10 Elitist tradition and democratic reform

Norwegian and Danish upper-secondary teacher cultures in transition, 1960–1994

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Across the Western world, in the period following the Second World War, an increasing number of students sought secondary education. The idea of mass education as an important political measure for societal and economic development emerged concurrently. At this time, Nordic upper-secondary schools came under scrutiny, juxtaposed between their inherent identity as selective academic elite schools and new demands for democratic mass education. Their future structure and content became hotly debated, both within governments and among teachers, pupils, and the general public. These tensions would gradually lead to a transformation of continental-style gymnasiums into more inclusive, democratic upper-secondary schools, integrated into a comprehensive national educational system.¹

However, this transformation did not follow a common trajectory in all Nordic countries. This chapter compares the shifts within upper-secondary education in Denmark and Norway, two countries which have had strikingly similar upper-secondary-school systems and related teacher cultures, due to their union before 1814 and continuous cultural and intellectual affiliations thereafter. Nevertheless, the democratisation of upper-secondary education took rather different paths in the two countries. In this chapter, we will concentrate our analysis on the cultures of gymnasium teachers in Denmark and Norway and the different degrees to which these schools were transformed and integrated into a comprehensive national scheme of mass education.

Studies have pointed to the close relationship between professions and the state in continental Europe and Scandinavia, in contrast to the Anglo-American tradition of self-organising professions providing services in a market. Since the nineteenth century, the state has played an active and often decisive part in the construction of the professions, and processes of professionalisation have occurred in cycles of state intervention from above, alternating with periods of greater self-management from within the profession (Siegrist, 1990). One way of examining the relations between the state and upper-secondary teachers is to look at how the state constructed and reformed the mandate of this profession in policy documents and reforms from the late 1950s onward. These teachers have traditionally been active in various deliberative bodies with advisory and decision-making functions in educational governance, such as expert councils, teacher councils, school-subject associations,² and professional organisations.

In this chapter, we ask: how similar or different were the two countries' gymnasiums and their teacher cultures when they passed the threshold of mass education in the early 1960s? What part did the upper-secondary teachers themselves play in the transformation of their schools in Denmark and Norway? What consequences did the reforms have for their professional autonomy and status? Finally, what can explain the differences in the developments between the two neighbouring countries?

In what follows, we will first present some historical preconditions and distinctive features of Danish and Norwegian gymnasiums, their respective teacher cultures, and modes of cooperation between the state and the profession of gymnasium teachers. We will then look more closely into the two countries' upper-secondary educational reform processes with special emphasis on the 1960s to the early 1970s, and the 1990s. Finally, we will discuss some key determinants of differences between the Danish and Norwegian trajectories.

Cast in the same mould: the birth of the modern gymnasium

Norway was under the Danish crown until 1814, and the early development of the modern gymnasium in the two countries was closely associated. In 1809, the Latin schools of both parts of the realm became subject to a neo-humanistic reform which provided the basis for these schools until 1850 in Denmark, when a modernised general curriculum was introduced, and 1869 in Norway (Høigård, Ruge and Hansen, 1971, p. 60). Educational reforms in the two countries continued to influence each other through the nineteenth century. An alternative study programme with natural sciences and living languages was introduced alongside the classical languages programme (Norway 1869, Denmark 1871). Around the turn of the century, both countries developed more coherent and adjoined primary- and secondary-school systems (Norway 1896, Denmark 1903), which gave a growing, but still strongly selected, group of pupils the opportunity for academic studies.

A common characteristic of the secondary-school reforms of 1896 in Norway and 1903 in Denmark was the further reduction in the importance of classical languages which had been the centrepiece of the Latin school. Modern languages and the natural sciences now overshadowed the classical languages in the curricula of both countries, but to differing degrees. In Norway, a strong national sentiment and the introduction, in 1884, of parliamentary democracy delegitimised the privileged position of Latin as the hallmark of the gymnasium (Høydal, 2007, p. 15). An emphasis on democratisation and cultural nation-building propelled the move from the classical heritage toward modern languages, national culture, and natural science as the curricular core of the gymnasium (Lindbekk, 1962).

In Denmark, the breach with the Latin-school tradition was less absolute. The classical languages programme continued, albeit in a somewhat reduced form, alongside the natural sciences programme and a new modern languages programme. Latin remained mandatory even within the modern languages programme, and in the natural sciences programme, ancient history and culture (*oldtidskundskab*) replaced Latin as a compulsory subject. Hence, while the 1903 reform reduced the total number of lessons in Latin, all students were now introduced to the classical world as part of their study programme (Bryld et al., 1990, p. 33).

