Comparing the OECD's and Norway's Orientation to Equity in their Teacher Education Policies – Teacher Autonomy under Attack?

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Abstract

More and more nations are losing the ability to control their education systems. OECD is an important premise provider for educational policymaking championing a neoliberal agenda. With the aim to investigate the impact the OECD may have on national policymaking, this paper compares their recent teacher education policies with those of Norway.

The OECD´s and Norway´s teacher education policies are characterised by similarities and differences as to what counts as good teacher education. The OECD argue for a combination of making clear criteria for selection into the teaching profession, standardizing the knowledge, tight monitoring of teachers along clearly defined standards of what counts as "accomplished teaching" and rewarding effective teaching. This combination of elements can be related to an entrepreneurial vision of education, and teachers as technicians. The Norwegian socialist-alliance government follows this idea through more standardization, tighter monitoring and that teachers should develop their work based on "evidence-based practice". Different from the OECD they address a more democratic representation of teachers, a wider concept of

education, and do not present incentives or rewards to improve teachers´ work.

Key words: OECD, Norway, teacher education policies, equity models

Introduction

Education has always been considered important for economic progress and increased wealth. What is new in the so-called Knowledge Economy is that knowledge has become equally important as capital and raw material and is considered decisive for national competitiveness (Dale, Gilje and Lillejord 2010). In the knowledge economy, education is both becoming a prerequisite for economic growth and a business in itself (Ball 2007; Burch 2009; Ravitch 2010).

National competitiveness is highlighted and measured through such organisations as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)[1]. Ball (2011) calls it a "denationalisation", a trend where more and more nations are losing the ability to control their education systems. In this context the OECD becomes an important agent through the numerous tests and measurements it undertakes for many nations. Based on the PISA investigation, the participating countries are ranked on their education systems´ success or lack thereof, and reports and evaluations are made to implement policies to improve the nations´ education systems. In constructing educational policy, the OECD has broad influence, as can be seen in Norway, where much attention is paid to the policies proposed by it (Hopmann 2007; Haugen 2010a).

Knowing that education is a central arena for power struggles (Bernstein 2000; Apple 2006) discourses that can win the hearts and minds of the general population are important for gaining political terrain. One example of a key word to "conquer" is equity. As expressed by Ball (2007, p. 35):

> The rhetoric of reform also tightly couples social justice, equity and maximising social and economic participation to enterprise and economic success… Reform will not only deliver greater equality; it is also intimately tied through the development of skills and 'new' knowledge to the requirements of the imaginary Knowledge Economy.

While these measurements and policy recommendations from the OECD in large part are treated as neutral evidence and neutral policy recommendations (Smyth and Shacklock 1998; Haugen 2010b), the OECD has been accused of championing a neoliberal agenda in education (Eide 1995; Karlsen 2006; Haugen 2010a; Haugen 2010b). However, what neoliberalism means is a matter of interpretation, and as Ball (2011, p. 4) states, it "...is one of those terms that is used so widely and so loosely that it is danger of becoming meaningless".

Therefore, it is necessary to be specific on what is interpreted as neoliberalism in the educational policies addressed by the OECD. In earlier research I find that the OECD has a special interest in combining the three words *accountability*, *autonomy* and *choice* to improve equity in education at a general level (i.e. for all countries) (Haugen 2010a), but also specifically for Norway (Haugen 2010b), and that it insists on this combination despite a lack of evidence (Haugen 2010a). In addition to implementing these three elements in combination, they also argue for the

state to allow for *privatisation* but where the state should still pay the costs (Haugen 2010a).

The OECD´s educational policies combining accountability, autonomy, choice and privatisation based on public funding can be understood as neoliberalism in the way Burch (2009, p. 2) describes it:

> Under neoliberalism we are expected to believe that the market can do everything better and that government should be *remade* in the market´s image. Private property rights, free trade, consumerism, performance audits, and entrepreneurs become the means for improving the social welfare. Government becomes an extension of the market; it is expected to do its work and follow its principles.

However, different countries respond differently to the policies addressed by the OECD (Hopmann 2007). With reference to the possible denationalisation in educational policy formation, I will argue that comparing the OECD's and Norway's educational policies is especially interesting. If the OECD is indeed promoting a neoliberal agenda, one could expect that Norwegian policies would differ from those proposed by the OECD since Norway has a socialist-alliance coalition. Consequently, the knowledge gained may be interesting not only for Norway, but internationally, as knowledge on what influence agencies such as the OECD might have may be interesting on a more general level, where in this context, Norway serves as an example.

