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This is an author produced version of a paper published in:

Teaching and Teacher Education : An International Journal of Research and Studies (ISSN: 0742-051X)

Citation for the published paper:

Beach, D. ; Bagley, C. ; Eriksson, A. (2014) "Changing teacher education in Sweden: Using meta-ethnographic analysis to understand and describe policy making and educational changes". Teaching and Teacher Education : An International Journal of Research and Studies, vol. 44 pp. 160-167.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.08.011>

Downloaded from: <http://gup.ub.gu.se/publication/203351>

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Changing teacher education in Sweden: Using meta-ethnographic analysis to understand and describe policy making and educational changes

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Abstract: This article derives from policy ethnographic research on teacher-education change in Sweden concerning the development of a unified profession with a common professional-knowledge base. This was a social democratic government policy for teacher education from the 1950s up until 2007, when the newly elected right wing government turned away from unification and toward re-traditionalisation. Based on a meta-ethnographic analysis of the policy ethnographies the article illustrates resistance toward unification and raises critical questions concerning the intellectual foundations and integrity of reform processes. Attempts are also made to locate the disclosures in relation to international research.

Introduction

Teacher education policy change has been extensively discussed in international research journals like *Teaching and Teacher Education* (Adamson, 2012; Beach & Bagley, 2012, 2013; Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004; Erixon Arreman, 2005; Popkewitz, 1985). The mediating constructions operating at curriculum level between society and teacher educators (Hökkä, Eteläpelto, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2010), ideology and social formation (Popkewitz, 1994), the capacity of teacher education to educate critically conscious professionals (Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004; Zeichner, 2010) and how teacher education operates as academic work (Ellis, McNicholl & Pendry, 2012) have been focused on, and similar policy developments have been described in many countries (see e.g. Karras & Wolhuter's, 2010; Garm & Karlsen, 2004; Sleeter, 2008). They suggest that over the course of the past fifty years national policies for teacher education have moved from emphasizing a dualist to a more unitary professional perspective, founded on a research-based knowledge about teaching, learning and education conditions (Beach & Bagley, 2012), but have then begun to swing back again, with a convergence toward global neo-liberal and new-managerial ideas (Apple, 2001; Garm &

Karlsen, 2004; Zeichner, 2010). Critical questions have been raised concerning this convergence (Adamson, 2012; Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004). It is said for instance to have had negative consequences for teacher knowledge and decision-making (Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004; Sleeter, 2008) and for the possibilities of educating teachers as professionals who can critically reflect over, and control their educational practices through a research-based and shared scientific professional knowledge foundation (Apple, 2001; Beach & Bagley, 2012, 2013; Zeichner, 2010).

In the article we are concerned with changes in teacher education in one particular country, Sweden. The two policy tendencies discussed above (i.e. the development of a unified profession with a common research based professional knowledge foundation followed by a return to a dualist knowledge base and age/grade-specific forms of professionalism) are shown to apply there. The article uses a meta-analysis of three long term ethnographic studies to explore this further. A systematic literature review of teacher education policy research as described by Depaepe, Verschaffel and Kelchtermans (2013) was added to enable a comparison of international findings with our own and to draw out potentially trans-local and transnational tendencies and explore and highlight the complex ways in which international ideas and discourses for framing policy may play out. We have tried to establish if there are clear common paths, threads and/or conjunctions between different policy studies that could help form the foundations for an explicitly posited logic of association. Basil Bernstein's theories and concepts have been used in this analysis. We suggest and hopefully demonstrate the theoretical and analytical value of his work, not only for what is happening in Sweden, but also internationally.

The research context: Teacher education in Sweden

Up until the mid-1980s teacher education in Sweden (Åstrand, 2006), as elsewhere (Karras & Wolhunter, 2010), primarily comprised two parallel traditions from the early part of the previous century: the elementary teacher education seminaries and grammar school teacher education (läroverkslärare). They created a divided profession (Jedemark, 2006) that recruited from different social classes and genders and formed different professional agendas and relations to State bureaucracy. Grammar school teachers taught older, middle and upper-middle class pupils. They had an occupational affiliation to both schools and universities and a dominant position in the education field based on cultural capital (Lindström-Nilsson and Beach, 2013), as is also described in international research (Karras & Wolhunter, 2010).

