

## Swedish School Reforms and Teacher Professionalism

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### Abstract

The education policy of the last few decades has significantly changed the Swedish school system. Municipalization and deregulation reforms were implemented in parallel with an internationally prescribed professionalization of teachers. This seemingly contradictory combination has reshaped not only teachers' attitudes and actions but also those of principals and students as managers and consumers. In light of these changes, the professionalization of teachers and the strategic importance of a teacher-specific knowledge base, multi-year academic training, certification and career steps are analysed. Based on Freidson's three competing work organization and control logics, this article focuses on how the mix of logics has changed at the expense of professionalism in favour of bureaucracy and the market. The professionalization reforms have in some respects benefited teachers, especially with regard to their positions in the labour market. In other respects, the actions of managers and consumers have resulted in restrictions on teachers' autonomy as professionals.

### Keywords

Teacher, professionalization, knowledge base, certification, career steps, work organisation, control logics

## Introduction

With the decentralization and marketization reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, teachers' professional activities were placed at the top of the international education policy agenda. Influential international organizations such as the OECD and the EU argued for the transformation of the industrial society into a knowledge society, competing knowledge-based economies and a growing need for professional teachers. The OECD's economy-based education project expressed high expectations for and strong criticism of the education sector. Teachers' professional practice was considered to have stagnated, unlike that of other professions whose professional activities had changed in line with knowledge development and new research findings (OECD, 2005). The EU Commission noted that today's globalized economies and rapid pace of change required teaching to be continuously upgraded. Teachers' knowledge and skills were considered outdated in comparison with those of what are usually regarded as the first generation of professions, the classic professions (EC, 2012).

Just as a medicine or law professional who qualified 30 years ago would be unable to work today without significant upgrading of knowledge and skills, rapid changes in society and the economy require revisiting and refining traditional criteria for entry into the teaching profession, whose license to teach can be valid for four or even five decades from recruitment. (EC 2012, p. 29)

The concepts of professionalization and professionalism have been problematized in a number of international studies which have found that the effects of new forms of governance and changed working conditions in the public sector have given the concepts new content and meaning. Professionalization studies have been enriched with concepts such as professionalization from above (McClelland, 1990; Buyruk, 2013), service professionalization (Hoyle, 2008), organizational professionalism (Evetts, 2009), commercialized professionalism (Hanlon, 1998) and colonized professionalism (Bourke, Lidstone & Ryan, 2013). All of these concepts referred to new and problematic connections between professional autonomy and external scrutiny and control. In light of these changes, the aim of this article is to explore the conditions for the professionalization of teachers in Sweden. It deals with the following issue: How far have Swedish teachers, despite increased external pressure, managed to realize the professionalization project and the ambitions to achieve professional status at the same level as classic professions?

Since the end of the 1980s, the public sector in Sweden as well as in several other Western countries has been decentralized and governed with the latest management concept, New Public Management (NPM). How these changes have affected Swedish teachers' professional practice has been a common subject (e.g. Lilja, 2013; Parding, 2018; Ringarp, 2012, Wermke & Forsberg, 2017). The Swedish case is interesting as changes seem to be more radical here than in other countries. Like Hoyle (2008) several researchers have

distinguished between two modes of organizing work in the public sector, the professional and the bureaucratic. In a Swedish context we can speak of a third mode. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011), the Swedish variant of NPM was more pronounced than other countries' in terms of management by objectives, evaluation and control, and also by deregulation and marketing. The starting point for the discussion of professionalization and the status of teachers as professionals is therefore taken in Freidson's (2001) analyses of professionalism, bureaucracy and the market as three competing work organization and control logics. Professionalism as an ideal type and logic is based on abstract and esoteric knowledge acquired through multi-year formal vocational education, professionally controlled vocational education, division of labour as well as labour market positions, and a developed professional ethic that emphasizes the quality of work over economic gain. In comparison with professionalism as a logic and with research and evaluation reports relevant to these aspects, state reforms and teachers' union projects aimed at raising the professional status of teaching are explored. Methodologically, the approach can be described as critical document analyses (Fairclough, 2003) where manifest and latent perspectives and positions regarding professionalization and teaching have been identified, contextualized and explored.

