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Historical Trajectories of the Contract-School Model in Norway

Kirsten Sivesind, University of Oslo

Kirsten-sivesind@iped.uio.no

By situating the analysis in cultural studies of education history, this chapter explores how school authorities in Norway have promoted a school system that reflects historical reform trajectories influenced by both national and international reform ideas. Most of the school reforms in Norway have built on the contract-school model, which began as a Lutheran project in Northern and Central Europe during the early 18th century. This chapter presents this model, focusing on how it developed in Scandinavia and Norway and how complementary ideas and power-relations emerged and contested the old legacy of this model during the 19th and 20th century.

Introduction

Evidence-informed policy has recently emerged as a global trend driving change in educational curricula and assessment systems. Among the key narratives currently attracting considerable attention in reform-making processes are 21st-century skills, which emphasise students' learning and well-being in a knowledge-based society. Moreover, knowledge within and across scientific disciplines have been declared necessary for each student within a lifelong perspective and for the future of the society. A core question is whether this emphasis on competence as an emerging theme transforms national school reforms by contesting older trajectories and reform models dating back to the origin of public schooling.

This chapter uses an analytical narrative approach, where I examine the ways key reformists and experts have developed new ideas and proposed historical trajectories, decisive for curriculum reform within and across national contexts. I review relevant documents, academic literature and draw on a series of interviews I have conducted with Norwegian reform makers about the formation of a particular governance model; the so called contract-school model. By drawing on Popkewitz's (2013), I apply two reasoning styles: a

retrospective approach that searches for social and cultural patterns in the past and a prospective approach that historicises the present by applying social and cultural theories to interpret current reform initiatives. In the first case, Tröhler’s (2014) recognition of the Protestant denominations that developed into Lutheran-pietistic reasoning in the early 18th century serves as a backdrop for understanding the cultural foundation of curriculum reforms. In the second case, I refer to research studies and documents on national reform efforts in Norway, and argue that pietism as an ideological movement has interplayed with alternative sources of legitimization, such a philanthropy that stimulated to intellectual developments and a renewed pedagogy during the early 19th century. Moreover, current reform trajectories are influenced by global and international competence policies that contest the contract school model by emphasising scientific reasoning as the raison d'être for pursuing reform within the 21st century. The next three sections present how the interplay of various ideas and movements evolved during three centuries.

Pietistic rationales and the contract-school movement (1736-1813)

Ideas of how to strengthen the younger generation’s literacy are not new within the Norwegian reform context, as they have been featured in reform policies for centuries. The first attempt to provide public schooling in Norway was in the early 18th century due to Dane-Norwegian King Christian the 6th’s desire to establish a contract school and thus increase literacy and spread Lutheran-protestant ideas. This kind of school drew on Western reform ideas from ancient Greece and Rome, where a new alphabet was developed in the 8th century BCE (Thomas, 2009, p. 346), about one thousand years after reading and writing were taught in national and local schools during the Shang Dynasty in China (Wang, Tsai, & Wang, 2009, p. 394).

In Northern and Central Europe, literacy, as a core focus of teaching and learning, was strengthened through Lutheran reform efforts, including the establishment of public schooling that prepared adherents for Christian confirmation in the early 18th century CE. In this region of Europe, the teaching of literacy skills is associated with the contract school and the Lutheran ways of practicing public schooling in homes and churches in the early 18th century. The Lutheran Reformation challenged the Pope’s power as the man closest to God and the person of highest rank who represented the will of God. Martin Luther, who is the forefather and the main reformist in this movement, contested both the position of the Pope and the language of the church. He suggested replacing Latin with the mother tongue in church and in

schools, which, at the turn of 16th century, were part of the same establishment. Monasteries and cathedral schools, later called Latin-schools, provided education for work in the Church and allowed entrance into universities. Luther's idea was that the state should replace the church role in areas of schooling (Myhre, 1976: 133-134). Although Luther did not argue for a secular curriculum, he was aware of two horizons for the definition of schooling: learning the word of God and acknowledging the world itself (Luther, 1529/2007). This distinction led to a new model called the *contract-school* model, which integrated the mother tongue into the curriculum (Hopmann, 2000).

The main idea of this chapter is to characterize how this contract model was made into a state-organized system based on pietistic rationales, successively established and reformed throughout the 19th century in Norway. After the mid-19th century, schooling took place primarily in small schoolhouses. The core ideas that inspired this project were political actions and cultural dispositions that benefited individuals by developing inner harmony for the salvation of their souls (Tröhler, 2014). Religious aims were of utmost concern to school reformers. King Christian the 6th, was a Christian, who have learned about pietism from his teachers, demanded the peasants and the church to arrange education based on pietistic rationales in the rural areas of Norway, which was declared by law. He sought to create a moral and religious population by unifying separate regions and interests (Tveit, 1991, p. 22).

Combining state interests and religious motives was however not of Danish-Norwegian origin. A state-pietistic rationale for reform had already succeeded in Prussia, a state within the German empire. The pietistic movement was initiated and supported by theologians, who challenged the Orthodox priesthood of the Lutheran church. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), who claimed to be the 'second reformer' of the state Lutheran church, and his friend and follower Hermann Franke (1663–1727) were forerunners to the pietistic movement (Hermansen, 2003). Under the motto 'pray, work, and passion', people sought spiritual renewal. Private meetings, so-called *conventicles*, gathered people in their homes for worship and prayer. The devotion of the heart rather than the intellect and living one's life in wholeness, purity, and piety according to God's will were keystones of their practicing theology, which developed further within the Lutheran church. An orientation to both practical and religious experiences was the core of this movement. Rasmussen (2004, p. 33) characterises this rationale as 'enlightened pietism,' as the intellectual orientation should be replaced by an interest in experience and enlightenment.

Although the movement was not popular among Orthodox Lutherans, it became a supporting element in the government of the state and the regulation of public schooling in

both Prussia and Denmark-Norway. The combination of state and religious concerns can be explained by the success of reform activity and school development in Halle. First, the reform university in Halle became one of the most prestigious and influential universities at the turn of the 18th century. In cooperation with King Friedrich Wilhelm the 1st of Prussia and private sponsors, Franke also organised schooling for poor children, which, over several decades, became organised into an establishment of many buildings and departments called the 'school-cum-orphanage complex' (*Armenschule, Paedagogium, and Anstalten*) (Payne, 1998). The system of schooling that subsequently arose became widely recognised for its hard-working students and exemplary teaching. It offered poor children the opportunity to attend school with the help of funding to pay for further education at the university. The success of this system, however disciplined, ascetic and autocratic, explains why pietistic schooling served as a model within the government regime of the time.

The schooling enterprise of Franke and the pietistic movement legitimised interest in 'real' things within the boundary of schooling. In contrast to Spener who preferred to work for a loosely coupled network of *conventicles*, Franke implemented a more militancy school system that aimed at transforming both the church and the social order of the society (Gawthrop, 10993, p. 150). Students of Halle learned to be loyal to authorities and disciplined about their life and work based on an absolutism of how to comply with the law and thereby God. Their aspirations of doing practical work rather than merely contemplating their inner beliefs and reflections closely matched the ideals of state governance and radical ideas of reordering the world.

The educational embodiment of this rationale was the *Realschule*, based on *Realien*, which means to be engaged in 'real things' or science. As Brubacher (1966, p. 113) confirms, pietistic schooling inspired new interest in a realistic orientation to schooling, which later developed into a scientific curriculum movement in Germany in subsequent decades. However, pietistic scholars did not ascribe to an empiricist orientation to the *Realien*, which was important to Christian Freiherr von Wolff (1679-1754), who later became a leading intellectual in Halle. His principles were incorporated into a curriculum system at universities in Prussia and Denmark at the turn of the 18th century and focused on an empiricist view of knowledge where principles were deduced through mathematical, logical reasoning, based on the values of science and God (Clausen, 1896; Koch, 2003).