There had been several calls to reduce the divisions between the two professions in Sweden prior to the 1980s. One example was the 1948 School Commission Report (SOU 1948:27, 36) concerning the possibilities for a common unitary comprehensive school. This report identified the organizational and personal barriers created by teacher education as one of several obstacles for the comprehensive school project. The Commission therefore established a sub-committee called the Teachers College Delegation for investigating teacher education. The Delegation outlined a reorientation of teacher education in joint institutions for all categories of teachers, called Teacher Colleges. The example of school policy leading the development of teacher education policy is an international historical trend across all continents (Karras & Wolhunter, 2010).

Although many of the recommendations made by the Teacher College Delegation were instated by the government, many of the more radical of them, particularly those pertaining to unification through a unitary research-based professional knowledge foundation for all teacher categories, were not (Beach, 2011). These aims were instead strongly opposed, particularly by the Grammar School Teacher Association and right-wing political parties. Their assertion was that subject expertise formed the cognitive base for professional action and that a common professional education based on studies in subjects like psychology and pedagogy should only ever be a secondary factor, which should not be taught at the expense of subject knowledge as this risked watering down the academic content of teacher education and would be hazardous for quality and recruitment, as would any attempt to lengthen teacher training to incorporate this knowledge. The grammar school seemed to be trying to protect a knowledge monopoly and advantaged position in the education field (Lindström-Nilsson & Beach, 2013). The support of comprehensive education and teacher education from the political left and its associates, and opposition to such projects from the right, seems to be both a national and an international policy conjuncture (Beach, 2011; Erixon Arreman, 2005; Karra & Wolhunter, 2010; Sjöberg, 2011).

Two later Inquiry Commissions (the 1960 *Teacher Education Expert Committee* and the 1974 *Teacher Education Inquiry*) followed up on how the recommendations from the Teacher College Delegation had developed in the Teacher Colleges (SOU 1965:29, 1978:86). They came with further suggestions regarding the development of a unitary profession, but it was first through the 1984 Teacher Education Reform Bill (Government Bill 1984/85:122) that a structure that included common courses for a unified profession was formally recommended (Beach, 1995, 2000; Eriksson, 2009). This was followed later by the report of the 1997 Teacher Education Committee (SOU 1999:63), which identified how the lack of a shared

professional knowledge foundation (a shared cognitive base of professionalism) remained as a barrier to implementing scientifically based practices (Linqvist, Nordänger & Carlsson, 2014). The subsequent Unitary Teacher Education Bill (Bill 2000/01:3) attempted to finally cement the notion of a unitary profession and common teacher education as official State policy.

The 2001 Bill concluded a 60 year long policy trajectory toward unification. It was broken in 2007 (Beach & Bagley, 2012, 2013) when the newly elected right-wing coalition government (from Sept 2006) commissioned a new teacher education inquiry called The Sustainable Teacher Education Commission (HUT 07: SOU 2008:109), with a strict mandate to assess the viability of the unitary organisation of teacher education and suggest sustainable alternatives. Government Bill 2009/10:89 was developed from these main recommendations (Beach & Bagley, 2012; Player-Koro, 2012b; Sjöberg, 2011), which included a dual curriculum (Ahlström, 2008; Beach, 2011; Kallós, 2009). Professional unification was thus a very short-lived and contested political project (Lindström-Nilsson & Beach, 2013).

The research focus

We have been involved in ethnographic research about unification and its challenges for almost thirty years and the present article has developed from this research. Three academic theses have been important (Beach, 1995, 1997; Eriksson, 2009; Player-Koro, 2012b) but we have also drawn on other national and international studies. Nationally these include policy studies (Beach, 2011; Beach & Bagley, 2012, 2013), ethnographic articles (Beach, 1996, 1999, 2000; Beach & Player-Koro, 2012) and research by Åstrand (2006), Ahlström (2008), Erixon-Arreman (2005), Jedemark (2006), Kallos (2009) and Sjöberg (2011). International research similar to our own was identified through systematic search procedures as described by Depaepe, Verschaffel and Kelchtermans (2013). Work by Adamson (2012), Delandshere and Petrosky (2004), Ellis, McNicholl and Pendry (2012), Sleeter (2008), Zeichner (2010) was identified. It suggested similar ideas, that certain common policy presuppositions can be identified regarding teacher education programmes in advanced knowledge-based economies and at the level of institutions (Hökkä, Eteläpelto, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2010) and that a recent ideological and rather unscientific policy process had emerged challenging these intentions (Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004) and the development of critically conscious and creative teaching professionals (Garm & Karlsen, 2004; Zeichner, 2010). This problem has also been discussed in other Scandinavian countries by Garm and Karlsen (2004), Rasmussen (2008) and Niemi (2008) and elsewhere by e.g. Apple (2001), Darling Hammond (2006), Furlong

(2005), Gore et al, (2004), Gore and Morrison (2009), Lauder et al (2009) and Lawn and Furlong (2009).

