

The Introduction of Sloyd into Swedish Elementary Schools

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What subjects shall be taught in compulsory schools? Throughout the History of Education and all over the world, this question has been put hundreds and hundreds of times. It is usually also a highly controversial question, and the answer is seldom self-evident. Furthermore, the answer varies both in time and space, depending on the prevalent national context. In Curriculum History the introduction of new school subjects is an especially interesting object of study, as one can expect that social, political, economical factors interplay with the endeavours of human agents to broaden the curriculum. In this paper, we will use Swedish sloyd to illustrate such processes.

In Northern Europe, handicraft became part of the Elementary school curriculum at an early stage. According to Bennet, instruction in manual arts had its origin in German pedagogy, but he continues with saying:

It is equally true that the pedagogical ideas formulated in Germany were first extensively applied in the public schools of the Northern countries — Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Moreover, this movement in Scandinavia was not so much an importation as a development of earlier customs.¹⁾

According to Bennet, the Swedish Home Sloyd tradition (hemslöjd) was one of these customs transformed into educational sloyd in the national curriculum of 1878. However, he tells

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nothing about why and how this happened. It is also likely that other conditions must be considered in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the introduction of sloyd into Swedish elementary school. Therefore the following question will be put:

- What economical, social, political, and ideological conditions promoted the idea that sloyd should be taught in Elementary school?
- How does Elementary school sloyd fit into the general development of the education system in Sweden?

The transformation of Swedish society

At the beginning of the 19th century, Sweden was an agriculture: About 80 percent of the population lived by farming, and only 10 percent lived in cities.²⁾ The farms were largely self-subsistent, although the farmers traded some of their products in exchange for salt and tools, and the urban population depended on a market economy for their living. Furthermore, the transition of farming from self-subsistence to capitalism was also set in motion.³⁾

During the second half of the 19th century the pace of societal changes accelerated. Communications were improved as rail ways were built and the telegraph was introduced. The state administration and the banking system were modernised.

Traditionally, the production of goods had been the monopoly of the masters of various craft guilds. The masters also controlled the recruitment to the guilds through the training of apprentices. Not only did they issue master certificates, but they also decided how many new masters should be licensed to practice the craft. The guild system was neither compatible with capitalistic principles of competition nor liberal ideas of freedom and individual rights. Therefore it was heavily criticised by various bourgeois groups. The laws of 1846 and 1864 were in accordance with such principles. After 1864 every Swedish man and woman should have

the right to practice any handicraft or any other business, under the presumptions that they were not in debt and had paid their taxes. Thus, no master certificate was required any longer. At the same time, many restrictions for the trading of goods were abolished.⁴⁾

These reforms paved the way for the breakthrough of industrial capitalism. At the turn of the 19th century, Sweden had become an industrialised nation, and the proportion of the farming population had decreased.⁵⁾ The economical changes were simultaneous with profound changes of politics, culture and, not least, the social conditions of ordinary people. Through the Parliamentary reform of 1866 economically hegemonic bourgeois groups got access also to the political power. The premodern state was transformed into a modern bourgeois state, which aim it was to promote the development of capitalistic production.⁶⁾ The working class expanded, and the labour movement was formed. The society was regarded as an organism, and it was the task of the state to coordinate all parts of the societal body. A new social order must be established, and the working class must be integrated into this order. Educational and social reforms became important state means for attaining such goals.⁷⁾

Problems caused by the large scale transformation of society

Due to the rapid transformation of society, many new problems emerged which, in one way or another must be solved. Furthermore, old problems required new solutions; for example, traditional forms for popular education were regarded as badly adjusted to the changing conditions. Some of these problems, more or less closely related to the sloyd issue, will be treated in the following section.

How could old traditions be preserved?

The decline of the home sloyd tradition

Traditionally, men and women on farms made most of the products necessary for their

daily life, like tools, clothes and household utensils. This home sloyd (*hemslöjd*) was an important part of the self subsistence economy.⁸⁾ Furthermore, some of the home made products were traded, thus also contributing to the farming family's economy. Many home sloyd models and patterns were characteristic of the local area. The aesthetic value of the products was regarded as relatively high and superior to mass made factory products.⁹⁾

However, as farming became more of a large scale capitalistic enterprise, the farming economy was modelled in accordance with market principles. The products were exchanged for money, and thus the farmers were, to a larger extent than before, able to buy other necessities of life. Furthermore, farming became a still more demanding occupation, and there was not much time any longer for home sloyd.¹⁰⁾ Furthermore, home sloyd products could not compete on the market with mass made factory products, and thus the trading of such products was not profitable any more. For such reasons, the traditional home sloyd was in a state of decline, and as we will see later on, this was regarded as a problem which must be solved.

