7 Pedagogy in Nordic teacher education

Conceptual approaches, historical paths, and current differences in Denmark and Finland

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Introduction

Pedagogy is a central concept in education, although it often carries different values and meanings depending on national or regional context. In the Anglo-Saxon literature on education, the word still carries a certain exotic flavour. It is clear, for instance, in Alexander's comparative work (2001), that pedagogy is not a home-grown concept in the British context, unlike in the Russian or French. In the Nordic countries, pedagogy has traditionally been understood as foundational for teachers' work. It has been both a descriptive and a prescriptive discipline, and is historically closely connected with the continental didactic tradition. The discipline of pedagogy in its modern form was imported to the Nordic countries from Germany during the late eighteenth century. Nordic pedagogy developed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with recurrent reference to, and in dialogue with, continental as well as British and American educational scholarship. Finland is a special case since it also borrowed pedagogical ideas from Russia, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century (Iisalo, 1979). From a Nordic perspective, pedagogy is defined as the more or less explicit comprehension of, and reflections on, educational practice, and the premises that education should be based on.

An apparent exception to the argument of the existence of a Nordic model within the field of education is the very different structure of teacher education in Denmark and Finland (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009). Considering that Denmark and Finland are quite similar from a political and economic point of view, why do we find fundamentally different approaches to pre-service teacher education? This chapter aims at answering the following research question: how have the different historical trajectories of *national educational schisms* and the *institutionalisation of pre-service teacher education* shaped the very different contemporary approaches to pedagogy in Finland and Denmark? This question is investigated using historical and contemporary evidence in the light of path dependency theory.

In this chapter, we compare the two most divergent approaches to teacher education within the Nordic region. Whereas the three other Nordic countries are, so to speak, 'closing in on Finland' with more or less academised pre-service teacher education connected to the university sector, Denmark is holding onto

a non-academic pre-service teacher education in a separate sector, that of professional education, where it is bundled together with the education of nurses, social workers, etc.

There are a number of similarities between Finland and Denmark. Briefly stated, these two Nordic countries share a Lutheran heritage since the sixteenth century, some early school initiatives during the eighteenth century whilst under absolutist rule, and a general institutionalisation of common schooling during the nineteenth century. After the Second World War, both developed universalist social democratic welfare states with systems of comprehensive schooling. As regards pedagogy, both are indebted to the German tradition, including national variants of the orientation towards self-formation or *Bildung* (known variously as *dannelse*, *bildning*, or *sivistys*). Nevertheless, teacher education is today quite different in Denmark and Finland, with different ways of institutionalising pre-service teacher education and differing approaches to pedagogy in these institutions.

Our data analysis in this chapter is twofold. We have adopted a historical path analysis to understand the evolution of the educational schisms in Denmark and Finland. We follow these divergent paths and their repercussions into divergent institutionalisations of pre-service teacher education in what we call the ‘policy window’ of the 1970s (Mahoney, 2000; Howlett and Ramesh, 2003). Finally, we analyse the differing contemporary pedagogical approaches in pre-service teacher education. For the contemporary data, we have run a thematic analysis on 29 interviews conducted during 2017–2018 in two Danish and one Finnish teacher education institution (Cucco, 2020).

In all the Nordic countries, the strength of rural countercultures during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been noteworthy. In contrast, especially to the German trajectory, all the Nordic countries have been discursively dominated by a continuity of positive political connotations of the *folk*, a Scandinavian concept which can be translated as ‘common people’ or ‘a nation’. The resulting opposition between urban academic elites and folk countercultures manifests also within the field of education (see also Chapters 1 and 2). Thus, we observe a *national educational schism*. This opposition can also be found in other regions, such as the German-speaking countries, but what is significant in the Nordic cases is that, especially in the three Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), the folk have gained almost hegemonic status in defining national educational and cultural self-understanding. In this respect, the Finnish case is something of an outlier. This will form part of the discussion below.

In the 1960s and 1970s, not least due to the general expansion of higher education and the almost global massification of higher-secondary education, a policy window opened for the academisation of pre-service teacher education in many countries. In Finland and Denmark, however, reforms of pre-service teacher education followed divergent paths. After the long-shared Nordic continuity of seminaries offering pre-service teacher education, Finland merged its teacher education institutions with the existing university system during the 1970s. Denmark kept teacher education institutions separate from the universities – a decision which shaped the course of teacher education in the country to the present day.