Research methods and analysis

Our initial research (e.g. Beach, 1995; Eriksson, 2009; Player-Koro, 2012b) was ethnographic. It examined the local enactments of specific teacher education policies and reforms and tried to make sense of what was going on there, based on a systematic first hand investigation of people's lives and cultures through the use of long-term direct and participant observation. In the present article we have gone back to the publications from this research in order to explore if there are common patterns there and possible grounds for eventual generalisations. Our aim has been to identify and synthesise the central ideas from our independent research findings, which we have then also compared with claims, suggestions and disclosures from other investigations in order to develop illustrative arguments about similarities and/or differences. This method has been called meta-ethnography (Savin Baden et al, 2008). It involves a *systemic literature review* (Depaepe, Verschaffel & Kelchtermans, 2013) of specifically ethnographic research accounts that aims to 'de-parochialise' research by cross-cutting dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global' and the 'life world' and the 'system' (Marcus, 1995) by moving from single-sites and local situations to a potentially global circulation of meanings with a potential interconnectedness (Noblit and Hare, 1988; Savin Baden et al, 2008). It involved four main steps. These were:

- (i) Identifying a relevant sample of texts (in this case was the total publications from our original policy ethnographic studies
- (ii) Reading these carefully to identify the main findings and key concepts.
- (iii) Checking the relevance of each concept to the main studies and synthesizing findings as a foundation for making general claims. And
- (iv) Challenging and supporting these claims with data from our own research and findings from international research on related issues.

Like multi sited ethnography this analysis is based on multiple trans-locational investigations but it is also trans-temporal and unlike multi-sited ethnography less concerned with raw data than with finished ethnographic products. What we wanted to do was identify and establish if common chains of thought, paths, threads and conjunctions existed between the investigations that may form an explicit logic of association.

For the present article the first stage in the meta-analysis involved identification and close, conjoint re-reading, of the different publications from our three independent ethnographic projects. Several common themes and points were identified. For instance, all of our studies had contained a strong interest in the *dispositions of agents* and the *organisation of communication and content* in teacher education, and the analytical outcomes were also found to have several common denominators. One of them concerned teacher students' reflections over their teacher education experiences and the professional knowledge needs of teachers. These findings were then analysed as policy outcomes and were compared to policy intentions and a general appraisal of policy into practice was attempted. Further common themes were identified and these were then interrogated and re-synthesised.

The identified common themes were firstly, that for several decades from the mid-nineteen hundreds, teacher education policy writers had clearly expressed aims related to a social democratic political vision of a unified school for a democratic society. Secondly, teacher education was also identified as recognised as needing to significantly change in order to be able to support this vision: the development of a unitary professional code and a common research-based body of knowledge for professional decision making was a key component (Beach, 2011). Thirdly it was noted that despite the sixty year unification aim in written policy, in practice a unified scientific professionalism has proven very difficult to fulfil (Ahlström, 2008; Kallós, 2009), as all attempts to break policy dualism and infuse a common knowledge-base for professional action were contradicted in practice (Beach, 1995, 1996, 2000; Beach & Player-Koro, 2012) and resisted by most student teachers and the majority of their teacher educators (Beach, 1995, 2000; Player-Koro, 2012b). Finally, it seems that to a certain extent this resistance occurred without the agents themselves always being fully conscious of it (Beach, 2000; Beach, Eriksson & Player-Koro, 2014): unconscious resistance seemed to apply (Beach, 1995, 1996; Eirksson, 2009). Instead of unification teacher education had retained an internal dualism reflecting a seminary tradition on the one hand and an academic grammar school teacher education on the other. Basil Bernstein's concepts of the *pedagogic device* and the fields of *production*, *recontextualisation* and *reproduction* were made use of when considering the main implications of this (Bernstein, 1999, 2000, 2003).

Bernstein's field of production is the field where knowledge is produced. In modern societies this is often but not only universities. The field of reproduction is the field of institutions and the field of re-contextualisation involves the transfer-and-transformation of content and meaning between these two fields. It is composed of two sub-fields, the *official*

recontextualising field (ORF) and the *pedagogic recontextualising field* (PRF). The former consists of specialized departments and sub-agencies of the State and local educational authorities who produce and publish written formal policy texts. The latter consists of university departments of education and their specialized educational media.

