& PROFESSIONS PROFESSIONALISM

Vol 10, No 3 (2020)

Table of Contents

Articles

PROFESSIONS & PROFESSIONALISM

ISSN: 1893-1049 Volume 10, No 3 (2020), e3813 https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.3813

An Ambivalent Recognition: The Academisation of Nursing in Switzerland

Kevin Toffel

HESAV School of Health Sciences, HES-SO University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland

Contact: Kevin Toffel, HESAV School of Health Sciences, Lausanne, Switzerland, kevin.toffel@hesav.ch

Abstract

Despite the academisation process the profession goes through in many Western countries for decades, the level of autonomy of the nursing profession is still relatively low; nurses remain broadly under the domination of doctors and health care institutions. The opening in 2009 at the University of Lausanne of a master's degree marked a new stage in the history of the profession in Switzerland. With new resources, the emergence of this nurses' profile disrupting professional relationships, both with respect to doctors as well as within the profession. After having presented the stakes of going through an academic training based on scientific knowledge, the article shows the attempt of redefinition of the practical and symbolic roles to which it gives rise as well as some of the effects of this diploma and its resources are having on the professional relationships.

Keywords

Nursing profession, academisation, power relations, Switzerland

Introduction

The nursing profession has historically been thought of as one which is subordinate in most working relationships[1]. Hughes (2008) noted that at the end of World War Two their role consisted of "of all the things which have to be done in the hospital and which are not done by other kinds of people" (p. 312). Looking at the hierarchical component of this division of labour, Freidson (1970) showed that the medical profession held a legal and symbolic monopoly on the assessment of patients' ailments; nurses had neither power nor autonomy over any decisions concerning patient care. Although these views may seem somewhat dated, later works came to similar conclusions. In the 1990s, Feroni and Kober (1995) showed that because doctors had a monopoly on diagnosis, prescription, and making incisions into human bodies, nursing remained a "profession of limited autonomy" (p. 37). More recent research came to the same overall outcomes showing that social relations between doctors and nurses remain marked by different kinds of domination—notably legal, symbolic, and gender domination (Picot, 2005; Longchamp, Toffel, Bühlmann, & Tawfik, 2020).

This picture cannot, however, conceal the long process of emancipation that the profession has undergone since its emergence. On the educational side, schools of nursing managed to largely free themselves from the tutelage of doctors during the second half of the 20th century. On the practical side, as of the 1950s, a distinct hierarchy began to appear (Feroni & Kober-Smith, 2005), with a distinctive "role of their own" (*role propre*) developing in the 1970s (Lert, 1996), partly freeing nurses from doctors. The emergence of distinct nursing knowledges (nursing sciences) further contributed to the nursing profession's potential for emancipation from the medical profession. The combination of these aspects provided nurses with a certain level of professional autonomy. Some authors were then tempted to label the relations between nurses and doctors as a "negotiated order" (Strauss, Schatzman, Ehrlich, Bucher, & Sabshin, 1963), at least in some sectors (Liberati, 2017). Others went so far as to consider the two professions as partners (Svensson, 1996).

That said, these two notable stages—the establishment of specific nursing education and the development of their "own knowledge"—were not enough to emancipate the profession. It has been observed that despite the ongoing academisation process taking place in many countries in continental Europe (Laiho, 2010; Lahtinen, Leino-Kilpi, & Salminen, 2014), the level of autonomy of the profession is still relatively low: nurses remaining broadly under the domination of doctors. This ascertainment has been shown as well in recently academised countries, such as Italy (Sena, 2017), as where academisation started way earlier, like in the USA (Judd, 2010). Tied to its past, the nursing profession seems incapable of throwing off its symbolic designation as "paramedical," which trap it in

[1] A longer version of this paper has been published in French in the *Swiss Journal of Sociology* (Toffel, 2020).

the status of a "would-be profession" largely subordinate to doctors and hospitals (Freidson, 1970).

The vertical and horizontal differentiation, which accelerated in recent years within the profession, begs questions about the definition of areas of knowledge and the care practices. Whereas the vertical differentiation (multiplication of training and career paths) to which more academic education contributes can generate tensions between different nursing profiles (Chaves, 2005; Ayala, Gerard, Vanderstraeten, & Bracke, 2014), horizontal differentiation (multiplication of institutions employing nurses due to the raise of ambulatory care) produces different conceptions of the profession, such as the varied means used in the struggle for its autonomy (Longchamp et al., 2020). These transformations are occurring within a context where professional borders are being redrawn under the influence of factors like increasing numbers of women doctors (Picot, 2005), shorter average lengths of hospital stay (Acker, 2005), and impregnated by neo-liberal reforms of the healthcare sector in OECD countries (Pierru, 2008).

Western Switzerland[2] presents an interesting case to apprehend some of these changes and their effects on the nursing profession. The master's and doctoral degree programs in nursing sciences available at the University of Lausanne's (UNIL) Institute of Higher Education and Research in Healthcare (IUFRS) since 2009 were the first academic programs at this level in this part of the country[3]. This is a new stage in the profession's history and is contributing to the general movement towards a more academic style of teaching nursing occurring across continental Europe. Nurses began to acquire new knowledge backed up by recognition of a new type: scientific. Making areas of professional knowledge more science-based is a crucial step towards giving those professions greater autonomy (Elzinga, 1990).

To grasp what is at stake in making the profession more academically based, this article focuses on nurses who have gained a master's degree in nursing sciences from the IUFRS while keeping in mind that these nurses are only a sub-fraction of the profession. This calls for a structural approach capable of embracing the profession as a differentiated social space like Bourdieu's field concept invites (Bourdieu, 1996). Some attempts to use Bourdieu's theoretical framework on the healthcare universe have been made—notably to overcome a sociology inherited by Parsons (Collyer, 2018). Unlike many loose uses of this framework pinpointed by Collyer, the in-depth employ of Bourdieu's toolbox allows to grasps the different agents (for instance individual and institutional, professionals and patients) at stake within a complex relational field of struggles (national but also trans-national) as highlighted by Hindhede & Larsen (2018). Following the work by Pinell (2005, 2011) on the medical field, the use of Bourdieu's research program permits to show what

[2] I.e., the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

[3] A comparable program has been available at the University of Basel (German-speaking Switzerland) since 2000.

ties the nursing profession but also what divides it. Considering the nursing profession as a social space firmly inserted within the medical field allows us to distinguish fractions holding specific representations and practices about nursing. These fractions are struggling around the possession of two main types of capital (nursing and medical) at stake within a "nursing space" that may be analyzing as a sub-space of the medical field (Longchamp, Toffel, Bühlmann, & Tawfik, 2018).

Following on from this, this paper focuses on the nurses whom I have termed the "scientific elites" because of where they are practicing—usually as clinical nurse specialists in university hospitals or as teachers in universities of applied sciences (UAS)—and the symbolic prestige (Bourdieu, 1984) associated with their new academic resources[4]. These nurses are called upon to play key roles in the transfer and monitoring of the use of clinical practices. Whether that occurs while they are leading care teams on wards or teaching, their ambition is to participate actively in a redefinition of the profession.

The purpose of this article is to contribute to a sociological analysis of the evolution of the nursing profession in Switzerland, and wider, to a reflection on the effects of its academisation. What are these nurses' perceptions of how the medical profession considers them? How do these nurses perceive the profession and their colleagues, particularly bedside nurses and nurse managers? And finally, to what extent does the new diploma and the new role of these nurses contribute to the autonomy process of the nursing profession? After setting out the stakes surrounding making nursing knowledge more science-based, I will present some of the effects that this academic degree has generated; particularly on a potential redefinition of the practical and symbolic roles that it has engendered, vis-à-vis doctors as well as within the profession itself.

Method and analysis strategy

This research has been carried out in Western Switzerland from 2012 to 2017. Following the theoretical framework elaborated by Bourdieu (1984, 1996), especially the field concept, the main goal of this research project was to understand the relationship between the position occupied in the profession (vertical—according to the careers and institutional positions—and horizontal—between the different wards and institutions) and the nurses' attitude toward the core of the profession and the relationship with surrounding professions. The first phase involved 21 semi-structured interviews carried out in 2012 with nurses of very varied profiles in terms of sex, age, job description, and workplace. The

[4] The "elite" can designate "social groups which, because of their position or resources, can influence a society's evolution by participating in its most important decisions" (Hartmann, 2007, p. 17, my translation). Applying this definition to the nursing profession, I harnessed the notion of a "scientific elite" to characterize the specific resources which can help nurses to reach positions of power. Even though a master's degree may not seem a high-level diploma compared to the average level in the academic field, it thus means a lot within a profession where less than 2% of the nurses in Western Switzerland have it (Longchamp et al., 2020).

second phase consisted of a survey of nurses' practices and representations (N=2923), carried out in 2014. These two phases showed what has been named a "nursing space" in which each fraction, based on volume and structure of a combination of capitals, is characterized by a specific image and set of practices, whether in relation to nursing practice, knowledge production, or the relationship between nursing and the medical profession (Longchamp et al., 2018, 2020). To investigate a sub-fraction of the profession, a third phase took place in 2017, consisting of ten semi-structured interviews of nurses holding master's degrees awarded by the IUFRS. These nurses interviewed formed a convenience sample selected according to their different institutional employers, professional positions, job description, and sex. All of them have been (or are still) working at the bedside. They were asked to speak about their academic training and about the caring side of the job. Five are working in University hospitals, three in UAS, two in retirement homes. Among other topics (for instance career path, typical working day), these interviews examined nurses' motivations for studying a master's degree, how they conceived of the profession, what they did as part of their daily work routine, and how they saw the profession's future. I conducted the interviews which lasted approximately one hour and a half each. All were recorded and transcribed. They went through a thematic and categorical analysis that highlighted their perceptions of working relations with doctors and their nurses' colleagues as well as their feeling about the nursing profession's role within healthcare. Although based on the results of the overall research, the present article relies mainly on the interviews from phase three.

Towards an academically-based profession

Nursing only became professional rather late on in its history, particularly in Switzerland (Droux, 2000). Although it evolved constantly throughout the 20th century, nursing education saw its most rapid changes in the last few decades. Until 1992, nurses in Western Switzerland could follow one of three basic career paths (general care, maternal hygiene and paediatrics, or psychiatry), but this was then substituted for more general nursing education. In their turn, as of 2002, these diplomas made way for tertiary level education in the form of a bachelor's degree at the UAS and then the introduction of master's and doctoral programs at UNIL in 2009.

Although nursing education had *de facto* become academically-based with the introduction of bachelor's degrees in nursing care at UAS, the launch of the IUFRS' new programs added a further significant stage to that education. Nursing professionals can now obtain the highest degrees given by the higher education system. And the type of knowledge produced and taught at this institute is probably even more significant because it is nurses who are doing the teaching and, above all, producing scientific knowledge—in other words: garnering scientific capital (Bourdieu, 1976). Abbott (1988) showed that the creation and maintenance of frontiers between professional groups are anchored in their "turf battles"

for the construction and conservation of expert knowledge in order to build up their own jurisdictions.

The combination of these two theoretical frameworks may seem unusual. If Bourdieu didn't investigate the health universe *per se*, he also criticized the closing effect of the "occupational taxonomies" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). But far from being incompatible with an analysis of professions, it has been shown that his theoretical framework helps to highlight the symbolic struggles at stake within professions (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011). Moreover, an in-depth use of this framework, along with Abbott's theory of professions, tends to be fecund as Morel showed (2016). Instead of opposing two sociological heritage—yet based on a wide range of differences—I will show the interest in combining the two perspectives.

Making nursing education both more academic and more science-based, constitutes a major shift. Even though the skills and knowledge developed during professional training are recognized and have a certain legitimacy, with a hierarchy of academic titles and the resources provided by the cultural capital which those titles confer (Bourdieu, 1984), one can consider the move from vocational education to an academic education as being the final stage in a profession's scientific and symbolic evolution. It is well known that conquering new areas of professional knowledge requires the capacity to enlist abstract knowledge. As Elzinga (1990) highlighted, "professional groups look to academic research for the theoretical core needed to validate their knowledge, and *obtain recognition* through the institution of degree programmes" (p. 151, my emphasis). This will, too, make nursing education more academically-based is associated with a desire for legitimacy, which, according to both Elzinga and Abbott, can be backed up using two types of strategies. The first is cognitive and consists in demonstrating the components of the new type of knowledge; the second is social and rests mainly on the capacity to argue the (new) discipline's added value and utility. However, these two strategies must be thought of in combination. Although using science—in other words, the resources of a scientific capital (Bourdieu, 1976)—to lever professional autonomy is not the *raison d'être* for expanding educational opportunities in nursing sciences, it does make up a substantial part of the argument according to which nurses have great social utility. Understanding the means that these nurses use in their quest for recognition requires a grasp of the social relations that the nursing profession has with related professions, most notably the one which has dominated it since its beginnings: the medical profession.

On a level playing field with doctors?

According to the nurses interviewed, their access to a master's degree in nursing sciences is accompanied by a re-evaluation of the profession; notably, they perceive greater

recognition from doctors. As Mr. Sari mentions,[5] "with the doctors […] things went very well straight away because they immediately saw the added value that we [holders of master's degrees] can bring." Ms. Genoud even speaks about stronger professional relations:

> – It very favorably reinforces the relationships we have with doctors.
> – Isn't it a source of friction?
> – Not at all. With that professional group, it's even been a facilitating factor […]. So, there is something a little privileged being played out in day-to-day interactions.

Beyond the perception that working relations with doctors have become closer, there is also a sense that these academically trained nurses now feel empowered by that relationship. From the point of view of recognition, university graduate degrees represent a turning point for these nurses; now armed with legitimate resources of professional knowledge they feel capable of rising to the position of a doctor's alter ego. There are two closely linked aspects to this enhanced positioning: a way of expressing things and a way of doing things. These aptitudes seem to enable nurses to "be on a level playing field," as Ms. Nicole states.

Legitimate ways of expressing things

> I have the feeling that my professional language has changed (Ms. Genoud)

One of the resources acquired by the scientific elites rests on the purely symbolic effects of earning a nursing sciences diploma that is recognized as legitimate because it is from a university. These nurses seem to have gained confidence through the increase in their cultural capital associated with the award of a socially recognized degree (Bourdieu, 1984). And it is thus easier to understand nurses' feelings of being able to evolve in parallel with doctors and of "no longer being undervalued" (Ms. Demaya)—sentiments that were repeated frequently during the interviews. Contrasting before and after the award of her master's degree by the IUFRS, Ms. Nicole mentions that independently of the value of the knowledge acquired in their initial bachelor's training and the clinical acts they carried out, nurses had remained dominated in their relations with the medical profession:

> – We could be good at what we did, but we were somehow always at a slightly inferior level… or there was always a form of—How should I put it?—either humility or… I can't find the word, but a sort of complex…
> – Of inferiority?
> – Yeah, exactly. And I've got the impression that it's not like that anymore; that we can participate at the same level. So, there you go. That's what these master's degrees bring us, somehow. It's real recognition at the academic level.

[5] Names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Ms. Nicole is reporting an essentially psychological dimension—whether it was humility or an inferiority complex. That "complex" is a mark of the symbolic violence resulting from the misunderstanding it creates (Bourdieu, 2000). That psychological dimension unconsciously determines the behavior which nurses should adopt in relation to the (especially class and gender) dominated position they occupy. In addition to the institutionalized capital recognized in the form of a diploma, there is also cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979) in the form of a way of expressing things that gives one the tools with which to fight the effects of domination. As Ms. Nicole states, "recognition at an academic level" is undeniably effective in our "ability to align ourselves, to be able to use language where we are not just taken for silly women."

The sentiment of being able to speak to doctors from a position as professionals of equal value, thanks to different knowledge, is the result of a new language made up of two types of resources. Being newly able to express themselves using "legitimate language" (Bourdieu, 1991) becomes a cultural skill, distinguishing its "speakers" and supported by the recognition perceived by the scientific elites:

> I think that [the master's] provides a kind of credibility. Because we know how… the language to adopt to play in the big league, is what I want to say. We're not the little nurse who can't express her thoughts properly anymore, you know?… It's that we quickly get into situations where "I don't have the right vocabulary; I don't really understand what the other person's saying," it's at another level. And then [the master's] gives us, in presentation skills for starters, in being able to do literature searches, etc., with references and stuff; we have a solid background. (Ms. Nicole)

Although knowing to "express [their] thoughts properly" may bring recognition, it would not be enough to create feelings of legitimacy if it were not for a "solid background" of skills. This is the second but principal resource of these academically educated nurses seeking that all-important *recognition* (Abbott, 1988; Elzinga, 1990) from their doctor colleagues: the tools of scientific research.

A scientific way of doing things

It is because they have the skills to use a specific language—the language of science—that the scientific elites' knowledge of what to say is determinant in their perception that their relations with doctors have been transformed. As Ms. Gomes states: "at the university, at the IUFRS, the approach often advocated is basing care on scientific evidence," and the other nurses interviewed repeatedly mention the acquisition of scientific knowledge—*id est* of a scientific capital (Bourdieu, 1976). Whereas Ms. Gomes mentions that what "interested me the most were the contributions from research […], everything about learning how to

critique a scientific article", Mr. Décosterd insists on "the importance of research in the domain of nursing sciences, the *power of research* [he emphasizes]".

Ms. Nicole reveals that the principal benefit of her academic education is its approach to research, which is safeguarded by "methodology," the use of "tools," and the "scientific literature". Mr. Sari also mentions these aspects and, like his colleagues, relates them directly to nursing practice and the development of "guidelines" in order to be able to implement a clinical project. Interviewees repeated mention theoretical frameworks and, above all, learning about research methodology, and knowledge about these conferred nurses with "more standing, depending on the interlocutors":

> – Now, when I write a protocol, I don't do it like that anymore. I go and look for what's been written about it, what's being done.
> – A research approach.
> – It gets printed out, and I find that it gives me a stronger footing with the stakeholders who I've got in front of me. (Ms. Bourg)

This is the distinction between *before* and *after* higher academic nursing education, one that recurred in interviewees' answers and which was relevant vis-à-vis doctors and bedside nurses. The feelings of having evolved and of being better armed to practice their profession is also what nurses with master's degrees identify, advocate, and wish for their profession's future as Ms. Pralong states:

> I think that with the Master we are more… we are more open to some confrontations. We are not afraid to say what we think because here what the Master also teaches us: to be more leaders.

Being able to use scientific arguments is a central issue in the position which nurses adopt when faced with doctors, as it enables them to be taken more seriously and even to "convince." As Ms. Bourg states, she "really regrets no longer having any access to PubMed"[6]:

> That's how I managed to convince doctors. Typically, you shouldn't delude yourself, in the end, they are scientists really, so when you turn up with arguments, saying, "Well, here you go, three meta-analyses say this, three things say that, randomised studies…". Well, they listen to you differently.

The scientific elites acquired many resources during their academic education—resources that turned out to be very effective, both socially and professionally. In that sense, their strategy of recognition fully illustrates the strategies identified by both Abbott (1988) and

[6] A bibliographic research engine for studies in biomedicine.

Elzinga (1990). Of course, if these nurses became closer to doctors, they can also be perceived as competitors. The use of a scientific language sets up these nurses as privileged interlocutors, but this foray into their territory can also generate tensions between the two professions, as Mr. Décosterd argues:

> There are two types of doctors. There are those who are convinced that they are responsible for the world, for care. And there are those who understood that it is important to work in interdisciplinarity. So, with those who are convinced that the hospital is run by doctors and bosses, of course things go wrong.

That said, the nurses interviewed unanimously feel that they now hold the means to reach their ends; the scientific elites incarnating the heroic figures of a profession lacking in recognition and autonomy since its very beginnings. Yet it is worth asking the question of whether today's nurses are experiencing a transformation in social relations with the medical profession or whether they are idealizing the extent of those changes. Because of the dominant position of knowledge from the medical field, knowledge that nurses are using widely, perhaps we are witnessing "a conversion to the biomedical paradigm" (Holmes & Perron, 2008, p. 407, my translation) rather than the development and promotion of nurses' own knowledge anchored in the theories of nursing sciences[7]. It is not sure that the scientific capital acquired and seen as resources in the academic training is directly convertible to a clinical nursing space of practice still dominated by medical capital (Longchamp et al., 2018). Furthermore, case studies on increasingly academically-based nursing education tended to have demonstrated that relations between nurses and doctors are continuing to be characterised by dominations despite the new resources acquired by nurses. Thus, from both the cognitive and social points of view, the quest for legitimacy is continuing, and the quest for autonomy has yet to be satisfied.

In-between bedside nurses and nurse managers

The scientific elites seem quite satisfied with their working relationships with doctors—that of respected colleagues who are nevertheless kept at arm's length. They seem less satisfied with their working relationships with their fellow nurses. Whereas bedside nurses are sometimes described as being "back to the stone age," as Ms. Bourg states, nursing managers, often presented as trapped by organizational constraints, are discredited because of their great distance from the patient. When the scientific elites make the most of their university education and their scientific capital, their professional relations move in two directions: their more academically-based education brings them closer to their doctor colleagues, but it also distances them symbolically from their nurse colleagues.

[7] Knowledge which is both discussed from an epistemological point of view (Longchamp, 2005) and yet little-used within the nursing profession, whether in research (Dallaire, 2015) or in healthcare (Lechasseur, 2009).

Because they have been trained to "optimise the quality of care and patient safety" and to "collaborate in organisational changes and necessary developments to the health system,"[8] the role of the scientific elites is mainly a matter of team management. The tools which they have learnt to use in their academic education become central to the implementation and monitoring of "best practices." Mr. Décosterd is convinced of his mentor's role:

> You have to go out on the ward, show how, train, supervise constantly: you have to mentor. […] During my training, I think that I realized that maybe I had become too distanced from bedsides and that when I brought [new knowledge] to people, I have to do more than just convince them its good.

