



# History of Education

Journal of the History of Education Society

ISSN: 0046-760X (Print) 1464-5130 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/thed20>

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To cite this article: Björn Furuhausen, Janne Holmén & Janne Sääntti (2019): The ideal teacher: orientations of teacher education in Sweden and Finland after the Second World War, History of Education, DOI: [10.1080/0046760X.2019.1606945](https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2019.1606945)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2019.1606945>



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Published online: 11 Jun 2019.



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## The ideal teacher: orientations of teacher education in Sweden and Finland after the Second World War

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### ABSTRACT

There are many similarities between the Nordic countries of Sweden and Finland, but they have made different decisions regarding their teacher-education policies. This article focuses on how the objectives of teacher education, particularly the vision of the ideal teacher, have changed in Sweden and Finland in the period after the Second World War. In Finland, the period since the 1960s can be described as a gradual scientification of teacher education. The image of the ideal teacher has transformed according to a research-based agenda, where teachers are expected to conduct minor-scale research in the classroom. In Sweden since the 1980s, on the other hand, teacher education has oscillated between progressivist and academic orientations, following shifts in government between the Social Democratic Party and the centre-right. Since the turn of the millennium, however, a consensus in favour of a strengthened research base of teacher education has also emerged in Sweden.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 28 May 2018  
Accepted 9 April 2019

### KEYWORDS

Teacher education; ideal teacher; teacher education orientations; Sweden; Finland

## Introduction

What is a good teacher education? This question has long been relevant, since teacher education programmes around the world have had – and continue to have – varied characters in terms of content, design, length, relationship between school practices, and subject theory. There has also been long-standing differences of opinion about the design and content of teacher education, which has often caused conflicts. Of course, what is considered a good teacher education depends on the views of what is a good teacher. Thus, a central theme for research into teacher education is different approaches to the role of the teacher – or, in the parlance of this article, the ideal teacher.

In this essay, we will analyse different views on teacher education, especially the views on the ideal teacher, by comparing developments in Sweden and Finland from approximately the end of the 1940s to today. During this time, teacher education was modernised in both countries, but in different ways and with different views on the ideal teacher.

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However, as several authors have identified, the comparative method is not without problems and there are pitfalls.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the countries and educational systems that are compared should not be overly different. Finland and Sweden are two countries that in many ways have developed along similar paths, including in the field of education. They share the same vision of a democratic welfare state, which should provide all citizens with good and equal education. Nevertheless, teacher education has developed differently in these two countries.

The existence of this difference in two basically similar countries makes teacher education in Finland and Sweden a perfect case for utilising ‘most similar system design’ (MSSD) in comparative research.<sup>2</sup> Ideally, in comparative studies using MSSD, two societies should be similar in all respects except for the independent variable investigated – in our case teacher education. This requirement is never met in the real world, but Sweden and Finland come very close, as they were originally one country, and one of them has frequently copied the reforms carried out in the other.

In Finland, teacher education has developed into a research-based programme. Although other countries may have similar models, what makes Finland stand out is that every teacher education institution has a research-based agenda, and all teachers complete a masters degree. The development of Swedish teacher education has been more complex. It has undergone a multitude of reforms, which have been based on shifting orientations in the content and aims of teacher education. In addition, Swedish teacher education has been perceived as problematic, and has been subject to criticism for its lack of quality. In contrast, teacher education in Finland enjoys almost unanimous public confidence, and each year it attracts large numbers of students.

Several researchers have discussed the benefits of comparisons in general as well as those within education and education research. Comparisons show similarities and differences, bringing the features of an individual case into sharp focus. The differences also show that special features and special development processes are not given without possible alternatives. What seems obvious and almost natural is thus questioned. Comparisons of individual cases also contribute to the analysis and explanations of the underlying general issues of which the individual cases are a part.<sup>3</sup>

A comparison between teacher education in Sweden and Finland provides new perspectives on the views of the ideal teacher and the development of teacher education in each country. The general similarities between Sweden and Finland make it easier to discern the particular characteristics of these specific themes in each country. The comparative perspective also illustrates that the view of the ideal teacher and the development of teacher education in each country was not inevitable, but was affected by a number of contingent factors. Nor were the ideas about teacher education and teacher roles determined, although they might at first sight, without comparison, appear

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<sup>1</sup>David Philips, ‘Introduction’, in *The Comparative Study of Educational Policy: Learning from Comparing. Volume 2. Policy, Professionals and Development*, eds. Robin Alexander, Marilyn Osborne and David Philips (Oxford: Symposium, 2000), 11–2; David Crook and Gary McCulloch, ‘Comparative Approaches to the History of Education’, *History of Education* 31, no. 5 (2002): 397–400; Sigrid Lömeke and Lynn Paine, ‘Getting the Fish out of the Water. Considering Benefits and Problems of doing Research on Teacher Education at an International Level’, *Teaching and Teacher Education* 24 (2008): 2027–37.

<sup>2</sup>Carsten Anckar, ‘On the Applicability of the Most Similar Systems Design and the Most Different Systems Design in Comparative Research’, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 11, no. 5 (2008): 389–401.

<sup>3</sup>Philips, ‘Introduction’; Crook and McCulloch, ‘Comparative Approaches’; Lömeke and Paine, ‘Getting the Fish out of the Water’.

as such. Finally, our comparison can contribute to explanations and analysis of the general phenomenon with varying views on what is a good teacher education and a good teacher. Thus, our aim is not limited to descriptions and explanations of teacher education in Sweden and Finland. This can also be a valuable contribution to research in general about teacher education.

We investigate the visions of the ideal teacher expressed in the reforms and development of Swedish and Finnish teacher education from the 1940s until today. In Sweden, these visions are expressed in reports issued by public committees preparing teacher education reforms. In Finland, since the late 1980s such committees have been replaced by evaluation groups. Unlike the committees, these groups do not generally prepare new legislation, but merely issue recommendations. In addition, Swedish teacher education has been reformed roughly once every decade since the 1960s, leading to a huge number of committee reports, while Finnish teacher education has not undergone any major structural reform since the 1970s. Our investigation of Swedish teacher education therefore relies heavily on committee reports, while in order to follow the development of Finnish teacher education it has been necessary to complement the reports with other sources, for example from the ministry of education, and literature.

Committee reports and normative educational policy texts can be opaque, vague, and difficult to analyse, since they are often the result of compromises between conflicting interests. However, by focusing on the image of the ideal teacher that these texts convey, it is possible to unveil the central ideas behind each reform and each period.

### **Teacher education orientations and ideal teachers**

Teacher education programmes are characterised by certain conceptual orientations, which are a form of educational ideologies or traditions.<sup>4</sup> They are ideal-typical constructions of views regarding the role of the teacher and the aims, content, and structure of teacher education. For Zeichner, this orientation is a *paradigm*, a compilation of beliefs and assumptions behind different teacher education programmes.<sup>5</sup> Feiman-Nemser uses the term *conceptual orientations*. According to her, each orientation depicts ‘a cluster of ideas about the goals of teacher preparation and the means for achieving them.’<sup>6</sup> The term *organising theme* has also been used to describe the core of teacher education.<sup>7</sup> We have chosen to use the term ‘conceptual orientation’ as it reflects the idea of a direction. While ‘organising theme’ could also have been useful, the term ‘orientation’ is more established in previous research and easier to apply. Zeichner’s paradigm concept entails the idea that the basis of the teacher education programme is well defined and almost unanimously accepted, which is usually not the case.

<sup>4</sup>Ken Zeichner and Hilary Conklin, ‘Teacher Education Programs’, in *Studying Teacher Education*, eds. Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Ken Zeichner (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 646–9.

<sup>5</sup>Ken Zeichner, ‘Alternative Paradigms of Teacher Education’, *Journal of Teacher Education* 34, no. 3 (1983): 3.

<sup>6</sup>Sharon Feiman-Nemser, ‘Teacher Preparation: Structural and Conceptual Alternatives’, in *Handbook for Research on Teacher Education*, ed. W. Robert Houston (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 1.

<sup>7</sup>Leena Krokfors et al., ‘Investigating Finnish Teacher Educators’ Views on Research-Based Teacher Education’, *Teaching Education* 22, no. 1 (2011): 1–2.

Several researchers see the development of teacher education, or the differences between teacher education in different states, in terms of conflict and compromises between different orientations.<sup>8</sup> A given teacher education is seldom influenced by a single orientation, but usually by combinations of several. For example, most teacher educations contain elements of both vocational and academic orientations, and usually also include some idea of personal development. Comparisons show, however, that the emphasis placed on each orientation varies among different teacher education programmes.