In this chapter, we try to analyse the styles of pedagogy that have developed in the two cases. We refer to the above distinction (universities vs. folk institutions) to clarify how we map differing traditions of pedagogy according to institutional settings. Figure 7.1 indicates that both pedagogical styles can be found in both settings, albeit with variations in their central references and approaches.

In the current Finnish approach, pedagogy is seen, in broad terms, as a growing, empirically founded and cumulative body of knowledge. The idea of research-based teacher training takes the research contribution of each student teacher, which is based on observational evidence, and sees this as an improvement – however small – in the pedagogical knowledge basis of action. This is, to some extent, similar to the use of empirical findings in the medical profession. This approach to pedagogy can be termed *cumulative positivism* (Figure 7.1, bottom row). In equally broad terms, the Danish approach takes a given pedagogical text, tries to understand and interpret the intentions of the theorist as thoroughly as possible, and moves on to ‘try it out’ in practice by applying the approach as a whole, remaining more or less loyal to its original intentions. This, in more technical terms, can be equated to some extent to the use and application of texts in law and theology, or with what H. G. Gadamer terms ‘dogmatic hermeneutics’ (Figure 7.1, top row). The word ‘dogmatic’ should here be conceptually connected not with rigidity or narrow-mindedness, but with reading a text with renewed attention to how it *speaks into* the actuality of the practical situation of action (Gadamer, 1960; Regan, 2012).

<div style="text-align: center;">Institutional schism:</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Pedagogical styles:</div>	Universities	Seminaries
	Teacher education at academic institutions	Teacher education at separate folk-institutions
Dogmatic / Hermeneutical Application of texts in teacher education programmes	The older German pedagogical tradition (simultaneously normative and descriptive) (e.g. Kant, Schleiermacher) (Herbart =>)	The tradition of reading central pedagogical texts and applying these ‘holistically’ in practice. (e.g. Grundtvig, Pestalozzi, Dewey, Montessori)
Cumulative / Positivistic Texts in teacher education programmes designed for direct implementation in practice	Typically, parts of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Applied psychology. (e.g. Thorndike, C.H. Judd, B.F. Skinner)	The professionals shall apply results of evidence-based meta-studies. (e.g. John Hattie, EEF, clearinghouses)

Figure 7.1 Pedagogical approaches in pre-service teacher education.

The framework in Figure 7.1 thus separates the dimensions of institutional setting and pedagogical style. The intention is to show a highly complex historical field, with differing approaches to educational knowledge in teacher education institutions. One central observation is that, recently, we find both pedagogical styles competing in Danish non-academic institutions of teacher education (Figure 7.1, right column). In the left column, we have placed an arrow with the name of a central figure, J. F. Herbart, as he can be understood as a precursor of the transition from a dogmatic hermeneutical to a rationalist approach building on ethics and psychology. His work paved the way towards a more cumulative and positivist approach to pedagogy, especially in the Finnish case. The ideas of Herbart led to the early dominance of rationalist psychological approaches in Finnish academic pedagogy as well as in teacher education, and secured continuity in the transition from seminary to university-based teacher education. Below, we will elaborate on all the four approaches sketched out in Figure 7.1.

In opposition to viewing globalisation as leading to a straightforward homogenisation, the comparative educationalist Jürgen Schriewer describes the opposing dynamics of ‘internationalisation’ and ‘indigenisation’ as only one of six contrary currents that can be observed in contemporary global developments (Schriewer, 2009). We argue that the current situation in Denmark exemplifies the tendency of *indigenisation* within the field of teacher education, while Finland is an example of a *trans-national disseminating model* in today’s global dynamics (see also Chapter 4). As a corrective to the supposed emergence of a homogenous global educational discourse, it seems fair to re-open the discussion of persistent local variations of pedagogical approaches in pre-service teacher education.