In recent research where I explore the socialist-alliance government´s response to the OECD on equity policies in education, I find that it agrees on addressing accountability and autonomy to a higher degree in the education system to improve equity, but the government clearly rejects

the idea of choice and privatisation (Haugen 2010a). While my earlier research has been on equity policies intended for schools, in this context I am interested in investigating whether the OECD and Norway follow the same "pattern" when it comes to their teacher education policies. These days, teachers and teacher education are being subjected to critical investigation both in the OECD and in Norway. The OECD argues that teacher education is an important element in improving education in general: "There is now substantial research indicating that the quality of teachers and their teaching are the most important factors in student outcomes that are open to policy influence" (OECD 2005, p. 9). In Norway, teacher education has been evaluated and criticised for a lack of quality and a white paper on how to improve teacher education has been tabled by the socialist-alliance government (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009).

Theoretical and methodological framework

Through a Critical Discourse Analysis (see Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999) the aim is to "deneutralise" policy recommendations for teacher education from the OECD and Norway by analysing the material through a discursive order (see Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

The framework for this approach is made by combining Bernstein's theory on power in education with two contrasting models on education for equity from Solstad (1997): "equity through equality" and "equity through diversity". Solstad claims that the equity through equality model reproduces power relations, while the equity through diversity model

most likely improves equity. However, I will argue that a power perspective can be employed on both models by adding Basil Bernstein's framework. Bernstein (2000) refers to Solstad's equity models in his latest work, but does not treat them theoretically. However, I argue that when addressing power and control in Solstad's models in a Bernsteinian sense, a more critical approach can be employed to see how school can reproduce power relations through its knowledge and pedagogic orientations.

Through the concept "classification", Bernstein (2000) describes how power relations maintain the degree of isolation between categories. How this concept may be relevant as an analytical tool at various levels is described by Bernstein (1990, p. 27):

1. Extra-discourse relations of education. Educational discourse may be strongly or weakly insulated from non-educational discourse.
2. Intra-discourse relations of education. Organisational contexts:
   a) Insulation between agents and insulation between discourses. Agents and discourses are specialised to departments which are strongly insulated from each other.
   b) Insulation between discourses but not agents. Here agents and discourses are not specialised to departments but share a common organisational context.
3. Transmission context. Educational discourses within and/or between vocational and academic contexts may be strongly or weakly insulated from each other.
4. System context. Education may be wholly subordinate to the agencies of the State, or it may be accorded a relatively autonomous space with respect to discursive areas and practices.

Below, I will demonstrate how classification can be used to describe the two educational models: "equity through equality" and "equity through

diversity". The equity models can be described along three dimensions: specialisation/despecialisation, standardisation/destandardisation and centralisation/decentralisation.

	Equity through equality	Equity through diversity
Teacher qualifications	Specialisation (+C extra-discourse relations of education)	Despecialisation (-C extra-discourse relations of education)
Knowledge	Standardisation (+C intra-discourse relations of education, transmission context)	Destandardisation (-C intra-discourse relations of education, transmission context)
Locus of control	Centralisation (-C system context)	Decentralisation (+C system context)

Table 1: Analysis tools: classification in equity models

When looking at the first dimension, *specialisation/despecialisation* of teacher qualifications, the equity through equality model focuses on a specialised teacher corps (a strong classification (+C) of extra-discourse relations of education), emphasising the "same" qualifications for every teacher student, whereas an equity through diversity model focuses on a despecialised teacher corps (a weaker classification (-C) of extra-discourse relations of education). In this context extra-discourse relations of education will more specifically describe the qualifications a student will need to enter teacher education and the criteria for *who* can become a teacher.

For the second dimension, *standardisation/destandardisation* of knowledge, the equality model emphasises a standardisation of knowledge through strong classification (+C) of intra-discourse relations

of education and the transmission context. This can refer, for example, to a strong classification between agents, subjects, education and work/community/students' backgrounds, providing the same knowledge for everybody regardless of local and individual considerations. The diversity model emphasises a destandardisation of knowledge, describing the relation between agents, subjects, education and work/community/students' backgrounds as weaker classified (-C).
In the third dimension, centralisation/decentralisation describing the system context, the equality model is characterised by strong central control, and consequently a weak classification (-C) between state and education, to ensure that all are given an education characterised by equality in both teacher competence and the knowledge provided. The diversity model is characterised by a strong classification between state and school (+C), as there is a need for autonomy to provide diverse teacher competencies and knowledge dependent on local and individual considerations.

It should be mentioned here that these equity models are contrasting models based on different ideological grounds. As education is built on compromises, a combination of them will likely be found in real policies and practices (Apple 2006; Solstad 1997). We can attempt to understand the power relations in these models by relating to Bernstein's analysis of how different pedagogic and knowledge orientations relate to power.

