Teacher Education in Global Era: Perspectives and Practices

Karanam Pushpanadham (Ed.)

Meeri Hellstén, and Larissa Mickwitz, Stockholm University
Meeri.hellsten@edu.su.se
Larissa.mickwitz@edu.su.se
Jonas Scharfenberg, Ludwig Maximillian University
Jonas.scharfenberg@edu.lmu.de

Teacher Education in Sweden: revisiting the Swedish Model[1]

The advent of globalisation is one of the most transformational projects in modern society. As such, its impact has been urgently sensed in the field and the institutions of education, which are publicly recognised as the most effective instrument in nation building. Sweden is the largest of the five Nordic countries, the other four of which as Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. A remarkable history of social engineering of an entire nation through comprehensive educational reform and mass schooling has harnessed the reputation of Sweden as the pinnacle of global social conscience. The educational system has gained a global reputation for what has been more generally known as '*the Swedish Model'* (Regeringskansliet n.d.). This 'common good' that the Swedish education resembled was admired and praised across the world for its progressive, student centred learning and level playing field in classroom teaching. An aligned national curriculum policy steering this progressively designed social constructivist educational schooling apparatus, centred on equity and access to public education by all school-aged children living in Sweden.

In this chapter, we describe the pathways of the Swedish development of teacher education through major reform periods leading to the current era of globalisation. Since teacher education in Sweden is a publicly driven system, we begin with a brief overview of the institutional context and a short overview of the Swedish school system. We then describe the impact of education reforms on the teaching profession and teacher education and conclude by deliberating on the professionalized teaching profession in the wake of globalization, migration and an increased need of multidimensional integration efforts.

[1] Cite as: Hellstén, M., Mickwitz, L, Scharfenberg, J. (2020). Teacher Education in Sweden: revisiting the Swedish model, in K. Pushpanadham, *Teacher Education in Global Era: Perspectives and Practices*, Springer, pp. 99-114.

Teacher Education in the advent of globalisation

Generally, the public policy resembling the era of the Swedish model was entitled 'One School for All'. It administered a centralised schooling system ideologically embedded into and justified by way of the statutes of the human rights treaty on the *Conventions of the Rights of the Child* (UN, 1989). The Swedish national curriculum was closely linked to the UN treaty where quality in and of education meant quality of life through equity, equality and the right to education:

> *"The education provided* in each school form and in the leisure-time centre should be equivalent, regardless of where in the country it is provided." (SFS 2010:800, 1: 9 §).

However, in the aftermath of the torrents of globalisation, this peaceful and inclusively constructed 'Swedish model' of an egalitarian, equity oriented, civil rights based society began to crumble during the 1990's grip of considerable system reforms, which in the main were brought on by the political upheavals. At the core of the public discontent was the system educating future teachers. The attention on the failing of the Swedish schooling system was accelerated by the declining PISA results and politically motivated constraints.

The combination of a series of politically driven imperatives and educational reforms placed the Swedish teacher education under siege for provisions of better accountability of quality education. The debates centred on the key issues seeking consolation on the long term quality aspects of a teacher education system that is assumed by the public to lead a nation from here into the future. The issues of tenability in teacher education can also be expressed by way of sustainability aspects, and be aligned for instance with the Agenda 2030, in which Goal 4 is directed towards the provision of quality education for all.

It raises the issues of how to appropriate teacher education outcomes in the face of rapid societal changes: How might future teacher education respond to and enact on an evolving globalised society? If Swedish teacher education forms a building block in the construction of social justice, how does it engage meaningfully with the current global flows of displaced peoples, with migration calling for a critical need for professional, social and cultural integration?

The institutional context of Swedish Schooling

Sweden has a publicly funded education system and consequently, nearly all schools are free of charge. In most cases schooling begins at pre-school between age one and five. The voluntary form of early childhood education, which is funded by the government at three hours per day is attended by approximately 90% of all children aged 3-5 years. Since 2018, compulsory schooling begins at age 6 with a preparatory preschool class ("class 0") that offers transition into comprehensive school which caters for years 1-9.

In UNESCO's ISCED classification, this comprehensive school combines ISCED levels 1 (years 1-6) and 2 (secondary level, years 7-9), while ISCED 3 comprises a separate school type called "gymnasium" that caters for upper secondary level education. Gymnasium provides schooling during years 10 to 12 and offers a range of specializations. While all of them lead to a matriculation that allows school leavers entry into higher education, some of them are specialized to prepare for tertiary education while others offer degrees that prepare for vocational training, e.g. in the technical sector or within tourism. Entry into university based tertiary education is made possible from vocational education through adding academic curriculum degree content offered within respective programs, or through community education also known as Folkhögskola (Folk College). The provision of special needs education is integrated into the mainstream curriculum: special needs education is provided as an integrated or distinct mode to mainstream schooling. While this system is regulated nationwide, since 1991 the schools themselves are administered at municipal level.