Bernstein's concepts were important in the original ethnographic research and in the synthesis stages of the meta-ethnographic work, which both gelled quite heavily around a disparity between the content of the ORF and the other two fields (Player-Koro, 2012b) and concerned how written policy and policy outcomes, mediation and re-contextualisation seemed to mismatch (Beach, 1995, 2000; Eriksson, 2009). They provided a foundation for an important critique of policy optimism. However, they also allowed us to posit and examine some suggestions about the new policy cycle from 2008 onwards. What was suggested was that that this round of policy was reactionary toward social democratic policy-making rather than based on scientific evidence and was principally ideological. On further analysis and comparison with international research this possibly applies not only in Sweden, but also elsewhere (Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2010). It is quite ironic given the emphasis in current policy on the value of evidence-based decision-making/practice (Beach & Bagley, 2013).

Data and results

The meta-analysis has involved a comparison of the findings presented in different publications from the independent ethnographic studies. Findings concerning policy intentions and teacher students' reflections on their teacher education experiences and the professional knowledge needs of teachers were of particular interest and common themes and patterns were identified. What we found was that the same spatial dispositions and forms of appropriation of physical and social space in teaching arenas seemed to apply across the studies (Beach, Eriksson and Player-Koro, 2014): i.e. that the students met similar contents, and that these consistencies seemed to accompany similar expressions about what constitutes key professional knowledge across the thirty years of the investigation (Player-Koro, 2012b).

There was, in other words, a strong institutional conservatism at play (Beach, 1995, 1996, 2000). Practices in, and student values as they developed through, teacher education for the secondary grades, clearly reflected ideas like those expressed in the Grammar School Teacher Education Act from the beginning of the last century (Beach, 1995; Player-Koro, 2012b), whilst with respect to prospective primary grade teaching, it was the values and practices of the teacher education seminary tradition that were apparent (Beach, 1995, 1996,

2000; Eriksson, 2009), despite several successive rounds of teacher education reform that were intended to remove and replace them (Beach & Player-Koro, 2012). Their presence thus reaffirmed a dualist teaching profession from the turn of the nineteen-hundreds, which seemed to form a cultural homology for subsequent practices (Beach, 1996). Player-Koro (2012a, b) used Apple's concept of conservative modernisation to describe this. Finally, in relation to Player-Koro (2012b) and Beach and Player-Koro (2012), we also noted that new reforms seemed to have been formed as if this institutional conservatism wasn't the case¹.

Investigating the synthesis against secondary students' value claims

Four things were identified in the meta-analysis as emphasized by secondary-grade-focussed student teachers. These were (a) the value of knowledge in and enthusiasm for the subjects they will teach, (b) their attribution of professional value to personal insight and maturity, (c) an emphasis on the value of practical know-how related to motivation and teaching as praxis and (d) the value and importance of obtaining technical teacher education content linking subject matter to good forms of instruction (Beach, 1995, 2000; Player-Koro, 2011, 2012 b). These four values were equally emphasised regardless of the decade in which the student studied and regardless of whether s/he was in her/his first or final semester of studies. Academic 'studies of teaching as a profession were not important... Learning a few tricks of communication and motivational skills were' (Asta, upper, 05 intake):

If there is one thing that I need to be good at it is math (and) that I can convey this knowledge and motivate pupils to learn... Subject disciplines are the most essential aspects... together with enthusiasm for the subject and the job, and being able to motivate the pupils... If they see that you really burn for your subject they might do so too... It is also helpful to know how they might understand what we teach them. (Joseph and Göran, upper, 88 intake)

¹ To sum up this synthesis, the problematic dualism identified in the 1940s has remained in teacher education. Primary and secondary specializing student teachers do not share uniform values or place value on a common research-based foundation for professional action. Instead, aside from a few general references to IT-competence and new media, they see themselves as having very different professional knowledge needs, according to where in the school system they intend to teach. These differences seem to be homologous with teacher education programs from over 100 years ago. Finally, the most recent round of reform in teacher education is completely out of synch with this disclosure, despite its repeated presence in research literature. The recent round of reform has nevertheless become foundational for future practice, which may signal a problem, as what is suggested is that recent reforms may have been formed *despite rather than based on scientific research foundations*.