Equity Models and Power Relations

According to Bernstein (1977), different knowledge and pedagogic practices may be related to different factions of the middle class: the "new middle class" and "the old middle class". The old middle class

(essentially from the 19th century) was based on the transmission of specific and unambiguous values, a visible pedagogy consisting of a clear hierarchy and criteria, a positional form of social control. The new middle class, on the other hand (mid to late 20th century formation), supports new forms of social control which are more personalised and have a more invisible form in which hierarchy and criteria become more implicit and invisible (Bernstein 1977).

An old middle class discourse can be described through the concepts "collection code" and "visible pedagogy". A collection code typically focuses on a reproduction of content to evaluate the "state of knowledge". This is often combined with a pedagogic orientation described as "visible pedagogy". The aim of visible pedagogy is to transfer specific knowledge, and thus there are clear criteria for evaluation of the results. The evaluation emphasises the result rather than the process of learning. The collection code and visible pedagogy are found in the equity through equality model as it emphasises a specialisation of teachers, a standardisation of knowledge and a centralised locus of control. Consequently, the equity through equality model can be described as an old middle-class discourse.

Whereas the old middle class most likely favours a collection code and a visible pedagogy, the new middle class most likely favours an "integration code" and an "invisible pedagogy". The integration code finds that the pupils should have insight into principles and processes rather than facts, in other words a focus on "ways of knowing". With invisible pedagogy, the process is in focus, since the teacher has produced the context for the pupil to explore, there is less emphasis on

the transmission of specific skills, and consequently the criteria for evaluation are multiple and diffuse and not so easily measured (Bernstein 1977). The integration code and invisible pedagogy are found in the equity through diversity model as it emphasises a despecialisation of teachers, a destandardisation of knowledge and a decentralised locus of control. Consequently, the equity through diversity model can be described as a new middle-class discourse.

Thus, the question is whether the two equity models first of all are agents for different social groups' interests. This is because, according to Bernstein (1977, p. 128), "[t]he opposition between middle-class factions is not an opposition about radical change in class structure, but an opposition based upon conflicting forms of social control".

When it comes to neoliberalism, as described in the quotation from Burch in the introduction, it is the result of a *combination* of the two equity models, and in this way neoliberalism can be described as a combination of the interests of the old and new middle class. If a market is to "work", it is dependent on accountability (equality-model), autonomy (diversity-model) and choice (diversity-model). This combination of contradictory interests represented in the same policy is described by Apple (2006) as *conservative modernisation.* However, it has also been suggested that this contradictory political movement may not be as contradictory as it first might seem. This may be a way of disguising power in education:

> There may be no real contradiction after all. The use of performativity and target-related funding as a form of control, linked to the localized, productive and capillary power of the 'manager', presents a solution to the problem of 'ungovernability'; that is, government overload, which allows the state to

> retain considerable 'steerage' over the goals and processes of the education system (while appearing not to do so) (Ball 1994, p. 10).

In the following I will investigate whether and how neoliberalism is found in the policy recommendations for teacher education from the OECD and Norway in light of the two contrasting equity models. In other words, I will try to determine the interests behind the recommendations, seeking to "de-neutralise" the recommendations for a better teacher education and examine them in light of contrasting discourses on equity.

Data material

Two documents will be analysed:

1) OECD. 2005. *Teachers Matter. Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers. Overview.*

This OECD report has received a great deal of attention in Norway and is referred to in the latest teacher education policy documents (e.g. White paper no. 11 2008/2009). The OECD describes this report as follows:

> This report draws on the results of a major OECD project, *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers,* that was conducted over the 2002-04 period. The project involved the preparation of Country Background Reports, visits to some countries by external review teams, data collections, commissioned research and workshops. The fact that 25 countries took part indicates that teacher issues are a priority for public policy... (OECD 2005, p. 7).

The data material is taken from: "Common Policy Directions" (p. 9-11) and "Developing and Implementing Teacher Policy" (p. 11-12). I have

chosen to focus on what is manifested as "common policy directions" in the OECD report since these recommendations count regardless of the current teacher education system in each country. Thereby, they reveal what the OECD consider the most important guidelines. "Developing and Implementing Teacher Policy" provide important information regarding the third dimension: de-/centralisation. It should, however, be stated that many more components of what is important in teacher education are discussed in the document but not dealt with in this context.

2) White Paper no. 11 (2008-2009) for the Norwegian Parliament: *The Teacher, the Role and Education.*

The second data source is Norwegian White paper no. 11, a report to the Storting in Norway, in which the government points out what problems it finds in teacher education and makes proposals for how to solve them. It is therefore interesting to investigate how the government responds to the "Common Policy Directions" and "Developing and Implementing Teacher Policy" from the OECD report. Could there possibly be a conflict between the two documents?