Over time, the balance of power between different orientations within a given teacher education might change, as proponents of competing orientations struggle to shape the educational content. This struggle may or may not be open, and there are often compromises between different actors and their paradigms. However, the primary focus of this article is not the conflicts between the proponents of different orientations,<sup>9</sup> but the orientations themselves, their underlying ideas – particularly regarding the ideal teacher – and how they are manifested in teacher education policies in different eras.

Catharina Andersson studied the orientations (which she called paradigms) in the planning and implementation of the Swedish comprehensive school teacher programme of 1988. Inspired by the above-mentioned American researchers, she used a model of four orientations: vocational, academic, progressivist, and personal development.<sup>10</sup> Since we also study Sweden, Andersson's system is a good starting point for our investigation. However, to describe Finland and other periods in Sweden, we have complemented this model with an orientation of educational sciences.

1. The **vocational orientation** concentrates on the skills needed to prepare students for work in a contemporary school.<sup>11</sup> It emphasises practical skills in teaching and everyday classroom work. Teacher education institutions following this orientation therefore prioritise practical teacher training and subject methodology. Experienced and active schoolteachers play a key role as teacher educators, supervisors, and role models to the students, who themselves have an apprenticeship status.<sup>12</sup> Practical skills are not founded on science, but on the everyday experiences of professional teachers. In this orientation, the ideal teacher is an experienced, practical schoolteacher who represents a traditional-craft paradigm in which experienced teachers are handymen of pedagogy, or competent craftspeople who are imitated by apprentices in teacher practise. Trial and error is considered a superior method of learning how to teach.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>See Feiman-Nemser, 'Teacher Preparation'; Zeichner, 'Alternative Paradigms'.

<sup>9</sup>For that, see Björn Furuhagen and Janne Holmén, 'From Seminar to University: Dismantling an Old and Constructing a New Teacher Education in Finland and Sweden, 1946–1979', *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 4, no. 1 (2017): 53–81.

<sup>10</sup>Catharina Andersson, *Läras för skolan eller skolas att lära: Tankemodeller i lärutbildning* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1995); Ingrid Carlgren, *På väg mot en enhetlig lärutbildning?: En studie av lärutbildares föreställningar i ett reformskede* (Uppsala, Uppsala University, 1992), 12 ff.

<sup>11</sup>Andersson, 'Läras för skolan', 69.

<sup>12</sup>Alexis Taylor, 'Developing Understanding about Learning to Teach in a University-Schools Partnership in England', *British Educational Research Journal* 34, no. 1 (2008): 73–7.

<sup>13</sup>Alex Moore, *The Good Teacher. Dominant Discourses in Teaching and Teacher Education* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004), 75–99; Hannu Simola, 'Didactics, Pedagogic Discourse and Professionalism in Finnish Teacher Education', in *Professionalisation and Education*, eds. Hannu Simola and Thomas S. Popkewitz (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1996), 97–118; Zeichner, 'Alternative Paradigms', 3.

2. The **academic orientation** focuses on the knowledge content of school subjects, such as history, geography, or mathematics.<sup>14</sup> This orientation is clearly anchored in the university, where teacher educators with a doctoral degree provide student teachers scientific instruction according to the traditions of their discipline. The aim is to educate teachers to become subject experts familiar with scientific and scholarly principles. Thus, the ideal teacher is a 'subject expert', as in traditional subject teacher education. For Feiman-Nemser, this academic orientation emphasises the teacher's role as an intellectual leader, with an emphasis on subject knowledge.<sup>15</sup>

3. The **orientation of educational sciences** resembles the academic orientation. It also emphasises the importance of science and academic principles, and university teacher educators with a doctoral degree are equally important. However, this orientation does not focus on school subjects: it focuses on educational science. This includes pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, and sociology as academic disciplines, as understood in the educational context. The student teachers' curriculum includes pedagogical teaching methods, developmental psychology, and classroom group dynamics, as well as educational philosophy and the sociology of education. Whereas vocational orientation is based on practical skills gained by professional teachers in their everyday school practise, the orientation of educational sciences is based on science, experiments, and systematic development work. Proponents of this orientation believe that education science is the key to developing student teachers' teaching abilities, and thereby actual teaching practices in schools. According to this orientation, the ideal teacher is a research-based educationalist. This orientation shares the same basic assumption as Feiman-Nemser's technological orientation, the name of which is slightly misleading since it is not directly related to technological aids. Instead, she explains that in the technological orientation, teaching is based on knowledge derived from the scientific study of teaching and learning.<sup>16</sup> Learning to teach involves approving of research-based principles and involves a heavy emphasis on the scientific basis for teaching. Zeichner's inquiry-oriented paradigm shares the same emphasis on educational sciences.<sup>17</sup>

4. In the **progressivist orientation**, teacher education reform is a way to reform the school, and school reform is a way to reform society.<sup>18</sup> Thus, student teachers and their education are instruments of social reform. Progressivist aspirations can be expressed in different ways: by changing the content of teaching in schools, thereby introducing new subjects into the teacher education curricula, or by shifting emphasis from knowledge to core values such as democracy. This orientation often appears together with the orientation of educational sciences, since it entails a focus on developing new teaching methods based on pedagogy and psychology. However, the focus on teaching methods is not an end in itself, but an expression of a wider ambition. For example, the relations between teacher and students change when teaching methods that promote egalitarianism and co-

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<sup>14</sup>Andersson, *Läras för skolan*, 70.

<sup>15</sup>Feiman-Nemser, 'Teacher Preparation', 2–3.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 8–9.

<sup>17</sup>Zeichner, 'Alternative Paradigms', 5–6.

<sup>18</sup>Andersson, *Läras för skolan*, 70.

operation are introduced. Thus, within this orientation, the ideal teacher is a kind of social reformer. Andersson's progressivist orientation is akin to Feiman-Nemser's critical orientation, in which the teacher is both an educator and a political activist.<sup>19</sup>

5. In the **orientation of personal development**, the future teacher's psychological and personal development is the foundation of the teaching profession.<sup>20</sup> Here, the aim of teacher education is to develop the personality of the teacher students and give them a deeper self-awareness as individuals and professional educators, thereby enabling a student's individual growth. Student influence on the organisation of teacher education is encouraged. According to this orientation, the ideal teacher is psychologically fully matured, and willing to develop as both a person and a teacher. Zeichner's personalistic paradigm and Feiman-Nemser's personal orientation is equivalent to Andersson's orientation of personal development.<sup>21</sup> This idea is also captured in Taylor's third way of learning to become a teacher and to teach, that of 'Enabling students' individual growth as teachers'.<sup>22</sup>

### Comparative research on teacher education

Although comparative education is a research field in its own right, there are few comparative studies of teacher education that adopt a historical perspective. Large comparative studies of teacher education have been conducted in, for example, Europe<sup>23</sup> and the Pacific region,<sup>24</sup> but these reports are inventories and evaluations, and generally lack a broader comparative approach and a longer historical perspective. Although *Traditions and Transitions in Teacher Education* from 2003 gives a historical perspective on the developments in Canada, Iceland, and Sweden, it is essentially a collection of case studies by separate authors rather than a comparative project.<sup>25</sup>

Some international comparisons have also touched upon differences in teacher ideals. For example, Stephens, Tønnessen, and Kyriacou claim that British teacher education focuses on practical teaching skills and the maintenance of order in the classroom, while Norwegian teachers are expected to learn pedagogical theory and value transmission.<sup>26</sup> Although the authors do not use the terminology, they effectively describe the British vocational orientation and the Norwegian progressivist orientation.

Several Nordic studies of teacher education have compared either all or a selection of Nordic countries. As focused as they have been on contemporary teacher education, however, their historical perspective is short. These studies have investigated the recruitment of teacher students and their opinions, the work and opinions of teachers, the role of teacher education

<sup>19</sup>Feiman-Nemser, 'Teacher Preparation', 6–8.

<sup>20</sup>Andersson, *Läras för skolan*, 70.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.; Feiman-Nemser, 'Teacher Preparation', 4–6; Zeichner, 'Alternative Paradigms'.

<sup>22</sup>Taylor, 'Developing understanding', 75–7.

<sup>23</sup>E.g. Theodor Sander et al., eds., *Teacher Education in Europe: Evaluation and Perspectives* (Osnabrück: SIGMA, 1996); Tema Nord, *Komparativt studium af de nordiske læreruddannelser* (Copenhagen: Nordisk ministerråd, 2009).

