

English summaries

Berit Askling, 2007: National quality assessment – A new element in the academic profession/ Bedömning av kvalitet i nationella utvärderingar/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 12, No 1, pp 1–19. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

By tradition, quality has been seen as an implicit and natural element of university-level learning and research and an integrated part of academics' professional responsibilities. Peer review was formerly the predominant form of academic quality control. It was defined as a judgement (assessment) of individual academics' work (mainly in terms of written academic production) undertaken by one or more individual academics who were supposed to be knowledgeable about the field of work (often disciplines). Thus, control was maintained by careful selection of academics who among their colleagues were judged competent to act as peers. In part the selection was determined by their previous contributions to their own disciplines. Their legitimacy was gained within the discipline and their loyalty was directed towards the discipline. Thus, by assessing individual academics' performance the academic community of scholars within a particular discipline controlled the academic quality of their own discipline.

Later, as an adjustment to the stepwise devolution of state authority to the institutions, this control system was gradually and voluntarily supplemented by external evaluations of one or another aspect of the institutions' activities. Often initiated by the institutional leaders, such aspects as quality and efficiency of local research programmes, professionally oriented programmes etc were scrutinized in order to provide basic data for strategic decisions concerning the institutions.

With the establishment of national agencies (such as the Swedish National Agency for Higher education – Högskoleverket) in the 1990s, and influenced by New Public Management theories, a new kind of relationship between the state and the academic institutions was introduced. The agencies operate on behalf of their governments. In the Scandinavian countries, the agencies have in common that they represent an independent part between government and institutions, trying to find a balance between controlling and supporting tasks. The agency must secure authority in its assessments. In this regard, the agency is dependent on the willingness of respected academics to take an active part

in panels and committees in order to legitimate conclusions and recommendations of the national agency.

In the article, it is argued that the radical shift from internal peer reviews of individual academics' performance towards more bureaucratic and national evaluations of quality assessments systems, programmes and disciplines, accomplished by national agencies, calls for a new kind of academic professionalism among those academics who take part in such national assessments and also for a bureaucratic evaluation professionalism among staff members at the national agencies.

The nature of the assessment (accreditation, evaluation, audit) calls for academics with a broad range of competence and experiences. Thus, the loyalty of the members of the panel may be more heterogeneous and varied.

To some extent, accreditation and evaluation can be considered extensions of former internal academic control procedures. However, they differ with regard to criteria and to the fact that these criteria are defined by the agency. An accreditation implies a judgement against a defined standard (such as a minimum level of qualified academics among staff members and sufficient library facilities) while many evaluations of programmes have to take into account a large number of criteria (some of them politically loaded and conflicting). In particular, this holds for professionally oriented programmes, such as teacher education programmes, where, as an example, the inbuilt theory – practice tension often generates almost contradictory criteria. In these kinds of evaluations, the academic members of the panels are often supplemented by representatives from the corresponding professional fields, thus also bringing a variety of loyalties into the panel's work.

The audit procedure, on the other hand, in which the institution's own quality assurance system is scrutinized, implies a quite new kind of assessment in the academia. It is designed by the national agency (in international collaboration with other national agencies) and is, thus, to a large extent a »property« of the agency itself. As a consequence, staff members of the agency have particular professional responsibilities with regard to criteria to take into account, procedures to follow and in writing the report, while the academics contribute to the audit procedure – and to its legitimacy – with experiences of academic leadership and familiarity with system theories and organisational ones.

To sum up, in this article it is suggested that a new kind of academic professionalism is emerging – a professionalism that is founded on theoretical understanding of and practical experiences from higher education institutions as societal institutions and as organisations. Besides, the national agencies also generate a new kind of evaluation professionalism among its staff members. Depending on the character of the evaluation task, the interplay between academic and bureaucratic evaluators vary. The legitimacy of the assessments is mostly guaranteed by the academics (and other members of the evaluation panels), while the loyalty of the panel members and the agency's staff may vary in direction according to the character of the assessment.