The data from the Norwegian white paper is collected from Chapter 2: Evaluations and actions (pp. 12-36).

Before analysing the two documents, I will provide some information on the current teacher education system in Norway to set the context that is necessary for considering the current Norwegian approach to teacher education in light of the OECD policies.

The current situation in Norwegian teacher education

In Norway, the categories for teacher education are preschool teacher education (children from 0-5 years), primary education (6-16 years), upper secondary education (16-18 years) and vocational teacher education. The preschool teacher education is given at university colleges and is a three-year programme. This qualifies the teachers for pre-schoolers and children aged 6-10 in primary education.

To become a primary-school teacher, the student teacher will attend a university college for four years, which qualifies for all grade levels in primary education. Another option is to attend one year at university integrated into a Master's degree or a supplement to a Bachelor's or Master's degree. The university education also qualifies teachers for upper secondary education. What separates university education from the university colleges is that the teaching at the university is more specialised into subjects.

Lastly, there is vocational teacher education, which is three years and is taught at both universities and university colleges. This builds on vocational education and practice and qualifies for teaching vocational education at the upper secondary school level (White paper no. 11 2008/2009).

Analysis

As presented in the section on the theoretical framework, the data material will be analysed along the three dimensions: de-/specialisation, de-/standardisation, de-/centralisation. These dimensions are presented

and compared in tables. In the tables, I will focus on key words and content, whereas in the text I will provide whole quotations. By providing the raw data through quotations, but, additionally providing a comparative analysis describing how I interpret elements as stronger or weaker classified, I will reveal how I interpret the data material.

Specialisation or despecialisation?

As mentioned above, the category *specialisation/despecialisation* describes what is necessary to qualify as a teacher.

	OECD	Norway
Specialisation	Quality over quantity Clearer criteria for selection	
Despecialisation		Quantity over quality More democratic representation Weaker criteria for selection New ways of recruitment

Table 2: Teacher qualifications: specialisation or despecialisation?

Analysing whether the OECD and Norway focus on specialisation or despecialisation of teachers, we see that they emphasise opposite orientations.

When it comes to the relation between the quality and quantity of teachers, the OECD states the following:

- Emphasising teacher quality over teacher quantity (OECD 2005, p. 9).
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Furthermore, there should be strict control over who should have the opportunity to become a teacher:

- …more attention to the criteria for selection both into initial teacher education and teaching employment... (OECD 2005, p. 9).

Norway, on the other hand, expresses a different orientation as to the qualifications that are considered important for becoming a teacher. Although considering that criteria for selection should be classified more strictly, the Norwegian Ministry concludes that the quantity of teachers should be prioritised before the quality of teachers:

- The Ministry has considered whether the admittance requirements should be higher, but after an evaluation has concluded that it would not be suitable for the purpose now (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 33).

The underlying concern in the white paper is that there are not enough teachers. Recruitment campaigns are needed as many teachers will be retiring in a few years, combined with a growing number of students and an increase in the number of hours in school. In addition, there are too few applicants to some institutions. Furthermore, the approach taken by the Norwegian Ministry differs from the OECD, as it does not recommend that the teacher role should be more specialised by distinguishing between what are and are not teacher tasks.

Another interesting element, which also is quite different from the OECD, is that Norway focuses on the teacher corps according to the criterion of diversity, rather than proposing clearer criteria for selection:

- …there is a need for more teachers with minority backgrounds, ...male teachers, ...Sami… (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 31).

It should be mentioned here that this does not indicate lower quality *per se*, but the stated aim is to attract students from diverse backgrounds.

Lastly, diversity is also addressed by proposing different paths into the teacher profession:

- The Ministry will develop a trainee-programme for excellent candidates from different educational tracks than teacher education… The purpose of the programme is to both increase the professional competence in school and to supply new and different competence, and to open for new ways of recruitment into the teacher profession (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 33).

To summarise: While the OECD recommends a more specialised teacher profession where quality is prioritised over quantity, criteria for selection are clearer and tasks are classified in more detail, Norway proposes despecialisation by focusing on quantity over quality, and by de-emphasising criteria for selection, aiming to attract a more diverse teacher corps and aiming to find new ways of recruitment.
From analysing the dimension specialisation/despecialisation we now move on to knowledge in the education, analysed as the dimension standardisation/destandardisation:

Standardisation or destandardisation?
The category standardisation/destandardisation describes the knowledge requirements of the preferred teacher identity. This can be described as

the classification between agents, subjects, or between education and work/community/student backgrounds.