Knowledge of a subject is important (as) is the ability to communicate this knowledge... I think of teaching as a craft (that is learnt in) a kind of teacher apprenticeship... Teaching is quite simply an appropriate innate ability and skill of a good teacher who knows her or his subject... Something she simply has... You can study and get tips about good ways to teach things and about pupil motivation and the like but that is all... Knowledge of how they can misunderstand content is also useful. (Bella, upper, 05 intake).

These ideas that the scientific content of teacher education has to do with the subject taught are highly traditionalist and can be recognised in the criticism of unification reforms from the political right and the former Grammar School Teachers Association. In the above they are combined with what students valued about what was called *subject didactics*, which often had to do with students'/pupils' subject conceptualisations. This is a particular content in Swedish teacher education. It predates but at the same time also reflects the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) described by Shulman (1987), as the teachers own special form of professional understanding that combines but at the same time is also distinct from subject content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Two central components in PCK are knowledge of instructional strategies and representations and knowledge of students' (mis)conceptions in a subject area (Depaepe, Verschaffel & Kelchtermans, 2013), both of which are quite evident in the comments made by the students². However, we would like to suggest that there is a serious potential problem for teachers as professionals embedded in the unquestioned acceptance of this form of knowledge, particularly if viewed along the lines of Sleeter (2008) and Zeichner (2010). This is because in order to be an education for a profession, teacher education of necessity has to be based on and mediate scientifically established principles and knowledge that explain why certain things are done as they are, not

² In European teacher education subject didactics (i.e. fachdidaktik/vakdidactiek/fackdidaktik in German/Dutch/Swedish) and didactique spéciale (in French) shares similar connotations to PCK, but has a longer history of research driven development dating back to Leitzmanns *Fachwissenschaftliche Didaktik an der Universität* (Monatsschrift für höhere Schulen) from 1921. This history means that the tradition of research that has developed does not fully share the critique levelled at PCK of being sufficiently theoretically and empirically ground and philosophically theorized. It includes (1) knowledge of student understanding, (2) knowledge of curriculum, (3) knowledge of instructional strategies and (and in connection with) the purposes for teaching (i.e. philosophical foundations) and (4) knowledge of media for instruction: thus comprising psychological, philosophical, instructional, historical, technical and political knowledge about teaching and learning in particular domains with subject knowledge from those domains. This is something more than merely the subject knowledge and skills unique to teaching a specific subject, which is basically what PCK developed as. Bernstein (2000) discusses this as related to the hollowing out of the teacher education trivium (Beach & Bagley, 2012). Unfortunately it is also what subject didactics in Sweden seems to be reduced to by students through its associations with common sense practical knowledge.

only how to do them (Brante, 2013). The policy cycles in teacher education from 1952 to 2001 recognised and expressed this (Beach, 2011) but these policies do not seem to have been particularly successful in influencing practice and student teacher's professional subjectivity:

There are two parts to being professional. One is personality with a big capital P and the other is subject education... You (need) good subject skills as a teacher and good personal insight and social competence... Being able to teach is something you are in a way born to (and) can also copy and practice and get feedback from peers on in order to learn. (Asta and Ben, upper, 05 intake)

It is in the school where you really learn to become teachers... The strategy should be to teach us the subjects we need to know and maybe something about psychology and how to motivate the pupils. (The rest) you learn in school from other teachers and in practice. (Dean, upper, 88 intake)

The centrality of personality and social and practical skills, together with the importance of subject matter content in teacher education is what is emphasised here, and this was also reflected in comments by subject tutors, and in how instruction was organised socio-materially at sites of reproduction (Beach, 1995, 1996, 2000; Eriksson, 2009; Beach & Player-Koro, 2012). It is the essence also of the most recent policy turn from 2008 and is also found in recent policy turns elsewhere, both in Scandinavia (see e.g. Neimi, 2008 and Rasmussen, 2008) and beyond (Beach & Bagley, 2013; Darling Hammond, 2006; Lauder et al, 2009; Lawn & Furlong, 2009; Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2010).