Shades of exclusivity: gymnasiums and teacher cultures before 1960

In both Denmark and Norway, the gymnasium remained an exclusive institution for the selected few up until the post-war reforms. In 1900, less than 1% of Danish and Norwegian youth attended these schools (Nepper-Christensen, 1998). Until around 1930, both countries saw a rather slow increase in upper-secondary schooling, which reflected the growing influx of female students as well as a gradual expansion of private and municipal gymnasiums in suburbs and smaller towns. From the 1930s, however, Norway exhibited steeper growth than Denmark in upper-secondary education. This increased further during and immediately after the Second World War. By 1945, more than 10% of Norwegian youth took the *examen artium* qualifying them for university entrance, as against less than 5% of their Danish peers (St.meld.nr.45, 1950, pp. 38–39). Although Norway's upper-secondary-school attendance decreased somewhat in the following years, it remained higher than in Denmark. While slightly more than a tenth of Danish youth attended gymnasium by the mid-1960s, the corresponding Norwegian share was by then rapidly approaching one-fifth (Aamodt, 1982, p. 81; Nepper-Christensen, 1998, p. 17). This difference is all the more striking as Denmark was a more urbanised and densely populated country, with much lower geographical barriers to secondary schooling.

An adequate explanation of this difference in upper-secondary-school attendance would require careful analyses of detailed, comparable educational statistics, and would go beyond the scope of this chapter. For our purpose, it suffices to maintain that the Norwegian upper-secondary school had gradually assumed a less exclusive character without breaking decisively with the continental-European model. By contrast, its Danish counterpart remained more of a continental-style gymnasium, with an exclusive student body and remnants of a classical curriculum. Thus, by 1961, less than 10% of Danish gymnasium graduates came from the working class, as against one-fourth in Norway by 1963 (Aamodt, 1982, p. 79; Hansen, 1997, p. 11).

However, the question remains: to what extent were the curricular and social differences between the two countries' gymnasiums paralleled by differences in their respective teacher cultures?

Danish and Norwegian upper-secondary teachers were in many ways strikingly akin. Both defined themselves in contradistinction to the seminary-trained elementary-school teachers, who, on their side, saw gymnasium teachers as representatives of an outdated elitist and intellectualist educational ideology. The opposition between the two teacher cultures, while also noticeable in Norway, was particularly strongly articulated in Denmark, due to the Grundtvigian hegemony in teacher seminaries (see Chapters 1 and 2) as well as a slightly more exclusive academic culture.

The marked schism vis-à-vis elementary-school teachers accentuated university education as the defining core of the professional and cultural identity of gymnasium teachers. Like their Swedish, German, or French colleagues, they were trained as academic scholars and defined themselves as such, and a substantial minority

continued to perform various forms of scholarship besides their daily schoolwork. Spread thinly across towns and local communities, they formed part of local cultural elites and disseminated their knowledge to wider publics. They thus found themselves in an intermediary position between the exclusive world of academic scholarship and the communitarian ethos of primary-school teachers.

However, while the German *Studienrat*, imbued with classic philology and a neo-humanistic ideology of *Bildung*, has been portrayed as the incarnation of the anti-modern 'German mandarin' (Ringer, 1969), Danish and Norwegian gymnasium teachers were deeply influenced by the so-called modern breakthrough of the late nineteenth century, which replaced the old synthesis of religion, classicism, and scholarship with a positivist ideal of specialised research. This new research ideology accentuated the cultural value of the natural sciences while also transforming the humanities as scientific disciplines and means of general education (P.O. Larsen, 2015b; Lynning, 2007). The gymnasium-teacher cultures of Denmark and Norway became characterised by an enduring tension between this new, science-oriented, cultural creed and an older, classicist idealism.

There is unfortunately a lack of comparable historical data on the sociocultural profiles of Danish and Norwegian gymnasium teachers. In Norway, gymnasium teachers were more democratically recruited – and had higher marks at *examen artium* – than most other academic professionals (Myhre, 2011, pp. 145, 176f). More candidates in the sciences and humanities were children of farmers and teachers, and fewer of wealthy businessmen, than in law and medicine. This seems to have held true in Denmark as well. However, the cultural implications of a rural/farming background may not have been quite the same in the two countries. In Norway, a number of regional, rural gymnasiums (*landsgymnas*) were introduced during the first half of the twentieth century, offering gifted young people in the countryside an education with special emphasis on national cultural heritage, New Norwegian (*nynorsk*), and Old Norse (Høydal, 2003). The *nynorsk* cultural and linguistic movement made up an important recruitment base as well as a cultural frame of reference for many gymnasium teachers, who were particularly attracted to the study of Norwegian language and literature – a core subject of the gymnasium (Lindbekk, 1968, pp. 20f).

