

Democratic Purpose and Educational Leadership Policies in Sweden and in Texas

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Abstract

In this study we analyze the extent to which policy documents that include standards and expectations for the preparation of school principals (i.e., head teachers) influence democratic practices. This comparative research examines educational policies that influence the work of principals both in Sweden and in the U.S., the state of Texas asking: What does it mean for a principal to create a school environment that emphasizes democratic practices? The context of education is provided for both populations, including the role of principals as related to the importance and function of schools in a democracy in a society.

Keywords: *cross-cultural, educational leadership*

Introduction

This comparative research observes educational policy documents as influencing the preparation and expectations for the work of principals both in Texas and in Sweden. This observation of cross-national preparation of principals began when 41 Swedish principals sought to learn more about the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) during a visit to Texas schools. Of concern among Swedish principals was the push for high-stakes testing by their own minister of education, and how this process collided with the preparation of students with an emphasis on democratic practices as reflected in the Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:31-34) which highlights that students should be prepared to be active democrats, impacting on and being responsible for their own learning. At the time, school systems in Sweden were encouraged to accommodate high-stake testing procedures in response to new Swedish legislation influenced by the testing model used within the U.S. As they visited schools, most of their questions to principals in the U.S. related to new school reforms that would dramatically change democratic practices among teachers and students (Murakami-Ramalho, Arlestig, & Törnsén, 2011).

Since the principals' visit, we continued exploring and supporting the preparation of principals as scholars, especially focusing on contributing to a cross-national review of the role and expectations for principals¹. We follow several other researchers who have contributed to the development of research around the

¹ This comparative research was also developed with the inclusion of expectations for principals in the province of Ontario, observing the Ontario Leadership Framework (Murakami, Törnsén, & Pollock, 2014).

preparation of principals with attention to common practices at a global level (Anderson, 2009; Fullan, 2002; Hallinger, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Day & Leithwood, 2007; Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Leithwood, 2012; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Matthews & Crow, 2010; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013).

This study focuses on a document analysis of standards and expectations for principals as influencing democratic practices in schools. This comparative research examines educational policies that influence the work of principals (i.e., head teachers in Sweden) both in Sweden and in the state of Texas asking: To what extent standards and expectations for school principals include democratic practices in schools? When analyzing these policy documents, we considered the preparation of principals in addressing common societal issues across countries, like the changing demographics due to the movement of peoples across countries, economic downturns, and subsequent consequences in education (Noah & Eckstein, 1969; Halpin, 1994; Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Phillips & Ochs, 2003).

As comparative scholars, we observe that, during the last two decades, a global movement of economic, cultural, and political forces have affected both the U.S. and Swedish societies. Since the 1990s and most particularly in the twenty-first century, these forces influenced revisions in expectations for principals, with implications for principals to be responsible for school processes and results (Daun, 2003). In Texas, the expectations and standards for principals have been revised in 2009. Later in 2012, there was a push to link student performance with principal leadership (Texas Education Agency, 2012) resulting in an evaluation process for school principals, which directly affects the performance and stability of principals in the state. Coincidentally, expectations for the preparation of principals in Sweden were also updated in 2009 through their Leadership Training Programme, formulated by the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2009). Interestingly, policy-makers and officials in charge of re-designing these standards are known for observing other countries, in efforts to observe international exchanges to improve local schooling.

Policy documents guiding the expectations and standards of principals include key roles in influencing the preparation of students, teachers, and families through democratic practices. As a result, this study is motivated by previous research indicating that an emphasis on democracy in the field of education is not unique, but actively pursued by other countries (Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer, 2007; Holmes, 1979). This research analyzes standards and expectations policies for school principals, not only as influencing democratic practices in schools, but also as impacting the role of leaders in a democratic society. Through the lens of democratic practices (Tenuto, 2012), we observe political aims expressed within its' national educational goals—organized to develop democracy in schools and consequently in society.

Democratic Practices and Cross-Cultural Studies in Educational Leadership

In their positions, principals are expected to support students in their academic achievement, support teachers in preparing to improve their pedagogy, and they are also expected to support families in the community, with the intent of guiding students toward their future. Through schooling, principals also model a democratic working environment—one in which principals and teachers prepare

students to become “active citizens and contributors to a democratic society” (Tenuto, 2014, p. 3). In modeling democratic practices, Tenuto argues that schools nurture the foundation of democratic principles, not only through classes and socialization of students, but also with educational leaders and teachers modeling democratic practices in their profession, their workplace, and with their students.