As they are implementing strategies to "convince" their colleagues of the merits of their new input, the nurses interviewed feel that they are on a mission to introduce reforms to professional practices. But the task is not easy: on one side, they come up against bedside nurses who don't always see the added value in "theoretical" input, and on the other side they come up against nurse managers who consider them to be competitors who want to exercise the managers' powers.

Bedside nurses with their "noses to the grindstone"

The scientific elites perceive the nursing profession from the commanding position they believe that they have attained. Thus, Ms. Demaya's master's degree enables her to go beyond her previous tasks centred on technical aspects of nursing practices and to think about things in a more "meta way":

> So as not to be just a nurse giving technical care like [bedside nurses], but also to think in a little bit more of a meta way about "What can we put forward?", "How can we push our profession forward?" By demonstrating the added value, in the end, of how we accompanying [patients].

Fortified by a feeling of superiority instilled by their academically-based education and their task of implementing best care practices, the scientific elites consider bedside nurses a little condescendingly. Indeed, the interviewees frequently bring up bedside nurses' lack of "responsiveness" or "critical appraisal" as Ms. Seppi states, finding them restricted to carrying out "tasks." The contrast is underlined by a classic division of labor between manual and intellectual tasks. The scientific elites distinguish themselves from the bedside nurses with their "noses to the grindstone," incapable of grasping the "true professional challenges" because of a "lack of vision"; they perceive themselves, however, as being able to take a step back, reflect and establish strategies for change "for everybody's good":

[8] Website of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO).

> I find that nurses really get into something, with their noses to the grindstone, so they have some trouble taking a step back and saying, "We have to change this. Then let's do it, let's change it." For everybody's good. (Ms. Demaya)

However, this pursuit of the common good is manifestly not obvious to everyone. Bedside nurses do not see the added value in the new nursing knowledge brought to wards by the scientific elites; showing the struggles taking place between the different fractions in the "nursing space" (Longchamp et al., 2018). Faces with this lack of enthusiasm about their desire to use the tools learned during their Master's—and their wish to instill a new professional culture—some of the scientific elites display a hint of bitterness:

> I've got a colleague who's a nurse who once said to me, "Why are you doing a Master's? If you're going to do that, why not study medicine." I thought that it was completely off the mark for a nurse to say that. (Ms. Demaya)

Fear of being judged by bedside nurses critical of their academic training or their new roles is common. The words of Ms. Genoud's head nurse reminds her of how prudent she had to be, despite her eagerness to disseminate the knowledge acquired in her master's program:

> [She said to me] "You know, Sandy, don't forget that when you come from the nursing pool[9], people know that you are a specialist nurse clinician in my unit and they're watching what you're doing with a magnifying glass" […] Depending on existing habits and routines, arriving and, let's say, wanting to disseminate new knowledge can unsettle people a bit unless you are careful.

Yet interviewees are minimizing the potential for conflict as if time would naturally guide the whole nursing profession towards a consensus agreement on the benefits of the master's degree program and the new resources it brought to patient care. This teleology, promoted by the scientific elites, is closely linked to the perception they have of themselves—a perception in which they are the only ones empowered to lead the entire nursing profession towards a desirable or preferred future.

Thus, the scientific elites' project works on two levels. Firstly, they aspire to the development of a "meta viewpoint," which would improve the professional position of nurses in the health space vis-à-vis other professions. Secondly, they aim to develop a true professional culture based on new skills and scientific knowledge that is exclusive to their profession, which would encourage professional autonomy and improve patient care management.

[9] The "pool" is a replacement ward.

Nursing managers weighed down by daily administrative tasks

Nurse managers have often been perceived as "administrative auxiliaries," or even "collaborators," as overly controlling on theoretical aspects while not being experts in practice (Dubet, 2002, my translation): veritable "countermodels of the female caregiver" (Véga, 1997, p. 112, my translation). They find themselves frequently discredited by nurses due to their distance from the patient's bedside and the managerial approaches they embody (Resenterra, Siggen, & Giauque, 2013).

This perception is shared by the scientific elites who constantly mention these two aspects, but for two different reasons: to deplore it and to distinguish themselves. Increased distance from patient bedsides is a trait which the scientific elites particularly deplore. Mr. Sari argues that whereas the scientific elites remained caregivers, becoming a manager "removes [nurses] from practice" and thus from the profession's core mission:

> – Up until ten years back, let's say, if you trained as a nurse, it's true that after a while, career-wise, there weren't necessarily many big opportunities unless you became head nurse, and thus a manager. But if you do that, you distance yourself from practice.
> – From the bedside.
> – From the bedside. So you're, I wouldn't say, it's a bit much, but you're not necessarily still a nurse if you… […] I'm exaggerating, but the epistemological question is: "Are you still a nurse if you don't see any patients?" I don't know.

Although Mr. Sari qualifies his exaggeration, the concept of proximity to patients is central to the nursing profession. The scientific elites definitely do not want to be distanced from patients. Indeed, they want to square the circle by remaining close to them (contrary to nurse managers whose greater distance is to the detriment of their professional legitimacy) and by introducing the clinical best practices that their "meta-perspective" enables. This apparently ideal position fails to hide a paradox that Ms. Ferreira's words illustrate. Although she pleads for nurses providing "person-centred care," that care would not be given by the scientific elites but by bedside nurses who are already fully invested "in direct care." The scientific elites would be responsible for "managing care projects," and as such, would somewhat distance themselves from patients, like nurse managers, but without having the hierarchical function. Because they aspire to monitor best practices, few of the scientific elites are managers, at least not in the formal sense. Four of the ten nurses interviewed did have management functions, however. Ms. Bourg, formerly a nursing home manager, maintained very close relations with the management of the care institution where she is working. Although they are working as clinical nurse specialists, Ms. Genoud and Ms. Nicole are part of their respective departments' management teams. As for Ms. Seppi, who is heavily involved in rewriting the training curricula in her UAS.

Although they reject the symbolic managerial positions which bedside nurses might associate them with, unofficially, the scientific elites often have close relationships with their management. This can cause tensions, which are the result of poorly defined roles. Whereas role differentiation seems clear to the scientific elites vis-à-vis bedside nurses, they feel a level of competition with nurse managers who "feel threatened" (Ms. Genoud). Tensions seem to be anchored around questions of management because managers do "not always have a clear, defined vision of who does what" (Ms. Pralong). Managing working time, which is one of the nursing manager's roles, seems to have become an issue struggled over with the scientific elites as soon as the latter group got involved in patient care management. These relational difficulties are driven by both a lack of institutional recognition and strains on the hierarchy because different groups' roles remain unclear: nursing managers are in charge of care resources, but clinical nursing specialists are supposedly responsible for the introduction of best practices:

> So, it's true that I also positioned myself by saying that if I was going to have a role to play at the same level as the head nurses[10]—that means some power to orient clinical care—then I'd have to be a little bit above them, at least when it came to representing the unit. (Ms. Nicole)

On his side, Mr. Décosterd deplores the lack of support that clinical nursing specialists are receiving from his institution and how the scientific elites are subordinate—"subservient"—to nursing managers:

> Clinical nursing specialists are directly subservient to departmental head nurses, which is an aberration, in my opinion […] Clinical nursing specialists and head nurses should have a shared decision-making interface for organizing care. Those responsible for care, for clinical care, should be clinicians. And those responsible for resources and other management should be managers.

Hierarchy issues seem to be central to the power relations opposing the scientific elites and nursing managers. However, recognition of their status is not merely a challenge associated with finding a position within that hierarchy; it is also a challenge with regards to the struggle for a legitimate new definition of the nursing profession rooted in the academic-based knowledge as underlined by Elzinga (1990). The scientific elites' reformist project is only a part of that struggle, and it is a project for which they are clearly having trouble getting backing, especially from their nursing colleagues.

[10] Head nurse on a ward.

The redefinition of the role of nursing

A central element in the scientific elites' discourse concerns their grand plan to reform their own nursing role. The scientific elites intend to represent the renewal of the nursing profession through the conceptual shift from nursing practice being seen as task-based to it developing around therapeutic projects in which the profession will establish its core role. Typical of the "new entrants" in a field (Bourdieu, 1996), this redefinition will require defending a model of the profession on a scientific-based knowledge that will necessarily challenge the established order. But, if it is a necessary condition to obtain *recognition* in both Abbott (1988) and Elzinga (1990) sense, it may not be a sufficient one. Sainsaulieu (2012) recalled that "the historic socialization of nurses does not predispose them to political protest" (p. 330). Although this observation may reveal the traditional stance held by nurses, anchored in a professional history marked by dominations (notably class and gender), we have to qualify its contemporary validity when we are trying to grasp the scientific elites' new discourse. This is because these new standard-bearers for nursing have an element of militancy about them, even if that militancy bears no resemblance to classic revindications about working conditions. Asked about their motivations for taking a master's degree at the IUFRS, interviewees insist on the "added value" it brought to boost the profession's standing, as illustrated by Ms. Demaya's words:

> Throughout their history, nurses have often been under-valued. […] So, I think that, yes, when my colleague said to me, "Well, [the master's] is an opportunity to promote and develop our profession, and to put it forward. And to show that, in the end, we can also be experts in the situations we encounter." I think that motivated me too, […] I think that it's true; nurses have often been undervalued, and we've had enough now because they've also contributed so much.

The feeling that the profession is at a turning point, the affirmation that they were "experts in the situations we encounter" and the belief that they have the ability to bring "change" through the use of their "tools" in order to overcome the difficulties faced by bedside nurses is omnipresent elements in the scientific elites' discourse. One might subscribe to Dubet's remark that "nurses have the feeling that they are continually running between several definitions of their job, none of which they are completely happy with" (Dubet, 2002, p. 195, my translation) when they are talking about bedside nurses. Still, it seems that the scientific elites have now stopped "running" after definitions and now propose just one for the entire profession, that of scientific healthcare expert. However, it is by no means certain that all nurses will adhere to this.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to contribute to a sociological analysis of the evolution of the nursing profession in Switzerland and to understand the struggles within and out the profession that are linked to the academisation process. Obtaining a master's degree in the

nursing sciences from a university in Western Switzerland is something very new for the profession. Because of the symbolic value of this qualification, as well as the type of resources which it embodies, the scientific elites glimpse a clear future for their profession. Equipped with the latest scientific assets, they want to actively participate in the redefinition of their profession by helping to change nursing roles and practices, giving new legitimacy throughout this scientific capital (Bourdieu, 1976) to a profession that has been undervalued throughout its history. This process is consistent with the means for recognition of a profession shown by both Abbott's (1988) and Elzinga's (1990) works. However, both the reformist project and nurses' institutional positions remain fragile. So far, even though their perception of the relations with the doctors improved, the attempt to redefine nursing roles seems to have a limited effect on social relations with them. Moreover, this attempt has, above all, been a vector of tensions within the nursing profession. The scientific elites' reformist project is still a long way from being able to overturn the medical profession's dominance over nurses, and they are having trouble finding their place in a highly differentiated nursing space: somewhere between bedside nurses who are slow to adhere to their project and nursing managers who see them as a threat to the management order. Even if one can qualify these nurses as "elite" with regard to their academic degrees and the types of knowledge resources at their disposal, it has to be acknowledged that the inter- and intra-professional relations in which they currently find themselves mean that this sub-fraction of the profession is still in search of its power rather than being able to exercise it.

Based on a case study, this paper is a call for a more general process of reflection on the uncertainties of making nursing education more academic. Although it may pave the way to a reconfiguration of social relations, the process can guarantee neither recognition nor the attainment of a more legitimate place for nurses in their interprofessional relations. Enlarging the picture of the stakes that the academisation process of the nursing profession in Western countries implies with a cross-national comparison could reveal some key features that are structured by a medical field that may be considered beyond national boarder (Hindhede & Larsen, 2018). Finally, the adoption of a structural approach based on Bourdieu's field concept makes it possible to understand the varied forms and unexpected effects in which a more academically-based style of nursing education might have on relations between members of that profession as well as with the medical one.

Article history

Received: 03 Apr 2020
Accepted: 26 Aug 2020
Published: 03 Nov 2020

References

Abbott, A. (1988). *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor.* Chicago: Chicago University Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226189666.001.0001

Acker, F. (2005). Les reconfigurations du travail infirmier à l'hôpital [Reorganization of Nursing Work in Hospitals]. *Revue française des affaires sociales 1,* 161–181. https://doi.org/10.3917/rfas.051.0161

Ayala, R. A., Gerard M. F., Vanderstraeten R., & Bracke P. (2014). Academisation of Nursing: An Ethnography of Social Transformations in Chile. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 51,* 603–611. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2013.08.010

Bourdieu, P. (1976). Le champ scientifique [The scientific field]. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, 2–3*(2), 88–104. https://doi.org/10.3406/arss.1976.3454

Bourdieu, P. (1979). Les trois états du capital culturel [The Three Stages of Cultural Capital]. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, 30*, 3–6. https://doi.org/10.3406/arss.1979.2654

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language & Symbolic Power*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, J.-D. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.

Chaves, G. (2005). *Etude sur l'image que la profession «Infirmière» a d'elle-même.* Lausanne: Service de la Santé publique de l'État de Vaud.

Collyer, F. (2018). Envisaging the healthcare sector as a field: moving from Talcott Parsons to Pierre Bourdieu. *Social Theory and Health, 16*, 111–126. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41285-017-0046-1

Dallaire, C. (2015). La difficile relation des soins infirmiers avec le savoir [Nursing's difficult relationship with knowledge]. *Recherche en soins infirmiers 121*(2), 18–27. https://doi.org/10.3917/rsi.121.0018

Droux, J. (2000). L'attraction céleste. La construction de la profession d'infirmière en Suisse romande (XIXe-XXe siècles). Doctoral dissertation, histoire, Université de Genève.

Dubet, F. (2002). *Le déclin de l'institution*. Paris : La Découverte. https://doi.org/10.4000/questionsdecommunication.7552

Elzinga, A. (1990). The Knowledge Aspect of Professionalization. The Case of Science-Based Nursing Education. In Torstendahl, R., Burrage, M. C. (Eds.) *The Formation of Professions. Knowledge, State and Strategy* (pp. 151–173). London: Sage Publications.

Feroni, I., & Kober A. (1995). L'autonomie des infirmières. Une comparaison France/Grande-Bretagne [The nursing profession in France and in Great Britain]. *Sciences sociales et santé, 13*(3), 35–68. https://doi.org/10.3406/sosan.1995.1336

Feroni, I., & Kober-Smith A. (2005). La professionnalisation des cadres infirmiers : l'effet de l'action publique en France et en Grande-Bretagne [The professionalization of Nurses : The Effect of Public Policies in France and Britain]. *Revue française de sociologie, 46*(3), 469–494. https://doi.org/10.3917/rfs.463.0469

Freidson, E. (1970). *Profession of Medicine*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hartmann, M. (2007). *Eliten und Macht in Europa: Ein internationaler Vergleich*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.

Hindhede A. L., & Larsen, K. (2018). Prestige hierarchies of diseases and specialities in a field perspective. *Social Theory and Health, 17*, 213–230. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41285-018-0074-5

Holmes, D., & Perron, A. (2008). L'infirmière praticienne en soins de première ligne : entre colonisation et affranchissement. In Dallaire, C. (Ed.), *Le savoir infirmier*. Au cœur de la discipline et de la profession (pp. 403–414). Montréal : Éditions de la Chenelière.

Hughes, E. C. (2008). *The Sociological Eye*. Selected Papers. New Brunswick: Transaction Inc.

Judd, D. M. (2010). Nursing in the United States from the 1980s to the Present. New Opportunity, Technical Advances, Nursing Autonomy and Globalization. In Judd D. M., Sitzman, K., & Davis, M. (Eds.), *A History of American Nursing* (pp. 180–209). Sudbury: Jones & Bartlett.

Lahtinen, P., Leino-Kilpi, H., & Salminen, L. (2014). Nursing Education in the European Higher Education Area–Variations in Implementation. *Nurse Education Today, 34*(6), 1040–1047. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.09.011

Laiho, A. (2010). Academisation of Nursing Education in the Nordic Countries. *Higher Education, 60*(6), 641–656. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-010-9321-y

Lechasseur, K. (2009). *Mobilisation des savoirs par une pensée critique chez des étudiantes infirmières bachelières en situation de soins*. Doctoral dissertation, sciences infirmières et didactique des sciences, Université de Laval.

Lert, F. (1996). Le rôle propre peut-il fonder l'autonomie professionnelle des infirmières ? *Sciences sociales et santé, 14*(3), 103–115. https://doi.org/10.3406/sosan.1996.1370

Liberati, E. G. (2017). Separating, Replacing, Intersecting. The Influence of Context on the Construction of the Medical-Nursing Boundary. *Social Science & Medicine,* 172, 135–143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.11.008

Longchamp, P. (2005). La confusion. Critique épistémologique des sciences infirmières. *Carnets de bord en sciences humaines, 10*, 104–116.

Longchamp P., Toffel K., Bühlmann F. & Tawfik A. (2018). L'espace professionnel infirmier: une analyse à partir du cas de la Suisse romande [The professional space of nursing: An analysis based on the case of French-speaking Switzerland]. *Revue française de sociologie, 59*(2), 219–258. https://doi.org/10.3917/rfs.592.0219

Longchamp P., Toffel K., Bühlmann F. & Tawfik A. (2020). *L'espace infirmier. Visions et divisions d'une profession*. Neuchâtel: Livreo-Alphil. https://doi.org/10.33055/ALPHIL.01517

Morel, S. (2016). Au(x) cœur(s) des professions. Penser le rapport des professions à l'hétéronomie avec Abbott et Bourdieu. In Demazière D. & Jouvenet, M. (Eds.), Andrew Abbott, sociologue de Chicago. *Héritages, dépassements, ruptures* (pp. 315–334). Paris, Editions de l'EHESS.

Picot, G. (2005). Entre médecins et personnel infirmier à l'hôpital public : un rapport social instable [Doctors and Nurses in Public Hospitals: An Unstable Social Relationship]. *Revue française des affaires sociales, 1,* 83–100. https://doi.org/10.3917/rfas.051.0083

Pierru, F. (2008). La santé au régime néolibéral. *Savoir / Agir, 3*(5), 13–24. https://doi.org/10.3917/sava.005.0013

Pinell, P. (2005). Champ médical et processus de spécialisation [The Medical Field and the Process of Specialization]. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, 1*(156-157), 4–36. https://doi.org/10.3917/arss.156.0004

Pinell, P. (2011). The Genesis of the Medical Field: France, 1795-1870. *Revue française de sociologie,5*(52), 117–151. https://doi.org/10.3917/rfs.525.0117

Resenterra, F., Siggen, M., & Giauque, D. (2013). Les cadres intermédiaires entre contraintes managériales et défense des identités professionnelles : l'exemple des hôpitaux de Suisse romande. *Humanisme et Entreprise*, 315, 1–24. https://doi.org/10.3917/hume.315.0001

Sainsaulieu, I. (2012). Collective Mobilization in Hospitals: Confrontational or Consensual? *Revue française de sociologie, 3*(53), 316–346. https://doi.org/10.3917/rfs.533.0461

Schinkel, W. & Noordegraaf, M. (2011). Professionalism as Symbolic Capital: Materials for a Bourdieusian Theory of Professionalism. *Comparative Sociology, 10,* 67–96. https://doi.org/10.1163/156913310X514083

Sena, B. (2017). Professionalization Without Autonomy: The Italian Case of Building the Nursing Profession. *Professions and Professionalism*, 7(3), e1900. https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.1900

Strauss, A., Schatzman, L., Ehrlich, D., Bucher, R., & Sabshin, M. (1963). The Hospital and Its Negotiated Order. In Freidson E. (Ed.), *The Hospital in Modern Society* (pp. 147-169). New York, Free Press.

Svensson, R. (1996). The Interplay Between Doctors and Nurses–A Negotiated Order Perspective. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 18, 379–398. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep10934735

Toffel, K. (2020). Les enjeux symboliques d'un diplôme académique. Reconfiguration des rapports sociaux et nouvelles tensions au sein de la profession infirmière [The Symbolic Stakes of an Academic Degree. Reconfigurations of Power Relationships and New Tensions Within the Nursing Profession]. *Swiss Journal of Sociology*, 46(1), 73–95. https://doi.org/10.2478/sjs-2020-0004

Véga, A. (1997). Les infirmières hospitalières françaises : l'ambiguïté et la prégnance des représentations professionnelles [Nurses in french hospitals. Ambiguity and loaded professional representations]. *Sciences sociales et santé, 15*(3), 103–132. https://doi.org/10.3406/sosan.1997.1405

PROFESSIONS & PROFESSIONALISM

ISSN: 1893-1049 Volume 10, No 3 (2020), e3878 https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.3878

Swedish School Reforms and Teacher Professionalism

Margareta Nilsson Lindström

Lund University, Sweden

Contact: Margareta Nilsson-Lindström, Lund University, Margareta.Nilsson-Lindstrom@soc.lu.se

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, Krigh & 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 form 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

References

Becher, T. (1990). Professional education in a comparative context. Torstendahl, R. & Burrage, M. (Eds.). *The formation of professions. Knowledge, state and strategy*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Bourke, T., Lidstone, J. & Ryan, M. (2013). Schooling teachers: Professionalism or disciplinary power? *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 47 (1):84-100. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2013.839374

Brante, T. (2014). *Den professionella logiken: Hur vetenskap och praktik förenas i det moderna kunskapssamhället*. [The professional logic: How science and practice are combined in the modern knowledge society]. Stockholm: Liber.