Politically, Norwegian gymnasium teachers generally turned towards the left during the first half of the twentieth century. By 1950, they were markedly more left-leaning than most other professional groups. While support for the conservative party was at about the same level among these teachers as in the general public (i.e. below 20%), a third voted for the governing Labour Party, and a strongly disproportional share supported the liberal-progressive party *Venstre*, which had traditionally been the elementary-school teachers' party *par excellence* in Norway (Lindbekk, 1968, pp. 15f).

We have not been able to find comparable data on Danish upper-secondary teachers, but their political profile might not have been all that different. In terms of sociocultural identity, however, there is reason to believe that they had a somewhat stronger upper-middle-class profile than their Norwegian colleagues. Danish society had a more pervasive class structure than the more rural, regionally diverse Norway, and its educated upper-middle classes seem to have had greater hegemony in high culture and higher learning, and more capacity to assimilate newcomers.³

The teaching profession and the state: cooperation, control, and co-determination

During the 1950s, the Danish and Norwegian upper-secondary teaching profession exerted a high degree of control of the gymnasium's curriculum, exams, and academic standards through their affiliation with the state administration. Their well-functioning professional organisations provided forums for debate and direct influence on school development.

The Latin schools in Denmark had, since 1848, been supervised and controlled by a central, autonomous governing agency, *Undervisningsinspektionen*. The agency was initially made up of university professors, but from 1906 onwards, it was staffed with representatives of the teaching profession itself. Apart from its supervision of the gymnasiums and their teachers, it was mandated to supervise the new practical-pedagogical education, the *Pædagogicum*. The inspectorate was formally affiliated with the state and its leader had the status of a senior civil servant. In 1963, it was superseded by a directorate (Haue, Nørr and Skovgaard-Petersen, 1998, pp. 200–202). In Norway, a teaching council, *Undervisningsrådet*, established in 1898 and comprising representatives of the profession, was mandated to supervise gymnasiums and their exams. Relatively independent expert councils outside of the Ministry of Education's direct control became a characteristic part of the national governance of education (Sirevåg, 1981; Telhaug and Korsvold, 1989).

Danish and Norwegian gymnasium teachers established their own organisations in 1890 and 1892, respectively, to promote their professional status and autonomy. Most of their collegial pedagogical and didactic debates, however, took place within sub-associations for specific school subjects. In Denmark, subject-specific associations were established already in 1885, five years before the professional organisation *Gymnasieskolernes Lærerforening* (GL). Autonomous and self-governed, these associations were affiliated with the GL and provided pedagogical expertise in matters of educational policy. In Norway, school-subject associations were less autonomous and became organised long after the professional organisation, *Filologenes og realitenes landsforening*. The immediate context was the public debate and government initiatives on secondary-school reform in the 1920s and 1930s. Much like in Denmark, the formation of subject-specific associations was a bottom-up initiative, though enthusiastically supported by the professional organisation (Kristiansen, 1992, p. 78).

After the Second World War, gymnasium teachers in both Denmark and Norway saw a need for curricular reform. In general, they wanted to preserve the gymnasium as a school for the select few. But many reform-oriented teachers were eager to update and invigorate the gymnasium as a provider of general education in its own right. The intent was to cultivate the elite of a democratic society: an elite *of* and *for* the people, recruited from all walks of life. However, the political and cultural situation, and the dynamics of educational reform in the two countries, would lead to unequal opportunities for pursuing curricular reforms from within.

The social-democratic push for unified schooling

The social-democratic model of governance became a well-known feature of Nordic societies in the post-war era, but to different degrees and with divergent outcomes for the secondary-school systems of Norway and Denmark. In Norway, post-war educational reform was shaped by 20 years of majority rule by the social-democratic Labour party (1945–1965). Heavily influenced by the passage of a unified primary and lower-secondary educational system in the Swedish parliament in 1950, Norwegian Labour party officials devised a grand scheme for an extended and more democratic system of education, leading to a series of government-appointed committees reviewing all levels of the educational system (Helsvig, 2017). By the early 1960s, policymakers' view of the gymnasium was changing: previously they had focused on providing equal opportunities for all *gifted* youth to attend upper-secondary school irrespective of geography and social class, thereby accepting its exclusive character on strictly meritocratic principles. Now, they emphasised the need for a radical expansion of secondary education in theoretical and vocational branches alike. While part of an international trend, the new policy was also conditioned by the post-war social-democratic hegemony and long traditions of democratic educational reform in Norway.

In Denmark, social-democratic reform ideas of unified schooling were less dominant, and the reform process caused less controversy. The Danish Social Democratic party was less hegemonic than its Norwegian and Swedish sister parties, and did not continuously control the government for decades. From 1957 to 1964, it governed in coalition with the left-liberal *Radikale Venstre*, a party known for its special attraction for teachers. This left more scope for liberal as well as conservative influences on educational policies (Wiborg, 2008).