Educational leaders’ responsibility in developing democratic practices, according to Tenuto (2014), relate to fostering a school culture that includes five areas that encourage shared collaboration: (a) sharing purpose (a higher purpose, a culture of care, and participation in community); (b) sharing data (in order to develop professional learning communities (PLCs), teachers as researchers, and enhanced collaboration); (c) Sharing expertise (through teachers professional communities (TPCs), research-based practices, and encouraging collegiality); (d) sharing leadership (through collaborative leadership, nurturing teachers as leaders, developing instructional leadership, and genuine empowerment); and finally, (e) sharing responsibility (through civic responsibility, leadership for social justice, and increased levels of commitment) (p.1). Tenuto determined these areas as key characteristics in the democratic professional practice in education (DPPC), which conclusions encompassed a review of research developed by contemporary scholars in the field of educational leadership.

Significant to this study is Dimmock and Walker’s (2000) assertion in the beginning of this century, that educational leadership research was conspicuously absent of considering significant connections with its’ local context, defined by its societal culture and influence on theory, policy, and practice. They argued that “societal culture holds the potential to be a powerful analytical tool with which to lay the foundation for developing a new branch of educational leadership, management, and policy” (p. 138). They advocated for the need of research as focused on comparative and international educational leadership and management. In this light, comparative educational leadership research would reveal significant implications for each country’s purpose and intent, and differences across expectations for educational leaders could be further explained. These comparative studies reveal how educational policies and practices are crafted and borrowed from other countries to the improvement of localized concerns.

Principals are guided in their preparation by standards and expectations designed by local and national policies. Nonetheless, each country presents different contexts and ways of negotiating these problems, including borrowing ideas and philosophies from other countries to resolve local issues. These unique contexts have their own national characters, socioeconomic, political, and sociocultural issues. However, with new shifts come new ideas. Each country follows their democratic goals, coupled with aspired economic growth, and adapt new ideas to meet the needs of their new generation of citizens. Re-crafting standards and expectations for school principals, for those involved in developing educational policies, may involve blending local and global philosophies and ideologies, adapting it into their local context (Day & Leithwood, 2007). These are significant considerations in the examination of expectations affecting the work of principals, their preparation, and professional development.

Review of Literature

The recent updates in the standards and expectations for principals in both Sweden and Texas suggest that the nature and role of the principal's job has evolved in the past decades. Experts in international educational leadership such as Johnson, Möller, Ottesen, Pashiardis, Savvides, & Vedoy (2011) perceive this global movement in education as influenced by a new ethical order in international economic times, or what they called an international knowledge society. These scholars argue that "rapid technological innovation, mobility, and globalization have resulted in new challenges for school leaders across many countries" (p. 153).

Across the globe, scholars have been exploring common definitions for the role of principal (Leithwood & Day, 2007). In the effort to understand how principals can generate democratic spaces and school success, Leithwood & Day (2007), and other researchers in the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP), found, for example, that principals' roles involved setting directions, building a vision for the school, as well as setting standards and expectations for their students, families, and teachers. Based on their findings, it was possible to observe how national expectations in education could also be crafted beyond local dialogues to improve schools.

At a global level, concerns related to the improvement of schools are examined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), who since the 2000s, began conducting 3 year assessments of students in different countries, in what is known as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA's key findings rely on the responses of principals among other data, and presently show decade-long trends across countries, such as effective strategies and practices for student engagement, and policies and practices related to school success. In addition, PISA examines connections between school and societal inequalities (Corak, 2006), including quality of life, and social movements such as immigration (Entorf & Minoiu, 2005), which informs the scope of influence among principals. PISA results demonstrate the extent in which principals must exercise their leadership, indicating the necessity to examine international strategies that work.

The importance of principals as fostering democratic practices adds to the examination of strategies principals must implement to improve schools, to a broader purpose and responsibility of principals to create environments where democracy is exercised and modeled. This idea relates to John Dewey's emphasis of the individual as part of society (Dewey, 2010). Apple and Beane (2007) expand on Dewey's premise, explaining that values and principles of a democratic way of life exercised in schools, provide individuals with meaningful "opportunities to learn what the way of life means and how it might be led" (p. 6). Some tenets in democratic schools, according to Apple and Beane (2007) include a concern for the rights of students, a recognition of individuals in their collective capacity to create possibilities and resolve problems; the opportunity to develop critical reflection to evaluate problems, ideas, and policies; a recognition that democracy can guide the lives of people; and a recognizing the power of "the organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life" (p. 7). In the U.S., scholars like Apple and Beane (2007) remind us that local decision-making needs to be informed and guided by state

and nation's democratic values, especially to safeguard schools from localized values non-conducive to the preparation of students for a democratic society.