<sup>24</sup>Paul Morris and John Williamson, eds., *Teacher Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Comparative Study* (New York: Falmer Press, 2000).

<sup>25</sup>Sandra Acker and Gaby Weiner, eds., *Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning. Theme: Traditions and Transitions in Teacher Education*, no. 3–4 (2003).

<sup>26</sup>Paul Stephens, Finn Egil Tønnessen and Chris Kyriacou, 'Teacher-Training and Teacher Education in England and Norway: A Comparative Study of Policy Goals,' *Comparative Education* 40, no. 1 (2004): 109–30.



in the university system, the teacher profession, the governance of teacher education, or the teacher education curriculum at various universities. The most commonly used methods and sources are interviews, school curricula, and local teacher education curricula at selected universities. The sources used in this article – national policy documents such as committee reports, parliamentary bills, and national statutes – are less commonly used.<sup>27</sup> Of the inter-Nordic comparisons, Klette and Carlgren's study of the image of the implicit teacher in the Nordic countries is most relevant to the aim of our project. However, they primarily base their analysis on policy documents for the school, and only to a limited extent on documents regulating teacher education. Their study is also limited to describing the situation in the 1990s, with no analysis of historical development.<sup>28</sup> These Nordic comparisons have had different aims and have utilised a wide range of methods, and their results are also rather disparate. Nevertheless, a common denominator in earlier research is the finding that Finnish teacher education is more research-oriented than in the other Nordic countries.

Previous research on teacher education orientations have created a strong descriptive framework regarding the aims of different teacher education programmes, and previous comparative research has illustrated important national differences in this regard. Most importantly for us, the earlier research has identified Finnish teacher education as more research oriented than that in Sweden and the other Nordic countries. Through a systematic historical and comparative analysis, we investigate how these differences between Sweden and Finland were formed. The many basic similarities between Sweden and Finland's societies and educational systems facilitates our comparison by limiting the number of possible explanations for the differences in teacher education orientations observed in earlier research.

### **Teacher education for the parallel school system**

In order to understand the development of the current university-based teacher education in Sweden and Finland, it is important to know something about the educational system that preceded it. After all, the new system was developed to remedy what were perceived as the shortcomings of the old one. In the nineteenth century, a parallel school system emerged in Sweden and Finland, with grammar schools for the elite, and folk schools for the majority of the population. This division was also reflected in the parallel systems of teacher education. In Sweden,

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<sup>27</sup>Gustave Callewaert and Sverker Lindblad, 'Introducing Teacher Education under Restructuring' (paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Crete, September 22–25, 2004); Jette Steensen, *Omstrukturering af laereruddannelse: En komparativ analyse Sverige-Danmark. Bidrag till LÄROM projektet*. (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2005); Nordiska ministerrådet, *Komparativt studium af de nordiske laereruddannelser* (Copenhagen: Nordiskt ministerråd, 2009); Kaare Skagen, ed., *Laereruddannelsen i Norden* (Copenhagen: UP, 2006); Jens Rasmussen and Hans Dorf 'Challenges to Nordic Teacher Education Programmes', in *Advancing Quality Cultures for Teacher Education in Europe*, eds. Brian Hudson, Pavel Zgaga and Björn Åstrand (Umeå: Umeå University, 2010); Hilde Wågsås-Afdal, *Constructing Knowledge for the Teaching Profession: A Comparative Analysis of Policy Making, Curricula Content and Novice Teachers' Knowledge Relations in the Case of Norway and Finland* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2012); Kirsti Klette and Ingrid Carlgren, eds., *Restructuring Nordic Teachers: An Analysis of Policy Texts from Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2000); Kirsti Klette and Ingrid Carlgren, 'Reconstructions of Nordic Teachers: Reform Policies and Teachers' Work during the 1990s', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 52, no. 2 (2008): 117–33; Jens Rasmussen and Martin Bayer, 'Comparative Study of Teaching Content in Teacher Education Programmes in Canada, Denmark, Finland and Singapore', *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 46, no. 6 (2014): 798–818.

<sup>28</sup>Klette and Carlgren, *Restructuring Nordic Teachers*; Klette and Carlgren, 'Reconstructions of Nordic Teachers'.



all parishes became obliged to provide folk schools in 1842, and each diocese had to establish a seminar for the education of folk school teachers.<sup>29</sup> The first Finnish folk schools were introduced in 1866, but the reform began with the training of teacher educators. They educated teachers at the country's first teacher seminar in Jyväskylä from 1863. In both Sweden and Finland, the seminar system expanded to meet the increasing demand for teachers, and to adapt to the changing needs of society. For example, the rising educational levels of teacher candidates led to the introduction of teacher training colleges based on the matriculation exam, which from 1934 in Finland, and 1956 in Sweden, coexisted with the seminars.

Finnish and Swedish grammar school teachers followed an academic educational path that was very different to that of the primary school teachers in the seminars. In both countries, grammar school teachers took a bachelor's degree in a university subject, after which, from the mid-1800s, they received some pedagogical instruction and practical teacher training. With minor alterations, the basic structure of this parallel system of teacher education survived until the mid-twentieth century. By then, however, critics argued that society had changed to such an extent that the old teacher education system was obsolete and in need of renewal. The old system disappeared in Sweden in 1968 and in Finland in 1974, when the last seminars were either closed or transformed into teacher education colleges (in Sweden) or faculties of pedagogy at universities (in Finland).

## Development of Swedish teacher education from the 1940s

### *The renewal of Swedish teacher education from the 1940s to the 1970s*

Swedish teacher education changed slowly from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, in parallel with the gradual introduction of the comprehensive school. After decades of experimentation, the decision to make a nationwide transition to a comprehensive-school system was made in 1962, but teacher education tailored for the new school was not in place until 1968. By 1977, education of both class and subject teachers was fully incorporated into the university system.<sup>30</sup>

The main argument for the renewal of teacher education was that the comprehensive school placed new demands on teachers. Since the comprehensive school was connected to progressivist ideas about a democratic school and new pedagogical methods, it was important to instil these ideals into student teachers, who were seen as instruments of the school reformation. The comprehensive school also aimed to support the personal development of pupils. Thus, the development of new teaching methods that focused less on traditional, teacher-led teaching and more on methods that stimulated the pupils' initiatives and independent learning were seen as necessary and were to be transferred to student teachers. Another important objective was to bridge the gap between the education of class and subject teachers. The comprehensive school aimed

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<sup>29</sup>Emil Bertilsson, 'Läraryrket', in *Utbildningshistoria*, eds. Esbjörn Larsson and Johannes Westberg, 2nd ed. (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2015), 193–5.

<sup>30</sup>The most important Swedish official reports from the 1940s to the 1970s are SOU (Statens Offentliga Utredningar) 1952:33 and SOU 1965:29. The most important government bills are proposition 1950:219, proposition 1954:209 and proposition 1967:4. For a more detailed analysis of the period before 1977 see Furuhagen and Holmén, *From Seminar to University*.

to develop a unified school for all pupils, which was believed to require a homogenous teaching profession. However, this goal was only partially fulfilled.

The experts and politicians involved in reforming teacher education considered psychology and pedagogy crucial for renewal and development. They provided the largest teacher training colleges with professors of ‘practical pedagogy’ and other resources for research, including experimental schools, and aimed to make teacher education scientific and to integrate it in the system of higher education. However, they did not emphasise the academic orientation, as they had no ambition to renew or expand the training in individual school subjects. Thus, the reform period from the end of the 1940s, when the renewal of teacher education started, to the first major reform in 1968, can be characterised as an endeavour to strengthen the progressivist orientation and the orientation of educational sciences. It was a major change away from the dominance of the academic orientation that had characterised the education of grammar teachers and the vocational paradigm that had characterised the education of folk school teachers.

The 1977 reform brought teacher-training colleges into the university system. Paradoxically, this weakened teacher education’s scientific connection, because the professors and research of practical pedagogics disappeared.<sup>31</sup>

### **The progressivist reform of 1988**

From the end of the 1970s, the political conflicts and the public debate around teacher education became more intense and polarised. Since 1977, frequent reforms have characterised the development of Swedish teacher education. The Social Democrats were the main architects behind the progressivist reforms of the school, and of teacher education, but their strong position was weakened in the 1970s. From that point on, government power has shifted between the Social Democrats and the more academically oriented centre-right coalitions.