The ambition to unify secondary education first became prevalent, and met resistance, within vocational studies. In Denmark, these studies had maintained more of their guild traditions than in Norway, with an apprenticeship system as their foundation and strong school-subject associations. In the 1960s, a coalition of employers and trade unions saw the importance of maintaining close relations between apprenticeship and employment, and resisted the academic drift of vocational training. This resistance constrained Social Democratic ambitions to establish a unified upper-secondary-school system (Jørgensen, 2018, p. 174).

In Norway, a weaker apprenticeship system and less cooperation with employers made vocational studies more susceptible to state-driven reforms. Within a few decades, vocational training was transformed from traditional apprenticeships, via part-time schooling, to new, full-time vocational schools. Vocational teachers were too poorly organised to effectively resist the pressure to reform (Grove and Michelsen, 2005, pp. 106, 406). However, they joined forces with the secondary-school teachers' organisation (*Norsk lektorlag*, NL) in resisting combined upper-secondary schools, and like their Danish colleagues, were wary of the quality of craftsmanship in an increasingly academic, less practically oriented, vocational training (Grove and Michelsen, 2005, p. 190).

The Norwegian trajectory: towards a comprehensive upper-secondary school

In Norway, the social-democratic project of unified schooling was strongly supported by primary teachers, who were eager to bridge the gap between primary and secondary school and their distinct teacher cultures (Helsvig, 2017, pp. 87–89).

Norwegian primary-school teachers had traditionally owed much of their respect and autonomy to their position as role models and leaders within the local community, rather than to their professional expertise (Lauglo, 1995, p. 268). They had also been active in national politics, where they had strongly supported the development of a unified, comprehensive national school system. Through their alliance with social-democratic policymakers, they largely outplayed the secondary-school teachers, and the once-sharp demarcation between the primary- and secondary-school traditions became increasingly blurred.

Primary-school reforms in 1959 did not include reform of the gymnasium, and the NL, representing secondary-school teachers, regarded it as something of a *fait accompli* since it had not been involved (Kristiansen, 1992; Telhaug and Mediås, 2003). The reform of the whole school sector in the 1960s was driven by the transformation of the lower-secondary school, setting the premises and creating path dependence for the upcoming gymnasium reform. Acknowledging its lost influence over primary- and lower-secondary-school reform, the NL presented a report in 1962 in an attempt to set the terms for a debate on gymnasium reform. Partly influenced by the Danish reform four years earlier, the report strongly emphasised the gymnasium's function as a university-preparatory school and expressed concerns about the consequences of the planned comprehensive lower-secondary school. NL feared that students' performance levels would be degraded, and proposed instead the addition of a fourth gymnasium year for students aspiring to university studies (Norsk Lektorlag, 1962).

In the very same year, however, when the Labour government appointed a committee to prepare a reform of upper-secondary education, it mandated the committee to revise all branches of secondary education – vocational, semi-academic, and academic – and to focus specifically on a common core curriculum.⁴ The aim was to transform the gymnasium from an exclusive, elitist university-preparatory school to one element of an expansive, increasingly specialised educational system (Tilråding om reform av gymnaset, 1967, pp. 38–39). The ongoing Swedish reform of upper-secondary education was a source of inspiration but was not as directly emulated as with the comprehensive lower-secondary school. The committee proposed a general reduction of lesson hours, combined with new, progressive teaching methods that projected a more independent, self-instructing student, thereby transforming the teacher into more of a facilitator and motivator. Planning for unified upper-secondary schooling continued undisturbed with the Steen committee, appointed by the Labour government in 1965, and underwent only minor revisions under the new centre-right government which took power later that year.

Following the release of the two committees' recommendations, NL raised concerns about the increased emphasis on pedagogy and psychology at the expense of school subjects in teacher education, and the possible levelling down of the

gymnasium's academic standards (Kristiansen, 1992, pp. 226–227). While welcoming the new student-centred pedagogical ideas, most gymnasium teachers opposed the integration of vocational studies and other measures that would undermine the gymnasium's selective and university-preparatory functions (Lauglo, 1971, p. 279). However, theirs was a losing battle: while the gymnasium maintained, for a while, remnants of the old academic culture in everyday subject teaching, its function and identity within the educational system were irrevocably changed. From an elitist university-preparatory school, it became one branch of a comprehensive, increasingly universal upper-secondary school, preparing its students for a broad range of tertiary educations and vocations.