The decline of handicraft

Handicraft was only a subsidiary industry of farming, but for craftsmen it was the main occupation. As such, it was profoundly affected by the transformation of society. Actually, craftsmen were regarded as losers in the competition with industrial capitalists. This is true for some craftsmen; for example hand made products of the shoe maker and the watchmaker were replaced by mass made goods. However, such groups of craftsmen did not disappear. Instead they became busy with repairing broken products. Black smiths made, mended and served machine pieces to be used in factories. Other groups were rather winners than losers in the new era: the market of baker's and butcher's products increased as the self-subsistence economy declined. As a consequence, the number of craftsmen was doubled by four in the period

1865-1910.¹¹⁾

Therefore, when contemporary craftsmen expressed anxieties about the decline of handicraft, they probably had traditional crafts in mind. They were also critical to the abolition of the guild system in 1864 and the fact that no training was required for the establishment and running of a craft enterprise: Unskilled persons making poor products were regarded as a threat to the social status of all craftsmen.¹²⁾

How to establish a new social order

Those, arguing for the revival of traditional craft enterprises and the home sloyd tradition, aimed at preserving parts of the past. However, other problems concerned the establishment of a new social order. Old social structures were clearly dissolving, and new one must be formed. In the massive transformation of society, this problem was manifest in many sectors of society. In this section we will briefly treat only a few of them, connected to the emerging working class.

Social and economic conditions of the working class

Ultimately, the class of industrial workers was the product of the transformation of society. Many workers were the first generation of their family to move to a city and depend on paid work in a factory instead of farming in accordance with self-subsistence principles. Many workers were low paid, and their housing conditions were poor, and the overall aim of the early labour movement was to improve the workers' living standards.

However, the integration of the working class into the society was a concern of several political groups, and to this end the contours of an emerging welfare state were drawn. Education played a key role in this project.

The education of industrial workers

Let us to begin with quote John Dewey, who as a philosopher of Education in 1899 gave a lecture on the relation between education and

society, a relation which had changed radically because of the changing mode of production:

Those of us who are here today need go back only one, two, or at most three generations, to find a time when the household was practically the center in which were carried on... all the typical forms of industrial occupation. ... The industrial process stood revealed, from the production of the raw material till the finished article was actually put to use. Not only this, but practically every member of the household had its own share in the work. The children, as they gained in strength and capacity, were gradually initiated into the mysteries of the several processes.¹³⁾ (School and Society, p 6-7)

In other words: the production of necessities and the transmission of knowledge and skills, needed for work, were integrated activities both with regard to time and space. Furthermore, the production of goods and the "training in habits of order and of industry, and in the idea of responsibility"¹⁴⁾ were simultaneous processes. But when the production of necessities moved from the household to the factory, these processes were also separated. Formal schooling replaced informal education provided by parents and other adult members of the household. As a consequence, the number of schools for different purposes increased rapidly, in Sweden as in many countries,¹⁵⁾ and the education of the working class became a much debated issue.

Which qualifications does a manual worker need? The answer to this question depends on which group of workers he or she belongs to. As the division of labour increased, the working class was differentiated, both horizontally and vertically. Probably, the demands for qualification of workers in higher positions were higher than for those only executing routine tasks.¹⁶⁾ To what extent, then, was sloyd regarded as a means of qualification of industrial workers?

The 19th century elementary school

Sloyd instruction for poor or orphan children

was provided by poor relief institutions already in the 16th century. During the first four decades of the 19th century the number of such institutions increased, and sloyd schools for workers' children were also established on private initiatives, for examples at manors, iron-works and the like.¹⁷⁾ As elementary schooling was associated with the poor relief issue, the idea of sloyd instruction in elementary school was not very far-fetched. In 1840, this idea was also put forward to the Parliament which later decided that Elementary schools should be established. However, it disappeared among all other urgent problems which must be solved for elementary schooling.