## **Swedish school reforms—a short background**

During the 1990s economic crisis with negative growth for several years, high unemployment and increasing budget deficits, the Swedish welfare model was increasingly challenged. Neoliberal political ideologies, inspired by Margaret Thatcher and British domestic politics with tax cuts, marketization and reduced public spending as the main purpose, gained a foothold in Swedish politics (Pollitt & Bourkaert, 2011). The Social Democratic government was replaced in 1991 by a conservative one whose school policy reform contributed to a greater scope for market forces. A major step in the neo-liberal direction was taken with the government bill for a free school choice, the content of which was a clear expression of a new and changed school ideological perspective (Government Bill 1991/92, p. 95). In the past, private or independent schools as they were often referred to, were eligible for state grants if the educational activities were considered to be valuable and stimulating for public school education development. However, educational development would be based primarily on new research findings. The school politicians of the 1990s, on the other hand, believed that educational development should be shaped by market forces. A new remuneration model was introduced wherein independent schools could operate on the same financial terms as public schools.

As stated in government bills in the 1990s the new school policy aimed to break up the public schools' monopoly and to give pupils and parents increased opportunities to choose which school they preferred (Government Bill 1992/93, p. 230). Pupils' school choices then formed the basis for the distribution of public funds in the form of individual school vouchers. The introduction of school vouchers and private schools contributed to the

emergence of a quasi-market, that is a market of profit-maximizing and simultaneously publicly funded schools. According to the Swedish National Agency for Education's calculations in 2012, three out of four private upper secondary schools were run as joint stock companies (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2012). One quarter of all private schools, at both primary and secondary levels, were owned by multinational corporations. Private schools had a limited share of the school market; around 20 percent of all primary and secondary school pupils attended private schools, but in neoliberal rhetoric they were a clear indication of a school policy shift. The 1990s school reforms included several of the neoliberal credo markers: school vouchers, students' free school choice and competition between different schools and school companies. The free school choice and the private school reform mainly benefited students whose parents had good knowledge of the education system and its changed logic. According to the Swedish National Agency for Education, the freedom of choice reforms resulted in a highly diversified school market, increasing social segregation and a less egalitarian school system (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2012). The ideological shift in education of the 1990s was a clear departure from the Social Democratic welfare state vision of equal education for all citizens.

In several policy areas central to the teaching professions, the public sector management concept and the political-administrative form of governance called New Public Management (management by objectives, focus on measurable performance and cost-effectiveness as well as external regulation, review and control) has been prominent. Teacher education is a clear example. From the 1968 Statute for Teacher Education to the recently revised Higher Education Ordinance, the descriptions of aims and objectives have become increasingly wordy and show a marked shift in perspective (SFS 1968, p. 318; SFS 1993, p. 100). According to the 1968 Statute for Teacher Education, teacher students should be brought to understand the teacher's task of promoting pupils' personal development, and the objectives are described in collective terms. This is in contrast to the current Higher Education Ordinance with the aim of promoting the teacher student's personal development, self-knowledge and empathic ability. The more process-oriented approach of the Statute for Teacher Education has been replaced by the emphasis on results and not on the vocational education itself but the individual teacher student. Professional education as primary vocational socialization, in addition to theoretical and methodological knowledge, mediates a profession-specific culture and identity (Freidson, 2001). Focusing on the teacher student's personal development and study performance, combined with a shortening of the internship periods, might contribute to a construction of teacher identity based on individual performance and attitudes to teaching rather than the profession and its professional codes (Nilsson Lindström, 2019).

## **Teachers' experiences of increased external control**

Teachers are thus caught in a tension between collective and unionized professionalization aspirations on the one hand and increased individual performance requirements and market

control on the other. In a survey of the Swedish professional layer 8,500 professionals representing seventeen occupational categories were asked about their experiences of different forms of governance and the effects on the quality of work (Brante, Johnsson, Olofsson & Svensson, 2015). The members of the two teachers' unions, The National Union of Teachers, NUT (organizing mainly secondary school teachers) and The Swedish Teachers' Union, STU (preschool and primary school teachers), like other public sector professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses, social workers) responded that political, bureaucratic and economic governance had increased.