In the first section, we outline the period from the 1860s until the 1970s, referring to both similarities and differences in the development of the two sides of the aforementioned national educational schisms in Finland and Denmark. In the second section, we outline the concurrent developments of pedagogy in settings which are now quite different – universities in Finland and the seminaries in Denmark – from 1970 to 2020. In the third section, we will refer to contemporary interview data on differing approaches to pedagogy collected in 2017–2018 from two Danish and one Finnish initial class-teacher education institutions.¹ We conclude by briefly discussing the placement of these two Nordic cases in the global dynamics of educational developments.

National educational ‘schisms’ 1860–1970

We find the typical Nordic nineteenth-century educational divide between, on the one hand, an academic approach to schooling and education and, on the other, a more folk-oriented approach in both Denmark and Finland. In Denmark, the schism is between the ideas of Johan Nicolai Madvig (1804–1886) and Nicolai Fredrik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872). In the Finnish case, the more academic side is represented by Johan Vilhelm Snellman (1806–1881) whereas Uno Cygnaeus (1810–1888) represents the folk-oriented approach. The Finnish trajectory is characterised by the eventual dominance of the academic side of this schism, whereas the Danish one is dominated by the folk side. In the following section, we outline

these national educational schisms and evaluate their significance for the development of teacher education.

The Danish schism: Countercultural dominance over teacher education

As the Danish school administrator and politician Johan Victorinus Pingel (1834–1919) wrote in a letter in the 1880s, the ‘Danish schism lies between the wet, thought-hostile Grundtvigianism and the dry, vision-less Madvigianism’ (Krarup, 1955, p. 245). Firstly, and most famously, the proliferation of Grundtvigian folk high schools in the second half of the nineteenth century changed the face of Danish education, with a strong path dependency into present-day Danish culture. Grundtvig’s aggressive attacks on the established institutions of learning, the grammar ‘black schools’, was decisive for Danish educational self-understanding. He was inspired by J. G. Herder’s view of the people’s organic growth into a cultural unity, combined with Christian notions of the people’s enlightenment (Bugge, 1965). Pingel’s characterisation of ‘wet’ and ‘thought-hostile’ refers to the romantic style of the charismatic oral–historical–poetical narratives that dominated the programme. These romantic ideas, combined with the British college model, led to the formation of a new cultural movement wherein the young sons and daughters of farmers spent a year or more in so-called folk high schools, a specifically Nordic phenomenon of mostly rural boarding schools.

Second was the culture of the universities and the learned schools in Denmark, connected with the figure of J. N. Madvig. He was a philologist of the neo-humanist legacy, who insisted on its renewal by arguing for the purely historical relevance of studying ancient languages and a modernised curriculum in learned schools. Madvig was active in the National-Liberal Party, an urban bourgeois party that pushed for a democratic constitution from the 1830s onwards, and was appointed minister of education in 1850. Despite some inspiration from Hegelian philosophy, Madvig’s educational thoughts mostly resemble Herbart’s rationalism. He was not, however, Herbartian in the strict sense, as his approach to *dannelse* (*Bildung*) was much less formalistic than Herbart’s (Larsen, 2002). His approach has been connected to the Danish philosophical tradition which is based on ‘a sense of and interest in psychology, impetus on experiential knowledge, focus on the importance of individuality and the difference between individuals, a critical stance against speculative philosophy’ (Høffding, 1918, p. 118).

From the 1850s onwards, the Farmers’ Party, which was strongly influenced by Grundtvigian ideas, argued for a liberalisation of the state monopoly on teacher education that had existed since 1818. The following years saw an unprecedented proliferation of new private teacher education institutions all over Denmark (Skovgaard-Petersen, 2005). Danish pre-service teacher education seminaries (*lærerseminarier*) in the late nineteenth century were not all Grundtvigian; some were more socialistic, some were Christian revivalist (e.g., Inner Mission), and some were closer to the small farmers’ Radical Liberal Party. However, there were close ties between the cultural self-understanding of many private seminaries and the folk high schools. The continuity into the twentieth century was strong. Indeed, facing a deficit of teachers in the late 1940s, the parliamentary commission

encouraged teacher preparation at folk high schools. The idea of the ‘man from the plough’ or ‘woman from the pot’ going into teaching was thus very much alive (Kampmann, 1991, p. 27).

