsen's presentation on religion and civic integration was based on studying Denmark and Sweden, with a focus on politicizing religion and nationalizing Christianity. Denmark and Sweden have followed quite different, indeed contrasting paths in their approaches to incorporating Christianity and religious education into school curricula in primary and secondary school. In these countries, different developments and emphases may usefully be seen as reflecting different broader approaches to "civic integration" – i.e., the assimilation and socialization of immigrants (and their descendants) as "citizens" in society – where policy rationales have spread from integration and citizenship programmes into other fields. This includes the field of education, in which "integration" also involves more holistic concerns of societal integration as such (e.g., social cohesion and national identity), including catering to the majority's "reception" of newcomers. Mouritsen described the differences between school subjects: "religion" in Sweden, and "Christianity" in Denmark. Denmark is increasingly emphasizing Christianity over other religions, with significant textual work on hymns and the Bible, learning about church liturgy, etc. Meanwhile, religious education in Sweden is inter-religious and broader, with less emphasis on Christianity. Mouritsen speculated on some likely consequences of this difference for the assimilation of immigrants and their descendants in society, citing some circumstantial, mainly ethnographic evidence of the second generation's experience of religiosity in Danish schools.

SUMMARY BY JENNY BERGLUND

Since the bombings in London, Paris, and Stockholm, public debate about Islam and Muslims has often focused on contradictions, conflicts, and contrasting value systems. On one side of this debate are those with a growing concern that immigrants with Muslim cultural backgrounds may be disloyal to their European homes, requiring increased monitoring, surveillance, and control. On the other side are those who argue that the West's Muslim populations have wrongly suffered from the increasing fear, intolerance, and suspicion generated by the international politics and terrorism of a small number of radicals. Such voices claim that there is a need not for monitoring and surveillance, but rather for the safeguarding of religious freedom and the right to equal treatment regardless of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and/or religious background. In many countries, these discussions have directed attention towards places of Islamic education such as Islamic schools, mosques, and Islamic organizations, with a focus on the often controversial and contested manner in which they have been depicted in the media, in public discourse, and, indeed, within Muslim communities themselves.

Religious education, in terms of how religion is communicated to the younger generation, is important to any religious tradition. Without religious education, in which older generations teach younger ones, a religion simply ceases to exist as a living phenomenon. For religious minorities, religious education could be considered urgent, since for these minorities, society itself does not convey the symbols, ideas, and narratives as it does for the majority religion. Getting some type of "Islamic education" is therefore crucial for Muslims as a minority in Europe, and there are, of course, various ways in which Muslims choose to teach their religious traditions to the younger generation: Quran study groups, mosque classes, Skype lessons, teaching by relatives, online courses, etc.

An interesting difference regarding social cohesion can be noted between Sweden and Finland. Both are so-called Nordic welfare states, but they have very different conceptions of how religious education can foster social cohesion. In Sweden, social cohesion is thought to be best achieved by non-confessional education in comparative religion open to students of all persuasions, with Islam being one of several religions taught. In contrast, Finland

has a separate religious education course for each type of religious adherent. The Swedish approach is based on the notion that when a mixed group of students is offered one course that teaches about the variety of world religions, this tends to forestall prejudice and xenophobia, contributing to social cohesion. The Finnish perspective, on the other hand, argues that when, for example, Muslim, Orthodox, or Jewish students participate in a religious education course specifically designed for their own tradition, they become knowledgeable about their origins and build a strong sense of personal identity. This creates secure Finnish citizens who can contribute to social cohesion in unique and meaningful ways. As already noted, in Finland all religious education school subjects are today “non-confessional”, whereas in, for example, Germany, where lessons also are separated by religion in most states, they are confessional by constitution. The confessional/non-confessional distinction in a separate school subject is an interesting one that calls for further research. Interestingly, despite considerable research on religious education and Islam in Europe, so far no one has really evaluated the different models and compared them with one another in terms of integration, feelings of wellbeing, prevention of xenophobia, inculcation of tolerance, etc. Although Berglund did not say that any of the studied countries were going to change their model of teaching Islam within the public school system, she nevertheless thought that we could learn from one another. More international knowledge transmission is clearly needed on these issues.

Islamic education taught outside school is often perceived as comprising only memorization, rote learning, and person-to-person transmission of knowledge, thereby appearing to clash with the ethos and other features of modern state-funded education. In mainstream schools, learning is seen as an open, interactive process in which the student actively constructs knowledge and reaches understanding by questioning and receiving answers from either the teacher or other sources. These two educational approaches are usually perceived in polarized terms by majority society, and the direct experience of the students themselves is rarely considered. Berglund has recently finished a project in which she studied the experiences of students who, in their daily lives, regularly move between supplementary Islamic education and

mainstream schooling in Sweden and Britain, aiming to better comprehend how Muslim teenagers negotiate the knowledge, skills, and values taught to them by two distinct institutions that are often considered dichotomous or opposed. The students were able to identify a range of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that, upon reflection, they conjectured could transfer from one educational setting to the other so as to benefit their overall learning. Both Swedish and British interviewees usually mentioned that the skills they had developed by reading, memorizing, and reciting the Quran had had a positive impact on their mainstream school work. They noted that Quranic education had improved their general ability to memorize, perform before others, concentrate on specific tasks, behave respectfully towards teachers, recite confidently, and listen carefully. Most also claimed that it had a positive effect on character development. When shifting to what impact their secular education has had on their supplementary education, the interviewees spontaneously highlighted religious education, which, as noted earlier, in both Sweden and Britain is non-confessional and part of the mainstream school curriculum, saying that knowledge of different religions and different versions of Islam benefitted them. They said that it contributed to their understanding of “other Muslims”, meaning those with interpretative traditions that differed from theirs.

Throughout the interviews, it became obvious that even though the students themselves could identify positive learning transferables, many of them had encountered problems when talking about their supplementary Islamic education with teachers in school. This was particularly the case for the Swedish students. Several of them had encountered discrimination when mentioning that they had attended Quran education or told us that they never mentioned in school that they attended supplementary Islamic education for “obvious reasons”. These obvious reasons have to do with the fact that they “know”, without anyone telling them, that there will be negative consequences if they talk about their supplementary education. Even though the students in general articulated positive benefits of taking part in both educational settings in terms of learning important skills and attitudes, Swedish students made it clear that Islamic supplementary education is a contested practice in Swedish society. This situation obviously shows us that there are both challenges and

opportunities connected to the integration of Muslims in public schools. The following can be noted in terms of challenges:

1. Although Berglund's research shows that many young Muslims feel that their supplementary Islamic education benefits their school studies, and vice versa, the fact that their supplementary education evokes such negative reactions is highly problematic. It does not help their integration.
2. It does not benefit the students that teachers from secular education do not know anything about the teaching and learning going on in the mosques, and vice versa.
3. Berglund's studies have so far not focused on extremist milieus, but we know that, although few, they do exist. For example, there are Salafi groups that provide Islamic education in a way that is directly opposed to democracy. We need to know more about the push and pull factors of these movements and how their education operates.

The following are the opportunities associated with this situation of two educational systems:

1. Teachers can have contact with one another across the mainstream religious divide; Berglund encountered examples of this in, for example, London.
2. International knowledge transmission is needed to foster the integration of Islam and Muslims in schools. As mentioned above, we do not know what benefits and problems arise from the relationship between the two systems. Could there be opportunities for the systems to learn from each other, and is this possible across the confessional/non-confessional divide?
3. As Berglund sees it, developing teacher education to include courses on minority religions such as Islam is one way of moving forward.

SUMMARY BY LAKSHMI SIGURDSSON

Since 2007, four-year teacher education in Denmark has included a mandatory subject that combines citizenship education, ethics, and religious studies. The aim is that the students should be able to "reflect on ethical, political, democratic, and religious challenges in relation to teaching, cooperation with parents, and school in a globalized society". This subject reflects broader trends in Europe,

such as the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, published by the Council of Europe (CoE) in 2016. Both are attempting to address current democratic challenges through education. In the CoE Reference Framework it is a central point that, whereas democracy is built on institutions and laws, "it lives through the actions and behaviour of its citizen", (Executive Summary, p. 5)". From this perspective, the teaching of citizenship calls for a didactic methodology that connects theory with practical experience and individual thinking with dialogue and negotiation. In recent decades, we have seen a growing focus on citizenship education (CE). A central point of departure was the 1998 British Crick Report: Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools. The report defined the task of CE as inculcating a combination of social and moral responsibility, involvement in the local community, and political alphabetization (Crick, 1998: 17), and one of the results was the development of a national primary school curriculum for citizenship education.

Some of the arguments underpinning the Crick Report were concern about the lack of political engagement among young people, as well as the potential segregation of different ethnic and religious groups. The Crick Report presents CE as a tool to establish common ground between different identities, and one of its final recommendations is to take a multiethnic approach to the concept of citizenship (cf. Korsgaard, Skovmand, & Sigurdsson, 2007). The connection between CE and current challenges is also part of the motivation behind the CoE Reference Framework from 2016. In its description of Europe's "new challenges", one can find a shift of direction in that radicalization and anti-democratic positions take centre stage, and the basis of extremism is linked to the emotion of fear. Just as the Crick Report defined the task of CE as inculcating a combination of social and moral responsibility, the Danish mandatory subject as well as the CoE framework include a focus on values and attitudes. This raises the question of freedom and self-determination. It is a central point that CE should "not teach students what to think, but rather how to think" (Competences for democratic culture: Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies, Council of Europe, 2016:7), as the CoE framework recommends. One of the didactic challenges

of CE is how we deal with the dimension of values and attitudes in a way that respects freedom of thought and stimulates independent and critical thinking. Philosopher of education Geert Biesta has argued that the aim of education is to enable an adult existence in and with the world, and that in this process “teaching is not understood as an act of control but an act orientated towards freedom” (Biesta, 2013: p. 4). He elaborates on this point by distinguishing between three domains of education, i.e., qualification, socialization, and subjectification, all of which are relevant to CE. Qualification is the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Socialization is the initiation of children and young people into traditions and ways of being and doing – cultural, professional, political, and religious. Subjectification is the way in which children and young people come to exist as subjects of initiative and responsibility rather than as objects of the actions of others (Biesta, 2013: 19–20). For Biesta, autonomy and freedom are central values if we are to understand education as an act oriented towards freedom. This does not mean that we should not introduce newcomers and young people to existing cultural, political, and religious traditions, but that we need to create a didactic methodology that stimulates and respects the freedom and autonomy of learners, and enhances their potential to find new beginnings and positions outside existing orders. From this perspective, CE must include the right to dissent, and although education can and often does impart a sense of the project of the nation, it should also value individual freedom, critical thinking, and dissent (Nussbaum, 2013). As expressed by Dr. Ove Korsgaard, the central question in democratic formation is this: “How is it possible to unite the modern idea of individual freedom, autonomy, and self-determination with the need of society for active and loyal citizens?” (Korsgaard, 2018: 78). Since 1975, democratic formation has been the responsibility of public schools in Denmark, as democracy replaced the Christian ideal of formation. The aims of 2016 demand formation based on “participation, mutual responsibility and understanding rights and duties in a free and democratic society”, but also emphasizing “familiarity with Danish culture and history and understanding other countries and cultures”.

On a daily basis, the activities in school must “be conducted in a spirit of intellectual freedom, equality and democracy”. To better qualify future teachers to take on this responsibility, CE became part of an existing mandatory subject in Danish teacher education in 2007. Citizenship was added to the course title, and the new combined subject was called: Christianity Studies, Life Enlightenment, and Citizenship Education (in Danish: KLM). The competence area must cover “complex challenges in a globalized society characterized by diversity of culture, values, and religion”, and the competency aim states that students should gain the ability to “reflect on ethical, political, democratic, and religious challenges in relation to teaching, cooperation with parents, and school in a globalized society”. In the course specifications, Christianity is treated as part of the historical approach to values in combination with “different views of human nature”, and the knowledge of religions and worldviews must also cover Judaism, Islam, ethical traditions, and different types of secularization. Based on experience from many years of teaching this subject, Sigurdsson, in her position as head of external chairman of the external examiners and political theories on the relationship between religion and politics, argued that the combination of citizenship, ethics, and religious studies is not only relevant, but also necessary.