The Danish trajectory the gymnasium sustained, relieved by alternatives

While Norwegian gymnasium teachers were losing their position as scholarly experts in the national school system, their Danish colleagues retained an elite position in society. Danish gymnasiums upheld a distinctly academic profile, with classical studies remaining a substantial part of the curriculum. Here, upper-secondary teachers largely succeeded in preserving much of the continental-style gymnasium tradition *within* a democratised national educational system. The increasing demand for secondary schooling and access to higher education was met chiefly by establishing new educational alternatives alongside the gymnasium, rather than by radically transforming the gymnasium itself.

In 1958, Denmark introduced reforms of both primary and secondary education, driven by a reform of the lower-secondary school (*realskolen*). The reform of the gymnasium, however, was minor, aiming at striking a better balance between its twin functions as a preparation for academic studies and a general education in its own right, by increasing students' freedom of choice of subjects and courses, including in the new social sciences (Læseplansudvalg for gymnasiet, 1960, p. 29). The profession-led committee introduced a more dynamic 'branch gymnasium' which put greater emphasis on student-centred pedagogical methods (Læseplansudvalg for gymnasiet, 1960).⁵ This reform paralleled and reciprocated the reform of primary education, which gave gymnasium teachers the opportunity to participate in the reformation of the whole educational system during the 1960s and the decades to come.

In 1966 a new upper-secondary track was introduced, the so-called 'higher preparatory exam' (*højere forberedelseksamen*, hf). Its primary function was to prepare students for semi-academic studies such as nursing, engineering, and primary-school teaching. While originally intended to be affiliated with the teacher seminaries, these courses were largely hosted by gymnasiums in their formative phase. The professional interests of primary- and secondary-school teachers came together in this innovation: The primary teachers' union (*Danmarks lærerforening*) saw the affiliation with the gymnasiums as a means of raising the status of teacher-training seminaries and the teaching profession. Upper-secondary teachers could appear as proactive school reformers to both the government and the public, while continuing their role as elite scholarly experts, defending the academic tradition

(Bryld et al., 1990, p. 103). In 1972, the higher commercial examination programme was upgraded to a university entrance examination, followed, in 1982, by the higher technical examination programme.

By the end of the 1960s, Norway had implemented nine-year comprehensive schooling for children aged 7–16. Denmark was reviewing the question, but its gymnasium had consolidated its position as a relatively elitist institution and retained most of its distinctive characteristics.

The new gymnasium of the 1970s: political drives and professional co-determination

From the late 1960s, Norwegian and Danish societies both went through a period of political and social confrontation. Education was intensely debated, from the primary level to the universities. Gymnasiums in both countries were criticised as elitist and authoritarian institutions, maintaining social inequality, and wasting the nation's intellectual resources (Ahm, 1966; Haaland, 1966; Hambro, 1966; Westergaard, 1965). In Denmark, advocates for a unified educational system proposed a major reform of all education for 16–19-year-olds (Haue, 2003, pp. 227–228). In Norway, a decade of debate and vigorous government initiatives paved the way for a new reform of upper-secondary schools in 1974. The national EEC referendum in 1972, and changing parliamentary constellations, had paused the reform process, but finally, the far-reaching so-called Reform 74 was enacted with broad parliamentary support. The gymnasium became only one of several study programmes in a new, comprehensive secondary-school system called *videregående skole*. Combined schools, offering both vocational and academic study programmes under the same roof, now became the preferred model (Bjørndal, 2005, pp. 142–144). The traditional final exam which provided students with academic credentials, the *examen artium*, was abolished, and the total number of lessons reduced.

In the late 1960s, a major reform of the Danish gymnasium was also discussed and outlined. Support for unifying the different branches of secondary education was widespread, resulting in the 1973 report popularly known as the Højby Proposition, which aimed at a more flexible curriculum and a common frame of knowledge and competence (Haue, Nørr and Skovgaard-Petersen, 1998, p. 299). The reform was halted, however, because of its estimated cost and the recession that followed the 1973 oil crisis. The reduced scheme that was implemented was nicknamed 'the minor reform'. It concentrated on the curricular content of the gymnasium and was met not only with support but also with criticism within the profession (Bryld et al., 1990, p. 117).

The GL, the Danish teachers' professional association, would play a vital part in the curriculum reform of the gymnasiums. In 1962 it coordinated the pedagogical and didactic efforts of the school-subject associations and unified them into one coordinating council (*Pædagogisk Samarbejdsudvalg*, PS). The PS became the epicentre of pedagogical and didactic debate within the profession in the process of preparing and implementing the minor reform. It functioned as a link between the profession and the state, informing and influencing both the GL and national policy (Bryld et al., 1990, p. 160). The PS and the school-subject associations

thereby consolidated their position as an autonomous, dynamic arena for debate within the profession, and a freestanding organisational pillar of the profession alongside the GL.