In Sweden, a similar philosophy of education toward democracy is present. Originally a monarchy, Sweden has seen political changes where social democrats instilled changes in the monarchical government since the early 1900's. Later, in 1974, an Instrument of Government was adopted, stating that public power stems from the Swedish people, who are to select the members of parliament in free elections. The monarch continues as the head of state, in name only (Sweden.se, 2015). In instilling democratic practices in schools, the national agency for education (Skolverket, 2000) articulates democratic values for leaders and staff in childcare and schools. These include schools as places for dialogue, and meeting places to conduct activities in a democratic way; develop children and youth into democratic citizens; and provide insight into the forms and substance of democracy (p. 13). The expectation is for adults to instill fundamental democratic values and express them in relation to others. Theofano (2010) recognized that individual choice and student participation are important features in democratic schools in Sweden. Especially in the southern areas of the country where immigration is more intense, equality within the diversity of peoples was highlighted by educators as part of the preparation of students toward a democratic society.

Method for Policy Document Analysis

Document analysis was used as an approach perceived as predominant in cross-cultural research (Merriam, 1988), which consists of a systematic method for reviewing documents. In this study we asked: "To what extent standards and expectations for school principals include democratic practices in schools?" This research was developed through a document analysis of educational policies as influencing the work of principals both in Texas and Sweden. We analyzed the documents using a cultural approach to the analysis of policies across countries. Dimmock and Walker (2000; 2010) reasoned that much caution is needed "when many are prone to draw superficial comparisons between policies and practices adopted in different countries..." (Dimmock & Walker, 2000, p. 144). Moreover, these authors contend that a distinctive branch of comparative educational management is much needed for rigorous research in this area. In developing comparative work across countries, Ragin recognized that "comparativists seek to interpret specific experiences and trajectories of specific countries (or categories of countries)" (p. 6). Similarly, we were interested in the particularities of each site, and "not simply in relations between variables characterizing broad categories of cases" (Ragin, 1987, p. 6). We recognized the value of this work as seeking "to piece evidence together in a manner sensitive to chronology and by offering limited historical generalizations that are both objectively possible and cognizant of enabling conditions and limited means of context" (Ragin, 1987, p. 3).

In the analysis of documents, we respected the interpretation of expectations for school principals in each of these sites, including the difference of nation and state samples. Sweden was observed as a nation, and Texas was observed as a representative state in the U.S. with a comparable geographical size in relation to Sweden. The analysis included national/state impulses guiding revisions of principal standards and expectations and how these were articulated. For

Sweden we analyzed the Goals of the National School Leadership Training Programme, formulated by the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2009) based on a national ordinance (2011:83). In Texas, the standards required for the principal certificate (New 19 TAC §149.2001) approved by the State Board for Educator Certificate (SBEC). In providing the context of this study, we considered each site as a particular community. Community in this study is defined by socioeconomic and sociocultural definitions that can be common based on global trends (Höög, Bredeson, & Johansson 2006; Leithwood & Prestine, 2002; Popkewitz & Lindblad 2004).

Each of the researchers reviewed the standards and expectations from their own countries, and the other country subsequently, observing similarities and differences based on their expertise of their own home country's expectations for principals. Through a dialogical approach (Padilla, 1992), an interpretation and analysis of documents were developed and transcribed. The coding process was developed based on the layers of dialogical exchanges among the researchers representing the two countries, in which document items were discussed as containing elements evidencing democratic practices as guided by Tenuto's (2014) considerations of democratic professional practice in education (DPPC).

As researchers exercising cross-comparative work, we were cautious to avoid biases and assumptions. For example, we know how difficult it is to interpret each country's ideologies, and that conversations about the meaning of education can be contested both within and outside the country. Resolves or disputes in relation to absolute truths were suspended, with the main purpose of understanding the complexity of the issues affecting the principals' work. Therefore, implications of this study included caution to meta-theoretical constructs that are not applicable or generalizable to other sites. Nonetheless, the value of this research is limited to the generalizability of methods in observing expectations of school principals as transferrable to a broader understanding of the impact of national/international policies and practices. In the next sections we contextualize education in Sweden and Texas. We provide an examination of the development of the principals' role in these sites, and expand on the meaning of democracy for each country's educational system.

Education in Sweden

Sweden is situated in northern Europe with around 9 million inhabitants. The country is divided into 290 municipalities. Small and mid-sized municipalities often represent one school district, while larger municipalities may organize several schools. In addition to municipal schools the number of independent schools has increased since the 1990s. These schools serve under the same laws and regulations as public schools.

