

Changing professional discourses in teacher education policy back towards a training paradigm: A comparative study

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Abstract. Most modern definitions of professions connect professional knowledge to scientific studies and higher education. In the present article we examine the changing nature of this relationship in respect of professional knowledge in initial teacher education in two European countries: Sweden and England. The article is based on policy analyses from recent decades of teacher education reform in the two countries. The findings are compared to previous research and implications are drawn for European teacher education policy in the future.

Introduction

This article is based on a comparative teacher education policy analysis in two countries. It aims to compare recent changes in two particular systems based on ministerial surveys and journal articles. Such comparative research has a solid history within the *European Journal of Teacher Education*, which has included many good examples over the years comparing different education areas and concepts of profession and professionalism (e.g. Martín del Pozo et al, 2004; Drew et al, 2007; Ayme et al, 2009). In these investigations, the analysis of the visible aspects of educational systems, such as the organisation of studies, the content of teacher education and the level of public expenditure, indicates that there are significant differences between national systems. However, more detailed analyses at the level of policy formulation and enactment contradict these differences and show that policy changes appear to be quite similar, particularly in recent years, where there has been a tendency toward the globalisation of a neo-liberal educational policy paradigm (Goodson, 2008; Harford, 2010; Beach, 2010). These results underline the need for detailed analyses (Martín del Pozo et al, 2004; Ayme et al, 2009). This is also what has been attempted here.

Simply put, comparative research is research that attempts to compare two or more items, policies, sets of practices and so on with a view to discovering something about one or all of these (Drew et al, 2007). It often utilizes multiple disciplines in one study subset and concentrates most often also on middle-range theories that do not purport to describe social systems in their entirety, but only of those systems (Ayme et al, 2009). This applies also in the present investigation, in which the concepts of teacher professionalism and professional knowledge in recent teacher education reforms in two countries are compared.

These two countries, Sweden and England, have been chosen for particular reasons connected to the development of higher education policy, including teacher education, in

recent years. They have in some senses similar policy histories with respect to the development of the respective nation's school systems and teacher education and in others quite different ones. For instance the *glesbyggs problematik* (sparse rural population problematic) that Sweden has had to deal with is not recognised in England, but both countries have had a long political struggle over the introduction of a common comprehensive school through the integration of the historically dominant grammar school with elementary and later secondary modern schools, and both have grappled with establishing teacher education principles, practices and institutions for educating teachers to teach, and managers to organise and lead, these institutions. These struggles are visible as traces across the policy histories of the two countries and it is key aspects of these policy histories related to professional knowledge as a means to improve teacher professional competencies through teacher education that the article is concerned with. We hope to cast light on what policy ambitions are reflected in the two countries and what these reflections suggest about how teacher professionalism and professional knowledge have been viewed over time in relation to teacher education.

Changes in the policy environment have previously been shown to affect senses of professionalism and professional identity (Powell, 2000; Day et al, 2007), as have changes in societal contexts (Leeman, 2006). Both dimensions of change are apparent at present in the two countries investigated. However, previous research has also suggested that Sweden has to a degree resisted global neo-liberal educational policy and refracted its ambitions differently to other countries, whilst the UK has seemed to embrace these policies, and was one of the first countries to adopt them (Lawn 1996; Goodson, 2008; Beach, 2010). By comparing developments in the two countries and present tendencies any maintained difference and/or general convergence can be identified, described and discussed.

Professional knowledge, teacher education and the performative turn

Modern definitions of professions, such as the definition of Eliot Freidson (1986, 59), describe professions as links between high levels of formal education based on several years of higher education that connects abstract theoretical knowledge to practical skills that are broadly considered as more exclusive and more profound than everyday knowledge and not easily understandable or communicated in everyday language (Brante, 2010). Professions have thus a specific kind of scientifically developed ‘know-why knowledge’ with a specific syntax and grammar that guides practice and carries professional ideas and values. However, as Brante (2010) notes, the relation between the scientific knowledge needs of the profession and professional action is often left here with no further attempts to specify what qualities this knowledge must have. Sometimes the State steps in to explicate this relationship, particularly with respect to professions in the public-sector (Whitty, 2006; Harford, 2010). This involvement can move professional knowledge in different directions, either toward or away from a scientific knowledge of practice befitting a *professions education* or towards or away from a more standardised, competency based and performative content of a *training* paradigm (Furlong, 2005; Furlong et al, 2009; Mentor et al, 2012).