	OECD	NORWAY
Standardisation	Strong subject matter knowledge Clear, concise expectations Objectives of student learning Pedagogical skills Profession-wide standards Evidence-based practice Analysing in light of standards Developing	Stronger subject orientation Pedagogy more instrumental
Destandardisation	Effective work with various students, colleagues Developing – lifelong learning Research role alongside their teaching role	Skills for teaching basic competencies defined in curriculum Developing Decide and make decisions in a school democracy Professional team Collaborate with students, parents and other actors within and outside school The local society is an important part of the students' learning environment Students' psychosocial learning environment New ways of recruitment – different competencies Critical and reflected attitude to own and the school's practice Pedagogy – strengthen it as a

		subject that promotes value, culture and a general sense of decorum Integrate international and global aspects

Table 3: Knowledge: standardisation or destandardisation?

Both the OECD and Norway focus on elements that can be interpreted as both a standardisation and a destandardisation of the teacher education. However, as will also be pointed out, there are some important differences in the two documents.

First, when examining the elements that refer to a standardisation of the teacher education we see that the OECD focuses on strong subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills for attaining the objectives set for the students' learning.

- ...strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills… (OECD 2005, p. 10).

This implies a strong classification between the various subjects. In addition, there should be a clear distinction between what are and are not teacher tasks, with other people being employed to do the other tasks:

- In its most radical form, a greater emphasis on teacher quality could see teachers' work being redesigned to focus more on its professional and knowledge-based components, with perhaps fewer teachers being employed, but with more other people being employed to do those parts of teachers´ professional skills... (OECD 2005, p. 9).

The OECD also displays great belief in standardising what knowledge and competencies a teacher should have:

- There is widespread recognition that countries need to have clear and concise statements of what teachers are expected to know and able to do, and these teacher profiles need to be embedded throughout the school and teacher education systems. The profile of teacher competencies needs to derive from the objectives for student learning, and provide profession-wide standards and a shared understanding of what counts as *accomplished teaching* (OECD 2005, p. 9-10) [my italics].
- The profile could express different levels of performance appropriate to beginning teachers, experienced teachers, and those with higher responsibilities. A clear, well structured and widely supported teacher profile can be a powerful mechanism for aligning the elements involved in developing teachers' knowledge and skills, and for providing a means of assessing whether teacher development programmes are making a difference (OECD 2005, p. 10).
- A statement of teacher competencies and performance standards at different stages of their career will provide a framework for the teacher development continuum (OECD 2005, p. 10).

However, from describing the clearly defined expectations of teachers, working to satisfy clearly defined standards and means, there is an interesting shift in the wording when it comes to describing the teachers in more autonomous manners:

- ...teachers need to be *active* agents in analyzing their own practice in the light of professional standards, and their own students' progress in light of standards for student learning (OECD 2005, p. 10) [my italics].

However, I would nonetheless argue that the teacher role is still instrumental, as is also described in the following quotation, where the developing teacher is emphasised:

- …teachers developing a research role alongside their teaching role; with teachers engaging more actively with new knowledge; and with professional development focused on the evidence-base for improved practice (OECD 2005, p. 11).

The aim is still to improve the practice based on evidence. It seems that knowledge *per se* should not be questioned by the teachers, but that the teachers' competence and knowledge are first of all about satisfying the clearly defined expectations, thus serving a role as technicians. I will therefore categorise these elements as standardisation; that is that these elements are about teachers working for a school to satisfy clearly defined, measurable standards.

However, indications of less standardisation (a weak classification) with respect to a diverse student body are also found in the OECD document:

- …the capacity to work effectively with a wide range of students and colleagues, to contribute to the school and profession, and the capacity to continue developing (OECD 2005, p. 10).

From the Norwegian Ministry of Education, we find some similar elements as the OECD, but also differences. The Norwegian Ministry emphasises a

- Stronger professionalism: a teacher education in two tracks (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 16).
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The two tracks both give a stronger classification between subjects and a stronger classification of knowledge based on age. In the first track, from first to seventh grades, the teachers should have:

- …at least four subjects… and Norwegian and mathematics should be obligatory (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 16).

Fifth to tenth grade teachers should have three subjects, but

- …[n]one of them should be obligatory (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 16-17).

An interesting element in addition to the increased standardisation of subjects and age relevance is that more emphasis is put on the subject of pedagogy. This increase in the importance of this subject is highlighted as:

- The pedagogy subject must be the central and unifying subject in the teacher education, and form a common basis for the practice of the teacher's role (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 20).

This can be done through collaboration:

- Teachers of pedagogy must collaborate with the subject teachers and the teacher trainers on teaching practical tasks and research and development projects where theory and practice can converge. The subject must be both close to practice and research-based (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 20).