Historically, the church, by putting people through their catechism, has been conducive to people's ability to read long before the Swedish elementary school system was established in 1842. A hundred years later, in 1940ies, various educational reforms were initiated, as part of building a welfare state. In 1960ies, a compulsory school system for all and an expansion of the upper secondary school system was created, to allow for more students to attend schools. Swedish schools' social and civic objectives stem from post-war

democratic and value- laden goals. Since then, beliefs of a strong state with values of equality in education, have been central in Swedish policymaking.

In 2012, it was documented that 15 percent of its population was born abroad (<http://www.migrationsinfo.se/migration/sverige/>). Global forces in combination with national circumstances resulted in a restructuring of the educational sector (Lindblad, Lundahl, Lindgren, & Zachari, 2002). Since the decentralization in 1991, the national level holds a regulating power through the national curriculum. They hold simultaneously a controlling and supporting function. Educational directives are now based on objectives and results, mirroring other countries' efforts to 'manage by results' (Johannesson, Lindblad, & Simola, 2002, p. 328).

The democratic values, social and civic goals are still positioned first in the school curricula. In the 1990ies the value-laden goals were emphasized by the national level (e.g. 1998 was officially dedicated to democratic values). However, since the 2000, the focus of schools has also shifted towards academic objectives. Official data includes academic performance. Some of this movement can be recognized by educational reform literature originated in the UK and the Americas generated by scholars such as Fullan, and Leithwood in Canada, among others. Social and civic outcomes, therefore, in national evaluations and inspection reports, ceased to be a metric for comparisons among schools. As a result, Sweden now emphasizes out-put management practices such as grading, testing, and created a national inspectorate to oversee the performance of all schools.

The Changing Role of Swedish Principals

Since the 1990s, the role and the responsibilities of head teachers (used here interchangeably with the term principals) are described in the Education Act, the compulsory school ordinance, and in the national curriculum (*Education Act, Skollagen* 2010:800; Lgr11, 2011). The recruitment of principals is the responsibility of the superintendent, whether municipal or independent. The State, through the Education Act (Skollagen 2010:800), prescribes the qualifications for principals and preschool heads. To be employed you must have demonstrated pedagogical understanding of education, training and experience. There's no demand for any special exam or preparation before employment. Head teachers must realize numerous policy objectives as democratic leaders, an overarching dimension of Swedish principal leadership (Johansson, 2004; Moos, Møller, & Johansson, 2004), which also can be traced back to the Swedish post-war period--during with democratic political objectives as a means to socialize students into democracy and citizenship (Oftedal Telhaug, Mediås, & Aasen, 2006).

The educational restructuring altered the prerequisites for principal leadership. Principals are now observed based on testing results, often based on global trends (Höög, Bredeson, & Johansson, 2006; Leithwood & Prestine, 2002; Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004). The Swedish National Agency for Education introduced on-line databases which build on information that schools and school heads are required to provide. These allow for various comparisons over time of e.g. school results. Competition, marketing strategies, and policies including schools of choice changed the educational options for students and parents. New

Public Management (NPM) models of leadership and management were adopted by politicians and administrators and infused into the educational sector, independent of differences in values, purposes, and practices (Moos & Møller, 2003). This policy borrowing movement influenced how districts organize and govern schools in most Scandinavia. Concepts, such as quality enhancement, assessments and evaluations, data analysis, and school improvement, were therefore introduced.

Sweden participates in international comparison studies (e.g., the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)). The PISA results from 2012 show that the average results for Swedish 15-year olds have declined compared to results from 2009 (Unesco.org). This relates to all three areas measured (i.e. reading literacy, mathematics and science). Students are performing significantly lower than the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average. Several educational reforms have been initiated since 2010, with the purpose of improving student outcomes. Further, concern related to improving outcomes when compared to PISA and TIMSS in part contributed to revised expectations and a revised National School Leadership Training Program (NSLTP).

Principals' Leadership Capacity in Sweden

State involvement in the training of practicing principals was introduced at the end of the 1960's and the program is still the responsibility of the State through the National Agency for Education. The current National School Leadership Training Program from 2009 is organized to ensure that the school leader has the competence to lead educational activities, and to ensure that the rights of pupils and parents are respected.

The aim of the current NSLTP is presented as follows:

Head teachers, heads of preschools and assistant heads all play a key role in centrally regulated education that is governed by the curricula. The task is to create a school and preschool of high-quality for everyone where the national goals are achieved and learning is experienced as meaningful, stimulating and secure.