During the 1990s, the Swedish school was subjected to several educational reforms. These have been largely aligned with international trends based on neo-liberal ideas about how to manage and administer the public sector (Ball 2009, Lingard 2010, Popkewitz 2012). Political changes opened up for a more market-driven school system encouraging competition between schools, parental choice (introducing a voucher system) and privatisation as optional alternatives. Today, Swedish education has changed from having one of the most centralized school systems compared to other European countries (Lundahl 2010), to being very decentralized with a unified basic structure (see Figure 1).

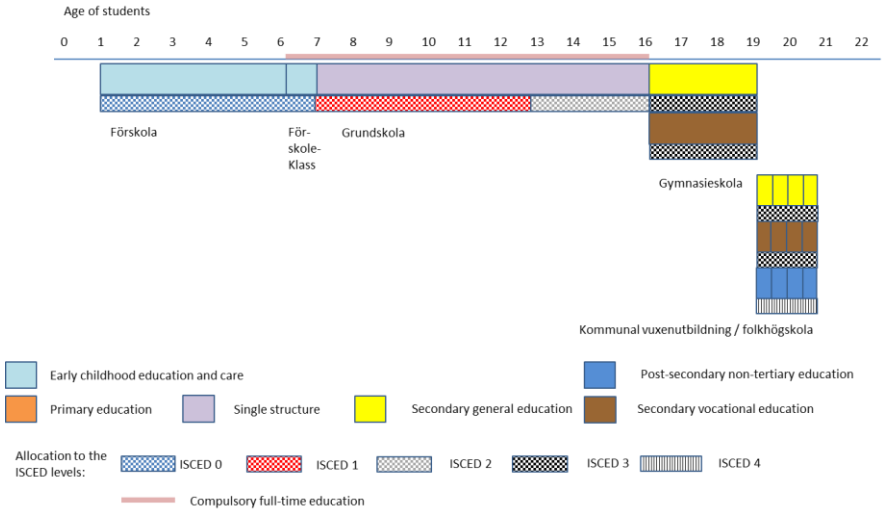

Figure 1: The Swedish school system (modified after Eurydice, 2019 n.d.)

After the 1990's reform period, it became increasingly easier to establish both non-profit and for-profit private schools through public and private funding administered by the municipalities.

Education reform and the teaching profession

The 1990s was marked by intense public debates about the quality of the Swedish schools. These are affected by both the politics and the public media, and resonate in the aforementioned structural changes. They also give meaning to the debates about declining achievement levels on international achievement tests, such as PISA and TIMSS. In many countries, the quality of the school has been increasingly in focus since the introduction of international knowledge tests and the raise of new opportunities for comparisons between countries. In the Swedish case however, much emphasis has been placed on the teaching profession and a need to secure teachers' professionalism (Mickwitz 2015).

In the 1990s, a long tradition of great confidence in the Swedish school's quality began to change. Issues to do with classroom management and falling achievement level results were raised in political debates. Many of the Swedish school's issues were largely explained by teachers' lack of professionalism. This case of alignment between improved quality of teacher education programs and improving conditions for teachers and rising PISA results is not unique for Sweden. It is discussed in other countries as well, with some researchers going as far as Dolton & Marcenaro Gutierrez (2011), who argue for a direct

connection between the salary of teachers and the PISA results in the respective OECD countries.

A more competitive and market-oriented school system changed the schooling landscape in Sweden in several ways. The introduction of a voucher system and parental choice led to increased segregation between schools. Public schools in more socio-economically vulnerable areas in the larger cities lost many students due to a student flight from the suburban areas towards schools in the inner city (Forsberg & Lundgren, 2010). Concurrently, the amount of independently run schools (a.k.a. 'free schools', 'friskolor') expanded during the years to follow. As these schools, although privately run, receive their funding from the government, they are not entitled to charge school fees. Nor are the few private schools that are running in the system allowed to have selective enrolment of students. This can be linked to the policy of "A school for all" which stipulates that students may not be excluded from schooling due to economic reasons. In Sweden, the requirement for an equivalent school for all is legislated within the School Act and in the national curriculum (SFS 2010:800, 1: 8 §). School enrolment is conditional to placement on the waiting lists (private compulsory schools) or grades (private and public upper secondary school). In larger cities in Sweden, a landscape of schools has been formed where students from socially more privileged backgrounds and higher levels of grade achievement attend the more prestigious schools, while the other schools receive students with lower levels of grade achievements. Therefore, the issue of parity among schools is increasingly questioned in Sweden today, and this has resonated also at international levels (OECD, 2016) expressing concern over the system becoming increasingly segregated. At the same time, this has led to considerable differences for the teaching profession, for example to increasing differences in the working conditions or salaries offered by different schools.

Lately, teaching is increasingly seen as an unattractive profession. This can be explained by a growing administrative workload that has increased significantly due to school reforms, the comparatively low salary, and a low degree of professionalization in the field (Bertilsson, 2014). Especially the salary has to be regarded as low compared to other OECD countries: In 2015/2016, Swedish teachers earned between 67,8% and 109,6% compared to the GDP per capita. Especially the maximum salaries are significantly lower than in other European countries, as teachers usually can earn significantly more than the per capita GDP in most countries (European Commision, EACEA & Eurodice, 2016). Furthermore, Swedish teachers have a rather high amount of work hours during the school year (in part as compensation for a long summer holiday).