The Finnish schism: An urban elitist dominance of teacher education

The status of the Finnish language vis-à-vis Swedish grew after the country’s geopolitical shift from Sweden to Russia in 1809. In the mid-1820s, a group of students at Åbo Academy, including J. V. Snellman, dedicated itself to working for Finnish language and culture. In 1831, they established the Finnish Literary Society which became the springboard for the *Fennoman* political movement. Although it was mainly urban and elitist and did not have direct contemporary effects on the rural population, this national movement had a large impact on Finnish self-understanding and cultural development (Kirby, 2006). From 1859 onwards, Snellman became the second professor of pedagogy in Finland, with a post at the University of Helsinki (Iisalo, 1979). In Snellman’s view, education was fundamentally a cultural question. Inspired by Hegel, he believed that only through a national education process could a person recognise him or herself as a member of the Finnish nation. There was a strong affinity, as also in Germany, between Hegelianism and neo-humanist educational thought. The professors of pedagogy after Snellman abandoned his Hegelianism and instead turned to Herbart’s rationalism. The ensuing dominance of Herbartianism also spread into the early institutions of teacher education (Iisalo, 1979).

Uno Cygnaeus, although a trained theologian, was also a natural scientist, a comparative educationalist and a social pedagogue of the Pestalozzian kind. It is debatable if it was Cygnaeus’s practical and utilitarian approach or Snellman’s neo-humanistic one that prevailed in the primary education institutions (Iisalo, 1979; Ahonen, 2014). In 1863, the first seminary for elementary teachers opened in Jyväskylä, coordinated by Cygnaeus, who had been appointed as inspector of elementary schools in 1861. After Jyväskylä, other seminaries appeared in smaller rural towns before 1900 (Iisalo, 1979). Merja Paksuniemi, in her study of a seminary for women teachers founded in Tornio in 1921, finds many examples of the practical and craft skills promoted by Cygnaeus into the 1920s, arguably with remnants in present-day Finnish teacher education programmes (Paksuniemi, 2013). The early efforts towards academisation expressed by Snellman were, however, decisive (see also Chapter 5). Since the opening of the Jyväskylä seminary and the birth of the first teachers’ trade union at the end of the nineteenth century, Finnish school-teachers started to call for a higher level of education. This aspiration was supported by the University of Helsinki which has offered summer schools and special classes for primary school teachers since 1894 (Jauhiainen, Kivirauma and Rinne, 1998).

Comparative perspectives

There is a striking resemblance between the figures of Madvig in Denmark and Snellman in Finland. The two shared a critical attitude towards theories of education and were thus thinkers on *Bildung* rather than the developers of a coherent

educational theory (Iisalo, 1979; Larsen, 2002). Cygnaeus and Grundtvig, by contrast, had less in common with each other. Although both had a background in theology, Grundtvig was a Christian nationalist romantic and Cygnaeus a natural scientist and practical school reformer. Nevertheless, the two enjoyed a similar status in their respective societies, and many elementary school teachers identified themselves with these figures (Iisalo, 1979).

From the 1920s onwards, reform pedagogy became strong in Denmark as well as in the rest of Scandinavia, and its impact increased at least into the 1960s. It has been argued that the early Grundtvigian attack on bookish learning and the promotion of a 'school for life' enhanced receptivity towards the ideas of reform pedagogy in all the Scandinavian countries (Jarning, 2009). In contrast, the Herbartian legacy was so dominant in Finland during the international wave of reform pedagogy and progressivism in the years after the First World War that these ideas did not gain a comparable foothold in Finland (Simola, 1998; Paksuniemi, 2013).

In Denmark, didactics were not well developed in pre-service teacher education until they became the main contribution of the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies (Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, DLH) after the Second World War. Here, the Finnish case shows a much stronger path dependency since the time of Herbartian dominance, i.e., didactics built on psychology and ethics.