The progressivist orientation culminated with the 1988 reform of teacher education. The Social Democrats had appointed a committee of inquiry that delivered its report in 1978.<sup>32</sup> This report was clearly influenced by progressivist ideas and the radical social climate of the 1970s. However, due to the changes in government in 1976 (centre-right) and 1982 (Social Democrat) and a public debate around the proposals, the reform was delayed until 1988. In the bill to the parliament, the minister of education had taken into account some of the criticism against the 1978 report.<sup>33</sup>

From the outset of the long reform process, the ideal was a ‘comprehensive school teacher’ for all grades, 1–9, albeit with some specialisations in grades and subjects. The criticism, which emphasised the need for specialisation, led to a compromise in two programmes, for grades 1–7 and 4–9. As originally planned, upper secondary school teachers had a separate programme. However, the ideal of a single programme for all comprehensive school teachers,

<sup>31</sup>Inger Erixon Arreman, *Att rubba föreställningar och bryta traditioner. Forskningsutveckling, makt och förändring i svensk lärutbildning* (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2005), 117–22.

<sup>32</sup>SOU 1978:86.

<sup>33</sup>Proposition 1984/85:122; Ulf Schüllerqvist, ‘Från LUT 74 till parallellutbildningen 1992’, in Sten-Olof Ullström, ed., *Lärutbildning i en föränderlig omvärld: Karlstad 1843–1993* (Karlstad: Högskolan i Karlstad, 1993). Schüllerqvist article is the most comprehensive study of the 1988 reform. Andersson, *Läras för skolan* and Carlgren, *På väg mot* have also studied the reform of 1988, but focus on its implementation at various universities.

who would be able to flexibly teach in different grades and subjects, lived on. It was also hoped that a common education would bridge the gap between class and subject teachers in the later years of comprehensive school, in which both groups now taught.<sup>34</sup>

Central to this reform was a changed role for the teacher, in which student teachers had to be prepared to promote the comprehensive school students' personal development and take greater responsibility for the school's social mission. In addition, traditional knowledge transmission would be reduced in favour of children's active knowledge-seeking. The teacher's role should be supportive and stimulating rather than authoritarian.<sup>35</sup>

Through its emphasis on school practice, the reform was also influenced by vocational orientation. Studies in pedagogy and methodological training were still included, but they were extended and became intertwined with a social agenda through the inclusion of subjects such as internationalisation, immigration and diversity, gender equality, and working life.<sup>36</sup>

The report also emphasised that teacher education should develop connections to research, and even claimed that schools and teachers should obtain resources for research and development.<sup>37</sup> However, the bill from the minister of education was almost silent on this theme,<sup>38</sup> and the reform of 1988 did not improve the research base of teacher education.<sup>39</sup>

### **Centre-right, academically oriented reform in 1992**

Liberals and conservatives criticised the 1988 reform for degrading subject knowledge and demanded differentiation between class and subject teacher programmes.<sup>40</sup> When they took office in 1991, they initiated a partial change of the 1988 teacher education programme.<sup>41</sup> This new reform emphasised the importance of subject knowledge in teacher education and underlined the schools' primary task as that of transmitting knowledge and skills. The pupils' personal development was seen as subordinate, and primarily the responsibility of parents.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the academic orientation, with the teacher as a well-educated subject specialist, became the official ideal.

### **Return of the progressivist paradigm in 2001**

The Social Democrats opposed the 1992 reform.<sup>43</sup> When they formed the government in 1994, they began planning a new teacher education.<sup>44</sup> The committee that prepared the reform had members from all political parties, all of whom were in favour of renewed teacher

<sup>34</sup>SOU 1978:86, 25–30, 93–137; Proposition 1984/85:122, 3–11.

<sup>35</sup>SOU 1978:86, 23–7, 75–93, 494–5; Proposition 1984/85:122, 9; Schüllerqvist, 'Från LUT 74', 47–52; Joakim Krantz, *Styrning och mening: anspråk på professionellt handlande i lärarutbildning och skola* (Växjö: Växjö universitet, 2009).

<sup>36</sup>SOU 1978:86, 33–4, 43, 203–45; Proposition 1984/85:122, 10, 19–20; Schüllerqvist, 'Från LUT 74', 47–52.

<sup>37</sup>SOU 1978:86, 39–40, 309–27.

<sup>38</sup>Proposition 1984/85:122.

<sup>39</sup>Erixon Arreman, *Att rubba föreställningar*, 118.

<sup>40</sup>Utbildningsutskottets betänkande 1984/85: UbU 31. [Report from the parliamentary committee on education.]

<sup>41</sup>Proposition 1991/92:75; Schüllerqvist, 'Från LUT 74', 60–3.

<sup>42</sup>Proposition 1991/92:75, 3–10; Schüllerqvist, 'Från LUT 74', 60–3.

<sup>43</sup>Utbildningsutskottets betänkande 1991/92: UbU 20; Schüllerqvist, 'Från LUT 74', 60–3.

<sup>44</sup>SOU 1999:63; Proposition 1999/2000:135.

education.<sup>45</sup> The reform was launched in 2001.<sup>46</sup> Although reminiscent of the progressivist reforms of the previous century, it was not as radical in its ambitions. Primarily, it strived to adapt teacher education to fundamental social transformations that had affected schools and society, such as globalisation, multiculturalism, and information technology.

It was argued that these rapid social changes demanded a new role for teachers, since they made it difficult to predict what skills and knowledge a teacher would need in the future. But many of these proposals are a revival of ideas from the 1970s and 1980s. Teachers were believed to play a key role in teaching students to understand and manage social transformation. In addition, it was believed that future workplaces would demand more problem-solving and co-operation skills than factual knowledge. Teaching would no longer be one-way communication; it would also involve pupils in the learning process and teach them to ask questions as well as seek and process knowledge, primarily by using information technology. The teacher should become more of a partner and create 'social and cultural meetings'.<sup>47</sup>

Three semesters of the programme were common to all teacher students. In addition to teaching and learning, the contents of the common period emphasised supposedly neglected social aspects such as socialisation, cultural and social issues, living conditions of children and young people, labour conditions, and core values such as gender equality, multiculturalism, and democracy.<sup>48</sup>

The recurrent efforts to bring different teacher student categories closer together culminated with the 2001 reform. Almost all student teachers were united in one programme that led to a common degree, although it offered options to focus on specific subjects and age categories.<sup>49</sup>

It was stressed that teacher education had to become better rooted in practical experience, and that subject knowledge should be more closely linked to the requirements of the teaching profession. School practice became an important part of the new education. Thus, although the vocational paradigm influenced the reform, it was emphasised that practice should be linked to theory, and that teachers should learn scientific methods.<sup>50</sup> The orientation of educational sciences re-emerged, with the intention of strengthening the research base of teacher education. However, whereas between the 1950s and 1970s the emphasis had been on research in pedagogy and psychology, the research should now be conducted in a wider field: educational science, which included subject didactics and other themes connected to teaching, schools, and learning in a wider sense.<sup>51</sup> The influence of the academic orientation was very weak, as subject knowledge was not emphasised in the

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<sup>45</sup> Utbildningsutskottets betänkande 1996/97: UbU 1.

<sup>46</sup> Owe Lindberg, *Talet om lärutbildning* (Örebro: Örebro Universitet, 2002) is a discourse analysis of the 2001 reform. The reform is surveyed in Berit Askling, 'En förnyad svensk lärutbildning', in Kaare Skagen, ed., *Laereruddannelsen i Norden* (UP, Köpenhamn, 2006) and in Göran Linde, 'The meaning of teacher education reform', *European Journal of Teacher Education* 26, no.1 (2003): 109–22. Krantz, *Styrning och mening*, studies the effects of the reform on teachers' work. Shortly about the reform also in Astrid Ahl and Ingrid Nilsson, 'Teacher education for the new century in Sweden', *European Journal of Teacher Education* 23, no. 2 (2000): 117–25 and in Stina Hallén, *Lärutbildning i skolans tjänst?: en policyanalys av statliga argument för förändring* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2013), 36–7.

<sup>47</sup> Proposition 1999/2000:135, 5–10; SOU 1999:63, 9–17, 49–107; Askling, 'En förnyad svensk lärutbildning'.

<sup>48</sup> SOU 1999:63, 123–30; Proposition 1999/2000:135, 10–12, 18–20; Krantz, *Styrning och mening*, 85.

<sup>49</sup> SOU 1999:63, 21–3, 175–91; Proposition 1999/2000:135, 15–20. Askling, 'En förnyad svensk lärutbildning'.

<sup>50</sup> SOU 1999:63, 12, 100–7, 133; Proposition 1999/2000:135, 10–12, 15–20.