At the same time, the social status of the teaching profession and its status compared to other courses of studies declined due to the decentralization, communalization and market orientation of the education sector during the last decades (Calander, Jonsson, Lindblad, Steensen & Wikström, 2003; Mickwitz 2015). Consequently, the teacher training programs have had major problems attracting students, which in turn has led to drastically reduced admission requirements of entry into teacher training. Today's teaching profession has seen an increasing shift in demographics due to recruiting more students from the lower socio-economic levels who in turn have limited cultural and social capital (Calander et al., 2003). Government reactions to the lowering of quality in teacher education has yielded the launching of several smaller teaching colleges in the regional urban areas. Today, the low quantity of students graduating from teacher training programs does not meet the needs in the teacher workforce. The lack of qualified teachers in Swedish schools spurs on debates about both the graduate capability of teacher induction into the workforce and the lack of appeal of the teaching profession as a whole. It creates a domino-effect where the low or no entry requirements into teacher training programs drain away any competition, which leads to even lower levels of teacher graduate induction into the Swedish schooling system.

Education reforms and teacher education

The current institutional changes discussed above also had implications for the teacher training programs. The reforms of the Swedish teacher education that are described in more detail in the next section can be traced back to a politically driven attempt to professionalize teachers as an occupational group. They stand in a long tradition of increasing governmental influence on and ongoing professionalization of teacher training efforts in Sweden.

A professionalization of teachers can be deemed an unusual turn considering Sweden's long history of education where teachers have traditionally been held in high regard. Sweden is one of the countries recognised for pioneering public schooling, dating back to the earliest scripture-based reforms of the 16th Century (Carle, Kinnander, Salin, 2000). The training was in these early days limited to the future clergy of the church. The following two centuries saw major reforms inspired by the ideas of enlightenment. The most notable of these was the modernisation of the training of teachers from a mainly female oriented vocation called 'child-gardening' to 'folk-schooling' and training in health and welfare and natural sciences (Linné, 2010). One of the pillars of Swedish teacher education was the formation of folk-schools which had an impact on the development of teacher

training. As in other countries (e.g. Kemnitz & Sandfuchs, in print), the government took hold of the training of teachers through the widely enforced folk-school reforms during the 19th century (Linné, 2010). This meant increased state control of future public education through a policy based encouragement of learners who realised a 'call' to teach.

As it became mandatory for all children to attend school as the general public school was established in the mid-1800s, a transfer of responsibility for children's education from the home and the church to the state began. It was now considered that the parents were unable to take the primary responsibility for their children's education and fostering. Herein lies one of the foundations of the institutionalized teacher education (Tallberg Broman, 2009). Formally trained teachers would compensate for the inability of the home to educate and foster their children. In the 1840's the first teacher education began taking shape at the 'Normal School' in Stockholm where tuition was offered in the arrangement of seminars, which albeit did contain some practical content on how to enact instruction (Linné, 2010). The new folk-school reform was ratified by law and gave the state influence over the curriculum content which remained Christian Lutheran and had a strong moral and civics education focus and which was drilled onto students through rote learning. Accordingly, the influence of the church and education, teacher training was still significant: in 1868, 30% of all teachers with a university education (usually teaching in secondary schools) descended from a priest household (Skog-Östlin, 1984).

This type of education was dominated by women. One the one hand, they became a cheaper form of workforce while on the other hand, teaching was one of the few academic occupations available for women from the upper classes (Linné, 2010). What signified the folk-school model was its focus also on early years of education, which gave many women access to higher education in an otherwise male-dominated environment. Regardless of the initiatives to make teacher training a state-based public education, the socio-economic upper classes were educated through private tuition until late 19th century (Carle, et.al., 2000; Landahl, 2016). Towards the mid-20th century, the first formal teacher education institution was launched in the capital of Stockholm and was followed by similar education programs in the other main cities (Linné, 2010). The curriculum was based on a respect for the development of the child and for underlying scientific evidence. It was also possible to undertake an education as teacher in special needs. The reform on public teacher education was a major social achievement in Swedish state politics and was forged by a general advocacy towards societal progressivist vision.

Teacher education today

During the last decades, Swedish teacher education was subjected to a cascade of reforms that often had contradictory effects on the structure of the teacher education programs. Until 2001, national teacher training programs were offered in eight different program structures that were not always compatible with parallel structures. The curriculum was merged into one core component that could be combined through several specializations. The restructuring was motivated by allowing more freedom of curriculum choice for students. The reform work received heavy criticism after its implementation (Hultqvist & Palme, 2009). An evaluation of the reform in 2005 criticised the low standards in the new the program curriculum, particularly within the core components as well as on the low level academic effort that the new curriculum required from students (who it claimed allowed for a "slipping through the program", Hultqvist & Palme, 2009, p. 78).