Investigating the synthesis against primary students' value claims

Prospective teachers of younger children emphasized different things to the secondary focussed students, such as the need of *understanding the child* and *what she is learning* and the need to *converse and interact* around matters of teaching and learning. These characteristics can be identified from the seminary teacher training from the beginning of the 19-hundreds. They were present in the teacher education ORF until the 1950s but seem to have hung on much longer in the PRF and in the reproduction field. They are reflected in students' comments in the following ways:

We need to know about pupil learning and the needs that arise from what they study (more) than we do the advanced subject... We know enough actual maths or science as such already for what we will teach... so we don't need more... We need examples of the content the pupils will study and tips about how to present this to help (them) understand... (Tina, lower, 88 intake)

You can only help pupils to learn if you understand them and reflect over how to deal in the best way with the objects of their learning... Teaching is about (connecting) teacher (thinking) with that of the pupils... This means psychology... We need to know the subjects they study and how they understand them... We don't need advanced calculus and the like... We need pupil psychology to understand pupils' learning styles and needs and to match our teaching to their knowledge. (Jemma, 03 intake)

Once again these comments seem very reasonable. However, they are also very traditional and they allow us to support a number of analytical statements from our original synthesis. The first of these is the one about the continued existence of divisions of practice and feeling in the teacher education field of reproduction that date back to the binary structure of the academic tradition on the one hand and the seminary on the other. This is exemplified by secondary students feeling they need 'academic subject knowledge, personality... a little psychology maybe, for conflicts and so forth... and some concrete subject related communication skills and knowledge' (Dave, upper, 88 intake), whilst prospective primary focussed ones say they need 'general practical knowledge... what pupils study in school (and) an understanding of the psychology and learning needs of different pupils' (Joanne, lower, 03 intake). The second synthetic statement is connected to new policy from the ORF. It is that at the same time as the comments on professional knowledge needs by the students reflect ancient values and positions, they also reflect the aims expressed in recent government policy (as per e.g. Government Bill 2009/10:89). Like the students, new policy primarily expresses concern with teachers being able to perform effectively as managed professionals who can cope with the practical demands of teaching at the levels that they are specialising in. It is about learning to cope for the present rather than studying in order to develop a fuller picture of the profession and the breadth of its knowledge requirements and this can be a problem for teacher attrition and turnover according to for instance Lindqvist, Nordäng and Carlsson,

2014), which perhaps needs to be more seriously addressed. All that is expressed as being needed for professional action is ‘knowing the subject you will teach’ (Mary, upper, 88 intake), ‘how it might be understood’ (Bella, 05 intake) and ‘having *different strategies for different ways of teaching this*’ (Mary, upper, 88 intake).

In analytical terms this likens again Shulman’s concept of the professional teacher (Shulman, 1987) and is fairly logical (Beach, 2000; Eriksson, 2009). As one student put it, ‘who wants to be surrounded by chaos (and) be felt not to be able to cope’ (Dave, upper, 88 intake). But at the same time, it represents a rather unscientific professional holding as well as important elements in Bernstein’s fifth step in teacher education development as discussed in for instance Beach and Bagley (2012). This is the step where psychology is taught in combination with subject knowledge and curriculum studies or didactics, in a way that leaves the university-based-education of teachers as a technically oriented content in combination with subject knowledge and apprenticeship-like-learning in schools. In the students’ words:

There is a parallel with understanding a patient and treating a disease... *We will be teachers, but... of subjects to older pupils... some are almost adults... We don’t need child psychology for this... We need subjects and knowledge about how to motivate (and) communicate.* (Colin, 88, upper intake)

Development psychology and curriculum methods are... important. The education should include different methods for working with mathematics... *Our responsibilities are with pupils... not subjects... Pupils are different and have different learning needs (and) we have to adapt our teaching to their needs and the ways they learn.* (Jonna and Joana 88, lower intake)

Students in the two enrichments are thus clearly saying quite different things from each-other in one sense, but the differences expressed actually also reflect some very clear similarities. One of these is that there is a *common marginalisation of content from the scientific study of education and curriculum theory as professional content knowledge*, ‘except sometimes in relation to the psychology of learning and motivation’ (Jonna, 88 lower intake) and ideas about misconceptions. These kinds of comment were consistent across the 25 years of our investigations and they suggest how both early/general and late/subject specialisers describe scientific professional content as really ‘a bit of a waste of time’ (Jane, lower, 03 intake) and as ‘using up time that could be spent doing things we need more of’ (Colin, upper, 88 intake).

What is favoured by students is a professional knowledge that mainly consists of concrete tips of what to teach and how to teach it (Beach, 2000; Eriksson, 2009; Player, Koro, 2012b).