NUT affiliated teachers stated the highest values on issues of increasing external control in relation to the average value for all professions, higher than both STU and also the university teachers. In terms of increased political governance NUT showed the highest value in the survey. In the assessment of bureaucratic and financial governance, doctors accounted for the highest values. Furthermore, NUT and STU belonged to the professions where a very high proportion of members (NUT 90 per cent and STU 84 per cent) stated that the rate of work increased and that this had a negative impact on the quality of work. An overwhelming majority (NUT 90 per cent and STU 84 per cent) said that the work intensity increased in step with increasing administrative work alongside teaching. These results were corroborated by previous investigations. In the Swedish National Agency for Education's survey of primary school teachers' working hours, teachers stated that they devoted a lot of working time to administration and documentation. Only about one third of the total working time was devoted to teaching (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2013.) According to Brante et al. (2015), teachers belonged to the occupational categories which most strongly stated that the increased control had a negative effect on their work. The majority (NUT 74 percent and STU 68 percent) believed that rationalization and economic savings requirements meant that they could not perform in a way that made them satisfied with their work effort. Economic governance is the form of governance that, according to the teachers, has increased most. With this form of governance, new quality measures such as economic efficiency have been introduced and compete with those of the profession.

## **Certified teachers and the limitations of certification**

Certification is usually considered a strong indicator of successful professional closure. Closing as a professional monopoly, that is the monopoly of practitioners over the practical application of a specific area of knowledge, is expected to contribute to strengthened jurisdiction and discretion. According to Freidson (2001), certification seems to weaken the influence of external management logics. On the importance of professional monopoly for the exclusive right to organize and control the professional activities, Freidson writes:

...monopoly is essential to professionalism, which directly opposes it to the logic of competition in a free market. Freedom of judgement or discretion in performing

work is also intrinsic to professionalism, which directly contradicts the managerial notion that efficiency is gained by minimizing discretion. (Freidson 2001, p. 3)

Swedish teachers' unions have since the 1990s, regarded teacher certification as an important step towards higher status as professions. Professional certification and a year-long internship as an introduction to working life were expected to raise the status of teaching and like the education for doctors, lawyers and psychologists, attract high-performing students. The teachers' unions, together with the government, advocated a so-called double quality assurance, double in the sense of having foundations in both academic vocational education and employers' assessment (Government Bill 2010/11, p. 20). However, this double quality assurance soon proved to be administratively complicated and time-consuming for principals and the National Agency for Education. Since 2014, the certification has been based solely on the teacher's degree.

The certification's main principles state that only certified teachers should have permanent employment and the responsibility for grading. Teachers who are not certified must do assessments together with a certified teacher. If teachers do not agree and a teacher certified in the specific school subject is not available or if the grade is incorrect the grade must be decided by the principal (SFS 2010, p. 800). As managers principals, whose position does not require teacher training or teacher certification, have to deal with market forces and the pressures from pupils and parents as consumers. Parding, Sehlstedt, Johansson, Berg-Jansson and Jakobsson (2018) studied how secondary school teachers perceived their working conditions after the private school reform. This study provided scientific evidence that pressure attempts existed. Secondary school teachers further argued that principals, pupils and parents make too great a claim to direct teachers' work. Despite teacher certification there is room for managers and consumers to counteract professionalism as an organization logic.

## **Teacher professionalization and professionalism as a logic**

The professionalization of teaching can be divided into different phases on the basis of how professionalization is defined by teachers themselves or by external actors (Nilsson Lindström & Beach, 2019). The first phase, from the 1880s to 1940s, was marked by teachers' internal professionalization strategies such as the formation of professional unions and the attempts to create professional monopolies through the application of various forms of closing strategies. The second phase was marked by the welfare state's secularization and modernization aspirations for the pre-scientific teacher education and schooling. This culminated in the university reform in 1977, when all teacher training programs were included in the higher education system. In contrast to the first phase, this second phase was marked by externally defined ambitions and interventions in relation to the teachers' unions. The third phase was characterized by the neoliberally influenced education policy of the 1980s and 1990s with decentralization and marketization. This phase

was also characterized by external professionalism rhetoric and an adaptation of teacher education and teaching to increased external evaluation and control. The three phases each made a more or less distinct mark on the teachers' unions' actions for increased cognitive and social legitimacy. During the third phase, the unions made demands for the introduction of professional certification and opportunities for teachers to make a career as teachers. Teacher certification and career step reforms were gradually introduced from the year 2011 until 2013.