In the 1860s the decline of home sloyd became manifest and, as mentioned above, many people were worried about this tendency. "The Friends of Handicraft", formed in 1874, was organized to support home sloyd. Agricultural societies and county boards also supported various kinds of sloyd education. Sloyd instruction was a recurrent issue at national meetings held by elementary school teachers.

Eventually, sloyd was defined as a responsibility of elementary school. In 1877 the Parliament decided that state subsidies would be granted to elementary schools for providing sloyd instruction for boys. As a voluntary subject, sloyd also became part of the first national curriculum for elementary school issued in 1878.¹⁸⁾ In 1887 sloyd was introduced into a few teacher training colleges for men. In 1896 also elementary school sloyd for girls became subsidised by the state.

The Sunday drawing school and the Swedish Sloyd Association

Other, more or less public, persons and institutions also acted on the sloyd arena. Nils Mandelgren was one of many persons trying to find new solutions to the qualification of manual workers. Among other things, he taught perspective drawing at the Royal Academy of Arts, but in 1844 he also established a school to teach journeymen and apprentices the drawing

skills, "required of professional Carpenters, Furniture Makers and Black Smiths".¹⁹⁾ This indicates that the "*on-floor-training*" typical for the guild system was not any longer regarded as sufficient: also handicraft work must be based on theoretical knowledge and drawing skills. Furthermore, according to a comment made in a newspaper, the school would transmit to craftsmen knowledge of the fine Arts in order to promote the development of their sense of beauty.²⁰⁾ The lessons took place on Sunday evenings, and many apprentices gathered to learn linear and free hand drawing, the theory of perspective and perspective drawing, rules for the application of shadows in drawings, how to copy drawings and models, make models for ornaments and the like. A few masters of various crafts also attended the lessons.

The drawing school soon ran into severe economical troubles, and in order to secure the existence of the school, the Swedish Sloyd Association (*Svenska Slöjdföreningen*) was established in 1845. Its members were culturally and /or economically prominent persons in Stockholm, who feared that the abolishment of the guild system would result in moral degeneration and disastrous decline of Swedish workers' handicraft skills. Presumably, the import of foreign goods of bad quality would also increase. Thus, "Swedish sloyd for Swedish independency" was one of the first slogans of the Swedish Sloyd Association.²¹⁾ The overall aim of the association was to encourage diligent and artistic handicraft work as well as home sloyd. "Morality, comprehension and artistic skills" among craftsmen should also be promoted, and to this end the association took charge of the Sunday drawing school. A man called Balzar Cronstrand was appointed head of the school, and like Mandelgren he was much concerned about the aesthetical aspects of handicraft, which to a large extent was reflected in the curriculum of the school.²²⁾

Obviously, the school met the need of many people, as the number of students rapidly increased. In 1859 the state began to subsidise the

school, and in 1860 the school was taken over by the state. In 1866 the name was changed to *the Sloyd School of Stockholm*, and in 1879 it was labelled *the Technical School of Stockholm*. The changing names partly reflected changing goals of the school. The school was divided into four different study programmes; two programmes were a succession of the original Sunday drawing school as they provided a further training of craftsmen in evenings or, for carpenters, in wintertime, i.e. the low season of constructing industry. Another programme for art and industry pursued and brought the aesthetical tradition of the Sunday drawing school to a higher level. Gradually the entrance requirements to all programmes were sharpened,²³⁾ and finally the school was transformed into a higher institute of Arts. Later, in 1945, it was labelled the College of Arts, Crafts and Design (*Konstfackskolan*).

In this process, the original aim to develop technical skills of craftsmen was abandoned. One reason for this might have been that, as the division of labour increased, the creation of patterns and designs of handicraft products was in many cases separated from the manufacturing. As for now, many Swedish designers work in close contact with skilled craftsmen.

The Swedish Sloyd Association and sloyd instruction

When the state took over the responsibility for the Sunday drawing school, the Swedish Sloyd Association was reorganised into three different divisions, one of which worked to promote home sloyd. In 1879 the secretary of the Association, J. O. Andersson, gave a lecture on the topic "To what extent can the Swedish Sloyd Association contribute to the development of sloyd instruction and home sloyd?"²⁴⁾ At that time, as mentioned above, sloyd was already part of the curriculum of elementary school, and Andersson addressed the goal of elementary school sloyd. In this section, we will use his lecture as an example of the significance occasionally allocated to sloyd. It is also likely that

Andersson's opinions were representative of the association as a whole.

