A Contribution to Re-theorizing Curriculum Research

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Introduction - The challenges

Contemporary curriculum policy work, teaching and educational leadership are to an increasing degree challenged by policy shifts generated by similar transnational developments in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. Most countries have, to various degree, witnessed expanding neoliberal policies, expanding cultural neo-nationalism, more populist politics, economic protectionism, increasing social inequality, religious fundamentalism, mistrust in democratic political participation and decreasing respect for knowledge institutions and established media. The above counterproductive consequences raise serious questions regarding the tasks of education. The answers to these questions take different forms in various countries (Paraskeva and Steinberg, 2016). For example, in Europe various types of deregulation and decentralization as well as reregulation and recentralization of political power and curriculum policies within nation states have occurred since the 1980s (Gunter, Grimaldi, Hall, & Serpieri, 2016). It has become increasingly important to see connections between economic neoliberal globalization, national and transnational governance policies, educational ideals, as well as curriculum and leadership practices within and between levels.

In a historical light, education and curriculum reform have always reflected dominating educational ideologies including ideas about the origin and future of a culture. This pattern continues. Instead, what has changed is the (grand) narrative considered as legitimate, by existing power structures, to regulate education. The dominant and almost unquestioned narrative today has become the idea of the competitive state on a global market. This model, partly founded on the liberal ideas developed during the 19th century is global and applied both in East, in the West and Global South. Sweeping over the complete globe the view reflects an instrumentalizing view of education and a performative citizenship. It also embraces an idea of progress. In knowledge-based economies, instrumentalization of e.g. higher education insitutions is expected to contribute to the growth of wealth. In reality, social and economical inequality is growing. The point made here is, that the idea of progression is no longer bound to some inherent, teleological view of development of the individual or the world, typically reflected in stage theories. The global economist view of progression thus differs from pre-modern teleological explanations of how the world develops. In Jan

Komenský's (J. A. Comenius), originally *Didaktika česká* (later *Didactica Magna*), the ultimate aim of education was to prepare for eternity (Comenius, 1907). Yet, Comenius also suggested revolutionary new ideas of his time, like seeing education as a universal human right. Another such idea regulating curriculum reform was the paradigmatic shift replacing religion with language as the vehicle to constitute cultural coherence of the nation state and personal identity. The focuse on language as interrelated with knowledge, but still something beyond content knowledge, also initiated a move toward seeing language itself as a core competency receiving the status of a subject of its own in the schools. On the one hand language received an instrumental value, on the other language was loaded with capacity to create a sense of belonging and cultural coherence. The construction has proven successful: irrespective of an ever ongoing change and increasing plurality in values and habits, the policy of using language to constitute cultural unity, has survived. However, with ongoing cultural pluralization *within* the nation-states the notion of nation-state as based on one ore more languages is debated. What this post-nationalist orientation will come up with is still not clear, especially as stronger new-nationalisms have entered the agenda on a global scale.

Today, neoliberal, competency oriented curricula do not disregard political and cultural citizenship, but tend to overemphasize a performative view of knowledge and citizenship. In such a view, the value of knowledge and language point towards their instrumental capacity to produce economic value. This ideal is increasingly critisized from, for example, a sustainable development perspective. Sustainable development has become a new parallell, and globally regulative principle for education, beyond economic profit and other political interests (Wolff, Sjöblom, Hofman-Bergholm & Palmberg, 2017).

These neoliberally driven policy initiatives and related globalization have taken many forms. A general background for this policy movement is the changed role of education and research in moving from a national industrial economy to a global knowledge economy. Given the dramatic economic impact that research and innovation have received, educational institutions have, to an increasing degree, been directed to adopt to the needs of the market. From a European perspective, this change is described as a movement from a social democratic welfare state model to a social liberal market state model, with the year of 1989 as a turning point when the socialist Eastern Europe collapsed. For good reasons, there is increasing critique, and mistrust, as to whether policy reform that promote competency oriented curricula, a practice of governing by numbers and redefining learning results as indicators reflecting successful teaching, indeed can lead us right? There is a constantly increasing critique regarding initiatives driven by local and global versions of neoliberal policy and their possibilities to guide reform in the public sector including, not the least in the Nordic countries (e.g. Willbergh, 2015; Sommer & Klitmöller, 2018; Värri, 2018). These complex and profound developments challenge existing theorizing of curriculum, Didaktik and educational leadership. Much research in different parts of the world have made a number of critical observations regarding theory development in curriculum research and Didaktik (e.g. Deng, 2013; Green, 2018; Young, 2013; Paraskeva & Steinberg, 2016; Priestley, 2011; Pinar, 2015; Henderson, Castner & Schneider, 2018). Critical dialogue among parallel theories is as things should be, but an unavoidable impression is that curriculum research as a field of research is losing ground, which makes the situation different. The increasing focus

on learning outcomes, a movement from subject centered curriculum to generic competencies and qualifications' frameworks are among the reasons to why interest in curriculum research has diminished (Priestley, 2011). Young (2013), for his part, considers the turn towards ideology critique in curriculum theorizing and research as one source of the crisis, with the motive that the what- and how -questions of teaching were lost. However, the dilemma with approaches delimiting curriculum research to an issue of learning, identity, *Bildung* or the teaching-learning process, is the lack of a conceptual apparatus for dealing with the societal and political dimensions of curriculum. Such orientations are therefore not well equipped to conceptualize prevalent economism or cultural neo-conservatism influencing education.

Pointing at some limitations of, first, approaching curriculum research primarily as an individual *Bildung* topic or, second, approaching curriculum research primarily in a societal perspective, does not reduce their importance. As both of these questions, and others, are legitimate, the challenge is rather how we might deal with both of them in a coherent manner? To deal with both of these perspectives in a coherent manner is the heritage of the German *Bildung* tradition as established by the classics Herder, Humboldt, Schleiermacher and Herbart and later on as developed in General Didaktik (GD) and Subject Matter Didaktik (SMD) (Fachdidaktik), which expanded dramatically in Finland when the new Faculties of Education were established 1974. About 10-15 years later a similar focus on the pedagogical content knowledge occurred in the USA (Schulman, 1986; for a discussion see e.g. Doyle, 2017, Deng, 2017). Subject Matter Didaktik also expanded in the 80's in the Nordic countries (Marton, 1981; Gudmundsdottir, Reinertsen & Nordtomme, 1997). In relation to the German Didaktik tradition the non-affirmative eduction theory approach to theorizing curriculum, teaching and learning also accepts the primacy of the contents, as in the Bildung tradition, but takes the concpetual analysis of the teaching-studying-learning process to another level and provides an alternative way to define the relation between e.g. politics and education. Before that, we will have a look at complementary remarks on delineating curriculum research and theorizing.