In other words, pedagogy should serve as a weaker classification between the various teachers providing core knowledge, regardless of subject matter knowledge. The pedagogy subject and student knowledge should also serve an instrumental function:

- The pedagogy subject and student knowledge shall focus on the more instrumental part of the teacher profession. The subject must also have an overriding responsibility ensuring that the student teachers, regardless of level and subjects, obtain the necessary competence to teach the students the basic competencies defined in Knowledge Promotion [recent curriculum reform] (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 20).

However, there are also elements indicating that the Norwegian white paper puts less emphasis on an instrumental approach to the teacher education/professionalism, suggesting a more autonomous and critical teacher role:

- ...with the fundamental understanding about the school's purpose and mandate, scope of action and significance in society…[and] with the understanding of the significance of change and development and with a critical reflective attitude towards one's own and the school's practice (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 20).
- …and it is a subject that promotes value, culture and a general sense of decorum (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 21).
- the subject should promote tolerance and respect, and contribute to dialogue between people with diverse backgrounds, religious and sexual orientations, and consequently contribute to combating bullying in school (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 21).

The increase in the emphasis on the pedagogy subject may thus be characterised by a weak classification, as it takes into consideration the diverse backgrounds of the students, and requires the teacher to be critical in serving a diverse student group. This could be described as a destandardisation of knowledge.

A destandardisation of knowledge may also be found through a weak classification between agents and arenas in the teacher education and education system:

- The Ministry shall develop a specific trainee-programme for especially good candidates from education tracks other than teacher education"… The purpose of the programme is to increase the professional competence in the schools and to provide new and different competence, and to open for new ways of recruitment into the teaching profession (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 33).
- An expansion with more interdisciplinary elements also implies that others than professional educators can teach the subject [pedagogy and student knowledge, the name of the subject] (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 21).
- ...a tighter collaboration internally and externally between the different subject groups and actors (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 19).
- …work systematically to integrate international and global aspects (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 26).
- …to have the ability to decide and make decisions in a school democracy (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 15).
- ...ability to collaborate and communicate with students, parents and other actors within and outside school (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 15).
- The local society is an important part of the students' learning environment (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 14).
- …the students' psychosocial learning environment (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 14).

Such elements would challenge a standardisation of knowledge, and are not found in the general policy recommendations from the OECD.

To summarise: as demonstrated in the analysis, the OECD emphasises elements that can be related to a standardisation of education to a high

degree by calling for stronger subject matter knowledge, clearer criteria for teachers to satisfy, a strictly defined teacher professionalism and more clearly defined standards and measures. The OECD has few common policy recommendations characterised by a destandardisation of education. Although emphasising development and the teachers' research role, the competence is primarily described in an instrumental manner, as goal attainment.

Similar to the OECD, the Norwegian Ministry focuses more on subject matter knowledge and more clearly defined knowledge for teachers depending on age level. However, in addition, there is emphasis on weaker classifications between different agents, arenas and subjects in both the teacher education and in school, corresponding to a destandardisation of education. This can also be found in the less instrumental approach to teacher professionalism, where teachers to a higher degree are expected to be active agents who are critical and develop. Referring to the scope of action for education, together with being critical and developing knowledge, the teachers (and other agents, such as parents, the local community) may be expected to influence the schools to a higher degree. Consequently more diverse, less standardised knowledge is in focus.

However, both documents reveal a tension between a more standardised set of criteria, or expectations, while at the same time expecting teachers to continue to develop.

Centralisation/decentralisation?

The category *centralisation/decentralisation* describes control of the education according to the degree of autonomy given to the school by the Ministry (i.e. described as strong/weak classification between state and school). Centralisation is described as weak classification between state and school, as the state has a high degree of control over the education, while the opposite is the case for decentralisation.

	OECD	NORWAY
Centralisation	Monitoring, evaluations, assessing teacher development profiles Reward, incentives Resources, structures of support Performance standards Public accountability	Performance goals, clear expectations Ministry coordinates, stimulates teacher education National monitoring group National curriculum, clear demands for learning outcome Uniform national teacher education Governmental control
Decentralisation	Own responsibility School responsible for teaching- personnel management Teachers actively involved in policy formulation, obey policy Professional autonomy	Necessary freedom, responsibility, initiative

Table 4: Locus of control: centralisation or decentralisation?

Whereas the recommendations from the OECD on the dimensions de-/specialisation and de-/standardisation have few tensions, where they have been rather clearly linked to specialisation and standardisation, the recommendations for control are more ambiguous. As we shall see, the focus on more central control is combined with more autonomy and influence.

We find that the OECD recommends stronger centralisation through evaluations and financial control mechanisms:

- …on-going evaluation throughout the teaching career to identify areas for improvement, recognizing and rewarding effective teaching, and ensuring that teachers have the resources and support they need to meet high expectations (OECD 2005, p. 9).
- …and teachers being paid substantially more to attract and retain the best possible candidates (OECD 2005, p. 9).
- …supporting teachers in the early stage of their career, and in providing the incentives and resources for on-going development (OECD 2005, p. 10).

