Certification as Reprofessionalization – Globalization, Educational Policy and the Challenge for Teacher Professionalism in Sweden

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Abstract

The suggested system of teacher certification is intended, by the government, to increase the professionalism of teachers and to contribute to the overall professionalization of teaching. However, sociologists of professions claim that professionalism in recent years, as it becomes attached to ever more occupational groups, has become an effective discourse of organizational control used in order to govern deregulated or decentralized systems from a distance. Following this, the article argues that the system of certification is part of an ongoing reprofessionalization of Swedish teachers. As part of the state’s growing number of external control mechanisms surrounding the work of teachers, the system of certification is argued to contribute to a process in which the work of teachers is changed in line with the perceived demands of a knowledge economy in which effectiveness, competition and accountability are central values. As a result, what it means to be a teacher is slowly changing in the process of educational reform, contributing to the uncertainty expressed by Swedish teachers as to what it is they are supposed to achieve.

Introduction

Under increasing forces of supra-territorial pressures, the conditions for teachers’ work may be changing as education is transformed from being a decidedly national concern to becoming a central theme on the agendas of many intergovernmental organizations, such as the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) or the European Union (EU). As education, or at least the education policy of ever more states, becomes reshaped in line with a discourse of a knowledge economy, the central tasks expected of teachers are, not least in the Nordic countries, called into question. The result of this is widespread uncertainty among teachers about how to make sense of their work in a context of rapid social change. The OECD report Education Today – The OECD Perspective (2009a) underlines the need for teachers
to improve in a number of ways, most notably to become more effective, if their countries are to stay (or become) competitive in the global economy. The report argues that in order to achieve the changes necessary, teachers must be “professionally developed” by being subjugated to “continuous evaluation throughout their careers” as a way of making sure that they focus on “evidence based” knowledge in order to “improve practice”.

In accordance with the arguments presented by the OECD, the need to improve the quality of teachers has become a central theme of contemporary Swedish education reform. A central part of this process of reform is to improve the status of teachers and teacher education, which for a long time have been considered to be in decline, in order to make teaching an attractive occupational choice for the most talented students. In order to accomplish this, strategies for the professionalization of teaching comes to the fore, as this is thought to be a key strategy in order to recreate the status of teachers in line with that of classical professional groups, such as physicians or lawyers, even though teaching never has been considered to fulfill the classical demands of a professional occupation. The present liberal government has, in order to achieve its goal of making teaching a more attractive occupational choice, initiated and presented two governmental investigations concerning (1) a restructuring of Swedish teacher education (SOU 2008:109) and (2) the creation of a system of certification of teachers (SOU 2008:52). The latter is an obvious attempt to transform teaching in line with classical professional groups by making it impossible for unauthorized persons to work as teachers and thereby making it more exclusionary. However, in late-modern society, the meaning of professionalism is far from self evident. Some researchers within the sociology of professions reformulate it as a governing technology used by employers in order to control their employees at a distance by establishing appropriate work identities and conducts; making the desires of individuals to be considered professional into a powerful mechanism of self discipline in accordance with the perceived demands of the new times.

The purpose of this article is to critically discuss the commission report on the certification of teachers (SOU 2008:52) in light of developments within the sociology of professions and against a backdrop of globalizing influences on the education reform processes of Sweden. Is a system of certification to be seen as a way of increasing the professionalism of Swedish teachers or as a way for the state to tighten control of a decentralized education system?
Globalization, the State and the Knowledge Economy

In order to understand the way that globalization is affecting national education systems it is important to understand that these changes are an integral part of a wider process of state transformation in light of globalizing pressures. Globalization is often thought of as neo-liberal economics gone global, resulting in the emergence of a global marketplace, but writers such as Dale (1999) and Cerny (1997) argues that the effects of globalization are as political as they are economic since “…the shaping of the playing field of politics itself is increasingly determined not within isolated units…called states, [but] rather…derives from a complex congeries of multilevel games played on multilayered institutional playing fields, above and across, as well as within, state boundaries” (Cerny 1997, p. 253). The increasing interest in education by intergovernmental organizations such as the OECD or the EU in recent years is one clear example of the rescaling of political power (Robertson et al 2006) inherent in processes of globalization. At the same time, the State as the ultimate locus of power is also challenged from within as regional or local authorities are increasingly intertwined in sub-national patterns of interdependence and cooperation across national borders.