In line with the Crick Report’s stress on the need for political literacy, some of the current challenges concerning radicalization and threats to democracy and positive co-existence reveal a need for religious literacy. As recent political philosophy has shown, we need to develop more differentiation in the analysis of religion and politics as well as a broader understanding of the historical process of secularization (Berg-Sørensen, 2004; Cassanova, 2006; Habermas, 2006; cf. Sigurdsson, 2007). In a situation characterized by Martha Nussbaum (2013) as “the new religious intolerance”, it seems highly relevant to build solid knowledge of religion, diversity, and the role of interpretation, as well as the ability to distinguish subjective attitudes from a historical–academic approach to religion. Nussbaum (2013) has analysed the role of emotion in politics, arguing that fear has become a dominant factor in the 21st century, and to overcome our fear, she suggests a combination of three things: 1) political principles expressing equal respect for all

citizens; 2) critical thinking, i.e., getting rid of inconsistencies and exceptions for oneself; and finally 3) cultivation of one's "inner eyes", i.e., the imaginative capacity to see what the world looks like from the position of the other/the stranger (which we learn through literature, poetry, art, movies, music, and history). If we want to teach not what to think but how to think, we need an explorative approach to values. In the Scandinavian tradition of democratic formation, teachers practice within a framework of values. In the aims of the Danish school system, educational activities must "be conducted in a spirit of intellectual freedom, equality, and democracy" (Aims of the public schools in Denmark). For the teacher, this must be the foundation of didactic methodology, classroom management, and relationships with pupils, parents, and co-workers. Teachers should also exemplify such values. Teachers have to practice within a system of education and political priorities that can give rise to dilemmas and paradoxes. They must be able to make didactic choices within this framework, but their priorities will often reflect their personal values and basic worldviews (Bakker & Montessori, 2016). Teacher education can and should develop teachers' ability to reflect on ethical, political, democratic, and religious challenges in relation to their practice.

Sigurdsson's experience is that the mandatory subject KLM can indeed enhance such reflection, if one applies an explorative didactic approach. She suggests a concept-based approach. The methodology, which basically investigates concepts such as plurality, equality, tolerance, culture, freedom, responsibility, solidarity, and judgement, works through a combination of three aspects: 1) preconceptions and individual thinking about the concepts; 2) cooperative and participatory activities based on dialogue, active listening, and negotiation; and 3) an imaginative approach to the history of ideas, including religious traditions and political philosophy. This didactic model structures the exploration of values and concepts through questions such as: Where and how do we find these concepts (e.g., equality or tolerance) in the history of ideas or in specific religious traditions? When and how have they been the objects of conflict and paved the way for new interpretations? Before or after this, one should focus on individual thinking and reflection: What is my own understanding of this value or concept? Finally, students

can deepen their comprehension through dialogue and negotiation about current dilemmas and challenges in relation to equality, tolerance, etc. This is primarily a didactic model for teacher education, and it clearly needs adaptation to be applicable on other levels. However, on all levels, the starting point for CE should be the principle of teaching how to think rather than what to think, based on the understanding of education as freedom-oriented actions.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

Politicized Religion and Citizenship Education in the Secular State – Carsten Ljunggren, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Örebro University, Sweden

The Religious Dimensions of Ethnic Identities, Nationalism, and Citizenship in Secular Education – Jasna Jozelic, Advisor, PhD candidate, University of Oslo, Norwegian Centre of Human Rights, Norway

Gorana Ognjenovic, PhD candidate, University of Oslo, Norwegian Centre of Human Rights, Norway

Politicising Religion, Nationalising Christianity: Religion and Civics in Denmark and Sweden – Per Mouritsen, PhD, Associate Professor, Willy Brandt Guest Professor, MIM/Malmö University and Aarhus University, Denmark

The Integration of Islam and Muslims in Public Schools: Challenges and Opportunities – Jenny Berglund, PhD, Professor, Stockholm University, Sweden

Citizenship and Religion in Troubled Times: Approaches and Challenges in Danish Teacher Education – Lakshmi Sigurdsson, Associate Professor, MA in Religious Studies & MEd in Citizenship Education, University College Copenhagen, Denmark

Chair: Carsten Ljunggren, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Örebro University, Sweden

HOW POLITICS SHAPE EDUCATION: ACTIONS, REFORMS, AND RHETORIC IN THE NORDIC HISTORY OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

Three professors of the history of education from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark presented a historical overview of the development of civic education in the Nordic countries. The Nordic model is based on comprehensive schooling intended for both social and cognitive training and, ultimately, for building a progressive society. Whereas past political actions paved the way for progressive reforms and modern civic education in the Nordic countries, today's political debate is occupied with describing problems in the education system. Under what conditions did the Nordic model of education develop during the 20th century, and to what degree is the situation different today? The three presentations illustrated the importance of history in education in order to understand current developments in Nordic school systems. Following on the three professors' brief historical overview, a panel debate moderated by Christian Lundahl ended the session.

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF METTE BUCHARDT'S PRESENTATION

Mette Buchardt from Denmark presented the political logic of rationality, and traced how Denmark became involved in launching a development programme for a new Nordic school system. The Nordic model of comprehensive education has the goal of creating social mobility through education, and of schooling citizens into a mentality of equity and equal participation suitable for the welfare state. Furthermore, she talked about "the ever-growing quantity of knowledge" in relation to other countries, which serves as an argument for inculcating functionally oriented skill in obtaining knowledge. She also said that schools should make students proficient, in an atomic and hydrogen world. Buchardt also discussed

the fact that other countries all over the world have faced the same conflict about whether education should entail "imparting a quantity of knowledge" or build on "the importance of the child itself being trained in skills for obtaining knowledge". She ended the presentation with some concluding remarks touching on the double scheme of schooling, especially when school teaches us to be technically competitive and good human beings. Though one aim of school is to qualify children to go out into society, its primary aim is to help children grow up to become harmonious, happy, and good human beings.

SUMMARY BY JAN LÖFSTRÖM

Jan Löfström presented "Visionary reforms, 'slow education', and nagging at an outdated school: societal goals of the Finnish school, 1960–2010s and beyond".

The occupational structure of Finland changed rapidly in the 1950–1975 period, with people moving from rural to urban areas and from working in agriculture to industrial and service employment. A need to raise the educational level was widely recognized. There were also those who thought that the only reasonable and feasible thing was to preserve the two-track system of grammar schools (läroverk) and elementary schools (folkskola), the latter in an extended form. The second, more conservative view signalled an understanding of citizens as by nature either practically oriented or intellectually oriented, and consequently in need of academic or practical training. However, the students were reacting to the realities of occupational markets, and the proportion of young people going to grammar school continued to grow. Grammar schools, however, were criticized for providing education that was too classical and formal.

A vision of comprehensive school gathered momentum starting in the 1950s, as part of a programmatic vision of education and science, on one hand, and increasing prosperity and extensive social equality, on the other, reciprocally reinforcing each other in a spiral of progress. The more traditionally minded were suspicious of the notion of state-directed social engineering and uniform education, but the winning concept of schooling for modern citizens was not theirs. According to Sirkka Ahonen (2003), Reino Oittinen was central in pushing through the vision of comprehensive school. A key figure in the National Bureau of Education and in numerous committees, a Social Democrat, he resolutely worked for a “social school” system based on the conviction that in a democratic society, all citizens have a right to a good education. In 1960s Finnish society, this was a notion that resonated among the working class, and increasingly among the rural populace as well.

The Agrarian League party was traditionally suspicious of anything that imposed expenses on rural municipalities or limited local autonomy, but the changes affecting the countryside made the party supportive of the Social Democratic model of school reform, which was ideologically compatible with the values of the Agrarian League, emphasizing the autonomy of individual citizens. When the reform was debated and decided on in the 1960s, the outcome was the result of the converging interests of the Social Democratic Party and the Agrarian League. In the final stages, socially liberal forces in the right-wing Coalition Party also joined in. Comprehensive school (*grundskola*) was thus not the product of any one political party, and this would make it more resistant to demands for change in coming years.

The reform was carefully planned. Comprehensive school was intended to develop students’ academic, social, and practical skills, as these were considered essential for citizens in an increasingly complex society. Language and mathematics teaching expanded. Students had been grouped according to different “stages” of skills in these subjects, but these groups were abolished for pedagogical reasons. Pedagogy was emphasized, and primary school teachers would now teach children until the age of 12, which grammar school teachers protested, fearful of the erosion of educational standards (and their jobs). Also,

teacher education was reformed in the 1970s and, as a collateral decision, masters degrees became mandatory for primary and upper secondary school teachers, which underlined the importance of teachers’ specialist knowledge in pedagogy. Private schools – plentiful, as a result of an active civil society – were allowed to remain outside the municipal school network if they wished, but they had to follow the same curricula: there would be no separate cultures of civic education in school.

Considering that civic education also takes place in everyday school life, it is noteworthy that there was also a radical reform of school administration in the 1970s, introducing school councils, including teacher and student representatives, that would have a lot to say about pedagogical matters too. These councils were disliked by certain right-wing forces, whose covert work led to their abolition in the 1980s. The memory of politically active councils obstructed initiatives in school democracy in the following decades.

Also, with education seen as a resource for citizens, the curriculum texts in the 1970s and 1980s put considerable weight on students’ social development. The separation between upper secondary and vocational school was seen as a question of educational equality, and in the late 1980s the idea of unified upper secondary school (*ungdomskola*), offering all students a wide range of academic and vocational studies, was on the table but was rejected. However, it was made easier for students to combine vocational and academic courses. The matriculation examination, dating back to the 19th century, was criticized as elitist and counterproductive for the aims of social equality, but it nevertheless survived.

During the 1980s, criticism of comprehensive school (“too much state control, too much trying to make all students and learning outcomes the same, too little encouragement of individuality and private initiative”) was in the air. In the late 1980s, the coalition government – headed by the Coalition Party – opened the way for decentralization and deregulation measures in the educational field: state control of textbooks and regular supervision of schools were abolished; in comprehensive education, children no longer had to attend the nearest school, but could choose from other schools as well; the

national core curricula became less detailed; freedom for local solutions was emphasized; and parents and students would be referred to as “customers”. The need for entrepreneurial education was underlined, and the implicit ideal citizen was now prone to individualistic risk taking rather than collectivistic “playing safe”, and would focus more on realizing his or her own potential rather than the common good.

One contingent factor, the economic recession of the early 1990s, actualized the positive sides of shared societal values and a sense of community. The concrete difficulties that people were facing emphasized the benefits of having local schools provide stability, predictability, and a sense of community to young citizens. Hence, the structures of the educational system were not changed as much as those employing neoliberal rhetoric had been demanding. For example, conditions for founding new private schools remained very restrictive. Schools were granted greater curriculum freedom in the 1990s, but a fear of schools becoming too different in academic profile and of future citizens being equipped with too widely differentiated competences resulted in new core curricula in which local freedom was diminished, yet without jeopardizing much of the teachers’ pedagogical autonomy. Also, another contingent factor came to silence the critics of comprehensive school at the turn of the Millennium, namely, PISA surveys since 2000, where Finnish students performed very well indeed. Clearly, the Finnish educational system could not be as bad as its critics had claimed. A third factor was that municipal administration was reformed, which entailed decentralization and gave municipalities – the major providers of primary and secondary education – a strong position. Latitude for centralized interventions, for example, in assessing school performance, narrowed considerably.

Interestingly, regarding pedagogy, and the role of teachers and the functions of school in educating citizens, Finnish schooling of the early 2000s was not avant-garde but combined aspects of traditional pedagogy with progressive social aims in education. The historically specific teachers’ ethos included benign conservatism regarding educational objectives, moderate curiosity about pedagogical innovations, and a sense of public duty. The education of teachers gradually became more theoretical, but in

practice teachers’ everyday decisions in school were often based on tradition. Demands for accountability were vocal, but assessments continued to have the major role of producing material for authorities for monitoring the national level of student performance, not evaluating individual schools.

In the 2010s, expert knowledge and scientific research seem to have lost some of their earlier authority as a basis for educational policy. The pace of small changes has increased, suggesting that there is no clear vision of future schooling or civic education among decision makers. The basic structure of the educational system remains much the same as before, but segregation between schools in big cities has been increasing, challenging the civic education mandate of schools. As Finnish society had remained ethnically and linguistically homogeneous until recent decades, schools and teacher education have only slowly addressed the question of what civic education entails in Finland in the 2020s. A question that has been discussed periodically since the 1960s is the ongoing separation between academic and vocational schools at the secondary level, which is a question of educating two kinds of citizens, with those in vocational school receiving much less education in societal themes. Finally, from the point of view of schools as sites of civic education, it is noteworthy that in the structure of Finnish comprehensive school, primary school teachers (class teachers) and subject teachers work under the same roof and can move in both directions across the old boundary between primary and lower secondary school. This allows more flexibility in implementing the civic education tasks of school.