Academisation and divergent institutionalisation, 1970–2020

In both Danish and Finnish teacher education, academisation occurred simultaneously with the emergence of comprehensive schools during the 1960s and 1970s. In Denmark, following a teacher education reform in 1966, a higher secondary school exam was required for all student teachers. The reform separated general subjects from pedagogy, psychology, didactics, and teaching practice (Wiborg, 2002). In the 1990s, low scores on international tests resulted, somewhat paradoxically, in political attempts to reduce teacher autonomy, culminating in a severe conflict in 2013 when the teachers' union lost ground to policymakers. Negotiations with teacher unions were decentralised and individualised in a more neoliberal manner to the municipal level, including decisions on working hours and the choice of pedagogical style (Nordenbo, 1997; Grinder-Hansen, 2013). Since the Teaching Programme Act of 1997, a series of reforms have re-organised the Danish class-teacher² education curriculum into specialisation by age and subject (Larsen, 2016).

Following Finland's comprehensive school reform in 1968, teachers' education was equated with a bachelor-level university degree in 1973 and became a master's programme in 1979. This fundamental change was welcomed by the teachers' union as well as by university scholars. The latter believed that the passage into a university environment would in itself socialise student teachers into a higher academic level (Furuhagen and Holmén, 2017). However, it was not until the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s that teacher education started developing its own distinct identity and autonomous position within Finnish universities. It was during this period that teachers started being recognised as both professionals and pedagogical thinkers. Since the 2000s, Finnish class-teacher education has been recognised as research-based (Säntti and Kauko, 2019).

In spite of the initiated academisation process, the strength of the Danish folk side of the national educational schism secured a path dependency for seminary-like institutions, albeit with new names and numerous mergers. Teachers were still taught at autonomous institutions, detached from universities, even during the higher education reforms of the 1970s (Rasmussen, 2004). From 2000 onwards, Danish seminaries went through a process of mergers into bigger organisations now called ‘university colleges’ (*professionshøjskoler*). This organisational reform aimed at making the new institutions multidisciplinary and more theoretically based, and thus to cater to the perceived academisation needs in the welfare state (Bøje, 2012). Although the differences between university colleges and universities are narrowing, these two types of institutions today are managed under different laws. The national legislation defines universities as strongly academically oriented, with the duty to offer master’s and doctoral education, while university colleges are supposed to be solely profession-oriented (Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2016). A recent rejection of an academised five-year pre-service teacher education in the summer of 2020 by the current Social Democratic government once again confirmed the Danish path. This decision was supported by central actors in teacher education itself: the Danish Professional Schools (*Danske Professionshøjskoler*) and the Organisation of Municipalities (*Kommunernes Landsforening*).

While the Danish academisation process happened within the seminary tradition, the institutional academisation of Finnish class teachers was strongly related to the university reforms of the last 50 years (Kivinen and Rinne, 1998). The economic and unemployment crisis of the 1990s, which forced Finnish higher education to change its outlook, led to attempts to alter this path. After the higher education reform of 1993, polytechnics (*ammattikorkeakoulu*) spread all over the country to form a dual system of higher education. There were political debates about moving teacher training into these newly established institutions which have been interpreted by some observers as an intention to reduce the status and salaries of class teachers and thus save public funds (Jauhiainen, Kivirauma and Rinne, 1998). This did not happen, and after the 1990s and in line with the neoliberal turn, universities have been considered autonomous enterprises with responsibility for adapting the teacher education programme within each institution, which has consolidated the academisation of Finnish pre-service teacher education (Rinne, 2004; Ministry of Education and Culture Finland, 2009).

In Denmark, the placement of pre-service teacher education in separate institutions has preserved, as it were, a more practical and moral-pedagogical approach to teacher education. This practical orientation can also be detected in the most recent reforms of the class-teacher education curriculum, which aimed to provide student teachers with the right theoretical and practical tools to solve educational problems, following the development approach of Danish pre-service teacher education (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, 2009). This pedagogical approach is currently debated by many actors. Some academic researchers advocate for improvements in theoretical and subject knowledge in order to strengthen teacher professionalism (Dorf, 2011). They also argue that a practical pedagogical approach may contribute to overly normatively oriented knowledge which is not in line with the evidence-based approach (Rasmussen and Bayer, 2014). On the other side, the evidence that

supported the last Danish teacher education reforms, including reports by the consultancy company Epinion and government evaluation bodies such as KORA and EVA in the last 15 years, tells a different story. These reports also advocate for evidence-based teacher education, but in a form which is closer to practice and is less academic, and run by teacher educators who are not scholars (cf. bottom right in Figure 7.1) (Bjerre and Reimer, 2014). In line with this last perspective, but opposed to evidence-based pedagogy, are those who argue for what they call ‘unclean pedagogy’ (*uren pædagogik*). This is a group of Danish educational scholars who defend the contextual, normative, traditional, and value-based approach to pedagogy, making continuing reference to Grundtvig (Rømer, Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2011).