As have been stated above, intergovernmental organizations are central actors in the construction of a globalized educational narrative. Rizvi and Lingard (2006) argue that the OECD is one of the most dominant organizations in this process, but also the EU is playing a more active role in promoting the development of the education systems of Europe in a more uniform direction. The resulting supranational narrative of education is often described as an emerging knowledge economy. The defining trademark of the knowledge economy is that “…it is market driven and performs according to a market ideology (Sörlin & Vessuri 2007, p. 3). Ball (2008), even though he considers the term both elusive and misleading, argues in line with this as he contends that the knowledge economy may be understood “…in terms of the increasing role of knowledge as a factor of production and its impact on skills, learning, organization and innovation” (Ball 2008, p. 20). In the knowledge economy, education is reframed and understood within the logic of the market. In this logic, the purpose of the education system is, above all, to generate competitive subjects with the skills to secure key positions in the global race for high quality jobs and property rights. In order to accomplish this, the transformation of education systems according to market principles of competition and accountability becomes imperative. As a result, and due to the rescaling of politics inherent in globalization, individual
states are becoming less capable of organizing education according to internal interests, as their dependence on intergovernmental organizations and other states are increasing in areas such as trade, business and finance.

As education is understood more in terms of a factor of production its significance for the economic competitiveness of different states increases, making it into an area of highest political interest. As Ball writes in his introduction; “education has become a major political issue, a major focus of media attention and the recipient of a constant stream of initiatives and interventions from government” (Ball 2008, p. 1). At the same time as the logic of the market brings about deregulation and decentralization within education systems, central governments feel a need to simultaneously tighten control over educational outcomes as the ratings of student performance in international evaluations have become an influential marker of the competitiveness of a state in the global marketplace. This is achieved through the use of models of target-setting and the implementation of systems of evaluation and inspection (Ball 2003). According to Lingard and Ozga (2007) this opens up for states that “…regard competition and individual responsibility as central to the production of a buoyant economy and society…[and that] steers at a distance via policy frameworks through an emphasis on product accountability, resulting in the rise of a culture of performativity and audit” (Lingard & Ozga 2007, p. 3). Ball (2003) reaches the same conclusion and talks about this as the emergence of the performative society in which the technologies of the market, new managerialism and performativity is the defining trademarks. He defines performativity as “…a technology, a culture, and a mode of regulation…that employ judgments, comparisons and displays as a new means of control, attrition and change” (Ball 2006, p. 692). In other words, the changes currently affecting most western education systems is to be seen as one example of a larger process of state restructuring under pressures of globalization. This process is not just changing the way that educational systems are designed, or the goals they are set up to reach, but also the way that they are governed in new and less obvious ways. The transformation of the workings of national states from structures of bureaucracy into a culture of performativity and new public management based in the logic of the marketplace implies new roles and tasks for state employees. This is especially evident for teachers as education arguably has been the primary target of governmental reform policies aimed at transforming traditional structures in line with the perceived demands of the new times.
Professionalism and Teaching in a Performative Society

Before going into the discussion about how processes of globalization and performativity may affect the work of teachers, some definitions of terms related to “professional” is needed. Most importantly, the difference between professionalism and professionalization must be made clear. Helsby (1995) argue that professionalization refers to the pursuit of professional status, that is, the self-interest of a certain occupational group when it comes to e.g. pay or autonomy, while professionalism “…implies not only the exercise of special expertise but also an altruistic concern to constantly improve practice in the interest of clients” (Helsby 1995, p. 318). In other words, professionalization is thought to refer to attempts at improving the status and standings of teachers while professionalism refers to improvements of the practice of teaching. Hargreaves (2006) argues that the process of professionalization often, but not always, is linked to questions of professionalism in the way that if an occupational group becomes successful in improving practice they will simultaneously improve their status. However, when it comes to teaching these processes are as likely to be contradictory because “…defining professional standards in high-status, scientific and technical ways as standards of knowledge and skill, can downgrade, neglect or crowd out the equally important emotional dimensions of teachers’ work in terms of being passionate about teaching and caring for students learning and life” (Hargreaves 2006, p. 674).