In this article we describe policy development in teacher education in Sweden and England over the past sixty years. In particular we are concerned with what may be termed *education theory* and professional scientific knowledge, which we define as content from the scientific study of the field of education practice in core disciplines like the history, sociology, philosophy and psychology of education within this policy development (Beach & Bagley, 2012). However, although we analyse policies from Sweden and England the article may reflect a wider policy context as well. As noted over the past decade, teacher education systems across European countries seem to have converged (Harford, 2010), and core

disciplines like the history, sociology, philosophy and psychology of education seem to be waning (Beach & Bagley, 2012; Lawn & Furlong, 2009; Lauder et al, 2009).

Riksaasen suggests such developments may threaten key aspects of professional knowledge (Riksaasen, 2002). This, in that as suggested by Beach (2011), Player-Koro (2012) and Beach and Bagley (2012) in Sweden and Lawn (1996) and Mentor et al (2012) in England, recent reforms have begun to reduce teacher education to teacher training, with an emphasis on subject knowledge and professional standards and competencies only. An apprenticeship approach to teacher education has begun to take precedence over the development and communication of theoretical knowledge (Lawn & Furlong, 2009; Lauder et al, 2009; Sjöberg, 2011).

Teacher Education in Sweden

The value of knowledge from scientific studies of the education field and its social practices and agents actions, for teacher education, developed in Sweden through a series of teacher education inquiries starting with the 1946 *National School Commission's Teacher's College Delegation* (TCD) (in Swedish 'Lärarhögskoledelegationen'), which officially recognised the role of the school in transforming society and how this places demands on teacher knowledge from deeper studies in pedagogy and psychology for work in a more progressive and comprehensive school. The argument, similar to that in Scotland today (Mentor et al, 2012), was that teachers will benefit from the contribution of these disciplines, which will help them distinguish between professional principles and practices that have gained wide acceptance and those that have not, and may be little more than passing fancies. Subsequent reforms built onto this early recognition, starting with the Teacher Education Expert Committee (TEEC 60), which submitted its recommendations in 1965 (SOU 1965:29).

As with the TCD, the TEEC report argued strongly for the need of scientific pedagogical research (particularly in the psychology of education but also in sociology, history and philosophy) and its value for professional knowledge and teaching. However, there was also a strong critique of the pedagogy discipline, which was described as lacking empirical foundations in research on institutional practices in education settings and failing to add significantly to this knowledge (Beach, 2011). This argument formed a basis for the direction that the TEEC expressed that teacher education should be taking. As in the TCD two component-directions were outlined: one for the development of research-based general pedagogical knowledge and one for research-based knowledge related directly to teaching methods. Both were to be communicated in pedagogy courses in higher education.

The Teacher Education Inquiry Commission (abbreviated in Swedish as LUT 74) followed the TEEC some nine years later (SOU 1978:86). Its recommendations were published in November 1978 and formed the basis of Proposition 1984/85:122 for a teacher education for the comprehensive school (Askling, 2006). Even the LUT commissioners wrote extensively on the value of research-based professional knowledge about teaching and ITT-practices, but their report also added that research is also a natural part of professional activities like teaching that has a value beyond the above benefits. An education in the systematic analysis and constructive criticism of prevailing societal conditions and professional practices was suggested on these grounds (Beach, 2011) and the Commissioners also wrote about stimulating a research-career-connection for teachers through in-service researcher training in the systematic recording, monitoring and analysis of observations. This represents a mile-stone recognition of the value of research-based-teaching. The quality of teaching in schools would be enhanced according to the commissioners, by teachers becoming critically aware research producers.