In Norway, Reform 74 maintained the close affiliation between the teaching profession and the state through a new council for secondary education (*Rådet for videregående opplæring*, RVO). Its members were recruited from within the profession. They oversaw the administration and pedagogical development of their specific fields of expertise and were in close contact with upper-secondary teachers and schools (L.E. Larsen, 2015a). While the council's mandate was gradually weakened from the late 1970s, debate and commitment within the local teacher councils seem to have increased, reaching a peak in the 1970s and 1980s. NL experienced a steady increase in pedagogical and didactic initiative and enthusiasm among its members, largely channelled through the various school-subject associations. By the 1980s, however, the organisation increasingly mirrored the structure of Reform 74 with a steady influx of new member groups, especially from lower-secondary school, bringing a stronger focus on salary and work conditions and the gradual dwindling of pedagogical and didactic efforts (Grove and Michelsen, 2005, pp. 250–251).

The end of the decade: kindred countries, contrasting outcomes

By the end of the 1970s, Norway had integrated its gymnasium into a comprehensive upper-secondary school, while Denmark largely kept to its tradition. In Denmark, attempts to gather political support in parliament for comprehensive reform had failed and coincided with a general turn of the political tide towards the right. Opposition also came from the well-organised profession, with its autonomous but cooperative units. The gymnasium and its teachers managed to maintain their position in the school hierarchy, and secured the support of primary teachers by accommodating the upper-secondary track which provided the latter with the credentials for teacher training: the higher preparatory exam.

By contrast, the introduction of an increasingly comprehensive system of schooling in Norway had marginalised upper-secondary teachers, who lost most of their influence over lower-secondary school to primary teachers. They retained influence in upper-secondary school, but gradually lost their traditional autonomy as education experts (Skarpenes, 2007; Slagstad, 2000, pp. 56–57). Shifting parliamentary constellations had little impact on the reform process. Some central features of the reform were contested from within the profession, while student-centred pedagogical ideals were welcomed. At the turn of the decade, the NL had been partly transformed from a professional organisation to a union, propelled by the influx of new members.

The 1980s and 1990s: governance, restoration, and managerialism

By the turn of the 1980s, a conservative wind was sweeping Western democracies, notably Britain and the United States. Even in Norway and Denmark, educational policies were shaped by a reaction against the radical educational ideology and progressive pedagogy of the 1970s, the awareness of an emerging global knowledge

society, and the influence of market philosophy (Haue, 2009). Managerialism became the preferred tool of effective governance, reflecting a fundamental distrust of professions and deliberative styles of governing. The affiliation between state and profession again came under scrutiny.

Two charismatic politicians were at the helm of the new reforms: Bertel Haarder in Denmark and Gudmund Hernes in Norway. In the 1970s, both had sharply criticised what they saw as symbiotic relations between the state and the professions. As a member of the Danish Parliament since 1975, Haarder had targeted the influence of teacher organisations in educational policymaking. Hernes, a professor of sociology and leader of the 'power investigation', a large-scale study of the distribution and operation of power in Norway, had directed a more general criticism at the 'segmented state' as the reverse side of the Nordic, corporative method of governing. The government had lost political control as powers within each of its 'segments' had become usurped by vested interests, such as organised pressure groups and professions. Both also held pedagogues in low esteem, seeing them as producers of ideology rather than knowledge-seeking scholars. As ministers of education since 1982 (Haarder) and 1990 (Hernes), they set out to regain political control by cutting the influence of the teaching profession down to size. When planning major reforms of the national educational system, both bypassed the traditional sequence of negotiations and instead handpicked a small group of people to design the structure and content of reform (Telhaug and Tønnessen, 1992; Thue, 2017, pp. 107–112).

However, this selection of a few trusted people reflected the different institutional links between the profession and the state as well as the diverging orientations of the reforms in the two countries. When starting the reform process in 1982, Haarder surrounded himself with a confidential committee of six members, five of them upper-secondary teachers, to circumvent the process in the directorate and take full charge of the school reform. GL, the teacher organisation, was taken by surprise by Haarder's dismissal of the traditional corporatist system and his direct collaboration with the school-subject associations. However, while critical of certain elements, the profession eventually became involved to some extent in the reform process. Haarder succeeded in limiting the GL's influence, but he also sought support for his reform within the profession and its school-subject associations (Haue, Nørr and Skovgaard-Petersen, 1998, pp. 345–349).