The Redefinition of Professionalism in the Performative Society

The discussion above concerning the meaning of professionalism is, however, based on a classical view of what professional work is all about. In this view a professional occupation was defined as one having (1) control over work and the tasks included in it; (2) autonomy and control over a specified area of expertise; (3) a supervising professional organization and (4) a defined code of professional ethics (Torstendahl 1989). Julia Evetts (2006) calls this occupational professionalism and defines it as “…a discourse constructed within professional groups themselves that involves discretionary decision-making in complex cases, collegial authority, the occupational control of the work [which] is based on trust in the practitioner by both clients and employers” (Evetts 2006, p. 141). Traditionally, the label “professional” was limited to a quite narrow group of occupations which, like physicians and lawyers, where considered somewhat exclusive and that possessed high societal status due to their high level of
control over a clearly defined area of expertise and their accompanying independence on matters concerning those areas.

Today, on the other hand, the concept of professionalism is being used in relation to an ever wider range of occupations and workplaces. Dent and Whitehead (2002) claim that being professional have become a central component of all kinds of work in the postmodern society, in which we are all expected to perform professionally. Evetts (2006) argues for the emergence of a discourse of professionalism “constructed and used by managers, supervisors, and employers of workers, [that is] being utilized in order to bring about occupational change and rationalization as well as to (self-) discipline workers in the conduct of their work” (Evetts 2006, p. 140). The result of this is that, in contemporary society, we are witnessing the surfacing of two contrasting forms of professionalism, what Evetts calls organizational (the new discourse of professionalism) and occupational (traditional/historical) professionalism. She concludes that “these two contrasting forms of professionalism would seem to be in competition in the modern world where systems of new public management, particularly in health and in education, are becoming common” (Evetts 2006, p. 141). In line with this, Fournier (1999) contends that this new style professionalism must be understood as a way of controlling the increased flexibility of work inherent in globalized capitalism and that “the mobilization of the discursive resources of professionalism potentially allows for control at a distance through the construction ‘of appropriate’ work identities and conducts” (Fournier 1999, p. 281). In other words, just as the changes in education currently occurring in many countries must be viewed in light of larger processes of the reconstruction of the organization of nation states, the changes currently affecting teachers’ work should possibly be analyzed in light of larger reorientations of the meaning of professionalism in the globalized capital system of western societies and as an integral part of connected processes of education reform.

Teaching in the Performative Society

According to Ball the defining feature of the performative society is that the performances of individuals and organizations “…serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’…[and] as such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization” (Ball 2003, p. 216). In the performative society, all occupational groups are exposed to the constant pressures of evaluation, inspection,
accountability and competition, making individuals forced to perform their work under increasing ontological insecurity – constantly wondering if one is doing enough or the right thing. Not even the most classical professionals are exempted from this new logic, as everything “…must now be measured against external criteria and scientific models: systems presented as objective, value-neutral, cold and accurate” (Dent & Whitehead 2002, p. 9).

When it comes to teaching, Ball argues for an ongoing process of re-professionalization of teaching as “new roles and subjectivities are produced as teachers are re-worked as producers/providers, educational entrepreneurs and managers” (Ball 2003, p. 218) Educational reforms in a performative society aims, according to him, not only to change education at an organizational level but also to change what a teacher is, or what it means to teach. An educational market needs a new kind of teacher with new kinds of knowledge. They need to be able to maximize performance and set aside irrelevant principles and old time commitments. Excellence and improvement in light of externally created goals and targets are the characteristics of this new teacher. Hargreaves agrees with this description but calls it de-professionalizing as the monitoring systems of the performative society have “…subjected teachers to the micro-management of ever-tightening regulations and controls that are the very antithesis of any kind of professionalism” (Hargreaves 2006, p. 686).