Magnus Dahlstedt, 2007: The consequences of (un)free choice policies: Segregation, differential valuation and educational reform in Sweden since the 1980s/ I val(o)frihetens spår: Segregation, differentiering och två decennier av skolreformer/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 12, No 1, pp 20–38. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

The following article analyses some of the main arguments for and consequences of two dominant notions in Swedish education policy, decentralisation and freedom of choice – since the 1980s. Firstly, the article provides an overview of the two key notions that have come to pervade Swedish educational policy. Secondly, the article addresses some of the negative effects of the policies implemented, with special focus on »white flight» and segregation, differential valuation of subjects and democracy, as well as the growing role of the private sector in education. Thirdly, Swedish educational policies and reforms over the last two decades are examined vis-à-vis wider (global) political and economic changes.

After the Second World War, the Swedish educational regime was based on the premises of centralism and universalism, social welfare and harmony, as well as the homogeneous valuation of subjects and democratic citizenship. Education was primarily defined as a »public good» and the education system was used as a redistributive tool. The main goal of policies of education was to offset the polarising tendencies of the capitalist system and act as a key instrument of redressing social, cultural and economic injustices.

The changes that have occurred in Swedish society over the past two decades have had a huge impact within the education system. The 1980s saw a radical shift and re-casting of the central tenets of the Swedish system of education. The change was part of a wider ideological shift around the world. Education was primarily defined as a »private good», where the main focus was put on individual – especially parents’ – educational responsibility, freedom of choice, efficiency, competition and raising the individual skills.

Since the 1980s, the Swedish educational system has increasingly come to function as a platform for individual development rather than as a redistributive tool. Moreover, the principle of equality gave way to the principle of equivalence. In mainstream discourses of education, the ideal citizen has come to be constructed as an active, self-conscious and responsible individual, who places him/herself at the forefront, continually updating his/her qualifications and learning how to make rational, independent choices.

Another important theme in Swedish discourses of education at present is the idea of decentralisation. In line with the devolution of powers of the state that characterizes the developments since the 1980s, the former top-down and centralized administration of education came under critique as being bureaucratic and inefficient. It was also seen as problematic in terms of accountability. Schools, it was argued, should rather develop new and flexible forms of bottom-up government, where decision-making is organised in local partnerships involving not only politicians and state authorities, but also teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders and actors in the local

community, such as companies and civic associations. Such a government is alleged to foster strong feelings of dedication and involvement among concerned parties, especially teachers, students, and parents.

By and large the major changes in Swedish society over the past two decades are seen in an ideological re-orientation from the collective to the individual, from public to private, from outer to inner demands. During the same period, the education system has shifted from top-down government to freedom of choice and individual responsibility, from conformity to diversity, from practices of direct control to practices of accounting, from sanctions to self-discipline.

A key argument is the need to make Sweden more competitive in a »globalized» world and thus the educational sector, it is claimed, has to be flexibly competitive, and adapted to changing labour market conditions. Rather than focusing on information and facts, education should give students the methods and tools they need to »teach themselves», to seek out, choose and evaluate information. One important feature in today's education system is thus the idea of »student involvement» and »self-instruction», which in some respects introduces the individual student to a labour market that is more and more characterized by flexibility and insecurity. In general, education is being streamlined to the needs of the (labour) market and its demands.

In the 1990s, the notion of »lifelong learning» became the guiding-star in educational discourse, not only in Sweden but in many other countries as well. »Lifelong learning» entails that learning is a continuous, life-long project and not just restricted to given or formal periods of schooling. Different aspects of people's lives, including education, work, politics, housing, family life and leisure time, are recast as an infinite series of (personal) choices, where the individual citizen is expected to develop one's skills and update one's qualifications on a continuous basis and learn how to make well-founded, independent choices as well as weigh up in advance the possible outcomes of different choices.

