

Chapter 15

Curriculum Theory, Didaktik, and Educational Leadership: Reflections on the Foundations of the Research Program

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Abstract This chapter provides concluding reflections and next steps in a research program bridging curriculum theory/Didaktik and educational leadership studies. The bridging utilizes non-affirmative education theory as the theoretical ground. To begin, we present a retrospective discussion of the project. We then relate the approach to the contributions included in this volume, especially focusing on the normativity of education theories, and pointing at how non-affirmative education theory corresponds to deliberation oriented democratic-hermeneutic initiatives. Non-affirmative education theory identifies both leadership, teaching and curriculum work as critical deliberation based professional activities driven by subjects, individual agency in historically developed cultural and societal institutions framed by policies. Non-affirmative educational leadership practices are expected to take a critical stand regarding given policies, and other expectations, yet mindful of that education in democratic societies, typically following a *Bildung* tradition aim at individuals making up of their own minds and learning that practices, also moral and political ones, may and can be changed. The approach applied in this volume, i.e. to point at the roots of modern European education theory not only helps us to better see connections between this *Bildung* tradition, Deweyan pragmatism and deliberative democracy but is also used as a point of departure to continue towards comparative research on how educational leadership work is carried out in the intersection between curriculum as a policy document and leadership practices at different levels as discursive practices.

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Since their inceptions as academic fields, curriculum theory/Didaktik and educational leadership have developed as disparate fields with different traditions and theoretical logics (Uljens and Ylimaki 2015; Ylimaki and Uljens 2017). Curriculum theory has taken many shapes as theory of education and Bildung, theory of governance of institutionalized education, as a cultural critique, or education as a critical-ideological force in societal transformation. Educational leadership literature, has evolved from an organizational theory and management foundation to an empirically driven field, developing leadership models or forms grounded in organizational theory and, more recently, institutional theory or critical theories as well as previous empirical studies. Regardless of grounding, the tendency is to approach schooling on an individual, interactive and a practitioner level, offering leadership approaches or forms that contribute to the school (organizational) issues, social dynamics between education professionals and being directed by “best practices” (instructional and otherwise) or social justice where curriculum or aims and content of education have been distant. As we argued in Part I, we see that both fields have demonstrated more or less blind spots to the interactional level between societal aims and social interactions in schools.

While curriculum/Didaktik primarily focuses on curriculum theorizing, all of which focus on broader questions of societal aims, values and ideals translated into content and methods, educational leadership scholars have produced approaches and forms (e.g. instructional leadership, transformational, transformative) primarily from an empirical base. The same holds true both within the Nordic (European) and US traditions. In Part I, we also argued that scholars in both fields have produced important literature but through approaches with inherent normativity problems, thereby grounding their work in social reproduction or social transformation perspectives on the relations between schools and society. For example, normativity problems occur when current and future ideals are clearly identified, perhaps leaving insufficient room to consider the future as an open question. In our view, such practices are problematic for education in a democratic society; however, as Carolyn Shields (2011) also reminds us in her Foreword, education is not value neutral or norm free.

Hence, in Part I, in framing this project, we support a less normative, non-affirmative approach and the use of modern education theory concepts. The term ‘non-affirmative education theory’, indeed modern education theory and its core concepts, is unfamiliar to many curriculum and leadership scholars outside the German-Nordic frame of reference, including North America and many other countries worldwide. This volume may be the first in which a non-affirmative approach is proposed for scholars in both fields and in both contexts. In our view, a non-affirmative approach has the potential to decenter instrumentalism that has, as Autio powerfully argues, dominated educational scholarship and practice, including curriculum and leadership.

Going forward, regardless of whether curriculum theorizing/Didaktik and leadership studies are treated coherently or not, both of these fields have developed in relation to perspectives on education, curriculum, governance, and leadership at the nation state level. As we and other contributors have argued throughout this volume, we must now consider curriculum and leadership at the transnational level as well

as within nation states with both similar and particular historical and cultural contexts. With this volume, we lay a foundation for a coherent agenda that brings curriculum theory/Didaktik and leadership studies closer together in new research fields amidst what we have termed globopolitanism.