According to Ball there has been, in England, a radical movement focused on the transformation of the teaching profession “…both as vocational practice and as mental labor” (Ball 1994, p. 48). Trough “discourses of derision” schools and teachers have been made out to be “failing” and hence in need of “…regulation and ‘hard’ management” (Helsby 1999, p. 167), as a way of finding public support for educational reforms aimed at the transformation of schooling in line with the logic of the marketplace. In this process the restructuring of teaching in a more technical fashion becomes a necessary action in order to assure control over educational outcomes. From this it is obvious that the older understanding of professionalism, in which the need for trust in practitioners from employers and clients is a key ingredient, have become severely challenged within the field of education. The paradox is that during this process the habit of speaking of teachers as professionals has increased dramatically even though Helsby summarizes the results of research on English teachers by claiming that “the imposed structural changes to the education system…would seem to suggest a transformation of teachers’ work and a
mutation of their role as semi-autonomous professional to managed and expendable employee” (Helsby 1999, p. 172).

Studying the Education Policy of Sweden

This article builds upon an initial analysis of parts of the empirical material of a doctoral dissertation project inspired by the approach called “policy sociology” or “education policy research” (Ball 2008). The overall purpose of the project is to analyze in what way professionalism in teaching is constructed within Swedish education policy and how this can be understood in relation to the debates surrounding the increasing globalization of education policy in western societies.

Analyzing Policy Texts

According to Codd (1988 in Ball et al 2007) there are basically two types of policy analysis. One type aims at providing specific policy recommendations or to provide policy makers with information and is usually called analysis for policy. The other kind is called analysis of policy and is aimed at examine “…‘the inputs and transformational processes operating upon the construction of public policy’…and also the effects of such policies on various groups; and…the values, assumptions and ideologies underpinning the policy process” (Codd 1988 in Ball et al. 2007, p. 168). This study is an example of the latter, as it aims at analyzing the content of education policy documents, in this case the governmental investigation on the certification of teachers (SOU 2008:52), which at the same time could be considered a good example of an analysis for policy.

When working with policy texts, Codd contends that it is vital not to view the text itself as “a vehicle for communicating ‘information’ or transmitting ‘a plan of action’, but as an ideologically constructed product of political forces” (Codd 1988 in Ball et al. 2007, p. 180). He goes on to argue that the purpose of policy texts is to establish public consent and that they, in doing so, produces real social effects that are largely unrecognized. In this way, policy texts constitute the official discourse of the state and become instruments or objects of power in the sense that they are used to achieve “ideological harmony” and as “institutionalized forms of domination they constitute pervasive expressions of power without normally being recognized as such by those who are affected” (Codd 1988 in Ball et al. 2007, p. 177). Taylor et al (1997) concurs with this and argue that it is useful, in the process of analysis, to distinguish between the levels
of context, text and consequences of policies. In this article focus will be given to the first two categories as the influence of the supranational discourse of a knowledge economy will be discussed as well as the way that the concept of professionalism is used in the arguments presented in the text to support the policy suggestions concerning the need for a system of teacher certification. Following this, the analytical questions put to the text concerns the way that the text connects to the rhetoric of the knowledge economy and how the arguments made can be understood in relation to the competing discourses of professionalism argued for by Evetts (2006). But before these questions are answered, a brief background concerning resent developments within the education system of Sweden will be presented as a way of contextualizing the study.

The Restructuring of Swedish Education: Contextualizing the Study

The theoretical discussion of resent developments concerning the work of teachers are, in this article, based on research concerning English teachers, but even if there are substantial differences between the educational systems of England and Sweden, processes of change, more or less like the ones occurring in England, have been central parts of Swedish education for a number of years. Carlgren and Klette (2008) write about what they call a restructuring of Nordic teachers, a process that begun during the 1990s and that have brought with it substantial changes to, what is usually referred to as the Nordic model of education. This model was characterized by a comprehensive and unstreamed school system in which all pupils, despite different academic and economic backgrounds and resources, were enrolled and it was constructed on the basis of social democracy and the belief that the state and the public sector was the best provider and organizer of education (Carlgren et al 2006; Oftedal Telhaug et al 2006). The importance of this model of education, in which the same possibilities was to be given to all, regardless of class affiliations, for the preservation of the welfare state model of Sweden was firmly established in the consciousness of the Swedish public. But due to economic crisis and processes of economic restructuring in the early 1990s the process begun that was to, by the end of the decade result in a decentralized system based in goal-steering in which the responsibility for education was transferred from the central state to local municipalities. Moreover, the state monopoly on education was abolished and a system of competition based on school vouchers and the emergence of state sponsored “free schools” were established as a way of increasing parental choice and effectiveness (Carlgren & Klette 2008; Lindblad et al 2002). This
dramatic restructuring is to be seen, according to Carlgren and Klette, as an adjustment to a new social (globalizing) reality and not, as was the case when the Nordic model of education was first established, as a point of departure for social change in a wider perspective.