The reforms, carried by teachers' unions in alliance with leading school politicians, can be regarded as the beginning of a fourth phase in the professionalization of teaching. However, the professionalization project appears to be increasingly problematic. Teacher certification, which reinforces jurisdiction and discretion in professional practice, is in conflict with increased external control, a stronger customer focus and increased leeway for market forces. With this fourth and challenging phase as the starting point, how far have teachers managed to drive the professionalization process and the ambitions to achieve professional status in accordance with EC recommendations and on par with the classic professions?

This question is explored based on Freidson's ideal type of professionalism as one of three competing organization and control logics (Freidson, 2001). The bureaucracy as a logic is based on features of Weber's ideal type (hierarchical organizational structure, centralized decision-making, specified jobs, positions and career paths). Adam Smith's and later on Milton Friedman's neoliberal theories of the free market as an economic principle transferred to the public sector form the basis of the market as organization and control logic. The ideal type of professionalism as a third logic consists of five basic components: recognized abstract and esoteric *knowledge* acquired through multi-year formal vocational education, professionally controlled *vocational education*, *division of labour* as well as *labour market positions* and a developed *professional ethic*. The following discussion is structured on the basis of these components. The components form the basis of professionalism as a logic, that is the profession's power over the organization and control of work. To the extent that teacher certification works as expected, it would, in line with Freidson's argumentation, strengthen teaching as profession in relation to municipal bureaucracy and market logics, in other words weakening the influence of managers and consumers over teacher autonomy (Freidson, 2001).

### ***Educational sciences as teacher's new knowledge base***

Since the School Commission was set up in 1946, the importance of science-based teaching has been emphasized. However, the research carried out at the Swedish departments of education was discussed and questioned (Nilsson Lindström & Beach, 2019). In the 1990s investigations, the education researchers were criticized for not broadening the research base of teacher education and not producing enough PhDs to fill the lecturer services in teacher education. As a solution to these problems, the school experts of the 21st century

advocated a new field of science called educational sciences and a Swedish Research Council Committee for Educational Sciences was established (Government Bill 2000/01, p. 3).

Educational sciences are defined by the committee as research on education, teaching and learning. The purpose is to broaden and deepen the scientific knowledge base of the teaching professions to several academic disciplines and didactic perspectives. A profession-specific scientific knowledge base is regarded by most researchers as a given prerequisite for cognitive and socially legitimate professional monopoly. Educational sciences can be said to be an attempt to contribute to the 'one-to-one' relationship between the profession and a specific academic discipline, introduced by Elzinga (1990).

Educational sciences as the academic residence of the teaching professions and as a newly established research area was dealt with in an anthology edited by Sandin and Säljö (2006). They described educational sciences as a field in formation. The struggle for interpretative preference between various research interests was ongoing, some emphasizing practical application and others emphasizing academic traditions and holding high theoretical ambitions. Therefore, educational sciences cannot be unambiguously defined, the authors noted. The anthology contributions emphasized the importance of teacher education and practice-based research, which was said to contribute to strengthening teachers' knowledge base and thus counteracting de-professionalization of teaching. One of the authors called for close-up studies of the activities in preschools and schools. The lack of such practice-oriented studies was regarded as the void that educational sciences was expected to fill (Sandin & Säljö, 2006).

Other researchers expressed fears rather than expectations. Educational sciences as a multidisciplinary research area was problematized in a critical report from the Committee for Educational Sciences. In a study of research communication and publication patterns Hansen and Lindblad found that Swedish educational sciences researchers were linked to a number of different disciplines and published their research in a number of different journals, but referred to each other to a very limited extent. They described Swedish educational research as fragmented adhocracy, characterized by a high degree of researcher independence but at the same time by great uncertainty and disagreement about how research results are to be interpreted and evaluated. The conclusion was that this led to difficulties in maintaining autonomy in relation to other disciplines and external interests (Hansen & Lindblad, 2010).

Educational sciences as a research area was mapped ten years after its establishment. The basis for the evaluation were grants from the three largest research funders: the Swedish Research Council (which accounted for 85 per cent of funding), the Swedish Central Bank Anniversary Fund and the Swedish Research Council for Work Life Research. The survey included a total of 345 applications during the period 2005–2010. The results showed that educational sciences research was conducted at about twenty different educational



institutions and in various organizational forms, such as subject departments, faculties or as a cross-faculty activity. The average allocation by subject, such as education, sociology, political science, mathematics and history, gave a clear picture of educational sciences as teachers' profession-specific multidisciplinary knowledge base (Broady, Börjesson, Dalberg, Krih & Lidegran, 2011).