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF NINA VOLCKMAR'S PRESENTATION

Nina Volckmar from Norway presented and discussed social integration in Norway from the late 1800s until today. She stated that social integration is an important consideration in a democratic society. In a well-functioning society, there has to be a balance between two integrating forces: functional integration (power and/or money) and social integration. To get a broad overview of the development between the late 1800s and today, Volckmar used a timeline in describing important eras in the development of Norway’s school system. She focused

on five milestones: the late 1800s, 1936, 1936–1969, the 1990s, and after 2000. For all milestones, she discussed what kind of school system Norway had, what kind of political system the country had, and the state of social integration at the time. It is interesting to see how the aspects of social integration have changed between the five milestones. For example, in the late 1800s, social integration was characterized by social mobility, national integration, and by nation building through national culture and language. In the last era, from 2000 to the present, social integration has been characterized by a competence-based curriculum, individual learning outcomes, equity in education, and integration into a global labour market.

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF JOHANNES WESTBERG'S PRESENTATION

Johannes Westberg from Sweden presented the Swedish school in relation to ongoing crises, with a focus on democratization, decentralization, and marketization in Sweden. Since the 19th century, school in Sweden been through various crises. Westberg discussed Swedish schooling as a segmented system, differentiated between the upper, middle, and working classes and between boys and girls. Over the years, several transient myths have arisen due to the lack of a historical perspective. Westberg also examined the Swedish school system from 2000 to the present, arguing that there is a tendency for citizens to blame politics and politicians and even the educational elite when something goes wrong with the school system. In the end, recurrent school crises have given rise to constant dissatisfaction with the school system, which can possibly be explained by changes in the crisis narrative and nothing more.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

A Nordic model of Schooling for “Life”? The Quest to Teach “Real Life Outside School” in Danish Educational Reforms from the 1950s Onwards – Mette Buchardt, Associate Professor, Aalborg University, Denmark

Visionary Reforms, “Slow Education”, and Nagging at an Outdated School: Societal Goals of Finnish Schools, 1960s–2010s and Beyond – Jan Löffström, Associate Professor, University of Helsinki, Finland

Social Integration in Education in Norway from the late 1800s until Today – Nina Volckmar, Professor, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

School in Constant Crisis? The Democratization, Decentralization, and Marketization of Schooling in Sweden – Johannes Westberg, Professor, Örebro University, Sweden

Chair: Christian Lundahl, Professor, Örebro University, Sweden

CONFRONTING RACISM, CONSPIRACY THEORIES, AND (UN)CIVIL ENGAGEMENT ONLINE: CHALLENGES FOR CRITICAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

ABSTRACT

The rise of interactive communication – particularly on social media platforms – has not only facilitated civic engagement with democratic intentions, but has also paved the way for (un)civil actors to enter into public discourse. Over the past decade, the increase in online information flows alongside the fragmentation of user practices have posed new and challenging questions for critical media literacy. The majority of children aged 13 years spend more than three hours per day on the Internet, and at the age of 15–18 years, that proportion exceeds 70% (school work not included). A vast portion of children’s Internet time is devoted to social media use (Statens medieråd, 2017). For most children, extensive Internet use and social media communication are taken for granted, which raises questions concerning children’s ability to process and critically problematize huge information flows in their everyday lives. This panel addressed how conspiracy theories and online communities, racism, populism, and extremism could be understood in relation to young people’s everyday media use. The papers discuss both empirical results and theoretical perspectives on the issues at hand, as well as introducing fresh and critical insights into the role of the media and information literacy. The panel is relevant to all stakeholders involved in policy making and issues concerning information and media literacy among children and young citizens.

SUMMARY BY MATTIAS EKMAN

Rather than viewing racism as an information problem, Ekman stated that we need to examine what drives racism online by assessing the affective dimension of online engagement.. Papacharissi (2015: 125 defined affective publics as “networked public formations that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through

expressions of sentiments”. Online networked publics expressing racist sentiments may not fulfil the criteria for deliberation, but they are nevertheless built around storytelling practices and express real-life experiences and viewpoints, with sentiments of disbelief, resentment, fear, and hate – as well as in-group solidarity – creating a sense of understanding and belonging. The far right utilizes pre-existing feelings of insecurity and fear circulating among citizens online. Ahmed (2004: 2117 argued that emotions “circulate between bodies and signs”, and that they are socially organized. Emotions that express, among other things, insecurity, fear, hostility, or hate among users in a social network align bodies of certain individuals within this network while simultaneously excluding others.

Mattias Ekman presented and discussed three forms of social media communication in which racism is produced and disseminated into public discourse. The first form is recontextualizing news in “alternative media” sites. The emerging right-wing populist movements are accompanied by a general scepticism towards mainstream media, paving the way for a diverse right-wing space online. “An increase in the distrust of mainstream news media among people with anti-immigration opinions has provided far right online sites with quite large audiences.

These sites are usually quick to report on events involving immigrants, minorities, or people with immigrant backgrounds, frequently publishing personal details, including racialized descriptions and, when available, information disclosing personal identification. These strategies constitute a technique to attract data traffic to these online outlets, and to facilitate further circulation of the items on commercial social media. Conventional

news stories are remediated and recontextualized to fit an anti-immigration agenda. The constant flow of “news” depicting the failure of immigration policies, or linking immigrants to criminality, violence, or simply untrustworthy behaviour, creates a self-referential news agenda. By presenting individual experiences or witnessing to crime and violence, storytelling practices circulate emotions, conferring authenticity and legitimacy on these “news” items. The anti-immigration media of the far right orchestrate an affective politics in which negative experiences of immigration are the focal point. News stories relating to immigrants tend to emphasize crime, but they also deal with issues connected to public unrest, cultural misunderstandings, social problems, and economic costs.

The second form mentioned is anti-immigrant mobilization via social media. Anti-immigrant and racist groups and networks have benefited greatly from the rise of DIY digital media practices and perhaps even more from the rise of commercial social media. Such organizations have mobilized and organized mainly through the use of social media and Internet communication. In particular, commercial social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook facilitate the rapid geographical spread of movements that are often characterized by internal conflict and only the temporary involvement of activists.

The third form is anti-immigration discourse in everyday social media use. Immigrants are not only strategically targeted by racist organizations and actors, but are also the object of continuous classification and reclassification in the everyday communication flow on social media platforms. We need to move beyond a dominant focus on extremist websites, and assess the role of everyday communication on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook via mundane social media practices such as hashtagging, linking, liking, and various ways of circulating images and memes, all of which help spread racism in public discourse.

Ekman also brought up the possible influence of online racism on young citizens. Social media obviously contribute not only to everyday enjoyment, connectivity, and information sharing, but also to the increasing circulation of uncivil expressions, including racist ones. There is little evidence that young users face a greater risk than

other user groups in relation to “uncivil” communication and racist attitudes online. Some results actually point in the opposite direction, i.e., the most common “actor profile” in these environments and communication milieus seems to be that of an adult man. However, some of the communication strategies clearly identifiable in the online culture are predominantly used by young men. In particular, the extreme right’s adoption of a “memetic” communication style, including irony, ridicule, humour, and play, seems to be aimed at younger audiences. Rather than deploying traditional political discourse, they feed off a memetic and idiosyncratic communication style popularized in online forums such as 4-chan and its predecessors. Furthermore, uncivil expressions on social media push the boundaries of what is publicly acceptable speech and ultimately shape the broader public discourse on migration. Effectively, discourses previously circulated by the populist right only become more conventional and permeate the agenda of mainstream political parties.

SUMMARY BY LINUS ANDERSSON

Linus Andersson presented how to understand and analyse online conspiracy theories and communities, with a focus on conspiracy theories, digital media, and critical thinking. Andersson highlighted the portrayal of mainstream media in extremist conspiracy narratives, in which these media are commonly understood to be tools of the governing elite that rules through manipulation (Bartlett & Miller, 2010). While some scepticism is, of course, normal and healthy, conspiracy theories inspire a generalized, knee-jerk cynical mistrust (Bartlett & Miller, 2010: 34). Acknowledging the rationality of conspiracist thinking might be a first step in developing strategies to counter conspiracy myths about the media.

Furthermore, Andersson highlighted recent discussion of the phenomenon of digital enclaves and ideological echo-chambers as unfortunate side effects of digital media. He discussed the term “filter bubble”, which refers to the phenomenon whereby people encounter only the like-minded online. Drawing on insights from social psychology, Sustain (2007) has argued that isolated groups with a similar mindset tend to become dominated by the most extreme position regarding a certain issue. There are indications that this type of group polarization tends to be especially strong in electronic settings, leading

to what are sometime referred to as echo-chambers or digital enclaves that are instrumental in establishing and spreading conspiracy myths. The debate about critical thinking in the field of education has centred on the question of whether critical thinking should be understood as a general or subject-specific skill. Can one develop general critical thinking that applies to all fields, or can critical thinking only result from one's knowledge within a certain field? (e.g., Ennis, 1989; Glaser, 1941). The notion of critical thinking as a general skill finds support in the works of Robert Ennis (1962, 1985), while John E. McPeck (1981) has stressed the contextual dimensions of critical thinking and how it relates to subject content.

What then are the implications of these findings when it comes to the media? Most of us are competent media users by habit, as media use is part of everyday life. However, few of us have engaged in systematic studies of how our media institutions developed historically, how they make money, and how they are regulated. In contrast to reading and writing, media literacy is not a school subject. If we were to take Nygren et al.'s findings seriously, perhaps we would regard it as difficult to promote critical thinking about the media without a clear foundation of knowledge about the media on which to build. What is concerning is the challenge posed by conspiracy theories and their role in anti-democratic propaganda online. Especially potent are conspiracy theories about the media that exploit lines of argument similar to those used in promoting media literacy and critical thinking: be sceptical about what you read and see in the media, and learn to discern hidden meanings and see through the propaganda. Andersson said that when he was still optimistic about these things, he thought that media literacy promotion should focus more on media history, economics, and regulation, rather than on ideological critique and source criticism, because the former aspects might be less ideologically charged. However, given the recent debate about fact resistance and the mistrust of established information intermediaries (not only the media/journalism but also science and universities), he is afraid that the problem goes deeper and is related to a general crisis of information and institutions, more so now than five years ago.

SUMMARY BY MICHAEL FORSMAN

Michael Forsman ended the panel by presenting new work on the new civic fabric and post-media literacy. He asked how destructive and non-democratic online logics can be met and countered, as new problems arising from cynicism, distrust, and contempt meet datafication and algorithms intended to orchestrate human behaviour in an automatic fashion. Some may advocate more regulation, even legislation, addressing platform giants such as Facebook and Google. Other prefer digital filters, gatekeepers, and fact checkers. However, the most common call is for more media and information literacy (MIL), referring to the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and participate in messages in various forms. The call for greater MIL mainly has children and youth in mind and formal K–12 education as the assumed context. MIL can be addressed under the guidance of the UNESCO document *Media and Information Literacy: A Curriculum for Teachers* (Wilson et al., 2011). This report has been translated into and adapted to a number of languages, including Swedish (Carlsson, 2013; Forsman, 2013). Even more hope (and prestige) has been placed in “digital competence”, a concept recently added to the Swedish K–12 curriculum (lgr 11). Besides programming and other mainly technical skills, digital competence strongly emphasizes matters such as source criticism, critical thinking, and online responsibility, partly overlapping the MIL area (Forsman, 2018). Both MIL and digital competence are central to the creation of a better, safer, and more sustainable online environment.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

Understanding and Analysing Online Conspiracy Theories and Communities – Linus Andersson, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Media and Communication Studies, School of Health and Welfare, Högskolan i Halmstad, Sweden

Online Racism, Populism, and Extremism: Implications for Communication and Socialization among Youth – Mattias Ekman, PhD, Associate Professor, Media and Communication Studies, School of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden

The New Civic Fabric: Post-Media Literacy Work – Michael Forsman, PhD, Associate Professor, Media and Communication Studies, Department for Media

and Communication, School of Culture and Learning,
Södertörns högskola, Stockholm, Sweden

Chair: Mattias Ekman, PhD, Associate Professor, Media
and Communication Studies, School of Humanities,
Education, and Social Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden

Panel respondent: Ulf Dalquist, PhD, Head of
Research & Analysis, Swedish Media Council,
Stockholm, Sweden

PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT

The prevention (or countering) of violent extremism is a growing global field in both policy formulation and research. Naturally, we would assume that it is also a growing field in various educational systems. Unfortunately, this assumption may not be entirely valid and, even if it were, it is unsatisfactory to realize that significant gaps exist between policy expectations, research, and practical pedagogical work. The aim of this panel was to discuss, in depth, expectations of the educational system regarding the prevention of violent extremism and terror, how this effort may or may not be aligned with the role of teachers in general, and how it is framed with regard to sustaining democracy in particular. The panel also shed some light on what are often referred to as “promise practices”, the lack of evidence-based interventions, and some of the more serious pitfalls.