In contrast to the Danish case, Finnish pedagogical approaches show a path dependency of didactics built on psychology with a positivist direction. Simola sees this as related to the rise of educational science and de-contextualised didactics (Simola, 1998). These tendencies are connected with a form of scientific legitimisation used by the political left in the 1970s to counteract the religious and conservative values that had previously dominated teacher education. Stressing *scientificity*, many on the left intended to promote Marxist philosophy, but the concept was interpreted differently by others (Kähkönen in Furuhaugen and Holmén, 2017). The analysis by Kähkönen also underscores what Simola sees as a continuous trend into the 1990s, a ‘*wishful rationalism* — a curious combination of Utopian, well-intentioned wishes and linear, top-down rationalism’ (Simola, 1998, p.330). This scientific legitimisation was detached from a critical view of the state, which arguably shows a path dependency all the way back to Herbartian pedagogy (Simola, 1998).

From the 1970s onwards, in line with the massification of higher education and, to some extent, following the East European polytechnic model, Finnish pedagogy changed focus towards an enhanced theory–practice connection (Furuhaugen, Holmén and Sääntti, 2019). During the 1980s, as primary school programmes became less centralised and more shaped by the universities, class teachers came to be considered more as curriculum-makers (Kansanen and Ulfjens, 1997). Thus, a mixture of the academic traditions and a strong vocational orientation came into being. The enterprise model of the early 2000s, alongside the growth of professional autonomy and the power of the professoriate, contributed to the development of a research-based teacher education, in which student teachers conducted their own direct research (Furuhaugen, Holmén and Sääntti, 2019). Today, many claim that this orientation is the main reason for Finland’s high PISA results (Niemi, 2011; see also the global image of the Finnish success discussed in Chapter 4 in this volume). On the critical side, some Finnish scholars argue that it would be more beneficial to be less theoretically oriented on the grounds that teaching is a mix of theory and practice (Sääntti et al., 2014).

Differing approaches to pedagogy and attitudes towards research-based knowledge

In this section, we argue that the changing institutional placement of pre-service teacher education during the last half-century, along with divergent national self-understandings, have influenced contemporary approaches to pedagogy and

attitudes towards research-based knowledge. In order to do this, we analyse how educational leaders, teacher educators, and student teachers make sense of the pedagogical approaches they are using (Cucco, 2020).

In line with the ideas of pedagogy presented in the introduction, and the framework outlined in Figure 7.1, our thematic analysis of the interview data collected shows the presence of neo-humanistic ideas of *Bildung* and the principles of Nordic egalitarianism both in the Danish and Finnish pre-service teacher education. In fact, the interviewees share the common idea of securing learners' holistic experience, which may be connected to ideas inherent to 'pedagogy' and *Bildung* as such. Nevertheless, an overall impression is that the Danish approach to pedagogy is more communitarian, while the Finnish one is oriented towards individualism. This difference can be partially related to the two different societies and their construction of divergent national self-understandings. Finnish nationalism was connected with academic-urban elites and, arguably, based on a more individualistic approach. Conversely, Danish folk-nationalism and farmers' counterculture contributed to forming a more communitarian-oriented pedagogical approach.

In Denmark, teachers aim to educate children to enable them to become part of a larger community; thus, they adopt a rather holistic approach towards education. They believe that teachers should not only be role models for pupils, like a second parent. They should also be part of a larger community of professionals as political actors, and help children become participants in the same community.

[Being a teacher means] that you are able to participate as a citizen in the society. And that's where the whole idea [comes from]. You have a social responsibility as an individual [and then] you have to teach to pupils in schools something that will eventually make them good citizens. Good individuals are also good citizens.