The next commission, the Teacher Education Inquiry Committee (abbreviated in Swedish as LUK 97), published its recommendations in 1999 (SOU 1999:63) in the wake of a series of reforms in the school sector. These included the decentralisation and curriculum reforms and the introduction of new forms of governance and criterion referenced national grading. They were felt to place new requirements on teacher competence and teacher education (Beach, 2011; Askling, 2006). However, in order to develop professional knowledge in connection to these new demands LUK also recommended that a new financial support system and means of organising research for teaching and teacher education should be instigated. This recognition and recommendation distinguished this committee from previous commissions. Although they had all made extensive statements about a scientific knowledge base for teaching and a research connection for and from teacher education, previous inquiry commissions did so in relation to existing faculties and subject areas in the universities and university colleges whilst LUK did not (Beach, 2011). It argued for shifting the research-based production of professional knowledge for teacher education away from disciplinary pedagogy closer to teaching and teacher education praxis (Beach & Bagley, 2012).

An important point to recognise here is that LUK still expressed that beginning teachers needed researcher skills and scientific content about professional conditions and labour in order to teach well and that this knowledge was to be produced by specialised scientific research in the universities, by specialised researchers and communicated to student teachers in teacher education in the university system. What had changed concerned recommendations about which researchers and faculties should be involved in this research. The professional knowledge hegemony of disciplinary pedagogy was brought into question. This development obtained its most important consequences ten years later (Sjöberg, 2011; Beach & Bagley, 2012; Player-Koro, 2012) through the so-called Sustainable Teacher Education Inquiry, abbreviated HUT 07 in Swedish (SOU 2008:105).

The recommendations of HUT 07 were very different to those of the previous commissions (Sjöberg, 2011; Beach, 2011); and so too were the directives to the commission from the Government (Beach & Bagley, 2012; Player-Koro, 2012) and several researchers have suggested that they turn the tide against the previous mission of developing a scientifically founded professional research base for teacher education, by instead placing emphasis on the value of academic subject knowledge and technical and behavioural knowledge related to how to select and ‘teach’ this content effectively: i.e. competency-based teacher-training (Sjöberg, 2011). The research-based knowledge foundation was shifted in other words back toward conditions that existed prior to the TEEC report, to subjects and a kind of subject instructional theory. Beach and Bagley (2012) talk about a re-traditionalisation reform. Player-Koro (2012) talks of conservative modernisation.

This kind of policy shift is familiar from other countries, such as the US (Apple, 2001; Zeichner, 2010) and the UK (Ball et al, 1994; Gerwitz, 2002), where they also occurred much earlier (Beach, 2010; Mentor et al, 2012), but also other European countries (Riksaasen, 2002; Garm & Karlsen; 2004; Goodson, 2008; Harford, 2010). It is a move from knowledge about research practices, outcomes and perspectives in relation to teaching and learning (as described in TCD, TEEC and LUT) back to a content that primarily stresses *the value of research products* (i.e. science based disciplinary content) in relation to the school subjects on the one hand and research-based *teacher behaviour* on effective forms of teaching in relation to pupils’ subject learning on the other (Beach & Bagley, 2012). As stated in HUT (p 376) teachers are described as needing knowledge of their subject and of the social and administrative nature of teaching and how to manage conflicts, assessment demands, evaluation and so forth (Beach, 2011). Evidence-based-teaching is introduced, research-based-teaching is ushered out, and a competence-oriented knowledge is once again emphasised as opposed to critical thinking (Sjöberg 2011).