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF CHRISTER MATSSON'S PRESENTATION

Christer Matsson shed some light on the complexity of violent extremism and its “gray zone”. Matsson described the progression to terror by depicting radicalization as a pyramid, with the base representing “the broad mass” and the top “the tipping point”. He emphasized the great interest in studying the majority of people who enter this pyramid, but who, without intervention, choose not to progress upwards in it. Furthermore, he stressed that the research on violence and violent extremism is inadequate, often looking for “quick fixes”. As a listener, I perceived Matsson as critical of how states detect and address radicalization, and he seemed critical of current reforms intended to prevent extremism. Matsson stated that school is a breeding ground of extremism and radicalization, and therefore is the best place to counter them. The classroom is thus a platform where teachers should encourage students to express their thoughts and ideas, and not strive for everyone to have the same opinion. If increasing the ability of students to express their views in class is not a priority, classrooms might instead foster the formation of racism and extremism.

SUMMARY BY MARTIN MEGGELE SJØEN

Martin Meggele Sjøen argued that educational institutions are viewed as particularly well-placed arenas for detecting, preventing, and disrupting pathways to extremism. Accordingly, several countries have introduced policies detailing the roles and duties of schools in national counterterrorism efforts. Although the incorporation of security measures in education has wide political support, little is known of the effects of efforts to prevent radicalization and violent extremism in schools (Gielen, 2017). Such efforts should be grounded in genuinely good education that utilizes social and relational strategies to address the growing risks of radicalization and extremism. What seems of utmost importance, however, is that any prevention efforts carried out in schools and universities should rest on the educational premises of inclusivity and support. It would appear that the current climate of politicized counter-radicalization efforts can have a negative impact on prevention in practice. Available evidence indicates that there is widespread use of “harder” profiling, surveillance, and zero-tolerance strategies, particularly towards immigrants and Muslim students in many countries. Students who adhere to extremist beliefs commonly report being discriminated against in school, and their narratives portray an educational setting characterized as exclusionary (Sjøen & Jore, 2019). Given the complexity of radicalization issues and the fact that educational radicalization prevention addresses a broad range of issues, there is always a risk that even inclusive and relational pedagogical approaches will not realize prevention as desired. Still, it is worth considering the overall argument that perhaps the best way to prevent violent extremism in schools rests on the premise of providing a genuinely good education. There seems to be a perplexing situation in which counter-radicalization efforts implemented to foster security may, in fact, impede educational radicalization prevention. This calls into question the contemporary integration of counter-radicalization efforts in the world of learning, citizenship, development, and socialization (Sjøen & Jore, 2019).

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF JESPER HOLME'S PRESENTATION

Finally, Jesper Holme presented a project implemented in Aars, Denmark intended to counter radicalization and violent extremism. The strategy is based on multi-agency cooperation using existing opportunities and systems to present narrow expertise and widespread awareness. The project bases its strategy on the results and evaluation of various workshops, combining presentations, dialogue, exercises, and case studies (see Figure 4). He also stressed the importance of students being able to express themselves in the classroom, and not being silenced by fellow students or teachers.

REFLECTIONS FROM A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

As a seminar participant, one got a sense of the essential aspects of confronting and preventing radicalization. Solutions seem to include better collaboration with parents and preventing the marginalization of students and alienation between students and teachers. Overall, this seminar illuminated the complexity and difficulty of countering radicalization. The seminar focused on the importance of dialogue between students and teachers (i.e., being open and asking questions), instead of always debating in an attempt to prove the other party wrong. Dialogue is not meant to alter the other participant's thinking; instead, its essence is to understand the other party's starting point in order to move on from there. The seminar participants noted that "parachuting" does not work, since working to prevent radicalization requires long-term solutions. This is an issue that cannot be fixed simply through policy measures. Knowledge of relevant experts who are immersed in this problem in school environments is essential in order to understand this complex problem.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

Martin Meggele Sjøen is a PhD Candidate in Societal Safety and Risk Management at the University of Stavanger. His research focuses on the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in Norwegian secondary schools.

Jesper Holme Hanssen, Department of Children and Young People, City of Aarhus, Denmark

Christer Mattsson, PhD, is the Director of the Segerstedt Institute at the University of Gothenburg. The Institute serves as a national resource centre in developing knowledge and methods to prevent violent extremism.

HOW TO COUNTERACT RACISM IN EDUCATION: FROM STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVES TO INDIVIDUAL- LEVEL ATTEMPTS

ABSTRACT

Racism and anti-racism have become increasingly salient and controversial issues in the Nordic countries, challenging institutionalized politics, civil society, and the educational system in different ways. What role should schools and teachers play in responding to different expressions of racism, and what anti-racist policies and practices are needed to counteract racism in education?

This session aimed to present different approaches to counteracting racism in education used in Nordic countries. It focused on different perspectives on anti-racist education, both structural perspectives, such as norm-critical, emancipatory, and inter-cultural education, and attempts to counteract racism on an individual level, such as relational, democratic, and knowledge-oriented approaches. All presenters introduced their perspectives on anti-racist education and developed their thoughts on the forms of racism addressed and the anti-racist educational processes developed within the tradition.

SUMMARY BY CLAUDIA LENZ

Professor Claudia Lenz from the Norwegian School of Theology gave a presentation about the Dembra project. Dembra stands for Demokratisk beredskap mot rasisme og antisemittisme (Democratic preparedness against racism and anti-Semitism). It is a competence-building project supporting schools in their efforts to improve democratic school culture and prevent anti-Semitism, racism, and undemocratic attitudes. The project aims to increase the professional competence of teachers, including their capacity to reflect on their own prejudice, bias, and privilege, as well as their competence to create inclusive learning environments and handle situations involving prejudice among students in ways that foster dialogue and relationship building.

Surveys completed by students and teachers yield data about each school's situation. Based on the survey and on workshops with school staff, the project group is responsible for conceiving and implementing a plan of action, counselled by experts from Dembra-related institutions. The experts also organize workshops for all project groups and hold teacher training courses at each school. Five principles in the project guide work on all levels in school, from classroom teaching to school governance.

The first and most important principle is fostering inclusion and participation. It is based on the realization that all the issues in question – attitudes of exclusion ranging from prejudice to extremism – incorporate the creation of a sense of belonging, community, and fellowship for those sharing these views. Following the idea presented above, the first step of prevention is presenting an alternative that can give the same or a stronger sense of belonging, but without the exclusion. Giving young people a sense of belonging is a key to general extremism prevention and a prerequisite even for more specialized deradicalization efforts. Emphasizing that the fundamental task of teachers is to engage their pupils is therefore especially important regarding this matter. This also means that schools have to consider the danger that negative sanctions and suspicion could lead to exclusion.

The second principle is fostering knowledge, critical thinking, and curiosity. First, knowledge of the specific prejudices in question is needed if teachers are to see and interpret what is happening among their pupils. A key to the concept of group-focused enmity is that each specific prejudice cannot be reduced to generalized prejudice, but also possesses its own history and contemporary

form. For example, knowing something about the classic anti-Semitic accusation of lack of loyalty to the nation, together with knowledge of the special status of the conflict in Israel/Palestine, is necessary for teachers to be able to act in response to pupils accusing Norwegian Jews of suppressing Palestinians.

Still, teachers cannot know everything. More important is their curiosity and their intention to build knowledge when observing conditions in their schools. Curiosity relates to what is termed “scientific thinking” in the Norwegian curriculum. Scientific thinking has to do with the intention to learn more, the longing for knowledge about the world, about how things are. This also means being eager to ask questions about what we know, to ask whether this is the whole picture, or whether things should be interpreted differently. As with the first principle, critical thinking is also mentioned often in policies for preventing violent radicalization and extremism. Competence in critical thinking can be an important factor strengthening young people’s defences against extremist messages, conspiracy theories, and simplistic narratives of “us” against “them”. Finally, teachers and school leaders need to practise what they preach – they need to be able to pose questions themselves, challenging their own views and understandings of situations in schools. In this way, critical thinking fosters an attitude of listening to one another – not least, teachers listening to their pupils.

Intercultural competence can be defined as the competence necessary in order to communicate and act in a context of diversity. A broad range of components can be included in intercultural competence (see Barrett, 2011, for a list). The relationship with the two previous principles, inclusion and critical thinking, is close, and both these principles can be seen as part of intercultural competence. The intention to involve others and critical thinking are necessary for communication and action in a diverse society. Critical thinking as a principle also points to the need to critically reflect on the concept of diversity itself, questioning interpretations of difference in society, in oneself, and in school culture. Both social psychology and anthropological research point to generalization and to protection of the discursive boundaries defining the perceived other as fundamental human tendencies (Barth, 1967; Dovidio et al., 2005). This means that a

conscious will to counter this tendency within oneself must be seen as a professional skill of teachers, so that they can treat each pupil as an individual, not as a representative of one group or another.

Ownership and long-term sustainability are key factors for the success of any project related to aspects of school development. Ownership by school management, i.e., that management makes a clear decision to enter a project, supports it, and enhances its implementation in regular school life, has been shown to be central to the success of any project (Udir, 2012). Ownership by teachers and staff is equally important but plays a different role: these actors need to be inspired by the project, understand their personal benefits from it, and feel that it is relevant to issues they themselves experience in their teaching.

Dembra is intended to inspire ownership through letting the teachers and schools decide on their own needs. Schools’ concerns vary greatly. Preventing radicalization has become an important motivator for many schools lately, other schools are focusing on the challenges of welcoming newly arrived immigrants, while still others are addressing the polarization of Europe – to mention a few themes. The need to concentrate on issues perceived as important locally is supported by research on identity formation, categorization, and hierarchizing, examining how in-groups and out-groups are formed locally, related to but not dictated by discourses in society at large.

The last principle is also well supported by research on school development. Effort needs to be made on all levels of school life for lasting change to happen, in what is often called a “whole-school approach” (Norwegian: skoleomfattende). Dembra uses a four-level model of the school. The first level is the competence of the individual teacher, i.e., professional pedagogical and didactic competence. The second level is classroom activities and teaching. This is the level at which most school time is spent, and also the level that is most regulated through the curriculum. The teacher training in Dembra is primarily geared towards these two levels. Courses are given to the staff of each school with the aim of improving the individual teachers’ competence and to inspire them to think through their teaching and classroom activities. The third level is that of school governance, especially

democratic and inclusive modes of discussion and decision making, and the fourth level is school–community cooperation.

Emma Arneback, Jan Jämte, René León Rosales, and Camilla Sjöström also participated in the panel via separate presentations. Due to insufficient textual material, we have been unable to make fair summaries of their presentations.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

Emma Arneback, Associate Professor, HUMUS,
Örebro University, Sweden

Jan Jämte, Senior Lecturer, HUMUS, Örebro University,
Sweden

René León Rosales, PhD, Head of Research,
Mångkulturellt centrum, Fittja, Sweden

Claudia Lenz, Professor, Norwegian School of Theology
and DEMBRA, Norway

Camilla Sjöström, Educator, The Living History Forum,
Stockholm, Sweden

Chairs: Emma Arneback, Associate Professor, HUMUS,
Örebro University, Sweden; Jan Jämte, Senior Lecturer,
HUMUS, Örebro University, Sweden

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY BY HUGO WESTER

The Council of Europe Education Policy Advisors Network (EPAN) aims to contribute to effective reforms in the member states in respect of education for democracy and human rights in accordance with the objectives of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, in particular, by encouraging integration of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). The seminar examined how curricula in the Nordic Countries respond to RFCDC, reflecting the challenges and opportunities of applying RFCDC in education for resilient democracy. EPAN Experts from Sweden (Hugo Wester), Norway (John-Christian Christiansen), and Finland (Kristina Kaihari) presented a review of national curricula together with Jonna Wrigley from the Danish Ministry of Education.

The Nordic cross-curricular approach to citizenship education is well aligned with the RFCDC model. General aspects and the core curricula respond mainly to the “values and attitudes” component of the RFCDC model, while the subject curricula/syllabi respond mainly to “skills, knowledge, and critical understanding”. Recently reformed Finnish curricula apply a holistic educational approach with seven cross-curricular, transversal competences. A transversal competence is an entity consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and will. Upcoming education reform with a revised general curriculum in Norway will have “democracy and citizenship” as one of three transversal themes in all general and vocational subjects starting in 2020–2021.

Discussions during the seminar concerned the level of impact when it comes to policies and the importance of focusing on implementation and monitoring, especially to reduce the widening gap between policy and practice. Nordic curricula respond to a long tradition of schools being given a central role in our democracies. However,

policy cannot effect change without daily action in the classroom. The work on RFCDC in EPAN has three paths, i.e., curricula, teaching, and assessment, and the Nordic countries are closely following all this work. Denmark is active in the EPAN teaching path. Among Danish national learning consultants, there is a special team to support and guide schools in education for democratic citizenship.