— Olander, Danish teacher educator

Conversely, Finnish pedagogy adopts a more individualistic perspective, in which psychology is at the centre of the teaching process with the aim of enhancing learning. This aim is also apparent in the different disciplines of class-teacher education, which are focused on psychological and didactical perspectives, with less focus on the learners' social context.

You have to know each child because they learn a little bit in different ways, and they are interested in different stuff. I think you [as teacher] have to be very sensitive to know each child and how you can help this child to learn maths and how to make it interesting to him.

— Laura, Finnish student teacher

The individualistic Finnish approach is echoed by a pedagogy of a more *cumulative/positivistic* kind (see Figure 7.1, bottom left). Finland follows a continuous path, starting with Herbartian applied philosophy, and continuing with the adoption of applied psychology during the last 50 years. Pedagogy is here considered a collection of theories which can be improved through the research process and then

translated into practice. Finnish teacher educators claim that ‘teaching is research-ing’, stressing the importance of systematic inquiry to bridge the theory/practice divide, and relating this to an evidence-based teaching orientation. Research is thus considered a systematic way of understanding and reflecting on teaching practice. Reflection happens through activities in which student teachers are required to answer ‘why’ questions about their practice. Thus, for Finnish teachers, as long they have the right method of teaching, the social context and the actual subjects taught are less important for didactic practice.

It’s important to know this [research] stuff because it has its whole language and, even if you can’t remember all of it, afterwards you may know how to read diagrams and all of the other kinds. It’s like, if you read an article, you actually understand what it’s saying better because you know how the research study has been done because you’ve done it yourself.

— Bella, Finnish student teacher

This cumulative aspect is also visible in the type of research-based knowledge used in the Finnish context. Within the class-teacher education programme, there is substantial attention to basic and applied research-derived knowledge, both of which aim at expanding educational theories. Thus, the purpose is not only to improve teaching practice but also to generate new educational knowledge. The main producers of research-based knowledge are teacher educators. Moreover, future teachers are able to build pedagogical knowledge, thanks to strong institutional support: the university. Student teachers gain research skills which provide support for becoming teacher-researchers once they are employed by schools. This is directly linked to the academic environment as well as the pedagogical style with which Finnish pre-service teacher education is conducted (see Figure 7.1 bottom left).

I think that this theoretical and scientific background needs to be so strong, when they will go to teach [...]. I think that it is so important that [the programme] is at the university because [teachers] need this scientific thinking and scientific background in everyday practice. And it’s possible only if they are part of universities and the scientific community.

— Sandra, Finnish teacher educator

To sum up the findings in the Finnish case, the strong path dependency, both at the pedagogical and at the institutional level, assure less distress to Finnish educators concerning the neoliberal shift based on individualistic assumptions (see also the discussion of reduced complexity in Chapter 13). The cumulative positivism observed in the Finnish case is perhaps also connected to, and works well together with the allure of top-down normativity typical of Finnish ‘wishful rationalism’, to use Simola’s term (1998).

Danish pre-service teacher education, meanwhile, has retained a *dogmatic/hermeneutic* approach. In Denmark, pedagogical knowledge is considered a reflective combination of theory and practice. Danish student teachers are familiarised with pedagogical concepts through ‘learning by doing’, in which theory is mixed with

pedagogical practice. Student teachers usually discuss pedagogy in the light of practical experience throughout the learning modules. This is within the tradition of reading central pedagogical texts and applying them ‘holistically’ in practice (see Figure 7.1, top right).

We use research usually in the context of examining a certain theory. It’s usually that we have a theory from someone and then we have to find out what the theory is about and then we have to find and use research that has been made on how this theory works.