In 2006, a government inquiry was assigned with the task to investigate the need for a national teacher accreditation system. The decision to appoint a government inquiry had been influenced by the public rhetoric about the lack of teachers with proper teacher training. This was seen as jeopardizing the quality of schooling. At the same time, the report by OECD, *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005), had gained much attention in educational politics both internationally and in Sweden. The report states that teachers hold the most important influence over students' school achievements implicating the need for a quality assurance of the teacher profession and the need to oversee teachers' competences. Consequently, Swedish education policy declared that teachers with appropriate teacher training are important in order to ensure schools' national equivalence, quality and the state's control over schools (The Swedish National Audit Office 2005, p 11-12).

While for a long time, many teachers had taught without a formal qualification, a new teacher accreditation reform was ratified in 2011 and which to regulate the work of unqualified teachers. Formal requirements for teachers' competencies were formulated in policy, thus articulating professionalism in terms of formal competence where it had previously been missing. Furthermore, teacher education experienced a general upward academization process as teacher training programs were amalgamated into the university system from their former position at college of advanced education level.

Since 2008, teacher education in Sweden is delivered as part of a university degree system. Initiatives have also been taken to strengthen the alignment between the teacher

education and the national curriculum of the Swedish school. As a result, the formal academic competencies of teachers are more in focus today. The policy reforms within the field of teacher education as well as the introduction of a teacher certificate in 2011 can be seen as an attempt to professionalize teacher education and raise its status in society. In the perspective of the teaching profession, these changes may be seen to resemble a disciplinary mechanisms to promote occupational change and control (Evetts 2003).

The tendency to strengthen the political regulation of teacher education is not only observed as a Swedish phenomenon. The same tendencies can be seen internationally, for example by an intensified reporting and accountability culture aimed at increasing control of teacher education policy and practice (Darling-Hammond 2001; Peck, Gallucci & Sloan 2010).

Thus, in 2011 the national system was – again – revised and replaced by a new system that consists of a stream of completely independent teacher training programs. Today, teacher education is anchored in university study and the institutions of higher education. Teacher education programs are delivered at; preschool, leisure-time school, elementary school, gymnasium and special vocational levels. Teachers for comprehensive schooling choose among programs catering for years F-3, 4-6 and 7-9. This leads to a rather compartmentalized landscape of independent teacher training programs. While teacher education programs are mainly centred on core pedagogical content knowledge up to year 6, including a broader subject range offered for years 4-6, from year 7 onwards teacher education at upper secondary level has a compulsory subject-specialisation of at least two major subjects. Consequently, teachers in lower grades will usually teach one single class in almost all subjects, while teachers in higher grades will teach multiple classes in two or three subjects.

Teacher training programs usually have a one-tier structure spanning three years (preschool) to five years (gymnasium) duration and include curricula on pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and vocational knowledge usually taught in cooperation with local schools. Therefore, even though there is no mandatory period of induction into teaching after graduation, most Swedish teachers will have acquired practical teaching experiences within their teacher training programs. Regardless of the one-tier structure, the different subjects offered within teacher education programs are usually studied consecutively. A teacher student who wants to become an upper secondary level teacher in languages at Stockholm University will, for example, study his or her first subject in the first two terms and the second subject choice in the terms four and five. The terms seven,

eight and ten are subsequent studies in both subjects including time for independent work while terms three, six and nine contain the pedagogical classes (Stockholms universitet n.d.). Teachers who wish to specialize in teaching children with special needs must enrol in an additional module after finishing their primary teacher training (Eurydice, 2017).

Increased need for professionalization and diversification of the workforce

The real situation of teacher training programs is different to this model, however. As the current policies place a strong emphasis on increasing the amount of teachers with formal qualifications as part of the efforts to professionalize the profession, a range of short programs options was established in order to support the upskilling of qualifications among teachers lacking a formal teaching degree. Those programs are called KPU ("complementary pedagogical training") which covers 1.5 years. Due to these programs, the amount of teachers with a pedagogical education has increased significantly over the last decade.

On the other hand, most universities discontinued programs for elementary school teachers for the grades from 7 – 9 due to crumbling numbers of students: There is little to no incentive to enrol in these programs, as students who decide to enrol in teacher education programs at Upper Secondary level are also eligible to teach the grades 7 – 9– but not vice versa.

This can be criticized in the context of efforts to professionalise the profession as there is no guarantee that teachers who are trained to work at upper secondary level receive the specific structural and pedagogical knowledge that is necessary for teaching at the higher levels of comprehensive schools. In any case, the current situation contradicts the idea of having extraordinary compartmentalized teacher training programs that offer tailor-made education for specific age groups. Another current challenge faced by Swedish teacher education today is the ongoing teacher shortage that is expected to continue increasing during the next decades (SCB, 2017). The reasons for the impending shortage includes not only exit to retirement during this period, but also the need to shift the low qualification rates of teachers and the rising number of students that is e.g. a result of the growing number of immigrant children (SOU 2016).