After studying in Halle, many students were employed in offices and services, such as the military, the church, and schools. More importantly, primary schooling in Prussia was based on the model of the *Anstalten* in Halle after the *Decree of 1717*, which made public

schooling mandatory at the primary level for all children living within the vicinity of a school. It was based on “a general call to grace” and according to Gawthrop (1993, p.152) rejecting any form of predestination. A school for all would spread the word of God and save the souls from corruption so far *the teaching estate* (Lehrstand) enabled the mediation of God’s word. This approach to curriculum was exemplary within its contemporary time and context. And therefore, this architecture that implied particular form of governance, also became the model for the Dane-Norwegian King, which, through the *School Ordinance of 1739* and *Decree of 1741*, made pietistic schooling mandatory in rural areas across Denmark and Norway.

Despite international influences, early attempts to regulate a public school system in Denmark-Norway are considered successful, particularly within a comparative perspective. As summarised by Val de Rust (1989, p. 31), because of its home-schooling tradition, Sweden adopted its first regulation for public schooling in 1842, about one hundred years later than Norway. In Great Britain, elementary schooling became compulsory in 1880. Even France, known for egalitarian rationales of education, formalised public schooling as late as 1791 and adopted further regulations in 1882. Based on this background, the *School Ordinance of 1739,* designed to regulate urban schooling in Norway, was, from a European perspective, a brave and early attempt to create a local public school system for people in disparate districts.

However, organising public schooling within a sparsely populated and vast country was not a straightforward task, especially given the historical and demographic conditions of Norway (Gundem, 1993b). Civil servants, independent farmers, and peasants were powerful groups across Norway, and they did not necessarily obey new laws without first demanding their rights. According to Tveit (1991), the introduction of an autocracy in 1660 gave all formal power to the King, but in reality, it created a powerful bureaucracy of civil servants. Norwegian farmers and peasants had become powerful groups due to the taxes they paid to the Norwegian state as well. By not paying the taxes, they could, in principle, play a sanctioning role according to new directives. Moreover, they were as Jon Lauglo (1982) puts it, promoted through free-holding farming, ‘freeing farmers from diffuse dependence on upper-class landlords. A mismatch between expectations of the state and the rural population can be explained by long distances between the lawmakers and the rural population. Moreover, the authors of the School Ordinance from Denmark, who originally formulated the curriculum instruction, were not informed about the local conditions for organizing schooling in the districts of Norway. They imagined a well-organised school similar to a model that developed in *Slesvig and Holstein*, very different from what could be accomplished within outlying districts in Denmark-Norway (Tveit, 1991).

The solution was to develop different decrees (*Plakat*) adjusted to regional circumstances (Decree, 1741). These decrees, one each for Denmark and Norway, would be followed up with local school plans or foundation documents (*Fundas*) within the districts. This system of decrees and local school plans represents the first systematic attempt to create formal curriculum documents across Norway; however, it cannot be considered a national system, which is an invention of the late 19th century (Engelsen, 2003; Gundem, 1993a, 1993b). The main change resulting from the new *Decree of 1741* was to place responsibility for public schooling on the districts. According to this *Decree of 1741,* taxes should be paid, but there were no fixed or general taxes imposed, which meant that the local districts decided how to solve funding problems and decide how much money they would spend on establishing and maintaining primary schools. Schools could be built in the local district (*fastskoler*) and used primarily for education, or it could take place in homes or elsewhere (*omgangsskoler*) and the location used temporarily for teaching and prayer. Certainly, ambulatory schools were much cheaper alternative and more practical for peasants in the districts. In practice, it was similar to what was institutionalized as home-schooling in Sweden (Tveit, 1991).

The physical equipment varied depending on what the peasants could afford with the donations and offerings (*almisse*) received. All inhabitants with a regular income should, in principle, pay for the establishment of primary schooling (Decree, 1741). Hence, home-schooling became a model for many districts, which meant that Norway and Sweden ended up with a similar model of schooling despite differences in centralized regulations. Administratively, the local school commission was in charge of the organisation of schooling, as well as its content. This commission should, according to the decree, consist of the four most knowledgeable men in the parish besides the vassal (*lensmann*), his curates (*kapellaner*), and the parsons (*sogneprest*). This commission was charged with formulating the local school plan (*fundas*) to regulate both the content and organisation of schooling within the parish. Many districts in both Southern and Eastern Norway completed this task in a relatively short time. Two-thirds of the districts in Eastern Norway drafted their school plans (*fundas*) within a year as they were instructed to do so by the state. Within three years, almost 95% of the districts had organised their own school commission (Tveit, 1991: 53). Half of the rural population in Southern Norway was offered public schooling by 1744, and it increased to 89% in 1750 (Tveit, 2004). In Northern Norway, Sami schools were introduced a decade earlier than those for non-Sami students.

In the selection of content, the main goal was that students would learn to read the Bible and understand the Lutheran Catechism. This aim prolonged a local tradition established by the church, which was formalised with the *Ordinance of 1739*. Additionally, parents could decide whether a teacher would teach their children writing and arithmetic, and both of these skills were considered part of the secular aims of schooling. The skill-set of the 'three R's' included a fourth: religion, reading, writing and 'rithmetic' (arithmetic). Although religion and reading were mandatory, writing and arithmetic were left to the parents' discretion and their ability to pay for the educational material (B. H. Johnsen, 2002; Markussen, 1990). However, most children were sent to school to learn what was considered necessary: learning to read and preparing for Christian Confirmation. This rite was mandatory for everyone, as proclaimed by the *Law of 1736;* Confirmation not only marked a youth's membership in the Lutheran Church and was a statement of faith, it was also considered important for civic reasons (Ordinance, 1736). Christian confirmation provided access to civil services, including getting married, joining the military, getting a proper job, and acquiring land and other property. The tradition and formalisation of Confirmation explain the high number of people who participated, and it remained a driving force in public schooling for the next 100 years (Tveit, 1991).

An interesting dimension of the reform trajectory that developed during this century is the distribution of responsibilities between the church and the school as two different systems. According to conceptual differentiations made according to the law, teaching and schooling were defined on their own terms after 1739. The awareness of what sets teaching and schooling apart from other interests is exemplified by the texts. Principles of teaching were incorporated into drafts of the *Decree of the Confirmation* as early as 1736. Although this decree did not reflect a comprehensive theory of teaching, it addressed how the Church should train young people for Confirmation and thereby reflected a conceptual distinction between teaching and 'Confirmation, examination, and assessment' (*prøvelse*). In 1736, both activities were organised during Sunday church services (Ordinance, 1736). However, after the school ordinance of 1739, the formal role of the Church was to supervise the education of youngsters, and teaching became a matter of schooling (Instruction, 1739; Ordinance, 1739). The order of *Ordinance and Instruction* maintained that Christian Confirmation and the Catechesis were the missions of the priest, and the clerk should teach the text of the Catechis.