Teachers' scientific knowledge base is heterogeneous, and as shown by Brante et al. (2015), the scientific foundation of teaching, according to teachers' own assessments, was weak in the sense that the link between scientific knowledge and teaching was less developed. The weak link is problematic in relation to Brante's (2014) model of the professional structure as a lasting and self-reinforcing relationship between profession-specific scientific knowledge, the professional practice and its object. The interdisciplinary and heterogeneous nature of the knowledge base is another weakness that distinguishes teaching as a new profession from the classic ones. When competition arises between contradictory ontological models and different theoretical and methodological assumptions, the development of a generally recognized profession-specific knowledge base is hampered, Brante argues.

According to the Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010, p. 800) only those who have teacher or preschool teacher certification may conduct teaching. However, the law allows for exceptions and the eligibility requirements can be expanded. Uncertified persons can be hired one year at a time when there is a lack of applicants, the uncertified applicant has sufficient competence and there is reason to assume that the applicant is suitable for teaching. From a professionalization perspective these exceptions are problematic. Thus, the development of a professional structure according to Brante's model is counteracted also by the fact that uncertified and persons with other educational backgrounds are allowed to teach. Freidson (2001) emphasized that only when certification is a prerequisite for entry into the labour market does it protect the profession from the most pervasive effects of competing forms of governance. The teacher certification does not have this closing effect.

### ***Academization and reduced internship periods***

The Swedish university reform in 1977 and the subsequent 1988 teacher education reform meant adaptation to the Higher Education Act and its portal section on education based on science, proven experience and research. With the 2011 teacher education reform, the teacher education programmes were prolonged by, on average, two semesters (SFS 1993: 100). Despite the extension in time, the subject studies have increased at the expense of internship periods which are reduced from two semesters to one.

The academization of vocational training is not without problems. According to Becher's studies of the conditions of pharmacists, nurses and teachers in 1980s Britain, there was a strong confidence in academic studies as part of the professionalization process (Becher, 1990). At the same time, the influence of the professionals was weakened as responsibility

for vocational training was transferred to the academy (Becher, 1990). Like Becher, Elzinga (1990) argued that academic studies and the reduced influence of profession representatives were problematic. It led to increased gaps between theory and practice, with negative consequences for both vocational education and the relation of profession-specific research to practice.

When recruiting staff for the academic vocational training, university teachers took precedence over professionals. The clear demarcation of the theoretical elements in relation to the practical ones was strengthened. This intensified division, according to Becher, led to disputes between academic teachers and the professionals about the content of a relevant knowledge base. Calander (2005) studied Swedish teacher education and drew similar conclusions. The methodology teachers, as the link between academia and the profession, were not considered competent to conduct science-based teaching and were replaced by university lecturers. According to Calander, this had negative consequences for the anchoring of vocational education in practical professional activities as well as for the formation of professional identity, especially the identity of primary school teachers.

The academization of teacher education has thus shown a Janus face, on the one hand higher status compared to previous teacher education, on the other, reduced influence of certified teachers. Another aspect that indicates that teachers' influence over vocational education is weakened is teachers' reduced opportunities to influence their own knowledge and competence development. Since the municipalization, it has been up to principals to decide what type of teacher development should be carried out. This led to negative consequences for teachers. The need for subject studies and in-depth pedagogical studies defined by teachers competes with needs defined by their employers. According to the study by Parding et.al. (2018) only one in four public-sector secondary school teachers and four in ten teachers employed by school companies stated that the employer's offer for competence development covered their needs. Thus, the fact that professional teachers' participation as well as internship periods has decreased, suggests that teaching professions no longer meet the requirements of Freidson's ideal type, as they do not control the vocational education to the extent they did in the past.

### ***A new division of labour and a challenged collegiality***

Discretionary specialization, as introduced by Freidson, refers to the specific type of specialization that distinguishes professions from other occupations through high requirements for multi-year formal education and a demonstrated ability for flexibility and recognition in the assessment and management of qualitatively advanced tasks (Freidson 2001). The specialization of teachers as professionals was a central theme in teachers' unions dispute over the design of teacher certification as a joint professional certification or specified for each teacher category.