These developments have been heavily critiqued for undermining content about education as a political and sociological object of knowledge along with the ‘know-why knowledge’ component of a professions education (Brante, 2010), which have all been removed from the teacher education curriculum, in favour of performativity content (Mentor, et al, 2012). In effect, and as we show in the case of England below (Furlong, 2005; Lauder et al, 2009; Lawn and Furlong, 2009), a marginalisation of abstract and theoretical disciplinary-based thinking and of know-why professional-knowledge has been established. This has occurred not through prohibition, but by filling the course time available with audited concrete practice related performative and behavioural content (Sjöberg, 2011). There seems to be a policy convergence at this point between the two countries in contrast to the differences that may have characterised their earlier policy periods.

Teacher Education in England

In mapping the last 50 years of ITT in England, the 1950-70s may be described as the ‘golden-age’ of higher education control (Le Grand, 1997). Teacher education was dominated by university providers who had a relatively large degree of autonomy over programme design and delivery (Whitty, 2006). This dated back to the 1963 Robbins Report (Ministry of Education, 1963), which supported the development of an all-graduate teaching profession throughout the UK (Mentor et al, 2012).

As in Sweden at this time the first education studies content of University ITT courses in England largely developed out of the research interests of professors of education (Crook, 2002) and as in Sweden, the key disciplines of study informing this development were the psychology (mainly), (but also) history, philosophy and sociology of education (Lawn & Furlong, 2009). For students on teacher training courses in universities this emphasis was signalled through the assessment procedures adopted, which were concentrated on

examination in these areas. The undertaking of a period of in-school practice also featured, but at that time to a much lesser extent than university studies (Mentor et al, 2012). The reverse is the case today.

This post-war thinking in relation to ITT and its commitment to the foundation disciplines is encapsulated in a 1968 textbook, which observes that education is a set of problems to be solved and the education disciplines are a set of tools waiting to be used (Lauder et al, 2009; Lawn & Furlong, 2009). To this end the study of history is perceived as familiarising teachers and researchers with what was, sociology is intended to reveal what is, while philosophy encourages thinking about what should be (Crook, 2002; Brante, 2010). Informed by these foundation disciplines educational research was undertaken and theory developed for the education of teacher trainees on issues related to influences on schools, learning and development (Lawn & Furlong, 2009).

Despite its 'golden-age' ascription even during this period the content of courses and the balance between school-based teaching practice and time spent in university was an issue of debate that operated as a proxy between balancing the need for theorised knowledge as provided by universities with the practical classroom knowledge provided by the schools (Thomas, 1990). Subsequently, in the 1970s the James Report into teacher education signalled a policy reappraisal of this balance. It stated that 'Many courses place too much emphasis on educational theory at the expense of adequate preparation for students' responsibilities in their first professional assignments' (DES, 1972, paragraphs 3.6, 3.7). This issue, the report claimed, was one highlighted by students who claimed to need more practical training in classroom teaching. As with the recent HUT report in Sweden, the James Report didn't totally reject the need for teachers to possess theoretical knowledge, but it advocated that this was something which should feature post-qualification as part of a teacher's further professional development (DES, 1972, § 2.7).

The precise influence of the James Report is difficult to gauge. But it is certainly the case that in the 1970s ITT in England witnessed a gradual reduction in the theoretical content of the curriculum, as subject and professional studies along with teaching practice (i.e. time spent in practical school-based training) began to feature more noticeably (Crook, 2002). Moreover, this de-theorisation process was given added momentum with the election of a Conservative government in 1979, committed to implementing a neo-liberal and neo-conservative political agenda and to reforming the content of what it perceived as an over theorised teacher training curriculum. As one right wing think tank pamphlet stated, Teachers with a Cert Ed after their names have studied nonsense for three years and those with MEd or AdvDipEd have returned for super nonsense. Differences with respect to the teacher education politics of right and left-leaning governments respectively have been noted previously by Erixon Arreman (2007) as also apparent in Sweden.