When the confirmation was organised in terms of a catechesis during Sunday services, the priest asked the youngsters to recall what was written in the Lutheran Catechism; the process was ritually organised and included a series of questions and answers that had been

reformulated and edited by Dr Erik Pontoppidan (Pontoppidan, 1737/1987). This text, referred to as *Sannhet til Gudfryktighet: Forklaring over Dr M. Luther's Lille Katekisme* [From Truth to the Fear of God: Explanation of Dr M. Luther's Small Catechism] was a shortened version of Spener's text, further confirming the impact of the pietistic movement since Spener, as mentioned, was one of its forefathers (Jensen, 2007a). The Norwegian Instruction of 1739, based on an *Aristotelian-Thomistic* view that implied to see the word of God from the perspective of the learner. Creating understanding was therefore as important as reproducing knowledge, which also meant that a particular sequence of teaching should consider the student's capability to develop understanding:

> He (the teacher) shall with all his diligence, teach the children within the Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, so as they first, rightly understand the meaning of each part and thereafter teach them to recall word by word; and subsequently he ought to teach them the common explana*tion to the Cat*echism. Whereas he is not going train them to recall by memory, to be bound to the words, but time and again change the questions directed to them, since it is better that they can put in plain words (gjøre Forreede) for the Meaning, than just read the words, without a sense of what they mean (utden at forstaae dem). (Instruction, 1739: Section 2)

The Catechesis of the Church followed a similar scheme of practices but was based on the Church's approval of what was to be learned. During services, students were placed in a group led by a teacher who was most often the clerk. When the bishop visited the church, students were divided into classes based on the level they had achieved. Only students who *understood* the main parts would be asked to recall the Catechisms from memory; if they were well prepared, they would also be asked to explain the answers. Despite all historical accounts confirming the opposite, the priest should have, according to the law, ensured that students were not embarrassed or overwhelmed during the rehearsal process (Rasmussen, 2004). Young children were required to recall the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and, in some cases, the Sacraments of the Alter from memory; in principle, however, these texts were expected to have been taught at home.

A second point to be made is that Luther viewed schooling through the lens of man's immortal destiny, but he also argued for secular aims concerning both practical knowledge and moral issues. Thus, religious and secular aims supported the idea of organising schooling for *all*, which, during the early 18th century, became a leading idea in the state-pietistic movement. However, viewing nature as having value in itself was not shaped by Lutheran *pedagogy*. This idea developed from naturalistic philosophy in the early 17th century and was

incorporated into a philosophy of education by Johan Amos Comenius (1592–1670). This philosophy was then mediated by pietistic reformers, including Spener and Franke. The naturalistic approach to understanding the world stressed the value of education in accordance with nature and teaching based on the principle of 'learning through the senses' (Comenius, 1658, p. 115). Pietists who followed Comenius' strand of thought were against any rationalisation of religion and instead sought validation of their inner faith through an external educational expression of learning and new sensory experiences. They argued against the view that the structure of the content itself defines what is significant to learn. Using the senses according to experiences of the world was, therefore, an invention of Comenius and at the core of *pietism*.

Democratisation processes and the academic elite of civil servants (1814–1890)

During the 19th century, the pietistic efforts to develop education across the nation evolved into a school system that was governed by state administrative bodies. The rise of a central public bureaucracy occurred when Norway became a centralised state in 1814, when Denmark relinquished the Province of Norway to Sweden (Christensen, 2005, pp. 721-722). In other countries, such as England, national assemblies were organised into different chambers and divided according to class and status. In Norway however, there were few feudal elites who expected to be honoured with powerful positions (Elster, 1988, p. 11). The assembly in Norway, *the Storting*, consisted therefore of an elected group, who represented different geographical regions and institutions: the peasants, the church and the military. Due to long geographical distances, people from the Northern part of Norway was however, not represented.

The Danish prince Christian Frederik (1786-1848) formulated a public letter that requested a national election and he asked the parishes to appoint two electives who then organized elections within the parishes. These elections are regarded as reflecting one of the most democratic systems in Europe at this point in history, and it resulted in a governance form, representing a pre-party state that dominated until 1884 when the national assembly gained authority over executive politics. After 1884, the parliament *the Storting* had formally the ruling power over the ministerial government (Christensen, 2003), that is, manifested parliamentarism that developed into the particular model of governance that characterized Norwegian politics and governance throughout the 20th century.

Nonetheless, in the 19th century, the school reforms and renewals were not demanded by any nobility. Neither the Danish prince Christian Frederik, who was appointed as he Norwegian King in 1814 for five months, nor the Swedish King, Kong Carl 13th and his adopted French son, Prince Carl Johan[i], who had served as a Marshal of France during the Napoleon wars, demanded for any school reform. Rather, the enthusiasts for reforms were a group of intellectuals who strived for independence and the establishment of national institutions. They were all devoted to ideas of national self-awareness, defended the rights and interests of the rural population, and were acquainted with traditions and knowledge from abroad since many were educated in Denmark. This *intellectual drive* is equal to the *Enlightenment* movement in Prussia, although the rationales of schooling and administration were respectively different. Jacob Nicolai Wilse (1736-1801) was among the first *Enlightenment* professors who worked for the renewal of the school system. He was greatly inspired by Comenius' *Orbus Pictu*s, which he read in school (Høverstad, 1918, p. 37). At the same time, the farmers can be considered an ultra-conservative force in religious and social matters and were not agents of reforms, as they challenged their way of life. According to Sirevåg (1986), the early rise of a public school system in Denmark-Norway and the establishment of Latin schools in the 16th century created a climate for modernisation, which explains why Norwegians were at the forefront of modernisation in Europe.

Niels Treschow (1751-1833) serves as an illustrative example of how intellectuals became involved in administrative positions during the early 19th century. He advocated rationales from abroad while defending a national orientation to schooling and reform that guaranteed the private rights of peasants. Treschow had participated in the Augustenborg reform programme at the Christiania Cathedral School, where he was a principal from 1789–1803; thus, he was experienced and well-acquainted with education and curriculum development. Although he did not view comprehensive schooling reform as his primary objective, a Dane-Norwegian model of reform became a *Leitbild*, a guiding composition of principles for the renewal of general schooling that influenced the law-making process during the early 19th century. A strand of thought, philanthropy, was formally institutionalised through a process developed by the establishment of a School Commission between 1875 and 1905. It was named: Instructional Committee: the Direction for Learned Schools, and the University (*Komité for Opplysningsfaget*), where Trehschow participated. Some members of this commission had opposing viewpoints, particularly about questions concerning the *Learned Schools* and curriculum. Some individuals on the commission defended a neo-

humanistic and classical view, along with Prussian ideas, while Treschow essentially defended a philanthropic approach.

In 1815, the Direction for Learned Schools was integrated into the Ministry, which became a Government-College (*Regerings-Collegium*) with full responsibility for school matters, and Treschow became the first minister (Riksarkivet, 2007c). According to this new body, the minister was only in a position to give advice to the national assembly, as the Swedish King could favour suggestions given by the parliament. When Treschow commented on the new law proposition published in 1816, he only gave advice on how to organize reforms for elementary schooling within rural districts. Law proposals were prepared by committees, approved by the national assembly, and thereafter supported by the King. In cases where different committees prepared the same reforms, some representatives met and prepared a joint draft, which was eventually discussed by the national assembly (Sirevåg, 1986: 136). A hierarchy of committees constituted the system for creating reforms during the 19th century. When giving advice about new law revisions prepared in 1816, Treschow clearly expressed his viewpoints in favour of pietistic rationales that considered private commitments significant to the organisation of schooling. The idea that 'parents should have the prime mandate to take care of children's upbringing and education' (The Law-committee, 1814-1830: § 1) seems to have been decisive in the new law proposition. In the amendment process, another distinction between two types of obligations was made: public schooling established by parishes and the education of children in general (*skoleplikt vs. opplæringsplikt*) (Sirevåg, 1986, p. 142). The law committee also decided that methods of instruction should be included in new instructions for teachers and developed by each parish (The Law-committee, 1814-1830: §24).

Preparations for the law revision went on for years; it was developed by committees, discussed within the national assembly, and finally approved by the Swedish King. The School Act of 1827, which finally became decisive for rural schooling at the primary level, shows the results of committee work and a course of decision-making that involved different parties (Lov, 1827). The law mandated a new system to go along with an established tradition of local curriculum planning and the pietistic reform ideals from 1739–1742. However, certain points were emphasised and clarified (§ 14). Subjects were divided into (a) reading, combined with reasoning exercises (*forstandsøvelser*), (b) religion and bible history to accommodate instructional texts, (c) singing from the hymn book, and (d) writing and arithmetic. Compared to the School Ordinance of 1739, there was a greater emphasis on writing and arithmetic (Jensen, 2007b). The reasoning exercises referred to looking up

keywords in the textbook, which were in an appendix containing up to 800 words (Jensen, 2007b).These changes can be looked upon as a modernization of the reform trajectory, influenced by philanthropic ideas.