During the last few years the education reform process of Sweden have been focused on the need to improve teachers as a way of fixing the perceived problems of Swedish education, mainly manifested in the relative decline of Swedish students in international evaluations, such as PISA. In the political rhetoric, a teaching profession built upon the foundation of knowledge and discipline is needed in order to reverse the declining results of Swedish students and in order to raise the societal status of teaching in order for teacher educations to be able to recruit the best students. As a result, the present government quickly instigated two separate investigations that was to suggest how teacher educations could be reformed in order to educate “better” teachers and how a system of certification of teachers could be designed and implemented in order to assure the continuing quality of teachers in the schools of Sweden. If implemented, the results of both these investigations will arguably have consequences for the way that professionalism in teaching in Sweden may be understood; indeed, the need to improve the professionalism, and in the same process, the professionalization of teachers are at the core of both investigations. The focus will now be turned to the latter of the two.

The Certification of Swedish Teachers

This final section will be divided into two parts. First, the arguments for and suggestions made by the Commission on the certification of teachers will be briefly presented. Following that, focus will be turned to a discussion of how the commission report can be understood in relation to the global discourse of a knowledge economy and finally, the article will close with some considerations of the impact of the suggestions made in the report on the future development of teacher professionalism in Sweden.

Certification as a Way of Improving Educational Outcomes and Increasing Professionalism in Teaching

In the governmental directives given to the commissioner it is clearly stated that the governments overall objective is to improve the educational outcomes of Swedish students by improving the quality of the education system. One important part of this process is to reevaluate the required levels of competence
needed in order to work as a teacher and to suggest how these requirements can be increased and guaranteed when it comes to the permanent employment of teachers (SOU 2008:52, p. 289). The need for harder regulations of the teaching profession is based, to a large extent, on the OECD report *Teachers Matter* (2005) in which the importance of competent teachers is underlined as one of the most important variables when it comes to students’ achievements. However, in Sweden, as a result of increasing decentralization, there are an increasing number of persons working within the school system without any kind of formal teacher training, or lacking the specialization required for the subject or grade in which they teach. According to the National Agency for Education, in 2007 19% of all teachers in public Swedish compulsory schools and 26% of all teachers in Upper Secondary Schools did not have any formal teacher training. For non public schools the numbers are even worse, 38% of teachers in the compulsory years and 50% of teachers at the Upper Secondary levels had no formal teaching degree (SOU 2008:52, Chapter 7). If teachers teaching grades and subjects for which they lack required specializations are included, the numbers get even worse. This is thought to be one of the central reasons behind the relative decline of Swedish students in international evaluations such as PISA or TIMSS.

As was stated already in the commission directives, the implementation of a system of certification of teachers is thought to become an effective solution to these problems, and also to contribute to the professionalization of teaching by raising its societal status and thereby attracting more talented students to become teachers (SOU 2008:52 p. 289ff). The suggestions is also aimed at improving the professionalism of teachers by providing increased incentives to engage in high quality professional development, preferably aimed at school development projects, and increasing the professional cooperation between newer and more experienced teachers. The first basic suggestion is that in order to be allowed to receive a permanent employment in Swedish schools a teacher must be certified by the National Agency for Education. The certification will only be valid for the subjects and grades corresponding to the degree certificate of the teacher. To receive certification a beginner teacher must complete a one year probationary service under supervision of an experienced teacher following graduation from a teacher training program, before being able to apply for certification at the National Agency for Education (SOU 2008:52 p. 182ff). Both the beginner teacher and the supervisor will have time reserved for the introduction in their schedules. Only certified teachers will be allowed to
perform certain teacher tasks, such as grading students. Another central part of
the certification system is the possibility to recall a certification if a teacher is
found to be neglecting his/her duties or in other ways is deemed incompetent.
Charges and investigations concerning individual teachers are suggested to be
handled by the National School Inspection but decided by a special committee
at the National Agency for Education (SOU 2008:52 p. 195ff).