Brante, T., Johnsson, E., Olofsson, G. & Svensson, L. G. (2015). *Professionerna i kunskapssamhället. En jämförande studie av svenska professioner*. [The professions in the knowledge society. A comparative study of Swedish professionals]. Stockholm: Liber.

Broady, D., Börjesson, M., Dalberg,T., Krigh, J. & Lidegran, I. (2011). *Inventering av svensk utbildningsvetenskaplig forskning.* [Inventory of Swedish educational science research].Vetenskapsrådets rapportserie 2:2011. Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet.

Buyruk, H. (2013). 'Professionalization' or 'proletarization': Which concept defines the changes in teachers' work? *Procedia. Social and Behavioral Sciences, 116 (21*), 1709–1714. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.460

Calander, F. (2005). *Mellan akademi och profession, nitton svenska lärarutbildares berättelser om lärarutbildning igår och idag*. [Between academia and profession, nineteen Swedish teacher educators' stories about teacher education yesterday and today]. LÄROM-projektet. Rapport 4, 2005. Uppsala universitet.

EC. (2012). *Supporting the teaching professions for better learning outcomes*. Commission Staff Working Document. Strasbourg: European Commission.

Elzinga, A. (1990). The knowledge aspect of professionalization: The case of science-based nursing education in Sweden. Torstendahl R. & Burrage. M. (Eds.). *The formation of professions. Knowledge, state and strategy*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Ehneström, C., Ellström, P-E., Svensson, L. & Öhman Sandberg, A.(2016). *Karriärtjänster för lärare – möjlighet eller hinder för skolutveckling*. [Career services for teachers - opportunity or obstacle for school development]. Slutrapport 2016-10-11. Linköpings universitet.

Evetts, J. (2009). New professionalism and New Public Management: Changes, continuities and consequences. *Comparative Sociology, 8 (2),* 247–266. https://doi.org/10.1163/156913309X421655

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203697078

Freidson, E. (2001). *Professionalism, the third logic*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Government Bill [Proposition] 1991/92:95. *Om valfrihet och fristående skolor*. [About freedom of choice and independent schools]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

Government Bill [Proposition] 1992/93:230. *Valfrihet i skolan.* [Freedom of choice in school]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

Government Bill [Proposition] 2000/01:3. *Forskning och förnyelse.* [Research and renewal]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

Government Bill [Proposition] 2010/11:20. *Legitimation för lärare och förskollärare.* [Certifications for teachers and preschool teachers]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

Hanlon, G. (1998). Professionalism as enterprise: service class politics and the redefinition of professionalism. *Sociology 32*, 43–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038598032001004

Hansen, M. & Lindblad, S. (2010). *Forskningskommunikation och publiceringsmönster inom utbildningsvetenskap. En studie av svensk utbildningsvetenskaplig forskning vid tre lärosäten.* [Research communication and publishing patterns in educational science]. Vetenskapsrådets rapportserie 10:2010. Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet.

Hoyle, E. (2008). Changing conceptions of teaching as a profession: Personal reflections. *Johnson.D. & Maclean.R. (Eds.), Teaching: Professionalization, development and leadership*. pp. 285-304. Dordrecht: Springer.

Lilja, P. (2013). "A quest for legitimacy: On the professionalization policies of Sweden's Teachers' unions". *Journal of Education Policy*.29(1) 86-104. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.790080

McClelland, C.E. (1990). Escape from freedom? Reflections on German professionalization 1870–1993. Torstendahl, R. & Burrage. M.(Eds.) *The formation of professions. Knowledge, state and strategy*. London: Sage Publications.

Nilsson Lindström, M. (2019). Utbildningsfältets omvandling och läraryrkets professionalisering. [The transformation of the field of education and the professionalization of teachers]. Brante, T., Svensson, K. & Svensson, L. (Eds.). *Ett professionellt landskap i förvandling.* [A professional landscape in transformation] Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Nilsson Lindström, M & Beach, D. (2019). Utbildningsfältets professionalisering. [The professionalization of the field of education]. Brante, T., Svensson, K. & Svensson, L. (Eds.). *Det professionella landskapets framväxt.* [The emergence of the professional landscape]. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

OECD. (2005). *Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers, overview,* http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/34990905.pdf.

Parding, K., Sehlstedt, T., Johansson, A., Berg-Jansson, A. & Jakobsson, M. (2018). *Lärares arbetsvillkor i kontexten av marknadisering, privatisering, val och konkurrens – beskrivande enkätdata.* [Teachers' working conditions in the context of marketing, privatization, selection and competition]. Luleå: Luleå Tekniska universitet.

Pollitt, C. & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public management reform: A comparative analysis: New Public Management and the Neo-Weberian state*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.

Ringarp, J. (2012). The Problem of the Welfare profession: example – the municipalization of the Teaching Profession, *Policy Futures in Education*, 10 (3), 328-339. https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2012.10.3.328

Sandin, B. & Säljö, R. (Eds). (2006). *Utbildningsvetenskap – ett kunskapsområde under formering*. [Educational science - an area of knowledge under formation]. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag.

SCB [Statistics Sweden]. (1997). *Lönestatistisk årsbok 1997.* [Wage statistics yearbook 1997].www. scb.se.

SCB [Statistics Sweden]. (2017a). *Lönedatabasen.* [Salary database]. www.scb.se.

SCB [Statistics Sweden]. (2017b). *Lärarprognos: Stor brist på lärare.* [Teacher forecast: Large shortage of teachers]. www. scb.se.

SFS [Swedish Codes of statutes] 1968:318. *Kungl. Maj:ts stadga för lärarhögskolorna*. [Royal charter for the teacher training colleges]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

SFS [Swedish Codes of statutes] 1993:100*. Reviderad högskoleförordning*. [Revised Higher Education Ordinance]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

SFS [Swedish Codes of statutes] 2010:800. *Skollagen.* [The Education Act]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

SFS [Swedish Codes of statutes] 2011:326. *Om behörighet och legitimation för lärare och förskollärare och utnämning till lektor*. [Eligibility and identification for teachers and preschool teachers and appointment as lecturer]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

SFS [Swedish Codes of statutes] 2013:70. *Om statsbidrag till huvudmän som inrättar karriärsteg för lärare.* [Government grants to principals who set up career steps for teachers]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet*.*

Stockholms stad. (2015). *Förstelärare och lektorat inom utbildningsförvaltningen i Stockholm stad*. [Head teacher and lecturer in the education administration in Stockholm]. Utbildningsförvaltningen. Avdelningen för personal och kompetensförsörjning. FoUenheten, Stockholm.

Svensson, L.G. (2008). Profesjon og organisasjon. [Profession and organization]. Molander., A & Terum, LI (Eds.). *Profesjonsstudier.* [Studies on professions]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Swedish Agency for Public Management [Statskontoret] (2017). *Uppföljning av karriärstegsreformen*. [Follow-up of the career step reform]. Delrapport 3. Stockholm: Statskontoret.

Swedish National Agency of Education [Skolverket] (2012). *En bild av skolmarknaden. Skolverkets aktuella analyser 2012*. [A picture of the school market]. Publikationsserier. Aktuella analyser 2012. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Swedish National Agency of Education [Skolverket] (2013). *Lärares yrkesvardag – en nationell kartläggning av grundskollärares tidsanvändning.* [Teachers' everyday work]. Rapport 385. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Swedish National Agency of Education [Skolverket] (2015a). *Akut behov av fler lärare närmaste åren*. [Urgent need for more teachers in the coming years] Pressmeddelande 2015. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Swedish National Agency of Education [Skolverket] (2015b). *Kompetens och fortbildning, lärarlegitimation/regelverk*. [Competence and continuing education, teacher identification / regulations]. Pressmeddelande 2015. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Swedish National Agency of Education [Skolverket] (2015c). *Vad gör förstelläraren?* [What does the first teacher do?]. Publikationsserier. Övrigt material 2015. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Swedish Schools Inspectorate [Skolinspektionen] (2017). *Kommuner behöver trygga tillgången till behöriga och erfarna lärare på skolor med stora behov*. [Municipalities need to ensure access to qualified and experienced teachers]. Pressmeddelande. www.skolinspektionen.se

Wermke, W. & Forsberg, E. (2017). The changing nature of autonomy. Transformations of the late Swedish teaching profession, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 61(2), 155-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2015.1119727

PROFESSIONS & PROFESSIONALISM

ISSN: 1893-1049 Volume 10, No 3 (2020), e3713 https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.3713

Knowledge Discourses and Coherence in Professional Education

Hege Hermansen

University of Oslo, Norway

Contact: Hege Hermansen, University of Oslo, Norway, h.y.hermansen@iped.uio.no

Abstract

In recent years, significant attention has been paid to the relationship between different knowledge domains in professional education, based on the assumption that achieving coherence between domains is important for student learning and educational quality. In particular, much research has addressed questions of knowledge integration across different sites of learning. However, less attention has been paid to the epistemic diversity of the campus-based programme context and to how relationships between knowledge domains are constructed within epistemically diverse professional programmes. This article addresses this gap by examining how programme leaders discursively position disciplinary knowledge in relation to the mandate of teacher education. The data consist of interviews and logs from 20 programme leaders at four higher education institutions. The analysis identifies four accounts of the role of disciplinary knowledge in teacher education. The article concludes by discussing implications for efforts to achieve coherence and knowledge integration in professional education.

Keywords

Coherence, professional education, programme development, teacher education, knowledge discourses

Epistemic logics in professional education

Much research has highlighted the need for stronger integration between knowledge domains and sites of learning in teacher education (e.g., Buchmann & Floden, 1992; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Hammerness, 2006; Smeby & Heggen, 2014; Zeichner, 2010). A general assumption is that the configuration of different forms of knowledge in an educational trajectory is consequential for student learning. Designing programmes that are "integrated" or "coherent" is therefore seen as important for strengthening educational quality.

This field of research is thematically diverse. One strand has examined conceptualisations of coherence and their empirical manifestations (Canrinus, Bergem, Klette, & Hammerness, 2017a; Hatlevik & Smeby, 2015; Heggen & Terum, 2015). Others have foregrounded practical approaches to coherence, including principles for programme design and pedagogical implications (Hammerness, 2006; Jenset, Hammerness, & Klette, 2018). Other concerns include the need to combine research-based education with professional relevance (Afdal, 2017; Munthe & Rogne, 2015) and the importance of equal partnerships between schools and higher education institutions (Lillejord & Børte, 2016; Zeichner, 2010).

The role of disciplinary knowledge domains in professional education has received less attention. Professional education is characterised by epistemic pluralism, in which courses with disciplinary and professional orientations coexist. For example, a student teacher may take courses in sociology or history at disciplinary departments, while simultaneously studying pedagogy and educational policy at a teacher education unit. A nursing student may attend courses in anatomy or microbiology taught by faculty that have never practiced nursing, while qualified nurses teach public health nursing or professional ethics. More generally, professional education programmes are composed of knowledge domains that are organised according to two contrasting logics. Disciplinary knowledge domains are typically organised according to a self-referential logic that emphasises conceptual coherence. By contrast, "professional" knowledge domains tend to be organised around the conventions of professional practice.

Such differences in knowledge domains can be described through the terms conceptual and contextual coherence (Muller, 2009). These differences in epistemic logics imply that it is not always obvious how different knowledge domains are to be "integrated" for educational purposes. The creation of relationships between knowledge domains will also depend on how educators conceptualise their purpose in professional education. Consequently, it is of empirical and analytical interest to examine how such relationships are constructed by educators, since they are likely to inform practical efforts toward programme coherence.

This article examines how relationships between knowledge domains and the mandate of teacher education are constructed in a Norwegian teacher education programme. Known as Lektorprogrammet 8-13, this five-year master's programme qualifies teachers for lower and

upper secondary school. The programme is characterised by epistemic pluralism. Multiple faculties contribute to the programme, and students simultaneously take courses offered by disciplinary departments and teacher education units. With its combination of courses with disciplinary and professional orientations, this programme represents an interesting site for examining questions of knowledge integration in professional education.

The objective of the analysis is two-fold: to generate empirical knowledge about how the relationship between different knowledge domains can be manifested, and to contribute to our conceptual understanding of knowledge integration in professional education. The following research questions are addressed: How is the role of disciplinary knowledge in teacher education discursively framed and constructed? and What are the implications for efforts aimed at achieving programme coherence?

The data consists of individual interviews and participant logs from 20 programme leaders assigned with specific responsibilities for programme design and development at four higher education institutions. Their work involves negotiating multiple knowledge domains and academic identities. Additionally, a national reform requires these institutions to develop so-called “integrated” teacher education programmes (Ministry of Education and Research, 2013). The data therefore provide insights into a programme context where notions of knowledge integration are in the making.

The next section reviews relevant existing research followed by a presentation of the theoretical and methodological approaches. The empirical analysis identifies four knowledge discourses that constitute the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and the mandate of teacher education: i) disciplinary knowledge as strengthening the teacher education programme; ii) the teacher education programme as strengthening the disciplinary knowledge domain; iii) the teacher education programme as challenging the disciplinary knowledge domain; and iv) disciplinary knowledge as being separate from the teacher education programme. The final section addresses implications for efforts aimed at knowledge integration and programme coherence.

Coherence and knowledge integration in teacher education

Considerable attention has been paid to notions of integration and coherence in teacher education. The two terms are often used interchangeably, but some differences can be delineated. Whereas “integration” is often used to denote relations between knowledge of different types (Lehmann, 2020), the concept of “coherence” has been applied more broadly to address different dimensions of teacher education.

One line of research addresses the notion of coherence, including concepts such as structural, conceptual, biographical and transitional coherence (Hammerness, 2006; Heggen & Terum, 2013; Smeby & Heggen, 2014). These concepts analytically emphasise the relations amongst different aspects of professional education, such as the

interconnectedness between programme components, a shared vision amongst teacher educators, and the interrelationships between professional education and work. Notions of coherence have been directed toward programme characteristics, actors' perceptions and visions, student trajectories, and connections across sites.

Another line of research foregrounds the relationship between campus- and school-based education. A particular concern has been how learning across sites can be better aligned and how schools can be positioned as equal partners in teacher qualification (Grossman, Hammerness, McDonald, & Ronfeldt, 2008; Lillejord & Børte, 2016; Zeichner, 2010). This literature emphasises closer cooperation between higher education institutions and schools, and the need to organise on-campus learning activities around teachers' practices (Canrinus, Klette, & Hammerness, 2017b; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Forzani, 2014; Jenset et al., 2018; Windschitl, Thompson, Braaten, & Stroupe, 2012). Within this body of research, the notion of integration often has a spatial framing, examining the interrelationship between two sites of learning (e.g. Lillejord & Bjørte, 2016). Another prominent theme is power relations and (un)equal partnerships between universities and schools (e.g. Zeichner, 2010).

A third line of research addresses the challenge of combining a research orientation with professional relevance (Afdal, 2016; British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2014; Munthe & Rogne, 2015; Tatto, 2015). This body of literature has been concerned with how research-based education can been conceptualised, and how efforts to integrate research in professional education have been operationalised. Within this body of research, the notion of integration has been closely connected to the interrelationship between generically framed research findings and the situated and contextual practices of teachers' everyday work.

This brief review illustrates the complexity associated with notions such as coherence and integration and the multiple dimensions that must be attended to in efforts to improve educational quality. This article contributes to existing research by analytically foregrounding how educators construct relationships between disciplinary knowledge domains and the mandate to educate teachers. This aspect of coherence is important because students in many professional education programmes spend a significant amount of time attending courses that are framed by disciplinary logics. The analysis also foregrounds the centrality of educators' sense-making practices related to epistemic diversity, and how discourses about knowledge generate constraints and affordances for efforts aimed at coherence.

A discourse-analytical approach to knowledge integration

This paper adopts a discourse-analytical perspective (Foucault, 2015), in which discourse is understood as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1). A key assumption is that discourses shape social interactions and

identities by providing concepts, categories and representations through which the world is made sense of. Discourse is seen as constitutive of social structures by temporarily "freezing" the meaning assigned to particular activities, materials or social interactions. For the current purposes, this implies that conceptions of knowledge and its role in professional education can inform educational practices. Foucault also emphasises the intertwining of discourse and power. Discourses inform what we deem legitimate social practices and what is defined as inappropriate. This makes discourse a fruitful unit of analysis for exploring contestations over a given phenomenon, in this case programme design in teacher education.

Another theoretical assumption is that subject positions are constructed and contested through the use of language. Subject position refers to how individuals are situated within specific discourses and how these positions are constitutive of their identities (Davies & Harré, 1990). Positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) provides analytical nuance to the traditional Foucauldian emphasis on a single, monolithic discourse acting formatively upon subjects, by highlighting how individuals agentically construct their own and other peoples' identities through language. Such constructions can be fluid; for example, a teacher educator may simultaneously be positioned as "a researcher", "a mathematician" and "a teacher educator". These positions may generate conflicting demands and expectations, but they also provide opportunities for agentic identity construction. Subject positions also inform perceived roles and responsibilities. For example, a disciplinary scholar that assigns disciplinary knowledge a significant role in teacher qualification, may be more likely to think of himself or herself as both a disciplinary scholar and a teacher educator.

Professional education is understood as a set of institutionalised practices that are partly constituted by discourses about whose knowledge "counts" in professional qualification. Teacher education is characterised by a variety of knowledge discourses. Examples include discourses that emphasise research-based education (Afdal & Spernes, 2018; Munthe & Rogne, 2015), professional relevance and practical knowledge (Afdal, 2017; Wæge & Haugaløkken, 2013), and the importance of schooling as a tool for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Pantić, 2017). In educational policy, knowledge is increasingly used as a policy tool to shape both teacher education and notions of teacher professionalism (Mausethagen, Prøitz, & Skedsmo, 2017; Mausethagen & Smeby, 2016). These knowledge discourses carry implications for how teacher education programmes should be designed and enacted. In the current analysis, knowledge discourses have implications both for how efforts toward programme coherence are perceived and for what kind of subject positions teacher educators adopt.

Knowledge domains are understood as historically developed bodies of knowledge that underpin ways of organizing knowledge in higher education and work (Jensen, Lahn, & Nerland, 2012; Knorr Cetina, 1999). In the empirical analysis, examples of disciplinary knowledge domains include history, mathematics, political science, biology or religious

studies. These are not just constellations of accumulated bodies of knowledge, but also act as objects of attachment and identity for academics (Knorr Cetina 1999, 2001). Thus, attachment to a given knowledge domain can inform academics' perceptions of self and their position in relation to others. From this perspective, the discursive construction of knowledge not only mediates questions related to programme design (what forms of knowledge should be taught when, how and for what purpose), but also the identities and social interactions of teacher educators.

Conceptually, the notion of coherence is addressed in two ways in this paper. First, it is treated as an emic concept (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) based on the participants' own understandings. Frequent terms used by the participants include integrasjon (integration) and sammenheng (which can be loosely translated as a set of productive relations among programme components). Analytically, the notion of coherence is used to explore the relationships constructed by teacher educators between disciplinary knowledge domains and the mandate to educate teachers.

A debated issue within existing literature is whether "coherence" implies the absence of tensions and contradictions (e.g. Buchmann & Floden, 1992). The position adopted here is that tensions and contradictions are an inherent part of human activity (Engeström, 2007), and that coherence should rather be understood as a form of alignment which, in the case of teacher education, is conducive for supporting student learning.

Empirical context and methodology

The Norwegian context is characterised by a plurality of teacher education programs. Broadly speaking, qualification to primary and lower secondary school has historically been carried out at designated teacher education units. These programs are generally organised according to a professional orientation, and students complete their entire degree at the same organisational entity. Qualification to upper and lower secondary school has historically been composed of a combination of disciplinary studies at subject departments and selected courses taken at a teacher education unit. These programs include both disciplinary and professional orientations and are characterised by organisational complexity.

The programme studied here belongs to the latter category, leading to a teaching qualification for grades 8-13. Students study two disciplinary subjects (240 credit points), take courses in pedagogy and subject didactics (60 credit points) and complete a school-based practicum of 100 days. One year of full-time studies equals 60 credit points. The programme organization reflects a national reform put into effect in 2013 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2013), which aimed to create more "integrated" teacher education programmes. An example of a programme structure is presented in Table 1.

The programme is characterised by epistemic pluralism. For example, one student may take courses in social anthropology, Norwegian grammar, international politics, pedagogy, literary history and subject didactics during the course trajectory for a degree. These courses are distributed across multiple faculties and have typically not been designed to have any relationship to each other.

Table 1: *Example of programme structure*

10. sem	Master thesis			Disciplinary subject 1
9. sem	Project development master thesis	Research methods 1	Research methods 2	Master thesis DS1
8. sem	Pedagogy		Subject didactics DS1	Subject didactics DS2
	40 days practicum			
7. sem	Disciplinary subject 1	Disciplinary subject 1 (master level)		
6. sem	Disciplinary subject 1		BA thesis Disciplinary subject 1	History and philosophy of science
5. sem	Disciplinary subject 1	Disciplinary subject 2	Subject didactics 1	Subject didactics 2
	35 days practicum			
4. sem	Disciplinary subject 2			
3. sem	Disciplinary subject 2			Pedagogy
	15 days practicum			
2. sem	Disciplinary subject 1			Pedagogy
	10 days practicum			
1. sem	Disciplinary subject 1	Disciplinary subject 1		

Students take courses in disciplinary knowledge at the relevant faculties. These courses are also attended by students enrolled in disciplinary degrees, such as a bachelor's degree in

biology or history. Consequently, the courses are not specifically designed to educate teachers, and faculty are simultaneously teaching student teachers and disciplinary students. The distribution of the two student groups differs; student teachers might make up the majority or a small minority. Courses in pedagogy and subject didactics and the practicum are referred to by informants as “professional courses” [profesjonsfag] or as “professional knowledge” [profesjonskunnskap]. These courses are framed by a professional mandate, and notions of professional relevance are important for their design.