As described above, evaluations and financial control mechanisms should be connected to clear criteria for what is expected of a teacher. However, together with the clear expectations, it is also emphasised that teachers are responsible for meeting the expectations, as described in the following quotation:

- As part of this there needs to be a clear set of expectations about teachers' own responsibilities for their on-going development, and a structure of support to facilitate their growth (OECD 2005, p. 10).

And schools should also have more autonomy:

- …providing schools with more responsibility for teacher personnel management (OECD 2005, p. 11).

However, in combination with the increased autonomy, central control is addressed through the following:

- To ensure that greater school involvement in personnel management does not worsen inequalities among public schools it is also important that there are externally determined performance standards (OECD 2005, p. 11).

The tension between autonomy and central control is also described with respect to educational reforms in the following two quotations:

- Unless teachers are actively involved in policy formulation, and feel a sense of 'ownership' of reform, it is unlikely that substantial changes will be successfully implemented. On the other hand, stakeholder groups should not be able to exercise a veto over education reforms that are mandated through democratic political processes (OECD 2005, p. 11).
- There are also institutional arrangements that can make a difference. Several countries have developed Teaching Councils that provide teachers and other stakeholder groups with both a forum for policy development and, critically, a mechanism for profession-led standard setting and quality assurance in teacher education, teacher induction, teacher performance and career development. Such organizations seek to obtain for teaching the combination of professional autonomy and public accountability that has long characterised other professions such as medicine, engineering and law (OECD 2005, p. 11).
- Policy formulation would also benefit from more extensive monitoring and evaluation of innovation and reform (OECD 2005, p. 12).

In other words, clear criteria and expectations that the teachers and schools have to satisfy are in focus, together with teacher autonomy and

influence over policy formulation processes; a combination of public accountability and autonomy.

For Norway, the same combination between increased autonomy and accountability in the form of clear goals and requirements is in focus. As can be seen in the following quotations, the Ministry of Education wants to have stronger control over the institutions by setting clear goals followed by evaluations:

- The Ministry shall set clear performance goals for quality development and coordinate and stimulate the work of the teacher education (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p 28).
- The Ministry shall establish a framework plan with regulations for the elementary teacher education with clear demands for learning outcome for subjects and teacher training…The framework plan shall contribute to creating a uniform national construction of the elementary teacher education (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 29).
- …the Ministry [shall] specify expectations for the institutions' efforts in this field and develop a set of quality criteria for the institutions to work towards (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 29).
- The Ministry shall set up a national monitoring group with broad professional competence. The monitoring group will collect the necessary information to provide an overview of and evaluate the development, both nationally and regionally, in processes, quality and results (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 29).

In addition to the clear goals and evaluations, teachers should have autonomy. However, only a few recommendations are made when it comes to autonomy:

- At the same time, it is important to find the right point of balance so that the governmental control mechanisms do not deprive the institutions of their necessary autonomy, responsibility and initiative for organising their own work (White Paper no. 11 2008/2009, p. 28).

To summarise: both the OECD and the Norwegian Ministry focus on stronger control over teacher education and teachers in combination with autonomy. There is, however, a difference in how the institutions and teachers should be controlled and how to approach the aim of a better teacher education. While clear goals and criteria followed by evaluations are recommended by both the OECD and Norway, only the OECD recommends rewards for teachers who satisfy the expectations in the form of financial control mechanisms, for example by increasing salaries. Financial control mechanisms are not recommended by the Norwegian Ministry.

Discussion

	OECD	Norway
De-/specialisation	Specialisation (quality, clear criteria for selection)	Despecialisation (quantity, selection criteria, democratic representation, various competencies)
De-/standardisation	Standardisation (subject matter knowledge, clear expectations, objectives)	Standardisation (subject matter knowledge, instrumental pedagogy)

	Destandardisation (developing, life-long learning)	Destandardisation (basic competencies, multiple agents, multiple arenas)
De-/centralisation	Centralised decentralisation (monitoring, accountability, financial incentives ← →professional autonomy)	Centralised decentralisation (performance goals, monitoring ← →professional autonomy)

Table 5: Main findings

The main findings demonstrate that altogether the OECD and the Norwegian socialist-alliance government paint pictures characterised by both similarities and differences as to what counts as good teacher education.