We need to know what we are teaching, to whom (and) how (and) we have absolutely no need of the sociology, history or philosophy of education... They are irrelevant to the work we will do and how to do it... Psychology yes... but not this other waffle... We will be teaching a subject... Teaching is *craftsmanship* and method... not a science.... We need to know what to teach and we need the skills of teaching it. (Dave, upper, 88 intake)

Although some didactics is interesting... it is (not) centrally relevant... We need to know about how pupils learn... There should be more time spent on this (and) less on (other) education and curriculum studies. (Jenny, lower, 03 intake)

These kinds of comment come from across the full range of the reform period from Government Bill 1984/85:122 in Beach (1995, 1996, 1997, 2000) to 2011 when Player-Koro's analysis was completed (Beach & Player-Koro, 2012; Player-Koro, 2012b). They support the synthesis concerning how student teachers do not seem to have ever been very committed toward a vertical professional discourse of scientifically grounded know-why professional knowledge (Eriksson, 2009), despite policy aims, and that they have instead always tended to place premium on the vocational aspect of their education in teaching practice as the 'main source of learning the profession' (Jemma, lower, 03 intake). Practical experience plus a kind of technical-practical content knowledge aimed at 'helping us learn what we will teach and how to do the job of teaching it' (Annie, upper, 88 intake) is what has been desired by student teachers (Beach, 1996, 2000; Eriksson, 2009).

This synthesized point is quite striking in relation to the recent Government White Paper on teacher education (Government Bill 2009/10:89), which suggests that a common-core of progressivism was both ubiquitous and highly problematic in schools, and that this emanated mainly from teacher education and was responsible for current lapses of performance (both in absolute terms and on comparison with other countries) by pupils in Sweden's schools. But this simply cannot be the case according to our meta-analysis, which shows instead that this notion of a unifying 'progressivism' is actually only an artefact from the ORF (cf. Ahlström, 2008; Kallós, 2009) and that the presence and failure of progressivism in the reproduction fields of today's schools is an element of a recently constructed political

discourse that is being used in order to drive a singularly ideological project of change in teacher-education that actually lacks scientific support (Player-Koro, 2012b; Sjöberg, 2011). The most recent round of reform seems in other words to stand on clay feet and purely ideological conceptualisations of current conditions and needs (Adamson, 2012; Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004; Beach, Eriksson & Player-Koro, 2014). Apple (2001), Lauder et al (2009), Lawn and Furlong (2009), Reid and O'Donoghue (2004), Darling Hammond (2006), Zeichner (2010) and Sleeter (2008) have all identified pitfalls associated with this kind of policy development in other contexts.

Discussion: Understanding policy changes

The policy ethnographic research we have conducted has addressed historical changes in the content and make-up of the teacher education policy field in terms of changes in written policy (from the ORF) from the nineteen forties to the present day, and the re-contextualisation and enactment of policy (in the PRF and RF of teacher education) in the past 25 years. A meta-ethnographic reanalysis has then been carried out. The meta-analysis has allowed us to make three statements about teacher education policy and policy making. These are as follows.

1. *Teacher education policies seem to be based on ideologically founded reactions to earlier policy formulations* (from the ORF), rather than empirical scientific analyses of actual policy outcomes (in the PRF and RF). [A similar point has been made previously nationally by Erixon Arreman (2005) and Erixon Arreman and Weiner (2007) and internationally by Delandsheare and Petrovsky (2004), Popkewitz (1985, 1994) and Reid and O'Donoghue (2004).] This implies that
2. Social Democratic governments have commissioned inquiries and lodged parliamentary bills in line with their political ideology, which broadly corresponds to a policy regime for universal welfare and collective bargaining within the framework of a capitalist economy, whilst right wing parties have opposed them with help from conservative professional class fractions (Lindström-Nilsson & Beach, 2013) from their perspective of the promotion of liberal values and conservative politics
3. The policy texts driven by social democratic forces have exhibited intentions toward unification and educational progressivism in the period from 1952 to 2001. These weren't matched by a shift in education practices and student values

4. Conservative forces have opposed these developments and reversed them in their political texts (Beach, 1995, 2000; Eriksson, 2009; Player-Koro, 2012b).