As a consequence of this programme structure, faculty members involved in teacher education occupy a range of epistemic and organisational positions. For example, some work at dedicated teacher education units and others at disciplinary departments. This diversity typically informs the extent to which faculty members identify as teacher educators. Previously, I have examined the interplay of these organizational and epistemic factors (Hermansen, 2019). In this article, the analytical focus is on how the research participants relate to the epistemic dimension of this diversity.

The empirical data consists of semi-structured interviews (20) and participant logs (75) from 20 programme leaders at four higher education institutions. At each institution, 4-6 programme leaders assigned with specific responsibilities for programme design and development were selected as informants. The term “leaders” is used in alignment with the literature on distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002). The category not only includes formal leadership positions but encompasses a network of key collaborators involved in programme design and development. Some informants were based at disciplinary departments and others at teacher education units.

The main themes covered in the interviews were approaches to and priorities for programme design and development, along with descriptions of the participants’ work. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The interviews comprise the primary data for analysis. Subsequently, participants submitted brief logs (Edwards & Thompson, 2013) over a period of nine months. In these logs, participants described recent incidents in which they worked on programme development and explained what they had tried to achieve, and why. These logs provided important contextual information about programme leaders' work and their reasoning behind specific actions related to programme design and development.

For the purposes of this paper, only the data that explicitly addressed the intersection between disciplinary domains and teacher education were subjected to further analysis. The first step of the data analysis identified all statements in the transcripts and logs that contained talk about different knowledge domains, the relationships among these domains and the relation of these domains to teacher education. This included statements such as “discipline X is characterised by…”, “mathematics and pedagogy differ in these ways…” and “as a historian, I am concerned with…”.

The next step of the analysis identified how the relationship between disciplinary knowledge domains and the teacher education programme was discursively constructed. Analytical emphasis was placed on identifying recurrent patterns in the talk that related disciplinary knowledge to the mandate of teacher education and examining the underlying premises and logics of these patterns. Repeated readings of the transcripts led to two initial categories of statements: those constructing the relationship between disciplinary knowledge domains and teacher education as inherently positive and desirable, and those that did not. Within these categories, significant diversity remained. To examine this diversity, the subsequent readings focussed on identifying the justifications made to support these relationships. The general framing of such statements would typically be "teacher education is good for discipline X because of Y", "teacher education benefits from discipline X because of Y", "it is problematic that department X is involved in teacher education because of Y", or "at department X, many people are not aware that we educate teachers". Based on this coding, the two initial categories were differentiated into four patterns of discourse. All discourses could be identified across the four programs and the data was therefore treated as a coherent whole during the empirical analysis.

1. Disciplinary knowledge as strengthening the teacher education programme,

2. The teacher education programme as strengthening the disciplinary knowledge domain,

3. The teacher education programme as challenging the disciplinary knowledge domain and

4. Disciplinary knowledge as separate from the teacher education programme.

The final step of the analysis examined the implications of these discourses for teacher educators' subject positions. Each discourse included statements that assigned faculty members with particular roles and responsibilities, including normative statements about how faculty members should relate to teacher education (or not). These statements were coded and summarised within each of the four categories.

Preliminary findings were presented to fellow researchers at three different points in the analytical process. This feedback helped to develop the analytical categories and a more stringent analytical account of the interrelationships between disciplinary knowledge and teacher education. Some respondents had previous experience from this specific programme, and their comments partially served as a form of participant validation.

The next section presents the results of the analysis, organised according to the four discourses and addressing both research questions. When citations are used, research participants are referred to using an individually designated number.

Knowledge discourses in teacher education

Disciplinary knowledge as strengthening the programme

In this discourse, disciplinary knowledge was positioned as a strength for the teacher education programme. A key assumption was that educational quality was enhanced by "offering the best possible disciplinary-based knowledge and competencies" (2-2) based on up-to-date research. Disciplinary scholars were positioned as "experts" and "specialists" and contrasted to teacher educators at programmes for primary and lower secondary schools, where faculty typically teach a broader range of subjects. The "generalist" teacher educator, who needs to know a little bit about everything, was compared to the "specialist" teacher educator who facilitates a different learning process:

> So, the learning dynamics are strong in this programme, and I think that's our strength in comparison to other programmes, where you have to learn and to teach a lot of subjects at the same time. They are strong on integration, but when you are teaching fractions, and how to teach fractions, and the importance of fractions for professional practice at the same time, it can become an educational challenge to facilitate deep learning around all those themes simultaneously. (3-1)

This way of relating disciplinary knowledge to the mandate of teacher education had implications for how coherence was understood. In this quote, knowledge integration is framed as something that might undermine student learning by presenting students with too many issues to attend to simultaneously. Deep learning is facilitated through immersion in the disciplinary domain, and this learning process is facilitated by a subject specialist. In terms of programme design, a temporal sequence was constructed in which students first had to become subject experts and then attend to "professional" knowledge. Expectations of integration and professional relevance should not interfere with ideals of subject specialization:

> What should the practicum consist of? Many people in this teacher education programme, particularly those who have a strong background in disciplinary subjects, think that the practicum takes up too much time. And, they kind of think that, "this training, that's all very well, but it should not under any circumstances interfere with the subjects we are teaching here on campus". (3-3)

Finally, the research-intensive nature of disciplinary departments was seen to contribute to teacher professionalism by exposing students to up-to-date research: "This is what I think our teacher education model is good at. If something new happens within research in [disciplinary field X], then this type of teacher education programme will be the first to integrate it" (3-1). Engagement with research was also seen to prepare teachers to critically examine and renew existing practices in schools, rather than merely reproducing them. This

was, again, contrasted to the teacher education programme for primary and lower secondary schools,

> …which has historically had a closer relationship to schools and to the field of practice, but sometimes that relationship can become too close – if teacher education only reflects current practices in schools, we don't move forward. (3-1)

In this statement, the criticism of teacher education being disconnected from professional practice is reconstructed as an advantage. Research is positioned as a tool that could help students maintain a critical distance from professional practice and renew established conventions for work.

In summary, strong disciplinary domains and subject specialization were positioned as strengthening the teacher education programme, providing a competitive advantage over other types of teacher qualifications. This framing of disciplinary domains afforded disciplinary scholars a sense of ownership and purpose in relation to the programme. At the same time, this discourse implied particular perspectives on knowledge integration and programme design, through which established policy discourses on knowledge integration were challenged. Rather than reinforcing political expectations of increased integration across disciplinary and professional knowledge domains, keeping disciplinary knowledge at arm's length from professional practice was construed as necessary for student learning and for developing critical and reflective practitioners. The most salient subject position was the disciplinary subject expert who is up-to-date on current research and facilitates subject specialization and deep learning.

The programme as strengthening the disciplinary knowledge domain

This discourse was characterised by an underlying assumption that involvement in teacher education provides disciplinary knowledge domains with increased legitimacy and societal relevance. Part of this legitimacy was related to the high academic achievement of student teachers. In several departments, this was contrasted to the students enrolled in disciplinary programmes, who entered university with significantly lower grade averages:

> What has really contributed toward creating interest and respect for the teacher education programme is the high academic quality of the student teachers. They often perform much better than the disciplinary students. And, the academics really like that, and it helps strengthen the respect for the teaching profession. (3-2)

Talk about the "academic quality" of student teachers served both to position teacher education as beneficial for disciplinary departments, and as something that helped programme leaders to strengthen the legitimacy of teacher education amongst disciplinary scholars. Teacher education was also seen to strengthen the disciplinary domains through

increased recruitment. This was particularly the case within the humanities, where several subject areas had seen a decrease in student numbers:

> [Teacher education] is important for our department now, it's important for the future recruitment of students and it's particularly important for the subject of history, which has traditionally been a sizeable discipline, but we have lost many master students over the past years. And, we are competing with [the local university college], and they have been actively profiling themselves as a professionally relevant teacher education programme. So, of course, we also need to market ourselves as teacher educators if students are going to select us. (2-1)

Here, recruitment to the teacher education programme helped disciplinary scholars protect the status of their knowledge domain. However, this required that the department position itself as a teacher education provider, competing on criteria such as "professional relevance". While the disciplinary domain was being protected, it was simultaneously being reframed in line with students' expectations toward professional education.

This discourse was also shaped by the increased institutional emphasis on teacher education. Several informants described university rectors who were actively promoting teacher education, which was seen as strategically important. Contributing to a teacher education programme provided a tangible basis for arguing that a specific knowledge domain was useful for the university. This also generated additional resources:

> We have new academic positions that are legitimised because of the teacher education programme, and we have political expectations from Parliament and also from the university through the Rectorate and the Deanship. Really great, thumbs up, high spirits. (1-1)

Finally, the importance of teacher education for the disciplinary domain was constructed around the idea of their organic interrelationship. In this account, the mandate of qualifying school teachers was closely connected with the future development of the discipline:

> One of the arguments I use is that I talk about the ecology of the knowledge society. We live in a knowledge society where everything is interconnected. So, if we don't educate good teachers, then we undermine our connections with schools. And, it's in the schools that our future students are being prepared. So, I try to say that, if you [disciplinary academics] want good students, then you need to educate good teachers who can educate the school students. And then, they can come here and be good university students. (3-2)

This line of reasoning positioned the mandate of educating teachers not just as a strength but as a precondition for the future development of the disciplinary knowledge domain.

Thus, a mutually constitutive relationship was discursively established, in which the interests of disciplinary scholars cannot be considered separately from educational quality in schools.

In summary, this discourse emphasised the advantages of being associated with the teacher education programme for safeguarding the disciplinary knowledge domains by increasing the legitimacy of the discipline, facilitating access to highly qualified students and generating resources. Implications for programme design were typically not articulated explicitly, but the disciplinary domain was often framed in relation to notions of societal and professional relevance, rather than discipline-specific criteria. This discourse went some way toward recontextualising the disciplinary domain in relation to the mandate of teacher education. It also positioned faculty with clear responsibilities for qualifying teachers, both for societal purposes and for ensuring the long-term development of the disciplinary domain.

The programme as challenging the disciplinary knowledge domain

This discourse was characterised by an underlying assumption that teacher education represented a threat to the disciplinary domain. This relationship was constructed as a zero-sum game: an increased focus on teacher education would come at the expense of safeguarding disciplinary knowledge and identities.

One reason for these tensions was attributed to an increased number of student teachers. Students enrolled in teacher education and disciplinary degrees attended the same courses. Historically, teaching had been organised according to a disciplinary logic, and no special affordances had been made to relate disciplinary subjects to professional practice. However, as the number of student teachers increased, sometimes outnumbering disciplinary students, disciplinary scholars were faced with expectations to cater more specifically to teacher education. The data contained several examples of such adaptations: for example, the literature lists in English language courses had been revised based on their relevance to work in schools, and a history course had become web-based to avoid timetable conflicts with the practicum. Another example related to the master's thesis. The national steering document specified that the master's thesis should be "professionally relevant". This had caused concern amongst disciplinary scholars:

> This was a very important issue for many people. Because, what does it mean? "Professionally relevant"? And, of course, within the disciplinary departments, they had a strong fear that this would mean that, in all subjects, students would have to do classroom-based research. And that wouldn't have been very well received, and they probably wouldn't be very well placed to supervise such theses, either. (3-2).

These examples illustrate how an increased focus on teacher education meant that key elements of disciplinary knowledge became "at stake" issues: course content, the organization of teaching activities and the master's thesis. Such developments resulted in

tensions between the mandate of educating teachers and maintaining the disciplinary programmes:

> So, the Faculty Board has decided that we need to accommodate [our course offerings] to the teacher education programme. They are going to explore the option of designing specific courses within the disciplinary subjects that are targeted to teacher education students. And, of course, that's something that's… it's not necessarily that easy to do, when you are a disciplinary scholar located within a disciplinary department and you have your academic identity and pride, and then you are expected to adapt to a teacher education programme. (4-1)

He continued to recount how he was once asked, "Are we all going to be teacher educators now?" at a meeting where customization of disciplinary courses to the teacher education programme had been discussed, and elaborated on the implications for disciplinary scholars' academic identity:

> Sometimes I can understand it, if you look at the type of language that is in use and the official decisions that are made, that it's difficult for the disciplinary scholars. And, that it can even be experienced as a threat. Because what happens to our identity in all of this? (4-1)

Finally, concerns had been raised about the academic achievement of student teachers, because 60 credit points of their degrees were assigned to pedagogy and subject didactics. Combined with the 100-day practicum, these courses were seen as interfering with student teachers' capacity to immerse themselves in disciplinary studies. Some academic staff were reportedly reluctant to supervise student teachers because they perceived the students' knowledge base to be deficient:

> It's a misunderstanding that I think we've now managed to get rid of, but for many years, my colleagues in the English department had this idea that the student teachers who were about to write their master's thesis had fewer English language courses than the disciplinary students. They don't. They have exactly the same courses. The only difference is that they write a 30-credit point master's thesis instead of 60.… So, we used a lot of time discussing this because there was this perception that the student teachers were not academically prepared for the thesis. (3-2).

In summary, this discourse was characterised by an underlying tension between the mandate of educating teachers and the safeguarding of the disciplinary domain, where the notion of a zero-sum game prevailed. Within this discourse, an increased focus on programme integration implied a threat to scholarly quality and established academic identities. Efforts aimed at adapting disciplinary courses to the teacher education programme were therefore met with resistance. Faculty were positioned as having their

academic integrity and identities challenged as a result of efforts aimed at increased integration.

Disciplinary knowledge as separate from the programme

The final discourse was characterised by the notion of a disconnect between disciplinary courses and the teacher education programme, expressed in a variety of ways. In one account, the separation was constructed as a natural consequence of the programme structure, which placed natural limits on the extent to which disciplinary knowledge could be integrated with professional courses. Rather than advocating increased coherence, it was emphasised that student teachers needed to be informed about the limitations of the programme design and to learn how to navigate its epistemic diversity. This was sometimes legitimised with reference to students' future work: "this is how teachers work in real life, they run from one subject to another" (1-1). In brief, the disconnect was constructed as a "natural" state of affairs and something that students needed to learn to live with.

Another manifestation of the disconnect appeared in accounts of disciplinary scholars who were completely unaware of the teacher education programme, even though they had student teachers enrolled in their courses. One programme leader recounted how a significant part of her job was to simply make her colleagues aware that they were teacher educators:

> I think I have been quite active in this regard, more than my predecessor… I have worked a lot within this department to make people aware that we are actually teacher educators. We just don't know it, haha. (2-3)

In this account, the disconnect was not necessarily intentional, but a result of ignorance or of the invisibility of the teacher education programme in disciplinary departments. This extended to formal decision-making fora, where the teacher education programme was described as falling off the radar. One informant described an important part of his role as reminding the leadership that the department had responsibilities for teacher education in addition to disciplinary degrees:

> And then my role [in the meetings] is always to say "so, what do we think about this in relation to the teacher education programme?" or "yes, but if we should be strategic, perhaps we should promote the teacher education programme". (1-3)

This type of disconnect was attributed to ignorance or lack of awareness. Thus, efforts toward increased programme coherence or knowledge integration centred on increasing the visibility and general awareness of the programme.

A third version of the disconnect appeared through an othering of student teachers as a group that did not organically belong in the disciplinary departments:

> Because, even if the student teachers write a master's thesis within [the disciplinary subject]… then faculty think of them as students belonging to the teacher education programme. Even when the majority of the students attending lectures in Nordic languages and literature, history or German are student teachers, even when they enrol in courses that belong to our departments and they are students that belong to us… the faculty still think that, "Oh, it's those student teachers". And, that's where a lot of the tension lies… So, now we are quite consciously talking about them as students who belong to the disciplinary knowledge domain. To make it clear that they are not other people's students, they are our students. (4-1)

In this case, the separation is expressed by student teachers being positioned outside of or on the margins of the disciplinary domain. The informant emphasised the contradictions associated with this discourse, given that student teachers take the majority of their credit points in disciplinary departments. However, through their enrolment in the teacher education programme, a distance was constructed between them and students taking disciplinary degrees.

A final version of the disconnect concerned the relationship between the disciplinary domain and the related school subject, and more specifically, how the knowledge domain was organised and enacted. An example is this account of different approaches to "doing history":

> So, history as a school subject has developed and separated itself somewhat from history as a university discipline. [In schools], they are concerned with historical consciousness and how we are both a product of history and producers of history, rather than accounts of what actually happened. That's how history is taught in schools. But, nobody here [in the disciplinary department] knows that. Everyone thinks that history in school is the same as what they are working on, and that students arrive here with the same knowledge about the First World War that they had when they left school. (3-4)

In this case, the disconnect was constructed between history as a university discipline and as a school subject, assigning the two domains different epistemic logics and scholarly identities. This has implications for efforts aimed at integration, in that the knowledge domain that could have acted as a bridge between higher education and school was discursively divided.

In summary, this discourse was characterised by accounts of separation at various levels: faculty, leadership fora, the student group and the knowledge domain. The subject position of faculty was constructed as disciplinary scholars who have little knowledge or awareness of the teacher education programme, and who are either tacitly or explicitly denying its relevance for disciplinary departments. The implication for programme leaders was that

efforts toward programme coherence and knowledge integration had to be directed at multiple levels, but also had to be generally focussed on awareness raising and information.

Discussion and conclusion

The empirical analysis shows how disciplinary knowledge can be positioned in diverse ways in relation to the mandate of teacher education, with implications for efforts aimed at integration. The first discourse positioned disciplinary domains as significantly contributing to the quality of teacher education, affording disciplinary faculty with clear responsibilities for educating future teachers. However, prevailing notions of integration were somewhat resisted and recontextualised in favour of an emphasis on subject specialization and research-based teaching. The second discourse positioned the teacher education programme as a source of legitimacy for disciplinary knowledge domains, informed by broader policy discourses about societal and economic relevance. To some extent, the mandate of teacher education was discursively subsumed under the broader objective of securing the relevance and quality of the disciplinary domain. At the same time, this positioning required that disciplinary departments "market themselves" as teacher educators, and expectations of "professional relevance" informed how the disciplinary domains were talked about. The third discourse positioned the teacher education programme as a threat to the quality and organization of disciplinary domains, and the relationship between the two was framed as a zero-sum game. Expectations of integration were described as challenging established conventions for work and academic identities. Finally, the fourth discourse positioned disciplinary knowledge domains as separate from the teacher education programme, either in the form of an empirical gap or in terms of "natural" limits to integration. In the first case, separation was framed as an undesirable state that could be overcome; in the second case, separation was constructed as a natural state of affairs.

These findings highlight the constructive and creative work that educators conduct as they actively seek to forge (or deny) specific relations between specific knowledge domains and the professional mandate. The four discourses coexisted across the four programmes, illustrating how the interface between disciplinary knowledge and the professional education programme cannot be taken as a "given", but needs to be understood as a relationship that is contested, open for interpretation and continuously evolving. The ways in which these relationships were constructed were informed by cultural, organizational and political contexts. For example, these discourses were intimately linked with the relational and emotional ties that academics had developed with their particular knowledge domains. They were also informed by themes such as student recruitment, their academic achievement, the strategic priorities of higher education institutions and broader political discourses about the role of higher education in society.

As a consequence, the programme leaders needed to work with and upon these divergent discourses as an integrated part of their efforts toward programme design and development, addressing diverse conceptualizations of "coherence" or "integration" in the process. More generally, leadership of professional education involves navigating multiple epistemic domains and identities. There has been scant empirical attention paid to what this actually entails. Yet, negotiating this complexity and its divergent approaches to professional education appears to be crucial for efforts aimed at strengthening educational quality. This type of leadership involves working with people's perceptions of and attachments to different knowledge domains, as well as to the professional mandate. This can be challenging because it entails working with and upon people's identities and their emotional connections to their work.

A practical implication is that efforts toward increased "integration" in teacher education need to take into account that a diversity of notions may exist within a given programme about what integration "is" and how the relationship between different knowledge domains and the professional mandate should be constituted. Programme leaders needed to develop their own accounts of these issues and relate them to the range of discourses they faced in their work. They also needed to create arenas and processes where these different discourses could be exposed to each other and placed under collective scrutiny (Hermansen, 2019).

Analytically, this article demonstrates the relevance of knowledge discourses as a unit of analysis for examining questions of coherence. By illuminating how knowledge is talked about and related to the professional domain, it is possible to gain insights into how specific educational settings provide affordances and constraints for efforts aimed at programme coherence. Theoretically, the analysis contributes to a conceptual understanding of coherence as a situated and emergent achievement (Hermansen, 2019), as opposed to a set of predefined characteristics.

Limitations of this study include the lack of a longitudinal, developmental perspective documenting changes in discursive configurations over time. A larger participant sample, combined with an ethnographic approach, would also have allowed for a more fine-grained analysis of the historical relationships between specific knowledge domains and teacher education, incorporating the significance of organisational factors. These limitations represent avenues for future research.