The topicality of curriculum research

In my understanding, the field of *curriculum research* is mainly covered by three related fields: a) *Philosophical curriculum studies*. This subarea consist of conceptual and ontological research on human growth (Bildung), personalization (identity) and socialization as related to pedagogical activity. This theorizing refer to, but cannot be drawn from, e.g. philosophy of mind, intersubjectivity, praxis/activity, ethics, and language. Philosophical curriculum studies include *epistemological* reflection (e.g. phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical realism, critical theory, etc.), but a theory of curriculum cannot be based on epistemology. Further, this field looks into how ethics, politics, law and curriculum/education relate as fields of practical philosophy. Further, this field embrace how we conceptually explain the relation between human growth, studying and teaching. Philosophical curriculum studies embrace conceptual research on various assumptions behind e.g. curriculum theories and Didaktik, and their comparative analysis. b) *Curriculum policy studies*. Here we find empirical research on curriculum ideology, as well as the study of curricular contents and

policies at different levels, reflecting the aims, contents and methods of teaching. Such research is sometimes comparative and historical in character. c) *Curriculum praxis research.* This field cover empirical research on curriculum reform, teaching and leadership. For example, the dynamics between and within different levels from the transnational level to the classroom level is included here, as is research on local school development and, since Comenius, teachers' work. Curriculum praxis research included research on *v*arious leadership processes around curriculum reform stages like initiation, implementation, enactment, development and evaluation of curriculum.

Not only is a comparative perspective central, but also a *historical perspective* should be added to the list above. Loosing historical awareness can result in that fundamental assumptions are taken for granted (Paraskeva, 2017). Historical ignorance can also allow researchers to define the tradition superficially or to reconstruct previous attempts in misrepresentative ways (Wraga, 2016; Doll, 1993). In comparative curriculum research, a historical perspective is also a key issue. In comparative research, we may be interested in following questions. How do, for example, various nations contribute and receive, translate or enact transnational or global movements? How do states and regional actors mediate national policies? Why is it that different countries respond so differently to the same challenges? Historical insight in each culture, brought into dialogue, often proves to be a fruitful strategy in comparative research. An approach perhaps still less developed in comparative curriculum research is *educational anthropology*. Studying changes in educational and curricular rituals and cultures as mimetic, recreative learning activities, may prove fruitful. As schools may be considered ritualized institutions with the double task of both reproducing and destabilizing norms and practices, approaching curriculum praxis from an educational anthropology perspective is interesting level of analysis (e.g. Wulf, 2010).

Sometimes *curriculum reform* or *curriculum development* is perceived as something that turns the attention away from what curriculum research could be at its best. Instead of turning away from curriculum reform as a topic for curriculum research, I support initiatives aiming at finding new ways of relating academic research and school development, e.g. interventionist approaches. But, such cooperation must be guided by a critical attitude, and awareness of that different polities and policies frame, define and direct curriculum reform very differently. In other words, curriculum research supportings *reflective school development* need concepts by which these questions can be handled in order not to reduce interventionist curriculum research to simple efficiency oriented instrumentalism, misrecognizing teacher autonomy.

A globopolitan view. Whereas curriculum research often approach curriculum work, policy and reform, primarily as a nation-state phenomenon, we can no longer overlook transnational dimensions. We are in need of a renewed and extended discussion on cosmopolitanism and the modern, nation-state centered heritage in curriculum and education (e.g. Brincat 2009; Moland 2011; Moos & Wubbels, 2018; Rönnström, 2016). Kemp (2010) points atfollowing questions for cosmopolitanism: (a) how does economic globalization relate to democratic control of the economy and technology, (b) how should we deal with conflicts between national or culturally related interests and challenges connected to sustainable development

and, finally, (c) how should we deal with global responsibility? In curriculum theory and educational leadership, globalization, cosmopolitanism, or rather a *globopolitan vision*, mainly falls into two different parts: globopolitanism as an educational ideal and globopolitanism as empirical transnational policy activities, reflecting dynamics between states and between states and transnational aggregations of various kinds (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). The simple reason to why I find globopolitanism more accurate than cosmopolitanism is that the latter today primarily refers to the totality of cosmos, in ways it never has been perceived before.

But, how should these transnational dimensions then be theorized? To what extent is it possible to handle these broad and complex influences and mechanisms as truly *educational* or pedagogical phenomena? Can a theory of *education, Didaktik* or *curriculum* convincingly frame all these aspects or is there a need to move beyond education theory and partially anchor curriculum research in policy research or political sciences, like discursive institutionalism?

For Erich Weniger, Didaktik in a narrow sense was about studying the contestation of aims and contents of education on a collective level. For Weniger (1965) a broader definition of Didaktik included teaching methods. Yet, the question remain. Studying curriculum reform today must include a transnational dimension. Such transnational influences operate more often as policy implementation initiatives, than being educational (pedagogical) in character. Expressed differently, if curriculum theory would be limited to theorizing human growth (Bildung) and how this growth is related to pedagogical activity on an interpersonal level, then such a theory would be insufficient as it is reasonable to expect that curriculum research also aim at understanding politically driven national curriculum reforms and their transnational dimensions.

The growth of research on *policy borrowing* and policy translation are good examples of more recent research approaches given the transnational condition. As transnational institutions of different kinds have challenged the nation-state perspective, later curriculum research and theorizing has partly responded by turning into investigations into how policies travel horizontally between policy systems and how meaning translate between levels (e.g. Steiner Khamsi, 2004). In some versions, curriculum research has more or less turned into policy research. Yet, we do indeed need comparative curriculum research on policies, also in order to support actors at different levels in their work with questions of what kind of *citizenship* (political, economical and cultural) our educational institutions should promote. This is especially central in an era where all nations worldwide internally develop towards increasing plurality while being simultaneously framed by challenges that call for a *globopolitan* view.

Curriculum work and educational leadership? Contemporary policies, curriculum work and evaluation practices, technological developments, new patterns of governance and leadership form a new complex web where we, as before, need to understand both the relation between politics and education but, it is argued, also the nature of leadership and curriculum reform interactions on and between multiple organizational levels, including classrooms (Uljens, 2015; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017).

To raise educational leadership as a topic for curriculum research may be unexpected. Curriculum research often represents a more critical approach, which is aimed at revealing the values, the mechanisms, processes and tensions underlying education, while the more recent increase of interest in leadership research, has clearly happened against the backdrop of an accountability oriented educational policy period, at least so in Europe (Uljens & Nyman, 2013). The English speaking world has traditionally operated with decentralized school systems giving local school leadership a prominent role. It is only with the decentralization of curriculum work, and later with accountability policies, that school leadership received a position in non-english speaking countries both in Europe and Asia. Yet, there is broad variation in research into leadership (Gunter and Ribbins, 2008). After closer consideration, should not research on the selection and treatment of cultural contents for educational settings and purposes include the role educational leadership in this process? In fact, as a practice, curriculum making at different levels, as curriculum work in genereal, can be perceived as a form of educational leadership.

The recent and ongoing shift in educational administration, replacing one bureaucracy with another, the movement from government to governance, has turned our attention towards understanding curriculum work and educational leadership as a multilevel endeavour. In institutionalized education, curriculum work does indeed take many forms and is horizontally distributed within, and over, many locations and professional groups as well as carried out at several, interconnected levels. This also means that educational leadership on different levels, including classroom teaching, may be seen as a mediating activity between different epistemic practices (subject matter, economy, law, media and culture) and value spheres (collective politics and intersubjective ethics). Teachers and leaders typically have certain degrees of freedom to contribute to the reconstruction of social reality. From a curriculum *theory* perspective a main question is then how we conceptually explain how this space is constituted, through the initiation and mediating of pedagogical interests and practices.

The fields of research mentioned in the beginning, condense to dealing with three topical relations. First, they point at curriculum research as dealing with philosophical and empirical questions. Second, they define curriculum research as dealing with questions of the individual's or human growth, in its broadest sense of the word, and how this growth relate to being with others. Most curriculum research locate this relational focus to an institutional education context. Third, curriculum research raise questions of how to approach the relation between education and society, i.e. the relations between institutional education as related to democracy and politics, to economy and working life, as well as to cultural issues. Whether approaching these fields empirically or theoretically I find it reasonable to argue that the second and third group of questions above are topics that require answers from any attempt that conceptually wants to clarify the field of curriculum research. Thus, first curriculum research need to answer how we theoretically define the relation between education and other societal forms of practices including politics, culture, and economics. That is, how should we conceptualize public education and curriculum in relation to politics, culture, and economics? Educational practice is under the influence of all these fields, while simultaneously preparing for participation in all of them. This first question is important for curriculum research in that it asks how politics regulates education, given that one aim of education is to prepare for

participation in future political life. Second, curriculum theory need to explain what kind of theories may help us conceptually understand the nature of teachers' and education leaders' *pedagogical* interaction with students and colleagues, that is, how we theorize the pedagogical or educational qualities of leadership and teaching, whether we talk about school children or e.g. teachers.

Finally, for analytical purposes there is a need to point back at the distinction between focusing *curricular contents, aims, mehods and policies* at different levels, and *curriculum reform and leadership*. In this context the *curricular contents and policies* refer e.g. to the curriculum as the syllabus in which aims, contents, methods including evaluation are explicated. Curriculum research of this sort means studying how a given curriculum defines the regulative educational ideas and aims, how it argues for selection and selected contents at different levels, values to ne promoted, methods of teaching and learning, collaboration, leadership and evaluation expressed and practiced. *In contrast, curriculum reform and leadership* refer, first, to the governance, leadership, management, teaching and evaluation practices. These practices can be carried out at different levels, from the local to the transnational level. These reform and leadership practices are not the same as the curriculum as a codified policy document, but they relate to the contents of the curriculum. Second, curriculum reform and leadership, refer to the initiation, implementation and enactment of curricula. This work feature *policy activities* and *pedagogical* activities.

The non-affirmative approach to curriculum research

As observed at the beginning of this article, in reflections on the challenges that contemporary curriculum theory faces, it is not unusual to identify a division of the field into a critical-sociological approach and an instrumental practice oriented approach aiming at serving practical needs (Lindén, Annala & Coate, 2017). Seen from the vantage point of Didaktik, these approaches broadly reflect two complementary expectations put on educational research. On the one hand, curriculum research aims at creating a critical distance to practice by making visible otherwise unreflected and taken for granted dimensions, mechanisms, norms, values and practices. On the other hand, curriculum research is typically expected to provide guidance of some sort to curriculum makers, education leaders and teachers (Jank & Meyer, 1997). Oftentimes these approaches are described as conflicting positions.

A complementary way to describe these two main orientations is to approach them from a normative perspective. The problem of normativity in curriculum theory emanate from that curriculum practice is by its nature intentional, aiming at something, which is not present, and directly or indirectly promoting certain values.

I agree with Green (2017, p. 1) when he observes that:

> "curriculum is best understood, first and foremost, as inescapably, always-already political—that there is, in effect, nothing outside *curriculum-as-political-text*. That means that, inter alia, knowledge questions are always, inescapably bound up with questions of power."

Given that "knowledge questions are always, inescapably bound up with questions of power" (Green, 2017, p. 1) the question is how curriculum is theorized and thought to be dealing with these power dimensions? I indeed do agree that one of the objects of curriculum research are political texts, and that teaching and educational leadership are normative practices. The remaining question is then how our *theories* position themselves in this respect? Are they, or should they be, political in the same way as a curriculum as a policy document is political? Is or should pedagogical practice by definition be as political as the curriculum as a policy text? Even if they are all normative in the sense of being value bound, I am inclined to not to merge curriculum theory with curriculum practice and curriculum policy.