In a situation where students in different respects are expected to take more charge over their own learning, greater responsibility for education is, directly or indirectly, placed on the family. The focus on the individual or family shifts the main responsibility for inbuilt class, »race»/ethnicity, gender, etc. injustices in the educational system as well as society at large, and re-positions these at the level of the individual/family. Students are basically forced to take greater responsibility for their own education, and to bear the burden of the consequences for the choices they make – or do not make. Parents and children who do not live up to these expectations and demands tend to be portrayed as problematic or deviant. The implication being that they have no one else to blame but themselves.

A recurrent theme in the Swedish educational debate since the 1970s has been the likely negative effects of the said educational reforms. One particularly important argument has been the risk of growing segregation and differentiation in the Swedish educational system. Several studies show that the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s tended to reinforce current patterns of differentiation and segregation. The policy of free choice has led not only to grow-

ing segregation between different schools, but also to growing differences in terms of school achievement, both among students and between schools.

At the same time, it has also implied heightened competition over those schools and education alternatives with the best prospects for success in education as well as working life. Different schools offer a variety of alternatives, making it more and more difficult to get an overall view of the educational field. This situation benefits students and parents with the resources and information that enable one to navigate this highly complex educational terrain. In this regard, several studies have also indicated that well-educated parents are the most active when it comes to choosing schools for their children. Parents with economic, social and cultural capital are able to find the best and specific educational routes that will suit their children.

Another tendency is that if too many students with foreign backgrounds choose one school, the reputation of that school will get worse, which in turn makes it less attractive to native Swedish and middle-class background students. In such a situation schools run the risk of being caught in a downward spiral of »student flight», declining resources, worsening reputation, budget cut-backs, »staff flight», and so on. At the same time, there are huge differences among the category of »parents with foreign backgrounds», in terms of school choice. Some parents are inclined to make an active choice of school, while others do not choose at all. It is possible that »parents with foreign backgrounds» in Sweden, as in many other countries, will more actively use the possibility of free choice in schooling in order to fly away from »immigrant dense» or »socially vulnerable» schools. Since many of the parents that actively choose schools for their children are well-educated and relatively wealthy, the segregation along ethnic lines will most likely decline, while social/class segregation will increase. In other words, free choice buttresses, differential valuation of citizens and segregated schooling.

Due to the changes during the last two decades, the most important idea guiding Swedish educational policy is the idea of corporate citizenship, rather than democratic citizenship. The particular concept of democracy defended in contemporary educational discourse is one that primarily focuses on the individual, rather than the social or the collective. The notion is based on neo-liberal cum neo-conservative ideals and as such it tends to undermine original democratic ideals by simply reducing or equating these to the freedoms, the exchange economy, and imperatives of the market.

In order to counteract the polarising effects of the policies of free choice, the fundamental purpose and meaning of education needs to be re-imagined, as part of a wider struggle for a radical democratic social order that would have to involve various actors and social forces, inside as well as outside the school. Here, the public debate on education as well as integration needs a radical recasting of the ideals and focus of education, not only theoretically and ideologically, but also practically – from instrument (freedom of choice, de-segregation policies and so on) to context, from individual problems or weaknesses to power relations and underlying social structures.

Henrik Nordvall, 2007: Cooptation or counter-hegemonic mobilization? On the interaction between the movement for global justice and the institutionalized Swedish popular adult education/ Kooptering eller mothegemonisk mobilisering? Om samspelet mellan den globala rättviserörelsen och den institutionaliserade folkbildningen/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 12, No 1, pp 39–60. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

In this article I explore the interaction between the new movement for global justice (MGJ), also known as the »anti-globalization movement«, and the Swedish state-funded popular adult education system. The study focuses on the emergence of local social forums in Sweden, inspired by the World Social Forum first held in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2001. There are two main reasons for why it is relevant to relate the MGJ's social forums to research on popular adult education. First, the open pedagogical form of the forums relates to ideas common in Swedish popular adult education. Second, an institutional relationship has occurred as ABF (the largest state-funded study association in Sweden) has been involved in several of these forums.