Article history

Received: 29 Jan 2020
Accepted: 15 Oct 2020
Published: 05 Nov 2020

References

Afdal, H. W. (2017). “Research-based” and “profession-oriented” as prominent knowledge discourses in curriculum restructuring of professional programs. *Higher Education*, *74*(3), 401–418. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-016-9998-7

Afdal, H. W., & Spernes, K. (2018). Designing and redesigning research-based teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *74*, 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.05.011

Askling, B., Gjørv, I. L., Hansén, S-E., Indrelid, B., Klubbenes, A. M., . . . Ytreberg, L. H., (2006). *Evaluering av allmennlærerutdanningen i Norge*. [Evaluation of the general teacher education programme in Norway]. Oslo: NOKUT

BERA. (2014). *The role of research in teacher education: Reviewing the evidence*. London: British Educational Research Association & Action and Research Centre.

Buchmann, M., & Floden, R. E. (1992). Coherence, the rebel angel. *Educational Researcher*, 21(8), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X021009004

Canrinus, E. T., Bergem, O. K., Klette, K., & Hammerness, K. (2017a). Coherent teacher education programmes: Taking a student perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *49*(3), 313–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2015.1124145

Canrinus, E. T., Klette, K., & Hammerness, K. (2017b). Diversity in coherence: Strengths and opportunities of three programs. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *70*(3), 192–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487117737305

Cochran-Smith, M. (2010). Toward a theory of teacher education for social justice. In Hargreaves, A., Lieberman, A., Fullan, M. & Hopkins, D. (Eds.). *Second International Handbook of Educational Change* (pp. 445–467). Dordrecht: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2660-6_27

Darling-Hammond, L. (2014). Strengthening clinical preparation: The holy grail of teacher education. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *89*(4), 547–561. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2014.939009

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *20*(1), 43–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.1990.tb00174.x

Edwards, A., & Thompson, M. (2013). Resourceful leadership: Revealing the creativity of organisational leaders. In A. Sannino & V. Ellis (Eds.), *Learning and collective creativity: Activity-theoretical and sociocultural studies* (pp. 49–64). London: Routledge.

Engeström, Y. (2007). Putting Vygotsky to work: The change laboratory as an application of double stimulation. In H.Daniels, M. Cole, & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky* (pp. 363–382). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Forzani, F. M. (2014). Understanding “core practices” and “practice-based” teacher education: Learning from the past. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *65*(4), 357–368. https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521831040.015

Foucault, M. (2013). *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203604168

Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *13*, p. 423–451. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00120-0

Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., & McDonald, M. (2009). Redefining teaching, re-imagining teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching*, *15*(2), 273–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600902875340

Grossman, P., Hammerness, K. M., McDonald, M., & Ronfeldt, M. (2008). Constructing coherence structural predictors of perceptions of coherence in NYC teacher education programs. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *59*(4), 273–287. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487108322127

Hammerness, K. (2006). From coherence in theory to coherence in practice. *The Teachers College Record*, *108*(7), 1241–1265. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00692.x

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography*. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203944769

Hatlevik, I. (2014). *Meningsfulle sammenhenger: En studie av sammenhenger mellom læring på ulike arenaer og utvikling av ulike aspekter ved profesjonell kompetanse hos studenter i sykepleier-, lærer- og sosialarbeider- utdanningene.* [Meaningful connections: A study of connections between learning in different arenas and the development of professional competencies among students in nursing, teacher, and social work education]. (Doctoral thesis, Oslo: Centre for the Study of Professions, Oslo and Akershus University College).

Hatlevik, I., & Smeby, J.-C. (2015). Programme coherence and epistemological beliefs. *Nordic Psychology*, *67*, 136–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/19012276.2015.1031553

Heggen, K., & Terum, L. I. (2013). Coherence in professional education: Does it foster dedication and identification? *Teaching in Higher Education*, *18*(6), 656–669. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2013.774352

Hermansen, H. (2019). In Pursuit of Coherence: Aligning program development in teacher education with institutional practices. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2019.1639815

Jensen, K., Lahn, L., & Nerland, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Professional learning in a changing society*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-994-7

Jenset, I. S., Hammerness, K., & Klette, K. (2018). Talk about field placement within campus coursework: Connecting theory and practice in teacher education. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2017.1415968

Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208871

Knorr-Cetina, K. (1999). *Epistemic cultures: How the sciences make knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208871

Knorr-Cetina, K. (2001). Objectual practice. In E. Von Savigny & T. R. Schatzki (Eds.), *The practice turn in contemporary theory* (175–188). London: Routledge.

Lehmann, T. (Ed.) (2020). *International Perspectives on Knowledge Integration: Theory, Research, and Good Practice in Pre-service Teacher and Higher Education*. Leiden: Brill Sense https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004429499

Lillejord, S. & Børte, K. (2016). Partnership in teacher education – A research mapping. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *39*(5), 550–563. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2016.1252911

Mausethagen, S., Prøitz, T., & Skedsmo, G. (2017). Teachers' use of knowledge sources in 'result meetings': Thin data and thick data use. *Teachers and Teaching*, *24*(1), 37–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1379986

Mausethagen, S., & Smeby, J.-C. (2016). Contemporary education policy and teacher professionalism. In M. Dent, I. L. Bourgeault, J.-L. Denis, & E. Kuhlmann (Eds.) *The Routledge Companion to the Professions and Professionalism*. (p. 329–342). London: Routledge.

Ministry of Education and Research (2013). *Forskrift om rammeplan for lektorutdanning for trinn 8–13* [Regulations for the teacher education programme for grades 8–13]. Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

Muller, J. (2009). Forms of knowledge and curriculum coherence. *Journal of Education and Work*, *22*(3), 205–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080902957905

Munthe, E., & Rogne, M. (2015). Research-based teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *46*, 17–24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.10.006

Pantić, N. (2017). An exploratory study of teacher agency for social justice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *66*, 219–230.

Smeby, J.-C., & Heggen, K. (2014). Coherence and the development of professional knowledge and skills. *Journal of Education and Work*, *2012*(1–21). https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2012.718749

Tatto, M. T. (2015). The role of research in the policy and practice of quality teacher education: An international review. *Oxford Review of Education*, *41*(2), 171–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2015.1017405

Wæge, K., & Haugaløkken, O. K. (2013). Research-based and hands-on practical teacher education: An attempt to combine the two. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *39*(2), 235–249. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2013.765195

Windschitl, M., Thompson, J., Braaten, M., & Stroupe, D. (2012). Proposing a core set of instructional practices and tools for teachers of science. *Science Education*, *96*(5), 878–903. https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.21027

Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college-and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *61*(1–2), 89–99. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109347671

& PROFESSIONS PROFESSIONALISM

ISSN: 1893-1049 Volume 10, No 3 (2020), e3838

Constructions of Vulnerability by Different Groups of Welfare Professionals

Birgitte Theilmann[1] & Erik Laursen[2]

1. Aalborg University, Denmark
2. Aalborg University, Denmark

Contact: Birgitte Theilmann, Aalborg University, birgittetheilmann@yahoo.dk

Abstract

This article has examined the various ways vulnerability among children is constructed by four groups of welfare professionals (teachers, daycare workers, social workers, and health care workers) within a Danish welfare context. Based on an empirical research project that featured a large number of interviews, the article has demonstrated how professionals construct vulnerability from a combination of their professional background and experiences in their working practice related to vulnerability among children. The research findings have revealed that professional employees in general tend to link vulnerability among children to either diagnoses and deviant behavior or a child's family context. At the same time, professional employees tend to ignore the possibility that vulnerability might be produced inside an institutional context like a school or kindergarten. In linking vulnerability to the child's family context, professional employees generally point to classic forms of risk and social problem factors related to children's families.

Keywords

Vulnerable children, social work, interdisciplinary cooperation

Introduction

Over the past couple of decades, Denmark has paid increased attention to children in vulnerable positions. As a result, there has been a considerable political will to propose and implement social reforms intended to reduce the proportion of children in vulnerable positions or at least reduce their levels of vulnerability (Socialstyrelsen, 2011). Recent studies have revealed that, despite this vigilance, the share of Danish children in vulnerable positions is actually increasing (Danmarks Statistik, 2018; National Association of Municipalities, 2019). A strong political focus on vulnerability, combined with reforms and interventions, is also reflected in a more global context, often without achieving the desired goal. This is especially true of preventive strategies targeting vulnerable children, which has been a major emphasis in many European countries (Eurochild, 2016, 2017; European Commission, 2013). In spite of this strengthened legislative focus, the strategies adopted do not appear to be working, as only modest improvements in the share of children facing social problems and vulnerabilities have been reported (Cingano, 2014; Inchley & Currie, 2016). Several studies have focused on implementation, focusing on the role of professional employees (Bo, Guldager, & Zeeberg, 2015; Brodkin, 2012; Lipsky, 2010; Zacka, 2017). However, there has not been a corresponding focus on how *vulnerability among children has been conceptualized*. The existing literature reveals a consensus about defining children in vulnerable positions from a variety of dimensions: poverty, social exclusion, violence, sexual abuse, health difficulties, stigmatization, and discrimination (Andersen, Jensen, Nielsen, & Skaksen, 2017; House of Commons, 2008; Mynarska et al., 2015). In general, there has been less focus on identifying children with a more privileged social background who show symptoms of lacking well-being, but there is now growing interest in expanding traditional ways of delineating vulnerability. This implies that when vulnerability is to be detected by professional employees, they must examine broader target groups (Görlich et al., 2019). To be able to target social efforts to specific groups of children in vulnerable positions, it is necessary to identify and classify those groups and link this classification to the different kinds of efforts directed at them by the social welfare apparatus. This study investigates how different groups of welfare professionals construct vulnerability among children and seeks to answer this research question: How do different groups of welfare professionals (teachers, daycare workers, social workers, and health care workers) construct vulnerability when defining the target group for interventions and special efforts? This question requires investigating both how constructions are actually carried out and the results of those processes of construction. Finally, we strive to identify factors affecting the processes of construction.

The case

As a study case, we use the implementation of a developmental strategy in the area of vulnerable children in Aalborg, a large Danish municipality, from 2016 to 2020 (Commune of Aalborg, 2016). The strategy relates to Aalborg's school administration and its family and

employment (F&E) administration. Cooperation between the two administrations addresses early detection and preventive work with vulnerable children. The strategy addresses two target groups: children showing initial signs of a lack of well-being who are at risk of later developing special needs, and children who are exposed to serious threats and in obvious danger of permanent damage. Cooperation between the employees in the organizations involves developing a common understanding of both target groups, which is a prerequisite for interdisciplinary cooperation between the professions involved. This is especially true for the four professional groups most central to vulnerable children. At the same time, those four professional groups work in different areas; while teachers, daycare workers, and health care workers deal with the general public, social workers serve a specialized population. There are also different work tasks: teaching (teachers), teaching and care (daycare workers), guidance (health care workers), and social efforts (social workers).

Research design and methods

In order to examine the construction of vulnerability among welfare professionals within the organizations, we conducted semi-structured individual interviews with four teachers, four social workers, three daycare workers, and four health care workers (4). We also conducted group interviews based on cases with the same informant groups—three teachers, three social workers, two daycare workers, and three health care workers—to initiate discussions about vulnerability within the groups. Altogether, 72 welfare professionals were interviewed.

The interview guide used for the individual interviews included wide-ranging and open-ended questions that focused more on theme than fine detail. The themes were 1) target group descriptions, 2) organizing interdisciplinary cooperation, 3) options for action, and 4) professional knowledge. These themes were also elements of the cases used in the group interviews. The interviews were coded using the NVivo software package. The process of coding comprised two levels: first, a broader thematic coding according to key concepts in the strategy (vulnerable children, interdisciplinary cooperation, early intervention and prevention, and organizational and professional knowledge), and then a more focused coding containing the key theoretical concepts derived from Abbott's (1988) notions of jurisdiction and diagnosis, inference, and treatment. The coding contained statements from the professionals according to their tasks and their attitudes toward vulnerability, which were clustered into categories. For analytical purposes, we used *power and proof quotes* (Pratt, 2008) to illustrate and pinpoint important findings and key understandings. Power quotes are strong opinions and statements from interviewees that capture the central messages of the analysis. Proof quotes are several short single quotes, puzzle pieces that contribute to the overall analysis. The proof quotes are presented in two meaning-condensed tables below (Pratt, 2008).

The structure of the analysis unfolds in two stages. The first part examines theoretical perspectives on vulnerability by analyzing the symptoms and causes linked to vulnerability, how welfare professionals define and construct vulnerability, and individual and contextual stresses. The second part examines the types of knowledge influencing the construction of vulnerability among welfare professionals and their professional backgrounds and functions.

Based on our findings, we reflect on the consequences of ways of constructing vulnerability in regard to both the contextual practice of different interventions and interdisciplinary cooperation. Finally, we summarize the article's key points, followed by our closing reflections on welfare professionals' different constructions of vulnerability.

Abbott's key concepts of jurisdiction and diagnosis, inference, and treatment

In our analysis of the similarities and differences in the four groups of professions, we use Abbott's (1988) theoretical framework and his notion of jurisdiction, buttressed by the key concepts of diagnosis, inference, and treatment. Our aim is to understand the extent to which and why constructions of vulnerability made by the professionals are influenced by their organizational positions, their professional tasks, and their professional backgrounds.

For Abbott, jurisdiction refers to the legitimate requirements for certain workers to maintain their specialized expertise and related competences. For that purpose, each profession builds a *knowledge system* (Abbott, 1988), which—in addition to academic expert knowledge—consists of more practical and experience-based cognitive procedures for problem identification (diagnoses) and problem intervention (treatment). According to Abbott, the understanding of the construction of professional jurisdiction includes—besides language—embodied experiences, material working tools, and organizational arrangements. However, language is central, as Abbott's concepts of the knowledge system refer to a great extent to how certain expertise and understandings of diagnosis and intervention are codified linguistically as common professional resources. Each profession must balance different linguistic forms that relate to academic and practical working contexts. This point is particularly relevant for an analysis of the constructions of vulnerability among different professional groups.

In Abbott's understanding, diagnosis, inference, and treatment constitute three interconnected moments in practical professional work and are thus an approach to the notion of *professional discretion* (Østergaard Møller, 2018). Abbott uses these terms in a general way to understand the work of the professions. In our case, this includes the different ways vulnerability is constructed and identified (diagnosis) and explained and handled professionally through social and pedagogical interventions (treatment). Fundamentally, presenting a professional diagnosis is a question of how a given profession classifies, designates, and distinguishes a problem as a problem of expertise, while

treatment is about how professions address problems by choosing relevant types of interventions to undertake. Inference is the process that connects these two moments, linking the general classification of a problem with a specific type of intervention adapted to the specific case of a particular child.

Constructing vulnerability as a combination of protection and risks

Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins (2002) pointed out that promising preventive efforts and early interventions are based on knowledge about risk and protective factors, but they also called for new research addressing the dynamics between risk and protective factors.

According to Kvello (2013), risk factors are common terms describing conditions that increase the probability of developing problems when growing up in families with one or more challenges. Some risk factors are closely connected to the development of specific problems, while others are related to many different disorders. Just as it is the continuous interaction between child and environment that influences children the most, it is also long-lasting exposure to risk factors that has the most severe effects on children, as opposed to shorter periods of intense exposure to high-risk factors (Kvello, 2013). Conversely, there are several protective factors in the childhood environment or within the individual that reduce the probability of damaging effects on children who are exposed to risk factors (Kvello, 2013). Like risk factors, protective factors include genetic, biological, mental, environmental, and social aspects (Schoon, 2006). Protective factors can be effective against several risk factors and become crucial when risk factors are severe because they have been present for a lengthy period.

Risk and protective factors can be both static and dynamic. The former are genetic predisposition, gender, and other factors that can only be altered to a modest extent, if at all, by social interventions. More often, risk and protective factors are dynamic and susceptible to influence and change through such interventions (Kvello, 2013).

A mapping of risk and protective factors for children in vulnerable families conducted by Rambøll Management Consulting (2016) shows—across 70 international and 15 Nordic studies—that factors apart from parental care can affect the development of a child. Personal, individual, familial, and contextual relationships can all be either protective or risk factors for different target groups among children who live in families with social problems. For this reason, knowledge about protective and risk factors is important for professional employees working with vulnerable children, as they can connect to the children through relationships in an institutional context.

According to the Rambøll study (2016), risk and protective factors that influence mental difficulties can be divided into the following three domains: 1) individual factors attached to

the child´s own resilience; (2) familial factors connected to the home environment, parenting skills, parenting interactions with the child, and proximity of relation; and (3) institutional factors related to the contextual surroundings that constitute the child's network.

Analysis of symptoms and causes linked to vulnerability

Symptoms, causes, and consequences

Because of how the concept is constructed, the academic field of children in vulnerable positions is associated with a multitude of terms and notions that fall into two broad categories: factors that burden children's everyday lives and symptoms, signs, or indicators of the different kinds of burdens to which children are exposed (Görlich et al., 2019). The competences to make valid interpretations of the various indicators of possible situations of vulnerability and thus detect the largely hidden sources that are creating discomfort and stress make up an important part of the professional role of employees working in this field. The method that welfare professionals choose to solve the problem depends on how vulnerability considered as a problem is constructed, experienced, and explained (Abbott, 1988). Definitions are used by the professionals to identify and categorize children in vulnerable positions and thus make target groups for different kinds of efforts by the welfare sector.

The overall construction of vulnerability refers to three elements: the signs, indicators, or symptoms of vulnerability, the causes of vulnerability, and the consequences of vulnerability. It is largely signs and causes that make up the definition of vulnerability, along with its delineation from other phenomena. While indicators constitute the immediately observable phenomena of vulnerability, causes are typically more difficult to identify. They often require additional information in order to detect with accuracy the hidden factors producing the symptoms and, through professional analysis, to explain the relationships between causes and symptoms and point toward the proper ways of intervening in a situation. Concerns arise based on observed indicators that are either verified or rebutted based on whether an underlying cause can be detected and confirmed. Finally, the consequences of vulnerability are used to distinguish between different types and levels of vulnerability.

The classified phenomena are grouped together with other phenomena that appear to have significant common features. The category of vulnerability is further differentiated into a number of subcategories, each of which is different enough to merit a categorical distinction (Lakoff, 1987; Laursen, 2020).

The who, why, and how of classifying vulnerability

To support the analytical framing of the ways that employees in welfare organizations classify human beings, Rubington and Weinberg (1969) suggested the set of questions detailed in the paragraphs below.

Who defines and classifies whom? Definitions and classifications are attached to children who show worrying features indicating that they are in vulnerable positions: violent behavior, self-harming behavior, absence from school, stress and anxiety, and a lack of participation in social communities. Definitions and classifications also include the children's families as factors, because risk-creating stresses are often located in the family; examples include violence, abuse, changes in the behavior of the child due to parental discord and career parents who are busy and do not have time for their children. The institutional context of kindergarten or school is, however, also involved, especially as a framework in which symptoms of vulnerability can be observed. Definitions and classifications are carried out by a number of professionals within the two administrations.

Why do people make definitions and classifications? Because public organizations are part of a welfare society with an imperative to act on social problems. According to Bacchi (2009), a phenomenon like vulnerability becomes a problem when society perceives it as such and feels a responsibility to address it. The starting point is to perceive it against the background of desirable normality, according to which it is possible to construct anomaly, its undesirable counterpoint. Based on a concept of normality, various examples of a lack of well-being are defined as abnormal and are thus conditions that will permanently harm the child. This motivates a morally justified demand to intervene in the problem.

In order to reduce the level of vulnerability among children, employees in both administrations are asked to identify signs and indicators of children's being at risk and to provide a description of the situation. In order to create a precise and informative description, professionals need to distinguish between different levels of vulnerability by estimating how serious the risks are. This classification is used to select the proper kind of intervention from among the options available in the two administrations (Jenkins,1996; Laursen, 2020; Theilmann, 2020).

Even though all professionals share the same goal of early detection of vulnerable children, they are also each influenced by their different tasks. In practice, they classify according to slightly different criteria, depending on the particular purpose of their profession in classifying vulnerability. The social workers connect vulnerability to family background, where violation, abuse, mental illness, and a lack of resources are the most prominent factors, although diagnoses of children and recurring absences from school are also involved. The teachers focus on children who deviate from ideal pupils, who are

independent, self-reflexive, and responsible for their own learning processes. Daycare workers are generally aware of children's access to and participation in social relationships, and health care workers focus on physical (mal)development and psychological well-being (Theilmann, 2020). Employees in the general area (teachers and daycare workers) initially make classifications from the perspective where daily operations like teaching and care are carried out. Disturbances and problems in daily operations are therefore classified according to a desire to keep operations flowing, which can lead to employees focusing on well-being in a broader sense.

How can this be done? The identifications and classifications carried out in relation to vulnerability are an integrated part of the general process of identifying, explaining, and intervening in problems; as moments in the professional work process, they are carried out with support from the individual's profession (Abbott, 1988; Østergaard Møller, 2018). The knowledge systems of the professions are generated from at least two sources: 1) professional training and 2) the work-based experience of individual professional employees. Employees draw on a broad knowledge base that describes and explains the phenomenon and on a set of procedures that prescribe how action should be undertaken (Argyris, 1992; Laursen, 2020).

Through the interviews in our study, we learned that the professional groups draw on different sources of information. Social workers collect assessments from colleagues with different professional backgrounds:

> "When I receive a referral, I am always careful about the fact that many explanations can be at play. I often involve the kindergarten to qualify my decisions" (Social Worker (SW) 2).

Teachers generally refer to their own knowledge constructions and self-made models. Still, technologies are also used as a tool for communicating with employees from other professions and administrations:

> "I make my own models in accordance with my experience, but sometimes the social workers ask me for a school statement. Then I use the ICS model" (Teacher (T) 1).