More specifically, our agenda built upon an assumption that three dilemmas are crucial for any theory of education, curriculum, or educational leadership thereof. First, we asked how a theory specifies the relation between education and other societal practices including e.g. culture, economy, politics), and here we argued for a non-hierarchical relation. This question has traditionally been the focus of curriculum studies, considering how curricula specify what education should be aiming at and what cultural contents should be selected in order to reach these aims. We argued that curriculum work to answer these questions is inherently leadership. Second, we asked how we explain human interaction and educational influence, questions that have pointed at methods in curriculum studies. While we recognize that the term influence has been widely utilized from different traditions and empirically driven logics (e.g. a control paradigm in curriculum theorizing and numerous leadership studies grounded in transactional and transformational leadership approaches) but the term has not been theorized as we do here with education theory. Rather, we argue that in answering the second question regarding the nature of individual interactions or relations in any theory of education, there is a necessary element of pedagogical influence, invitation or provocation in the *Bildung* process. As noted in part one, *theories of (general) education* are aimed at addressing both a theory of *Bildung* (aims and contents) and a theory of teaching (educational influence) in a systematic manner. *Theory of Bildung* traditionally includes reflection on the aims of education and how selected cultural contents may support reaching these aims, while *theory of education* explicates those educative interactions involved in treating the contents for reaching given aims.

It should, thus, be observed that exchanging the term ‘influence’ to another one does not do away with the core problem at hand. The paradox of modern education is that it seems we have to accept the individual as being indeterminate, i.e. free, in order for learning to occur and for education to be a meaningful activity. On the other hand, it seems we have to accept that we can reach *cultural freedom* only by living among others – “man becomes man only among men” (Kant, Fichte). That is, only by experiences, activity and reflection that we learn from other humans we become a part of the culture sharing language, practices and norms. Without these we would not be culturally free (Benner 1991; Uljens 2002). The modern heritage in education theory reminds us that this process of pedagogically supported growing into a culture can occur in ways that allow me to become aware of what kind of culture I seem to be growing into. Education also can help the individual transcend the very culture into which she or he has grown into. This is not problematic. The dilemma comes here: if the individual really is assumed free in this radical sense as being indeterminate, then it appears that it is exactly this and nothing else that, first, makes education possible, but also, second, that might allow external influences to mold the individual. On the other, if the individual is free in this radical sense, then it seems that what experiences are paid attention to is in the hands of the individual

herself and her way of relating to the world, others and herself. Suddenly, in this light it appears as if education would be a completely impossible task. Modern education theory tried to locate a position between unlimited possibility to influence the learner and the impossibility to influence the learner, given that determinist assumptions about the world and the human was abandoned.

Or, we could always try to communicate with others and convey things, but it would definitely be beyond our control to lead the individual to predetermined aims, as is done in reproductive, socialization oriented pedagogy or in transformative pedagogy striving towards making ideals real for the future by educational means. With modernity our western tradition left the idea of man being determined by birth, religion or social class. We also left a teleological view of development. The future became radically open. Human beings turned from being only law abiding to law establishing, political subjects accepting to live by the laws we make ourselves. In the same vein, we became historical: if the future is open the way we live, we cannot avoid making history. Faced with this dramatic shift from a teleological view of man and world, founding fathers of education as a science and theory tried conceptually to find a room for pedagogical action that did not perceive of itself an almighty power to form indetermined objects according to his/her own ideas about the future, and which, on the other hand did not fall into despair of being unable to support others growth. The theoretical concept of non-affirmativity in pedagogy refers to an invitational activity is relational in its core: only to the extent that the learner accepts the invitation, she can, through own activity, engage in a self-transcending activity. Fichte called this relation activity *Bildsamkeit* on the learner's side. On the educator's side, he used the concept of summoning to self-activity.

One of the cornerstones of modern pedagogy is the notion that autonomy (*Mündigkeit*) is the highest objective of education – discerning thought and action as regards issues of both knowledge and values. According to Herbart, moral freedom means following the reflected will, not acting conventionally from impulse or emotion. Consequently, education consists in the summoning of the Other to reflect over, for instance, the reasonableness of one's own will in relation to others and to the interests of others. Educating the will is then about the cultivation of discernment with the help of reason. Here we have argued that we need to (re)theorize educational leadership from a root of existing education theory, drawing explicitly on the German tradition including particularly Benner's (1991) reconstruction. This tradition is also present in John Dewey's philosophy that has a Hegelian root. As we argued in detail earlier, Hegel draws on Kant and Fichte's critique of Kant that opened the way for Hegel on which Dewey builds his philosophy. Further, John Dewey developed his philosophy in relation to a core tradition of western citizenship, identity, and democracy 100 years ago in a nation with a relatively new U.S. democracy from classical theorists who developed ideas 100 years even prior. Interestingly, education theory in its classical tradition and applications with Dewey and others have survived over time. At the same time, we see the increasing relevance of interculturality and multiculturalism to our non-affirmative education theoretical framing in what we have termed an era of globopolitanism increasingly characterized by populism and neo-nationalist discourses. Of course we also recog-

nize that Kant Fichte and others were writing about cosmopolitanism, but we are now living in a time with a paradoxical neo-nationalist discourse along with globopolitanism. Despite globopolitanism and multiculturalism, we see the need to retain core theoretical positioning on what it means to become a human cultural being (ethnos, identity) and citizen (demos).

We also recognize that non-affirmative education theory in the foreground of our theoretical framing was constructed in relation to education at the nation state level (Uljens 2016). National curriculum making and curriculum theory are challenged by globally growing political, economic and technological interdependencies, transnational homogenization and aggregation processes. In addition, increasing pluralisms within nation states present new topics to be solved. We have argued that although the world never before has had the shape and form it we experience today, these issues are, in principle not new from an education theory perspective. The modern, or classic, approach early on identified dilemmas connected to a reproduction- and transformation oriented curricula, as well as dilemmas emanating from descriptive-technological and normative theory. A contribution we have from modern education is a concept explaining how e.g. socialization (becoming a subject sharing things with others) and personalization (developing an individual unique identity) may be considered as integrated rather than excluding processes.

The nation-states face new dilemmas both in their external relations and internal conditions. ‘Globalization’ has brought cosmopolitanism back on the agenda after about 200 years of constructing independent, legal states (Rechtsstaat) based on some concept of collective nationhood, often invented around language, formal equity of citizens and history (Lewellen 2002). What is needed today is a renewed and extended discussion on cosmopolitanism and the modern, Hegelian educational heritage (e.g. Brincat 2009; Moland 2011). As a topic cosmopolitanism has reoccurred many times in European history, but always in new constellations and with new motives. We know that in their reaction against the aristocratic society both Kant and Herbart proposed cosmopolitanism as an ideal. “Das Weltbeste”, (Kant 1915), the best for the world, rather than private or national interests, was to be the aim of education.

We recognize and support a deliberative notion of curriculum (Englund 2006) and theorizing curriculum as complicated conversation (Pinar 2012) with explicit attention to leadership amidst the contemporary situation. The third question in our framework again considers how relations between schools and society are explained and how educational influence is explained both within nation states and at transnational levels. Although the global perspective has been present as an educational ideal and in policy borrowing/lending for centuries, the scale and quality of how policy-curriculum work and educational leadership are connected with transnational developments in globopolitanism has changed. The question is how far the modern heritage can take us in this respect? Modernism, however, includes both a tradition of cosmopolitan thinking as represented by Kant, while educational theory in the form we know it today is mainly Hegelian acknowledging the empirical Other as a condition for developing subjectivity. We also must recognize that we have been here before. Historically, we have been at a point where modern nation states

developed from cosmopolitanism, and education had a crucial role in building societal cohesion. Thus, again we also look to modern education theory (Benner 1991) and its core concepts (recognition, summoning to self-activity, *Bildsamkeit*), asking to what extent these modern concepts are still relevant for contemporary challenges. We argue that modern education theory and its core concepts are still relevant; however, we have not yet fully examined how these core education concepts apply to curriculum work-leadership at transnational levels. We also look to discursive institutionalism to explain leadership interactions within and between levels; however, we recognize that discursive institutionalism does not have an education language. Further, we acknowledge that discursive institutionalism provides us a language to understand policy discourse but it does not explicitly consider internal organizational dimensions found to be relevant for leadership in schools, districts, and perhaps transnational organizations. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that we are presenting a grand narrative in a certain way with our overarching theoretical framing. At the same time, in a spirit of a non-affirmative perspective, we also acknowledge that the future is an open question and our framing will be subject to counter arguments in relation to future changes. To that point, we defend the position presented here as we take it to an empirical phase. Next steps feature an empirical phase grounded in our theoretical framing and hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology.

We purposely opened Part II with an examination of the macro level influences on educational leadership and curriculum/Didaktik. As Lejf Moos clearly demonstrates with his detailed description of empirical realities in Europe, new transnationally related movements focused on governance and evaluation/curriculum policies bring curriculum/Didaktik and leadership studies closer together on a global agenda. Closely related, Gert Biesta's analysis of leadership demonstrates how neoliberalism and related externalized evaluation policies have instrumentalized administrative/leadership of teaching and learning on a global scale, shifting for example, discourse from head teachers to lead learners. In so doing, these chapters lay the groundwork to understand how Curriculum Theory-Educational Leadership and Didaktik-Educational Leadership connect in a global perspective as well as nation state perspective. Paraskeva continues this argument, proposing a critical, non-abyssal position that respects epistemological diversity, demonstrates vertical as well as horizontal cosmopolitanism, and aligns with a non-affirmative position outlined in Part I.

Part III continues with an examination of the history and implications of dialogues occurring in the Curriculum Meets Didaktik project of the 1990s. While the Curriculum Meets Didaktik project did not explicitly consider the role of leadership, that project is a model for comparative dialogues and inspired projects that help us further consider how to bridge curriculum and leadership today. From a US perspective, Doyle describes how the Curriculum Theory Meets Didaktik project inspired empirical studies of the relations among content, pedagogical processes, and the practicalities of classroom-level curriculum. He argues that the present situation of current curriculum evaluation policies and governances changes makes leadership increasingly relevant to curriculum studies, and in his chapter, he considers how curriculum and leadership may be considered closer together. From a

European perspective, Knapp and Hopmann also illustrate how the Curriculum Meets Didaktik project inspired many empirical projects, including most recently, their own recent study of school leadership as gap management in Austria. Autio then traces the history of ideas and its emphasis on instrumentalist thinking and rationality, and then argues powerfully for a reconsideration of this thinking in the contemporary situation, one that more clearly connects curriculum and leadership. In his final part of his chapter, Autio moves beyond western epistemologies, and poses a view of educational leadership from a base of Chinese wisdom traditions. Further, Autio reminds us that when we consider leadership in relation to a culture other than our own, we must clearly understand our own traditions and history of ideas.

The disproportion of chapters in the remainder of this volume then illustrate, through varying traditions and perspectives, an empirical reality of how, from a North American and European perspective respectively, we came to a place where curriculum theory/Didaktik and leadership are coming together on global and nation state agendas. We began with Bogotch and colleagues' description of powerful historical examples when leadership and curriculum have come together to promote aims of multicultural education, democracy and social justice in the US. Huber and colleagues also consider leadership connections with curriculum but focus on tensions between accountability policy pressures and long-standing tradition in Didaktik and Bildung. Castner and colleagues continue the focus on tensions between ideological arguments on the right and left, arguing for a new conceptualization of teacher as leader grounded in a Reconceptualist curriculum tradition. We appreciate the focus on theorizing teacher leadership from a curriculum base as this chapter opens a complicated conversation regarding leadership in pedagogical relations. William F. Pinar, the leader of the Reconceptualist movement in North America and elsewhere, then brings his expertise in curriculum theorizing, Bildung, and parrhesia ('frank speech') to posit a new lens for leadership authority. Here we again see important connections between Pinar's perspectives on intersubjectivity and the core concepts from modern education theory (Benner 1991) that are foundational for understanding leadership relations in our framework. Moving back to the Nordic countries with some contrast, Forsberg and colleagues anchor their consideration of curriculum theory and leadership in classical curriculum perspectives (codes), arguing for a new comparative code to explain the contemporary global situation bringing leadership and curriculum together. The final chapters also feature a multi-level perspective on leadership, using discursive institutionalism along with curriculum theory/Didaktik and leadership research. Here Uljens and Rajakaltio's empirical study reconstructs the discursive dynamics regarding educational leadership as curriculum work at the nation-state level. In much the same vein, Sivesind and Wahlstrom take their point of departure from both classical curriculum theory and institutional (societal and programmatic) arenas, re-conceptualizing school leadership using curriculum theory as well as discursive institutionalism.

Going forward, in conclusion, we offer two interrelated propositions. Our first proposition is methodological. The non-affirmative position is coherent with a

hermeneutics as epistemology. We have also pointed out the connection between hermeneutics and theory of Bildung. Practitioners and policymakers at all levels of the education system are mediating between, as well as contributing to, various epistemic practices and value discourses. To what extent do different policy practices frame this work? How to practitioners contribute to the existing network of professionals acting? Here we argue that a comparative international dialogue regarding curriculum and leadership requires new *comparative inquiry* approaches and methods as well as a further consideration of globopolitanism. One reason is that obvious differences may be observed both *within* and *between* regions (North-America and the Nordic countries/Europe) and increasingly between these regions and non-Western regions, especially in terms of leadership and evaluation policies and practices, despite increasing similarities in curriculum and output-centered evaluation policies supported by transnational organizations. In our view, comparative inquiry must involve reflexive relations that both differentiate globalizing policy and the subject at all levels (classrooms, schools, districts/municipalities, states or regions, nation states, and transnational levels), with some variation between the nation state curriculum/evaluation policy and leadership preparation level and the transnational policy level (Uljens et al. 2016).

At school and district/municipality levels, we then ask:

What notions of curriculum are promoted by transnational organizations, nations, and states, municipalities, regions and schools and how do they mediate among these and their students?

What kind of school leadership, teacher's professionalism and school development are promoted and practised at the different levels within the state and as cooperations between regions and states? How may these school development initiatives be supported by research?

At the nation state level (and states as well as regions, districts, municipalities within these), we have curricula (e.g. aims, content, methods) as well as policies. Implications for a comparative inquiry project include the following questions:

How do nation states initiate and develop curriculum changes or reforms and how do they mediate and position themselves between transnational and local realities within the nation-state? If appropriate, we also ask how do states within nation states initiate, develop, and mediate curriculum changes or reforms? How are various nation states, with their differing cultural and historical traditions, responding to global, common changes and dilemmas? What are the conceptions of citizens' Bildung, competencies, skills, and learning of each nation state and how are these promoted through policies and the process of education?

How does the dynamics within the nation-state look like, regarding the dynamics between policy making, governance research and practitioners?

At the transnational level, we do not have curricula; rather, we have transnational curriculum and evaluation policies that could be compared. We ask:

What curriculum and evaluation policies and practices are promoted by transnational organizations as members of continuously evolving configurations of nation state systems?

Here *curriculum* may be considered as a culture emerging in relations within and between new forms of governance.

At all levels, we acknowledge that categories are discursive, dynamic, and evolving within and between nation states.

Our second proposition is that domestically oriented theorists, researchers, and practitioners now considering curriculum work and educational leadership grounded in our framework could enlarge their repertory by further looking into theoretical developments regarding the issues we have opened up for, including empirical and theoretical studies regarding to what extent educational leadership and school development practices may be understood as affirmative vs non affirmative practices. Cosmopolitanism, both in terms of theoretical ideals and empirical realities now manifest within and between nations is another central topic. We can look to theoretical ideals of cosmopolitanism (Kant) and existing approaches to explain the empirical reality, such as policy borrowing and lending inspired by systems theories (Luhmann), world systems theory (Wallerstein) and those who have considered their approaches in policy borrowing and lending (e.g. Steiner-Khamsi, Waldow). As noted in Part I as well as other chapters (Uljen and Rajakaltio Chap. 13, Sivesind and Wahlstrom Chap. 14), we also see the relevance of organizational theory for schools and transnational organizations along with discursive institutionalism as a mediational approach to analysis of how ideas move within and between levels in different polities. Our approach considers these perspectives and offers an alternative for future comparative inquiry.

At the same time, we recognize and appreciate the cultural/contextual challenges involved in comparative inquiry or even dialogue. We also recognize the challenges involved when scholars move outside of their traditional fields of study with long-standing theoretical logics and meanings associated with particular terminology, such as influence. Going beyond the earlier important Curriculum Meets Didaktik project, in this project bridging curriculum theory/Didaktik and educational leadership studies, scholars must not only engage in cross-national dialogue and transnational study but also must engage in study across fields and disciplines. That said, we invite readers from curriculum/Didaktik and educational leadership to continue this dialogue as this project is ongoing.

As a final note, we appreciate the perspectives, questions, and critiques from those who wrote commentaries – namely, William F. Pinar, Carolyn Shields, and Tomas Englund. They all inspired and challenged our thinking in this volume and for future scholarship. This is how we grow as scholars and as learning subjects. It is our greatest hope that the kind of cross-field/disciplinary and cross-national dialogue initiated here will be inspirational for others, building upon our new coherent theoretical agenda of education, bridging curriculum theory/Didaktik and leadership amidst globopolitanism and beyond.

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