The division of labour between different teachers' unions and teacher categories has formed the basis for disputes that clarified teachers' different educational backgrounds and positions in the education system. The two teachers' union followed different argumentation logics in the preliminary work on the 2011 teacher education reform. STU advocated a common teacher degree for all teacher categories regardless of subject orientation and school level. NUT argued for different exams for different teacher categories and positions in the education system. NUT's claim for differentiation was realized. The new teacher education meant that the previous homogenization of different teacher training courses to a joint teacher degree was abandoned in favour of a return to a clear differentiation between teacher categories. In close connection with the teacher education reform, the question of teacher certification was raised. Even in this matter, the teachers' unions had different opinions. STU advocated a teacher certification common to all teacher categories, and NUT advocated a clear profiling based on subject studies and school level (Lilja, 2013). The differentiation advocates won the battle.

An example of the unions acting together is their struggle for a developed career structure and career opportunities. Career services, called First Teacher and Lecturer, were established in 2013. Applicants for career services must be certified, show documented professional skills, have at least four years of service in the school system, demonstrate a particularly good ability to improve pupils' school results and have a strong interest in developing teaching methods. In addition, a lecturer's post requires research training. The career service as First Teacher mainly involves initiating educational development and developing collegial collaboration and research-based practice (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2015c). The establishment of a lecturer position as a career step was aimed at strengthening the links between education sciences and teaching. The new career structure was also expected by teachers' unions and politicians to strengthen the status of teaching by making visible and rewarding especially skilled teachers. Another central motive was increased wage spread.

According to Freidson, career paths typical of professions are horizontal, in the sense that the practitioners are loyal to the profession throughout their professional careers, by specializing within the professions or by changing workplace. For practitioners as employees, which applies to most Swedish professional practitioners, there are two career paths that break the horizontal pattern: the position as senior supervisor and mentor for lower-qualified or less-experienced colleagues and positions as managers. The First Teacher position can be regarded as a vertical career path in Freidson's sense when it comes to leading and mentoring colleagues. As a vertical career path, the recruitment to and appointment of First Teachers is a key issue. The eligibility requirements for First Teacher positions, certification and four years of work experience have in some cases raised legitimacy problems, especially when First Teachers have lower scientific qualifications or less professional experience than their senior teacher colleagues. The problem was

highlighted by the Education Administration in Stockholm in a survey addressed to teachers with career positions (Stockholm Stad, 2015). The results showed that four out of five First Teachers perceived their legitimacy as being questioned by teacher colleagues. All of the others stated that they had a great need for further education at the master level, and one third considered themselves in need of postgraduate education. The lecturers were not questioned to the same extent. The requirements for postgraduate education gave cognitive and social legitimacy.

An external evaluation of the City of Stockholm's implementation of the career step reform carried out by Ehneström, Ellström, Svensson and Öhman Sandberg (2016) showed another interesting problem. The criteria for the appointment of First Teachers had generally been developed within the school management team without being anchored among teachers. This meant that the teachers perceived the aims of the career step reform and the criteria for the appointment as unclear. The evaluation showed that the principals perceived First Teacher services as a career step for particularly skilled teachers, but also to a large extent as support for principals. The principals' responsible for the job description submitted parts of their assignment as educational leaders to First Teachers. The fact that teachers take over principal's tasks can be perceived as positive from the perspective that it can give teachers a greater responsibility for and influence over the school activities. If the First Teachers also take over some administrative tasks from their colleagues, it can free up time for teaching. From a professionalization point of view, the career steps as a new division of labour, insofar as it is only anchored in the school management, causes problems.

The number of First Teacher services is limited; only about one in eight teachers will have access to these services. If career services, of teachers' colleagues that are not promoted, are considered to be a new level in the managerial hierarchy, this can counteract rather than strengthen the collegiality of teachers and thus contribute to the weakening of teachers' position in school as a work organization. According to Svensson (2008), collegiality means cooperation and control among equivalent colleagues based on profession-specific knowledge and ethical principles. The First Teachers' experiences of lack of legitimacy and the need for further education at higher academic levels provide an indication of how legitimacy is closely associated with equality in the eyes of colleagues, and a certain consensus regarding specialization and career-level qualifications and skills. In Freidson's (2001) model of discretionary specialization the ability and opportunities of professionals to decide which qualifications are required for the performing of various tasks, is a central dimension. It is far from given that career services in the form described above, unilaterally based on assignments and tasks defined by the managers, will in the long run strengthen teaching as a profession.