Daycare workers take a more multifaceted approach to knowledge and methods. When revealing their understanding of a problem, they draw on knowledge from the child's family and their colleagues, combined with professional discussions with other cooperators, handbooks, methods, models, and theories. For example, daycare worker (DCW) 1 reports the following: "I use Børnelinealen [an assessment tool] to make the relevant determinations." DCW 2, meanwhile, says her professional group uses "the three perspectives of in front, next to, and behind the child to reach the nearest development" to qualify the identification and classification problems and as a prerequisite for initiating interventions. Health care workers report navigating between emotions, moods,

professional intuitions, and their prior understanding of good growth, relying on their nursing background to understand the well-being of the child as a starting point for professional decisions and interventions (Theilmann, 2020).

How welfare professionals define vulnerability

All interviewed employees were asked how they defined children in vulnerable positions and thus demarcated them from other children. During the process of analysis, all answers were coded in NVivo into eight categories (see Table 1).

Table 1: *Categorization* (Theilmann & Laursen, 2020)

Category/ **Professional group**	**Social workers**	**Teachers**	**Day care workers**	**Health care** **workers**
Traditional social problems	-violation -abusive parents -mentally ill parents -violent behavior -substance abuse -lack of resources in the family -parents with low IQ	-children with only one parent -children with diagnoses -traumatized children -abusive families and problematic divorces -children from chaotic homes	-children not guided by their parents -unwashed and dirty children -concerns about family-related issues -children who have been exposed to incest, violence, or misguidedness	-no contact with parents -resistance from parents to professionals -parents with diagnoses and drug abuse -conflicts at home -quarreling parents -vulnerable families, e.g., low-income families or ethnic families -alcohol and violence
Physical and mental handicaps	-children with diagnoses			-difficulties when regulating sleep and food maldevelopment -lacking contact with the child -physical problems -overweight
Problems associated with learning, skills,	-absence from school	-children who are not able to help themselves	-children with difficulties concentrating	-child's development, contact, interplay, and

and competences		-absence from school -learning difficulties -deviant behavior -performance in school	-children lacking knowledge of environmental awareness -sensory disturbances -handicaps -verbal challenges	relationships
Lack of well-being	self-harming behavior	-children who are not able to express their emotions -children suffering from a perfect-abiding culture -children with stress and anxiety symptoms -children who are not part of social communities -children, especially girls, with eating disorders -sad and tired children -children lacking social competences -deviant behavior -lack of well-being -socially disadvantaged children -lonely children -striking children, quiet children -invisible children -overweight	-changes in the behavior of the child or context -changes in the child´s mood, or sadness -children who lack attention and are looking for affirmation -children with aggressive behavior -frustrated children -a child who is not doing fine, who deviates from the group -quiet girls -children that need to be delimited physically -children striking, biting, kicking, shouting, or running around wildly	-a troubled child -sadness and depression -lack of well-being, e.g., pain in the stomach, concerning thoughts, anxiety, eating disorders, insecurity -deviant behavior -physical pain that has a psychological explanation -quiet girls
Severe incidents		-children with changed home environments due to parents' divorce -illness and death in the		-death in the family

		family		
Stressful features related to parents		-busy parents who can afford to hide problems due to their finances -lack of care from parents in spite of material goods -parents who are busy realizing themselves through sports, new relationships, etc.	-career parents who are busy and do not have time for their children	
Ethnic affiliation		-language-poor children	-bilingual children who are far behind in language development	
Prematurity of the child				-prematurely born children

In particular, there appears to be consistency in regarding traditional social problems in the child's family as an important cause of vulnerability. Other examples of overlap are physical or mental handicaps like ADHD and autism combined with children showing a lack of well-being. Ethnicity and premature birth were also commonly cited. These examples of consensus reflect a heavy emphasis on these factors in both public debate and research in the field (Andersen et al., 2017; Mynarska et al., 2015).

The professional employees, however, also refer to other understandings that deviate from the traditional approach to vulnerability. This is shown through the following categories: 1) *problems associated with learning, skills, and competences*; 2) *severe incidents*; and 3) *stressful features related to parents as the third issue*. Finally, the lack of well-being category is also relevant because that category contains an ambiguity that we explore below.

Problems associated with learning, skills, and competences

Learning, healthy development, and acquisition of competences are both causes and symptoms of vulnerability and phenomena that arise in the relationship between a child and

the school or daycare. A child with learning problems in mathematics is not necessarily in a vulnerable position before encountering that subject and the learning goals associated with it. It does not necessarily represent a problem that a child has difficulties in achieving mathematical competences, but to understand vulnerability as something that might be produced in the institutional context is beyond a teacher's perspective if that vulnerability is either created in the private sphere and brought into the institutional context or is something inherent in the child. The same applies to the child in a kindergarten whose behavioral interactions with other children and adults are only recognized as problematic when observed in the institutional context.

Severe incidents (divorce, illness, death)

As shown above, the employees referred to severe incidents as factors stressing the child. Divorce, illness, and death affect anyone, regardless of status. This is thus a rupture with the conception of classic social problems as the all-encompassing risk factor. In this case, professional employees look beyond the classic approach to vulnerability and point to causes that make vulnerability relevant to other groups.

Stressful features related to parents

In real-world contexts, professional employees recognize different indicators when inferring vulnerability. Stressful factors can be recognized as both the more classic risk factors for vulnerability, such as unemployment in a certain demographic area, and as issues connected to welfare-oriented relationships, such as stress due to careerist, self-centered, and self-actualizing parents who focus on work and do not pay sufficient attention to their children's well-being. Teachers and daycare workers were especially likely to highlight this welfare problem as an explanation of vulnerability.

Lack of well-being (loneliness, social isolation, conflicts)

We emphasize that showing signs of a lack of well-being as a category both as belonging to the classic understanding of targets for early detection of vulnerability and as deviating from the classic understanding of vulnerability because of the professional employees' highlighting of loneliness, social isolation, and conflicts as issues that come into play for children in more privileged families. The empirical data also reveals an important insight; the powerful influence of classic understandings of vulnerability means that the same symptoms of vulnerability are not recognized as equally serious in more privileged families as in families with traditional symptoms of vulnerability. This is reflected by teachers and daycare workers stating that they do not have any children in vulnerable positions in their area and that vulnerability is attached to children in other areas in the commune: "We don't have this kind of children here" (DCW 4). One explanation for this view is that professional employees might consider privileged families to be carriers of multiple protective factors, which could cause them to disregard vulnerability among children in those families and/or believe that those children have the resources to meet challenges without intervention. Thus, these children are in a position where there is no particular concern for them. On the

one hand, professional employees recognize the great variety in understandings of vulnerability, including which indicators ought to be observed. On the other, they find it easier to identify and act on the classic risk factors that constitute vulnerability.

Generally, social workers carry out their identifications and classifications related to vulnerability without the benefit of direct contact with the child in the detection phase. Instead, they receive reports of concern from other professionals involved with the child. Unlike social workers, teachers know the children well and spend time with them on a daily basis; therefore, they are less dependent on other professional assessments in the early detection phase. At the same time, teachers often have only limited insight into a child's family situation. In interpreting a situation that might cause concern, they draw on their previous personal experiences regarding possible interventions. Like the teachers, the daycare workers know the children well; in addition, they generally work more closely with the parents. Health care workers only meet children in a particular context: either a rare home visit or in school through a specific program. Health care workers thus make their assessments on the basis of nursing optics, which focuses on development vs. maldevelopment, health vs. disease, and normality vs. deviation. On the other hand, their jobs provide them with legitimate and accepted access to homes and thus to children's family situations.

Individual and contextual stresses

The professional employees made further distinguished between *individual* and *contextual* stresses and signs of a lack of well-being. Individual stresses are either something inherent in the child, like a diagnosis, or deviant behavior by the child. Contextual stresses related to the conditions around the child can involve both the familial context and the institutional context.

The study's empirical data shows that employees regard individual stresses as either behavioral modes of reaction or traces of personality. Regarding contextual features, the professional employees also distinguish between the institutional context and the familial context. In connection with contextual stresses there is a pronounced tendency among professional employees to consider only the family as a context that causes vulnerability. By contrast, there is a tendency for professionals to treat the school or kindergarten as an arena where individual traits attached to the child are viewed as causes of vulnerability, with the institutional context left unexamined as a causal factor.

Table 2: *Origination of vulnerability, Theilmann & Laursen, 2020*

Origination/ Professional group	**Social workers**	**Teachers**	**Daycare workers**	**Health care workers**

Personal traits attached to the child	-self-harming behavior -violent behavior -children with diagnoses	-children who are not able to help themselves -language-poor children -learning difficulties -children who are not able to express their emotions -children suffering from a perfect-abiding culture -children with stress and anxiety symptoms -children who are not a part of social communities -eating disorders -sad and tired children -deviant behavior -children with diagnoses -children lacking social competences -lack of well-being -performance in school -socially disadvantaged children -invisible, lonely children -overweight -striking children, quiet children	-changes in the behavior of the child or changes around the child - sadness or changes in the child´s mood -bilingual children who are far behind in language development -children with difficulties concentrating -children lacking knowledge of environmental awareness -sensory disturbances -children with aggressive behavior -frustrated children -a child who is not doing fine; one who deviates from the group -quiet girls -children that need to be delimited -physical handicaps -verbal challenges -children striking, biting, kicking	-a troubled child -difficulties in regulating sleep and food -the child's development, contact, interplay, and relationships -physical mal-development -lacking contact with the child -prematurely born children -sadness and depression -lack of well-being, e.g., pain in the stomach, concerning thoughts, anxiety, eating disorders, insecurity -physical pain that has a psychological explanation -quiet girls -overweight
Familial context	-violation by parents -abusive parents -mentally ill parents -substance abuse by parents -lack of resources in the	-absence from school -busy parents who can afford to hide problems thanks to their finances -children with only one parent -lack of care from	-changes in the behavior of the child or changes around the child -children not guided by their parents -unwashed and dirty children	-no contact with parents -family background: violent parents, family drug abuse, parents who were placed in care -resistance from parents to professionals

	family -parents with low IQ -absence from school	parents in spite of material goods -parents who are busy realizing themselves through sports, new relationships, etc. -children whose home environment changed due to parents' divorce -traumatized children -abusive families and problematic divorces -illness and death in the family -children from chaotic homes	-career parents who are busy and do not have time for their children -children who lack attention and are looking for affirmation -concerns about family-related issues -children who have been exposed to incest, violence, or misguidedness	-parents with diagnoses -parents' drug abuse -conflicts at home, deviant behavior, death in the family - quarreling parents -vulnerable families, e.g., low-income families or ethnic families -alcohol and violence
Institutional context	-absence from school	-absence from school		

Types of knowledge influencing the construction of vulnerability among welfare professionals

The ways vulnerability is perceived and handled by welfare professionals are generally influenced by the following types of knowledge: 1) knowledge and values that support the definition of the problem; 2) profession- and practice-related knowledge of how to notice and interpret signs of vulnerability; and 3) knowledge of relevant types of possible problem interventions (Abbott, 1988; Bacchi, 2009; Høybye-Mortensen, 2013; Jenkins, 1996; Jöhncke, Svendsen, & Whyte, 2004).

Vulnerability must be observable to be experienced and articulated, initially as a concern. Indicators, expressions, or symptoms represent ways that phenomena become visible and thus are objects for observation and detection. The symptom is both part of the phenomenon and an indicator of something that extends beyond itself (Laursen, 2020). The ability to interpret aspects of the observable world as signs of a typically hidden reality can be achieved from several possible sources. The selected indicators of vulnerability used by the various professions reflect partly their work assignments and partly their professional education. Each of the four professional groups identifies its own preferences as to indicators that arouse concern for a child.

In practice, welfare professionals often do not distinguish between signs, indicators, and causes of vulnerability among children. For example, lack of care connected to deficient nutrition, clothing, and hygiene are aspects of vulnerability that are both indicators of stress and stressful factors themselves. A child who goes to school or kindergarten without a lunch box might be interpreted as an indicator of the child's vulnerability, but it might also be considered an indicator of insufficient parental ability, which represents the real cause of vulnerability. Which aspect of the phenomenon to select as the cause of vulnerability is heavily influenced by the theories and models used by each group of professionals to structure their perceptions, which are thus generally based on professional knowledge and aspects that can be observed. This part of the problem construction draws heavily on the practice Abbott calls inference, which represents the specific know-how that characterizes the practice of the professionals (1988).

Both individual professions and the overall organization possess a set of options for intervening in typical situations of vulnerability among children. Through interdisciplinary cooperation between the administrations and between the professions involved, the various types of vulnerability included in the classification systems used are linked to sets of possible types of intervention used in the organization. The process of linking observed and classified types of vulnerability with the different possibilities of intervention is carried out on the basis of task-related work experiences and coordination tools (Høybye-Mortensen, 2013; Laursen, 2020; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002) provided by management.

Professional background and professional tasks

The present study has focused on the four groups of professionals that are most relevant for the implementation of the developmental strategy. Most of the similarities between these groups are obvious; all have a very explicit focus on the group of children already known by social services to be in precarious situations—in fact the same target group is described by the developmental strategy as "those who are exposed to serious threats and are in obvious danger of permanent damage" (Commune of Aalborg, 2016 p. 3) We see a somewhat more diverse picture when it comes to the other target group described in the strategy: "children and adolescents showing initial signs of being vulnerable or at risk of developing special needs" (Commune of Aalborg, 2016 p. 3).

However obvious the task of detecting vulnerability may appear, it is interpreted differently by the four professional groups. Another important observation from the interviews is the co-existence of several methods of addressing vulnerability, even if some ways of perceiving the phenomena in question are more prominent than others.

Teachers and daycare workers

An important tendency revealed in the interviews with teachers and daycare workers is that the construction of vulnerability by the two professions is influenced by their primary work

tasks. In kindergarten, these are development, care, and learning, while for schools they are learning and teaching. The consequences are that, while daycare workers focus largely on how a child relates to other children in a social context and make observations regarding whether that child acts in conformity with social expectations, teachers in school use the notion of a "normal pupil" as their point of departure in detecting vulnerability. There is a tendency for professional employees in kindergartens and schools to classify children into dichotomies based on whether they do or do not participate adequately in the activities and social community offered by school and kindergarten, respectively. When a child deviates from the "normal child," professional employees demonstrate a pattern of trying to detect factors inherent in the child, like personality traits or developmental disorders, or trying to detect contextual factors with reference to the child's private sphere.

In general, teachers and daycare workers worry about the same aspects of the children: behavior, appearance, and ways of relating to the outside world. The identification of a problem is largely governed by the question of whether or not a child takes part in the everyday practices of the institution.

However, there are also differences between kindergartens and schools. Of course, schools have far more subject-related learning requirements than do kindergartens, and adequate behavior is also identified differently depending on a child's age. Therefore, we also observe marked differences in the *disturbing features of behavior*. For example, daycare workers more often referred to aspects of elementary language skills and physical and relational behavior than teachers in schools did; the latter group focused to a greater extent on school absence, children's educational performance, and disruptions of teaching.

Health care workers

Health care workers noted that they are the only professional group with access to a child's home and familial context (at least for infants under 12 months of age) as an integrated part of their professional duties. They are thus the only group who routinely enjoys a firsthand insight into a child's family background. At the same time, the essential part of their work focuses on health aspects, which is reflected in a significantly greater awareness of health problems and physical disabilities. However, all three groups of professionals have significant awareness of mental disorders as stressing factors and of the classic problems within a child's family.

Social workers

Social workers differ from the other professional groups in rarely being directly included in the early detection. They often become involved when concern for a child by a teacher, daycare worker, or health care worker has become so serious that it no longer can be handled by a professional from the general area alone. As a consequence, social workers depend on the observations of the other professions in the early detection phases. Generally, they tend to connect vulnerability to family background. Violation, abuse, mental

illness, and a lack of resources are all prominent factors, but so are diagnoses of the children and recurring absences from school, which are classic risk factors in which social services are already involved. One social worker expressed the difference in what social workers and the general professional groups witness: “This is not a big issue. I am not worried. This is peanuts compared to what we usually experience” (SW 5). It is striking that the same issue is considered major by teachers and trivial by the social worker. Unlike the other three professions, social workers’ constructions of vulnerability are related to a task-oriented combination of protecting the vulnerable child and supporting the family with the services it needs and is entitled to access.

We thus conclude that different groups of professionals tend to construct the concept of vulnerability in accordance with their professional function and work tasks in the organization. Among the four groups of professional employees, there is both a consensus regarding the traditional approach to vulnerability and differences when it comes to the interpretation of symptoms, differences that are produced by the different functions, tasks, and positions occupied by the various professions.

Consequences of the different ways of constructing vulnerability

First, the professional employees appear to construct vulnerability as a phenomenon that is largely connected to the child, either within the child (by virtue of diagnoses or behavioral expressions) or in the child’s context, which is usually understood to be the family. The institutional context is not—in the professionals’ eyes—a context in which vulnerability is produced. This basic assumption is common to all professional groups and makes it easy to ignore the possibility that schools and daycare arrangements like nurseries and kindergartens sometimes act as *coproducers* of vulnerable situations for children. To recognize the institutional context as a possible coproducer of vulnerability implies a self-critical awareness of the ways that institutions and professional employees relate to the child (Laursen, 2020).

Second, it appears to be relatively easy for the four groups of professional employees to detect severely stressed children in vulnerable positions, especially when the causes are classic and well-known social problems of the families in question. By comparison, it appears to be much more difficult to identify vulnerability during the detection phase when the employees are confronted with an interaction between several possible causes of vulnerability; likewise, it is more difficult in this situation to choose the right decision from alternative interventions. This last challenge arises partly because detection is complicated by the different problem constructions used by various groups of professionals in interdisciplinary cooperation and partly because the inferences made by different groups of professionals cannot be unambiguously identified as indicators of vulnerability. Rather, they depend on context and the number of risk factors that must be considered in relation to a

given concern. Finally, the situation is complicated by the different kinds of interventions that professional employees can choose to implement.

In addition, the various groups tend to interpret the same indicators differently when it comes to deciding the category of vulnerability to which an individual child should be assigned and thus assessing how serious or burdened the child's overall situation is. What is of professional concern to teachers and daycare workers is not necessarily a major concern for social workers, and vice versa. These differences between the four professions in how to interpret the indicators of vulnerability could challenge the overall coordination of the individual efforts of the four professional groups in the context of interdisciplinary task solutions.

Conclusions

The present study confirms previous research on vulnerability to the extent that vulnerability is linked by professional employees to the presence of risk factors. The risk factors selected appear to support the classic understanding of vulnerability, where the attention of professional employees is directed to elements like social exclusion, violence, sexual abuse, health difficulties (poor mental health or disabilities), stigmatization or discrimination, cultural affiliation, unemployment, and sole provider status. The detection of these risk factors addresses children and adolescents in families who present with well-known kinds of social problems. When it comes to indicators like loneliness, social isolation, and conflicts or contextual impacts like divorce, illness, and death—indicators and symptoms that are not necessarily linked to a problematic family background—there still appears to be a greater focus on children from families with traditional problems. In sum, it appears that it is easier to act on concerns associated with this group of children rather than with children who display similar symptoms but come from families that are better off. Those families tend to be perceived as anything but vulnerable, based on the implicit understanding that, in most cases, they are capable of dealing with their problems.

Although professional employees generally do pay attention to family background when constructing vulnerability, there are also significant differences between the four professional groups when it comes to children at risk of developing special needs. Two important factors influencing the ways vulnerability is detected and constructed are the employees' professional backgrounds and, especially, their professional tasks (whether in the specialized sphere of social services or the general area where daily routines are carried out).

When constructing vulnerability, professional employees generally regard the risks responsible for creating vulnerability as related either to the child as a personal trait expressed through a certain pattern of behavior or to the child's familial context. In the present study, the professional employees tend to consider the institutional context primarily as a place where vulnerability can be detected and not as a context where it is

produced or exacerbated. This means that there is a marked tendency to ignore schools and kindergartens as possible explanations for vulnerability.

In conclusion, we emphasize that a robust consensus on how welfare professionals should detect symptoms and make inferences about causes and link them to possible interventions would help strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation further in terms of both quality and efficiency. On the other hand, a powerful consensus also has costs in the form of possible blind spots, such as ignoring the institutional context as an arena where vulnerability might be produced.

At present, many social reforms related to vulnerable children and adolescents do not appear to have had their intended impact. One reason may be the divergent constructions of vulnerability caused by the different perspectives of the professions involved, which tend to disturb interdisciplinary cooperation and make it less effective.

Article history

Received: 27 Apr 2020
Accepted: 25 Nov 2020
Published: XX Dec 2020

References

Abbott, A. D. (1988). *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226189666.001.0001

Andersen, S. H., Jensen, B., Nielsen, B. W., & Skaksen, J. R. (2017). *Hvad vi ved om udsatte unge: Historik, omfang og årsager [Knowledge on vulnerable children: History, scope and causes]*. Copenhagen: Narayana Press.

Argyris, C. (1992). *On organizational learning.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia.

Bo, K.-A., Guldager, J., & Zeeberg, B. (Eds.). (2015). *Udsatte børn: Et helhedsperspektiv [Vulnerable children. A holistic perspecitve]*. Copenhagen: Akademisk.