In line with this, in 1983 the UK conservative government established the Council for Accreditation of Teacher Preparation (CATE), with the role of monitoring the provision of teacher training, and which through Circular 3/84 linked institutional accreditation with specific criteria that training institutions had to satisfy. In 1989 CATE published further criteria that required training to focus upon subject studies and subject application, while any reference to the acquisition of any wider theoretical disciplinary-based knowledge was noticeably absent. As a consequence higher education providers lost an emphatic measure of their professional autonomy and their ability to define the form and content of training courses (Furlong, et al 2009; Mentor et al, 2012). Similar developments seem to be beginning to overtake Swedish teacher educators today (Beach, 2011; Beach & Bagley, 2012).

In the 1990s, the UK Government specified that schools should take on increased responsibility for the training of teachers (DfE 1992, 1993). This requirement radically altered the relationships between schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) and further

sharpened the emphasis on practical training; in terms of the ‘competencies’ that had to be met by students before qualifying to teach (DES, 1989; DfE, 1992, 1993). However, significantly, while universities were instructed that they must work with schools, schools were not required to involve universities in the training of teachers, thus creating a considerable managerial imbalance (Mentor, et al, 2012).

Following the Education Act of 1994 the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) took over from CATE and was made responsible for all initial teacher education in England. In addition, an Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) became responsible for a centralised inspection framework. As Crook, (2002) notes, even after theoretical aspects had all but disappeared on the job training was still often championed as a means of training teachers in an environment free from academicism. The teacher training system had a skills-based craft-orientated model, based on a centralised competence-based assessment framework facilitated through a predominantly school-focused training programme. As the then Prime Minister John Major later reported in his autobiography, the intention was to give teachers a better practical start and to *cut the time spent on theoretical rather than practical training* (Major, 1999).

Subsequently, the 1990s witnessed a growing number of policy interventions such as a National Curriculum for trainee teachers in English, Mathematics, Science, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (DfEE 1998), with courses heavily regulated in terms of content and length. Discursively, while training remained competency-based (i.e. set against specific behavioural outcomes), the term ‘standards’ replaced ‘competences’, as witnessed with the introduction of ‘Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)’ as the professional denotation that an individual, following a higher education course, was qualified to teach (DfEE 1997). In this vein the National Curriculum for trainees was withdrawn as the Labour government focussed on the stipulation of standards to be achieved by all trainees (DfES/TTA, 2002) rather than the means to get there (Mentor et al, 2012).

The Labour government's 1998 Green Paper *Teachers: meeting the challenge of change* (DfEE, 1998) states, 'The time has long gone when isolated, unaccountable professionals made curriculum and pedagogical decisions alone, without reference to the outside world'. Consequently, the late 1990s and the early part of the 21st Century witnessed further shifts toward an increasingly technical rationalist approach to professional knowledge (Furlong et al, 2009), with an emphasis on school-based training and student achievement of practical, centrally determined, competences.

The most recent UK government White Paper from 2010, *The Importance of Teaching*, takes teacher training even further into the practical domain. It sets out ideas for implementing new legislative proposals that discursively position teaching as a craft best learned by being immersed in a school, observing expert teachers and by the acquisition of skills learned through practical 'on-the-job' experience (DfE 2010: 19). As such the document continues a policy trajectory which over the last 40 years seems to have been committed to resolve any apparent tensions between theory and practice, by removing theoretically based professional knowledge altogether, and simply creating a practical curriculum. In so doing it downplays even further any required role for HEIs, emphasising school-based and school-led programmes with the development of a national network of Teaching Schools on the model of teaching hospitals (DfE, 2010). Through it work-based training will become the 'default' mode of entry into the profession (Beck & Young, 2005).

The extent to which this intention and others within the White Paper reach fruition remains to be seen. But it is perhaps noteworthy that while under the previous Labour government, a principle undertaking in the funding agreement for Academy schools was that they employ teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), the new Coalition government has removed this requirement, meaning that Academies are no longer required to employ teachers

with QTS. There are similarities here between the British and Swedish right-centre coalition governments and their education and teacher education policies.