The current training program covers three areas of knowledge which as regards choice of words reflects the both impact of accountability oriented system changes. *Legislation on schools and the role of exercising the functions of an Authority* covers the provisions laid down in laws and ordinances. Emphasis is also put on how the school's assignment is formulated in the national goals. *Management by goals and objectives* covers measures for promoting quality which are required for the school to achieve the national goals of the education, and create the conditions for its development. *School leadership* covers how the work should be managed based on the national tasks of the head teacher and the principles set out in the steering system for bringing about development in line with greater goal attainment. Johansson and Svedberg (in press) when examining the principal program, recognized that "the new educational market-like context require principals who can understand the formal and informal aspects of the educational system and be in charge of their schools" (p. 4).

While the national goals in the curricula include democratic, social and civic goals besides the academic goals, the revised program reflects enhanced expectations on principals and clear signs of borrowing policies from other countries. Principals are given the dual task to secure democracy as content and attitude while at the same time adhering to accountability oriented system changes.

The Context of Education in the United States

The national character of the United States can be understood through its federal republic and the individual character of fifty states, a federal district, and 16 territories, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The diversity of peoples in territories and states is reflected in the representation of children in schools. Public schooling in the U.S. is compulsory until high school and free under the jurisdiction of government, state, and local districts—who are governed by locally elected school boards. There are different types of schooling including public, private, charters, as well as home schooling.

Different from countries with a nationally organized education system, the federal role of education in the U.S. is distributed to the States. The department of education has the smallest staff among the 15 cabinet agencies in the U.S. government, and provides only about ten percent of funding from the federal budget to support schools nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, 2012; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). Education in the U.S. therefore, is primarily a State and local responsibility (Ed.gov, 2012).

Apple and Beane (2007) recognize that even though public schools in the U.S. have been built in a foundation of democratic goals, most recent educational reforms make little mention of the “role of public schools in expanding the democratic way of life” (p. 7). The goals of public school education in the U.S. have shifted over time. Spring (2006) provides an overview of this evolution, explaining that between the 1820s and 1840’s, the purpose of education was more focused on common moral and political values. In the 1880s and 1920’s, it was focused on the Americanization of immigrants, preparing skilled laborers for industrialization, with political anticommunism and radicalism views during the Vietnam war, as well as concerns to reform family and medical care. Between 1920s and 1940’s there was an expansion of high schools and efforts to keep youth off the labor markets. In 1950’s and 1980’s Lyndon Johnson’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (P.L. 89-10; 79 Stat. 27) influenced what the president defined as *war on poverty*, with special attention to racial and cultural divides as related to poverty. Johnson emphasized equality and educational opportunity. Later in 1980’s and into the 2000’s, schools followed globalization movements, preparing students for a global economy (Spring, 2006, p. 11). More recently, with an emphasis on student performance, the federal government reauthorized ESEA and guided the educational standards and standardized testing decisions. Accountability demands of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001) further defined federal expectations for educational standards and standardized testing.

Overall, the U.S. scores seems to be comparable with other country’s averages in reading, math, and science (NCES, 2013). However, when analyzed separately, U.S. performance in Mathematics literacy was of 9 percent, which is

lower than the OECD average of 13 percent of top performing students. The U.S. scored one percentage lower than the OECD average of 8 percent, which means lower than 22 countries, higher than 29 countries and not measurably different than 13 countries (NCES, 2013). In reading, the U.S. did not score measurably different than the OECD average of 8 percent among top performing students. Within the U.S., comparisons in educational performance are localized, with scholars like Ladner and Myslinski (2013) publishing a yearly report card on American education, including all states and how they compare. Texas is shown in 2011 as ranking 11th among all states, using the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) when comparing gains in education between 2003 and 2011. It is important to point out that internal measures that generalize across states are not often observed as tools for state reform.

Texas Education and Implications for Principals

Texas is the second largest state, and the second most populated state in the country. Texas has a population of approximately 26 million. Serving approximately 5 million school age children, the state monitored 8,529 schools which 506 were charter schools in 2012 (TEA, 2012). The political atmosphere in the state has historically leaned towards fiscal and social conservatism. In public schools, 325,000 teachers and 19,000 principals and assistant principals serve students, organized by districts, and district's board of education, composed by parents, educators, and community stakeholders. Texas has a highly diverse population with a large population of Hispanics. Fifty-five percent of the K-12 school population in Texas is Hispanic. This does not mean that a majority of educators and principals are also Hispanic. An average of 35 percent of families speak a language other than English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Socioeconomically, Texas is the 10th poorest state in the nation, with nearly 18% living below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). This means that 25 percent of the children (or one in four children) live in poverty. Texas is also located in what some defined as the Bible belt (Carter, 2007; Heyrman, 2013). Quality of learning is connected to poverty in Texas, where funding is based on taxes generated by districts.