The article links up with an academic debate on social movements, popular adult education and social change. This theme has been examined rather extensively in the literature. However, current research on the subject often focuses on historical processes or on theoretical questions. There are few empirical studies on contemporary processes. Hence, this study contributes with an empirically grounded analysis regarding a contemporary popular adult education phenomenon related both to a new movement and an organization with its roots in the early 1900's labour movement. Consequently, the article relates specifically to the academic and political debates of the relation between »old« and »new« social movements; a relation that is often characterized as an antagonistic or an oppositional one.

The main question discussed in this study is how the MGJ's ability to challenge the prevailing social order is influenced by the interaction with the state-integrated popular adult education system. The analysis is inspired by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's theory on hegemony. In the analysis, I discuss two alternative interpretations of the interaction between the popular adult education system and the MGJ. On the one hand, the interaction is discussed as an enforced counter-hegemonic mobilization, i.e. a wide-range coalition that challenges the hegemony. On the other hand, the interaction is also discussed as a process of cooptation, where the existing social order neutralizes and absorbs resistance.

Four aspects of the interaction are examined in the article: (i) the economic and organizational relationship, (ii) the social forum organizers' strategic concerns, (iii) the MGJ activists' trust in, and experiences of, institutionalized popular adult education and (iv) ABF's ideological stance vis-à-vis the movement for global justice.

Both quantitative and qualitative data are analysed. The empirical material consists of ethnographic field studies conducted during one and a half years

(primarily on the emergence of Stockholm Social Forum), material from e-groups and web pages, data from a survey study on social forum participants (N = 1066) and document analysis.

The result shows an extensive interaction between the social forums and the institutionalized popular adult education. The social forum gains economic and material support from ABF. However, the organizers' desire to collect funding to the forum is not the only motive that encourages interaction. The organizers use ABF as a strategic link to reach trade unionists within the labour movement, a task with political importance for the movement.

Survey data on the social forum participants also shows a high level of trust in ABF. A majority of the participants participate in both social forums and traditional forms of popular adult education, such as study circles or folk high school courses. On the other hand, ideological documents produced by ABF demonstrate a substantial influence from the global justice movement. The study association has clearly incorporated the movement's political themes and symbols in its self-presentation.

In that sense, consequently, there are no signs of conflict between MGJ and the popular adult education system represented by ABF. On the contrary, they appear to be mutually integrated. A piece of the state funded popular adult education becomes incorporated in the MGJ, and the MGJ becomes partially integrated in this system. Hence, the interaction between the new social forums and old popular adult education practices and institutions showed in the case study underlines the need to problematize assumed conflicts between new and old movements, as well as this distinction in itself.

When the local social forums, through the interaction described above, become incorporated by the state regulated system, it could be seen as a forum of cooptation. The political and ideological stance against neo-liberal global capitalism, shared by both ABF and the social forum, must however be considered. In contemporary global capitalism, where multinational corporations radically have increased their influence, while nation states and forces in civil society still haven't produced any counterweight, the conflict line between civil society and the state isn't necessary the crucial one.

Instead, »cross-cutting» coalitions that involve actors in both sectors become a not so surprising response to neo-liberal forces. Hence, it is emphasised in the analysis that the interaction between ABF and the global justice movement should not be reduced to a matter of state cooption of radical forces in civil society. Rather, the study draws attention to the need to consider social conflicts beyond the distinction state – civil society.

It is however too early to say if the extensive interaction illustrated in the case study will improve the counter-hegemonic mobilization of the movement for global justice, or if it will reduce its impact through a process of neutralising cooptation. The consequences in terms of social and ideological change cannot be determined due to the short time this movement has existed, and is, therefore, a question for future research.