Local parishes were also ordered to provide a local teaching plan and a decree that described the duties of the teachers (§ 26). The bishop had the overall responsibility for making a plan, which should, by law, not hinder the course of teaching; instead, it should ensure that schooling was organised according to the above-mentioned paragraph (§ 14). Moreover, this plan and the instructional plan for teachers had to be approved by the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and the school system. This system of curriculum-making, as well as reading material, such as the ABC for learning the alphabet, and religious texts, provides narratives of a national unification and a formalisation of curriculum-making for general schooling in the early 19th century. Although textbooks were not approved by the ministry before the period of 1889–1908, instructional texts were nonetheless considered exemplars of subject matter, as both parents and teachers used them consistently in the schools (§ 14) (Skjelbred, 2000).

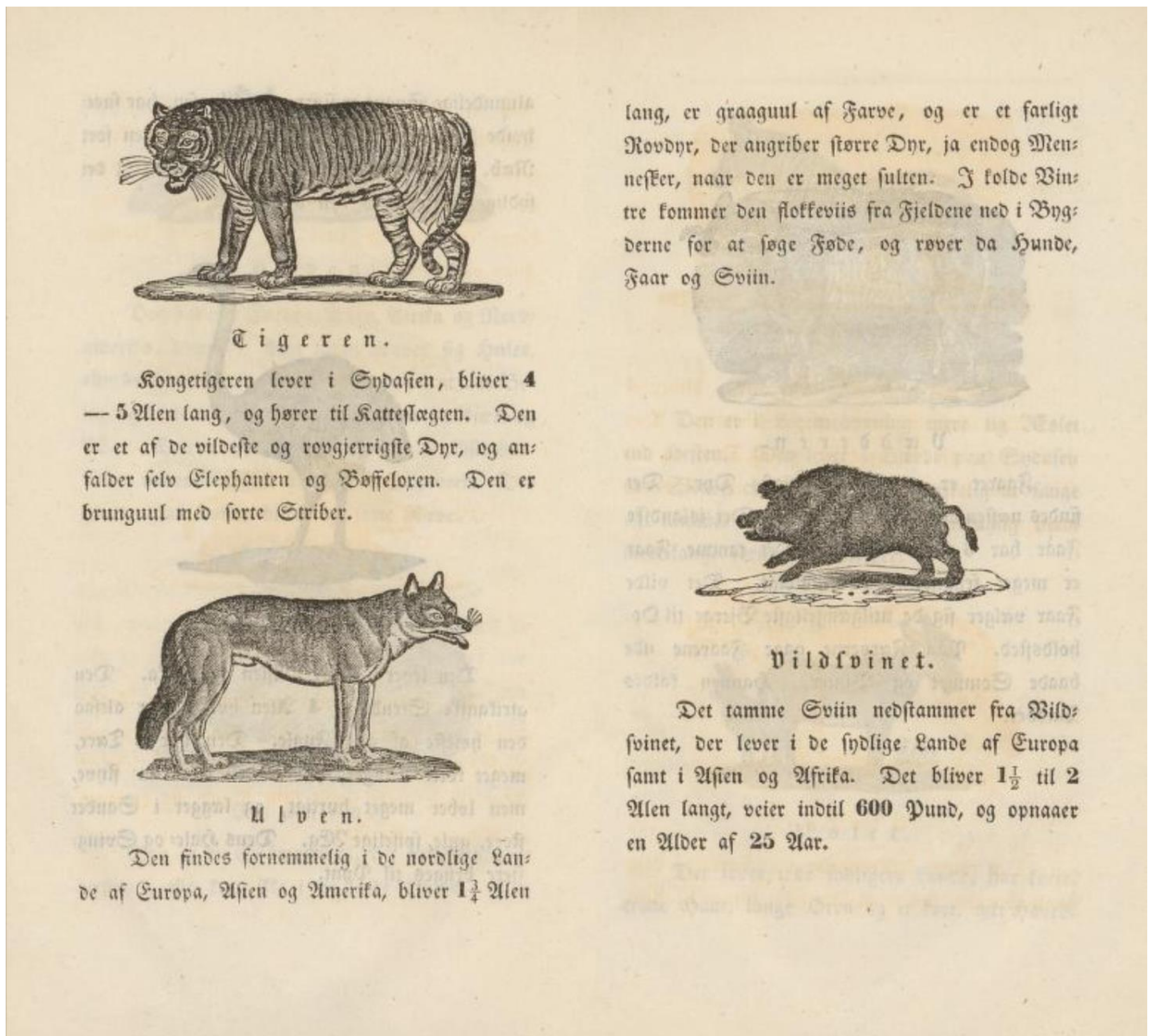
A survey of the teaching material produced between 1779 and 1842 reveals that ideas of what should be taught reflected Enlightenment ideas, as well as advice on teaching children, for example, reading (The oldest Norwegian ABC-books, 2007). Preparation books in religion, also used for exercises in reading, expressed a philantropic rationale of what to teach. For example, the *Book of Grøgaard* covered Bible stories (about 60%). In addition to Christian church history, Islamic faith (*Mahomet*), and Norse mythology (*Odin*), a short introduction to philological questions was included (Grøgaard, 1821, pp. 117-118). In many ways, this book reflected enlightenment in terms of philanthropic ideas as a curriculum rationale, including knowledge about various cultures and life-views. Moreover, it was intended for elementary education. The author also recommended teaching methods that differed somewhat form traditional pietism. For example, Grøgaard states that the teaching of children should start with subject matter that is the easiest and most comprehensible. One (the teacher) should not choose to start teaching pupils with the highest wisdom of the religion. Chilrden should not start by learning anything other than what they can accomplish through reason (*end hvad de kunne tænke noget ved*). In this way, boredom and habits of laziness are avoided (Grøgaard, 1815, p. 2).

This idea is not entirely novel since a pietistic reform also preferred a realistic orientation to content. However, in this period, the use of reason was emphasised to a greater extent and further strengthened by Enlightenment ideas (Brubacher, 1966). Johnsen (2017)

has reviewed literature about Grøgaard's position, not merely as one of the elected representatives in the national assembly in 1814, but as an educator and an enlightenment scholar being a distinguished author of school books at this moment in history. B. E. aJohnsen argues that Grøgaard's widely used schoolbooks: the ABC, published in 1815, and a reader, published in 1816 were highly inspired by Danish rationalism, at first influenced by the Swiss-French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1788) with the work Émile: *Ou de l'Education* from 176nd 2, thereafter by Philanthropy and the work of Basedow through the Danish reformist, Friedrich Eberhard von Rochow (1734 – 1805). Rochow authored a reading book for ordinary people in Denmark, the *Child Friend* (*Børnevennen*) that was published in eleventh editions, and also widespread in Norway. It is important to mention that the Danish reform trajectories at the turn of the 19th century did not contest pietism and Lutheran ideas as such, but aimed at challenging superstition within the population. Thus, reading books became oriented to scientific knowledge about the laws of nature, and towards moral guidelines more than upbringing in Christian faith. Rather than executing corporal punishment as a disciplinary device, philanthropism advocated to tell stories for children for an educational purpose, and as Rochow argued, through moral upraising, the need for punishment would diminish by itself (B. E. Johnsen, 2017, p. 150).