There are several options to curb a teacher shortage depending on the location of the bottleneck limiting the inflow of new teachers into the system. As the Swedish system does not lack a sufficient number of places in teacher education programs, but has issues filling

the existing places, several strategies were implemented to enhance the number of future teachers. Next to increasing the attraction of the profession by raising salaries and offering new career positions within schools for experienced teachers, the Swedish government decided to open new teacher training programs in areas with inhabitants that are less likely to visit classical universities.

Together with implementing KPUs, these measures aim at enhancing the potential to attract new teachers without de-professionalising the workforce by allowing an influx of unqualified personnel to cover the shortage. At the same time, these measures – new locations to target new, specific groups of the population and KPUs which allow access to people from other occupations – can be seen as measures to diversify the teaching workforce. Teaching workforces are known to be less diverse than the population of students they teach (e. g. OECD 2005).

Teacher education and globalization

Enhancing the number of teachers with an immigrant background can be seen as important, especially in regard to the increasing number of students with immigrant background in many European and Non-European countries (OECD, 2016). At the European level, recommendations of increasing diversity among teacher staff is linked with assumptions that teachers with immigrant background can strengthen immigrant students' educational results (Donlevy, Meierkord & Rajania 2016). The same conclusion is made in Swedish educational policy (SOU 2016:35). The possibilities for having former teacher education validated varies between countries according to the differences in national migration policy and structures of the teacher education. Sweden has offered Complementary Teacher Education Programs for foreign teachers since 2007. Foreign teachers with at least a two-year post-secondary teaching degree from another country and sufficient knowledge in the Swedish language at the level of upper secondary school are admitted into the program. In 2016, due to the high influx of migrants, the program was accompanied with an introducing 26 week Fast-track for immigrated teachers to cut the pathway of newly-arrived teachers towards establishing themselves in schools and preschools (SOU 2016: 35).[2] The Fast-track is an introduction into the Swedish school system. One main aim of education was to align immigrant teachers' attitudes and norms with those inherent within the Swedish school

[2] Several Fast-track programmes have been organized for different professions. The Fast-track is a labor market education based on an agreement between the Government, the Swedish teachers' union, the employers' organization for the Swedish Service sector and the Swedish Public employment Service.

system for becoming a teacher in a Swedish context. The newly-arrived teachers, mainly from Syria, are educated in Swedish, the history and organization of the Swedish school system and attend in-school practice during the Fast-track programme. After the Fast-track many of the immigrated teachers continue to the Complementary Teacher Education at the universities. The complementary education varies in length depending on their previous education and professional experience and includes teacher training courses and/or subject studies as well as in-school practice. Thus, Sweden hopes to increase the number of teachers with immigrant background and at the same time fill the teacher shortage gap.

Teacher education in Sweden as well as elsewhere is not uncommonly described as a localised institution, building on the premise of nation-building from a regionalised knowledge management perspective. The intentions of the European Union, through the Bologna Declaration of 1999, were aimed at aligning European higher education by synchronising higher education structures and advocating increased student and staff mobility across member states. Here we find that the mobility of teacher education students is partly promoted "in view of the important role they will play in educating future generations of Europeans" (EHEA 2015, p.3). Whilst mobility provides only a fraction of the grand vision delivered in the Bologna Accord, the case of Swedish teacher education differs. Despite the broader intentions, both the content and interest in the teacher education curriculum remains more focused on Swedish national interests than on global issues.

For students in the teacher training programmes this has, for example, been made evident through the relatively low commitment to international exchanges in and out of the Swedish teacher education system. In the face of rewarding economic incentives and national drivers lobbying for increased activity in the internationalisation of teacher education sector in Sweden, the mobility rates have remained at minimal levels for several decades. Neither did the remarkable growth in global advocacy, which is so prevalent abroad, make a notable impact in the context of Swedish teacher education, where expressions of interest to undertake a mobility period during teacher training have remained unrealised by many. One of the explanations to this derives from the sheer structure of the teacher education program curriculum, which in many cases lacks embedded mobility periods. This hinders students from undertaking an exchange period in another country, for fear of involuntarily extending the duration of their study candidature (SOU 2018:3).

It resonates generally with the experience of setbacks at system level in the internationalisation of higher education suffering from a bad fit in credit transfer between partner institutions. This leads in many cases to students not receiving credit for their

overseas study, and needing to complement courses they have missed out on during their exchange period. These issues and a general disinterest in a global mind-set contribute to the relatively localised approach found in teacher education during the twenty-first century. There is a belief that Swedish students simply travel abroad for their holidays, and conduct their education, training and work at home.

However, the recent upswing in global engagement, not least through the advocacy of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030, might bring about a turn in direction. For small size nations such as Sweden, being part of the global sustainability agenda is fundamental to remaining in the top league among environmental world leaders. Sweden has realised the broader benefits of involving the education system in this process as it has a key role to play in developing global initiatives through education for sustainable development. In this respect Sweden has made a notable difference involving teachers and schools, particularly through government initiatives such as "Den Globala Skolan" (The Global School) (UHR) which has a mandate to engage schools and the public education system within the global development agenda.