In the U.S., performance systems in this century based on No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 strengthened expectations for schooling around high-stakes testing. Scholars like Nichols and Berliner (2007) expressed concerns related to NCLB's legislation that is not sensitive to individual differences, and carries expectations that *all* children can reach the same levels of proficiency at a same rate of speed. Such concerns relate to important differences within states, with public school systems present a degree of freedom within states, such as determining the age range for compulsory education, and different funding allocations per pupil. In addition, Spring (2006) recognized that, in a society organized around high-stakes testing "the school becomes a crucial institution for determining economic success. To ensure equality of opportunity, the school must give everyone an equal chance to succeed. Is this possible?" (p. 41), he asked.

Texas has had five versions of student assessments since 1980, which observe the state curricular standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) (TEA, 2013), which mainly tested students in reading, mathematics, and writing. The first state mandated test was called Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS), and was adopted in 1980, testing students in grades 3, 5, and 9 in

reading, mathematics, and writing. The most recent test, the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STARR) has been adopted in 2012, and it is substituting the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills established in 2003. The present system is more rigorous, intended to measure performance and academic growth in reading, mathematics, writing, science, social studies in grades 3 through 8, and students must pass classes as well as end-of-course testing in order to earn a diploma.

Accommodations are made for English language learners (ELL) and students with special needs. Following national requirements related to NCLB, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) disaggregates data by ethnicity and social indicators, like students at-risk of failing or dropping out of school. The data from TEA reveals academic disparities occurring across ethnicities, with White and wealthy children outperforming children of color, mirroring several other states (National Center for Education Statistics 2011).

Requirements to Become a Texas Principal

The standards for school principals in Texas have been through much examination since the 1980's. Standards in many states follow the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC), as articulated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Texas does not follow ISLLC, but many standards from ISSLC can be identified in the State's standards and expectations for principals.

The commissioner of education in Texas has revised standards to enhance the preparation of principals which include both instructional and field-based practice opportunities. In 1995 the Texas Legislature formed the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) in order to review the standards and expectations for teachers, principals, and superintendents. SBEC made recommendations on courses to be included in approved preparation programs, with an alignment with certification requirements and certification exams (Murakami, Bing, Garza, Thompson, 2010). In order to become a principal in Texas, educators must obtain a certificate (without which public school principals cannot be hired), describe requirements (Title 19, part 7, chapter 241, rule §241.1 to §241.30). Requirements include holding a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education, and experience. Certified individuals can be employed as principals or assistant principals. Principals need to be re-certified every 5 years.

The Commissioner's rules concerning educator standards for administrators (New 19 TAC §149.2001, Principal Standards) are used to inform preparation and training, appraisals and the professional development of principals. Texas continues to concurrently publish skills required for obtaining principal certification on a separate code (TAC §241.15). The standards also inform individual assessments, professional growth plan, and continuing professional education of principals in the state. There are five standards, with expectations of knowledge and skills which includes: (I) Instructional leadership; (II) Human capital; (III) Executive leadership; (IV) School culture; and (V) Strategic operations (New 19 TAC §149.2001). In the next section we analyze these country-specific public policy documents, reviewing democratic practices included in the standards for each country.

Findings: Democratic Values in Sweden and Texas

In this study we examined to what extent standards and expectations for school principals include democratic practices in schools, comparing the landscape of Texas and Sweden. The value of democratic practices in education was present in both countries, even though democracy could be interpreted as more or less articulated in the documents. The analysis considered democratic values common to areas contemporary to the field of education.

Dimmock and Walker (2000) highlighted the importance of considering societal culture as an essential component in the study of educational leadership. When analyzing the guiding philosophies and ideologies in Sweden and Texas, we engaged in an analysis of political configurations that transfer to the world of principals. It was interesting how each of us carried different interpretations of our own country, as well as the compared country. Our analysis revolved around Hofstede and Hofstede's (1991) degrees of power distance, which the authors defines as applied ideologies related to norms, family, and school.

We observed democratic practices in educational leadership as including a shared purpose, transparency in sharing data, the preparation of teachers and respect for their expertise, as Tenuto (2014) summarized in the democratic professional practice in education model. She highlighted shared leadership and shared responsibility through civic and social justice responsibility as also key in the democratic practice of principals. It was interesting to observe similar language in the standards set for principals in these two countries.