### ***Certification and strengthened labour market positions***

The pay gap between different teacher categories has decreased since the late 1990s. For secondary school teachers, salaries increased by 78 percent in the years 1996–2015, and for preschool teachers, they increased by 91 percent (SCB, 1997; 2017a). During the period 2013–2016, teacher salaries increased more than those of other professions, and the differences between teacher and principal salaries decreased.

The profession's control over the labour market was strengthened by the general rule that only certified teachers can be considered for permanent employment. A high proportion of uncertified teachers, generous retirement benefits and weak search pressure for teacher education created a high demand for certified teachers. This strengthened individual teachers' negotiating positions in relation to municipal and private employers. During the 2013/2014, the proportion of certified teachers in municipal primary schools was 87 percent, in private school 70 percent; for secondary schools, the proportions were 80 and 65 percent respectively. Two out of three primary school teachers and every other secondary school teacher were certified in the subjects they taught. Four out of five teachers in primary school and about the same proportion in secondary school were qualified in at least one of their teaching subjects. The large number of immigrants in 2015 also contributed to the shortage of teachers. Until the year 2031, the need for certified teachers will increase, especially in compulsory school. In the case of teachers in grades 1–3, an increase of 50 percent, and in grades 4–6, 120 percent more school teachers will be required (SCB, 2017b).

Another problem is the dropout from the teaching professions. Of those who graduated between 2008 and 2012, one in ten teachers left for other professional activities (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2015a). Searches in the teacher register in 2013 showed that just over 50,000 people younger than 65 years with a teaching degree were employed in other occupations in or outside school. According to the Swedish Agency for Public Management the career step reform was introduced in 2013 and three years later, more than 14,000 career services were added, which corresponds to one eighth of all certified teachers (Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2017). Career service means reduced teaching time by up to 50 percent (SFS 2013, p. 70).

Recruitment needs are great, and the lack of qualified teachers leads to principals competing for teachers by offering increased teacher salaries. As stated by The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, teachers' tendency to change schools is increasing and for socio-economic reasons, less attractive municipalities and schools find it difficult to recruit and retain teachers (Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2017). Several employment agencies have focused on school staff, and hired teachers have become a costly resource. The introduction of teacher certification and career services, increased incentives for horizontal and vertical teacher mobility combined with a great teacher shortage, meant stronger teachers' unions

and labour market positions. On the other hand, the effects of strengthened labour market positions in terms of professionalization of teaching, are limited.

### ***Ethical codes and a teachers' responsibility committee***

Freidson (2001) also deals with professional ethic and the emphasis on the quality of work rather than financial gain. In the study by Brante et.al. (2015) priests in particular, but also almost every other university teacher and STU-associated teacher, as well as four in ten NUT teachers, perceived the teaching profession as a calling. Classical professions usually have a number of professional ethical codes as well as procedures for reviewing certifications. Teachers' professionalization strategies included the establishment of a joint professional ethics programme and a professional ethics council. Later, in connection with the teacher certification, a responsibility committee was established. The Teachers' Professional Ethics Council, established in 2007, is a joint project of the two teachers' unions. The Council consists of four professional teachers representing the teachers' unions and one researcher with a teaching background.

The Council's task is to safeguard professional ethics and good teaching practice. Good teaching practice means that teachers undertake to adhere to professional principles such as to a) conduct and develop their work based on science and proven educational experience, b) take responsibility for developing their competence in order to conduct good teaching, c) follow the scientific developments d) take responsibility not only for students' learning but also for what they learn, e) avoid advocating and engaging in such developmental trends and actions in school and society that may harm students, f) respect both colleagues and students, g) engage other expertise to assist students if necessary. However, it may seem a bit problematic that The Council's principles follow the intentions that proved to be difficult to implement, such as science-based teaching and knowledge development.