A professionalized teacher education

The current status of the Swedish teacher education system is a transitory one: As in many other countries, Sweden has recognized a need to enhance the professionalization of its teaching workforce. This has been carried out by certifying the teaching profession and increasing the influence of the curriculum at all levels of the school system. Today also the pre-school and before-and-after-school programs are part of the national curriculum with stated pedagogical goals to fulfil. Since July 2019, even leisure-time teacher are obliged to have a teacher certification if obtaining a permanent position in school. The reform has been launched as a way to raise the professional status of before-and-after-school teachers in the same way as the teacher certification reform that was launched in 2011. In particular, a need to assure quality in the teaching profession has been articulated politically. Simultaneously, an increased awareness of the importance of well-educated teachers has emerged.

Teaching is no easy profession with unambiguous situations that can only be mastered by following clear, simple instructions – it is a complex occupation that places high requirements on individuals working in the field. Seeing teaching as a profession

acknowledges these demands and asks for professional teachers that possess specific knowledge and skills which enables them to act successfully in ambiguous situations that are common in schools and during classroom teaching. They have better requirements to spur on lifelong learning, to adopt new developments in the field and to master complex, multidimensional settings (Cramer, in print).

In the current Swedish system, the need for a higher professionalization of teachers encounters a teacher shortage that calls for measures to attract and induct more teachers and offers possibilities to speak to a more diverse group of prospective teachers than ever before. At the same time, the 'old' Swedish model of 'school for all' faces pressure from more recent, neoliberal currents in the political debate that threaten to erode the egalitarian approach of the Swedish school system. This places demands on schools to become less equal in their pursuits for distinction. In turn, this development may move the options for people to choose teaching as their profession in an opposite direction. A more segregated school system may lead to an increasing need for ever more well-educated teachers. Such a case would require the professional competencies that are presumed necessary for catering for specialised needs in schools in marginalised areas. However, such schools are also the ones having most problems attracting expert teachers.

Swedish (teacher) education: catering for a school for all

The above account raises the issue whether the Swedish teacher education system has evolved along the traditions of egalitarianism by acting as the corner stone of the appraised 'Swedish Model' to become a mere 'dice' subjected to the game of social and political construction at the hands of globalisation. This is perhaps not surprising, as the potential of the 'goods' that a teacher education might deliver for societies anywhere must be geared towards meeting the needs within immediate society. The ideals of Swedish teacher education are holistic in this sense as it is aimed at catering for all of society. 'One school for All' has far reaching implications to train teachers in competencies far broader than the mainstream. This grand plan of collective teacher training in Sweden provides for the societal range across dimensions of age, socio-economics, and cultural diversity needs.

Therefore, what is also reflected in Sweden's provision of teacher training are the five constitutionally recognised minorities of the indigenous Sami, the Sweden Finns, the Meänkieli (spoken in the northern border regions between Sweden and Finland), Jiddish, and Romani Chib according to the 2000 *Framework Convention for the Protection of*

National Minorities (Rodell-Olgaç & Hellstén 2012). These populations range in size from 20000 to 600000 speakers. The Swedish government's adoption of the convention in 2013 led to an initiative to offer education for aspiring minority language teachers at four universities. Subsequently, Umeå University offers training in the Sami and meänkieli; Stockholm University caters for Finnish; Lund University for Jiddish and Södertörn University College for Romani Chib. According to the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR, 2014), the numbers of applicants has been relatively low calling for stronger incentives to maintain and revitalise minority education (SOU 2017:91).

Sweden's historically and traditionally unique approach to teacher education provisions can be described to cut a transversal through the layers of society and across the lifespan. Current initiatives, however, fall short in meeting the objectives set by the patterns of system tradition. Teacher education in Sweden today needs deliberation at several points of departure. At the one end it needs to respond to the global flows in the field of education, such as the upskilling of the profession. Concurrently, it must actualize new societal concerns in providing a robust professional teaching community that is equipped to tackle the tendency towards a mobile future society in which teachers and the teaching profession migrates across global boundaries. This raises the professional legitimacy concerns to a global level in teacher education.

The legacy of *the Swedish model* may not have morphed beyond repair. Given the state of world developments, the impact of migration and world unrest upon the historically egalitarian public system and the culture of integration within the common agenda of 'One School for All' what versions of the local and global intersect in trajectory of Swedish teacher education?

National teacher education towards a globalized climate: concluding commentary

At a global glance, the Swedish case is in accordance with the state of affairs in teacher education elsewhere. According the recent Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report published by OECD (June, 2019), all 48 countries surveyed indicate a need to attract more teachers into the workforce. One of the shared suggestions revealed by this survey of 260 000 teachers and school leaders across the participating fifteen thousand schools agree on the need to raise economic incentives in order to secure the sustainability of the teaching profession into the future. The implications for raising the status of the teacher profession are placed on, for example, technological advancement. Whilst this chapter has not explicitly addressed ICT and teacher education, it does confirm a

parameter that is also decisive in the debate on teacher training enhancement, globally. For example, ICT training and innovation in teacher education is at about 56% among the OECD TALIS member countries but is alarmingly the lowest in Sweden at only 37%. Does this observation warrant additional attention to the need for raising the bar on teacher professionalization in the context of Sweden?