The second major suggestion in the commission report connected to the system
of certification is the creation of new types of positions available to teachers.
The idea is that the possibility of advancing as a teacher will increase the
incentives for teachers to undergo continuous professional development or to
engage in doctoral studies or other research educations. The possibility to
advance to higher positions with more advanced tasks and better pay is also
thought to contribute to making teaching a desirable career choice among the
most talented students (SOU 2008:52 p. 204ff). There are two new positions in
the suggestion and one of them is only available to teachers in the theoretical
subjects of the Upper secondary school with a PhD degree, which is the
position of Senior Lecturer. This position already exist but the intention of the
commission is to extinguish it more clearly from ordinary teaching positions and
to increase the low number of Senior Lecturers that returns to public schools
after having finished their doctoral education. A major responsibility for this
group of teachers will be to safeguard the academic training of students heading
for university studies (SOU 2008:52 p. 208). The second, and new, position is
called Specially Qualified Teacher, and will be available to all certified teachers
after 4 years of highly recommended service if the teacher can prove
him/herself as especially competent by completing a well documented
pedagogical or school development project or undergo a two year university
based research training program within the framework of educational sciences.
A Specially Qualified Teacher is supposed to take extra responsibility for subject
development, school improvement and quality work and to function as mentor
for student teachers as well as teachers doing their probationary service. In
order to be able to complete such tasks, the teacher will receive a somewhat
lower number of classes to teach (SOU 2008:52 p. 207). The National Agency
for Education will be responsible for approving Specially Qualified Teachers as
well as Senior Lecturers as these positions are to be added to the certificate of
the teacher.
Swedish Teachers between the Market and the State

As have already been mentioned, the reformation of policies related to teachers has become a central part of Swedish education reforms of recent years. This is no coincidence. In a highly influential report, the herald of the knowledge economy - the OECD - singles out the improvement of the quality of teachers as the most effective way of improving student outcomes by means of policy. In the report *Teachers Matter – Attaining, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005) the organization provides six overall policy suggestions as to how states are to create the effective teachers they need to meet the demands of the global market. These are in short; (1) Emphasizing teacher quality over teacher quantity; (2) developing teacher profiles to align teacher development, performance and school needs; (3) viewing teacher development as a continuum; (4) making teacher education more flexible; (5) transforming teaching into a knowledge-rich profession; and (6) providing schools with more responsibility for teacher personnel management. Regarding the first two policy suggestions the Swedish commission report follows the OECD policies very closely. The overall purpose of the system of certification is to ensure teacher quality over quantity by, for example, introducing a probationary year under supervision following graduation form the teacher education programs in order to assure the quality of new teachers. Closely related to this is the commissions suggestion that the National Agency for Education should provide clear teacher competence profiles by which teachers doing their probationary year are to be evaluated, something that is also recommended by the OECD. The point of these profiles is to make sure that teacher educations deliver equivalent programs in line with the needs of the schools in which the teachers are to work. As was presented above, the second objective connected to the certification system was the establishment of career opportunities for teachers within schools, a measure designed to increase the incentives of teachers to take part in continuous development projects throughout their careers, another area highlighted by the OECD. The relatedness of these two reports is evident, making Swedish teacher policies part of a much larger process of education reconstruction under pressures of globalization.

As was also discussed above, the increasing importance of education within the discourse of a knowledge economy for the competitiveness of states have brought with it an increased interest from politicians to take control of educational outcomes (Ball 2008). At the same time, the market logic of the knowledge economy has resulted in heavily decentralized school systems,
making the creation of systems of control from a distance into a political priority of increasing importance. As Evetts (2006), Dent and Whitehead (2002) and Fournier (1999) argues, professionalism as a discourse of organizational control has proven to be an effective way of achieving this, making the commission report, with its clear ambition to contribute to the professionalization of teaching as well as increased professionalism amongst teachers into an interesting document to analyze from this point of departure.