Andersson's starting point is that the support of home sloyd and sloyd instruction has become one of the most urgent issues at present time and important for the well being of the whole nation.²⁵⁾ First and foremost, he stresses the aesthetical aspects of home sloyd. In his view the Swedish people have lost sense for beauty and truth, and instead they prefer false imitations and superficially showy ornaments. The "autonomous, plain and honourable mentality that, fortunately, still remains deep in the nation's heart" must be revived, and a return to traditional patterns and models of home sloyd is necessary in order to restore the declining national sense of beauty. Therefore the development of sloyd and sloyd instruction must be based on deep knowledge of "the living conditions and the mental spirit of the nation".

Clearly, ideas of a specific Swedish mentality and culture are at the heart of Andersson's arguments. Such arguments are part of a broader discourse about the construction of the Swedish nation.²⁶⁾ Thus, from Andersson's point of view, home sloyd and sloyd instruction will contribute to the building of the Swedish nation by preserving and further developing specific characteristics of the Swedish people.

In his lecture, Andersson also outlines the contours of sloyd pedagogy. The *goal* of sloyd education shall be to develop manual skills as quickly and steadily as possible. *Accuracy* is the key word; the pupil must learn to work carefully, not mechanically but constantly reflecting on what he is doing. *Model series* must be used in order to teach the pupils the functions of various tools and materials. The models shall illustrate single operations which are performed in a gradually increasing order of difficulty.²⁷⁾

It is worth notice that Andersson speaks as a kind of pedagogical expert. Furthermore, he argues that the Swedish Sloyd Association shall play a key role in the development of sloyd instruction, because certain members of the

Swedish Sloyd Association are the most qualified persons for such a task. As the Association is located in Stockholm, it has also an easy access to the national collections of handicraft illustrating the "national creativity" which must form the basis of sloyd. This indicates that elementary sloyd instruction has not yet become the exclusive responsibility of professional pedagogues like elementary school teachers.

It is also notable that Andersson, the early secretary of the Swedish Sloyd Association, focuses the aesthetical aspects of elementary sloyd, as such aspects later on were to be the most prominent features of the Association. Today the Association is still at work, but in 1976 its name was changed to *the Association of Swedish Design*. In the spirit of pioneers like Mandelgren and Andersson the goal is still to promote the Swedish people's sense of beauty and the production of tasteful articles for everyday use. However, in the ongoing process of division of labour, the Swedish people as a whole are not any longer expected to acquire the skills required for the making of such articles. Instead such skills are the characteristics of experts, like designers and craftsmen.

Sloyd instruction — a responsibility of the home or the state?

Mandelgren, Andersson and other members of the Swedish Sloyd Association tried to find *private* solutions to restore handicraft skills and promote aesthetical sense of ordinary people. However, those who worked to introduce sloyd into elementary school sloyd, acted on the *state* arena.

Formal schooling can, as mentioned above, be regarded as a substitute for the education, earlier provided by parents and adult members of the household. As such, it represented a fundamentally new principle for the upbringing of children which, to begin with, was much debated and controversial. Thus, the problem facing the early elementary school was to a large extent a matter of legitimacy. Many parents questioned the right of the state and the

school to take command of their children. In this regard, elementary school sloyd was at many quarters regarded as a further infringement of parental rights. Therefore, the battle over sloyd instruction in elementary school partly also concerned whose right and duty it should be to bring the children up.

The parliament debate

In the parliament debate about sloyd, the surge of this battle swept forth and back. It is significant that the first proponents of elementary school sloyd did not regard sloyd instruction as appropriate for all the children: only orphans or children of poor parents should be taught sloyd. Poor parents were for some implicit reasons regarded as bad, ignorant and morally insufficient and unable to up bring their children to good citizens.²⁸⁾ In such cases, it was claimed, the state must replace the parents.

However, according to some members of the Parliament, parents were in fact able to provide the necessary instruction at home: "every plain woman can, to her best ability, teach her daughter how to sew linen, knit stockings and the like, and for this purpose there is definitively no need for any other teachers."²⁹⁾ Other speakers defended the parental right on principal grounds: the home was the natural institution for the upbringing of children, but elementary schooling had undermined its status and elementary school sloyd would make things worse. Instead the children must be brought back to the parents.