— Luna, Danish student teacher

The hermeneutical approach also characterises the way in which Danish participants define the use and production of research-based knowledge. As described in more detail elsewhere (Cucco, 2020), research-based knowledge within the Danish bachelor’s programme is of an applied or experimental-developmental kind and is produced solely during their bachelor’s degree projects by student teachers. Teacher educators are also developing applied research-based knowledge, but face challenges in implementing this new knowledge in their classes. In line with the hermeneutic approach and the Danish institutional divide, academic knowledge is then translated into professionally oriented teaching resources and materials. Thus, the main aim of gaining research-based knowledge is pragmatic and is usually intended to improve and update teaching practice. This research and development approach is then spiced up with the more *cumulative/positivistic* style in which professionals should apply the results of evidence-based meta-studies into practice (see Figure 7.1 bottom right). This Danish melting pot of a dogmatic hermeneutical style shared at the institutional level, and the new policy-driven *cumulative/positivistic* approach, is a matter of concern for Danish teacher educators: they are sceptical about the more individualistic and goal-oriented approaches implemented since the 1980s in the Nordic countries.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we aimed to answer the following question: how have the different historical trajectories of late-nineteenth-century *national educational schisms* and the differing *institutionalisation of pre-service teacher education* in the second half of the twentieth century shaped the very different approaches to pedagogy found in Finnish and Danish pre-service teacher education? We argued that differing biases in the national educational schisms during the nineteenth century resulted in divergent paths of institutionalisation of pre-service teacher education during the 1960–1970s. This institutionalisation, in turn, shaped different contemporary approaches to pedagogy in Denmark and Finland, as shown in Figure 7.1.

Since the 1990s and increasingly in the 2000s, due to the global trends of neo-liberalism, evidence-based practice and ‘what works’ approaches, pre-service teacher education in both Denmark and Finland has been under political pressure to move ‘downward’ in Figure 7.1. This has created a strong pressure in Denmark on the continuity of its more communitarian and *Bildung*-oriented, hermeneutical

approach to pedagogy, and there are calls to 'look to Finland' (cf., e.g., Andersen, Wiskerchen and Honoré, 2017). Currently, a certain schizophrenia can be observed in the Danish educational world, between the traditional reading and dogmatic hermeneutical application of normative, philosophical educational literature, and the adoption of an evidence-based 'what works' agenda of a positivist nature (cf. Figure 7.1, right column). Additionally, an overall observation is that the previously very central concept of pedagogy seems to be losing ground in both these Nordic cases, perhaps because of the strong Anglo-Saxon influence as part of the above-mentioned global trends. In this development, Denmark seems less willing to change its pedagogical approach than Finland. The historical development in Finland has already paved the road for an approach to pedagogy which has a strong affinity to the 'new' global trends, whereas Denmark has had almost the opposite trajectory. As argued above, this calls into question if the global homogenisation of educational approaches is really inevitable.

The current situation in Denmark may exemplify the tendency of *indigenisation*, as opposed to a dynamic of *internationalisation* (cf. Schriewer, 2009). The Danish educational arena as a whole is slowly moving towards an academisation of pedagogical approaches, not least due to a nationally quite dominant institution founded in 2000, the Danish University of Education. This institution, which now comes under Aarhus University, in its pedagogical approach has had the strongest affinity to the left-hand column in Figure 7.1, i.e., to academic institutions. Central actors in teacher education, however, are consciously choosing the 'indigenous' path more in the right-hand column of Figure 7.1, i.e., the folk institutions. Referring again to the contrary currents outlined by Schriewer, and as can be seen in Chapter 4, Finland offers an example of a *trans-national disseminating model* in today's global dynamics. As a corrective to the supposed advent of a homogenous global educational discourse, we therefore conclude that local variations of pedagogical approaches in pre-service teacher education tend to persist along national paths.

Notes

- 1 The contemporary data consist of 29 interviews collected using snowball sampling and involving the main actors in class-teacher education: student teachers, teacher educators, and educational leaders. Each interview was conducted in English. After the complete transcription of all interviews, a thematic analysis was conducted. The data collection process guaranteed anonymity both to the individuals and to the institutions involved in the project and was approved by the ethical committee of the Università degli Studi di Torino. We have lightly revised the language of the quotes in this chapter.
- 2 In this chapter, 'class teachers' refers to educators who teach in Danish comprehensive schools (grades 1–9) or in the first six years of Finnish comprehensive schools. We use 'elementary school teachers' to indicate those who taught in Danish and Finnish primary schools before the rise of comprehensive schooling in the 1960–1970s.

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