Teacher education courses in England were until recently accredited by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). Programmes were either undergraduate (4yr), postgraduate (1 year) or employment based, but regardless of which they were extensively school-based; for example in a one year postgraduate (36 week) course, 24 weeks is school based for secondary school teacher education and 18 weeks school based for primary. About 85% of all training is through formal school-university partnerships whilst about 15% is through wholly school-led provision. Postgraduate training is at Masters Level and candidates earn credits normally equivalent to one third of the Masters degree. QTS is granted at the end of the course to teachers who have demonstrated that they have met the required professional standards to be able to teach in State schools. The General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) is at the time of writing the awarding body for QTS and makes the award when it is informed by an accredited teacher training provider that a trainee has met the required QTS-standards. This means that as Furlong et al (2009) describe it, educational experts have worked out what excellent instruction involves and the government has then rolled out that policy for all teachers. Furlong et al added that in this way professional knowledge has been hollowed out and the opportunities for individual teachers themselves to engage with research and debate the nature or value of proposed forms of excellent instruction (basically Brante's 'know-why' professional knowledge) have been marginalised or removed.

The most recent reform in Sweden seems to also be moving in these directions. Like teacher training in England, teacher education policy in Sweden has become overwhelmingly focused on practical rather than theoretical preparation, except in respect of academic subject knowledge (Player-Koro, 2012), particularly when compared to Sweden in the past (Sjöberg, 2011). Things may not have gone so far as in England, where would be teachers are now

called trainee teachers who undertake a training course mainly in schools, but a road-map for the future does seem to have been quite clearly drawn up and this map navigates clearly toward more standardisation, more subject content and more competence-based knowledge.

Discussion

Theories of performativity (Mentor et al, 2012) and /or managerialism (Gerwitz, 2002) have been used productively in previous research to analyse the kinds of development we have described. We will use these too, but we also want to add a further dimension to our discussions by using two concepts developed by Basil Bernstein (1999, 2000). These concepts distinguish between two different forms of discourse in relation to university content that reflect a dichotomy between academic and everyday knowledge (Bernstein, 1999).

The first concept is *horizontal discourse*. It refers to a knowledge discourse that is embedded in everyday language and expresses common sense knowledge related to practical goals (Player-Koro, 2012). It is also often oral and context-bound according to Bernstein, who also suggested that this ‘generic’ form of knowledge has been gaining ground in recent years (Beach 2011), something which is very clear in relation to England successively in the past thirty to forty years and in Sweden, more suddenly and more recently. However, also noted by Bernstein (2000) is that ground gained by generic knowledge accompanies a performative turn in professional knowledge learning. Indeed the two dimensions of change may be mutually reinforcing in relation to a return to a professional training paradigm as opposed to/or instead of a professional education (Apple, 2001; Sjöberg, 2011; Mentor et al, 2012). Horizontal knowledge discourses are not created through scientific analysis or anchored within specialized communication with a specialised syntax and grammar produced in a research discipline. They are context-bound, specific, concrete and related to particular practices (Beck & Young, 2005; Player-Koro-2012)

The second concept refers to what is called a *vertical discourse*. It is in effect the opposite of the former and often develops in specialized academic disciplines like physics, mathematics or history, as a hierarchically organized conceptual structure with a robust grammar and specialized syntax that is expressed through a very esoteric language (Bernstein, 2000, pp.170 -171). It is theoretical and abstract and has been presented as aimed for previously in relation to the professional knowledge base of teacher education (Beach 2011). As we suggest earlier in the article, both Sweden and England have had periods when this form of knowledge was argued for at a policy level, but this is no-longer apparent. Horizontal (tacit) knowledge is now emphasised; through HUT 07 in Sweden recently and much earlier in England from the 1970s James Report onwards. Through these reforms specialized content concerning the sociological, political, philosophical, economic and ideological dimensions of professional knowledge has been marginalised.