The most recent round of reform may give a good illustration of how this has played out. This reform is attempting to move teacher education policy in directions that the government claims will re-traditionalise teacher education content, practices and values by moving them to a 'back-to-basics' position, but our research shows clearly that teacher education was already highly traditional and basic (Beach, 1995; Player-Koro, 2011, 2012a). In the field of reproduction in particular, dualism has been a constant feature as has resistance toward common professionalism based on the scientific study of education practices and institutions (Beach, 1995; Eriksson, 2009). Put more bluntly, the unison development of deeply progressive knowledge tendencies that were heavily critiqued in the most recent government bill have in no way ever been evident in practice and the conservative attitudes and traditional structures of communication and forms of authority and knowledge in teacher education that are recommended in order to help Sweden's schools improve their performances on internationally comparative evaluations like PISA and TIMS, are more correctly to be analysed as a potential cause of performance problems rather than a solution to them.

This again says something of relevance to the most recent round of reform, which has changed the classification of the professional knowledge need statements of the ORF to a more horizontal form and legitimises an archaic dualism and knowledge relationship in the ORF of the teacher education curriculum, by bringing this back into line with existing structures in the field of reproduction. It is thus extremely reactionary and anti-professional! But by being homologous with and appealing to common sense knowledge it has also obtained support from key agents, particularly students, even when this is actually not at all in their own best interests or the interests of those they will be likely to teach in the future (Beach & Bagley, 2012; Zeichner, 2010).

Conservative values have now once again become the official value position in the ORF, where they have been established through ideological arguments and without (or possibly even against) research based knowledge (Beach, Eriksson & Player-Koro, 2014). The most recent round of reform is therefore to be considered as highly inauthentic and ideological in terms of the recommendations it makes. Unfortunately this seems to be a very common occurrence in policy making in teacher education in Sweden today (Beach, 2011; Beach & Bagley, 2012, 2013; Player-Koro, 2012b; Sjöberg, 2011) and possibly even internationally (Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2010), as a symptom

of a kind of global policy disease (Adamson, 2012; Beach & Bagley, 2012, 2013; Garm & Karlsen, 2004; Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004) that should be considered as somewhat ironic given current government expressions (both nationally and internationally) about the need and value of evidence-based policy making.

Lindquist, Nordänger and Carlsson (2014) suggested how the lack of effective training and an ability to maintain fidelity are two major barriers to implementing evidence based practice. We are certainly seeing something of what this can involve. In the present investigation and based primarily on a meta-analysis of a sequence of ethnographic studies, the current Swedish government seems to have ignored scientific evidence in teacher education policy and reforms. This might not be uncommon also internationally if we read with for instance Adamson (2012), Apple (2001), Delandshere and Petrosky (2004), Reid and O'Donoghue (2004) and Zeichner (2010). In addition, teacher educators seem to have been unable to develop effective strategies for communicating the importance of a broader conception of professional knowledge needs for teaching in teacher education (Ellis, McNicholl & Pendry, 2012; Hökkä, Eteläpelto, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2010).

Conclusions

Key questions in the article have concerned how teachers' professional knowledge is conceptualized in policy and in practice, what are its dimensions, and how student teachers' motivations and beliefs about teaching might relate to this knowledge? These are also important international questions that have been addressed in research articles and chapters in handbooks on teacher education such as Karras and Wolhunter's recent (2010) volume. They concern the relationship between teacher knowledge and professionalism.

When addressing these questions we have concentrated on their relationships to government reforms and what drives them. We have come to the unfortunate conclusion that governments all too often become tempted to allow their ideological interests to predominate over scientific knowledge: this may particularly apply with regard to the recent turn toward neoliberal forms of control, new-managerialism (Apple, 2001; Zeichner, 2010) and a dualist knowledge base (Beach & Bagley, 2012; Sjöberg, 2011). It suggests that governments should perhaps not be allowed as much license to influence teacher education in the future as they have in the past. As teacher education concerns all our futures it is far too important a venture to be left in the hands of governments and their own appointed agents. Professional control and a vertically constructed knowledge-base, as in the key-professions of Law and Medicine,

should predominate, as suggested by the Teacher Education Expert Committee and 1974 Teacher Education Commission in Sweden many years ago (SOU 1965:29 and 1978:86).

These points have serious possibilities concerning the education of teachers as professionals who can critically reflect over and control their educational practices based on scientific knowledge (Apple, 2001; Beach & Bagley, 2012, 2013; Sleeter, 2008; Zeicher, 2010). They provide potentially important lessons to learn for the future about how to gain from detailed analyses in one specific country regarding the influence of global neo-liberal policy discourses. When exploring and highlighting the complex way in which these discourses can be played out, the meta-ethnographic approach has been very useful and may provide insight into a method of real use value to policy researchers more broadly. The use of Bernstein's theories and concepts also signals the theoretical and analytical value of his work.

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