There are five standards, articulated in Texas for expectations of knowledge and skills: (I) Instructional leadership (the principal is responsible for ensuring every student receives high-quality instruction); (II) Human capital (the principal is responsible for ensuring there are high-quality teachers and staff in every classroom and throughout the school); (III) Executive leadership (the principal is responsible for modeling a consistent focus on and commitment to improving student learning); (IV) School culture (the principal is responsible for establishing and implementing a shared vision and culture of high expectations for all staff and students); and (V) Strategic operations (the principal is responsible for implementing systems that align with the school's vision and improve the quality of instruction) (New 19 TAC §149.2001). Each standard is expanded to include expectations of knowledge and skills for effective leaders, as well as indicators of demonstrated competencies. The Swedish program focused on what principals should know and understand in relation to three areas: legislation on schools and the role of exercising the function of an authority; management by goals and objectives; and school leadership. Both documents include democratic practices, as part of expectations for the principal's role.

Interestingly, democracy is mentioned only once in either the Texas standards for principals and in the Swedish standards for principals. More specifically, in Texas, the word democracy is not directly articulated in the Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards Subchapter BB, Principal Standards (New 19 TAC §149.2001). However, in the standards required for the principal certificate, the Texas Administrative Code (TAC §241.15), the principal is

expected to “articulate the importance of education in a free democratic society” (p.1). In Sweden, head teachers are expected to “demonstrate good ability as a leader and provide a democratic model to pupils and personnel by creating an open communicative climate” (p. 8).

Shared Purpose in Schools

Texas indicated the importance of a shared campus vision in the expectations for principals. A shared purpose is included four times in the document, all related to a shared vision of high expectations for all staff, students, or high achievement for students. There is an emphasis on principals to generate a vision for the school (vision is included 13 times). In Sweden, the “head teacher is responsible for the results achieved by the school, and also for follow up and evaluation in relation to the national goals” (Goals of the National School Leadership Training Programme, p. 4). A shared purpose is articulated once, where the document includes a statement that “Head teachers need to understand both their own role and that of the school, share the fundamental values governing how the school works, and be able to transform these values into concrete actions” (p. 2).

Accountability

Evidence for assessment and outcome-oriented expectations were found in all documents and included practices such as data-driven decision-making, drive improved student outcomes, developing methods for quality monitoring and securing accountability. A large extent of policy borrowing philosophies and ideologies seemed to influence standards and expectations for principals, specifically concerning academic achievement and accountability, which were heavily emphasized in the revisions in Sweden, while Texas adapted to No Child Left Behind Act (US Department of Education, 2002). The borrowing of terms are also noted, where for example, the Sweden education system website articulates that “no one is left behind” in Sweden’s Education Act (Sweden.se, 2013).

We attributed the push to develop a common language in the standards for principals as guided by a push to encourage nations to compete for improved educational outcomes, such as through TIMMS or PISA. Attempts to measure education seem to be the best predictor of what countries could be observed in order to improve the local context. Strong discussions of the validity of these impulses are often questioned by principals who may not see value in using academic performance as a single factor in the formation of future citizens (Murakami, Arlestig, Törnsén, 2010). Commonalities in which these expectations were articulated and the dates in which updates occurred indicate how an emphasis on measuring educational outcomes has become prevalent in the work of principals.

The Value of Teachers’ Expertise

Both Sweden and Texas documents observe the importance of principals in nurturing and valuing teacher expertise. The Texas document related to the principal appraisal and training (New 19 TAC §149.2001) defines teachers (17 results) and sometimes as staff. There is an expectation that principals “create opportunities for effective teachers and staff to take on a variety of leadership

roles and delegate responsibilities to staff and administrators on the leadership team" (Standard 2, Human Capital, item 2.A.VI), as well as encouraging teachers to grow and develop as high-quality teachers. In Sweden, the standards include the importance of the head teacher to ensure "that effective pedagogical processes are applied in the school" (p. 3), and that "the role of the head teacher together with teachers is to provide structure and content to the work of the school" (p.2). In the same context as in Texas, the task for head teachers in Sweden also include leading the internal work of the school "in order to maintain and develop high-quality" (p. 3).

Shared Responsibility and Social Justice

Both Texas and Swedish documents highlight the importance of shared responsibility, and collaboration. Reference to the social and emotional, and physical needs of students and adults was articulated in both documents. For example, the Swedish standards dedicate a section of the standards to the head teacher's role and responsibility (reference to responsibility was found 5 times in the document). One of the standards address "the school's responsibility for ensuring that pupils are given the opportunity to attain the national goals" (p. 5). In Texas, shared responsibility was articulated into a shared vision. Even in the section named executive leadership, the focus was of modeling and motivating students, teachers, and community members to ensure the success of the school through a "relentless pursuit of excellence" (p.1), and consider unsuccessful experiences as learning opportunities. The standards also include the statement that,

