The professionalization of Nordic school leadership - a challenge to teacher professionalism?

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Aims

The paper aims to investigate how and to what extent the professionalization of Nordic school leadership may be in conflict with the ideal of the teacher as a professional.
Point of departure

• School leadership is approached as a balancing activity between various stakeholders and seen as something executed in the form of and relation to different knowledge practices within an historically developed cultural institution.

• School leadership and school development must be understood in the tension between the local, national and transnational level.

• As the analysis mainly focuses on the postwar period it is assumed that the global conditions have been similar from an educational perspective
Welfare state
Decentralization
Thin, local curriculum
Intellectual and professional accountability
Trust in profession
Schools as community of professionals
School leader

Nation state
Centralized model
Thick, national curriculum
Legal accountability
Trust in obedience
School within a legal framework
Head teacher
Instructional leadership

Globalized competition state
Both-And
Curriculum for testing
Perfomative accountability
Trust in results
Deprofessionalization?
The effective school
Principal
Professionalization and Professionalism

• Professionalization may be characterized as a sociological project, relating to the authority and status of the teaching profession

• Professionalism is a pedagogical project, concerned with the internal quality of teaching as a profession

• Accountability is an important dimension of professionalism. This dimension highlights that the teacher is morally responsive to the students’ and the parents’ needs, as well as responsive to the public through the mechanism of the state.
Methodological approach

• The study is based on textual analysis of policy documents that are significant in the organization and governing of primary and secondary school in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

• The analysis is also informed by findings from the OECD study of improving school leadership across 22 countries, in which Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway participated.

• The concern is with the language used in the policy documents about the need for professionalization of principals and teacher professionalism.
Findings

Similarities and differences across the four countries:

• Perspectives on the professionalization of teachers

• The move towards professionalization of school principals

• The emerging age of managerial accountability
Scenario I: Universal managerialism (UM)

1. Managerialist (technical) goal-, result, and quality assurance

2. Accentuates the principals role as accountable

3. Threatens the teachers academic profession?

4. Resources connected to success as testperformance - Added value thinking – the school *must* develop!

5. Knowledge development not connected to a science of education

6. Other disciplines gradually take over research on education

7. Universal management supports mobility between eg. state organisations but result in profession insensitive (contentneutral) leadership unable to lead development – only efficiency as such. (Disconnects economy, curriculum work and pedagogical leadership).
Scenario II: Towards researchbased, school developmental leadership? (RDL)

1. Theory development on educational leadership continues - Educational theory and leadership theory finds each other

2. Educational leadership a practice relating to different epistemologies.

3. The educational leader as an interpreter – translating the logics between knowledge practices.

4. Resources for leadership research combined with school development and continuing education

5. Municipals, schools, state & universities cooperate on researchbased school developmental work

6. Teacher and principal education include training in school based developmental teamwork related to ongoing research projects
Michaels vision – 3 förslag från 24.1 2012:

1. Konstruktivt arbete med ”evaluering för utveckling”
   • Bevara den respekt för lärarens professionalitet som präglat den finländska traditionen.
   • Offentlig rangordning blir lätt kontraproduktivt – skampedagogik bör undvikas.

2. Lärar- och ledarprofessionaliteten bör utvecklas
   • En ny syn på lärar- och ledarprofessionalitet som inkluderar skolutvecklingsarbete.
   • Förena pedagogisk forskning, skolutveckling och lärar- och ledarskapsfortbildning.
   • Rektorsutbildningen och –fortbildningen genomgås.
   • Lärarutbildningen ökar praktik och forskning – minskar på annan ledd undervisning.
   • Former för stöd / samverkan med skoldirektörer söks.
3. Helhetssyn kring samverkan och utvecklingsarbetet

- Klokt att aktörer med reellt ansvar för verksamheten (universiteten, kommunerna och statliga myndigheter) leder utvecklingsarbetet (lärarutbildning och –fortbildning, forskning, utbildningsadministration, läroplansarbete, utvärdering).

- Regionala pedagogiska skolutvecklingscentra inrättas som samverkar med och stöds av Utbildningsanordnare, Utbildningsstyrelsen och Universiteten Utvecklar Undervisning (5U)

- Kommunreformen bör medtänka hur skolutvecklingsarbetet skall organiseras.

- Skoldirektörerna och rektorerna spelar stor roll för det pedagogiska utvecklingsarbetet och bör involveras.