<sup>51</sup> SOU 1999:63, 28–35, 255–79; Proposition 1999/2000:135, 10–12, 15–20, 35–40; Askling, 'En förnyad svensk lärutbildning'.

extensive policy texts behind the 2001 reform. Erixon Arreman has shown that the teacher education's research base was problematically weak in the late 1970s and the 1980s, and that efforts were made to develop it from the early 2000s.<sup>52</sup> This research-oriented trend was to continue in the following decades.

### *Resurgence of the academic orientation in 2011*

The liberal and conservative parties claimed that the 2001 reform degraded subject knowledge and undermined the role of the teacher.<sup>53</sup> When they regained office in 2006, they initiated what in 2011 became the new teacher education.<sup>54</sup> It was less progressively oriented than previous reforms, since it lacked the instrumental view of teacher education as a means of social transformation. However, all categories of student teachers still had a common core, but it focused on themes more closely connected to education and it was reduced in length. Socially-oriented themes were reduced.<sup>55</sup> The ideal of a general teacher, who could follow the students through large parts of the comprehensive school, was abandoned. Instead, separate programmes and degrees for class (grades 1–3 or 4–6) and subject teachers (grades 7–9 or upper secondary school) returned.<sup>56</sup> This also meant that subject knowledge and the didactics of basic skills in arithmetic, reading and writing received more emphasis than in earlier reforms. The social task of developing the personality of the pupils was de-emphasised.<sup>57</sup>

The reforms of 2001 and 2011 also shared certain characteristics, however. Both emphasised teacher education's scientific and vocational base. The report that prepared the 2011 reform strengthened vocational training through improved school-based practice.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the research base of teacher education was once again investigated and found to be problematic.<sup>59</sup>

### *Conclusions*

In Sweden, through a struggle between competing views, the image of the ideal teacher has changed since the 1970s. The state's ambition to develop schooling by governing teacher education has been emphasised in almost every official report and government bill about teacher education since the 1970s. It has also often been openly stated that teacher education, because of its influence over schools, needs to be under stricter government control than other programmes of higher education.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>52</sup>Erixon Arreman, *Att rubba föreställningar*.

<sup>53</sup>Utbildningsutskottets betänkande 2000/01: UbU 3.

<sup>54</sup>Summaries and analysis of the 2011 reform in: Hallsén, *Lärarytelse i skolans tjänst?*; Margareta Nilsson Lindström and Dennis Beach, 'Changes in teacher education in Sweden in the neo liberal age. Towards an occupation in itself or a profession for itself', *Education Inquiry* 6, no. 3 (2015): 241–258; Bengt Persson, *Lärarytelse i skolans tjänst? En inkluderande skola* (Högskolan i Borås 2011); Lena Sjöberg, 'Same, same but different. En genealogisk studie av den gode läraren, den goda eleven och den goda skolan i svenska lärarytelse-reformer 1940–2008', *EDUCARE*, no. 1 (2010): 73–99.

<sup>55</sup>Högskoleförordningen examensordning bilaga 2 [Higher Education Ordinance]; SFS 1993:100 [Swedish Statute Book].

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>SOU 2008:109, 13–21, 101; Proposition 2009/10:89, 8–40.

<sup>58</sup>SOU 2008:109, 18.

<sup>59</sup>SOU 2008:109, 18; Proposition 2009/10:89, 56–60.

<sup>60</sup>Proposition 1984/85:122, 9; Proposition 1991/92:75, 13; Proposition 1999/2000:135, 16; Utbildningsutskottets betänkande 1984/85: UbU 31, 13; SOU 1978:86, 33; SOU 1999:63, 12; Askling, 'En förnyad svensk lärarytelse'; Hallsén, *Lärarytelse i skolans tjänst?* 11–13.

Thus, Swedish political parties have used teacher education as an instrument for realising their conflicting political and pedagogical agendas regarding the role of teachers. Combined with the frequent shifts of power between the Social Democrats and the centre-right, this has led to a fluctuation in emphasis between progressivist and academic orientations. However, both the Social Democrats and the centre-right have, throughout the 2000s, considered the research base of teacher education to be insufficient and problematic. Thus, a common ideal of a research-based teacher has emerged, although it has not yet been realised.

Despite continued interest in teacher education from both the media and Parliament, the Social Democratic government of 2014–2018 did not propose a new teacher education reform. A committee was appointed in 2015, after weak PISA results, to investigate how the quality of schooling could be improved. In 2017, the committee highlighted several problems in teacher education, including a weak research base. However, it believed that teacher education should be improved within its current framework and discouraged new attempts to completely reform the programme.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the high rate of reform has itself become perceived as a problem. In January 2019, the Social Democrats and the Green Party reached an agreement with the two liberal parties in order to form a government. The agreement encompasses a wide range of areas, including school and education. One point concerns ‘reforming’ teacher education. However, it is still uncertain whether this reform be restricted to minor changes or involve yet another structural overhaul.<sup>62</sup>

## Development of Finnish teacher education from the 1940s

### *The old teacher education is challenged (1945–1969)*

After the Second World War, the political situation in Finland changed radically. For the first time, the Communist Party could participate in political life. In 1945, the Finnish Peoples’ Democratic League, which was dominated by the Communist Party, won 49 of the 200 seats in parliament. Together with the Social Democratic Party, they started to demand that the school system be reformed: that teacher education should dispose of the Christian and patriotic values inherent in the seminar institution.<sup>63</sup> However, in the 1950s and 1960s, the focus of primary school teacher education in Finland was still practical and moral. Pertti Alasuutari has described this era as the period of moral economy.<sup>64</sup> Teacher education promoted the status quo in school and society, especially in terms of its fundamental values: nationalism, the Christian religion, and belief in authority. Teaching was considered a calling, and teachers were role models for pupils. They were presented as the keepers and moderators of collectively cherished cultural values. The position signified high moral expectations.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup>SOU 2017: 35, 17, 151–5.

<sup>62</sup>Regeringsförklaringen, 21 January 2019. <https://www.regeringen.se/tal/20192/01/regeringsforklaringen-den-21-januari-2019/>

<sup>63</sup>Jari Salminen and Janne Sääntti, ‘Kasvatustieteellisen teorian ja käytännön välinen suhde Suomen opettajankoulutuksen kehityksessä 1910-luvulta 2010-luvulle’, in *Toiveet ja todellisuus: kasvatusta osallisuutta ja oppimista rakentamassa*, eds. Auli Toom, Matti Rautiainen & Juhani Tähtinen (Turku: Suomen Kasvatustieteellinen Seura, 2017), 65–6.

<sup>64</sup>Pertti Alasuutari, *Toinen tasavalta: Suomi 1946–1994* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1996).

<sup>65</sup>Risto Rinne, *Kansanopettaja mallikansalaisena: opettajuuden laajeneminen ja opettajuuteen rekrytoitumismekanismit Suomessa 1851–1986 virallisen kuvausaineiston ilmaisemana* (Turku: Turun yliopiston kasvatustieteiden laitos, 1986); Hannu Simola, Sakari Heikkinen and Jussi Silvonen, ‘The Birth of the Modern Finnish Teacher. A Foucauldian Exercise’, in *The Finnish education mystery: historical and sociological essays on schooling in Finland*, ed. Hannu Simola (London: Routledge, 2015), 95–114.



The primary goal of teacher education was to introduce everyday school practices and the tricks of the trade to prospective teachers. The teacher practice programme for elementary school teachers contained neither theoretical elements nor educational thinking.<sup>66</sup> Traditional teacher seminars were in small rural towns and aimed to recruit students from lower social backgrounds with elementary education. These institutes defended the status quo and resisted scientific interests. However, four colleges of education, as opposed to the traditional teacher seminars, were situated in larger cities such as Helsinki and Turku. The leading educational scientists affiliated to these colleges held an opposing view and urged for the extension of teacher education. These ideas, which emphasised the scientific approach, were first presented in the committee report in the early 1950s.<sup>67</sup> The education of grammar school teachers differed significantly from that of folk school teachers. It was academically oriented and focused on school subjects and subject knowledge.

In the 1960s, Finnish society underwent deep changes in economic structure and urbanisation. The new welfare society needed a new pedagogy that would meet the demand for equality and individualisation. A significant educational decision was made in 1968, when the Finnish Parliament approved the comprehensive school system. Teacher education committee reports from the 1960s clearly wanted to bury the old culture of teacher colleges.<sup>68</sup> In teacher training, this change meant a new role for both folk and grammar school teachers. The old-fashioned, authoritarian teacher should be reincarnated as a democratic, broad-minded, and well-trained educator.<sup>69</sup> The vocational orientation of folk school teacher education and the academic orientation of grammar school teacher education held up traditional expectations and reflected the parallel teacher education that had been static for over a century.