In schools with effective executive leaders, teachers and staff are motivated and committed to excellence. They are vested in the school's improvement and participate in candid discussions of progress and challenges. They are comfortable providing feedback to the principal and other school leaders in pursuit of ongoing improvement, and they welcome feedback from students' families in support of improved student outcomes (p.1)

The Swedish program rests on requirements from legislation and national assignments, and acknowledges that requirements from local school organizations and municipalities, including their political decisions have to be taken into account. Since the program goals in Sweden were initiated in 2009, the Education Act from 2010 calls for research-based education, an effect of policy borrowing from the western world. However, no reference to research was found in the standards and expectations for head teachers. In Texas, there was an expectation for principals in prioritizing instruction and student achievement by "developing and sharing a clear definition of high-quality instruction based on best practices from research" (p. 1).

Both Texas and Sweden seemed to be preparing principals based on the fundamentals of democratic practice. Tenets in the DPPC model were articulated by both countries' standards, using different terms (such as students vs. pupils, or pedagogical leader vs. instructional leader). After the analyses of standards for principals in both countries, we find that democratic practices are articulated in the expectations for these school leaders practice and performance.

Conclusion

"Preparing students to become active citizens and contributors to a democratic society is premised on teaching democratic principles and modeling standards of democratic practice at all levels of education" argued Tenuto (2014, p.1). The examination of policy documents guiding the preparation and certification of principals in Sweden, and Texas informed instances in which democratic practices were to be expected. The particular national character influenced each of the countries in interpreting how these global aspirations were infused into education. In observing the national context influencing principals, we could see how an emphasis of global competitiveness existed. Each country's educational philosophy and ideology guided the observation and adoption of foreign policies (Johannesson, Lindblad, & Simola, 2002; Lindblad, Lundahl, Lindgren, & Zachari, 2002).

Expectations for students were slightly different, where Sweden teachers expect students to take initiative in class, while in Texas principals expect more compliance from both teachers and students. In the U.S., we recognize instances of conflicting philosophies, of "saying one thing," while "doing another," such as stating of leaving no child behind, but continuing to fund schools according to neighborhood income, which is the case of Texas. Therefore the subjective call for democracy, even though present in both documents, must be considered in practice as presenting different degrees of power difference.

Swedish principals are expected to behave in a democratic way and to focus on democratic values in their schools (Skolverket, 2000). Nonetheless, an emphasis on academic performance, curtails the freedom principals in providing students autonomy, or to design their educational goals. Policies that included standards and expectations connected to socioeconomic or community issues, when related to changing demographics, with requirements for principals to be culturally-sensitive, and observe different diverse groups when focusing on academic achievement and accountability.

Implications for future research include examination of how these changes affect the work of principals, their preparation, and professional development. "Education is highly correlated with democracy," argued Glaser, Ponzetto, and Shleifer, (2007, p. 79), especially when focusing on the benefits of new generations in being more educated and able to develop political participation. It would be important to further study the infusion of foreign educational policies as generating a paradigm shift, which in this case, was limited to the analysis of documents within national contexts. However, it is important to understand how principals are interpreting policies in order to generate a new order within schools, especially with a focus on all students' success. We assert that as standards and expectations are revised, paradigm shifts among principals may occur to adapt schools to new changes and improvements in their specific communities, and create a renewed society through new generations.

When observing two countries through a comparative analysis, we observed that educational policies are now "borrowed" at a faster pace from one country to another (Noah & Eckstein, 1969; Halpin, 1994; Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Phillips & Ochs, 2003), leading to a universalization of tendencies in educational reform (Halpin, 1994). However, when policymakers in education go through a process

of policy borrowing, it is possible to consider how the interpretation of what is observed in other countries can become a very *different* set of standards. Johnson, Moller, Ottesen, Pashiardis, Savvides, and Vedoy (2011), as well as Phillips (2005) cautioned about the practice of initiating national conversations based on knowledge as “informed by means of the foreign example” (p. 33). These are serious considerations that affect the work of principals and teachers as exemplified by this study, and ultimately, affect the lives of children.

This study re-ignites the importance of global research to investigate how research, policy, and practice are continuously morphing and transposing borders. The analysis of standards and expectations for principals evidenced how each country addressed local community challenges, and aimed at improving educational systems through the work of principals. These documents, allowed us to identify how the national character is deeply embedded in the expectation for principals, in order to prepare students for each country’s socioeconomic and sociocultural momentums of changing demographics, and high global academic achievement expectations. We perceive the important role of the principal in cultivating democratic practices to secure the success of students and their families, preparing future generations to be active citizens in democratic societies.

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