Other speakers were also negative towards increasing state intervention into family life, but they draw the opposite conclusion:

Those days have passed when the child learnt how to read, sitting on its mother's knee. Therefore the bonds between the parents and the child have weakened, and instruction in home sloyd, which was earlier provided at home, has to a large degree disappeared. … One good thing must be to introduce some kind of sloyd into elementary school in order to remedy such

*deficit.*³⁰⁾

The battle was partly won by the advocates of school sloyd in 1877, when the Parliament decided to subsidy school sloyd for boys, and finally in 1896 when also girls' sloyd became subsidised. After that voices claiming the right and responsibility of the parents to teach their children sloyd died away. However, as sloyd was an optional subject, the parents could, at least in principle, decide about this aspect of their children's education.

The debate at the national meetings of elementary school teachers

In many respects, elementary school teachers were expected to take over the parents' responsibility for the upbringing of the children. Therefore it could be expected that they adhered to the idea that sloyd instruction should be part of the elementary school curriculum. This issue was discussed at some of the recurrent national meetings of elementary school teachers. For example, in 1849 the meeting discussed whether sloyd schools should be a necessary appendix to elementary schools. However, the word "appendix" indicates that sloyd was not regarded as a subject to be taught within elementary school. But in 1878 the participants of the teacher meeting agreed that sloyd instruction in elementary school was most desirable; in other words: sloyd was now regarded as an elementary school subject. At that time it had also officially become part of the elementary school curriculum.

At the teacher meetings only a few speakers defended the parents' right to teach sloyd. According to one of them, it was not wise to introduce sloyd into elementary school because "at many quarters people feel a dislike to school, and they would do so still more if the costs for elementary school increases because of sloyd schools."³¹⁾ However, it was also argued that sloyd could contribute to the legitimacy of elementary school, because common people really appreciated sloyd:

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*Sloyd is a subject which people understand and which fruits they appreciate. For common people it is not always easy to evaluate academic progresses. Therefore every subject, which result they can control will work as a new bond of love between the school and the people.*³²

On the whole, in the views of the participants of teacher meetings the legitimacy of school sloyd was not especially problematic. This is quite logical as their professional identity and their bread winning depended on school as a substitute for the home. In their view, education was the responsibility of professional teachers instead of laymen like parents.

Elementary school sloyd – for what good?

According to people in powerful positions of the state bureaucracy like Erik Sparre and private persons like Otto Salomon sloyd should be part of the elementary school curriculum. However, other persons were sceptical about this idea. In this section we will analyse the arguments for or against sloyd as a school subject in the Parliamentary debate during the period 1840 – ca 1900.³³ We will also examine the debate at the national meetings of elementary school teachers. Three different kinds of arguments have been distinguished:

- (1) Economical arguments: provision of opportunities for persons to earn money, preventive poor relief, making and repairing of utensils for the home etc. Sloyd as *vocational training* belongs to this category of arguments.
- (2) Moral arguments: development of various moral characteristics. Aesthetical aspects on sloyd have been brought to this category.
- (3) Pedagogical arguments: counterbalance to one-sided academic education, a means of developing the senses and the motor activity.

It should also be pointed out that economical,

moral and pedagogical arguments could also be used *against* school sloyd.

The debate in the Parliament

As the main arguments changed by course of time, we will treat different periods separately.

1840-1875

During the period 1840-1875, only a few speakers addressed the issue of school sloyd,³⁴ and most of them applied *economical* aspects on school sloyd, as they regarded sloyd as preventive poor relief. Thus, sloyd should be a *vocational training* for children of poor parents. Thereby these children could acquire the working skills and competence which society later on would demand of them. *Moral* aspects were also put forward as the children would be accustomed to industriousness, discipline and order. Occasionally *pedagogical* aspect was applied: the children's need for physical activities would be satisfied during sloyd lessons. One speaker regarded sloyd as a healthy correction to the theoretical education provided by elementary school.

1876-1887

In the period 1876-1887, 105 speakers expressed their views on school sloyd. Explicit or implicit, it was mainly boys' sloyd that was discussed, as state subsidies for this purpose were at stake.