Although Bible stories and the catechism were traditionally the core of what should be learnt at school and what tested through the catechetic of the church, the new textbooks extended the curriculum to cover small poems, fairy tales, and general history and geography. The catechetic method, in the form of a question-answer pattern, was replaced. Most of the books consisted of exercises and showing children how to put letters together to spell words. However, the most interesting characteristic is the content. The ABC-book of Knutzen, for example, showed pictures of animals from all over the world as well as from the Nothern part of Europe (see Figure 1). These pictures were considered objects that should develop children's knowledge and understanding of nature, as well as the characteristics of different species (K. O Knutzen, 1836). In the preface, Knutzen claims that Latin was excluded and that the pictures replaced Danish ones because, according to his viewpoint, they did not give an accurate representation of nature. This textbook expresses a naturalistic approach to content through pictures, tales, and stories, which was legitimised by paragraph 14 of the new law. A similar textbook, published in 1837, also includes knowledge about history and geography. Although educational ideas, as well as the overall governance of the education system, continued along pietistic reform trajectories, this textbook depicts images consistent

with what was typical at this point in history. The catechetic method is not used; instead, the book focuses on ways of teaching children to read and learn certain subject matter.



Tigeren.

Kongetigeren lever i Sydasien, bliver 4 — 5 Alen lang, og hører til Katteslægten. Den er et af de vildeste og rovgjerrigste Dyr, og anfalder selv Elephanten og Bøffeloxen. Den er brunguul med sorte Striber.

Ulven.

Den findes fornemmelig i de nordlige Lande af Europa, Asien og Amerika, bliver $1\frac{3}{4}$ Alen lang, er graaguul af Farve, og er et farligt Rovdyr, der angriber større Dyr, ja endog Mennesker, naar den er meget sulten. I kolde Vintre kommer den flokkeviis fra Fjeldene ned i Bygderne for at søge Føde, og røver da Hunde, Faar og Sviin.

Vildsvinet.

Det tamme Sviin nedstammer fra Vildsvinet, der lever i de sydlige Lande af Europa samt i Asien og Afrika. Det bliver $1\frac{1}{2}$ til 2 Alen langt, veier indtil 600 Pund, og opnaaer en Alder af 25 Aar.

Figure 1. The tiger, the wolf and the wild boar. Page 19-20 in *The newest Picture-ABC* for adolescents (K. O. Knutzen, 1836)

National school authorities formulated an official curriculum in 1834 already (Plan, 1834). This curriculum did not conflict with the above-mentioned rationale, except for the monitorial[ii] method. This method of instruction that involved a group of pupils being taught to instruct younger students, as a form of peer turoring, gained worldwide recognition during the 19th century (Hopmann, 1990, p. 13). However, in Norway, conditions for organising education within the districts, with a sparsely populated country, did not allow for this movement to survive. Rather, the enacted curriculum was more in line with educational

principles introduced during 1739, along with pietistic rationales. Therefore, pietistic reasoning continued as a justification for public schooling in the 19th century, while discussions within the national assembly touched upon the question of how a modern curriculum for Norwegian schooling should be developed for the purpose of establishing a comprehensive education system.

For example, Frederik Moltke Bugge (1806–1853), who served as a member of a national board for reforming secondary schools, argued for reforming schooling into a comprehensive education system. In the first stage of the work of this board, Bugge visited the states and provinces of Germany[iii] and France to study their school systems. He spent one and a half year on this task and wrote a report for the commission that covered 1,144 pages and filled three volumes (Bugge, 1839: I - III). The national school authorities distributed this report to all schools in Norway at no cost, and the same year, Bugge launched a programme for creating a comprehensive education system (Roos, 2019). The resistance to a comprehensive curriculum system was however, considerable due to disagreements within the national assembly, as well as within local communities. Both the upper and middle classes residing in cities were a rather small group compared to the peasantry in the rural districts, and national politics were influenced by those living in regional areas. They represented a '*demokratisch prägendend Kraft*,' [a democratic oriented force], as Werler (2004: 215) characterises this moment in history.

Nonetheless, due to the need for central support at the school district, municipal, and regional levels and the smooth modernisation regulated by the Ministry of Education, popular ideas of social movements were not opposed in principle. This was, above all, a problem in Denmark, where the state and bureaucracy lacked legitimacy among the peasants, particularly after their loss of Holstein to Germany in 1864 (Korsgaard & Wiborg, 2006). In Denmark, Korsgaard (2003) claims that the creation of central regulations challenged the ideas of the schooling tradition of Grundvigians, known as promoters from *Folk-Bildung*, who were, in principle, against state-ruled institutions and favoured local control of schools and the parents' right to choose between alternative schools with different pedagogical and social profiles; thus, Grundvigians were not a driving force for developing a public school system (Lauglo, 1982). The establishment of a comprehensive public school system was therefore developed in opposition to the Grundvigian movement[iv].

Thus, the peasants' attitudes towards a state-governed school system in Norway differed from those in Denmark, where conservatives were in charge of the national government at the turn of the 20th century. This meant that the government in Denmark

allowed the establishment of alternative schools free for parents to choose between, in addition to public schooling, although not necessarily founded on Grundvigian ideas, while local demands were supported in Norwegian state educational politics, guaranteeing the rights of the rural population until centralisation was considered reasonable. This need evolved throughout the 19th century, and a significant step towards educational administration at the central level occurred when the department appointed the first secretary general for school affairs in 1856. The position was first held by a theologian until 1863 and thereafter by the educator Hartvig Nissen (1815–1874), who argued for a differentiated system of central and local administrations providing for the organisation of a comprehensive educational system in Norway (Gundem, 1993a:28). Nissen, who had been a student of Bugge, worked to make the system similar to the Prussian model in accordance with the suggestions put forward by Bugge. However, Nissen was far more progressive in terms of the content of the reforms. Here, Nissen prolonged the contract school idea of Luther: 'schooling must always start with the mother tongue, given its fundamental connection to any people. The purpose of all teaching is, as Nissen sees it, at every stage of the school's formation' (Roos, 2019).

Meanwhile, there were signs of adjustments to a Prussian model in Norway during the establishment of a national curriculum for the secondary level. The 1858 'normal plan' for the integrated Latin grammar and 'real' or science school represents an emergent step in the development of a national upper secondary school in Norway. According to this reform, the upper secondary school should prepare students for both academic and vocational studies and seek to differentiate teaching material according to pupils' interests. As claimed by Bjørg B. Gundem, this curriculum prepared the first step for a nationally prescribed curriculum or a 'normal plan' for secondary schooling and strengthened the realistic dimension of the contract-school movement. The national curriculum was probably heavily inspired by the Prussian curriculum, '*Normalplan für Gymnasien* of 1816', which is now widely considered a German invention (Gundem, 1993b:255, 264). In this curriculum, content descriptions were of primary significance.

The governance of public institutions differed between Denmark and Norway. Neither Danish nor Norwegian reform efforts became legitimised according to Grundvigian ideas in this matter (Korsgaard & Wiborg, 2006). Differences between Denmark and Norway might shed light on the underlying model of curriculum governance that was established in this period. Korsgaard and Wiborg conclude that the countries' education governance aligned with two different reform models (Korsgaard & Wiborg, 2006). At this point, they draw on Slagstad's (2001) book, *The National Strategists* [*De Nasjonale Strateger*]. Slagstad claims

that the Norwegians modelled their reforms based on the Prussian model, where the term *folkelighet* [popuaristic] reflected the German concept of *Volkstum* [ethnicity]. These two concepts differed in their substantive foundation, specifically where the *reform-compromise* is considered a characteristic trait of the Norwegian alternative: equally evaluating cultural ideals and popular requests. Slagstad views this compromise as inspired by both German romanticism and French-English rationalism, or what can be considered both expressive and instrumental in its orientation to public concerns. The pietistic trajectory was thereby contested and adjusted ideologically.