### **The didactical semi-scientific orientation of the 1970s**

In 1974, teacher education departments were established at universities. Their vocational orientation was still strong, but they were also tentatively research-oriented. Several prominent Finnish educationalists had presented left-wing opinions in the school reform discussion, and the Polytechnic model of the DDR fascinated many of them. The model was welcomed as the long-awaited key to merging theory and practise. It also provided rhetorical leverage at the right moment for leading teacher educators,

<sup>66</sup>Salminen and Sääntti, 'Akateemisesta varjosta', in *Salonkikelpoiseksi maisterikoulutukseksi: luokanopettaja- ja opintoh- jaajakoulutusten akateemisoitumiskehitys 1970-luvulta 2010-luvulle*, eds. Jukka Rantala & Matti Rautiainen (Turku: Suomen kasvatustieteellinen seura, 2013).

<sup>67</sup>Lasse Kangas, *Jyväskylän yliopistokysymys 1847–1966. Tutkimus korkeakoulun perustamisesta ja kehityksestä yliopistoksi*. (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto 1992), 105–6; Council of State. *Korkeakoulukomitean mietintö*. Committee Report, 1956; Risto Rinne and Arto Jauhainen, *Koulutus, professionaalituminen ja valtio. Julkisen sektorin koulutettujen ammattien muotoutuminen Suomessa* (Turku: Turun yliopiston kasvatustieteiden laitos, 1988); Salminen and Sääntti, 'Akateemisesta varjosta', 108.

<sup>68</sup>Ministry of Education, *Opettajanvalmistustoimikunnan mietintö*. Committee Report, 1967, 14–5; Ministry of Education, *Opettajanvalmistuksen opetussuunnitelmatoimikunnan mietintö*. Committee Report, 1968, 11–2; Ministry of Education, *Peruskoulunopettajakomitean mietintö*. Committee Report, 1969, 10–1; Janne Sääntti, Mikko Puustinen and Jari Salminen, 'Theory and Practice in Finnish Teacher Education: a Rhetorical Analysis of Changing Values from the 1960s to the Present Day', *Teachers and Teaching. Theory and Practise* 24, no. 1 (2018): 9–10.

<sup>69</sup>Sirkka Ahonen, *Yhteinen koulu. Tasa-arvoa vai tasapäisyyttä?* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2003); Osmo Kivinen and Risto Rinne, 'Teacher Training and Higher Education Policies in Finland since World War II, in *Professionalisation and Education*, eds. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Hannu Simola (Helsinki: University of Helsinki 1996), 76–96; Sääntti et. al., 'Theory and practice', 9.



who found the model fitted their subject perfectly. Already, Finnish teacher education had a strong practical, vocational orientation, and as a newcomer in the academic world it was expected to strengthen its theoretical foundation. At the same time, the traditional university institution was accused of being too academic and alien to working life. One solution to this situation was the reform of higher education curriculum (1975–1981), which invoked opposition amongst academia and university students.<sup>70</sup>

The polytechnic model was not accepted by the conservative academic management. Firstly, they regarded the origin of the ideology as too Marxist. Secondly, traditional academic culture was not interested in promoting practical skills.<sup>71</sup> A significant turn came in 1978, when the statute of educational studies began to only recognise master's level studies.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, teacher education reached the master's level, which was especially important for folk school teachers, who were now called class teachers. According to Hannu Simola and Risto Rinne, the change was mainly a political decision.<sup>73</sup> However, leading educational professors such as Oiva Kyöstiö and Martti Koskenniemi had promoted academic teacher education for elementary school teachers since the late 1950s. Their vision gathered increasing political support in the 1960s, even in the conservative Coalition Party.<sup>74</sup>

From an academic point of view, at this point Finnish teacher education was not yet ready to initiate a balanced and credible theory-based programme. However, as educational science came to dominate the programme as the main subject, didactical studies based on German pedagogical thinking became the backbone of Finnish teacher education.<sup>75</sup> Teacher education was now a melting pot of an academic subject-oriented tradition, rising educational sciences represented especially by didactical studies, and a strong vocational orientation, which still formed the main basis of teacher education.<sup>76</sup> In the late 1970s, a new scientific awareness emerged in the wake of the didactical emphasis, but it was still mixed with vocational (class teachers) and academic (subject teachers) orientations.

### **Steps towards an orientation of educational sciences in the 1980s and 1990s**

The 1980s was an era of consolidation for the comprehensive school and for university-based teacher education. Many ambitions of earlier decades were fulfilled, and teacher education could concentrate on academisation in accordance with the orientation of

<sup>70</sup>Ministry of Education, *Filosofisten ja yhteiskuntatieteellisten tutkintojen toimikunnan mietintö*. Committee Report, 1972, 31–2; Ministry of Education, *Vuoden 1973 opettajankoulutustoimikunnan mietintö*. Committee Report, 1975, 36; Jaakko Numminen, *Yliopistokysymys*, (Helsinki: Otava, 1987), 190–216.

<sup>71</sup>Veli-Matti Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia 6. Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa 1966–1980. Hyvinvointivaltion koulutus- ja kulttuuripoliittiset visiot haasteeksi uudistuneelle opetusministeriölle* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1994), 188, 193; Matti Klinge, *Helsingin yliopisto 1640–1990: 3. osa, Helsingin yliopisto 1917–1990* (Helsinki: Otava, 1990), 651–2; Salminen and Sääntti, 'Kasvatustieteellisen teorian', 68.

<sup>72</sup>Asetus kasvatustieteellisistä tutkinnoista 1978. Asetus 530/1978.

<sup>73</sup>Hannu Simola and Risto Rinne, 'Kontingenssi ja koulutuspolitiikka: vertailevan tutkimuksen teoreettisia edellytyksiä etsimässä', *Kasvatus* 41, no. 4 (2010): 316–30.

<sup>74</sup>Salminen and Sääntti, 'Kasvatustieteellisen teorian', 69.

<sup>75</sup>Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia*; Ministry of Education, *Opettajainvalmistustoimikunnan mietintö*. Committee Report, 1967; Ministry of Education, *Opettajainvalmistuksen opetussuunnitelmatoimikunnan mietintö*. Committee Report, 1968; Ministry of Education, *Peruskoulunopettajakomitean mietintö*. Committee Report, 1969; Hannu Simola, *Paljon vartijat: Suomalainen kansanopettaja valtiollisessa kouludiskurssissa 1860-luvulta 1990-luvulle* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopiston opettajankoulutuslaitos, 1995), 135–221.

<sup>76</sup>Janne Sääntti and Jari Salminen, 'Luokkahuonedidaktiikasta tutkimusperustaiseen reflektointiin', *Kasvatus* 43, no. 1 (2012): 20–2.

educational sciences. However, this harmonious state was disrupted in the 1990s. Because of teacher education's weak research base and relatively young academic culture, it experienced intensified criticism in the 1980s. Some educational researchers and ministerial officials were prepared to relocate teacher education, at least partly, to the Universities of Applied Sciences, which were under development at the time. Despite the substantial number of teacher educators, their research was considered narrow and weak, which provided ammunition for their critics. The teacher educators' academic profile was also relatively modest, since in general few among the faculty except full professors held a doctoral degree.<sup>77</sup>

The orientation of educational sciences' long reign in Finland has been plagued by conflicts. At the end of the 1990s, educational psychologists also started to criticise Finnish teacher education, especially its heavy reliance on subject didactics and concentration on teaching, which indeed constituted the heart of Finnish teacher education. Therefore, a new teacher education programme was launched at the University of Helsinki, in which student teachers majored in educational psychology. This was quite a significant change – which still did not question the common belief in a research-based teacher education, the core concept of the orientation of educational science.<sup>78</sup>

In the 1990s, the Finnish Parliament, the Ministry of Education, and the National Board of Education subscribed to a new rhetoric of competitiveness, customer orientation, and individual choice. These principles prompted radical changes in school culture. Schools increasingly started to profile, and local development projects were initiated.<sup>79</sup> As attitudes towards such projects became more favourable, teacher education strengthened its scientific rhetoric, thereby answering questions as to its scientific foundation.<sup>80</sup> The teacher ideal of the didactical thinker was still visible, but now in a broader sense as an agent of change with a critical stance and a self-evaluative attitude.<sup>81</sup>

The 1990s saw the completion of the qualitative change towards research-orientation. The importance of educational science for teachers' daily work was further emphasised, and schoolteachers were offered a more active role in research activities. This concerned both class and subject teachers, as the research orientation was meant

<sup>77</sup>Veli-Matti Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia 7. Vakiintuneisuudesta uusien muotojen etsimiseen 1981–1995* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1997), 150–51; Helsingin yliopiston arviointiryhmä, *Universitas Renovata. Helsingin yliopiston arviointiryhmän raportti ja ehdotukset* (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 1993), 80; Ministry of Education, *Kasvatusala kohti tulevaisuutta. Kasvatustieteellisen alan tutkintojen arviointi- ja kehittämisprojektin loppuraportti* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1994), 12; Osmo Kivinen, Risto Rinne and Kimmo Ketonen, *Yliopiston huomen* (Tampere: Hanki ja jää, 1993); Janne Sääntti, Jukka Rantala, Jari Salminen and Petteri Hansen, 'Bowling to Science. Finnish Teacher Education Turns Its Back on Practical Schoolwork', *Educational Practise and Theory* 36, no. 1 (2014): 28–30.

