

Abstract

Title: *The rise and change of the teaching profession: a sociological study of teachers' conditions, organization and project within basic education in Sweden ca. 1800-2000.*

In Swedish with summary in English

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This dissertation comprises a sociological analysis of teachers' conditions, organization and professional project within the basic compulsory (elementary) education in Sweden from the beginning of the 19th century to the present. It also partly deals with other teacher categories such as secondary grammar schoolteachers and girls' schoolteachers, whose work came to be integrated with the elementary school when the compulsory school was established. The focus lies on teachers' collective action, chiefly through the organizations of the Swedish Union of Teachers and its two similarly named predecessors. In addition, attention is given to the special organization of female and male elementary-school teachers as well as infant school teachers during the first part of the 20th century.

The dissertation takes a critical realistic approach, and reality is understood in line with Roy Bhaskar's ontology as structured, stratified, differentiated and changeable. The scientific ambition is to provide, in accordance with this, a theoretical clarification of the generative mechanisms which as a whole have caused the course of events being studied. As support for the analysis, use is made of Margaret Archer's morphogenetic approach and theory of educational systems, as well as works of the "Gothenburg school" in the sociology of professions. Further, theories of patriarchal genus structures are applied. The historical analysis builds mainly on earlier research and the teacher corps' own memoranda, but also on some primary material used by teachers' union magazines and union brochures.

Three great transformations of education and the teaching profession are treated: (1) the rise of the elementary school and the elementary-school teacher profession (1800s-1840s), (2) the rise of a centralized compulsory school and its teacher profession (1840s-1960s), and (3) the rise of a decentralized compulsory school and diversification of its teacher profession (1960s-1990s). These periods indicate a movement from heterogeneous educational conditions toward a centralized compulsory school marked by standardization and systematization, and further toward a decentralized education characterized by specialization and differentiation.

The restructurings have pervasively influenced the teaching profession and the teachers' conditions. However, teachers have not only been affected by the transformations, but have also participated in their design. This has happened through the teacher organizations' formulating the teachers' collective concerns and linking them to what were then regarded as society's interests, and the organizations have used numerous strategies (of professional, political and union character) to promote their interests. Yet in addition to the teacher corps' hallmarks of unity and collaboration, there has been opposition between fractions, originating in class-structure conditions and patriarchal gender relations as well as in different working conditions and educational visions. Also treated, therefore, are conflicts internal to the corps in the struggle for jurisdiction, resources, status and the design of education. Not least, emphasis is laid on the female elementary-school teacher union's work for egalitarian conditions in the profession.

Keywords: teacher, educational system, agent-structure, critical realism, Margaret Archer, professional sociology, patriarchal gender structures, working conditions, teacher organizations, professional projects.