There was certainly political interest in increasing the wealth of the people according to political requests, as Nissen proclaimed in his political programme for education reform (Thuen, 2004). One might agree that the Norwegian curriculum model placed more authority and responsibility in the State's governing bodies, where intellectuals participated, and where the state held a more profound role more like in Prussia and unlike England, for example. In the Norwegian and German contexts, a tradition of 'reform from above' was established. With a focus on the state, the elites were identified with state initiative and expansion, unlike elites within the English laissez-fair-system (Slagstad, 2001, p. 151). Thus, one might conclude that the Danish government corresponded with the British liberal governance tradition of John Locke and the French tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) giving the private domain and, in this case, parents overall authority for their children's upbringing and teaching. In comparison, the Norwegian model adjusted its reform trajectory to the Prussian model of reform, encapsulating traditional *Didaktik* [didactics] as a normative and connecting link between public politics and local schooling.

However, such a view undermines the changes in rationale that developed from below, where ordinary teachers and principals cooperated with laymen and others who worked for the establishment of a professional discourse. This tradition was not German in origin. Rather, this Dane-Norwegian tradition was established through pietistic and partly philanthropic inspired reform, which sought to combine principles of instruction with instructional principles of moral character that had implications for re-presenting the content in for example text books. Furthermore, it was informed by popular requests and very different from the tradition in England, where the curricula tradition became focused on methods without concern for the purposes and principles of the overall enterprise of education (Reid, 1997, p. 679). Norwegian reform work aimed for a coherent approach and sought to bring together means with aims, which was not accomplished in England to the same extent. Nevertheless, Korsgaard and Wiborg (2006) identify similarities between the Norwegian system and the

Prussian model both in church and school politics. They claim that state-oriented pietists had a greater impact in Norway than in Denmark, with a ‘clearly visible line running from state pietism to social democrats, different from an anti-state ideology based on Grundvigian rationales in Denmark’ (Korsgaard, 2006, p. 376).

However, a formal decision that reflects a modernizing trend in Norway was made in 1889, when local school boards were no longer in the hands of the church and the parishes since the church no longer had a supervising role in school matters (Gundem, 1993b). This event resulted in a renewed demand for curriculum to be based on secular and popular purposes, inclusive of encyclopaedic content and methodological advice. Although content was formed into a predefined subject matter (*stoff*), local and popular demands for schooling were, however, strengthened, politically, through the Liberal Party, which increased in importance during the coming years.

A curriculum for the primary levels appeared in 1890. Additionally, regional school directors appointed in each county instigated a centralisation of curriculum-making by creating the first regional plan in 1874 (Gundem, 1993b). Their work resulted in an overall plan for the creation of local school plans. Although one could argue that the regional school directors represented a conservative class at that time (Telhaug & Mediås, 2003), they were served as a bridge between the central authorities, local elected boards, and teachers in this system. Earlier plans, entitled *Instruction for the Teachers*, were aimed at the individual schoolteacher, who was responsible for his own administration and teaching (Gundem, 1993b). The new plan, entitled ‘teaching plan’, pointed towards an impending school system that was equipped with school buildings and teaching material. This plan contained not only bodies of prescribed content to be taught but also entailed the purposes of each subject, as well as axioms of methods for teaching specific subjects (Gundem, 1993a:32). It was devised as a guideline, which referred to the Primary Education Act of 1860 (Lov, 1860).

Therefore, one might question whether educational reform initiatives in Prussia and Denmark-Norway shaped bureaucratic institutions into a centralised system ruled from the top, as indicated by Slagstad (2001). This is a two-fold issue: (1) how the Prussian system did not necessarily function as a top-down project, and (2) how the establishment of the Norwegian schooling system addressed political, professional, and to some extent private interests differently than education systems in other countries, such as in Germany. Moreover, one might also discuss whether a pietistic tradition resulted in an instrumental rationality, as claimed by Max Weber (Weber, 1930/2001), and if so, whether it worked as a foundation

for curriculum control during the next century, which is a theme that will be addressed in the next section.

Modernising school reforms: based on scientific rationales? (1890 – 1997)

Following the School Act of 1889 (Lov, 1889), the state's power to sanction municipalities with regard to the preparation and planning of the school curriculum was limited. In the 1920s, this power distribution began to change, as the government started to see the need for state control over curriculum matters. A parliamentary decision in 1920 provided a new system of funding intended to extend general schooling from five to seven years. The parliament decided to allocate money only to continuation schools (middelskoler) that were based on a seven-year programme. The 1936 law stated that every child should be given the same economic and cultural opportunities and have equal access to a unified school system that provided an equally high level of quality and prepared students for both vocational and academic studies. Although political parties spanned the political spectrum, party leaders reached an agreement about centralised education, and a unified system was established. Thus, the establishment of a unified school system served as a common programme and fulfilled the goals of different parties.

A substantive body of literature underscores the empirical orientation in the field of education of the 1930s (Dale, 1999, 2005; Helsvig, 2005; Lønnå, 2002). A cluster of principles, which changed the traditional concept of allmenndannelse [general education], was considered in light of psychologically-oriented theories (Bakken, 1971, pp. 9-15). The idea of what to teach became a question of what could be learned. This idea was investigated through empirical methods and experiments. Psychological education theories were discussed at Nordic school conferences as early as 1900 and were also written about in volumes of the teacher journal Skolebladet, which was more radical than the older and more conservative journal Norsk Skoletidende (Harbo, 1969, p. 202). Quantitative studies paved the way for new considerations of what and how to teach, always according to practical perspectives on schooling that provided a fundamental foreground for the reformists, who were well-educated intellectuals.

It is obvious that the empirical report published during the initial phase of the reform process in 1936 was based on a pedagogical-psychological approach, as indicated in the title: The teaching plans in the Folk-school – a pedagogical-psychological preparation of the new plans for social studies (Ribsskog & Aall, 1936). The report evaluated student outcomes in

different grades and subjects, from the second grade of the folk school to adult education levels. However, due to the limitations of this kind of research, wise judgements about what could and should be achieved could not be outlined on an aggregated level that matched the conditions of the education systems across countries. Thus, teachers' knowledge and experiences were considered a more appropriate source to formulate the curricula, which resulted in the two 'normal plans' in 1939, one for rural and another for urban schooling. Similar plans developed during the period from 1890 to the Normalplans of 1939 pawed the way for national curricula. However, these plans, such as the Normalplan curricula from 1922 and 1925, based on classical and realistic ideas, more or less continuing the pietistic reform trajectory. During the 1930s, empirical rationales evolved through nation-wide reforms, and contested the old rationales, now through a centralized reform, subsidised and funded by the state and evolving along with continuous economic growth, which throughout the century made Norway a rich nation (Østerud, 2005).

Modernization during the 20th century implied a restructuration of industrial transformation that aimed at creating equal opportunities for various parts of the population across the country. An overall aim was to achieve equality between urban and rural areas, rich and poor, men and women, and the majority and minorities, which became a political issue in the 1970s. These optimistic trends, as well as the need for creating structured and planned development of welfare services, justified empirical research, scientific enquiry, and experimentation (Gundem, 1995). This empirical orientation was decisive for political action and critical curriculum theorising, along with ideas brought forward by Habermas' Technik und Wissenschaft als Ideologie [Technology and Science as Ideology] (Habermas, 1968). Slagstad (2004, p. 74) claims that the scientific vocabulary that developed during this period pursued a 'new way of putting knowledge into practice'. Scientific rationales were decisive in reorganising the compulsory school system in 1969. Parliament had already decided that compulsory education (grunnskole) would be extended from seven to nine years (The School Act of 13 June 1969). The Public School Act of 1959 had motivated the newly established National Council for Innovation in Education, which was responsible for different research projects during the 1950s and 1960s, to create a provisional plan called the 1960 Curriculum, which was used to guide a new nine-year compulsory school model (Forsøksrådet for skoleverket, 1960).