<sup>78</sup>Jari Salminen and Janne Sääntti, 'Opettajankoulutuksen jännitteitä', in *Opetussuunnitelmatutkimus. Keskustelunavauksia suomalaiseseen kouluun ja opettajankoulutukseen*, eds. Tero Autio, Liisa Hakala and Tiina Kujala (Tampere: Suomen yliopistopaino Oy, 2017), 124–9.

<sup>79</sup>Ahonen, *Yhteinen koulu*, 158–66; Hannu Simola, 'Koulupoliittikka ja erinomaisuuden eetos', *Kasvatus* 32, no. 3 (2001): 290–97; Janne Varjo, *Kilpailukykyvaltion koululainsäädännön rakentuminen. Suomen eduskunta ja 1990-luvun koulutuspoliittinen käänne* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2007), 241–2.

<sup>80</sup>Sääntti et. al, 'Theory and practice', 11–3.

<sup>81</sup>Jorma Heikkilä, 'Itseohjautuva oppiminen muutosagentin koulutuksessa', in *Muutosagenttiopettaja. Luovuuden irtiotto*, eds. Jorma Heikkilä and Sirkku Aho (Turku: Turun yliopisto, 1995), 87–134; Pertti Kansanen, 'Teacher education in Finland: Current models and new developments', in *Institutional Approaches to Teacher Education within Higher Education in Europe: Current Models and New Developments*, eds. Bob Moon, Lazar Vlăsceanu and Leland Conley Barrows (Bucharest: Unesco-Cepes, 2003), 85–108; Hannele Niemi, 'Tutkimuksen merkitys opettajan ammatin kehittämisessä', in *Tutkiva opettaja. Opetus 21. vuosisadan ammattina*, ed. Sinikka Ojanen (Lahti: Helsingin yliopisto, Lahden tutkimus- ja koulutuskeskus, 1993), 52–65.

for every teacher in every school. Although this was done in a persuasive tone, the approach was presented as more of an emancipative possibility than a laborious obligation. These ideas were in line with the international action research movement. A more active role in curricula development provided teachers with the opportunity to practise their new role.<sup>82</sup> Schools and teachers gained considerable autonomy when curriculum planning was decentralised to the local level, beginning with the comprehensive school curriculum of 1994.<sup>83</sup>

The orientation of the new Finnish teachers of this era was more academic than progressivist, and their academic basis was pedagogical knowledge and didactical awareness, reflecting the orientation of educational sciences. Subject teachers were now considered experts in education rather than professionals in history, biology, or other school subjects.<sup>84</sup> Thus, the academic orientation, which had dominated subject teacher education for a century, now had a contender. The orientation of educational science replaced or merged with the academic orientation, depending on the point of view. According to some, subject teacher education did not actually change prior to the millennium.<sup>85</sup>

These progressivist ideas, however, so prominent in the Swedish educational system, in Finland aimed merely to renew the school itself and not society as a whole. Thus, Feiman-Nemser's critical orientation, in which the ideal teacher is both an educator and a political activist, is unfamiliar in Finnish mainstream teacher education.<sup>86</sup> Any critical thinking or radical ideas focused on pedagogical, not political issues. The research-orientation reflected this critical orientation, as teachers, including class teachers, were now the initiators of their own curricula. They could celebrate a rather unique and autonomous pedagogical status, as there were no apparent political intentions to interfere with the education system.

### **The breakthrough of the orientation of educational sciences (2000–)**

At the beginning of the new millennium, the research-orientation of the 1990s had developed into a research-based approach, which is also the unquestionable agenda of current Finnish teacher education. The constant refrain 'all teaching is based on research' is supported by the fact that most teacher educators have a doctoral degree and research as their primary assignment. Thus, Finnish teacher education culture has rapidly transformed from teaching orientation to research-based activities. Thus, the basis of the criticism that teacher education suffered in academia in the 1990s has been removed.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>82</sup>Ministry of Education, *Opettajien kelpoisuustoimikunnan mietintö*. Committee Report, 1991, 16; Ministry of Education, *Kasvatusala kohti tulevaisuutta*, 48; Salminen and Sääntti, 'Akateemisesta varjosta', 116–17.

<sup>83</sup>National Board of Education, *Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School*. (Helsinki: Painatuskeskus, 1994), 18–9.

<sup>84</sup>Mikko Puustinen, 'Ohjatusta opetuksesta omatoimiseen tutkimukseen – Aineenopettajien kasvatustieteellisten opintojen akatemisoitumiskehitys Helsingin ja Joensuun yliopistoissa 1980–201', *Kasvatus & Aika* 6, no.2 (2012): 21–36.

<sup>85</sup>Matti Rautainen, 'Pysähtyneisyyden aika – Aineenopettajakoulutuksen akateeminen taival', *Kasvatus & Aika* 6, no. 2 (2012): 48–9.

<sup>86</sup>Feiman-Nemser, 'Teacher Preparation', 6–8.

<sup>87</sup>Päivi Hökkä, *Teacher Educators amid Conflicting Demands. Tensions between Individual and Organisational Development* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2012), 18–9; Sääntti et. al., 'Bowing to Science', 30–3; Sääntti et. al., 'Theory and Practise', 13–4; Ian Westbury, Sven-Erik Hansén, Pertti Kansanen and Ole Björkqvist, 'Teacher Education for Research-based Practice in Expanded Roles: Finland's Experience', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 49, no. 5 (2005): 477–80.

One could argue that present teacher education exceeds the wildest dreams of the educational scientist half a century ago. Nowadays, teacher education is an unquestionable part of the University, and teacher educators are welcome members of academia, who publish in scientific journals and attend international conferences. As for school teachers, they fulfil everyday duties in a research-oriented fashion and forge close ties between scientific and practical work. The latter depiction might be more rhetoric than real, but it reflects the ideal orientation of current Finnish teacher education. The status of teacher education is connected to the status of teachers and schools.<sup>88</sup> Thus, teacher educators do their best to convince schoolteachers of the benefits of research-based activity and the merging of theory and practise.<sup>89</sup> It is supposed that every teacher can resolve daily issues based on the theoretical knowledge with which Finnish teacher education has provided them.<sup>90</sup>

A clear difference is discernible between pre-millennial research-orientation and the research-based agenda of the 2000s. The former orientation, which was characteristic of the 1990s, entailed the idea that teachers' main tasks were planning, teaching, and evaluating. The emphasis was on every day teaching duties, which could be complemented with occasional, tentative developmental activities such as separate school development projects. In contrast, the research-based orientation presupposes that every teaching act is based on research, as part of a continuous process of development. In fact, this concerns both school teachers and teacher educators, which confirms the congruent status of these two groups.

## Conclusions

In the 1960s, Finnish society underwent an exceptionally intensive and rapid modernisation process that also affected teacher education. It was considered outdated, as was the entire parallel school system. The 1970s was the era of implementation of the comprehensive school and the harmonisation of teacher education. During that time, the orientation of educational sciences gradually began to replace the vocational and academic orientations of the older teacher education, even though one can still find traces of these two orientations in current teacher education. However, the decision to follow the orientation of educational sciences was of central importance. Since that period, Finland has consistently followed the same orientation, despite it being questioned in the 1990s, mainly by academia.

## Comparative conclusions

According to our analysis, Finland has followed the orientation of educational sciences since the 1980s, although the foundation of this orientation was under construction for more than a decade before it was accomplished. The teacher ideals of various decades

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<sup>88</sup>David F. Labaree, *The Trouble with Ed Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 12, 33; Geraldine Jonçich Clifford and James W. Guthrie, *Ed School. A Brief for Professional Education*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 329.