These developments are, we suggest, problematic for teacher professionalism. As we wrote in Beach and Bagley (2012), a horizontal discourse on its own gives a very poor basis for developing thoughtful professional practice, as it runs against the idea of a teaching profession grounded on scientific research-based ‘know-why’ knowledge of practice that forms a shared professional knowledge component (Garm & Karlsen, 2004; Sjöberg, 2011). A vertical discourse is also needed, in the form of a robust system of concepts and practices that can be used to describe, model and theorize from empirical situations to help students in and after teacher-training to *understand the ideological and political restructuring that is going on around them* and deconstruct the forces that impact on working conditions and the content and meaning of professional labour, as a tool for analysing trends and thinking critically and strategically about teaching and learning processes and their outcomes (Apple, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010; Riksaasen, 2002; Murray, 2008).

Through the emphasis on horizontal discourse this possibility, through the specialised disciplines of educational studies, has been lost and these disciplines have become weakened as ‘political, cultural and academic sites’ (Furlong et al, 2009). Professional knowledge has been successively hollowed out through an almost complete generification process (Furlong, 2005). In England this process stretches back over 30 years of policy development. In Sweden first, if reluctantly, LUK 97, and then (very clearly) HUT 07 recommendations, are moving the professional knowledge base in this direction.

What we are seeing as per the most recent rounds of reform, is thus a return to a teacher training paradigm (Sjöberg, 2011) which is taking place by means of conservative modernisation (Player-Koro, 2012) and a performativity turn (Mentor et al, 2012). In essence, from having become increasingly specialised toward a vertical discourse in relation to education and learning in the first part of the reform period - up to the 1970s in England and 2000s in Sweden – the professional knowledge about teaching, learning and education conditions communicated in teacher education has lost its direct connection to established pedagogical disciplines (such as the sociology, history, philosophy and history of education) and their established faculties and specialized scientific practices and language (Beach, 2011). This has enabled other forms of knowledge to take space in the teacher education curriculum.

In reflecting on this change, we would contend that developments in initial teacher education are discursively and politically (re)constructed with the explicit intention of changing the nature of the professional skills, knowledge and values of teachers (Furlong, 2005) and that this has been done in a manner that subsumes education to prescriptive government criteria, including inspection and appraisal regimes and a restructuring of the formation of the professionals who will service the needs of re-formed institutions (cf Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Mentor et al, 2012). Moreover, institutional freedom and autonomy have also been eroded and subordinated to national government pronouncements, audits and inspections

emanating from outside the academy, informed by neo-liberal modes of governance and control (Gerwitz, 2002; Mentor et al, 2012).

In this policy reformulation the discursive notion of ‘trainability’ is central and related to what Bernstein (2000, p59) terms ‘generic’ pedagogic modes. These are based on a new concept of ‘work’ and ‘life’ which Bernstein called short-termism, where skills, tasks and areas of work undergo continuous development, disappearance or replacement and must be continually updated cope with new requirements. These elements now characterise the official teacher education policies of both countries. They are also elements of a turn to a training paradigm (Beck & Young, 2005; Sjöberg, 2011; Player-Koro, 2012; Mentor et al, 2012). Teacher education institutions, educators, and students now need to respond to (and integrate into teaching and practice) a constantly shifting prescribed list of behaviours, competencies and standards against which their professional work will be assessed. As Beck and Young (2005) argue, for generations professional identities have centred on a particular kind of relationship to knowledge, a relationship which was based on what Bernstein termed ‘inwardness’ and ‘inner dedication’ or what Brante (2010) terms ‘know-why’ knowledge.

Arguably then, what has been witnessed in England and what we are witnessing in Sweden is a shift in the conception of the teaching profession in this respect of the capacity of teacher education institutions to not only instil practical skills, but to also generate a meaningful and sustainable performativity relationship between knowledge and the self (SOU 2008:109; Mentor et al, 2012; Player-Koro, 2012). As Beck and Kosnik (2002) note, in such a world strong attachments to identities centred in notions of the intrinsic value and integrity of academic disciplines of education studies now come to signify rigid obsolescence and a range of dysfunctional if not pathological characteristics (Sjöberg, 2011).