Hernes, on the other hand, did not seek support from within the profession, but surrounded himself with a small group of esteemed scholars, with no direct contact with the profession or upper-secondary schooling. His handpicked advisors instead had backgrounds and networks in universities and colleges (Skarpenes, 2007). The unusually hasty pace of reform outplayed the tradition of deliberation and consultation in curriculum reform. Curriculum committees were given strictly limited mandates, leaving little scope for disagreement, and the tradition of curriculum hearings was *de facto* terminated (L.E. Larsen, 2015a; Sølvsberg, 2004). It was not so much the general ideas behind the reform that infuriated the profession, but rather this cunning way of organising the reform process, the dismantling of professional autonomy, and Hernes' headstrong attitude.

The resulting 1994 reform of the Norwegian upper-secondary school (Reform 94) continued the comprehensive upper-secondary school, bringing in a

strengthened academic component in vocational studies, and a set of common subjects. Reform 94 freed students of the constraints of certain study groups and components, and created a more flexible and coherent upper-secondary school. In Denmark, the study-programme model was continued but the defined branches were abolished, leaving the students to choose more freely among subjects. The gymnasium's character as a general education that prepared students for academic studies continued, with ancient history and culture (*oldtidskundskab*) a mandatory part of the curriculum.

In Norway, managerialism on the school level extended the headmaster's authority at the expense of the teaching staff. The once-prestigious teacher councils were abolished on the account that the interests of the profession were guaranteed through the regulations between the state and the unions. The new administrative order allowed schools to organise pedagogical forums, associations, or councils for the teaching staff, but the legislation granted no formal position to such groups or initiatives.

Denmark saw a parallel trend of managerialism, resulting in the introduction of school boards and closure of the teacher councils. The GL and its upper-secondary teachers were concerned that pedagogical competence would be disregarded in the new governing model. However, contrary to Norway, the reform required pedagogical councils at every school with an advisory function vis-à-vis the headmaster and school board, similar to the teacher councils in Norway in 1976–1994 (Haue, Nørr and Skovgaard-Petersen, 1998). Also, unlike in Norway, the connection between national administration and the schools was preserved, with consultants recruited for school subjects from within the profession and working part-time in the ministry alongside their ordinary teaching duties (Haue, Nørr and Skovgaard-Petersen, 1998, p. 360).

Explaining national differences: politics, social structure, and contingency

The post-war era saw a sharp rise in the demand for longer and more comprehensive education for a greater part of the population. A reorganisation and expansion of secondary education was viewed as a critical measure to meet the demands of the future. By the early 1960s, the position of the gymnasium in Norway and Denmark was largely similar, but only a decade later it would look fundamentally different. These differences would prove persistent. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the gymnasiums of Denmark maintained their traditional profile. Upper-secondary teachers remained scholarly experts within their fields of specialisation, cooperating with the state in shaping the content and structure of the gymnasium and enjoying some self-governance through collegial forums at the school level.

In Norway, a unified upper-secondary school replaced the gymnasium in 1974, which led to a change in its teacher culture. Upper-secondary teachers gradually lost their greater degree of influence within their schools, and increasingly converged towards a unified teacher culture dominated by primary- and lower-secondary teachers. More than their Danish colleagues, they saw their close

affiliation with the state, their status as expert advisers, and their collegial influence at the school level dwindle, particularly after 1994.

What led to such different outcomes for national professions that had looked so similar only four decades earlier? We argue that the key determinants of these diverging developments were the strength and impact of social-democratic reform drives, the chronology of primary- and secondary-school reforms, and the socio-cultural preconditions of elitist educational traditions.

The social-democratic parties, while holding strong positions in all of Scandinavia, were not equally hegemonic throughout the region. The Danish Social Democrats were more dependent on compromise and coalition-building than their Swedish and Norwegian counterparts, which gave more scope for liberal and conservative influences on educational policies. However, ideological hegemony may also reveal itself in a high degree of consensus across party lines. In Norway, the social-democratic project of comprehensive nine-year schooling for all was actually completed by a centre-right government, after 1965. The upper-secondary-school reform of 1974 that followed was also, to some extent, a joint political venture. The general drift of the reforms was embraced by politicians from left to right, and laid the foundations for the *politics versus profession* discourse that would become more prevalent towards the turn of the millennium.

The diverging developments in Norway and Denmark were also partly an effect of the different chronological sequence of educational reforms. The Danish reforms of 1958 consolidated both primary and secondary schools concurrently, and defined a distinctive role for the gymnasium. In Norway, the long postponement of upper-secondary-school reform made the gymnasiums path-dependent on the prior introduction of comprehensive lower-secondary schooling. The democratisation and modernisation of primary education tended to set the agenda for a reform of the entire school system from the bottom up, at the expense of the traditions and distinctiveness of university-preparatory gymnasiums; this was, after all, more or less the explicit aim of the policy effort. Hence, the Norwegian upper-secondary teaching profession was continuously arriving too late to meetings with closed agendas.