Equality, in terms of accepting diversity or a multitude of cultural orientations, was approached in the curriculum reform efforts throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, without constraining teaching to merely focus on competence and which resulted in two

national curricula, one for the nine-year school in 1972 which was conditional type of curriculum that provided long lists of content in the school subjects and which outlined cross-disciplinary themes every teacher should take into account in cross-disciplinary projects or in each subject. Adapting education to individual interests referred meant to broaden the content in terms of variety of subjects and requirements rather than focussing on competence in terms of individual or aggregated outcomes. The new concept of suitably adapted education [tilpasset opplæring] turned into a practical approach during the 1970s. Teachers cared for individual self-determination by referencing the formal mandate for education and they secured quality through a pedagogy from below. Moreover, the reform did not advocate for equality in outcomes, as public enquiries and researchers would still argue for, but rather in terms of meeting interests of different kinds, corporative associations at the state level, and the students and their families within the context of schooling at the local lecel. Thus, the reforms followed what is typically considered a Norwegian model where a unitary State oriented its decisions towards the citizens' needs by combining a pluralistic and consensual government style, both by governance at the national and local level (Kickert & European Group of Public, 1997) and through pedagogy pursued by teachers in schools.

The emphasis on local development work was reflected in national and international development projects throughout the 1980s as well and in the national curricula. In 1985 the formal curriculum of 1974 was replaced first with a provisional curriculum (M85) and later with a final version (M87). In the 1980's, curriculum guidelines for the first time made centralised aims compulsory for all students between the ages of 7 and 16. It is therefore considered a major break with established traditions from the 1970's. However, the breakthrough ideas, which after all might be considered as resulting in a bright new curriculum, is the The Core Curriculum from 1993 (L93) and the Curriculum guidelines for compulsory school (L97), which were followed by the Knowledge promotion curriculum in 2006 (LK06) and a renewed national curriculum in 2020 (LK20). An interesting fact is that during the 1990s, empirical research on learning outcomes neither guided decision-makers responsible for curriculum reforms, nor inspired educational researchers to advocate new models for curriculum reforms. This problem turned into a headache for Gudmund Hernes, one of the authors of the public enquiry reports about result quality from the 1970s (NOU, 1976), when he became the Minister of Education.

The systemic reform this minister of education initiated, resulted in Curriculum 1993 (a general curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education that outlined the purpose of education based on four legal mandates) and Curriculum 1997, which covered both

Curriculum 1993 and a set of principles and guidelines for organising education alongside the traditional school curricula for primary and lower secondary education. Among the source documents for this reform, I have found a note referring to an international survey conducted by the IEA and one reference to a national research report about the inefficiency of teaching with implications for students' learning outcomes. The Minister of Education, who formulated parts of the curriculum framework and served as the chair of several conferences and meetings within the reform processes, denied in my interview with him that there were empirical studies that exerted a valid influence on the reform work in this period. He claimed that no empirical evidence could at this point legitimise the policy decisions that had been made due to the extent and quality of the empirical research about the Norwegian school system at that time. Yet, at that time, there were signs of a national orientation towards literacy; in addition, some committee members who were involved in writing curriculum documents in English for example, and international experts with experience in conducting IEA studies, confirmed that there was a tendency to adopt conceptions of competence and literacy within the curriculum making process..

Policymakers working within the ministry considered the minister the inventor of this curriculum and the most influential actor in its formulation because he developed the general part of the curriculum after being in contact with three advisory groups. The ministry composed three committees tasked with providing ideas and drafts for the general and middle parts, consisting of the principles and guidelines. However, Hernes, the Minister of Education at the time, finally decided to write the first draft of the general curriculum and half of the middle part, which were finally integrated into a 'blue book' with hard binders in 1996. Both texts were however, subjected to public hearings and revisions as well as comments from officers within the Ministry of Education.

The first text, published in 1993, was authorised by the parliament to become the general part of the curriculum for primary, secondary, and adult education in Norway. Notably, this part of the curriculum was translated into languages other than Norwegian for the first time, and interviews with several officers within the Ministry of Education, are helpful in understanding why it was translated and in which languages. From interviews with the minister and his colleagues, it seems clear that the core ambition was to write a curriculum that teachers and all individuals involved in the Norwegian education system could be proud of using. The minister preferred a text that was stimulating to read, not at least for parents, and therefore aimed at writing a curriculum, characterised by fluency, suppleness, and rhythm. In the general part, the Minister of Education also aimed to formulate a text that

integrated theories about education and its relation to society. Thus, the curriculum was designed as a social contract between the state authorities, the local school, and the surrounding communities, where the school collaborated with organisations, and the pupils participated in their leisure time and with the families in particular. This idea continued old reform traditions, in which parents were considered primarily responsible for raising their children, the Minister confirms in the interview. It developed core ideas that was in particular important for the national curriculum from 1939.

Formally, the main themes found in the National School Act provided the bases for the structures of the curriculum and its sections: 'The Spiritual Human Being', 'The Creative Human Being', 'The Working Human Being', 'The Liberally Educated Human Being', 'The Social Human Being', 'The Environmentally Aware Human Being', and 'The Complete Human Being' (L93). These categories were approved by a group of ministry officers but were more or less a result of how the Minister of Education decided to formulate the curriculum. The contents refer to a broad spectrum of questions and the challenges and tasks faced by teachers and students today. There is an emphasis on classical content to be taught in schools and important knowledge to learn for life. In addition, there are photographs of arts and crafts, as well as technological inventions illustrating classical and realistic perspectives on culture and knowledge. However, both the contents and the visual documentation make this curriculum a different type of text compared to the previous curricula in both the national and international contexts. The new rationales that brought together systems of reasoning draw on various knowledge sources, including American reform ideas. According to some informants, the minister was inspired by American sociological research, which he learned about during his visits and scholarships as a professor in one of the prestigious universities in the United States. A rationale that grew out of this interest consisted of pedagogical challenges and solutions that take young students as a whole, childhood, and youth cohorts into consideration when formulating the curriculum. From this sociology of research viewpoint, traditional schooling was criticised, and as one of our informants claimed, 'we need[ed] to find other approaches, pedagogically' (R1).

This critique may have stimulated the focus on a common set of values and norms that everyone should endorse and incorporate into educational practices. The minister also referred to the American scholar Hirsch (1985), who argued for a return of cultural literacy to bring about more heterogeneity within the global cultures. Few experts within the Norwegian curriculum context were familiar with this approach that built on pure scientific rationales rather than a pragmatic approach. Thus, Hernes introduced scientific reform ideas that to

some extent differed from the Nordic curriculum tradition by emphasising that teachers are not merely going to teach what is written in the curriculum or the textbooks and adapt this to the individual student, but should even more concentrate on what the students need to learn and master for the sake of their own life and society. Thus, the development of literacy became a major theme in the first part of this reform project. A few public enquiries also emphasised the importance of competence-based reform, and by drawing on one such enquiry, competence-based objectives were included in the curricula for upper secondary education (Reform 94). Hernes also included the word competence in one paragraph in the general curriculum (L93).