It would be anticipated that these low measures have a negative impact on recruiting more students into a teaching career. Interest in choosing teaching as a profession is indicated by TALIS (OECD, 2019) by two thirds of participants surveyed, and remains more popular among women than men. The migration issues sweeping across countries show impact on the needs for adaptation also in teacher education. Approximately one fifth of teachers are today working in schools where refugee students make up ca. 10% of total student populations. This shows a trend across the OECD region for increased adaptation to multicultural academic content, where surprisingly, the Swedish teachers' preparedness to teach in a multicultural setting is at about 32% against the near 80% across the OECD.

To what extent do these hard facts show the shifting direction in cultural commitment of the Swedish teacher education landscape? Unfortunately, facts emphasise support for the recent international critique towards the Swedish education system. The debates resonate in the national discourse on teaching and the teacher professionalization. However, we need to further discover at what levels the current circumstances might first be understood, in order to be effectively improved upon. Further research could undoubtedly be afforded to examining the extent to which 'the Swedish model' engages the national mind-set among educators. Or may there be so much implicit public trust in the schooling system at policy levels to warrant an assumed belief in any of its failures simply being attributed to inappropriate policy instruments, rather than analysing their implementation potential (Forsberg & Lundgren, 2010)? Alternatively, does the potential of a national mind-set that is built upon the values framework of yesteryear's *Swedish model* make available a silent national contentment? Further issues to be explored in future research may address whether such a belief system acts on saving its constituents from global competition and outsider influences. This type of research might shed light on to what extent the core values of the Swedish model have been affected by the societal changes and become institutionalised in the case of Swedish teacher education. These are issues which give rise to further exploration of comparative research that takes into consideration the state of affairs in teacher education globally and at the intersections across national boundaries.

References

Ball, S. J. (2009). Privatising education, privatising education policy, privatising educational research: network governance and the 'competition state'. *Journal of Education Policy* 34 (2), 83-99

Bertilsson, E. (2014). *Skollärare. Rekrytering till utbildning och yrke 1977-2009 (School teachers. Recruitment for education and profession 1977-2009).* Uppsala: Uppsala University Library.

Calander, F., Jonsson, C., Lindblad, S., Steensen, J. & Wikström, H. (2003). *Nybörjare på Lärarprogrammet. Vilka är de? Vad vill de? Vad tycker de? (Beginners at teacher training programs. Who are they? What do they want? What do they think?)* Uppsala: Pedagogiska Institutionen.

Carle, T., Kinnander, S. & Salin, S. (2000). Lärarnas Riksförbund 1884-2000: *ett stycke svensk skolhistoria ur fackligt perspektiv (The Teacher's Riksförbund 1884-2000: a part of the history of Swedish schools from a subject-centered perspective)*. Retrieved from http://www.lararnashistoria.se

Cramer, C. (in print). Professionstheorien. Überblick, Entwicklung und Kritik. [Theories of the profession. Overview, development and critique] In M. Harant, U. Küchler & P. Thomas (Eds.),. Tübingen: Tübingen University Press.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2001). Teacher testing and the improvement of practice. *Teaching Education, 12*(1), 11–34.

Dolton, P. & Marcenaro Gutierrez, O. (2011). Teachers' Pay and Pupil Performance. *CentrePiece, 16* (2). Retrieved May 09, 2017, from http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp352.pdf

Donlevy, V., Meierkord, A. & Rajania, A. (2016). *Study on the diversity within the teaching profession with particular focus on migrant and/or minority background: Final report – Study, European Union, Brussels*. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.2766/873440

EHEA (2015). *Report by the EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition. To present to Ministers of the European Area of Higher Education for the Bologna Ministerial Conference, 14-15 May 2015, Yerevan, Armenia*. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/70/7/YerevanCommuniqueFinal_613707.pdf [Accessed 12 September 2019].

European Commission, EACEA & Eurydice (2016). Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe – 2015/16. Eurydice Facts and Figures. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Eurydice (Ed.). (2019). *Sweden. Overview*. Retrieved June, 11, 2019, from https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/sweden_en

Eurydice (Ed.). (2017). *Sweden. 9. Teachers and Education Staff.* Retrieved May 09, 2017, from https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Sweden:Teachers_and_Education_Staff

Evetts, J. (2003). The construction of professionalism in new and existing occupational contexts: promoting and facilitating occupational change, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 23(4), 22-35

Forsberg, E. and Lundgren, U. (2010). Sweden: A Welfare State in Transition, in Rotberg, I, *Balancing Change and Tradition in Global Education Reform*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Education, pp181-195.