In this period, pedagogical aspects on sloyd were most frequent. According to some Parliamentary members of the earlier period, sloyd could replace other less useful subjects, like History and Geography. However, no one made such proposals any longer; instead sloyd advocates argued that it would be possible to combine sloyd with other subjects of elementary school. Sloyd would, for example, affect the instruction in other subjects in a positive way. One speaker referred to an American expert, according to whom nobody could endure more than four hours demanding intellectual work per day. Sloyd would thus be a healthy exchange, making the children *better* fit for

theoretical studies. However, other speakers were sceptical to such statements: Instead, sloyd would make the children still more exhausted. They would benefit more from outdoor play and activities than from sloyd.

Other pedagogical arguments for sloyd were not explicitly questioned. Sloyd was a means of fostering all round personalities, because both hand and mind would be developed. Sloyd was also a popular subject, which would make it easier for pupils to endure boring theoretical lessons.

Moral aspects were also prominent. Some speakers argued that, due to the stress laid on theoretical knowledge in elementary schools, the status of manual work had declined disquietly, but sloyd would contribute to the restoration of the respect for manual work. Furthermore, children would be busy with useful sloyd work instead of just spending leisure time on mischieves and pranks.

Economical arguments were not very frequent. Only a few speakers followed the line of argument, dominating in the earlier period, regarding sloyd as preventive poor relief. A few others regarded sloyd as a means for correcting the balance between the export and the import of the nation: Anyone walking on the street of Stockholm could not avoid observing the amount of imported goods in shop windows. Such products could easily be made by the Swedes themselves if only they had been taught sloyd. In that respect, however, other speakers doubted the economical value of sloyd, claiming that home sloyd could not any longer compete with big factories.

1888-1892

During the period 1888-1892 state subsidies for girls' sloyd were on the agenda, and once again economical arguments for sloyd became most frequent. Earlier, however, the economical value of boys' sloyd had been associated with working life and thus with vocational training. It had also been connected to the economy of the nation. As for girls' sloyd, however, the

economical value was restricted to the private economy of the family:

Everyone, who has got any insight into the conditions of the working classes, has observed that poverty is huge in many quarters, only because the wife does not know how to make the bread last. Usually, low salaries are regarded as the cause of such poverty. Certainly, gradually raising salaries are desirable, but I believe that there is another way of making money last, namely the way of thrift. However, I'm neither referring to greediness, nor to thrift as privation, but to thrift manifesting itself in the ability to economize, not letting the hole in the coat or the stocking become to big but mending them in time.

However, some speakers were sceptical about the economical value of girls' sloyd. Some of them feared that sloyd would make the family economy even worse, because of its orientation towards luxury. In some places the female elementary school teachers teaching sloyd had introduced "showy decorations", which were preferred by the girls instead of their mothers' plain handicraft, necessary for daily life. According to other speakers, this was not a true description of reality: Girls' sloyd did promote such necessities. And anyway, if the state was going to subsidised girls' sloyd, it would also be possible to control what kind of sloyd was taught to the girls.

These economical arguments for and against girls' sloyd had many moral undertones. Sloyd would turn girls away from simple manual works, make women unfit for household work, and one speaker asked: "Gentlemen, do you believe that sloyd will make the woman become what she is meant to be: the assistant of man?" Other members of the Parliament, however, regarded sloyd as a means of accustoming the girls with hard manual work. Sloyd would also promote other moral virtues like cleanliness, order and tidiness.

Pedagogical aspects were remarkably few.

Unlike the case of boys' sloyd, there was not much talk about girls' sloyd as a healthy counterbalance against one-sided theoretical studies or its positive effects on other subjects. In 1896 one member of the Parliament concluded that girls' sloyd aimed at teaching girls sewing and mending, which was quite different from the aims of the boys' pedagogical sloyd.

The debate at national teacher meetings

How did elementary school teachers regard sloyd? From the reports of the national meetings of elementary school teachers some conclusions can be drawn.

In the 19th century elementary schooling was quite a new enterprise, and it was still an open question what its aims should be. According to some teachers elementary school should promote spiritual needs of the people, and sloyd was questioned because of its association with practical and economical interests. However, most speakers at national teacher meetings applied various pedagogical aspects on sloyd: sloyd was necessary for the development of both brain and hand, and it was a healthy exchange to theoretical studies.