However, after completing the work on the curriculum for upper secondary education, the minister rejected the use of competence as the overall approach and purpose of general education. This decision indicates that, for example, IEA studies, which introduced the concept of scientific literacy during the 1980s in Norway, were not really a core inspiration for the Minister of Education. Interestingly, the general part was highly inspired by the Lutheran tradition despite the recognition of scientific rationales, as illustrated by the education clause presented in the first part of the curriculum:

> Primary and lower secondary education shall, with the understanding of and in cooperation with the home, assist in providing students with a Christian and ethical upbringing, develop their mental and physical abilities, and give them a broad general education so that they can become useful and independent persons in their private lives and in society. (The Royal Ministry of Education Research and Church Affairs, 1993)

The curriculum text focuses on, among various themes, the role of Christian and human values, but national and global concerns are also considered:

> Christian and humanistic values both demand and foster tolerance, providing room for other cultures and customs. They buttress the rule of law and the democratic state as the framework for equal political participation and debate. They emphasise charity, brotherhood and hope, promote progress through criticism, reason and research; and they recognise that humans themselves are a part of nature by their bodies, their needs and their senses. (The Royal Ministry of Education Research and Church Affairs, 1993)

Narratives and images reflecting the government's interest in presenting the core curriculum as both traditional and modernised brought national images into the global discourse by

focusing on particular and, one may claim, national values, but the theories and epistemologies attached to these narratives created another frame that also made sense in other cultural settings. This part of the historical trajectory is amazing compared to common sense expectations. Several informants remembered how the Minister of Education presented the general part of the curriculum in other countries, such as Russia, where the ministry distributed thousands of copies of the curriculum translated into Russian. One informant stated that Russian bookshops asked for translations, and the minister regarded this event as creating an opportunity to put the national Norwegian curriculum on the world map. Interviews with curriculum makers close to the minister confirmed that this national curriculum achieved popularity internationally. The Curriculum was translated into English, French and Chinese. One even confirmed that the text was used directly, not only as an information source, but as a blueprint in another European country, where a new state-based curriculum was underway. As one informant claims: “They felt that this document was equally relevant for them as it was for us, and it doesn’t matter because it is a good text”. (R2)

Between 1999 and 2003, experts from Norway participated in projects run by the OECD, which became a decisive global actor in defining and conceptualising cross-curricula competencies and skills for being used in national policy projects (Sivesind, 2019). A new curriculum in 2006 manifested this policy through a core focus on competencies. However, this curriculum did not replace the new overall curriculum guideline. The general part published in 1993 was replaced by a new visionary document in 2017 and adopted in 2020. This document was not subject for any discussions within the parliament, but draw on public enquiries and white papers that set the agenda for the 2020 reform. According to information I obtained from interviewing officers within the Ministry of Education in 2019, the new overall curriculum was developed through collaboration with academic researchers and representatives from various associations, such as the teachers’ union within the country. Interestingly, the structure of this new curriculum entirely copied the structure of the education clause formally authorised in 2008. According to the appointed leader of the public enquiry team that prepared this law, this clause created openness towards society by emphasising human rights and societal values. The wording and structuring of the new curriculum show that the school’s mandate is both far and deep as it concerns identity development and learning in several fields. Values, learning, and knowledge development are both essential aspects and cultural heritages, which imply nationalisation of reform processes.

Reform trajectories within the 21st century

The new national curriculum in Norway, that are implemented in Norwegian schools from the school year 2020-21, aims to improve learning by actively involving teachers, schools, and the society in the training and upraising of young students (The Royal Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 2). On this backdrop, representatives of the nation state (e.g. ministers, scientists, or officers) both implement global policies by recognizing individual rights and human values and by advocating for the re-contextualisation of global reform initiatives within the context of a national school system. Does this reform project contest the legacy of the contract-school model?

This study confirms what Zhao and Tröhler claim in the introduction chapter: 'Education and curriculum are never a neutral knowledge (re)production system but always a contested site where multi-layered power relations are (re)produced and effectuated through the play-with and play-against of varying mechanisms in history' (Chapter 1). Thus, there is no guarantee that the contract-school model will develop along the same lines as in earlier centuries. In the present chapter, I explored state governance in the field of education and reform and the ideas and legacies underpinning the school plans and national curricula in Norway since the early 18th century. In particular, I focused on the role of the state and used examples to illustrate how curriculum developed as a reform project, both as a receptor of international ideas throughout the three centuries and even as a provider of international ideas in the 1990s.

During all the periods covered by this chapter, there are signs of a cultural-educational impact of historical legacies. The Lutheran contract-school model evolved in both Central and Northern Europe during the 19th century and is by itself not national in its origin. The model developed through history and made curriculum reforms more or less centralised and open to realistic world views and enlightening rationales. As I have described, in Norway, the pietistic trajectory developed into a model that was legitimised and organised through a collaboration between representatives from the state and local school boards with formal responsibility for education in the districts. Moreover, civil servants and intellectuals, educated at Universities in Denmark and Germany contributed significantly, and proactively put their own national fingerprints on the school reforms while being involved in reform-making processes. Philanthropic ideas were decisive for revising the catechetic method during the first decades of the 19ty century.

A pietistic reform trajectory that influenced curriculum reforms in Norway, were combined with both philanthropic and empirical rationales during the 19th and 20th centuries, however, without changing the contract school model that governed education by law and

simultaneously through the semantic of schooling. This semantic emphasised principles for teaching and grading, and viewed formal education from an inside-out perspective, but without necessarily situating the school content in a national context restrained by a particular culture (Klafki, 2000, p. 89). Representing the outside world through texts and also focusing on practical and moral purposes, is a typical trait of philanthropic reform known within Scandinavian countries (Sivesind, 2008). Ideas that renewed pietistic reforms originated in this case through text book production that had substantial impact on reading literacy within the population.

Therefore, one cannot think of curriculum reform initiatives in Norway as beginning as a top-down effort in terms of universal reforms, or even serving as a form of centralized implementation of national reform during the 19th and 20th century. Rather, one should consider curriculum-making a public project and an innovative practice that created space for both political and practical developments. I have characterised this institutional arrangement as a top-bottom-up model (Sivesind, 2008), and which contrasts reform work in many other countries, often portrayed as either top-down or bottom-up (Smith & O'Day, 1990).

After the parliamentary system was introduced in Norway in the 1880s, political decisions became involved in regulating schooling for children in urban areas. Political control was accomplished by law, which however, restricted the positive use of political power through formal decrees and allocation of money and thereby allowed for local control and professionalization of teachers. The parliament could discuss and approve decisions in some areas of curriculum reform, but the decision-making processes on how to formulate curriculum guidelines were handed over to committees. Nearly all reforms during the 20th century based on practical reasoning and knowledge within subject matter areas. Although researchers prioritised psychometric research during the 1950s and 1960s, the curricula were primarily formulated by professionals and authorized by the state and for some parts, the parliament [Stortinget].

During the 1970s, critical sociology created a new era in curriculum theorising, and intellectuals promoted universal values as crucial in restructuring the Protestant contract-school model. Societal change and critical-rational reasoning made society highly secularised, a process that evolved from the mid-19th century in Denmark and Norway (Markussen, 1990). Currently, empirical evidence justifies competence and skills as a scientific invention. An empiricist view on the 21st century skills contests the contract-school model that was, despite Lutheran ideas of making the reformation universal, a highly contextualized project from the beginning. Today, content-based curricula are replaced by a futuristic oriented pedagogy that

focuses on generic skills. The contract-school model is thereby challenged. However, Tröhler (2017) argues that declining legacies provide an opportunity to regard the historiography of reform as an expression of change that is configured differently across time and space, both institutionally and intellectually. For this reason, historical interpretation of national trajectories of education systems and the way we reflect on education are important, as they both stimulate to rethink traditions and enlighten the intellectual debate about curriculum and competence within the 21st century.

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[i] His original name was Jean Baptiste Bernadotte.

[ii] The monitorial method originated at the Military Male Orphan Asylum, Egmore, near Madras, India, where Andrew Bell (1753–1832) served as an army chaplain. The method was described in a brief article published in 1797. At first, this system did not gain any public support. Joseph Lancaster (1778–1838), a Quaker living in London, found the method to be useful in his education of poor children in the slum quarter, and developed a similar method, which gained success in mass-schooling institutions. This method was introduced in the new curriculum for national schooling in Norway in 1834, but without any success since schooling in Norway was mainly organized within districts and with only a few students at a time.

[iii] Bugge visited Bayern, Sachsen, and Württemberg.

[iv] Contradictions were also visible in disputes about how to establish Folk high schools in Norway, which, after discussions in the parliament, resulted in a system equal to the Prussian model (Korsgaard, 2003). This is the reason why the Folk high school lost its status and became an optional or alternative school in Norway, comparable to a state-owned public education system.