Hultqvist, E. & Palme, M. (2009). Stå vid rodret eller tappa bort sig. En sociologisk studie av rekryteringen till lärarutbildningen och dess följder (Staying on board or leaving. A sociological study about recruiting in the teaching education programs and its

consequences). *Praktiske Grunde. Nordisk tidsskrift for kultur- og samfundsvidenskab* (4), 77–94.
Kemnitz, H. & Sandfuchs, U. (in print): Geschichte des Unterrichtens (History of teaching). In E. Kiel, B. Herzig, U. Maier & U. Sandfuchs: *Handbuch Unterrichten in allgemeinbildenden Schulen*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.
Landahl, J. (2016). *Politik & Pedagogik. En biografi över Fridtjuv Berg. (Politics and Pedagogy. A biography of Fritjuv Berg.)* Stockholm: Lärarförlaget.
Lingard, B. (2010). Policy borrowing, policy learning: testing times in Australian schooling. *Critical studies in Education*, 51(2), 129-147
Linné, A. (2010). *Lärarnas historia*. Retrieved from www.lararnashistoria.se
Lundahl, L. (2010). Sweden: decentralization, deregulation, quasi-markets – and then what? *Journal of Education Policy*, 17(6), 687-698
Mickwitz, L. (2015). Den professionella lärarens möjlighetsvillkor (The possibilities and limits of teacher professionalism) *Utbildning & Demokrati*, 24(2), 35–54
OECD (2005). *Teachers matter: attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*. OECD publications. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/education/school/34990905.pdf
OECD (2016). *Working together: Skills and labour market integration of immigrants and their children in Sweden*. OECD publishing, Paris
OECD (2019). *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/education/countries-must-make-teaching-profession-more-financially-and-intellectually-attractive.htm
Peck, C. A., Gallucci, C. & Sloan, T. (2010). Negotiating Implementation of High-Stakes Performance Assessment Policies in Teacher Education: From Compliance to Inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education,* 61 (5), 451–463
Popkewitz, T. (2012). Pisa: Numbers, Standardizing Conduct, and the Alchemy of School Subjects. In M.A. Pereyra, H.-H.Kottoff & R. Cowen (eds.), *PISA under Examination: Changing Knowledge, Changing Tests, and Changing Schools*. Rotterdam: Sense
Regeringskansliet (n.d.). *The Swedish Model*. Retrieved from https://www.government.se/4a5336/contentassets/8416c4ff1410419090181fe503920390/the-swedish-model.pdf
Rodell-Olgaç, C. & Hellstén, M. (2012). Editorial 22(1): Special issue in intercultural and critical education. *Issues In Educational Research*, 22(1), iii-vii. Retrieved from http://www.iier.org.au/iier22/editorial22-1-special.html
The Swedish National Audit Office 2005. *Rätt utbildning för undervisningen – Statens insatser för lärarkompetens* (The right education for teaching – The Government's efforts for teacher competence). Riksdagstryckeriet, Stockholm 2005
SCB: Statistiska centralbyrån (2017). *Trends and forecasts 2017. Population, education and labour market in Sweden - outlook to year 2035*. Stockholm: SCB, Prognosinstitutet.
SFS: Svensk författningssamling (Swedish Codes of Statues) (2010). *Skollagen (School law)*. The Swedish government.
Skog-Östlin, K. (1984). *Pedagogisk kontroll och auktoritet. En studie av den statliga lärarutbildningens uppgifter enligt offentliga dokument kring folkskollärarutbildningen, läroverkslärarutbildningen och lärarhögskolan (Educational Control and Authority. A study of state teacher education tasks according to public documents around the folk-school teacher education, the läroverks teacher education and teacher education college).* Studies in Education and Psychology, Bd. 14. Malmö: Liber Förlag/Gleerup.
SOU: Statens offentliga utredningar (Swedish Government Official Reports) (2016). *Vägen in till det svenska skolväsendet (The Road to Swedish Schooling),* SOU 2016:35. The Swedish government.

SOU: Statens offentliga utredningar (Swedish Government Official Reports) (2017). *Sweden's national minority languages in education.* Government report.
SOU: Statens offentliga utredningar (Swedish Government Official Reports) (2018). *Strategic Agenda for Internationalisation.* Government report.
Stockholms universitet (n.d.): *Utbildningsgång Ämneslärarprogram språk, gymnasiet/vuxenutbildningen - antagen fr.o.m. HT17*. Retrieved May 28, 2019 from https://www.isd.su.se/utbildning/v%C3%A5ra-utbildningar/%C3%A4mnesl%C3%A4rarprogram/utbildningsg%C3%A5ng-inriktning-spr%C3%A5k-gy-vux-antagen-fr-o-m-ht17
Tallberg Broman, I. (2009). "No parent left behind": Föräldradeltagande för inkludering och effektivitet. *Educare*. (2-3), 221-240
UHR Universitet och högskolerådet (Swedish Council for Higher Education) (2014). *National Minority Education*. Retrieved from https://www.uhr.se/globalassets/_uhr.se/publikationer/2017/uhr-nationella-minoritetsutbildningar-20142016.pdf
UN (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx