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## GOVERNANCE OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING WITHIN A NEW CAREER POSITION<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Teacher's professional development is a continuous learning process which has been explored from many perspectives (Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall & Cribb 2009; Leaton & Whitty 2010; Moore & Clark 2016; Sachs 2016, 2001). This study focuses on Swedish teachers' professional development and learning when trying to find ways to think and act in a new career position introduced in a career reform in Sweden. We regard teachers' professional development as a part of the adult learning field, in which teachers are the adult learners in a professional context. Adult learning is therefore regarded as a phenomenon occurring not only in educational institutions but as part of the broader context of learning as professionals in working life (cf. Knowles, Holton III & Swanson 2015).

In evaluating the reasons for shortcomings of the Swedish educational system, the OECD states that a long-term human resource strategy is needed as a tool to improve schools and to reverse the decline of Swedish students' performance (OECD 2015). When trying to enhance students' performance the Swedish Government in 2013 introduced a career reform with two new career-oriented positions; lead teacher and senior subject teacher<sup>2</sup> (The Swedish Code of Statues 2013:70). Open to teachers at all school levels, these positions required specific qualifications. Both positions require a valid teaching certificate, four years of work, and demonstrated pedagogical skills. For the position of lead teacher, a strong interest in improving teaching is required. For the senior subject teacher position a postgraduate examination within a field of

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<sup>2</sup> We use "lead teacher" and "senior subject teacher" as the English terms for the Swedish terms "förstelärare" and "lektor". Other studies use different translations such as the term "first teacher" (see Hardy & Rönnerman 2018) and the term "middle-leader" (see Hirsh & Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018).

relevance for the position is required. The requirements and the related job descriptions for these two career positions are intertextually linked to the Swedish Education Act, (SFS 2010:800). The Act (Ch. 1§5) states, “Education should be based on research and proven experience” and thus the teaching profession’s practice must be based on research-based knowledge. While both lead teachers and senior subject teachers are expected to perform research-based education in practice, the career reform differentiates the role of lead teachers and senior subject teachers in relation to educational research. Lead teachers are expected to investigate and implement research-based knowledge, whereas, senior subject teachers are expected to carry out research-based studies within schools. Even with this distinction, the reform’s intention is clear: development work in the schools should be undertaken in a culture based on both research-based knowledge and teachers’ experience-based knowledge. According to evaluations of the implementation (The Swedish Agency for Education 2014; Stadskontoret 2016) the reform has neither created a position for development and learning for the teaching profession nor been the expected effective tool for school development. Furthermore, neither of these reports say anything about how the lead teachers themselves have interpreted the reform in relation to the demands that teaching should be based on scientific ground and proven experience (SFS 2010:800).

In this study, we focus on lead teachers’ in a specific professional development and learning situation as they try to handle their new career position. Lead teachers are less likely to have had a research education but are still expected to base their work on research and proven experience. The aim of this study is to elucidate, analyse and discuss how lead teachers govern themselves in their positions, their underlying assumptions about career and the intersection between their job responsibilities and demands on scientific ground and proven experience. The following three research questions guide this study:

- (1) How do lead teachers, in their practice, interpret and translate, a) the mission of the lead-teacher career position and b) the demand for research-based education and proven experience in education?
- (2) What underlying assumptions of career emerge in lead teachers’ expressions about their work?
- (3) What ideas, strategies and actions do they use to handle their role in practice?

### ***Governance through career and scientific knowledge***

We study governance in practice, the arena in which policy is enacted (Ball, Maguire, Braun & Hoskins 2011). In that respect, we place our study of lead teachers’ professional development and learning in a specific part of critical policy research: “the governance turn” (Ball 2009). Research within this tradition shows that complexity

of the policy process has increased; today there are different and even contradictive reforms, several new players and new markets that claim teachers' attentions (Ball & Junemann 2012). In the late 2000s and early 2010s extensive reforms were carried out to alter the ideological grounds of the Swedish school system and return to traditional values and goals (Lundahl, Arreman, Erixon, Lundstrom & Ronnberg 2010). Carlbaum argues that the shift, in fact, reflects a battle at an ideological and political level whereby the meaning of education in society shifted from education for all, to a school for the labour market (2012).

The issue that teaching should be based on research and proven experience can be seen as an example of governance of education and follows trends in other European countries (Brante 2014; Caena 2014; Cain 2015). These trends link to New Public Management (NPM), a set of principles governing educational change and school performance (Ball 2009). Research shows that state control has increased while teachers' professional autonomy and professionalism has decreased (Ball & Junemann 2012; Fejes 2011; Lundahl 2005; Olssen 2016). Such measures as controlling results, publishing schools' performance and attempting to identify "correct" knowledge/science has led to a political project addressing teachers' professional knowledge base (Biesta 2010; Carlgren 2012; Liedman 2011). Previous research on the academisation of education (Kyvik 2009), shows that the change towards a research-based education and the divide between research-based knowledge and teachers contextualised-based, experience-based knowledge imposes great challenges to teachers (Cain 2015; Dewey 1929; Levin 2013). The so called "knowledge problem" is of specific interest as lead teachers are supposed to act as knowledge promoters for academic and research-based knowledge within a context dominated by experience-based knowledge. A study of the career reform by Hardy and Rönnerman shows that a focus on salaries and the teachers' role demoralised the reform's intention of enhanced teaching and learning and of strengthening teachers' professional status (2018). Both the career reform and the demands for scientific ground and proven experiences can be regarded as communicated by holders of political and organizational perspectives on career, where career thus becomes a rational and linear strategy for reaching certain goals (cf Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018).

### ***A return to past concepts and conditions in a new age?***

In the broad field of career research in general, the meaning of career is not that easily defined. Due to tremendous changes in work life in the past decades, the traditional view of career as referring to the dominant metaphor of "climbing the ladder" (Savickas 2008), has gradually been challenged and regarded as something belonging to the past (see e.g., Hall 1996), where attempts to provide new meanings of career to better fit with a changing working life have been observed (see Bergmo-Prvulovic 2015;

Inkson 2004). However, in everyday speech, career is often taken for granted and seldom clarified. Furthermore, it is defined differently among different disciplines and perspectives (cf Arthur, Hall & Lawrence 1989; Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018; Collin 2007; Inkson 2004). This in turn, leads to different discourses in how career is defined and communicated (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018). Career within the organizational discourse is emphasized as a strategy and resource for reaching the goals of the organization. Career within the discourse that emphasizes career from an individual perspective rather refers to personal meanings, social meanings and to career from a perspective of exchange (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2013, 2015, 2018). In addition, career can also be communicated from a professional discourse, depending on the profession in focus (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2015).

Career research in the area of teaching, often focuses on the phase of career choice and *reasons behind* the procedure of becoming a teacher, for example on altruistic factors such as a desire to help, intrinsic factors such as interest in the activity of teaching and/or interest in a specific subject, and extrinsic factors such as level of pay and status (Kyriacou & Coulthard 2000; Moran et al. 2001). Studies focusing on the phase of continuous professional development for teachers, and how they handle a transition towards a new role and position as part of a governing reform, are more difficult to find. Rather, the reasons and motivations behind seeking such positions are in focus (Adivov-Ungar 2016; York-Barr & Duke 2004), where aspirations often are divided in *either* lateral *or* vertical aspirations, and *in* either intrinsic *or* extrinsic factors. Several studies also point out that extrinsic factors are not the most prominent in the Western World (Ganchorre & Tomanek 2012; Moreau 2014). We argue that it is not always a question about either or it can be both depending on the contextual situation, teachers' experiences and need for recognition. Research on teachers in middle-leading positions (Hirsh & Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018), also confirms how this can be a question of both and, as teachers refer to a perspective of exchange, in which both internal and external rewards relates to expected outcomes of their efforts in their professional practice.

An overview reveals that those countries in which career tracks for teachers are stable, integrated and commonly accepted, such as in Singapore, South Korea (Lee & Kroksmark 2017; and Finland (Kansanen 2014), hold a traditional view on career as "climbing the ladder" (cf. e.g., Savickas 2008). Such a traditional view of career has however gradually been challenged in the new world of work. Moreover, the Swedish context differs in an interesting way from those countries described above. The possibilities for career opportunities, in the form of the lead teacher and senior subject teacher positions, have only been available since 2013. Previously, career advancement for teachers in Sweden consisted of becoming responsible for a school subject. However, such career opportunities were abolished in the 1990s as the local school organization

was reorganized into a flat organizational structure with the only remaining career advancement possibility being that of becoming a head teacher. This flat organizational process began in the 1940s with attempts to create an equal and democratic school system for all (Richardson 1983, 2010). The emphasis on implementing career positions with the new reform reveals a return to past concepts and conditions in an age in which these are challenged, furthermore in a context that for long have been characterized by a flat structure.

### **Theoretical and methodical frameworks**

This study draws upon three theoretical perspectives, *policy enactment*, *governmentality* and *career as social and professional representation*. Policy enactment (Ball & Junemann 2012), based on an awareness of the shortcomings of implementation research, with the policy's logic taken for granted, disregards the processes and the context-based knowledge-in-practice when trying to realize a policy. Policy enactment seeks to explore the ways in which different types of policy become interpreted, translated, reconstructed and remade in to different, but similar, policy practices. In this study we conceive the career reform as an example of policy as a neoliberal technique for governance, whereby the state and its governmental entities redirect the responsibility for carrying out changes considered as necessary to improve teaching and student outcomes. The mission to find solutions to identified inadequacies in the educational system on the policy level is, by different reforms, handed over to the individual teacher by emphasising the need for professional development (Ball 2009, 2003). The joint responsibility for carrying out a reform in practice is thereby, outsourced to individual teachers in the organization who, along with others, are considered as adaptable and positive to the reform and active subjects (Ball & Olmedo 2013; Lundahl 2005).

To deepen our understanding of the ideas and strategies of lead teachers, and of the rationalities they use to govern themselves in their mission as lead teachers, we study the policy enactment of lead teacher's through the concept of *governmentality* (Foucault 1991). This concept draws attention to the mechanisms by which the state, through policies influenced by neoliberal strategies, governs by means of disciplinary control and individualisation (Ball et al. 2011). The disciplinary control corresponds to Foucault's "governmentality" which we use to study the governing logics in first teachers' interpretations and translations of the career reform. We assume that the functions of control operate through individuals, through their positive conceptions to the intentions of the reform and via the discourses that form their thoughts about the world and themselves within the career position. Governmentality pays attention to techniques that lead teachers to govern themselves and, within their specific context, to learn how

to be and act as suitable and desirable professionals. These ideas of how lead teachers “should be” and “should act” in given contexts, can then be connected to discourses about career offered in expressions found in policies, political visions, local goals and circumstances (cf. Hansson 2014). In order to reveal the governmentalities underlying teachers’ ideas, strategies and actions we use Dean’s four analytical dimensions of governmentality (2010). We describe these further in the methodological section.

To understand teachers’ underlying assumptions of career within the created career position as lead teacher, we use the analytical framework of *career as a social and professional representation* (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2013, 2015), based on social representations theory (Moscovici 2001; Ratinaud & Lac 2011). We regard these representations as preceding and unfolding in discourses through the teachers’ expressions, which govern their ideas and their strategies for handling their mission. Career as a social representation means that the definition and meaning ascribed to career depends on our systems of values, ideas and practices which enables us to establish an order for orientating and governing ourselves within this order. Furthermore, this system provides us with codes for interpreting, translating and communicating our understanding of career. These representations express, on the one hand a personal meaning and, on the other, a social meaning of career. The first meaning refers to career as an “individual project and self-realization”, and the second refers to career as “social/hierarchical climbing” (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2013, p. 14). Furthermore, the social representation of career as a “game of exchange” is clearly relational in character, and thus expresses a search for a mutual exchange between the individual and the organization, in terms of expected efforts and outcomes, and in terms of internal and external rewards (See Bergmo-Prvulovic 2013, 2015, 2017). Such internal rewards relate to personal values and satisfaction, and external rewards concern salaries, positions, and status. These representations are also evident as underlying assumptions of career in previous research on teachers in middle-leading positions (Hirsh & Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018). In this study, we assume that social representations of career guide the thinking of lead teachers about their mission. Moreover, we assume that certain professional groups form professional representations within their community (Ratinaud & Lac 2011).

### ***Data collection and preparing of data***

Data was collected by conducting qualitative interviews (Kvale & Brinkman 2009; Cohen Manion & Morrison 2007) with twelve newly appointed lead teachers. The interviews were carried out in 2015. The interview involved open-ended questions to allow the interviewees to express themselves both in terms of content and in terms of level of abstraction. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. The chosen method facilitated the lead teachers describing and reflecting upon their every-

day professional lives, their personal views of what is expected of a lead teacher as set out in the career reform, how they comprehend the concepts of research and proven experience in schools, and what strategies they use to handle their career mandates. The interview guide comprised several question areas covering the following themes: *understandings of the mission, understanding of the career position (personally, organisationally, professionally), main task within the mission, possibilities and obstacles for development/improvement, and understanding of research-based education and proven experience.*

We collected data from twelve lead teachers working at different compulsory schools (pupils 7-16 years old) in Sweden, who were randomly selected from within two different municipalities with outspoken strategies to implement the career reform and a research-based education. First, we read the transcripts inductively to gain an overall understanding of the content. Qualitative content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman 2004), was then used in the initial stage to visualise ideas, strategies and actions in order to prepare the collected data for the analytical process of disclosing governmentalities. We identified meaning units with lead teachers' expressions in search for similarities and differences on the main issues. Then, data was condensed and meaning units with same/similar content were brought together. These steps prepared our data for the governmentality analysis.

### ***Analysis of data***

To disclose the governmentalities, we formulated the following questions based upon Dean's dimensions of governmentality (2010):

- 1) which problems do the lead teachers visualize in relation to the career reform?
- 2) what knowledge and expertise are important for them to handle the mission?
- 3) what are the different techniques teachers use to govern themselves and others when handling the mission as lead teacher and the mission of research-based education and proven experience?
- 4) which subject positions are offered and taken by the lead teachers? We aimed these questions at the content of the expressions.

With support from Dean's four dimensions (2010), we abstracted the meaning units into four different governmentalities of how the lead teachers interpret and translate the lead-teacher mission and how they govern their mission with different strategies. These governmentalities are the result of our categorisation of *expressions of governmentalities*, i.e., rationalities that teachers use to govern themselves as lead teachers, based on teachers' *expressions*, and not a categorisation of teachers. In order to explore what underlying assumptions of career emerge within these governmentalities, we applied the



analytical tool of career as a social and professional representation (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2013, 2015) on the teachers' expressions within each disclosed governmentality.

With regards to the credibility and reliability (Creswell 2009) of the study, we have continually, among us as authors, served as critical reviewers of our interpretations and perspectives, in order to come to a common understanding. We have presented and discussed the preliminary results with both lead teachers and research colleagues. Such processes have served as critical tools in the process of clarifying and strengthening our transparency in both methodological procedures and in the presentation of the result.

### **Presentation of the result**

We present the summarized results of the governmentality analysis in table 1, below.

Table 1. Presentation of result: Lead teachers' governmentalities

	<b>Dimension of governmentality (a-d)</b>	<b>a. Problem</b>	<b>b. Knowledge and expertise</b>	<b>c. Strategies and technologies</b>	<b>d. Subject position</b>
Governmentalities (I-IV)	I. The School Developer	Defined in policy	Organisational knowledge NAE and re-search	Top down, control of results, adequate research	A kind of head teacher, Research consumer
	II. The Process Leader	Teachers problems in teaching and learning	Teaching experiences. Practical & tacit knowledge	Bottom up, teachers joint and critical reflection	One among equals. Research producer
	III. The Subject-Specialist	Strengthen status of school subject	School subject knowledge. Subject specialists	Bottom up, learning about school subject content	The School subject head teacher. Research consumer
	IV. The Involuntary Careerist	Climbing the ladder	Common sense Institutional knowledge	Status quo	Dismisses the idea of research in the position. Functional cynicism

The analytical tool of Dean's dimensions are sorted into the following headings; a) the problem, b) knowledge and expertise, c) strategies and technologies, and d) subject position. The main findings, the four governmentalities (I-IV) are presented as subheadings in the results section in the following order: I) the school developer, II) the process manager, III) the subject specialist and IV) the involuntary careerist. The presentation of the results consists of descriptions based on the analysis of the interviews, which are illustrated with quotations from teachers' expressions in order to illustrate in teachers own words the different dimensions and rationalities. After each



governmentality follows a summary of the analysis made by the analytical tool of career as asocial/professional representation (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2013, 2015). Finally, we present our interpretation of all the disclosed governmentalities.

## Results

### *The school developer*

The rationalities of lead teachers' expressions categorized as "the school developer" reveal a positive and affirming conception of both the career reform and the demand for research and proven experience. Both were considered pertinent to school improvement and affirmation. The school developers' rationality envisions the career reform to be natural, a thoroughly positive and important initiative for both the teaching profession and the organisation.

I mean, all places of work have different careers – or professional categories. Why should it be so incredibly bad only in our profession? I don't understand that. (Teacher 8:20)

The lead teachers' role is considered a way to contribute to improving both the school and the profession. Being appointed as lead teachers is perceived by the educators as an acknowledgment that they are on the right path. The confirmation and the rise in salary strengthen the legitimacy and the task of continuing to work for school improvement. Notwithstanding these views, the school developer's rationality also expresses a critical view and disappointment that the career reform defines lead teachers as developing a school subject.

When I applied for the lead teacher job, I was obliged to apply for it in connection to a school subject. I thought that I would work more with basic values and hence, you know, school improvement, thus, on the whole, not like in my own subject, I do that all the time. (Teacher 5:20)

Expressions of the school developers' rationality show that lead teachers are prepared to address the tasks of overarching school-improvement work at an organisational level. Furthermore, they are prepared to handle such problems that government, principal or head teacher have identified and communicated to teachers at school level, e.g., defective equivalence, assessment, interdisciplinary work, organisation, collegial learning, follow-up, documentation, systematic quality work or connection to research and proven experience in teaching.

This rationality views the lead teachers' previous experiences of practical school-improvement work to be knowledge that is important for the role of the lead teacher. This rationality argues for the need for school improvement and research to improve students' performance. Keeping up to date with research-based knowledge is of great importance and therefore vital for the school developers' rationality:

Then I'd like to have a stronger link between school and university and learn how to use research and evidence-based teaching methods. I myself have been dreaming about this /.../ though there has not been enough time, to study at an advanced level. (Teacher 8:54)

Furthermore, research as a governing technique is perceived to be a way to visualise teachers' experience. The school developer does not see conflicts between being a teacher and doing research of one's own in the classroom. On the contrary, this rationality deems that through research a teacher's experiences can contribute to the knowledge needed to improve education. Flexibility and having high expectations are two stratagems that school developers see as important.

In describing their status, the school developers use expressions such as being "a kind of head teacher", an extended arm of the authority commissioned to realise intentions initiated via top-down governance but implemented by bottom-up means.

In summary, we find that within this governmentality of lead teachers there are underlying assumptions about career that clearly refer to the social representation of *career as social/hierarchical climbing*. These expressions link to recognition, rewards and improved status for the teaching profession, factors considered as being crucial for strengthening legitimacy. This representation aligns with the expectations expressed in the career reform and policies assuming that a strengthened status and legitimacy will automatically result in improved student results.

### ***The process manager***

The governmentality termed "process manager" has an ambivalent, critical questioning conception of the career reform. On the one hand, its expressions view the intention of a career path for teachers as having the potential to provide opportunities for more serious advancement in the teaching profession. On the other hand, some expressions show disappointment with the current application of the reform, since the recruitment process and the rationale and qualifications for appointment to positions were not sufficiently clear. Hence, according to expressions found in this governmentality, the lead teacher reform is perceived as undemocratic and a cause of tension, conflicts and jealousy that will split the unity and solidarity within the teaching profession at school.

From the expressions emanating from this governmentality, the process manager is willing to be prepared to teach and to improve teaching in concert with his/her colleagues. However, administrative tasks and the tensions among the colleagues are problematic and create obstacles for carrying out their commission.

No, I think that I made more of a career before. /.../ Then I gladly developed the teaching, but now what's happened is that I'm working with administrative things. And that is really not what I want to be doing. Instead I want to develop my teaching. /.../ But I've almost had to

stop doing that, because I cannot manage it now, when I've got to devote my time to all sorts of other tasks. (Teacher 7:32-7:33)

From the process managers' rationality, lead teachers need solid knowledge about how to work with their own learning, their colleagues' learning and their pupils' learning. Teachers' teaching experiences are an important source of knowledge and there is a need for teacher-driven research.

Expressions found in this governmentality characterize the lead teacher as a teacher researcher among equals, a facilitator basing his/her activities on the research producer's logic in relation to the Education Act. In other words, they are conceived as being producers of legitimate knowledge and as teachers capable of sustaining and improving teaching and learning.

I think that one might become much more aware of one's own role as a teacher, and I also believe that it would give more verve to what one says to the parents. This is how it is between boys and girls, because I've checked it among your children, and what can we do to make it better (Teacher 2:71)

The idea that lead teachers should be able to conduct research is a way of distinguishing the lead teachers' specific work tasks within the school.

In summary, we find that the underlying assumptions about career within this governmentality clearly express an ambiguous relationship to career. These expressions reveal dynamic career representations where teachers are struggling with different and even contradictory career representations. First, we see that from this governmentality's perspective career refers to hierarchical thinking as something negative and that it affects and may destroy the solidarity within the profession. However, the possibility of advancement is also seen as something positive, in the sense that the profession as a collective is acknowledged for its significance. Second, these expressions indicate a newly identified professional representation of career where the teaching career is seen as a *non-hierarchical or equal level position*. The ambivalence in the expressions relate to the unclear criteria of what competencies are required as lead teachers. Therefore, career becomes a conflict, between values implicit in the reform and values in the profession.

### ***The subject specialist***

The expressions categorized as "subject specialists" rationalities show a positive conception of both the career reform and the demands for research and proven experience. The career reform is regarded as a welcome initiative whereby teachers can receive confirmation, higher status, inspiration and recognition of school improvements based on the efforts of subject teachers' in the school subject development.

I mean, I think that it develops the teaching profession quite a lot, for example, that together we might begin to talk more about the knowledge goals, how we relate to assessment, how we work to attain the goals, how we sort of present the concepts to the pupils, what methods we use /.../. (Teacher 4:37)

The subject specialist's main problem is fear about the subject's legitimacy and status in relation to other school subjects. Their task is to strengthen the school subject and give the subject teachers a voice; thus, they see research in schools as promoting this aim. This rationality shows little or no difficulties in receiving their colleagues' legitimacy and access to the arena for collegial learning. The knowledge of the "how and why" questions about teaching appears as almost self-evident and highly personal knowledge.

I've been a teacher for ten years. I know what they think is fun, what they jump at. So, the form of working is very much governed by my experience. But then, when I want to develop their knowledge, how does the brain really function? I want to know more in that respect than just sort of guess on my experience. I must find – there must be someone who has done research about this, how learning happens. (Teacher 9:70)

Subject researchers as well as researchers within didactics are considered, in the rationality of the subject specialist, to be important experts who possess the answers. But the idea that lead teachers would take active part in building their professional knowledgebase by involving themselves in research activities is not an option here.

Instead, this rationality uses a governing strategy based on the idea of subject communities, where teachers develop their teaching excellence by learning from each other in a collegially open climate where humility about what one does not know, rather than boasting about one's unique professional skills, are important attributes for being successful as a lead teacher that is responsible for a school subject. Expressions falling into this rationality show that lead teachers use different techniques with their colleagues for governing the subject community. This fulfils several aims, namely, to articulate, defend and support their school subject in relation to other school subjects and to strengthen teachers' influence on the subject development. The subject specialist's rationality perceives the lead teacher as a subject representative with the task of both leading the collegial cooperation among teachers in the same subject and being responsible for looking after the subject's development. In relation to research and proven experience, the subject specialist assumes a position as research consumer.

In summary, we find that within this governmentality there are underlying assumptions about career that clearly refer to the social representation of career as *hierarchical climbing*, which provide possibilities for acknowledgement, higher status and recognition based on teachers' efforts within their subject expertise. Furthermore, the social representation of career as a *game of exchange* is clearly expressed, where the outcome of the career reform would lead to strengthening subject matter, and their subject ex-

pertise may be rewarded. The professional representation of career as a *non-hierarchical equal-level position* also emerges within this governmentality, though, delimited to groups of teachers defined by their school subject expertise.

### ***The involuntary careerist***

In the governmentality termed “involuntary careerist” we find expressions that conceive both the career reform and the Education Act's demand for research and proven experience to be something negative. This rationality offers a view of the career reform as being undemocratic, a source of conflict among teachers and an initiative to create a hierarchy by sorting teachers in doubtful governmentalities as either bad or good and awarding higher pay to the latter. Furthermore, solidarity among teachers weakens, and the institutional order, knowledge and actions seen as important, are challenged. This rationality rejects as utopian the idea that lead teachers, in addition to their teaching duties, should also be involved in research. Some expressions reveal that being a lead teacher was a way to find out if one was trusted:

I play a double role. Yes, I do. And it was also hard to tackle. I wanted, I wanted to test, as it were, is it something that I would like to be. Am I trusted, to get a career job? (Teacher 11:50)

The rationality of the involuntary careerist describes the decision to apply for the lead teacher post as an act of solidarity, in which someone must make a sacrifice to maintain the institutional order.

So I got a post, because no one applied. I think people were tired of this system. (Teacher 11:11)

Furthermore, this rationality takes a pragmatic and somewhat cynical subject position in relation to the career reform. Expressions emphasize that they have not chosen this of their own free will. In acquitting themselves from taking initiatives, lead teachers use techniques such as passively waiting for directives regarding lead teachers' tasks. In relation to the Education Act's demand for research and proven experience and the mandate assigned to the lead teacher, this rationality may be summarised as conceptual disconnection, that is, as something completely detached from teachers' practice and work tasks.

In summary, we find that the underlying assumptions of career within this governmentality also express ambivalence like those found in the process manager governmentality. However, this governmentality reveals expressions of career as a dead end and emphasizes the conflictual aspect within the profession. The social representation of career as hierarchical climbing emerges. However, within these expressions, there are indications of a second identified professional representation of *career as a sorting tool* to discern between good and bad teachers, where the good ones are rewarded, and the

solidarity within the profession becomes threatened. However, there are also expressions of career referring to individual rewards, a way to find out if you are trusted as a teacher.

### ***Interpretation of the results***

The first dimension, i.e., the problem, helps us to understand what the lead teachers regard as the core of their mission and what they are willing to work with. The rationality of the school developer is concerned with improving the school's inadequate results from an organizational level. The process leader wants to strengthen the teachers' perspective and to deal with important issues that arise from classroom practice and with issues that are directly concerned with teaching and student learning. The school subject specialist is focused on finding ways to strengthen the legitimacy of the school subject and repair the damage done to teachers' content knowledge when the binary school system was abolished in the 1960s (Richardson 1983; Liedman 2011). Finally, the involuntary careerist's issue is to find ways to handle the problem of being both a lead teacher and a careerist while simultaneously denying this fact without risking conflicts with colleagues given the careerist's salary increase (Ball 2003).

As to the second dimension; knowledge and expertise, the four rationalities use quite different epistemological starting points, when governing themselves in relation to their mission. The school developer can be seen as representing a bureaucratic discourse, referring to the need of organizational and management knowledge and considering evidence-based knowledge as stable knowledge (Brante 2014). Both the process leader and the subject specialist are good examples of the split epistemologies between, on the one side, a strong focus on theoretical knowledge and, on the other side, a focus on practical knowledge, inherited and embedded in the pedagogical discourse as a continuum between content and form in teaching (Cain 2015). The most interesting epistemological tension in the results appear between the school developer and the process leader. To the process leader, teachers' practical and experience-based knowledge is necessary and important both for the profession and for improving student achievements. Without this specific knowledge, it is not possible for teachers to develop professionally or to know how to handle the demand for research-based education, or how to improve teaching so that students' learning is improved. According to the process leader's rationality, the lead teachers' mission in Swedish schools could go beyond new public management and the idea of evidence-based education. However, the mission is defined by a combination of factors, namely, the tacit knowledge of experienced teachers, teachers' research-driven questions and being an active participant in research along with an interest in experience-based pedagogical knowledge (Fejes 2011). This way of thinking about the relation between research and a need for new

knowledge is in sharp contrast to the involuntary careerist rationality, which expresses a denial of the whole idea of research-based education (Levin 2013).

The third dimension; strategies and technologies, relates to governing and gives insight into how, where and with whom the lead teachers are prepared to act. The school developer's main governing techniques are to use control in combination with top down strategies, for example, by choosing and recommending what research their colleagues should read. To both the process leader and the subject specialist rationalities, it is important to have a dialogue, not top-down but bottom-up. The big dividing line between these two rationalities lies in the view of the content of the reflection. The way forward for the process leader seems risky. The governing technologies can create contexts where teachers can reflect together, but this depends on an open and trustful relation between teachers and this appears difficult to achieve, the process leader feels (Ball & Olmedo 2013).

The fourth and final dimension; lead teachers' subject positions, shows the diversity of possible status/role positions that lead teachers in their specific context can use to govern themselves as lead teachers and/or in the mission of research-based education and proven experience. Either the teacher can take a position in which he/she identifies themselves as the type of head teacher in which management is of interest where the lead teacher functions as an intermediary for research-based knowledge, or the teacher takes a position as one among equals, depending on others' approval. In relation to research, the lead teachers regard themselves as research producers. Furthermore, lead teachers can govern themselves from the position as a school subject specialist, with the main interest in research regarding subject content. Finally, the teachers can govern themselves from a functional cynical position in which, engaging in research knowledge is out of the question.

The underlying assumptions of career are revealed in the expressions as social and professional representations of career (cf. Bergmo-Prvulovic 2015; Ratinaud & Lac 2011), where the career as social/hierarchical climbing emerges as a dominant pattern to which each governmentality refers to, either as something acceptable, or not. Expressions in the two governmentalities – the process manager, and the involuntary careerist – reveal social representations of ambiguity. This dynamic and ambiguous reasoning results in two new professional representations of teachers' careers. 1) *as a non-hierarchical equal-level position* and 2) *career as a sorting tool*. Expressions in the governmentality of the subject specialist reveal the social representation of career as being a game of exchange (cf. Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2013, 2015), where the lead teacher can strengthen the status of their school subject, and get personally rewarded as a subject expert.



Lead teachers govern themselves in their daily practice guided by the idea of career paths as hierarchical, and the demands on research-based education and proven experience emerge as a career object, which they either accept or reject. Within the social representation of career as hierarchical, the teachers develop different strategies to cope with both colleagues' envy and their own desires for professional acknowledgment, recognition and rewards. The teachers relate and try to handle the different discourses about career – organizational, individual and professional – (see Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018) within their different governing strategies to interpret and translate their mission. These discourses occur in an interplay between each other, however, in some governmentalities they are more prominent than in others. The school developer governmentality relates more clearly to career within the organizational discourse, while both the process leader and the subject specialist more clearly refer to a professional discourse of career alongside an individual discourse referring to both internal and external rewards (cf. Hirsh & Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018). The involuntary careerist handles both the individual discourse and the professional discourse of career in an intersection, but with emphasis on internal values, personal meanings and difficulties in how to cope with career as a hierarchical path.

## **Discussion**

In exploring how teachers enact a new career position, we have found that in lead teachers' interpretations and translations of the career reform and demands for research-based education, teachers use different rationalities to govern themselves in practice. These rationalities serve as inner platforms for governance of their continuous professional development and learning in this new role. One of the limitations of the study is that it mainly provides knowledge about when teachers are quite new in their positions and are trying to interpret and handle a new reform in their different school-practices. In order to understand the full enactment of the reform, it is valuable to see how it develops on a longitudinal basis. In this sense, there is recent research (Hirsh & Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018) that might complement this study. Furthermore, it is valuable to conduct studies with other methodological approaches and perspectives. However, this study contributes important knowledge about the redirection of responsibility in the first stage of making the reform happen in practice. Lead-teachers are left alone, without supportive structures, when beginning to form their strategies of how to think and act in a new career position in their specific contexts. Such knowledge would be valuable for leaders and decision makers, when initiating, planning and implementing a reform. The four governmentalities show that lead teachers interpret and translate the purpose of the career reform and the lead teachers' mission in different and even

contradictive ways. Either it is perceived as something individual and an economical reward for previous efforts, or it is seen as a new role aiming at improving the quality of school and teaching. As a consequence of the latter, follows responsibility for processes leading to educational change, as well as strengthening subject matters. In addition, the results show that expressions in the different governmentalities reveal different perceptions about how to handle the demands of research and proven experience within the role as lead teachers. While the rationality expressed in the governmentality of involuntary careerist rejects the link between the two assignments, the expressions in the other governmentalities attempt to integrate them in various ways as part of the mission.

When implementing a career reform as the one in Sweden in 2013 (SFS 2013, p. 70), it is obvious that both the organization and the employees (in this case, teachers) will be influenced by such changes. This study has shown that it is rather problematic to include the concept of career in overall strategies and policies without clarifying either the meaning of career or the intentions of the use of such a concept. To understand lead teachers' experiences and different logic and rationalities to master their career mission, it is important to place them in the broader context of political governance of school improvement, as well as the socially constructed meanings they ascribe to career. The results provide a strong subjective account from the complexity in lead teachers' struggles to find ways of coping with the career reform. The lead teacher's perceptions of the purpose and meaning of the career reform clearly show that the introduction of a hierarchical job structure cannot be distinguished from the issue of the overall purpose of education that includes social aims. The results show that lead teachers' view this issue differently. For some, a hierarchy among teachers is fundamentally wrong because it undermines the idea of a democratic and equal school and society for all (cf. Lundahl et al. 2011). Lead teachers' critical attitude towards the introduction of the career reform shows that it has served as a catalyst for teachers' defence of deeper ideological beliefs about the meaning of education and the functioning of their profession. The question thus arises: is the reform a fast-paced state-of-the-art scheme created by the government to respond to the OECD's recommendations based on the hope that it will result in a more efficient education system with enhanced competitiveness? This study, instead of interpreting teachers' reactions to lead teachers merely as a matter of jealousy and dissatisfaction, has contributed to a deeper understanding of how the career system has collided with specific values in the education system. The study shows that, in practice, the career reform has not only revealed deep ideological cracks that address the value of education, but it has also revealed teachers' desire for professional recognition. The intersections between the demands of research-based education and proven experience and the demands of the career reform have resulted in creating a difficult career goal for teachers to master, given that teachers are left alone

with their difficulties in constructing the meaning of how to handle this intersection in their daily practice.

The conclusion of this study is that the shift from a flat to a hierarchical organization as well as the academic shift to a research-based education has been hard for the interviewees to address. Lead teachers are left alone, without academic structures supporting their enactment and academisation (Carlgren 2012; Cain 2015). By understanding the very heart of that agony, the experiences as expressed by lead teachers can work as a hinge between the subjective and the social world (cf Hansson 2014). Furthermore, the goal to define a specific position and its function for the lead teachers in the Swedish school system seems far away. The combination of politically relying on quick fixes and the ignorance of the complexity in the enactment of career in different school has indicated that the career reform has been naïve in the expectations of straightforward outcomes when it comes to political school improvement and the strengthening of teachers' professionalisation.

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#### **GOVERNANCE OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING WITHIN A NEW CAREER POSITION**

**SUMMARY:** In 2013, the Swedish government introduced a career reform for teachers (SFS 2013, p. 70) that established two new career-track positions, namely, lead teachers and senior subject teachers. This study analyses the process of integrating this career reform into the Swedish school system in its early stage and focuses on lead teachers' professional development and learning when trying to interpret and translate this new career position in their daily working life. The study explored teacher's ideas, strategies and actions to govern themselves in relation to the demands for research and proven experience within the career reform, as well as their underlying views of career. For the empirical data collection, we interviewed twelve lead teachers. The analysis of the data generated four different governmentalities that these teachers used to govern themselves when trying to handle the career reform in their practices: *the school developer*, *the process manager*, *the subject specialist* and *the involuntary careerist*. Teachers relate their rationalities to different career discourses where organizational, individual and professional discourses are prominent to various degrees. Furthermore, underlying representations of career relate to both hierarchical views, and to a perspective of exchange.



In addition, two new representations of career emerged: *career as a non-hierarchical or equal level position*, and *career as a sorting tool*. The results indicate that lead teachers have found themselves caught in tensions between multifaceted meanings of career, research-based education, and personal and organizational pressures associated with the intentions of the career reform.

**KEYWORDS:** Career, governmentality, education policy, social/professional representations, teachers, teaching qualities, research and proven experience

### **ZARZĄDZANIE ROZWOJEM PROFESJONALNYM I UCZENIE SIĘ NAUCZYCIELI W KONTEKŚCIE NOWEJ POZYCJI ZAWODOWEJ**

**STRESZCZENIE:** W 2013 r. szwedzki rząd wprowadził reformę ścieżki rozwoju zawodowego dla nauczycieli (SFS 2013, s. 70), która ustanowiła dwa nowe stanowiska, mianowicie nauczycieli wiodących i doświadczonych nauczycieli przedmiotowych. Badania, których wyniki prezentuje niniejszy artykuł, analizowały proces wprowadzania tej reformy do szwedzkiego systemu oświatowego na wczesnym etapie, koncentrowały się na rozwoju zawodowym i uczeniu się nauczycieli, próbujących jednocześnie zinterpretować i wprowadzić nowe stanowisko do codziennego życia zawodowego. Zbadano postrzeganie kariery zawodowej przez nauczycieli, a także ich pomysły, strategie i działania związane z radzeniem sobie z wymaganiami nowej reformy dotyczącymi pracy badawczej i udokumentowanego doświadczenia zawodowego. W celu zebrania danych empirycznych przeprowadzone zostały wywiady z dwunastoma nauczycielami wiodącymi. Analiza danych wygenerowała cztery różne rządomyślności stosowane przez nauczycieli, próbujących poradzić sobie w swojej praktyce z reformą zawodową: *developer szkoły*, *kierownik procesu*, *specjalista przedmiotowy* i *mimowolny karierowicz*. Badanie wykazało, że nauczyciele odnoszą swoją racjonalność do dyskursów zawodowych, w których w różnym stopniu istotne są dyskursy organizacyjne, indywidualne i profesjonalne. Ponadto podstawowe reprezentacje kariery dotyczą zarówno poglądów hierarchicznych, jak i perspektywy wymiany. Dodatkowo pojawiły się dwie nowe reprezentacje kariery: *kariera jako pozycja niehierarchiczna lub równa* i *kariera jako narzędzie podziału*. Wyniki wskazują, że nauczyciele wiodący znaleźli się między wielowymiarowymi znaczeniami kariery a edukacją opartą na badaniach oraz presją osobistą i organizacyjną związaną z założeniami reformy rozwoju zawodowego.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** kariera, rządomyślność, polityka edukacyjna, reprezentacje społeczne/zawodowe, nauczyciele, jakość nauczania, badania i udokumentowane doświadczenie.