Brodkin, E. Z. (2012). Reflections on street-level bureaucracy: Past, present, and future. *Public Administration Review, 72*(6), 940–949. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2012.02657.x

Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A. M., Lonczak, H. M., & Hawkins, J. D. (2002). Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *Prevention & Treatment, 5*(1), 98–124. https://doi.org/10.1037/1522-3736.5.1.515a

Cingano, F. (2014). *Trends in income inequality and its impact on economic growth*. OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. *163. Paris: OECD Publishing.*

Commune of Aalborg (2016). *Udviklingsstrategi (Developmental Strategy)*. 2016-2020 https://www.aalborg.dk/usercontrols/AalborgKommune/Referater/Pdf.aspx?pdfnavn=17209704-15079809-22.pdf&type=bilag&pdfid=67883

Danmarks Statistik. (2018). Udsatte børn og unge [Vulnerable children and youth]. Retrieved from https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/levevilkaar/sociale-forhold/udsatte-boern-og-unge

Eurochild. (2016). *Is Europe doing enough to invest in children?* Retrieved from https://www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/public/05_Library/Thematic_priorities/02_Child_Poverty/Eurochild/FINAL_Eurochild_Semester2016_web.pdf

Eurochild. (2017). *Le bien-être des enfants: de la protection de l'enfance*. Retrieved from http://www.cnape.fr/files/presse/105.pdf

European Commission. (2013). *Investing in children*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1060&langId=en

Görlich, A., Pless, M., Katznelson, N., & Graversen, L. (2019). *Ny udsathed i ungdomslivet: 11 forskere om den stigende mistrivsel blandt unge [New vulnerability in life of youth]*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

House of Commons - Welsh Affairs - Fifth Report. (2008).

Høyby-Mortensen, M. (2013). *I velfærdsstatens frontlinje: Administration, metoder og beslutningstagning (In the front line of the welfare state: Administration, methods and decision making].* Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Inchley, J., & Currie, D. (2016). *Growing up unequal: gender and socioeconomic differences in young people's health and well-being: International report from the 2013/2014 survey*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/303438/HSBC-No.7-Growing-up-unequal-Full-Report.pdf

Jenkins, R. (1996). *Social Identity.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Jöhncke, S., Svendsen, M. N., & Whyte, S. R. (2004). Sociale teknologier som antropologisk arbejdsfelt [Social technologies as an anthropological field of work]. In K. Hastrup (Ed.), *Viden om verden: En grundbog i antropologisk analyse* (pp. 385–408). Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Kvello, Ø. (2013). *Børn i risiko [Children at risk].* Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.

Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Laursen, E. (2020). *Sociale teknologier og samarbejde om udsatte børn og unge [Social technologies and cooperation on vulnerable children and youth].* Aalborg: Aalborg Universitetsforlag.

Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services* (30th anniversary ed.). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Mynarska, M., Riederer, B., Jaschinski, I., Krivanek, D., Neyer, G., & Oláh, L. (2015). *Vulnerability of families with children: Major risks, future challenges and policy recommendations.* European Union Families and Societies Working Paper Series 49. Retrieved from http://www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/WP49MynarskaEtAl2015.pdf

National Association of Municipalities. (2019). *Nøgletal udsatte børn [Key figures vulnerable children]*. (2019). KL's nøgletalspublikation 2019.

Østergaard Møller, M. (2018). Styring, professionel dømmekraft og faldgruber for fagprofessionel værdiskabelse [Control, professional jurisdiction and pitfalls for professional value creation]. *Tidsskrift for Professionsstudier, 14* (26), 86–97.

Pratt, M. G. (2008). Fitting oval pegs into round holes. *Organizational Research Methods*, *11*(3), 481–509.

Rambøll Management Consulting. (2016). *Viden om risiko- og beskyttelsesfaktorer for børn og unge i udsatte familier [Knowledge about risk- and protective factors for children and young people in at risk families]*. Retrieved from https://socialstyrelsen.dk/udgivelser/ny-udgivelse-kortlaegger-risiko-og-beskyttelsesfaktorer-for-born-og-unge-der-har-sociale-problemer-taet-inde-pa-livet

Rubington, E., & Weinberg, M. (1969). New York, NY: The Macmillan Company

Sahlin-Andersson, K. & Engwall,L. (2002). *The expansion of management knowledge: Carriers, flows and sources.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Schoon, I. (2006). *Risk and resilience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Socialstyrelsen. (2011). *Håndbog om Barnets Reform*: - Viden til gavn. *Socialt udsattes situation ÅRSRAPPORT*. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.udsatte.dk/dyn/resources/Publication/file/7/107/1566115789/endelig_udsatte-aarsrapport_2019_30-web.pdf

Theilmann, B. (2020). Interdisciplinary cooperation in the field of measure, means and methods: A challenge to welfare professionals. *Nordic Social Work Research*. https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2020.1724188

Zacka, B. (2017). *When the state meets the street: Public service and moral agency*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674981423

PROFESSIONS & PROFESSIONALISM

ISSN: 1893-1049 Volume 10, No 3 (2020), e3906 https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.3906

Community-led Work and Its Impact on Deprofessionalization: The Case of Public Library Professionals

Jenny Nilsson

Linnaeus University, Sweden

Contact: Jenny Nilsson, Sweden, jennysnilsson94@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this empirical study was to explore the impact of community—led work on the (de-)professionalization process among public library professionals in Canada through the analyzation of transcripts from 11 semi-structured interviews and a guideline document. The results were analyzed and sensitized through Abbott's professionalization theory (1988) and Bourdieu's praxeology theory (1986; 1992). With the methodology of grounded theorization, the study found that the profession has changed, and is changing, into the direction of possible deprofessionalization, due to not only external but also internal factors in the form of a collegial conflict.

Keywords

Canada, public library profession, librarians, professionalization, deprofessionalization, community-led, community relationship, collegial conflict

An internal divide

The community-led approach has been popularized among a wide spread of professions over the course of the past decades in sectors extending from health care and social work to librarianship (Athena, 2016; Nichols, Knighton, Brunisholz, Elbel, Smith, Choberka, Belnap, Allen, Moore & Srivastava, 2020; Williment, 2009; ;). The practice involves centering the

needs of clients, patrons, or the community by inquiring and involving them in the development of the service that the professionals provide. In this study, with the case of a group of public library professionals in Canada who (mainly) practices the community-led approach, the impact of this practice on the profession itself will be explored.

By the end of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century, the increased internet access among the public changed the demand of library services and thereby the professionals' work activities. A contemporary example of the consequences of these changes is the fact that several public libraries in Canada were under threat to be closed in 2018, although they remained open but underfunded (CBC, 2018). What can be detected as a reaction to these changes is the initiatives of increased community involvement throughout Canada in the past decades which has been described as an adjustment to meet the needs of the patrons and remain relevant (The Working Together Project, 2008, p. 7). The community led movement within the public library profession is an example of this, and it has taken the form of for example community reach out, where the librarians engage and adjust their programs and resources to non-users of the library (Kripps & Middlemass, 2018). In the academic field, courses regarding the community led approach have also been taught in Nova Scotia in recent years (Dalhousie University, 2020).

From this perspective, the relationship between patrons and public library professionals seems to have changed—the professionals' only or main tasks does no longer seem to be to provide books and references. These old work activities were the cornerstones of the professionalization process that the occupation went through originally through academic institutionalization. This disparity indicates that there is a movement within the public library profession that is more concerned with relationship-building work activities and less concerned with the traditional work activities. This possible divergence among public library professionals will be explored in this study through the experiences of professionals who are, mostly, working with the community led approach as well as through analysis of a guideline document. Through identifying the impact of community-led work on the (de-)professionalization process within this professional group, a deeper understanding of the profession as well as these processes, may emerge.

This study is limited to exploring the experiences of Canadian public library professionals operating primarily within medium sized cities, mainly practicing the community—led approach. The changed work activities within the profession, found in previous studies, calls for a sufficient theorizing of the (de-)professionalization process of this group. The objective of this study is therefore to answer the following research question: *What is the impact of community-led work on the (de-)professionalization process among public library professionals in Canada?*

Changed dynamics challenging the profession

Results from previous studies indicate that the public library profession was professionalized through mechanisms such as abstract knowledge (Abbott, 1988) and that there currently is a crisis within the field of librarianship (Dorner, Campell—Meier & Seto, 2017). The studies have concluded that this crisis stems from the digital revolution as it challenged the need of libraries—and therefore librarians – in society. Researchers have found that specific competencies are needed in order to stay relevant, or to develop the librarian profession, and key competencies beyond what is being taught in the library schools have been identified (Hansson & Wisselgren, 2018; Shumaker, 2012; Tîrziman, 2017).

The librarians Berthoud and Finn (2019) discussed and emphasized the importance of having a social justice mentality in the daily practice of their profession. Through semi-structured interviews and participatory observation, Hyder and Tissot (2012) found that as terminology has a real effect on marginalization, discourse is an important aspect to consider when institutions, such as public libraries, aim to pursue an inclusive practice. Williment (2009) presented a paper where a general evaluation of the Community-Led Service Planning Model, in Canada, was presented as a way to practice social inclusivity at public libraries. The study concluded that the approach to co-create activities resulted in more relevant library services. Another paper on the topic was written by Williment and Jones—Grant (2012) discussing asset mapping. The approach entails identification of current resources within the community in order for the public library to complement these services. Over the course of a decade, Delica and Elbeshausen (2013) studied community participation in Danish at-risk neighborhoods through interviews, field observation and participation. They found that increased community participation and centers based on social needs among minority groups in at-risk-communities were benefitting these groups. These studies indicate a strive among (some) professionals to work differently than before. As this changed approach might be translated into changed work activities, this will be analyzed in this study in order theoretically explore what this change can mean for the (de-)professionalization process among the professionals.

The mechanisms found through studies regarding other professions, such as sensemaking of professional identity within the welfare sector (Harrits, 2016), effects from co-creating as professionals with the community within the health field (Kirkegaards & Andersen, 2018) as well as the analysis of which professional groups might be most open to co-production among mental health professionals (Leemeijer & Trappenburg, 2016) may be generative in the exploration of the (de-)professionalization process. Through exploring the possibly changed relation between the professionals and the community they serve—its internal impact as well as the process may be further understood.

No previous studies explore the current (de-)professionalization process of public library professionals, what has been concluded is rather that the profession is facing a challenge or

crisis and strategies for how this can be managed. The essence of this crisis is found to be affected by external factors, namely the digital revolution and funding cuts, however no internal factors have been delineated. This study will focus on how the professionals are reacting to, and perhaps are contributing to, the changes internally by exploring the impact of community-led work on the (de-)professionalization process. This study brings a new perspective, by exploring these changes through the lens of sociological theories of professions. Since professionalization, according to Abbott's theory, is a process that requires external validation but also internal strengths—exploring these aspects of the profession may be fruitful in order to theorize this impact. Through the lens of Bourdieu's praxeology theory, these internal factors may be further conceptualized and specified.

Theorizing (de-)professionalization

The theoretical framework of this study consists of Abbotts professionalization theory, Bourdieu's praxeology theory and my own sensitized concepts. Through Abbott's theory of how the professionalization process works, the crisis of the public library profession found in previous studies, will be explored. What Bourdieu's perspective adds to this theory is a conceptualization of the mechanisms of socialization and reproduction that one could argue, enable the professionalization process . My own sensitizing of Bourdieu's doxa, will be used to further theorize the different ideas among the professionals, enabling for a theorization of the internal impact of community-led work.

Abstract knowledge and control over work activities

According to Abbotts (1988) professionalization theory, analysis of professionals' work activities is essential to understand this process. Abbott found abstract knowledge to be an instrument that professionals use to legitimize their professional status and autonomy over a specific set of work activities. However, the purpose or use of this is more symbolically charged than practically charged. This is because the abstract knowledge works as a legitimizing tool of professional work by "clarifying its foundations and tracing them to major cultural values" which can be used to "legitimize that work in the context of larger values". However, Abbott (1988, p. 59) acknowledged that these activities might only, in fact, be loosely related to the work that the professionals *actually* perform[1]. In relation to the changed work activities among library professionals, Abbott's perspective will be used to explore how abstract knowledge operates within a changing profession.

Abbott also suggested that professionalization, or deprofessionalization, is a multidirectional process, meaning that different tasks within a professional's schedule may

[1] According to Carlhed (2011), one of the parallels between Bourdieu and Abbott is their acknowledgement of the difference between practical and "educated" knowledge. However, since Abbott's concept is further developed specifically for studies of professions, I chose to work primarily with this conceptualization.

be more central than others . By exploring which activities that are core, and which that are in the periphery, a clearer view of what the professionals actually do and the impact of community-led work on the (de-)professionalization process may emerge. According to Abbott's theory, when an occupational group controls their work activities, meaning that they are the only profession having those work activities, they can get professionalized. The group usually need to compete with other occupational groups to achieve or maintain control over these work activities. The absence of control over a certain set of work activities can be a part of the deprofessionalization process according to the theory (Abbott, 1988, p. 60-61; p. 82-83).

The doxa's challengers, enablers, and loyalty culture

One of the main ideas of Bourdieu's praxeology theory is the doxa—the natural order. The concept concerns power in the sense that it represents "norms and beliefs" through stating what is right and what is wrong—what is natural and what is unnatural. This concept demonstrates the idea of an abstract "law enforcement" since we follow these norms as though they are rules—often oblivious to the fact that they are created through social interactions. Bourdieu meant that establishment—in combination with a high concentration of control and structure—can generate a conflict between conservative forces and challenging forces. Loyalty is a response to the gift that is the individual's benefits, or perceived benefits, of the doxa (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 471). The more consecrated the individual or group is—meaning the more dedicated they are to enable the doxa—the more willing they are to consecrate objects within the doxa as well as reproduce its actions (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 159).

Figure 1: *Field of opinion and doxa*

Figure A : **Figure B:**

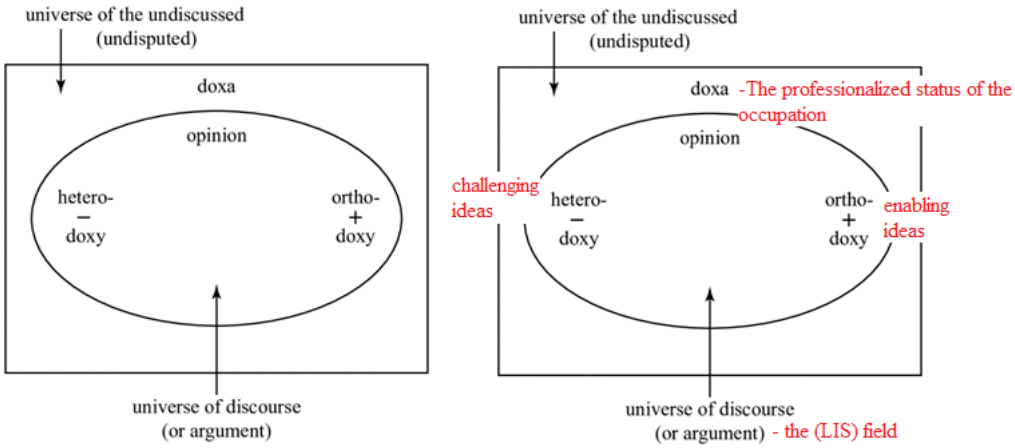

Illustration of Bourdieu's field of opinion and doxa is found in figure A (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 168) while my sensitized version of the theory is found in figure B. As illustrated in figure B,

the doxa is understood as the professionalized status of the occupation and the universe of discourse is understood as the Library and Information Science (LIS) field. The sensitized concept 'challenging ideas' is placed next to the heterodoxy part of the doxa while the other sensitized concept 'enabling ideas' is placed next to the orthodoxy part of the doxa.

In the analysis, the concept of the doxa will be further understood through my own sensitized concepts—*challenging* and *enabling* ideas—meaning the ideas that the professionals express or possibly embodies, illustrated in Figure B. I name the sensitizing of the conservative forces as enabling ideas and the challenging forces as challenging ideas to deepen the understanding of the professionals' experiences. Identification of these ideas enables for a deeper analysis of what it specifically means to challenge or enable the doxa within the public library profession. It is my argument that, solely distinguishing that there are different forces within the doxa does not give enough space to theorize *what* ideas are affecting these forces and exactly *how*. My argument is that the concept of forces heuristically sends focus to opposites— negative or positive forces—but lacks the heuristic focus towards what these positives and negatives actually entails in specific fields or social rooms. Challenging and enabling ideas will be utilized as a tool to not only distinguish between different forces among public library professionals but also to explore further what they may entail.

In regard to professions that are undergoing changes, the concept of the doxa offers a perspective regarding why a conflict can be created between the professionals who are open to change and those who are opposed to it. Education, which is a crucial step in the professionalization process according to Abbott (1988), "has an ideological function", as it operates as an indoctrination to the specific logic and doxa of that field. Education works as a social reproduction tool (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2008, p. 151)—which according to my conceptualization is reproduced by the embodiment of enabling ideas.

Method and Methodology

Data collection

The data consisted of transcripts from 11 semi—structured interviews with librarians, conducted between the 6th and 24th of December in 2019, and a national public library position statement. Through the interviews, the librarians daily work life could be explored as well as mechanisms affecting the (de-)professionalization process. Semi—structured interviews enable for a greater knowledge—producing potential than structured interviews according to Brinkmann (2013, p. 21) due to the possibility to adjust the interview to different angles that the interviewee deems as important. Privacy of the interviewees was ensured through anonymization and randomized quotations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews. The document that was analyzed was the Position Statement on Diversity and Inclusion by the Canadian Library Association (CLA,

2012) which is a statement utilized by all public libraries in Canada. This statement presents goals and ethical values of Canadian public libraries and is therefore relevant in order to further understand the discourse of the LIS field.

The sample

The interviewees operated in three midsized cities and one large city, located in three different provinces of Canada—in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia. I interviewed five Community Librarians, one Newcomers Librarian and three library managers. The managers were working in the departments of programming and community, research and analytics and service design. The two other interviewees worked as a Chief librarian and the other as branch head. The average interviewee had worked as a librarian since 2005 whereas the most experienced professional had worked since 1978 and the least experienced professional had worked since 2017. The geographical spread in combination with the variating years of work experience, contributed to a more diverse sample.

I was dependent on gaining access to senior staff members to get in contact with librarians at different branches. Due to this, initial convenience sampling, turning into snowball sampling was practiced. In search for a more diverse group of interviewees, librarians were also contacted through emails that were sent to 20 public libraries throughout 10 Canadian provinces, geographically distributed to increase the generalization capacity of the data. However, most of the interviewees were found through snowball sampling, as only one professional outside of the referring—system was available for an interview within the timeframe of the study. Five out of the eleven interviewees had also worked together on a project called “The Working Together Project” [2].

No data was available concerning how many public library professionals operate within Canada today. The latest statistics was reported in 2012, when the number was 2,796 (CLA, 2012, p. 6). The more recent statistics does not differentiate between different librarians (for example academic, public etc.), but illustrates that there were 16,700 librarians in Canada in total in 2018 (Government of Canada, 2018). It is difficult to determine the representability of a sample without a clear population number, however, these statistics may illustrate in which ratio the population may be. Regardless, whether the sample was representable of the professional group as a whole is doubtful concerning that the majority of the interviewees were practicing the community—led approach – which was found to be a contributor to a collegial conflict within the profession. However, theorization concerning different ideas emerged as important information about the collegial conflict among the public library professionals. This may indicate that the sample of this study may possibly be

2 A governmentally funded project in Canada during 2004-2008 where selected public libraries were working with the community-led approach (Working Together Project, 2008).

representative of the professionals who practice the community—led approach, although population data is needed to determine if so, and to what extent.

The sample size was determined based on theoretical sufficiency (Dey, 1999, p. 257), meaning that the sample was deemed sufficient when no new information challenged the categories that had already been coded from the already collected interview data. A consensus was reached through the categorization of data by the 11th interview. The ability to reach theoretical sufficiency by such a small sample may be further understood by the limited ratio of librarians in Canada—especially those who practice the community—led method. The interviews were also in depth and on average 50 minutes long, which enabled for a rich data set to theorize. Smaller samples may also be deemed acceptable for studies that does not evoke scepticism through claims concerning, for instance, "contradict[ions of] established research" according to Charmaz (2006, p. 114). This is in alignment with this study as it found a change within the public library profession – in accordance with the academic discourse concerning this change, or crisis, found in previous studies.

Coding of data

Since this was a grounded theory study, the theorization process was inductive (Charmaz, 2006). Through theorization of the data, this study generated hypothesis in relation to the research question. This method involves the core principles of "(1) questioning rather than measuring, and (2) generating hypotheses using theoretical coding" (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003, p. 16). Through the use of NVivo Software as a tool in the analysis process, the data was digitally transcribed, organized and coded.

Repeating ideas were detected in the material and consisted mainly of the professionals' aim to meet the needs of the community, to build and maintain relationships with the community and their experiences with expertise attitudes. After I organized the repeated ideas, a theme emerged in the form of a conflict within the public library profession regarding how it should be practiced and what should be taught in library schools. The next step in the coding process was to organize the themes into "larger, more abstract ideas" (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003, p. 42) and through the lens of Abbott's professionalization theory, complemented by concepts from Bourdieu's praxeology theory and my own sensitized concepts, a conflict was coded between different ideas within the doxa of the profession. The social mechanisms of the professionalized nature of the occupation, in combination with the socializing mechanisms, constructed the embodiment of professionals who use enabling or challenging ideas of the doxa—essentially affecting the professionalization process. The document analysis was coded through incident-by-incident coding. This means that the different sub-statements, were coded individually (Charmaz, 2006, p. 51). Two of these statements were coded as challenging ideas of the doxa.

Results and Analysis

Contrasting abstract and practical knowledge

According to Abbott's professionalization theory, the process is built on legitimizing institutional processes such as academic degrees. Since a master's degree in LIS is a requirement for librarians in Canada (NOC, 2020), the competencies the professionals have acquired through their education as well as through work experience, will be explored through the analysis.