According to the teachers themselves, they and not craftsmen were most suitable to teach sloyd. Thus, sloyd should *not* be part of the vocational training of the pupils; for obvious reason elementary school teachers could not be competent to teach various handicrafts. Instead pedagogical aspects were emphasised, and Otto Salomon's *pedagogical sloyd* became the key word. The practical use of pedagogical sloyd was not direct, but indirect:

...the goal of sloyd instruction is not to be found in its practical use, but its only aim is the harmonic development of the bodies and souls of the young generation. Such are the aims of the pedagogical sloyd, and therefore it is also fruitful for life, i.e. practical in a more narrow sense of the word, because it will provide a solid basis for later vocational and professional training.³⁵⁾

Such arguments were attempts to eliminate conflicts between pragmatic and pedagogical aspects on sloyd. The solution was to regard sloyd as an indirect training for work, because general skills and characteristics were developed. We conclude with quoting the resolution of the teacher meeting of 1913, where moral, pedagogical and economical aspects on sloyd were brought into a harmonious unit:

In elementary school both girls' and boys' sloyd contribute to the development of the ability of secure and quick observation, precision in work, general manual skills, economy on material, carefulness with utensils, sense for the neatness of the working product, persistence with work in order to attain a certain goal, and interest for manual work. Therefore sloyd is a good basis for vocational training.³⁶⁾

Concluding remarks

Obviously, many persons regarded sloyd instruction as a means of preserving old home sloyd and crafts traditions. Sloyd also was regarded a kind of antidote against a whole lot of social diseases of the late 19th century and a means of establishing a new social order. We know, however, that pedagogical sloyd, modelled in accordance with Otto Salomon's ideas, soon became almost synonymous with boys' sloyd in elementary schools.

We believe that this development fits well into the overall construction of a coherent public school system in Sweden. Out of the mess of different schools with different goals, characteristic of the early 19th century, an ordered system emerged. In this systematisation process the relations between different school forms were defined: school hierarchies were constructed, based on the competences provided by different schools. Another important distinction was made between schools for vocational training and schools that should provide only general education; the latter was what became the object of elementary schooling. As a consequence the goal of elementary school sloyd must not be

vocational but general. Otto Salomon's concept of pedagogical sloyd fitted perfectly well into this historical context.

The history of Mandelgren, the Stockholm sloyd school, etc. is also typical for another process: that many private initiatives in the educational field were replaced by public institutions governed by the state. In the 1870s it was only natural that the Swedish Sloyd Association should take on the main responsibility for sloyd instruction of the whole nation. Today, such thoughts would be inconceivable. However, in the 19th century everything, and also institutions responsible for sloyd instruction, was still in the making.