A Nordic consensus on the unsuitability of assessing “values and attitudes” on an individual level was noted at the seminar. Being employed at school means promoting respect for and affirmation of democracy and human rights among children and youth, but individual values and attitudes are not to be assessed or graded like knowledge and skills. The upper two wings of the RFCDC butterfly should therefore be assessed and monitored on a more structural level, i.e., how well does the school succeed in promoting a safe learning climate in which students feel free to speak.

Hugo Wester, EPAN Expert Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden

REFLECTIONS FROM A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

During the seminar, there was a notable consensus of the Nordic representatives on how democratic values and human rights have obvious roles in the various curricula presented. The representatives from the Nordic countries presented examples of curricula from their respective countries. From an observer's point of view, this was a great way to get a convenient overview of the impact RFCDC has had in the different countries. The presentations also illustrated how democratic values are important in all school subjects. Some keywords related to human rights and democratic values that are prominent in all the curricula are equality, inclusion, respect of others, and freedom of opinion.

After the various presentations, some interesting discussions took place when the representatives invited the audience to ask questions. Most people agreed on the difficulty of actually ensuring that curricula are being followed by schools. Other concerns regarding teaching values were also brought up: Teachers can teach students certain values, but how can we later assess students' values? Could it not be problematic from an ethical standpoint to map students' opinions and values? Questions like these inspired many audience members to take part in the discussion. All the representatives agreed that RFCDC has been implemented in the various curricula. However, there is a need for improvement, and collaboration between Nordic countries is essential in order to improve schools in the future.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

Swedish Curricula and Competences for Democratic Culture – Hugo Wester, EPAN Expert Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden

Norwegian Curricula and Competences for Democratic Culture – John-Christian Christiansen, EPAN Expert Norway, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, Norway

Danish Curricula and Competences for Democratic Culture – Dorthe Anthony and Jonna Wrigley, Ministry of Education, Denmark

Finnish Curricula and Competences for Democratic Culture – Kristina Kaihari, EPAN Expert Finland, Finnish National Agency for Education, Finland

Chair: Hugo Wester, EPAN Expert Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden

HOW TO USE EDUCATION TO FOSTER A CIVIC CULTURE AND CULTIVATE DEMOCRATIC HABITS: LIMITS AND POTENTIALS

ABSTRACT

Through an educational policy shift starting in the 1990s, the Swedish educational system has come to be increasingly characterized by marketization, privatization, and segregation. Today, teaching and discussions within secondary schools can be seen as fostering civic culture for half of the student population, while students in vocational education still have few chances to develop a nuanced political understanding, even though some research shows that deliberative discussions could be productive in fostering societal participation. However, what can be done to foster democracy in other parts of the educational system, such as preschools, and on other levels within the comprehensive school system for students of different ages? Is it possible to cultivate democratic habits in preschool and the early years of education by reflecting on ethical and moral questions? Is it possible to act with commitment and to develop a predisposition for future commitment in the early teenage years? Is it possible to realize more equal achievement among students through combining high-, middle-, and low-achieving students in the same school class? How can folk high schools and municipal adult education contribute to the formation of active citizenship?

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF TOMAS ENGLUND'S PRESENTATION

Professor Tomas Englund started his seminar presentation by speaking about the important role of the school in maintaining and strengthening democracy. He argued that the school system has great potential to nurture democracy, but that it is up to all of us to evaluate what kind of preconditions are necessary to realize that potential. However, we need to be aware of recent changes such as marketization, privatization, and segregation. Might these phenomena be threats to democracy? Englund continued his presentation by considering the question

“How to nurture and foster democracy?” He highlighted the need to develop deliberative communication, defining this as communication in which different opinions and values can be set against each other. This implies the endeavour of each individual to develop his or her views by listening, deliberating, seeking arguments, and valuing, coupled with a collective and cooperative endeavour to identify values and norms that everyone can accept, at the same time as pluralism is acknowledged. Englund listed different elements of communication that could facilitate deliberation in a classroom setting. In such communication, different views are confronted with one another. Deliberative communication implies communication in which:

- a. there is tolerance and respect for the other participants;
- b. different views are confronted with one another and arguments for these different views are given time and space to be articulated and presented;
- c. elements of collective will formation are present, i.e., an endeavour to reach consensus or at least temporary agreement or to draw attention to differences;
- d. authorities or traditional views can be questioned, and there are opportunities to challenge one's own tradition; and
- e. there is also scope for students to communicate and deliberate without teacher control, i.e., for argumentative discussions between students with the aim of solving problems or shedding light on them from different points of view.

The approach has been tested at different levels of the educational system, from the early preschool years, through the common comprehensive school, to higher education. One area where testing has been done is within vocational education, where Englund et al. noticed anti-democratic tendencies coupled with “traditional” teaching methods. One interesting result was that “students

in vocational programmes that participated in deliberative teaching increased their knowledge, thoughtful opinions, political efficacy, readiness for political participation and conversation skills more than students that had non-deliberative teaching” (Andersson, 2012: 192 [Deliberative teaching: Effects on students’ democratic virtues. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 59 no. 5, pp. 604–622]).

SUMMARY BY ANNICA LÖFDAHL HULTMAN

Annica Löfdahl Hultman held the presentation “Involve the outside world in preschool: ways to educate [students in] democratic values”. The initial part of the Swedish preschool curriculum, like other curricula in the Swedish school system, emphasizes that democracy forms the foundation, and that all preschool activities should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values. This may seem simple and obvious, but how are the aims of this curriculum to be realized? What challenges must preschool teachers address in their democracy work? Over the last year, Löfdahl Hultman and colleagues have been working on an international edited volume on this topic: *Challenging Democracy in Early Childhood Education: Engagement in Changing Global Contexts*. Cited below is the foreword to their book by Professor Emeritus Peter Moss (Thomas Coram Research Unit Institute of Education, University College London):

Democracy as a way of life and relating calls for the practice of listening and dialogue, confrontation and negotiation; recognition of diversity, multiple perspectives and the partiality and provisionality of one’s own knowledge and understanding; in short, an acknowledgement that there are always alternatives, other understandings and narratives, and that these should be treated respectfully and seriously. But, arguably, the same qualities should form part of formal governing and decision-making, whether it be by government ministries, parliaments, local councils or other bodies involved in the business of shaping policy and practice. These are essential conditions for a democratic politics of education, a politics based on recognizing education as first and foremost a political practice organized around political questions and political choices, political questions defined by having no one right answer but, instead, alternative and often conflicting answers, requiring choices to be made by citizens

through democratic practices. Questions such as “What is our image of the child?” “Of the teacher?” “Of the early childhood centre?” “What do we mean by knowledge?” “What are the purposes of education?” (Moss, in press #####: #)

Peter Moss has further written:

“One of the main challenges [to democracy] is posed by the hegemony of a particular politico-economic regime, neoliberalism, and its attendant mindset or paradigm, neopositivism. Under neoliberalism, everything (including the political and social) has collapsed into the economic, so that everything becomes conceptualized, rationalized and practiced in economic terms. The images of child and adult are essentially economic: the child as potential human capital; the adult as “homo economicus”, an autonomous individual, flexible and calculating. The role of the early childhood centre is to realize the child’s human capital and so enable each child and society to survive in a ruthless, dog-eats-dog world of markets and hyper-competition. ... In this scenario, democracy has no value, no place, no purpose; political questions are ditched for technical questions, including the question of “what works?” (Moss, in press #####: #)

In the international arena, we can see how “quality tool-boxes” for early childhood education (ECE) are produced; we have learned about standardized assessment of children aged five years across four “early learning domains” (i.e., early literacy and numeracy skills, self-regulation, and social and emotional skills), perhaps in an attempt to replicate, for young children, what PISA has become for 15-year-olds.

However, there is a growing global resistance movement that contests the dominant narratives of neoliberalism. There are both researchers and practitioners who strive for ECE practices that challenge the challenges Difficulties talking about and concretizing democratic issues in everyday preschool work are well known in the research field. A recent report from the Swedish School Inspectorate notes in its most prominent conclusion that “the underlying concept of the value-based work is perceived as difficult to concretize in words “ (Skolinspektionen (2018). *Förskolans värdegrundarbete. Kvalitetsgranskning 2018, Dnr 400-2016:6998*”). Preschool teachers often choose to work on

what is closely related to their own activities. As some preschool teachers expressed in interview with Löfdahl Hultman, “We work on what is concrete for the children, what they recognize”. In these situations, democracy education was about avoiding conflicts and meeting the needs of each individual child. Of course, these are important aspects of everyday preschool life, but are more part of conflict management, equal treatment, and care, rather than aspects of democracy education.

Löfdahl Hultman’s research group at Karlstad University treats democracy education as offering children situations and tools for reflecting on the surrounding world. As society changes and preschool becomes part of an increasingly global knowledge economy, democratic values such as solidarity and equality must reach beyond the local preschool and even beyond the country’s borders.

Löfdahl Hultman and her colleagues have seen how democracy education is often reduced to simply letting children make choices. The fruit snack time is one such typical situation, and is often transformed using democratic working methods whereby influence emerges, children’s voices are heard, and a democratic climate develops. Through Löfdahl Hultman’s research, it is known that the fruit snack time concerns letting children make choices rather than evoking views about global living conditions. Choosing fruit can be an important way to introduce democracy education to children, but it needs to be developed, expanded, and followed up with conversations about the meanings and consequences of different choices.

From a research project, beginner student teachers were asked about their visions of democracy education in preschool. The most common situation described was “the free choice of fruit”. It was of great interest to know what kind of knowledge became available to the children through such a democratic way of working. In Löfdahl Hultman’s and her colleagues’ analyses they found this freedom of choice similar to adults’ possibilities to choose health center or preschool settings for their children. Making a choice is not only about rights and possibilities but also about responsibilities to take the consequences of one’s choice. If the child has chosen a banana, it is hard to change and choose a pear instead.

Considering “the free choice of fruit” an educational situation illuminating the meaning of being a citizen of a democratic society challenges preschool teachers to reflect on the topic more than once. Like adults choosing a healthcare centre, the children must consider certain things before making a choice. Smell, taste, colour, and the possibility of having the same fruit as their best friend are all examples of such considerations. If there are Fair Trade-labelled bananas or locally grown apples or plums among the fruit, the free fruit selection can also involve ethical considerations. The challenge for preschool teachers is to pay attention to the potential and not let fruit selection become a routine, but rather to invoke the outside world and let the children – regardless of age – hear about, see, and even taste a Fair Trade banana during snack time or ecological eggs at breakfast. Loading everyday routine activities with meaning connected with global sustainability establishes a basis among the children for growing responsibility and for practical interest in maintaining democratic values. Even the youngest children can learn about the Fair Trade symbol, knowledge that can be generalized from bananas to other foods or products.

Aside from fruit choice in preschool – an obvious and convenient way of involving democracy – there are more serious events to be taken into account in preschool democracy education. It may be convenient to ignore images we all see from recent refugee situations, or from encounters with beggars outside the supermarket. If we are to take democracy education seriously, however, such “big” events deserve to be noted in preschool. This concerns events featured in the media that attract attention, evoke strong reactions, and somehow leave traces in our memories. Obviously, it is a challenge for the preschool teacher to deal with and problematize such knowledge content among preschool children and make it teachable. This requires professional strategies that cannot be specifically devised in advance, but have been tried and discussed in the work team in general terms. For example, using dramatizations, reading stories, or initiating games to prompt children to talk about why some children cannot live in their own homes are various ways to take up the challenge of making a worldwide perspective part of children’s questions and concerns. In this way, conscious didactic conditions are created

to promote children's understanding that democratic values and working methods reach beyond their own preschool setting.

Most importantly, democracy education is not something that happens only on specially planned occasions or spontaneously in relation to emerging events in the outside world. It is about constantly maintaining an attitude that encompasses both local value-based and larger-scale democratic social issues. Regardless of what the actual subject or theme is, democracy must be included as an equally important aspect.

SUMMARY BY SÖREN HÖGBERG

Sören Högberg, PhD in Education from Högskolan Dalarna, held the presentation "Commitment and inclusion in social studies: opportunities and obstacles and the need for teachers' professional space". Högberg discussed different ways of understanding knowledge of democracy in social studies related to 10–13-year-old students. By using a lens of descriptions formulated by Henriksson Persson (2018) as:

- i) teaching about democracy,
- ii) teaching for democracy,
- iii) teaching democracy as skill or stance and
- iv) teaching democracy through experience,

Högberg focused on how knowledge of democracy in social studies are expressed in the syllabus of Civics (Lgr 11), as well as by teachers and students. The four analytical categories are here understood as part of a dimension going from a more distant view on democracy to a more inclusive participating process.

Firstly, from an overall analysis of the Swedish syllabus of Civics, Högberg pointed out that the summary of the aim of civics differs from what is described as the central content in the syllabus. The central content is mainly expressed in terms of different kinds of knowledge characterized by students' understanding, which Högberg categorized as teaching about democracy. However, an analysis of what is expressed as the aim of civics, although very much dominated by an idea of knowledge as understanding, gives reason to categorize the aim of teachers' work as teaching for democracy.

Secondly, Högberg referred to Henriksson Persson (2018) who found that grade 4–6 teachers expressed their civic and democracy education mission in terms of:

- promoting respectful interaction between all persons in school
- offering students influence and choices
- encouraging students to develop a willingness to participate in and influence society
- permeating everyday school practice with democratic values

The point discussed in the presentation is that teachers express an understanding of knowledge in social studies that are largely related to students' everyday life. Hence, the teachers' view is categorized as teaching democracy as skill or stance.

Thirdly, Högberg also highlighted children's voices retrieved from a project in which the point of departure was students' experiences of the Internet and social media, dealt with in school activities (Hultin & Högberg, forthcoming). In this project the researchers identified a process among students, expressed as an evolution from fear of doing wrong to fear of being subjected to wrong-doings. The students expressed gradually an awareness that websites, digital events, and digital communication activities, all can serve as objects of analysis. Their knowledge of different phenomena that occur in online settings, along with the understanding that these might or might not be judiciously regulated, have resulted in students' articulation of the importance of critical thinking. Aligned with source criticism that stimulates their disposition to critically relate to what they experience, the students also seem to develop a critical view in other subject domains of the school. The findings also show that the students' experiences related to Internet and social media gradually goes from a personal context to public spaces. In relation to media activities, the students expressed bit by bit an awareness of how learning strategies correlate to meaningful educational settings. The students showed an increasingly desire to be part of the digital culture. They identified certain practical and aesthetic abilities, central to their wish to develop a digital bildung/cultural competence to be able to participate in a media culture and a knowledge society.

The children's voices based on the school activities, shows that their wish to be able to participate is stimulated by the experienced school activities. Understanding of knowledge in social studies, from a student's perspective, is accordingly categorized as teaching democracy through experience.

Based on the analysis Högberg argued that teachers need professional space to capture the tension between what is and is not, and to take an interest in new uses of impulses to approach societal issues, emerged by students in educational settings. Teachers need latitude to cultivate student commitment and to modify educational settings. Teachers also need the trust of students, parents, authorities, the media, and society in order to try out the unknown. There is undoubtedly a potential to understand knowledge in social studies as participation, which comes out of experience.

Högberg referred to Adenskog (2018), who has illustrated how involvement in democratic innovations (DIs) is interrelated with, rather than isolated from, the political system, and noted that DIs can influence people's trust in political systems. This goes both ways – there is a present risk, Högberg argues, since 40% of the participants in Adenskog's study changed their attitudes in one way or another towards political systems ability to maintain democratic values. Hence, aligned with this conclusion, teachers have a moral responsibility when giving students an opportunity to consider and address pressing issues. Still, we can never know the outcome in the future, regardless of how we are teaching democracy – about, for, as, or through democracy – but, and this according to Högberg is crucial, we as teachers can sense when commitment is present.

To capture commitment, teachers need an epistemological and moral authority (Sockett, 2012). This authority can be granted by students, parents, and school authorities, but also by media and society as a whole. If teachers are given authority, opportunities are present for teachers to support students to engage with socially relevant questions that enable them to go beyond everyday experience in a discerning and judicious manner. Also in relation to both curriculum and pedagogy. In this regard, teachers have a moral responsibility also to question and restrain

students' involvement in undesirable communities, including aspects of inclusion, exclusion, and social trust. However, as Garrison (2010) points out, a teachable moment is a moment when students are willing to be involved. It is a kind of educational situation – meaningful by experience – that can stimulate students desire to develop skills and stances for democracy by getting to know more about it.

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF ANDERS TRUMBERG'S PRESENTATION

Anders Trumberg discussed Swedish school choice policy, and noted that it is students from wealthy, highly educated families who exercise this right. Trumberg demonstrated that there is a pattern of students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds attending different schools from those attended by students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, besides socioeconomic factors, another factor playing a role in school choice is ethnic background. Trumberg demonstrated how this has fuelled increasing socioeconomic segregation between schools. A big problem for many schools right now is to improve on bad reputations, which cause many students to switch schools as they are allowed to do so by the school choice policy. These schools with poor reputations also have an inflow of students who have recently immigrated to Sweden. Trumberg finished his presentation by talking about the closing of a secondary school in Örebro and how students are now bussed to other schools in different neighbourhoods. He discussed how this can positively affect students' grades. Another positive effect is that schools with mixed socioeconomic student compositions foster democratic values, though a risk of this strategy is so-called white flight. Lastly, questions regarding this strategy were brought up: Are all schools in areas characterized by low socioeconomic status going to close? Will the students from these areas be welcomed in their new schools? Perhaps most important, is this strategy even legal?

SUMMARY BY MAGNUS DAHLSTEDT

Magnus Dahlstedt presented how in just a few years, major policy changes have shifted Sweden towards a more repressive approach to migration and migrant integration. This development has been particularly evi-

dent in the wake of the European refugee situation since 2015. In popular education, extensive efforts are made to promote the social inclusion of newly arrived migrants throughout Sweden. This is particularly the case in two popular education settings that Dahlstedt and his colleagues have studied in an ongoing research programme, Migration, Learning, and Social Inclusion, namely, folk high schools and study associations.

Adult education, i.e., popular education, has a long tradition in Sweden. According to this tradition, popular education is an important means of fostering citizenship. Here, there still truly is potential to promote democratic citizenship and contribute to a more equal and democratic society, not least in terms of involving migrants in the community. The largest study association in Sweden is the Workers' Educational Association (ABF). In ABF, Dahlstedt and his colleagues followed the Swedish from Day 1 study circles, directed towards adult asylum seekers, which introduce Swedish society and language. They have also followed the Language Introduction Programme, offered in upper secondary school for young migrants aged 16–19 years. The aim of this programme is to prepare students to enter a national education programme in upper secondary school. However, the government has recently allowed some municipalities to outsource the sites for such programmes to folk high schools. So, in two municipalities, Dahlstedt and his colleagues have followed language introduction classes arranged by one folk high school and one upper secondary school in each municipality. In each setting, organizers, teachers, study circle leaders, as well as participants and students were interviewed. Participant observations were also conducted on site. Of course, there are several differences between the educational settings, though there are also similarities.

Dahlstedt and colleagues found that popular education activities offered by study associations and folk high schools indeed help newly arrived migrants move towards social inclusion in Swedish society. First, with the educational system extended to accommodate adult asylum seekers, and with studies offered at folk high schools for those aged 16–19 years, migrants now have the legal right to access such educational activities. This was previously not the case, which is of course important. Second, their

analysis demonstrates that participants in both kinds of activities find them both meaningful and important, in an otherwise difficult and very stressful life situation. The Language Introduction Programmes offered in the folk high schools strive to involve the participants in the mainstream activities offered by the schools, not least by co-locating the migrants' classrooms with those of the rest of the participants. In the upper secondary schools, on the other hand, the migrants' classrooms were located on the periphery, and in one of the schools in an old auxiliary building that was too cold to permit teaching in the winter. Third, the support offered, not least in the study circles, goes well beyond what is formally expected of the study circle leaders and teachers conducting the work. Here, newly arrived migrants receive support with a range of social issues that are very important for them. These include how to contact authorities, the Migration Board, the social services, or the dentist. Providing someone to talk to when relatives die or someone is denied a residence permit is another form of support. Such support is of course beneficial for the newly arrived migrants' progress towards social inclusion.

In all, the activities offered in both settings can become a home for the migrants, a place that contributes to the development of a feeling of belonging. Some of the participants said that school essentially acted as a home for them.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

How to Use Education to Cultivate Democratic Habits in Times of Marketization, Privatization, and Segregation – Tomas Englund, Senior Professor, Education, Örebro University

Involve the Outside World in Preschool: Ways to Educate in Democratic Values – Annica Löfdahl Hultman, Professor, Educational Work, Karlstad University

Commitment and Inclusion in Social Studies: Opportunities and Obstacles and the Need for Teachers' Professional Space – Sören Högberg, PhD, Education, Högskolan Dalarna

Closing Schools in the Name of Equivalence – Anders Trumberg, PhD, Human Geography, Research Fellow, Uppsala University

Adult Education and the Formation of Citizens:
A Critical Interrogation – Magnus Dahlstedt, Professor,
Social Work, Linköping University, Norrköping/Strategist,
City Administration Office, Örebro Municipality

Chair: Tomas Englund, Senior Professor, Education,
Örebro University

FOSTERING TOLERANCE AND SOCIAL TRUST, AND PREVENTING VALUE CONFLICTS AMONG YOUNG PERSONS: HOW DOES SCHOOL CONTEXT PLAY A ROLE?

ABSTRACT

This panel aimed to provide an interdisciplinary perspective on the role of schools in preventing value conflicts and promoting the development of social trust and tolerance among adolescents in a democratically troubled time. The first paper, by Elisabet Langmann, offered a theoretical contribution regarding how to handle value conflicts in schools. A Europe that seems to have lost its sense of community, fraught with increasing moral and political tension, resists an approach to values education that is either too naive or too dystopian. The core of the proposal is that values education needs to include a shared collective imagining of what is or could be valuable in the world. In this sense, democratic values can be presented as objects of study and matters of common concern despite our conflictual times. The second paper, by Erik Lundberg, dealt with the current discussion in the literature on whether social trust is a stable cultural trait marked by persistence or is based on experience and is subject to change over the life course. Based on unique longitudinal data from five cohorts of young people in Sweden, ranging in age from 13 to 28 years, the paper focused on how social trust develops over time. In addition, Lundberg presented results concerning the role of school climate in explaining changes in social trust among adolescents. The third paper, by Sevgi Bayram Özdemir, focused on the development of tolerance among Swedish adolescents. Reporting a three-year longitudinal study, this paper answered three important questions: (1) How have Swedish adolescents' attitudes towards immigrants changed over time? (2) Does school context (i.e., friends' views of immigrants and a cooperative and socially cohesive classroom environment) play a role in the development of positive attitudes? (3) How does school context influence the development of tolerance

among youth from families with different views of immigrants? The discussant, Jochem Thijs, pulled together the rich findings and further discussed their educational and social implications.

SUMMARY BY ELISABET LANGMANN

Elisabet Langmann, PhD, gave a presentation in which she talked about two ongoing projects. One is a research project financed by the Swedish Research Council, Living Values, and the other is a strategic partnership programme financed by Erasmus plus, The Inquiring Classroom. What these projects have in common is that Langmann and her colleagues are working closely with teachers and educational researchers in Sweden and Europe to develop a professional language and didactic strategies that can help teachers and students engage in difficult ethical conversations in the pluralistic classroom.

Langmann talked about how increasing interest in populist, racist, and fascist movements among young people is causing many teachers in Sweden to feel increasing unease about engaging in ethical discussions in the classroom. Furthermore, many teachers feel uncertain about how to interpret “fundamental democratic values”, as mentioned in the national curriculum. Langmann continued by talking about author Toril Moi (2017), who has made the case that there is a qualitative relationship between how we look at the world (attention) and the words we use in defining what we see (language). Describing what we really see, Moi argues, is not about language skills but about practicing a way of looking at the world with a certain kind of attention. This means listening carefully and applying oneself, awaiting and expecting, but also watching over and looking after.

Inspired by Moi's argument, Langmann and her colleagues claimed that at least three shifts of attention need to be made to find a more meaningful way of speaking about values and value commitments as a teacher:

- from “norms” to “values” and “value commitments”
- from what values “are” (abstract definitions of values) to what values “do” (the work of values in ordinary life)
- from “teaching common values” to “making values common” through study and exercises

Langmann and her colleagues have identified at least three functions of values in people's everyday life that can be summarized as follows:

- the attraction of values (we cannot live in a world without inclinations)
- the colour of values (we cannot live in a world without attachment)
- the “sacredness” of values (we cannot live in a world without enchantment)

Langmann emphasized not what values “are” but what they “do” with teachers and students, so that another “grammar” can be offered with which teachers and educators can begin to speak differently about values education. Lastly, Langmann talked about various exercises inspired by this grammar that have been developed and used in workshops for teachers and educators in Sweden as well as in international summer schools in Marathon, Greece, within the framework of the Enquiring Classroom programme. The exercises can all be seen as examples of how to inculcate the kind of attention needed in order to develop the richer and more nuanced language about the values of liberal democracy so much needed today. What are the gestures of freedom? How does solidarity smell? What does equality look like in everyday life?