This policy trend, which is epitomised by the UK’s recent White Paper (DfE, 2010), appears like Apple (2001), Garm and Karlsen (2004) and Harford (2010) suggest for recent

policies elsewhere, to be one in which teacher education heads towards an ever more centrally controlled narrow technical focus on measurable classroom skills and performance (SOU 2008:109; Mentor et al, 2012; Sjöberg, 2011). In such a context any disciplinary based opportunity for sociological, philosophical, historical or psychological engagement is at best marginalised or at worst virtually eliminated (Lawn & Furlong, 2009).

In essence, according to the wording of formal policies in teacher education today, all you need to know to be a teacher – particularly but not only in the secondary school - is the subjects taught at the level they are taught, knowledge and skills in how to teach them, and the skills and courage to grade student performances and maintain classroom discipline and order (Sjöberg, 2011). This turns back the clock of teacher education policy development to cognitive values and the kind of content that were in place some hundred years ago (Beach & Bagley, 2012), around the time of the grammar and elementary school teacher education acts in the early nineteen-hundreds in the two countries (Player-Koro, 2012).

Bernstein (2000) discusses this kind of change as a return to a quasi-medieval educational relationship, but with a form of knowledge organization that is closest to a horizontal discourse, with a direct link to a practical context and a focus on trainable teacher behaviour. It now dominates teacher education policy in both countries to suggest that although the neo-conservative educational values and neo-liberal policy paradigms are anticipated to refract differently in different contexts, this has not happened with respect to England and Sweden in relation to recent teacher education policy (Beach, 2010). As Sjöberg (2011) has expressed it, although the neo-liberal paradigm and its neo-conservative value set may have taken longer to reach (and invade the education policy terrain in) Sweden, what we seem to be witnessing today are the effects of a common global discourse of neo-liberal teacher education reform that varies primarily only in terms of being spoken in national, local and/or regional dialectal forms: ‘same, same, but different’, as Sjöberg (2011) so eloquently

put it. The possibilities of autonomic thinking professionalism may be seriously undermined by these developments (Mentor et al, 2012; Player-Koro, 2012; Beach & Bagley, 2012).

Concluding remarks

In the *Evolution of Educational Thought* (1977), Durkheim argued that for education reform to succeed, it is not enough to prescribe in precise detail what teachers will have to do, as they must be in a position to assess and appreciate these prescriptions, ‘to see the point of them and the needs which they meet’ (Durkheim, 1977, p 4). Durkheim concluded that this, what Brante terms ‘know-why’ knowledge, could only be achieved by studying educational theory while at university. Unfortunately teachers today are likely to be denied access to this kind of knowledge (Becj & Young, 2005). In line with recent policies they will be equipped only with a predominantly horizontal professional knowledge discourse and will be arguably less prepared for defining, assessing and, if necessary, responsibly adjusting their teaching. They risk becoming tied to horizontal communication in an everyday discourse that may leave them severely limited by common sense experience and less able, as also Durkheim suggested so many years ago, to carry out their work and deconstruct the forces acting on and through their actions (cf Zeichner, 2010).

For capitalist states committed to a neo-liberal agenda, and discursively repositioning education as an economic commodity, while promulgating a generic pedagogic mode of trainability, the successive removal of vertical (know-why) knowledge of professional practices might be precisely ‘the right thing’ to do (Sjöberg, 2011). It certainly reflects the policy commitments of the political right (Erixon Arreman, 2007) and would at least be consistent in its capacity to produce a conformist and compliant workforce, as new teachers would lack any real theoretical knowledge that would enable them to take a critical distance from practice and have a principled understanding of education as a value (Player-Koro,

2012). Higher Education teacher educators would have become trainers and mediators of Government policy (Mentor et al, 2012), who understand their role as supporting professional work by offering principled guidance on classroom practice that is at best pre-digested theory (Apple, 2001; Murray, 2008; Zeichner, 2010; Mentor et al, 2012). If this is the future for teacher education in England, Sweden and elsewhere in Europe it is quite a bleak one.

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