In connection with the introduction of teacher certification, the Teachers' Responsibility Committee was established. Its task is to examine on behalf of the School Inspectorate the continued right of individual teachers and preschool teachers to retain their certification (SFS 2011:326). The board consists of a chairman and eight members appointed by the government every three years. The committee is led by a regular judge. Members must have knowledge of and practical experience in teaching (SFS 2010: 800). The committee decides on revocation of certifications if the teacher has demonstrated gross negligence as a teacher, committed serious crimes, has a disease that adversely affects the ability to fulfil their professional duties, or proves in other ways unsuitable to conduct teaching or requests a revocation. The committee's decision can be appealed to the General Administrative Court (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2015b; SFS 2010: 800). With regard to reconsideration of the right to teacher certification, the teachers' unions have been

successful. With the committee members anchored in practical teacher work, the board can function as quality assurance on terms of the teaching professions.

## Conclusions

Since the school reforms of the 1990s, the Swedish school system has been characterized by increased external control and a publicly financed school market. The mix of different work organization and control logics has changed for the benefit of bureaucracy and the market. With new forms of political-administrative and economic governance teachers' professional autonomy has been questioned. In this new school-political landscape, teachers' unions succeeded in enforcing their certification requirements. The teacher certification means: a) recognized teacher-specific knowledge base; b) monopolized professional activities such as the exclusion of uncertified teachers from permanent employment in combination with c) strengthened union labour market positions and d) the establishment of a teacher-dominated responsibility committee. If we follow Freidson's argumentation on licensing as monopolization, we can argue that the teacher certification counteracts or weakens the influence of external organization and control logics. However, as stressed by Freidson, only when licensing is an absolute prerequisite for access to the labour market the profession is able to, despite increased external pressure, assert its exclusive jurisdiction and discretion that is to a large extent define, exercise and control their professional activities (Freidson, 2001).

On the basis of professionalism as an ideal type, including both cognitive and social aspects, the picture of the Swedish professionalization of teaching became more complex. From the cognitive point of view and based on the definition of professions as occupations whose practitioners have many years of scientific training, who follow the development of research and in practice apply scientifically based knowledge and principles, there are obvious limitations. The new scientific base, educational sciences, was described as a broad research area in an initial profiling and establishment phase. From Brante's (2014) strict definition, a broad and interdisciplinary knowledge base counteracts the development of generally recognized profession-specific knowledge. Except from the problem of the establishment and recognition of the teacher-specific knowledge base, academization and the professionals' weakened control over vocational education, career services and the profession's lack of control over the internal division of labour were other examples of problematic aspects.

To sum up, the Swedish case highlights two significant aspects in relation to professionalization. Primarily, the development of a defined teacher-specific knowledge base is an important part of the teacher professionalization project. As the cognitive base is vaguely profiled and the link between science and practice proved to be less prominent, it is also doubtful whether new social attributes like licensing and career steps are professionalizing. Social aspects like certification are strongly linked to the cognitive base.

This was shown by Freidson (2001) who stressed the importance of licensing as professional monopoly, meaning the monopoly over the practicing of profession-specific knowledge. The Swedish teacher certification does not have that closing effect when it comes to cognitive aspects, nor socially. The fact that, in the absence of a certified teacher, it is possible to hire uncertified temporary staff and that employers, public and private, and principals (a managerial position without requirements for teacher training or teacher certification) have the overall responsibility for the exercise of authority, weakens the cognitive and social significance of teacher certification. Further on, the emergence of a quasi-market is another problematic aspect and, as far as I understand, unique to Sweden. The competition between schools for the pupils' school vouchers constitutes a strong financial incentive for principals as managers and parents and pupils as consumers to exert pressure on teachers, especially in connection with grading. With increased external control, school vouchers and students' free school choice, the legitimacy of teacher autonomy in terms of jurisdiction and discretion is challenged.

Teacher certification and career services can strengthen the teachers' unions' success in traditional union questions such as wages, employment conditions, and the like. Teachers' unions' strength and strengthened labour market positions are successes in themselves, but do not benefit the professionalization project. The classic professions and professionalism as a work organization and control logic remains a distant, and in relation to the changing mix of logics, incompatible ideal.

## Acknowledgements

This article is based on results from *The professional landscape in Sweden*, a research project led by professor Thomas Brante from 2011 to 2016 and funded by the Swedish Research Council.

## Article history

Received: 17 May 2020

Accepted: 13 Oct 2020

Published: 16 Nov 2020

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