<sup>89</sup>Säntti et. al., 'Theory and Practice', 16–18, see also David F. Labaree, 'Power, Knowledge, and the Rationalisation of Teaching: A Genealogy of the Movement to Professionalise Teaching', *Harvard Educational Review* 62, no. 2 (1992): 123–55.

<sup>90</sup>Ministry of Education, *Opettajankoulutus 2020* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, koulutus- ja tiedepolitiikan osasto, 2007), 37; Kansanen, 'Teacher Education', 89.

reflect a gradual scientification process that took place over a period in which the orientation of educational sciences dominated Finnish teacher education. At the beginning, when the ideal teacher was a didactically thinking educator, scientific ambitions were quite modest, and practical teaching was seen as primary. The next step was taken in the 1990s and can be described as research-orientation. During this period, teachers were given authority in the curriculum processes, and they became more autonomous actors than ever before with almost non-existent official supervision. The most recent phase has produced the ideal of the research-based teacher, whose everyday action is founded on theoretical knowledge. This teacher's working ethos is clearly anchored in the interests of educational science.

In Sweden, what constitutes an ideal teacher has been a contested matter. The reforms of progressivist orientation initiated by Social Democratic governments contained the ideal of a general teacher who could teach a broad range of subjects to children of a wide age span. Because of the social ambitions of the progressivist orientation, the ideal teacher should also have a wide-ranging education in social issues. The academically oriented reforms, initiated by centre-right governments, had an ideal of teachers as experts who would be specialised in a limited number of subjects, would focus on a narrower age group of pupils, and be less concerned with social issues. However, because of the undulating nature of Swedish educational policies, none of these ideals were ever given time to gain such a dominating position as the research-based teacher ideal in Finland.

Whereas Swedish teacher education policy has oscillated between two orientations, Finnish teacher education has developed in a more continuous fashion. The teacher education of the 1960s supported the social and political reforms of the age. The reform of the Finnish school system in the 1970s involved substantial political tensions. However, since the mid-1970s, the educational field has become depoliticised and followed a steady course. This has involved a gradual deepening of the idea that education should be research and theory-based, which applies to the work ethos of both teacher educators and teachers.

The role of the government and party politics constitute the significant difference between the development of Finnish and Swedish teacher education and the view of the ideal teacher since the 1970s. In Sweden, teacher education has been considered an important instrument of state control of the school, and different governments have reformed teacher education to push through their education policy. The Social Democrats, for a long time the leading force in Swedish politics, supported the dominant progressivist orientation until the 1990s. Parties of the political centre and right have, since the 1980s, opposed the Social Democrats' reforms and advocated an academically-oriented teacher role that focuses on subject knowledge. Since Social Democratic and liberal governments have alternated in power since the 1970s, and each new government has initiated a new teacher education reform, the teacher ideal has swayed between progressivist and academic orientations.

Since Swedish teacher education has been guided by different political agendas, Swedish teacher educators have needed to be aware of current political trends, and this has affected the contents of teacher education. In Finland, in contrast, political guidance has been almost non-existent, which may have reduced the awareness of the political, societal, and sociological issues in teacher education. This has been possible

because the academic culture and, without reflection, the research base has been perceived as outside the political sphere. This could explain why the current research-based orientation is considered free from any normative pressures and is said to embody the ideas of neutrality and objectivity. However, a new kind of normativity has emerged in Finnish teacher education. Traditional normativity was unconcealed and demanding, reflecting Christian and patriotic values,<sup>91</sup> while recent normativity is more seductive than compelling by nature. The new teacher should be, for example, an international and dynamic agent of change with an extensive network.<sup>92</sup> Tellingly, these ideals are also characteristic of modern researchers.

Since the turn of the millennium, the increased emphasis on the international comparisons of educational achievement has placed the Finnish educational system on a pedestal, while Swedish education has been subjected to harsh criticism. The quality of teacher education has been used to explain both phenomena. However, there may be no direct, significant connection between the orientation of teacher education and the success or failure of the school system in international rankings. Rather, the explanation behind the Finnish success might be that it is beneficial for teacher education institutions to have a clear, uninterrupted agenda that is shared, or at least accepted, by the political institutions. This prevents the political tug-of-war that has disrupted the development of Swedish teacher education. The exact nature of this shared agenda might be of less importance. Belief in education has been strong in Finnish society, which is also reflected in the status of teachers. Finnish teachers are considered autonomous academic actors, which, in turn, is the underlying idea of modern teacher education. According to Zeichner and Conklin,<sup>93</sup> teacher education programmes should articulate their aims and visions explicitly. In our analysis, we have tried to clarify these visions and aims, based on how they have been articulated in official documents from the two investigated countries.

To conclude, it remains likely that the relatively stable policy environment, which has lasted for decades, has brought many advantages to Finnish teacher education. In comparison to Sweden, several factors have facilitated the perception of Finnish teacher education as being academically credible. The greatest differences between the countries have emerged since the 1970s, as the greater autonomy of Finnish universities, and the comparatively lax central political guidance of the educational system, have provided a beneficial environment for the gradual development of research-oriented teacher education.

It seems that Sweden is following Finland on the road towards the orientation of educational sciences. Despite their differing opinions regarding the importance of the progressivist and academic orientations, the Social Democrats and the centre-right have agreed throughout the 2000s that the research foundation of teacher education is insufficient. The 2014–2018 Social Democratic government was the first since the 1970s not to propose any reform of teacher education: although in 2017, a committee did point out that improvements should be made to teacher education within its

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<sup>91</sup> Janne Sääntti and Jari Salminen, 'Development of Teacher Education in Finland 1945–2015', *Hungarian Educational Research Journal* 5, no. 3 (2015): 3.

<sup>92</sup> Jari Salminen and Janne Sääntti, 'Akateemisen yleisdidaktiikan vaikea ja lyhyt historia 1960-luvulta 2000-luvulle', *Kasvatus & Aika* 6, no. 2 (2012): 11–12.

<sup>93</sup> Zeichner and Conklin, 'Teacher Education Programs', 702.



current framework.<sup>94</sup> The constant reforms have eventually come to be perceived as a problem. This might be the first sign of an emerging new attitude to teacher education among politicians and experts. The future of teacher education envisioned in Sweden on both sides of the political spectrum, with a lower rate of reform and a firmer research base, is highly reminiscent of the development that Finland's teacher education has experienced since the 1970s. The Swedish committee that prepared the 2011 reform made excursions to Finland, and in some respects used the country as a model for the research base.<sup>95</sup> However, an important difference is that Swedish politicians, regardless of party, still believe in strong government control of teacher education.

Our comparison clarifies the national features in a manner that would not have been possible if each country was analysed separately. In particular, the problematic development in Sweden is contextualised, as Finland functions as an example of how an alternative development may look. For example, for such a long time in Sweden the progressivist orientation was associated with an orientation of educational science that the two became almost synonymous. Catharina Andersson, one of the few scholars that has previously tried to apply the orientations of teacher education to a Swedish context, also considered them to be one and the same.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, the critique of progressivist teacher education among the Swedish academically oriented actors, who have favoured subject knowledge, has often had an edge against the orientation of educational sciences, particularly against pedagogy. However, the Finnish case illustrates that a strong orientation of educational science can exist independently from progressivism.

We have found the relationship between the state and the universities to be crucial for explaining the differences between Sweden and Finland. In Sweden, teacher education has been seen as an instrument for the state and politicians, but in Finland the universities have enjoyed a greater freedom from the political sphere. This state-university relationship has mostly been overlooked in earlier research on teacher education orientations. As it probably is of importance for other countries besides Finland and Sweden, it is a dimension that is worth taking into consideration in future research.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Funding

This work was supported by the Vetenskapsrådet [2013-1229].

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<sup>94</sup>SOU 2017: 35, 17, 151–5.

<sup>95</sup>SOU 2008:109.

<sup>96</sup>Andersson, *Läras för skolan*, 69.



a focus on the Nordic countries. For example, he has compared images of the United States and the Soviet Union in Norway, Sweden, and Finland during the Cold War, attempts to democratise society through education in Sweden and Finland, regional history writing and identity construction on islands in the Baltic Sea, and mental maps of secondary school seniors around the Baltic and Mediterranean seas. Together with Björn FuruHagen, he is working on a Swedish Research Council project comparing teacher education in Sweden and Finland from the 1940s to the present.

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