The OECD holds that the number of teachers in schools is less important than the presumed quality of the teacher (cf. specialisation). The vision is that a teacher student taught along clearly defined standards in teacher education, and with clear criteria for what counts as "accomplished teaching" (standardisation) combined with rewards/incentives dependent on performance standards (centralisation, public accountability) will make the best teacher. This vision of how to improve teachers can be interpreted from an entrepreneurial vision according to two aspects: 1. education can be more cost efficient (reduce the number of teachers) if the right mechanisms are in place, which means that the teachers are to

become enterprising subjects (Ball 2003), advancing and gaining rewards by demonstrating efficiency in the standards set out to monitor the school enterprise. The teacher education should prepare the student teacher to meet these standards.

Although the OECD also addresses some autonomy, with teachers being active in policymaking and continually developing, the connection between development and standards of what counts as good teaching is explicitly associated to "evidence-based practice", which can be described as an orientation where the relation between policy, practice and research is tightly connected (cf. Hammersley 2002; 2007). In this regard, not only general education and teacher education, but also *educational research* should serve an instrumental function. In other words, the teacher education policies from the OECD can be described as neoliberal in the sense that they form a vision of a more cost-efficient education system, where the products (students) to be made are described along specifically set and tightly monitored standards, where the workers (i.e. teachers) are paid/rewarded on how well the standards are met, and where they develop their practice dependent on research evidence of what "works".

The teacher education policies from the Norwegian socialist-alliance government both follow and reject some of the ideas from the OECD in some important areas. Their similarities deal with the idea that the teachers´ competencies should be standardised to a greater degree by improving subject matter knowledge and providing a more instrumental pedagogy. Furthermore, the government also addresses more centralisation through tighter monitoring.

What is rejected is that the teacher should be more specialised in terms of criteria for selection into the teacher profession. On the contrary, the government stresses a democratic representation of students and various competencies. Nor are rewards and incentives for doing well on performance indicators recommended. Bearing this in mind, there is less to gain for the teacher who does well on the standards set. Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the impact accountability that is made public, regardless the lack of incentives, may have on teachers´ practice. The stress on teachers may still be significant as has been found in recent work on consequences of national testing and ranking of schools in Norway (Marsdal 2011).

Another element which is interesting in light of neoliberalism is the marketisation of teacher education, which is promoted through the opening of different paths into the teacher profession in Norway. While private alternatives to public education are strictly limited in the comprehensive education system (only pedagogic and religious alternatives are allowed, and it is prohibited to make economic profit on education), this opening of alternative teacher education paths has provided space for other actors. One example of what is found in Norway is "Teach First" which Ball and Junemann (2011) describe as:

> an influential social enterprise which is deeply embedded between the communities of government and business and the complex "post-political" social relationships now being mobilized around philanthropic solutions to educational problems (p. 658).
> These sites, programs, and events are conduits for enterprise discourse. They point up both the role of businesses in developing and supporting curriculum development and curriculum interventions, as well as the complex global flow

> of ideas and funding through networks established by philanthropic and educational organizations. They also give some indication of the increasingly subtle and complex relations between moral and business interests in the forming of particular kinds of financially "responsible" and entrepreneurially competent citizens and workers through education (p. 656)

The question is whether the socialist-alliance government is aware of the impact that opening for such organisations might have in the long run. The question is whether we are only seeing the beginning of a more marketised solution to educational problems. Interestingly however, this way of marketising teacher education is not addressed by the OECD.

An important contrast in both the OECD´s and Norway´s teacher education policies is, however, the focus on both professional autonomy and public accountability. How the two are to be balanced is an issue that needs to be investigated in the specific context. Furthermore, it should be added that although the same policies are worked on, they may be recontextualised (see Bernstein 2000; Haugen 2009; Elstad and Sivesind 2010) into quite different practices. In other words, the same discourses may have different practical implications and interpretations. Bearing this in mind, one question to ask which is especially interesting in the Norwegian context is whether we are only preparing and laying the groundwork for a more extensive neoliberal solution to both educational and societal problems. That through the international and national competition and ranking we are preparing Norwegian citizens to be dissatisfied with the public education system. All in all, this is a zero-sum game, where, in one way or another, half of the participants will end up with below average results. An effective marketisation of the education system will be easily put into practice once the socialist-alliance

government has been replaced by a more conservative/neoliberal government, as tools (like international and national testing and ranking) for marketising through choice and privatisation are already in place. In my opinion we have a democratic problem when the political parties agree on most issues in education (Aasen 2007). To broaden the educational debate we need to question the underlying premises provided by the OECD through its international knowledge competition. Once we are participating in this competition we will have to play by its rules and visions of what good education is to make the Norwegian education look better in the international arena. Therefore, I argue that there might be reason to fear that the Nordic model of education based on a strong welfare state, with its tight connection to principles of equity, local anchoring and a common education system, is losing its legitimacy.

Notes

1. "The mission of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world … We compare how different countries' school systems are readying their young people for modern life …"(OECD 2012).

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