When asking about the different competencies or skills that they had developed through library school, I was met with surprise and even laughter on occasion:

> "[laughing] Oh, you see, a lot of the competencies that they taught in library school I'm not sure if.. I'm not sure if they're applicable" — Librarian 1

> "I haven't thought of that in years, and now that I think of it, I must say that I haven't used much of the skills I learned during my education…" — Librarian 6

It appeared to be a topic that some of the interviewees seemed to have given a lot of thought, while others seemed to reflect more intuitively. Through this data, an experienced contrast between their education and their profession can be detected. The observed emotionally charged reactions can be detected as indicators of how strongly these librarians felt about the apparent divide between these two spaces. Frustration was coded as a main emotion among the librarians as they reflected on their experiences.

Some managers also expressed concern over the staff that they are training since there appear to be a different idea of the profession within the educational space versus the occupational space. One manager shared the difficulty of training new staff — who technically are academically qualified:

> "There's two questions what do they and what should they develop. […] Public library is like a specialty within the degree so it's easy to get a library information degree with no exposure to libraries." – Librarian 2

The fact that it is possible to be academically qualified to work as a public library professional without taking any courses regarding public libraries (Government of Canada, 2020), demonstrates a clear gap between what is being taught in library school in contrast to the skills that the librarians needed to do their work.

The most frequently mentioned, or similarly phrased, competencies within the educational versus the occupational space, mentioned by at least 6 out of 11 interviewees, are presented in the table below.

Table 1: *Table of competencies that were mentioned or phrased similarly by at least six of the eleven interviewees.*

Library school	**Frequency**	**Work experience**	**Frequency**
Collection building	11	Relationship building	9
Program developement	8	Listening skills	9
Intellectual freedom	6	Service minded	8
Ethics	6	Conflict resolution	7
		Humility	6

As illustrated through the table above, the most frequently mentioned competencies developed within the educational space were collection building (11), followed by program development (8), intellectual freedom (6) and lastly ethics (6). The most frequently mentioned competencies developed through work experience were relationship building (9), listening skills (9), the ability to be service minded (8), conflict resolution (7) and lastly, humility (6). The interviewees generally mentioned more competencies that they had developed through work experience, however, it is to be noted that the mentioned competencies from work experiences may intersect. This data rather shows the different focuses of the spaces—where the work experience-based competencies were coded as more relationship-oriented.

In order to further demonstrate the discourse surrounding these competencies, and the spaces in which they are acquired, excerpts from the interviews where the librarians answered the question of what competencies they believe are necessary in order to do their work are presented below:

> "Dealing with conflicts because for example homeless people are very stressed because their lives are very difficult and complex and they have short time spans, like one hour, that can affect their behavior, they're in this permanent anxiety condition.[…] You need the skills as a library worker [so] that you can deescalate situations, you can manage conflict in a good way. We don't want to throw anyone out […] But we must handle the behavior because it can be disturbing for other patrons and other staff." — Librarian 5

> "Listening to patrons and understanding what their questions are, talking to people from all different walks of life and finding common ground are some of the main [skills]" – librarian 3

> "We're really trying to position ourselves in the community as a space for people that live in it so it's really important to us to be mindful of our relationships" – Librarian 6

The interviewees exemplified under what circumstances, or in which situations, that these competencies are necessary. The excerpts above specifically concern the competencies regarding interpersonal relationships. Through the data, the community, or the patrons, were detected as important components since the professionals expressed that they needed these skills to have and uphold a good relationship with them. Maintaining the relationships through listening, finding out what the community needs from the library and the ability to resolve conflicts were coded as indicative factors of the nature of these competencies. These skills differ from the more practical skills that the librarians learnt in library school according to the data.

A gap between what is being taught and what is being practiced within a profession can be analyzed through Abbott's concept abstract knowledge. Abstract knowledge is a legitimizing form of knowledge used through institutions such as academic education to control the professionalization process. This knowledge is noted to not often relate to the practical knowledge used within the profession. One could argue that the competencies that are being taught at library schools in Canada are consisting, to some degree, of abstract knowledge since the skills that the librarians acquired through working differed in their nature. The abstract knowledge can be viewed as more practical in terms of using and developing systems while the practical knowledge can be viewed as more relationship oriented. Through the theorization of this data, a gap between abstract and practical knowledge can be detected as a key element in what appears to be a conflict between the educational body of the LIS field and the public library profession. This conflict is coded as a part of the essence of the profession's contemporary status.

The essence of the conflict

According to Abbott's professionalization theory, professions are founded on a major cultural value. This value, in combination with my own sensitized concepts challenging and enabling ideas of the doxa, will act as guides through the exploration of this conflict.

The frustrated emotions in combination with the gap between the abstract and practical knowledge of the profession theorized in the previous section, were detected as indicators of a conflict. When the professionals shared how they view their profession in regards to competencies taught in library school, a majority of them shared that they find it problematic that they as professionals are taught to view themselves as automatic experts,

even on other peoples' lives. The following data excerpts illustrates some of the experiences that they had.

> "In library schools there's a lot of discussion around expertise and that's how the profession tried to sell itself because 'we're experts'" - Librarian 4

> "We always say that the community is an expert on its own needs" – Librarian 7

> "Most librarians tend to be, in my experience, white, from middleclass backgrounds, educated, and they have this, what I call, professional mindset which basically means 'I'm well educated, I've been to library school, I know what I'm doing, I'm very competent and I'm basically the expert' and the issue with that is [that] with community led work you're not the expert - the community knows their needs better than you do because they've lived the experience […] So it's a bit of a challenge for some professionals to kind of give up that power, give up that status and give up that we can never assume what people's needs are." – Librarian 8

The interviewees shared how they were taught from library school to view themselves as experts. Contrasting ideas to this notion was found among several librarians who shared that they view the expertise to be found in the community instead. The interview excerpts above demonstrate that the experience from library school have been (for several of the interviewees) that the doxa conditioned them into believing that as librarians – they are experts. By acknowledging the source of this "mindset", coded as the doxa, the librarians acknowledged the strength of this culture. The strength of the culture that creates these enabling ideas can be understood through the socialization process. The doxa has been challenged by the challenging ideas through the core idea of the community being an expert on its own needs. The concept can be further understood through the very academic institutionalization that professionalized librarians - Bourdieu argued that education is one of the most powerful socialization processes. Another aspect that strengthens this theory is Bourdieu's concept culture of loyalty where the professionals gain a sense of obligation due to the institutional legitimization that gained them their position as professionals. This may explain why some librarians are opposing change within their profession.

Another interviewee emphasized the importance of the non-expert "attitude":

> "If you have this [expert] attitude in the community, you can actually kill relationships" - Librarian 10

The phrasing of risking to kill relationships empathizes the importance of the relationship between the community and the librarians. This further supports the narrative of certain librarians being more relationship oriented and valuing relationships with the community and believing that they are fundamental for the occupation.

Expertise was coded as an essential aspect of the public library profession—whether it is in the form of a challenged or enabled idea. Expertise was also found to be a major cultural value, embodying the foundation of the professionalization of the profession. According to Abbott, the core of professionalization is expertise - this problematized the conflict since the challenging ideas within the doxa might essentially oppose the professionalized status since they are opposing the expertise narrative of their field.

Lack of competitiveness

Autonomy over a certain set of work activities is considered a crucial aspect of the professionalization process according to Abbott's theory. It is therefore necessary to explore the professionals' control, or lack thereof, concerning work activities. Through the analyzation of interview data regarding the work activities of the profession, this will be theoretically explored.

The tasks of managers and librarians differed slightly since managers spent more time in meetings, planning and staff training. Activities mentioned by at least eight of the interviewees were however collection building, community engagement and program development. What could be detected from the data was activities taking place outside of the library and specifically with the purpose of engaging with the community. This was done through what the professionals' referred to as community outreach or community engagement.

The librarians exemplified how their branches have operated to meet the needs of homeless people and other socially vulnerable groups, both outside and inside of the library. An excerpt of this data is presented below:

> "The library would hand out free bus tickets so [they] could go to other organizations where they could access clothes and so on" - Librarian 2

> "In terms of where they can go during the day the library is the main place, we are warm, we don't throw people out. They will be moved from shopping centers when not buying anything. We meet that basic needs during the day by having them in the building. Some have medical needs, so we bring in street nurses and they can check, we try to bring the services into the library to meet their needs rather than sending them back out into the community where they don't feel safe. Many homeless people say that they feel that the library is the safest place in town. Because even [the shelters] are pretty violent places, libraries [are] a sanctuary in a way." – Librarian 5

Through offering free bus tickets and having medical services operating inside of the library, the professionals practiced work activities that are not explicitly mentioned in the national description of their work activities (NOC, 2020). By stating that they "meet their [homeless

peoples'] basic needs during the day", the librarian indicated that they view it as a part of their profession to meet the needs of the community in collaboration with other actors. The labeling of the library as a sanctuary for some societal groups, was coded as a challenging idea, embodying the relationship-oriented view of work.

Relationship-oriented work activities are not very well aligned with the National Occupational Classification (NOC), they are however more in alignment with the excerpt from the Position Statement on Diversity and Inclusion by the Canadian Library Association (CLA, 2012), presented below:

> [A] diverse and pluralistic society is central to our country's identity. Libraries have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that recognizes diversity and fosters social inclusion.
>
> Libraries strive to deliver inclusive service. Canada's libraries recognize and energetically affirm the dignity of those they serve, regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental capabilities, or income.

The statement encourages libraries to deliver inclusive services and to "recognize and energetically affirm the dignity of those they serve". This was theorized as a challenging idea of the doxa. According to Bourdieu's theory of the doxa – this very act challenges the doxa if we define it as what is socially accepted as the "natural" work of librarians. All social fields have a set of believes and norms that create a framework of what is right and wrong within it—this constitutes the doxa. The conflict, in regard to Bourdieu's theory, could only be created within a context that had been established for some time, meaning that it had a history where a high concentration of control and structure had been practiced. Due to the professionalization of the librarian profession, this context shows just that - a strong structure that is currently being questioned by some of its members.

The librarians appeared to view themselves as professionals who are not only supposed to follow the work activities specified in the Canadian job description, but also to do something *more*. It appeared to not only be something that they wanted to incorporate as a part of the work of the library - but also something that naturally should be a part of the occupation according to them. Several interviewees referred to, or even showed me, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and demonstrated how the pyramid works in relation to the librarians:

> "[…] So you can't do the stuff up there until you address those basic human needs"- Librarian 1
>
> "We need to […]help them [homeless people] get accommodation, help them get a job so that we can move on to more high level needs such as becoming a library member, using the library, learn more about the collection, attending programs.

> They’re not gonna do that when they don’t know where their next meal is coming from. So, we start at the bottom with the basic needs and then we move further and further up on the Maslow’s triangle.” - Librarian 3

What can be identified through this data is a pattern of the professionals catering to specific groups, with the aim to provide them with, or redirect them to other actors, where they essentially can get further integrated in society. Eight of the librarians explained how they viewed it as their mission to guide groups, and individuals, in society up to the top - self-fulfillment. This meant that they regarded it as their professional duty to, through cooperation with organizations in the community as well as the community itself, aid these groups even at the lowest level with needs such as shelter and food.

Two public library managers shared how these relationship-oriented activities in the profession have been met by their colleagues and employees:

> “Not everything we did in the past is relevant anymore and that was another tough call for staff. So we said to staff we need to stop doing that thing even though it’s something you really like doing or you’re really good at. And we now need to do this thing over here instead, because that thing you were doing in the past no longer addresses the issues that we’re engaged in” – Librarian 5

> “I think the main thing was trying to work with staff to make them more comfortable providing services outside the library buildings and a lot of people were, you know, very comfortable providing library service in the library but if they went to a community organization they felt quite uncomfortable and they didn't really know how to enjoy promoting the library”– Librarian 9

Confusion regarding why they should engage with these relationship-oriented activities, especially outside of the library, instead of doing the work that they have been taught through library school or through working before the profession started to change, was detected. Through the data, different ideas within the doxa were coded—the professionals described by the interviewees as open to these new activities were contrasted with the professionals who were not open. Working environment was coded as another important factor as the interviewees had witnessed difficulties with doing certain work activities, such as promoting or practicing their services, outside of the library. Through challenging what the professionals had been taught in library school, the new activities seemed to add to the conflict within the doxa. In the sense of controlling work activities, a conflict can be detected among the librarians where some are positive to new or different tasks while others are reluctant.

> “It’s just like an informal network that has been created among a lot of.. resources” - Librarian 7

> "We're the safety net. If they fall through the system, if they get thrown out form one place, or their behaviors are not being good, we catch them. We do work in partnership with a whole range of organizations. Nobody can do everything, we all do our part, we kind of fill gaps. […]. It's a partnership approach we don't believe that we can do everything ourselves. We also have to meet everybody else's needs, the regular folk who come in who just want to borrow a book. Kind of balances it out." – Librarian 11

The professionals shared how they work with other actors in society to reach their goal – to meet the needs of the community. Since the professionals emphasized the importance of cooperation with other actors in society, their activities were not coded as controlled by the professionals. Professionals who are controlling their work activities according to Abbott, are competing to gain control over their work activities. In other terms, through the lens of Abbott, it could be argued that the lack of control of work activities can be viewed as a part of the deprofessionalization process. The fact that the different ideas—challenging and enabling ones—are coded as opposing forces regarding the professional status, might further validate this theory.

The abstract knowledge of Abbott's theory is again exemplified here as the professionals have acquired the relationship-oriented competencies through work activities and not through their education. And as Abbott noted, that knowledge may oftentimes barely relate to the actual work that the professionals do. What is interesting when the abstract knowledge that the professionals have acquired from LIS school does not align with the work activities of the profession, is that the work activities may intersect with some other occupations or professions. One librarian expressed this concern with the words:

> "I spend a lot of time listening to people. I remind myself that I'm not a social worker, while often it feels like the roles overlap. It's different in that I can both offer an ear, library resources, and most importantly a space where people can go and just be." – Librarian 1

One could argue that the professionalization process of librarians becomes ambiguous when other similar occupations operate side by side or even in the same building or through cooperation between the library and that service. The impact of this on the profession was coded as a challenging idea whereas the professional status of the occupation, through controlled activities for instance, was not prioritized.

According to Abbott, when a group of professionals no longer occupy autonomy, or power, over a certain set of work activities, their status as professionals is threatened. The enabling ideas found among the librarians who were more hesitant to the changed, more relationship-oriented work activities, were coded as related to the enabling ideas prioritizing

the professionalized status of the occupation. The lack of control over work activities was coded as an indicator of deprofessionalization of the public library occupation.

Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of community-led work on the (de-)professionalization process among public library professionals in Canada and through the analysis of empirical data, a theorization of said impact was explored. It has been acknowledged through previous studies that the profession has changed, and what was found in this study is a theory on how and why this has happened—beyond the effects of external forces such as the digital revolution.

A clear difference between what the librarians were taught in library school and the knowledge they acquired through working, and the skills that they actually used and needed in order to do their job, was coded through the data material. This was conceptualized as abstract knowledge taught in library school, through the lens of Abbott. The empirical analysis indicated that the doxa of the public library professional is being questioned, or opposed, by challenging ideas of the doxa. This theorization adds to the understanding of the process since previous studies only indicated that external factors such as the digital revolution were responsible for this change. The internal conflict that was theorized in this study adds to the understanding of the profession by further exploring how and why it is undergoing these changes.

The conflict theorization was further supported through coding of data that indicated that there is an expertise conflict within the library field where the challenging ideas are opposing autonomy of expertise. Since expertise was found to be not only the core of professions according to Abbott's theory, but also the major cultural value of the public library profession specifically, the challenging ideas regarding the expertise narrative were coded as possible indicators of deprofessionalization, or aims for such process within the field. The expertise conflict was found to be closely related to the education gap which further supported this theory. In conclusion, public library professionals in Canada are facing an internal, collegial conflict between the challenging and the enabling ideas of the doxa as well as through the lens of Abbott's professionalization theory. This conflict might affect the professional status of the occupation in the future if the challenging ideas, concerning for instance relationship-oriented activities, continues to be expressed or embodied by actors within the group.

Interviewing professionals who actively worked with the community led approach, and some who had even worked together, might have interfered with the result of this study as the interviewees offered a specific perspective. However, this study may contribute to a fruitful discussion regarding professionals practicing the community-led approach in relation to the deprofessionalization process. Building on the sensitized theory of this study, an

exploration of *which* ideas that dominate—the challenging or enabling ones—may be helpful in order to theorize where a profession is in the process of (de-)professionalization.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Hultman at Linnaeus University for supervising the original version of this study as well as the two anonymous peer-reviewers and the editor of the Professions and Professionalism journal for their thoughtful and constructive comments. I would also like to extend my thanks to the librarians who enabled this study by generously sharing their experiences.

Article history

Received: 04 Jun 2020
Accepted: 25 Nov 2020
Published: 14 Dec 2020

References

Abbott, A.D. (1988). *The system of professions: an essay on the division of expert labor*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226189666.001.0001

Auerbach, Carl F. & Silverstein, Louise B. (2003). *Qualitative data an introduction to coding and analysis.* New York: New York University Press

Berthoud, H. & Finn, R. (2019). Bringing Social Justice behind the Scenes: Transforming the Work of Technical Services. *The Serials Librarian,* 76 (1-4), 162-169. https://doi.org/10.1080/0361526X.2019.1583526

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812507

Bourdieu, P. (1986). '*The Forms of Capital'. Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Capital, edited by J. G. Richardson*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1992). *Texter om de intellektuella: en antologi*. Stockholm: B. Östlings bokförl. Symposion.

Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. (2008). *Reproduktionen: bidrag till en teori om utbildningssystemet.* Lund: Arkiv.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. (2018, April 4). Good news, bad news as libraries remain open but underfunded, say librarians. *CBC.* Retrieved March, 15 from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/library-no-closure-announcement-1.4603116

Canadian Library Association. (2012). *National Statistical Profile of Canadian Libraries.* Retrieved from http://cla.ca/wp-content/uploads/National-Statistics-Profile.pdf

Carlhed, C. (2011). Fält, habitus och kapital som kompletterande redskap i professionsforskning. *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift,* 18 (4), 283-300. Retrieved from https://journals.lub.lu.se/svt/article/view/15723/14206

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis.* London: SAGE.

Dalhousie University. (2020). *School of Information Management.* Retrieved March 16, 2020 from https://www.dal.ca/faculty/management/school-of-information-management/current-students-site/Courses.html

Delica, K. & Elbeshausen, H. (2013). Socio-cultural innovation through and by public libraries in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Denmark: concepts and practices. *Information Research, 18(3)* paper C14. Available at http://InformationR.net/ir/18-4/colis/paperC14.html

Dey, I. (1999). *Grounding grounded theory*. San Diego: Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012214640-4/50011-5

Dorner, D., Campbell-Meier, J,. & Seto, I. (2017). Making sense of the future of libraries. *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions 43 (4),* 321-334. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012214640-4/50011-5

Government of Canada. (2016). *National Occupational Classification.* Retrieved March 15, 2020 from https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/noc.html

Government of Canada. (2020). Librarian in Canada. *Job Requirements.* Retrieved September 16, 2020 from https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/requirements/5263/ca

Hansson, J. & Wisselgren, P. (red.) (2018). *Bibliotekarier i teori och praktik: utbildningsperspektiv på en unik profession.* Lund: BTJ förlag.

Harrits Sommer, G. (2016). Being Professional and Being Human. Professional's Sensemaking in the Context of Close and Frequent Interactions with Citizens. *Professions and Professionalism, 6 (2).* https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.1522

Hyder, E., & Tissot, C. (2012). 'That's definite discrimination': practice under the umbrella of inclusion. *Disability & Society, 28 (1)* https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.695579

Kirkegaard, S., & Andersen, D. (2018). Co-production in community mental health services: blurred boundaries or a game of pretend? *Sociology of health and wellness, 40 (5),* 828-842. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12722

Kripps, S., & Middlemass, C. (2018). What do we mean by Outreach? *British Columbia Library Association.* 10 (3) Retrieved from https://bclaconnect.ca/perspectives/2018/12/03/what-do-we-mean-by-outreach/

Leemeijer, A., & Trappenburg, M. (2016). Patient Centered Professionalism? Patient Participation in Mental Health Professional Frameworks. *Professions and Professionalism, 6 (2*). https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.1474

Nichols, L., Knighton, A., Brunisholz, K., Elbel, R., Smith, G., Choberka, A., Belnap, T., Allen, T., Moore, M., Srivastava, R. (2020). Adapting a complex, integrated health and social services intervention in two communities. *Health Services Research, 55,* 111-112. http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lnu.se/10.1111/1475-6773.13489

Shumaker, D. (2012). *The embedded librarian: innovative strategies for taking knowledge where it's needed.* Medford, New Jersey: Information Today, Inc.

Tîrziman, E. (2017). The Librarian - A Redefined Profession for the 21st Century. *Romanian Journal of Library and Information Science*, *13 (4),* 101-108. https://doi.org/10.26660/rrbsi.2017.13.4.101

Williment, K. (2009). It takes a Community to Create a Library. *Partnership: the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research; Toronto, 4 (1),* 1-11. https://doi.org/10.21083/partnership.v4i1.545

Williment, K., & Jones-Grant, T. (2012). Asset Mapping at Halifax Public Libraries: A Tool for Beginning to Discover the Library's Role with the Immigrant Community in Halifax. *Partnership:the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research; Toronto, 7 (1),* 1-12. https://doi.org/10.21083/partnership.v7i1.1491

Working Together Project. (2008). *Community-Led Libraries Toolkit*. Retrieved March 15, 2020 from https://www.vpl.ca/sites/vpl/public/Community-Led-Libraries-Toolkit.pdf