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- 1) Bennet, C. (1937). *History of Manual and Industrial Education 1879-1917*. Bennet is one of the pioneer researchers in the history of manual education.
- 2) Carlsson, Sten (1964). *Svensk historia II : Tiden efter 1718*. Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, Bonniers.
- 3) Magnusson, Lars. (1999), *Sveriges ekonomiska historia*.
- 4) SFS 1846: 39; SFS 1864: 41. However, there were several exceptions from these laws. For example, the production and trading of dangerous chemical stuff were still strictly regulated.
- 5) In 1900, 55 percent of the population lived by farming. Statististika centralbyrån (1969). *Historisk statistik*, 82.
- 6) Magnusson, Lars. (1999), *Sveriges ekonomiska historia*.
- 7) Kilander, Svenbjörn (1991). *Den nya staten och den gamla: En studie i ideologisk förändring*, (Studia Historica Upsaliensia 164.) Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- 8) For example, the concept *hemslöjd* is used both in state and research reports. Cf. e.g. *Hemslöjdscommitténs betänkande avgivet den 10 december 1917* (1918). Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söner;
- 9) *Hemslöjdscommitténs betänkande*,
- 10) However, it should be noted, that not all farmers were big entrepreneurs. For example, in the northern part of Sweden, farming was for a long time still a small scale business.
- 11) Ericson, Tom (1988), *Mellan kapital och arbete: Småborgerligheten i Sverige 1850-1914*. Umeå: Almqvist & Wiksell. 55-78.
- 12) Ibid. 69.
- 13) Dewey, John (1985) *School and society*, 6-7.
- 14) Ibid,
- 15) Florin, Christina & Johansson, Ulla (1993). "Där de härliga lagarna gro..." *Kultur, klass och kön i de svenska läroverken 1850-1914*. Stockholm: Tiden, 86-90.
- 16) Some researchers even argue that large groups of workers were deskilled in the process of industrialisation. See e.g. Braverman,
- 17) Wiberg, *Till skolslöjdens förhistorie – några Utvecklingslinjer i svensk arbets-pedagogik intill 1877–*, 1937
- 18) It was voluntary in two senses. Firstly, it was voluntary for the local school board to provide sloyd instruction. Secondly, sloyd was optional for the pupils. Sloyd was not made compulsory until 1955.
- 19) Quoted in Larsson, Lars (2001). *Industri- och hantverksutbildning under två sekel*. Uppsala: Föreningen för Svensk Undervisnings-historia, 48.
- 20) Ibid, 49.
- 21) Stawe nov, Åke. 'Så började Svenska Slöjdföreningen.'
- 22) Larsson, *Industri- och hantverksutbildning*,
- 23) *Tekniska committéns betänkande*,
- 24) Andersson, J. O. (1879). 'I hvad mån kan Sv. Slöjdföreningen medverka till slöjdunder-visningens och husslöjdens utveckling? Föredrag hållt i Sv. Slöjdföreningen den 4 Nov. 1879.'
- (Meddelanden från Svenska slöjdföreningen: Afhandlingar uti Industri och Konstslöjd, 3.) Stockholm: Svenska Slöjdföreningen.
- 25) However, in our opinion, thereby he applies only a restricted perspective on social reality, because many other acute problems are on the

- agenda.
- 26) During the second half of the 19th century, nation building processes were going on in many countries in Europe, e.g. Germany, Denmark, Italy. Cf Albesetti, James C. (1983). *Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany*. Princeton University Press.
 - 27) In this regard, Andersson refers to the model series of Moscow Polytechnical institute, which were shown at the world exhibition in Paris in 1878.
 - 28) Riksdags Protokoll: J.O. Widegren (1840). *Bondeständets protokoll, Band I*, 232; Uhr (1876), *Andra kammarens protokoll no 21*, 32.
 - 29) Riksdags Protokoll: P. Nilsson (1876). *Andra kammarens protokoll*, no 21, 35.
 - 30) Riksdags Protokoll: Wallenius (1877). *Första kammarens protokoll*, no 29, 40.
 - 31) Svedbom, P.E. (1850). *Berättelse om det allmänna svenska läraremötet hållet i Stockholm den 19, 20, 21, and 22 juni 1849* (1850). (Enligt uppdrag utgifven av P.E. Svedbom.)
 - 32) *Förhandlingar vid Åttonde Allmänna Svenska Folkskolläraremötet*, 1878, 17-18. .
 - 33) This part is to a large extent based on Ulla Johansson (1987), 72-86.
 - 34) Only 12 speakers talked about this topic, and most of the comments were made in the 1840s. *ibid.*, 73.
 - 35) *Tolvte Allmänna Svenska Folkskolläraremötet, Norrköping den 10. 11 och 12 augusti 1898*, 85.
 - 36) *Redogörelse för Femtonde Allmänna Svenska Folkskolläraremötet i Lund den 1-3 juli 1913*, 178.

The introduction of *sloyd* into Swedish elementary schools

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In Curriculum History the introduction of new school subjects is an especially interesting object of study, as one can expect that social, political and economic factors interplay with the endeavours of human agents to broaden the curriculum. In this paper, we will use the Swedish *sloyd* to illustrate how this process works. The following question will be put: What economical, social, political, and ideological conditions promoted the idea that *sloyd* should be taught in elementary school?

Our findings show that *sloyd* was regarded both as a means of preserving old traditions, like the home *sloyd* tradition, and as an important element for building a new society, e.g. to create industrious manual workers. The concept of the pedagogical *sloyd*, however, must be understood as a consequence of the contemporary Swedish school policy, the aim of which is to distinguish between different types of schools including those that have manual training. Pedagogical *sloyd* became the keyword for elementary school in contrast to, for example, *Tekniska skolan i Stockholm*.

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