SUMMARY BY ERIK LUNDBERG

Erik Lundberg discussed the development and foundations of social trust among adolescents. Social trust in this context refers to the confidence and belief that strangers (i.e., fellow citizens we do not know) will not take advantage of us. Lundberg emphasized the importance of social trust, since it is a resource of the individual affecting life satisfaction, happiness, participation, etc. Social trust

is also an asset for society when it comes to economic growth, democratic government, social integration, etc. Furthermore, Lundberg discussed the decline in and challenges facing social trust, which could be affected by increased wealth inequality, immigration, and political polarization. Do schools play a role in boosting young people's trust in others? An affirmative answer to this is based on the institutional argument, that the performance of public institutions generates trust. The school climate is argued to be important: relationships built between students and between students and teachers, as well as safety and the school environment, are all essential. To promote social trust, Lundberg argued that it is important to reduce victimization and foster supportive norms, structures, and relationships among students.

How can teachers and other experts in schools promote social trust among the younger generation of citizens? In his research project, Lundberg presents a couple of leads to this critical and complex question by analysing 1) the way in which social trust develops during adolescence and 2) the role of some components of the school climate in terms of the development of social trust among adolescents.

Based on longitudinal data, they found that social trust was relatively high at the age of 13. However, between the ages of 13 and 15, social trust decreased significantly and remained comparatively stable between the ages of 15 and 18. Social trust increased, however, from 2.89 (on a 1-5 scale) at age 18 to 3.32 at age 28, which is a statistically significant difference. Interestingly, analyses showed a greater degree of instability between the ages of 13 and 15 and an increase in stability after late adolescence (ages 16–18). Thus, this indicates that social trust appears to stabilize as individuals mature and is more flexible between the ages of 13 and 15. Given that school is perhaps the most important public institution for young people, they took a closer look at some aspects of the school climate in terms of the development of social trust. More specifically, they tested three factors they believed were important in the development of social trust: 1) the extent to which teachers treat their pupils fairly; 2) the extent to which teachers signal responsiveness towards and care for their pupils; and 3) the extent to which pupils experience verbal and physical bullying and victimization.

They assumed that if teachers are perceived to be honest and fair, then trust in society will develop. Teachers are often some of the first people outside the family with whom adolescents have frequent, regular contact. Therefore, adolescents' experiences of their encounters with teachers could play a key role in the degree of trust they have in people whom they do not know personally and have not met. They also assumed that the extent to which teachers signal responsiveness to and care for their pupils plays a role in the generation of social trust – not least since teachers are very important role models for pupils. Finally, they assumed that individuals generalize from their experiences with others. If adolescents experience victimization, this influences their perception of unspecified people as being threats rather than supporters, which has a negative influence on social trust.

Using data on three cohorts of young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years, they found that, on average, there was a decline in social trust over time. In addition, looking at school climate predictors, they found that victimization was the strongest predictor of changes in social trust across the three waves. This indicates that experiences of victimization resulted in a large decrease in social trust across the three waves. Put differently, the level of social trust decreased more over time among adolescents who experienced more victimization at school than among those who experienced less victimization. Victimization alone accounted for about 8% of the variance in the slope of social trust over time.

An important lesson learnt from this study is that experiences of victimization in school seem to reduce adolescents' social trust. This suggests that if we want to uphold and strengthen social trust among adolescents, we should aim at reducing victimization, bullying, and unfair treatment, and instead foster supportive norms, structures, and relationships among students. These and other interventions that research has found to be relevant are probably particularly effective between the ages of 13 and 15 years, when students' social trust seems to be flexible and thereby open to influence.

SUMMARY BY SEVGI BAYRAM-ÖZDEMİR

15% of Swedes had a foreign background. As of 2017, about 24% of the Swedish population are either first- or

second-generation immigrants (Statistics Sweden, 2017). Even though Sweden has been presented as one of the most successful countries in terms of integration and citizens' views on immigrants in cross-national surveys (European Social Survey, 2014; MIPEX, 2015), recent national statistics suggest that Swedish society has experienced increased polarization. For instance, a far-right nationalistic political party, with an anti-immigrant discourse, has increased its power since 2006, and won a considerable number of seats in parliament at the last election. During the same period, the number of police-reported hate crimes has increased. According to recent crime statistics (BRÅ, 2016), 68% of hate crimes in 2015 had xenophobic/racist motives. In addition, recent studies show that immigrant youth in Sweden are at risk of negative peer treatment in school. For instance, the Swedish School Survey on Crime in 2015 showed that 8.6% of 9th grade students in Sweden were the victims of a xenophobic or an anti-religious hate crime (BRÅ, 2017). Similarly, in a large-scale study, Plenty and Jonsson (2017) reported that immigrant youth, especially those from non-European countries, were more likely than native youth to be isolated and rejected. Together, these findings suggest that finding ways to promote positive relationships between different ethnic groups, especially among the children and youth who will become the new members of the host society, are essential to retaining Sweden's well-being and stability.

Compared with other social settings, schools have special importance for the development of young people's views on others because most of their social interactions with peers with different ethnic backgrounds take place in school. In addition, schools are places where positive opinions and behaviors can be systematically promoted among almost all children. In line with this, the Swedish Parliament has assigned schools the task of promoting tolerance of differences. The Education Act (2010:800) states: "Schools should promote understanding of other people and the ability to empathize so that no one should be subjected to discrimination or other degrading treatment on the grounds of gender, ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief systems, transgender identity or its expression, sexual orientation, age or functional impairment" (Lindström, 2013, p. 29). The question then is how schools can promote positive attitudes towards immigrants and counteract negative ones.

In this paper symposium, two individual studies are presented to address the gaps in knowledge. The overarching aim of these two studies was to understand the role of the school context in the development of attitudes towards immigrants. Specifically, using a 3-year longitudinal study, I aim to answer three important questions: (1) How do Swedish adolescents' attitudes towards immigrants change over time? (2) Does the school context (including friends' views on immigrants and a cooperative and socially cohesive classroom environment) play a role in the development of positive attitudes? and (3) Does the school context influence the development of anti-immigrant attitudes among youth from families with different views on immigrants?

Study 1:

Bayram Özdemir, S. & Özdemir, M. (in progress). How Do Adolescents' Attitudes towards Immigrants Change over Time? The Role of Peers and Classroom Social Context

In Study 1, we examined whether Swedish adolescents followed different pathways in their positivity towards immigrants over time, and whether the school context (including friends' views about immigrants and a cooperative and socially cohesive classroom environment) plays a role in the development of positive attitudes.

The sample for the study was taken from a longitudinal study, the Political Socialization Project (PSP), which aimed to identify the factors that play a role in adolescents' interest and involvement in civic and political issues. The PSP was conducted in thirteen different schools (10 lower-secondary and 3 upper-secondary) in neighborhoods with varying socio-demographic characteristics in a medium-sized city in Sweden. The current study focused on a longitudinal sample of students at grade 7 during the first year of the study. These students were re-assessed at grade 8, and grade 9. Among the participating adolescents, the following criteria were used to select the sample: (1) having parents who were born in Sweden, (2) being in a classroom with at least 10 students, and (3) being in a classroom with at least one immigrant student. The analytic sample for the present study comprised 572 students ($M_{age} = 13.42$, $SD = .52$, 51% girls).

A latent class growth analysis was performed to examine whether there were different groups of adolescents who changed their attitudes toward immigrants over time in different ways. Four distinct groups were identified. About 21% of our sample (on a high-increasing trajectory) had highly positive attitudes and became even more positive from grade 7 to grade 9. Sixty-eight percent of the adolescents (on an average-stable trajectory) were slightly above average in positivity, and remained stable over time. Also, there were two relatively small groups that raised concerns. About 6% of the adolescents (on an average-declining trajectory) had somewhat positive attitudes in grade 7, but they sharply decreased in their positivity over time. And, 5% of the youth (on a low-stable trajectory) had very low positivity and remained stable over time.

We then examined what made these two last groups (i.e., average-declining and low-stable) different from the group holding positive views of immigrants. Two separate multinomial logistic regression models were estimated. In the first model, adolescents in the low-stable group were defined as the reference group. We found that adolescents in the low-stable group perceived their classroom climate as less cooperative and socially cohesive than the adolescents in the high-increasing group. They also had a lesser likelihood of having friends who held positive attitudes towards immigrants than adolescents on the high-increasing and average-stable trajectories.

In the second multinomial logistic regression model, adolescents in the average-declining group were defined as the reference group. We found that adolescents on the average-declining trajectory perceived their classroom climate as less cooperative and socially cohesive, and also had a lesser likelihood of being friends with those who held positive attitudes towards immigrants, than those on the high-increasing trajectory. Further, (even though it is marginally significant) adolescents in the average-declining group had a lesser likelihood of having friends who held positive attitudes towards immigrants than those in the average-stable group.

Together, these findings suggest that Swedish adolescents follow different pathways in their attitudes towards immigrants as they get older. Some develop in a positive di-

rection, but others become negative over time. Friends are important reference points for youth on how they form their views on immigrants. Thus, finding ways to diversify adolescents' peer networks (especially for those at risk) may be a way of preventing the formation of peer groups with similar social ideologies. Adolescents' perceptions of the classroom climate seem to play a role in promoting positive attitudes to some extent. Thus, creating a classroom environment where students have the opportunity to collaborate and interact with each other harmoniously may be a key to promoting inter-ethnic relationships.

Study 2:

Özdemir, M., Bayram Özdemir, S., Espling, L. & Wilson, E. (in progress). Can Schools Prevent Parental Influence on the Development of Youth's Negative Attitudes towards Immigrants?

In Study 2, we examined whether the school social context (including a cooperative and socially cohesive classroom environment, and also teacher fairness) plays a role in the development of attitudes toward immigrants among youth from families with different views on immigrants.

The sample for the current study was taken from a longitudinal study, the Political Socialization Project (PSP). The aim and nature of the PSP are described in Study 1. The current study focused on the longitudinal sample of students who were at grade 7 (age 13) or grade 10 (age 16) during the first year of the study. These students were re-assessed at grade 8 and grade 11, respectively. Among the participating adolescents, the following criteria were used to select the sample: (1) having parents who were born in Sweden, (2) having parents who were participating in the study and who had data on attitudes towards immigrants, (3) being in a classroom with at least 15 students, and (4) being in a classroom with at least one immigrant student. The analytic sample for the study comprised 835 students ($M = 14.96$, $SD = 1.68$, range = 13-19, 50.8% girls).

We found that parents' negative attitudes predicted youth's attitudes over time when youth perceived their classroom environment as less cooperative and socially cohesive. By contrast, students in more cooperative classrooms were not significantly influenced by their parents' negative

attitudes. Further, parents' attitudes predicted youth's attitudes only when youth did not perceive their teachers as fair. When youth felt that they were being treated fairly by their teachers, parents' attitudes did not predict youth's attitudes. Together, these findings suggest that schools may have the power to intervene in the inter-generational transmission of prejudice by providing a collaborative and cooperative environment for students. Having a cooperative classroom climate may help youth develop a shared/common identity independent of ethnic origin. Our findings also suggest that, by treating all students fairly and respectfully, teachers can create a safe and tolerant environment in the classroom, which can provide indirect protection against parents' prejudices.

To sum up, schools may have the power to foster positive attitudes and values, and counteract anti-immigrant attitudes, not only through the curriculum they follow but also by how they "Walk the Talk".

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

The seminar ended with a discussion led by Jocjem Thijs, PhD. The role of individual teachers was discussed, together with the social aspects of school and teaching practices, which need to be examined in detail. How to respond to the intercultural classroom climate, the cultural competence of teachers, and promoting cross-culture interactions were issues raised. Several questions and discussions were brought up concerning how to foster tolerance, since it is a crucial aspect of good citizenship. Is tolerating one another sometimes more feasible than liking one another? What are the exact mechanisms behind the impact of peer cooperation and teacher fairness? How do norms and interpersonal relations interact?

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

The Work of Values: Teaching Values in Schools Despite Troubling Times – Elisabet Langmann, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Education, School of Culture and Learning, Södertörn University, Sweden

The Development and Foundations of Social Trust among Adolescents – Erik Lundberg, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Political Science, School of Education, Health, and Social Studies, Dalarna University

How and For Whom? Understanding the Role of Schools
in the Development of Positive and Negative Attitudes
Toward Immigrants – Sevgi Bayram Özdemir, PhD,
Senior Lecturer, Psychology, School of Law, Psychology,
and Social Work, Örebro University, Sweden

Chair: Sevgi Bayram Özdemir, PhD, Senior Lecturer,
Psychology, School of Law, Psychology, and Social
Work, Örebro University

Sweden Discussant: Jochem Thijs, PhD, Associate
Professor, Department of Interdisciplinary Social Science/
Research Fellow, ERCOMER, Utrecht University, The
Netherlands

GOVERNING AND PROFESSIONALISM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLICY MAKERS, RESEARCHERS, AND PRACTITIONERS IN EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been increased societal and political debate about how the governing of welfare institutions can best be organized to serve the public and uphold democracy. In education, positively charged key concepts such as equivalence, quality, and legal security have dominated the debate. Simultaneously, governance ideas embedded in new public management (NPM) policies, particularly the increased development of quality assurance systems and accountability regimes, have been criticized for creating unintentional consequences and narrowing the societal mandate of education. Concerns have been raised about a need to revitalize trust in professionals, while ensuring a certain amount of control. How can such a balance be found?