The characteristics and social status of the secondary-school teaching profession in society can also help explain the diverging developments. In 1960, Danish upper-secondary teachers held prestigious positions in society, more so than their Norwegian colleagues. A smaller proportion of student age cohorts enrolled in gymnasiums, and largely came from an elite circuit at the top of society. The educated upper-middle classes seem to have exerted a firmer cultural hegemony in Denmark than in Norway, and Danish gymnasium teachers were less identified with counter-cultural currents, at least before 1968.

Denmark still maintains a more differentiated system of upper-secondary schools than Norway, with a stricter separation between vocational and general education, as well as a continued distinction between the time-honoured 'general student exam' and newer tracks that give access to academic studies: the 'higher preparatory', 'higher commercial', and 'higher technical' exams. On the other hand, the more socially exclusive character of the Danish gymnasium has dwindled.⁶

In Denmark, the close affiliation between the profession and the state continued through the period of reinforced political control in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The Danish Ministry of Education has upheld its tradition of employing school-subject consultants recruited from the profession. At the school level, legislation grants the profession a role in the management of gymnasiums, with pedagogical councils maintaining the profession's advisory role vis-à-vis the headmaster and the board. In Norway, by contrast, the affiliation between the profession and the state was thoroughly altered from the 1990s. Here, the Ministry of Education terminated the expert councils and social scientists, lawyers, and economists gradually replaced bureaucrats recruited from the teaching profession (Helsvig, 2017, pp. 181–187, 234–240; Thue, 2019). Since 2004, a new Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has become the authoritative centre of the national administration of education (Røvik, Eilertsen and Lund, 2014, p. 88). The teaching profession has thus lost its foothold on the upper tier of school administration.

Unlike their Danish counterparts, Norwegian teacher organisations have undergone profound changes during the past three decades, resulting in their transformation and fusion into a more union-like organisation. In 2001, the Norwegian teachers' union, *Utdanningsforbundet*, was founded, and brought together all teacher groups in a single organisation (Grove and Michelsen, 2005). It has focused its effort on the concept of *teacher professionalism*, signifying the construction of a unified teacher profession with an increased emphasis on common professional conduct and ethics at the expense of subject content and didactics (Mausethagen et al., 2018). At the school level, there are no formalised, autonomous professional communities similar to the pedagogical councils in Denmark. Nor are there any signs that teacher unions have continued the pedagogical and didactic discussions that were once the hallmark of the teacher councils (Bie-Drivdal, 2018).

The Danish educationalist Peter Henrik Raae has argued that a major reason why the Danish gymnasium was allowed to continue in only slightly modified form after the 1960s, unlike their Norwegian and Swedish counterparts which were integrated into a comprehensive scheme of modern mass education, was the existence of a liberal Danish educational tradition crystallising in the schools' right to self-organisation. This liberal educational ideology, articulated particularly in the Grundtvigian free schools and folk high schools, had been a core element of Danish cultural nation-building since the nineteenth century (Raae, 2012). This observation points towards a rather paradoxical conclusion: the Grundtvigian tradition, which had always defined itself in polar opposition to the academic gymnasium and its teachers, may indeed have been an important factor in its survival into the new era of mass education.

Notes

- 1 We will use the terms gymnasium and gymnasium teachers in this chapter to emphasise the kinship of the Nordic upper-secondary-school tradition to continental European, notably German, models. In Norway, an academically educated upper-secondary-school teacher is called *lektor*, and in Denmark, *gymnasieleærer*.
- 2 This label signifies the professional organisations' subcommittees for the different school subjects, concerned with pedagogical and didactic debate. These existed in parallel to the professional organisations.
- 3 A detailed study of the recruitment and further educational career of students at the gymnasium of Hjørring, a small town in Vendsyssel, the northernmost county of Jutland,

has shown that these students hardly had a more common social background than Danish students on average, apart from a somewhat higher share of farmers' children. Hjørring's local academic and business elites dominated the gymnasium, and students from the surrounding agricultural districts felt that they crossed a marked sociocultural barrier when they attended the small-town gymnasium (Priemé, 1997).

- 4 The so-called Gjelsvik committee did include a number of representatives of the upper-secondary teaching profession, however, as well as one student representative.
- 5 *Læseplansudvalg for gymnasiet*, 'Council for the gymnasium curriculum', presented a model for a new gymnasium, *grengymnas*, or branch gymnasiums. Ten of the twenty members of the commission came from the profession, either as headmasters or upper-secondary teachers.
- 6 In 2014, 36% of Danish youth attended a general gymnasium, marginally less than the share of Norwegians attending *studiespesialisering* a few years earlier (39% in 2008) (cf. Danske gymnasier, 2015, p. 4; Salvanes et al., 2015, p. 20).

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