Practice-oriented curriculum models are often designed as tools for planning teaching. They are often instrumental but also conservative and can be reproduction-oriented. Larger societal aims of education remain often as taken for granted. These societally seen reproduction oriented models often accepts contemporary values as the norm for education. Bobbit's (1918/1972) application of scientific management as developed by Taylor is an example of such a view. Also models of teaching basing their recommendations on learning theory represent the same pattern of thought. Often in these models, curriculum practice is perceived as a question of efficiency and productivity.

Lindén, Annala & Coate (2017) remind that the European Union's so called modernization agenda invite employers and market institutions into a dialogue regarding curricular aims, contents and methods. In stark opposition to such an understanding of curriculum work we find counterhegemonic, critical emancipatory pedagogy (e.g. McLaren, 2000). Transformative models typically aim at ideal, future possible practices, that are not yet real. Despite that transformative and counterhegemonic curriculum models represent opposite positions they remnd of each other regarding their role for practice. The similarity consist in how they relate to norms: while the first curriculum model takes existing societal norms as given and do not problematize them, the second curriculum approach tend to defines future ideals to be worked towards. These curriculum theories takes on the role of a curriculum: the teacher is successful if the curricular aims have been promoted. The dilemma for both is that they may run the risk of turning education, leadership, curriculum work, and teaching into a technological practice where results refer to values external to the profession. Neither of these would be able to solve the problem described initially, that is, a reproduction-oriented approach does not typically question ongoing developments but rather supports them. In turn, the alternative, or counterhegemonic, critical reasoning may end up replacing an existing ideology with another one, yet remaining in an instrumentalist relation to educational practice. In contrast to these approaches, non-affirmative theory argues that education is not to be seen as a vehicle for reproduction or for making predetermined ideas about the future come true. NAT positions itself, not in between but beyond these models.

At this point, it is important to remind of that NAT does not advocate a value neutral position. On the contrary, NAT has originated as a theory in and for a political liberal democracy. In a theory for democratic education, it would be mistake to equalize pedagogical practice with politics as practice, as it would a mistake to equalize educational theory with political ideology or political utopia. Instead, NAT would argue that educational theory is

analytical tool for reflecting on educational ideals and interests as well as practice. In principle, a political democracy will have difficulties viewing education *either* as socialization into something existing or as an idealist transformation of society with the help of education.

Education and politics are indeed related, yet neither can be solely deduced from the other without violating the idea and nature of each other. In non-democratic polities, education is by definition strictly subordinate to politics. In democratic education, and in education for democracy, the task of education is, among others, to prepare for political participation. Such education *is* normative, i.e. valuebound, in that it recognizes and respects political freedom of thought and the individual's right to a political conviction, by not deciding in advance what values individuals should represent.

According to NAT, education and politics, as two forms of societal practices, relate to each other in a non-hierarchical way. In such a view, politics is viewed to direct and regulate education while recognizing that the task of education is to contribute to educating a political will, without directing what this will should be wanting as a political will. Education prepares for politics, while at the same time uses education for its own purposes. According to non-affirmative theory, politics, therefore, must accept to operate by a permanent open question: To what extent and how strong do policies steer education practice? If politics in advance strictly try to decide how a future generation should think and act, then, paradoxically, this would endanger the future of a democratic state. That is, democratic states need to educate its citizens for democracy.

Let us look at the non-hierarchical relation between politics and education from a *pedagogical* perspective. According to non-affirmative theory, a hierarchical reasoning *subordinating* education to politics would reduce pedagogical reflection and practice to an efficiency problem: How efficiently can given educational aims be reached by educational efforts? *Again, superordinating* education over politics would mean, in principle, that the field of education alone would define towards what kind of future the world should be moved. NAT would argue in favor of a third position. It reminds us that education and politics are not *either* super- or subordinated to each other. Consequently, NAT identifies curricular ideals in a democracy as resulting from a public political process, cultural reflection and professionals' contribution. From a normative perspective, NAT would then remind us that the teacher must *recognize* existing interests, policies, ideologies, utopias, and cultural practices, that is, to identify them as existing. But, NAT would not ask the teacher to affirm these ideologies, utopias and cultural practices. Not to affirm various interests means to not pass them on to the next generation without making these interests objects of critical reflection in pedagogical practice with students. According to NAT, citizenship education for democracy can therefore not be about the socialization of youth only into a predetermined form of democracy, but must include critical reflection of historical, existing, and possible future versions of democracy.

Recognition, summoning to self-activity and *Bildsamkeit*

Now moving to the second part of this article the intention is to qualify the above arguments by especially focussing the interactive pedagogical relation, in terms of three related concepts. These are recognition, summoning to self-activity and Bildsamkeit.

The origins of the concept *recognition* (Anerkennung) may partly be found in a modern, classical, theory of education, i.e. within a theoretical-philosophical context of the later enlightenment. It is often associated with Fichte's and, in particular, Hegel's philosophy. Although the concept has inspired many, it has nevertheless long remained on the fringes of pedagogical discussions. The past two decades, however, the situation has changed through works by and inspired by Axel Honneth, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Nancy Fraser, Judith Butler, Emanuel Levinas, Jaques Ranciere, and many more. Yet, the relation between recognition and some basic concepts in educational theory have remained unclear. Also, what exactly is referred to by recognition varies. For instance, does recognition primarily refer to assumptions lying behind educational activity, e.g. that the subject must to be considered (recognized) free or non-determined or equal, in order to make pedagogical activity meaningful? Or, does recognition refer to some quality of the actual educative activity itself, i.e. that education happens through somebody is doing 'recognizing'? In such a case, education could be about recognizing the present state or presence of somebody. Or, still, has the concept of recognition rather to do with pedagogical aims? The reason to such an interpretation would be that education often aims at some form of increased self-determination or practical or cultural, political and personal autonomy, which tells something about how an individual perceives or identifies herself in relation to others. In this last case recognition would be seen as a *result* of an educational process.

From the above we can see that the concept may refer to the premises, to the pedagogical process as such or to the result of pedagogical processes. Therefore we can reasonable ask, how much is included in recognition? In the following, I will try to indicate that all three ways of understanding recognition are meaningful. They have a place in curriculum theory. In order to clarify this it is necessary to relate the concept of recognition to some other core concepts from education history.

In the German-influenced tradition of general pedagogy or 'Allegemeine Pädagogik' (c.f. Herbart, Schleiermacher, and others), the concepts (a) recognition, (b) summons to self-activity, and (c) Bildsamkeit traditionally occupy a central position (Benner, 1991; Uljens, 2001). These concepts are fundamental for the post-Kantian modern pedagogy, the main outlines of which were drawn by Fichte, Herbart, and Schleiermacher, among others. Fichte, for instance, assumed that a defense of the freedom of will presupposes the recognition of the Other as free and that this recognition is mutual (Uljens, 1998). At the same time, there was the notion that the individual attains (reaches) a so-called *productive or cultural freedom* only by first being summoned to free self-activity. The reaching of productive, cultural freedom, would therefore accordingly be mediated by a summons (Aufforderung). In order to follow this argument there is reason to step back and have a look at the larger picture framing the establishment of the concept.

A fundamental thought in German idealistic philosophy is the idea of freedom as a transcendental philosophical concept – the human being *is* radically indetermined. This mindset contributed in a positive way to the gradual abandonment of a *teleological* view of the individual, humankind and of the world. The new order of things viewing the future as an open question demanded a new approach to education. By virtue of the transcendental subject-philosophy, Kant, for his part, assumed that the subject is free, in a radical sense, to establish his or her relation to the world through a self-reflective process. It was assumed that the human being does this in relation to an existing surrounding world whose influence the subject cannot escape. The philosophy of freedom views this radical freedom as an opportunity for the individual, not as a lack in need of a remedy. Yet, this resulted in a need to radically re-theorize education. The dilemma was that if individual freedom in this radical meaning was accepted, it presented us with two possible conclusions in education. The first conclusion reflected an unlimited educational optimism: if the subject was no longer determined, by social class, original sin or anything else, then educational influencing appeared as an unforeseen possibility. The opposite conclusion was, however, was also possible: if the subject was considered radically free, how could we ever claim that educational influence was possible in the first place? A cultural identity, a Me, would then be attained only by virtue of an active *self*-educational process, for instance, through free study of pedagogical influence. The significance of pedagogical efforts would thus be dependent on the learner's decision to attach meaning to it – a position repeated by contemporary constructivist psychology. In such a perspective, it seems impossible to maintain how pedagogical activity would be something *necessary* for the individual's development of a cultural identity. Thus, from the Kantian transcendental philosophy of freedom it is difficult to show how *the Other* constitutes the necessary element it proves to be in practice. Siljander (2008, 74-76) draws attention to that Herbart's contribution was to introduce the idea of *pedagogical causality* to overcome the antinomy between freedom and coercion, between the causality of nature and the causality of freedom. The concepts *Bildsamkeit* and *summons to self-activity* have a bridging function for Herbart in explaining the pedagogical paradox. The modern pedagogical paradox of freedom as a necessary assumption making education possible, and education as a necessary activity for making (cultural) freedom a possible consequence (Uljens, 2017).

Curriculum and the modern pedagogical paradox

Even if J. G. Fichte, in his lectures fom 1796, defines recognition as a mutual assumptional acceptance of each other's freedom he simultaneously introduces the concept *summons to self-activity* as a fundamental category in order to understand a human being's becoming a cultural being. Fichte's question is how we explain that the individual reaches an understanding of herself as a free individual. Fichte develops a critique of Kant's idea according to which the individual's perception of herself as free, is founded in one's awareness of the moral law. According to the idea of the moral law, there exists categorical imperatives saying, for example, that we are not allowed to make use of fellow human beings in order to reach our aims. Instead, wee are expected to act according to such maxims that can

be raised to universal principles valid for all. For Kant we had access to such moral laws before experience. For Fichte, this meant that Kant in fact had the idea of intersubjectivity, i.e. an idea of a shared world, built into his theory. Instead, Fichte introduced the idea that the empirical freedom, i.e. our awareness of ourselves as free and responsible for others, is intersubjectively mediated through others' recognition of us as free and others' summoning us to self-activity. The subject's empirical autonomy and experience of him or herself as a being of free will thus becomes dependent on the empirical Other, a position that Hegel develops further and which today constitutes the reference point for, for instance, Charles Taylor's and Axel Honneth's work. Fichte's contribution includes the notion that the subject's potentiality for culturally productive freedom can be realized solely through a summons to such freedom (Aufforderung). The coming into being of the subject's empirical awareness of freedom (understanding of oneself as a willing being, conation, provided with self-respect) becomes dependent, but not determined, on the one hand, on the Other's recognition of the freedom of the self, and on the other hand, on the Other's summons by the self to free activity.[2]

While the transcendental subject-philosophy appears to emphasize recognition as a matter of accepting freedom as a fundamental starting-point associated with a summons, the Hegelian tradition more clearly views recognition as a question of the subject's *struggle* for recognition on different levels. The incentive is that the establishment and maintenance of personal identity is seen as *dependent on* different forms of recognition, thus reflecting a fundamental human need, e.g. a need to be loved ("I am loved, therefore I exist", *amari ergo sum*). In this spirit, Axel Honneth, for instance, identifies three hierarchically related forms of needs of recognition that correspond to three "practical self-relations." Consequently, a) love of home/parents/care takers is necessary for the development of a fundamental self-confidence (Selbstvertrauen). In a Hegelian need oriented interpretation, the individual strives to be loved to satisfy the need of a fundamental self-confidence. (b) The civil society's recognition of the individual as a morally responsible legal subject, i.e., as having legal rights and responsibility for his or her actions, as well as being a political citizen (respect for the freedom of will, freedom of expression, ownership), leads to self-respect (Selbstachtung). It is further assumed that self-respect develops as the individual strives to be recognized by the other as responsible. Finally, (c) the individual would strive to be esteemed and recognized (self-esteem, Selbstschätzung) for the work he or she has performed. In other words, in this interpretation recognition means that the individual's efforts, are identified and acknowledged as valuable contributions in the context in which the individual finds him or herself.

From the perspective of curriculum theory, Honneth's view on recognition appears valuable but perhaps also limited. What is valuable, firstly, is that Honneth calls attention to Hegel's expansion of Fichte's interpretation of recognition. Fichte had developed his concept of recognition primarily in relation to his philosophy of rights, which presupposes all human beings' equal and natural rights, regardless of social class and the like, and which in turn means that all human beings must themselves limit their freedom and their actions so as not to preclude others' freedom (Fichte 2000, §10, p. 102; Uljens, 1998, p. 179f.). This notion returns in Hegel, and Honneth through the second level of recognition. Secondly, Honneth's understanding of the first level of recognition represents a pedagogical tone, which clearly makes the human being's identity formation dependent on the treatment by the surrounding

(pedagogical) world. It is surprising, however, that Honneth does not seem to refer to Fichte's concept of summons (Fichte, 2000, §3). Thirdly, the theory is interesting because the education process is seen in a cultural and social theoretical light.

The limitation in Honneth's interpretation of recognition appears to be that a concept for *pedagogical activity* has not been worked out in relation to recognition. This is why the concept of recognition becomes so wide and vague and why, for instance, the educator's role remains unclear. In addition, there is the issue regarding whether it is reasonable to consider recognition in terms of a "philosophy of lack" where the individual is rendered dependent on the arbitrariness of the surrounding world.

In the following, the aim is to propose a few interpretations of the relation between recognition, summons to self-activity, and Bildsamkeit, in order to overcome the vagueness of the previous understanding of recognition.

Bildsamkeit

Literally taken, *Bildsamkeit* refers both to the human capacity to learn, and to the possibility to influence the Other by educational means. In the present context the principle of *Bildsamkeit* refers to the individual's engagement in learning activity, or in studying as I prefer to say, in pedagogical situations. In such situations the learner has accepted and pedagogical invitation or provotion and in way accepts to become engaged in and by an activity, by being summoned to this by the pedagogue. Bildsamkeit, incidentally the first principle in Herbart's pedagogy, does not mean that the growing individual in this process expresses something which till then would have been hidden or concealed, but, more radically, that a field of action, activity, and reflection *is established* through a summons to self-activity. The point is that this summons to self-activity, being a kind of intervention in the learner's relation to herself, to the world or to others, contributes to the establishment of such a shared and mutual sphere, or such a space wherein the subject may come to see the world in another light. It is a matter of a constructed, or staged regional world or situation, that invites the Other through her or his own thought and acts, to experimentally relate to what is offered or *pointed at* (Mollenhauer, 2014). The principle of *Bildsamkeit* or educability means that the student's own activity is necessary and summoned in the process. One's own activity can be viewed as representing an experimental relationship to the self and its forms of expression.

The principle of Bildsamkeit, then, means that the learner *is recognized as a subject with a potentiality for self-transcendence*. But this potentiality may be realized in and through the pedagogical space that is created through the summons to self-activity. The principle of Bildsamkeit therefore refers to individuals' own processing of their experiences – their relation to the world – through their own activity (Benner 2015; Uljens 1998). The results from this pedagogical dynamics in its respective case, are by definition impossible to predict. It is then easy to understand that the *pedagogical space* of activity is a new space, dependent on the involved subjects' engagement. In the beginning of the pedagogical encounter, the pedagogue does not know how the meeting will turn out.

Pedagogical activity or summons to self-activity, then, means that the subject's potentiality for empirical freedom is recognized (the principle of recognition, Anerkennung)

and is realized through the principle of Bildsamkeit. Freedom is realized through Bildsamkeit and means that the Other becomes aware of his or her own self as free through the summons to use his or her autonomy. A concept of recognition tied to the goal of the process – the recognition of the *independence* of the Other, autonomy, as an objective for pedagogical activity – is present, as the pedagogue's activity aims to support the individual's development of a reflected will.

This reasoning draws attention to the empirical self-understanding as essentially dependent on social recognition, as for instance Axel Honneth (2003) argues. If the individual's self-image is dependent on and is established through interaction with others, and if these dimensions of self are viewed as rights, it follows that pedagogical activity can be viewed as a response to the moral demands that result from the recognition of these rights.

The concept of summons can then be viewed as a concrete expression of our responsibility for the Other. The principle of Bildsamkeit also means that the Other is recognized as being innately morally violable, i.e., is attributed a human value both through his or her species belonging and through a reflectivity, without which moral violation is rendered impossible; only the autonomous or the free can experience violation.

The otherness of the Other – on intersubjectivity

The principle of Bildsamkeit means that *the otherness (difference) of the Other is recognized, but in a way that this Otherness cannot be negated* (Uljens, 2009). The radical otherness of the Other is recognized through the acceptance of a mutual freedom as a starting-point (non-determination) and through *the recognition of the Other as self-activated.* Consequently, the principle of Bildsamkeit means that it is the Other who self-actively "forms the self" also if it occurs in relation to "forming" practices. Even if the establishment of the otherness of the Other in the form of a Self is dependent on the recognition/summons, the Other remains a stranger for the self, unapproachable – it is impossible to predict the outcome of the encounter in advance. This is because the establishment of the self is not a function of a summons. The self is thus simultaneously both free and dependent, both as regards itself and others. Therefore, it is apt to say that the continuous self-forming process is a response to a continuous question of who I am, what I can do, know, and want (desire).

In the present position it is argued that the pedagogue in his or her summons *cannot exclusively* assume a *shared* life-world or some form of mutuality (symmetry) between the Self and the Other because the freedom of the Other, and hence the assumptional and radical otherness of the Other, is recognized through the concept of Bildsamkeit. A symmetry, or the negation of asymmetry, in the form of the establishment of a shared life-world is rather something that is sought through the pedagogical process. But also the opposite is true. In his or her summons of the Other, the pedagogue *cannot exclusively* take for granted a radical and total *difference* (asymmetry) between the Self and the Other, partly because the bodily-based intersubjectivity is recognized and partly because an asymmetry is something which is sought through the pedagogical process. A "sought-for asymmetry," that is, the negation of symmetry, refers to the aim of the pedagogical process, namely that the individual develops uniqueness in a cultural sense, a uniqueness that did not originally exist (cf. fig 1).

Affirmative and non-affirmative summons

In the interpretation of pedagogical activity represented here, summons means behaving toward the growing individual by recognizing her presence, interest, existence, but yet *non-affirmative* way. Non-affirmative summoning to self-activity has to do with recognizing the growing individual as being capable through self-activity to transcend him or herself and affirming the ways in which the child responds to a summons, but not taking for granted an intention to lead the growing individual to a preconceived form of perception of the world. This would be an example of an affirming pedagogy.

A non-affirmative summons to self-activity highlights that the education process is dependent on an experiential address, but that when this provocation is a pedagogical activity the pedagogue should consciously refrain from confirming the prevailing or ideal future condition. With such a self-reflecting pedagogical discernment the pedagogue is thought to be better able to create a space for a Bildung process that recognizes the learner's self-activity and right to exercise intentional independence of thought. The path to the second level of recognition in Honneth's theory can go through non-affirmative summons to self-activity.

In somewhat older pedagogical literature, such as in the Finnish philosopher, the hegelian Johan Vilhelm Snellman's pedagogical writings (Snellman 1861), the education of the home is represented as a normative, primary socialization to prevailing praxis and normative systems. This would be an example of affirmative pedagogy. By contrast, the school's role was by Snellman described as a step toward "the world of knowledge", where existing normative systems may become object for reflection. This would be a question of secondary socialization, which transcends the education of the home. Yet, it would be an oversimplification to say that the home nurtures and school teaches, in the sense that the activity of the home is affirmative while the activity of the school would be non-affirmative. It is obvious that all activities in the home is not about affirming in the form of non-reflective socialization for prevailing normative systems. On the contrary, it is easy to identify non-affirmative practices in the home, in particular concurrently with an increasingly value-pluralistic everyday life and an educated generation of parents who have learned to adopt a reflective attitude toward themselves and their everyday lives. The same is true for school. Numerous studies show how the school unreflectively passes on and socializes pupils into normative patterns of practices. Thus, not all activities in a school are non-affirmative, some are affirmative, but in order for activities in schools to be educational they ought to be non-affirmative. Consequently, the distinction between affirmative and non-affirmative pedagogical activity becomes an analytic tool for discussing both parents' and teachers' pedagogical activity.

The Other and Summons as responsibility

As seen, arguably the theoretical tradition of modern pedagogy includes an idea of mutuality or intersubjectivity. This thought was initially introduced by Fichte in his critique of Kant and is then continued by Hegel who has inspired many twentieth-century philosophers. Nevertheless, it is possible to problematize this view by claiming that it is the self that subordinates the Other as the Self is the recognizing part. This would represent a reading that

could be contrasted with, for instance, Levinas's ethics which emphasizes the primacy of the Other – through the experience of the Others otherness, the Self is summoned to awareness of one's (infinite) responsibility. As formulated by Levinas, the face of the Other appeals to the Self to welcomingly open up for the Other, whereby the impregnable otherness of the Other is simultaneously recognized, i.e. the Self is summoned by the Other through the Other's mere presence. The strength with Levinas' position is that it draws attention to the Self as subordinated to the Other. At the same time, though, this position may be seen as a new, or reversed, one-sidedness in relation to the subject-centered tradition that Levinas critiques. From a pedagogical perspective, the value of Levinas' position is that it reminds of the Self's pedagogical responsibility. However, this responsibility is constructed, as I read Levinas, from his idea of man as a picture of God.

Nevertheless, against this background, pedagogical activity, summons, can be interpreted as the way in which the Self handles the responsibility to which we awaken through the presence or address of the Other. With Levinas, also the Self/pedagogue is reminded of its/his or her "infinite" responsibility to respond to how the Other should be treated. Levinas's suggestion that the Other awakens the Self to responsibility simultaneously means that a reflective behavior is demanded of the pedagogue. How should I conduct myself? What does my responsibility involve? What constitutes a reasonable summons?

It is possible here to discern a similarity or a point of convergence with the non-affirmative summons: the non-affirmative summons is a reflected pedagogical act in the form of a full expression of a responsibility, and as such aware of its fundamental opportunity for affirmative or socializing teaching as well as prescriptive education, that is, freedom-depriving rather than freedom-developing pedagogy. A non-affirmative pedagogy that seeks to allow the Other to deal with the problems to which existing knowledge is the answer (and also to assess the value of the existing problems), as with issues about the good life, thus works to *prevent* the learner from *unreflectingly* dedicate him- or herself cultural content and therefore represents a kind of restraining pedagogy. Pedagogical activity, which is ethically reflective, requires that the school as a social institution is allowed enough free space for the establishment of necessary pedagogical fields of action in relation to other social interests.

Educational awareness could then be defined as the Self recognizing the unreachable Otherness of the Other, but simultaneously viewing itself as an Other, for the Other. Thus, the Self also contributes to the constitution of the otherness of the Other. The self-reflexivity of pedagogical thought therefore means that the Self is forced to reflect on its I-ness and ask for its otherness from the perspective of the Other (who am I, what do I want, how does the other experience me?). In this way, the self is both free and dependent on the Other (Uljens, 2009).

The education of the will

One of the cornerstones of modern pedagogy is the notion that morality is the highest objective of education – discerning thought and action as regards issues of both knowledge and value (ethics and esthetics). According to Herbart, moral freedom means following the reflecting 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. The education of the will is then the cultivation of discernment with the help of reason. If Levinas calls attention to the Other as awakening the Self to awareness of its responsibility, non-affirmative education draws attention to that establishment of empirical ethical thought on the part of the Other is made dependent on the summons to ethical reflection.

The paradoxical summons

The non-affirmative approach, is also featured by a paradox. It implies that the growing individual *is adressed as though he or she is already capable of doing that, to which he or she is summoned,* and as treated someone who comes to realize his or her freedom through self-activity (Benner 1991). According to Heidegren (2003), Honneth has debated on whether recognition has something to do with affirming something that the Other brings with her, so to speak, or if recognition means ascribing a new characteristic to the Other that the Other does not yet possess. According to Heidegren, Honneth leans toward the former interpretation. Also Huttunen (2007, p. 425) writes: "According to Hegel, recognition must be based on the person's existing abilities and skills." Thus, is identified a difference to the paradox formulated by Dietrich Benner. In the latter pedagogical theoretical tradition, recognition is not limited to the Honnethian acceptance of something new, but recognition is complemented by recognition of the Other as free, and this in turn refers to the concept of summons. Thus, recognition can no longer be reduced to an empirical social-psychological concept (Williams, 1997, 7). In Dietrich Benner's formulation, pedagogical activity rather entails behaving toward the Other *as though* the Other is already capable of that to which the Other is summoned and through *self-*activity *may* be and become able to accomplish. In this case, recognition is not about recognizing a specified competence, but about behaving toward the Other in an opportunity-identifying way. Nevertheless, the subject also always finds him or herself in a given life-worldly situation or state. Even if the Other "an Sich" per definition is unapproachable, the summoning pedagogue's empirical experience of the Other is not, it is present. When Herbart refers to the concept *pedagogical tact* the intention is to demonstrate that summons not only falls back on the recognition of the freedom of the Other as such, but that summons must, in order to work, be experienced as reasonable by the Other. In such a tactful activity, the pedagogue shows awareness of the empirical reality, life situation, and identity of the Other, as these may appear for the Other.

Conclusion - Non-affirmative curriculum theory as critical theory

In non-affirmative education theory recognition of the subjects constitutive openness to the world, is present in the pedagogical concept summons to self-activity. That is, through the education process the individual develops both a personal uniqueness and a cultural belonging, i.e. personalization and socialization go hand in hand. When the Other's empirical life-world is recognized, it embraces to simultaneously recognize the individual as free and already self-activated. Education does not make subjects self-activating but provides possibilities to turning a potentiality into a reality. In addition, recognition of the others life-

world means a confession of the Others radical presence in a shared world. Non-affirmative theory would consider pedagogical-ethical responsibility towards the Other as pre-eminent, but not in the way Levinás explains. Rather, the fundamental human insight regarding necessity of being responsible for caring emanate from the fact that without care the newborn child will not survive.

As we have seen, pedagogical activity presupposes, on the one hand, an interhuman, interdependent relation (intersubjectivity), and, on the other, the freedom of the subject (subjectivity) as equally fundamental points of departure. At the same time, tensions between the recognized freedom and the empirical life-world, where individuals work on their relation to themselves, their fellow beings, and their cultural world, can be analysed by means of the concepts educability (Bildsamkeit) and summons to self-activity.

This seond part of the article has also shown how *recognition* as a *concept* and *problem* has been present throughout the whole modern pedagogical-philosophical tradition, since the establishment of classic or modern pedagogy and onwards. From a curriculum theory perspective, it is meaningful to identify different versions of the notion of recognition. Further, recognition is a crucial notion in understanding pedagogical activity. Yet, it should not be mixed with summoning the Other to Self-activity. While recognition points to the Other's life-world, its reality and potentiality, summoning refers to the actual act of education aiming at creating a pedagogical space inviting the Other to transcendence of the Self, denoted by Bildsamkeit as the correlate for summons. In conclusion, it is considered productive to perceive of the concepts *Bildsamkeit* and *summons* as mediating between the recognition of the subject's empirical life-world and the recognition of the individual's potentiality or freedom.

NAT can also be read from a methodological perspective for analyzing curricular practices. Claiming that NAT is an analytic vehicle does not mean that it is considered value neutral. There *is* a imperative inherent in this theory, saying, for example, that the teacher is not expected to *affirm* existing societal practices or future political or educational ideals. Leaders and teachers in democratic public school systems are, by law, expected to follow the spirit of a curriculum and must aware such interests. NAT therefore argues that teachers must *recognize* curricular aims and contents, but that teachers are not allowed to simply affirm these aims and contents. To affirm them would mean not to problematize these aims and contents for and with students, thereby reducing education to transmitting given values and contents. This is how NAT explains the creation of what was here called *pedagogical spaces for the student or pupil*. These pedagogical spaces feature critical reflection of what is, what is not, and what might be. They represent an invitation to discerning thought and experimental practice, i.e. the critical contemplation of contents advocated by the curriculum as policy. A non-affirmative approach reminds us of Klafki's (1994) *categorical* Bildung- or erudition centered position, where the idea is to work around the selected contents (Bildungsinhalt) so that its possible educative qualities (Bildungsgehalt) are revealed in relation to the student (Jank & Meyer, 1997). In this way *educative teaching* unites socialization and personalization – we become unique individuals only in so far we grow into a culture of sharing the world with others. Only by such a contemplating, reflective, dialogical co-activity where the teacher intervenes (questions, listens to, problematizes) the students experiential relation to

him/herself, to others and to the world, the individual may come to share dimensions of a culture, and thereby establish one's own relation to it – a process of identification and individualization.

Working in relation to a Humboldtian tradition of *Bildung* as well as Hegel-inspired view of recognition, non-affirmative theory of education considers pedagogical activity as mediational, and thereby hermeneutic in character. One contribution of this article is hopefully that, historically seen, we more clearly can see that the development initiated by J. G. Fichte, and later carried on by Herbart and Hegel, introduced strong core concepts for theorizing education. The non-affirmative approach represents a present-day reconstruction of this modern tradition. Whereas the *Bildung* tradition typically remains theorizing human growth, in the widest sense of the word, representing a dynamic educational anthropology, non-affirmative theory contributes with a conceptualization of a corresponding notion of pedagogical activity, which is not very explicit in the humoldtian or later initiatives to theorize the process of *Bildung*. Non-affirmative, pedagogical mediation between the world and the students is therefore both critical and hermeneutic in the fundamental sense that education presents a pedagogically motivated interpretation of the world for the learner to engage in. Such a perspective today is a strong alternative to dominating competency and performance based ideas of human growth.

Notes

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[2] This means that the already immediately and originally self-aware and object-aware subject who encounters the world (in the world!) can "be summoned to self-activity." This summons, on the one hand, promotes the establishment of "cultural intersubjectivity," and on the other, personal identity (empirical identity). Pedagogically this means that the educator/teacher directs the growing individual's attention toward *the relation* between his or her own thought and action in the subject's relation to the world as experienced by him or her,

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