By introducing and raising critical questions about the dominant governance discourses in education, including issues of professionalism and quality, we argue that there is a need for deliberations among policymakers, researchers, and practitioners on how to seek new ways of making welfare institutions sustainable in democratic societies. A core issue is how education can contribute constructively to the promotion and upholding of democracy.

SUMMARY BY DANIEL PETTERSSON

In recent years, there has been increased societal and political debate about how the governing of welfare institutions can best be organized to serve the public and uphold democracy. In education, positively charged key concepts such as equivalence, quality, and legal security have dominated the debate. Simultaneously, governance ideas embedded in new public management (NPM) policies, particularly the increased development of quality assurance systems and accountability regimes, have been

criticized for creating unintentional consequences and narrowing the societal mandate of education. Concerns have been raised about a need to revitalize trust in professionals, while ensuring a certain amount of control. How can such a balance be found?

By introducing and raising critical questions about dominant governance discourses in education, including issues of professionalism and quality, we argue that there is a need for deliberations among policymakers, researchers, and practitioners on how to seek new ways of making welfare institutions sustainable in democratic societies. A core issue is how education can contribute constructively to the promotion and upholding of democracy.

When locating the development of modern science in time, it can be noted that something happened between the 16th and early 19th centuries. These changes have been discussed in terms of a scientific revolution, meaning that a profound transformation of human minds was taking place. Historically, science was considered heretical. Instead, religion, and to a lesser extent the monarch, were seen as the cultural and moral authorities deciding what was true or false. Gradually, science came to occupy this position, and took over the mandate to define “reality”. This was done using a specific technology, which can be called the “mathematization” of the study of motions. Mathematization grew to be the method with highest legitimacy for investigating the natural order. It also eventually came to establish a dichotomy between what was considered subjective and objective. Henceforward, “objectivity” developed into the highest authority in deciding what was true or false. Before addressing objectivity, the prevailing historical system of making decisions had been highlighted as far too subjective to gain authority

or legitimacy. Now, mathematization (containing numbers) was perceived as more objective and as the ultimate authority for deciding falsehood or truth.

The introduction of mathematization and numbers into the field of governing meant that the scientific revolution could also be treated as a change in governing. The technologies developed and used in science now also interacted with society. Mathematization and numbers changed society in profound ways, for example, by making the connection between science and society institutionally stronger and changing people's attitudes. Using science and numbers to govern became common sense. As such, "facts" and "truths" had to be based on science, and science was usually described as resting on a strong objective foundation of quantification and measurement, transforming uncertainty into certainty with strong social legitimacy.

A consequence of this development was that a separation came about in which numbers, quantification, and comparison were used in understanding society and making it intelligible at a distance. This approach was most used by actors trying to steer society in one way or another, and actual in-the-present observations made within contextual situations created awareness of what could be interpreted as "reality". This separation created a situation in which policymakers and scientists used one technology for understanding "reality", and professionals – within-school actors – used another technology to make the same claim. As such, "reality" was perceived, observed, and constructed in two different ways that could not always easily "talk" to each other, making the two different perspectives not always mutually understandable or intelligible. This created a situation in which there were not only different languages between practitioners and policymakers, but also different "realities".

SUMMARY BY TONE DYRDAL SOLBREKKE

These different understandings of "reality" have also become evident in the world of professional practice. Until recent decades, teachers and their professional associations were given great autonomy to define what constituted responsible teaching. However, with NPM, a new governance logic was introduced in the public sphere, and this had implications for what is understood as professional responsibility. While professionals have

traditionally based their professional "responsibility" on a professional and moral rationale only (or at least have been expected to do so), NPM introduced an "accountability" logic based on a legal and economic rationale that differs from the traditional idea of professional responsibility. Within traditional professional governance, the teaching profession's internal standards were considered a guarantee of good teaching, whereas NPM has emphasized external "accountability" more explicitly. Contemporary teachers must therefore demonstrate responsibility by delivering results measured against politically defined aims.

We acknowledged that teachers and school leaders must cope with both logics. For example, the state has a legitimate interest in monitoring the results of public investments, for example, seeing how economic resources are used and how teachers are safeguarding students' legal rights. However, problems occur when the accountability regime overwhelms the responsibility logic. One step towards a more productive balance would be to understand professional responsibility as legitimate compromises between the two logics.

Table 2 presents a comparison of these two logics, to support critical analysis of what underlies the decisions made in practice. Such an analytical approach may also help us better understand what is in play when making personal choices.

TABLE 2. ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY LOGICS.

"Responsibility"		"Accountability"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on a normative mandate • Trust • Professional/moral rationale • Situated/contingent evaluations • Internal accountability • Negotiated professional standards • Internal (implicit) language • Defined by profession/association • Relative autonomy and personal responsibility • Proactive behaviour/performance 	<p>Professional responsibility as legitimate compromises negotiated in the tension between the different logics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined by contemporary politics • Control • Economic and legal rationale • Standardized routines (contract) • External accountability • Predetermined quality indicators • Transparent language • Defined by political goals • Loyalty to employers'/politicians' decisions • Reactive behaviour/performativity

According to the two logics, there may be divergence between politicians, researchers, and teachers in how they interpret the overall purpose of education, depending on their different “realities”. Becoming more conscious of the two logics may not only help us negotiate legitimate compromises in the tension between them, but it may also help us develop a repertoire for action.

SUMMARY BY ANDREAS BERGH

Just as the concept of professionalism is contested and thus can be interpreted in many different ways, so too can the concept of quality. If we expect a professional teacher to uphold quality in education, it seems reasonable to have an idea of what we mean by quality. Despite that, using Swedish education policy as an example, it is known from research that the dominant interpretation of quality has changed dramatically since the concept was first introduced in education policy documents in the late 1990s. Rather than this change saying something about an isolated concept, it is important to note that it reflects how the very idea of education has been challenged in recent decades. Having said that, developments in recent decades can also be understood historically in relation to the tensions between the two “realities” sketched above.

Briefly stated, up to the late 1990s, the governing of the Swedish school system largely allowed for the logic of professional responsibility. Up to that time, based on their professional training, teachers were entrusted with a societal mandate to realize overriding visions such as equity, democracy, and Bildung, to decide on how to

reach these goals, and to evaluate the results. However, due to societal changes following the logic of professional accountability, the previous societal mandate given to teachers has been challenged. Consequently, rather than visions of how education can contribute to the development of individuals, groups, and society at large, the dominant use of the quality concept has been captured by a discourse in which concepts such as clarity, systematics, legal assurance, shortcomings, and constant improvement seem almost impossible to question.

The challenges following on the changes in the use of the quality concept needs to be discussed to a much greater extent than has been done so far. Paradoxically, the pursuit of quality in education in the past two decades, at least as it appears in education policy texts and governance discussions, has led to what we traditionally associate with education being marginalized and replaced with a more general language, clearly distanced from its original context. Central educational questions have thus been marginalized, while an emphasis on measurable results and the construction of systems to regulate and control have come to dominate. Despite good intentions, given the specific character of education, the introduction of values from other value bases, which this development has permitted, risks eliminating basic institutional values and thus education’s social and democratic potential. It is therefore very important to continue to pay attention to what these changes do to the quality of education and teachers’ professional practices. The insight that we are embedded in and constrained by the dominant

“truths” of our time, which, as we have argued, can also be understood from a longer-term historical perspective, tells us that we always have the power to challenge and change such practices. Here, all the various actors who work with and in the school system have important responsibilities to contribute.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Summarizing the above, we have described two different technologies for understanding educational “reality”, one based on numbers, quantification, and comparison and the other more contextual one based on experience. Depending on the development of these different technologies, a situation is created in which different actors in the educational system have trouble understanding one another’s visions and descriptions of what is actually the “truth” in education. In such a situation, dialogue is crucial, as is the exchange of educational knowledge. What is most striking is that policymakers tend to understand education from above: looking out over the educational landscape from an overall perspective, taking in all the benefits and deficits, basing the knowledge gained on numbers, quantification, and comparison. In contrast, active teachers understand education more from below, seen from within the contextual embedding of education, making individual and situational circumstances more important for understanding educational “reality”.

Given these different perspectives, a common understanding of education shared by policymakers and practitioners is hard to reach, and instead the entire educational landscape is characterized by different perspectives, languages, educational strivings, and priorities. This also leads to different interpretations of how teacher professionalism as well as education quality are to be understood (Bergh, 2015; Solbrekke & Englund, 2011). The effort to create “number-intelligent” activities (meaning that activities are instantiated to increase the “numbers” in education) is not always aligned with what can be understood as “education-intelligent” activities (Elde Mølsted & Pettersson, 2019). In this situation, it is crucial to create arenas for the discussion and exchange of ideas and perspectives about education, to maintain education as one of the most important institutions for addressing issues of democracy.

REFLECTIONS FROM A STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

The seminar ended with discussions about a number of topics, for example: What is education for? What are the challenges? How can we reach legitimate compromises in democratically troubled times? As Biesta (2013) has claimed, "Education always involves risk, but the risk is not that teachers might fail because they are not sufficiently qualified. Neither is the risk that education might fail because it is not sufficiently based on scientific evidence, or that students might fail because they are not working hard enough or lack motivation. The risk is there because education is not about filling a bucket but about lighting a fire. The risk is there because education is not an interaction between robots but an encounter between human beings. The risk is there because students are not to be seen as objects to be moulded and disciplined, but as subjects of action and responsibility. Yes, we do educate because we want results and because we want our students to learn and achieve. But that does not mean that an educational technology, that is, a situation in which there is a perfect match between “input” and “output”, is either possible or desirable. The reason for this lies in the simple fact that if we take the risk out of education, there is a real chance of taking out the education altogether”.

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PRESENTATION OF THE JOURNAL UTBILDNING & DEMOKRATI (EDUCATION & DEMOCRACY)

ABSTRACT

Utbildning & Demokrati (Education and democracy) is an educational journal whose title is inspired by John Dewey's classic work from 1916, *Democracy and Education*. It provides a forum for the publication of articles at the interface between philosophy and social science. Our aim is to offer analyses of the political implications – in a broad sense – of education. Like Dewey, we wish to emphasize the significance of communication for the creation of meaning, relating questions of didactics to a view of education as a democratic institution and the role of education as a public space. This journal is aimed at readers with an interest in preschool and school education, teacher education and other forms of higher education, as well as those interested in communication processes in other contexts. The journal is now in its 27th year of publishing three issues each year.

PRESENTER

Professor Tomas Englund, Editor in Chief

CLOSING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

A STUDENT'S SUMMARY OF THE CLOSING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Before the end of the conference, closing roundtable discussions were held with policy makers, teachers, students, and scholars. Not only did these sum up the conference, but they also helped all participants to reflect on the new information and knowledge gained during these days. The Nordic countries are characterized by a high level of civic education, and could therefore be seen as a sort of “lighthouse”, guiding the way. However, several participants in this discussion agreed that the lighthouse role brings a responsibility to manage and develop education for civic citizenship. There was agreement regarding the importance of education to maintain and develop democracy, with school being a place where students can use their voices, learn in an open climate, and have trusting relationships with their teachers. As a member of the audience, I can state that the conference gave me hope and inspiration about how to combat the various challenges facing democratic societies. Also discussed was the importance of social trust, which schools could have a prominent role in building in the future.

Another aspect raised in the roundtable discussions was the importance of sharing knowledge between teachers, pedagogues, and researchers, since knowledge and practice go hand in hand. This conference also created an opportunity to meet international researchers and experts. This was a great opportunity to understand the situation in other countries, to grasp various challenges facing citizenship education, and to formulate questions about how to make improvements. Important questions were raised and discussed in several seminars during the conference, regarding how to confront and discuss issues with students – among many other topics. A student from a teacher education programme participating in the panel discussion mentioned the existing gap between teachers and researchers, and she argued that the curriculum does not include enough research. There seemed to be a shared understanding of the complexity of democracy, and that it is therefore important to have the right tools to address the challenges facing different societies and

democratic institutions. To this end, a shared willingness and eagerness to make schools better is vital in order to promote and develop citizenship knowledge. We must do our utmost to prepare the next generation to safeguard and develop democratic values and societies. This requires civic education so that future citizens are fully equipped to engage and care for our ever-developing democracies.

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