Swedish Teacher unions are eager supporters of a system of certification as they are hoping that it will prevent people from working as teachers without formal education as well as to contribute to increased societal status by associating teachers with other certified professional groups; in other words, to contribute to the professionalization of teaching. However, even the claims of exclusivity of the most established professions are being called into question within the logic of globalized capitalism, making it questionable if a certification by itself contributes to societal status in a world were almost all occupations are expected to perform professionally (Dent & Whitehead 2002). If anything, the commission report argues for the State to assume greater control over the work of teachers trough the creation of more expanded systems of control, a development that is the opposite of the quite extensive autonomy of the classical professions. Instead of contributing to a professional discourse from within the teacher profession, the suggestions of the commission seem to indicate above all the creation of more external systems of control in order to guarantee that teachers live up to, equally externally created, goals over which they have virtually no influence. Examples of this is the key role of the National Agency for Education in handling the system of certification as well as to produce the teacher profiles that play a crucial part in shaping the future of the teaching profession. This development is well in line with the logic of the performative society, as described by Ball (2006, 2003), and constitutes an obvious example of the state’s ambition to increase its control of the education system in new and less obvious ways. The hope for a system of certification to increase the professional status of teachers by its mere existence seems, from this perspective, rather improbable in late-modern society.

Also when it comes to the commissions suggestions concerning the improvement of professionalism amongst teachers does the state advance its position. The major suggestion here is the introduction of a compulsory probationary year and the establishment of new teacher positions in order to
improve the professional discussions between teachers and to increase the incentives of teachers to engage in continuous professional development projects. However, a fresh OECD report (2009) indicates that teachers already are positive towards participating in professional development but that the rewards following such an initiative are insufficient. One may question if the level of work required in order to qualify for the new teacher positions is to extensive to be found interesting, given that teachers already feel that even smaller efforts at personal improvements are not rewarded in a sufficient way. Also, the expanded role of school managers in, for example, deciding in what way Specially Qualified Teachers and Senior Lecturers are to be used also contributes to making rewards by means of new tasks uncertain. Further more, it is the state, and not any kind of teacher organization that is to decide the criteria for acceptance to the new positions. The state will also design the teacher profiles in accordance with which the professional development of teachers are intended to be organized. In other words, teachers themselves will have little influence over the formulation of the direction of their work in the future, as well as the professional development initiatives needed, should the commissions suggestions become reality.

So, Swedish teachers seem to be caught between a globalized discourse transforming education in line with the ideology of the market and the state’s desire to establish control over a decentralized education system in new ways. As have already been discussed, this must be considered two sides of the same coin as it is the marketization of education that makes it so important for politicians to control, creating a situation in which a more decentralized and deregulated situation for Swedish teachers is followed up by new kinds of systems of control from the state. A result of this is the feeling among teachers that a number of new tasks, not least in relation to these control systems, have been laid upon them, making it hard for them to concentrate on what they consider to be their major duty. Does this mean that teachers are in fact depersonalized within the discourse of a knowledge economy, as is argued by Hargreaves (2006)? The answer is not self-evident. As Evetts (2006) argues, there are two differing discourses of professionalism existing side by side in the world of today, what she calls occupational and organizational professionalism. In relation to the former and classical discourse, it could be argued that teachers are indeed being depersonalized as the suggestions put forward by the commission does not in any way contribute to any increased autonomy or influence over their work for teachers, rather the opposite. On the other hand,
by viewing the commission report in light of professionalism as a discourse of organizational control brought about by increasing processes of globalization it becomes more useful to think about what happens to teaching in line with Balls (2003) argument of a reprofessionalisation of teachers. What it means to teach, and to be a teacher is slowly changing in the process of global education reform. This creates a need for the state to find new ways of governing the education system, resulting in new and unfamiliar tasks for teachers as they are to face up to the monitoring systems of the emerging performative society. The Swedish commission report on the certification of teachers can easily be seen as a part of this process of change.

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