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Music teachers’ perspectives on their chances to disrupt cultural and social reproduction in the Swedish Community Schools of Music and Arts

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Abstract

This study sheds light on music teachers’ perspectives on their chances to disrupt cultural and social reproduction in music education in the Swedish Community Schools of Music and Arts (*kulturskolor*, sing. *kulturskola*). Focus group conversations were carried out involving 18 teachers at five such schools. As a point of departure, the analysis of the conversations applied the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu with an emphasis on the concepts *explicit versus implicit pedagogy* and Bernstein’s corresponding concepts *visible* and *invisible pedagogy*. The analysis discusses *explicit versus implicit* assumptions interwoven in the teachers’ accounts of their efforts. The teachers describe it as difficult to challenge social structures. Based on marketing efforts vis-à-vis families from immigrant backgrounds, the teachers point to differing understandings of the significance of participation in the programmes. The teachers’ descriptions point to opportunities that stem from efforts to facilitate children taking part in music education in cooperation with compulsory schools, teaching practice habits and more general behaviours, and initiatives to reach parents and children from immigrant backgrounds with information. The descriptions show explicit as well as implicit components, often in terms of implicit assumptions embedded in an explicit framing. Reflection upon implicit assumptions is suggested as a means to develop more radical strategies to disrupt cultural and social reproduction in the Swedish *kulturskolor*.

Keywords: *Community Schools of Music and Arts, kulturskolor, cultural reproduction, implicit pedagogy, explicit pedagogy, focus groups, children*

Introduction

A point of departure for this study is the cultural and social reproduction (hereafter reproduction) found in the Swedish *kulturskolor* (Community Schools of Music and Arts) due to an overrepresentation of Swedish-born children with well-educated parents who in many cases practiced an art themselves (Jeppsson & Lindgren, 2018). Cultural reproduction can be defined as the intergenerational reproduction of cultural values, while social reproduction stands for the social and economic status transferred from one generation to the next. The political interest of widening participation in the *kulturskolor* has been articulated through the appointment of a commission to investigate the Swedish *kulturskolor* (Dir. 2015:46). The directive states that “the Government’s starting point is that all children, regardless of background, should be given the opportunity to practice art” (Dir. 2015:46, p. 2, my translation). In terms of political aspiration, the *kulturskolor* institution can be regarded as object of a cultural-political democratizing endeavour.

Some research describes the Swedish *kulturskolor* as marked by exclusion to some extent (Rostwall & West, 2001; Tivenius, 2008) with limited openness to change (Gustafsson, 2000; Tivenius, 2008); and difficulty reaching children who are not from the ethnic Swedish middle class (Elofsson, 2009; Hofvander Trulsson, 2004). Based on the inclusive ideals articulated on the political level and the depiction of *kulturskola* as marked by social stratification (Jeppsson & Lindgren, 2018) it is of vital interest to highlight the teachers’ perspectives on this issue. In this investigation of the *kulturskolor* teachers’ perspectives on the extent to which they are able to disrupt social and cultural reproduction and the opportunities available are traced.

Reproduction in the context of *kulturskolor* can be viewed as a reflection of broader social stratification in education (Blanden, Gregg & Machin, 2005; Esping-Andersen, 2008). Within the framework of the theory of reproduction and based on the work of Bourdieu, the cultural capital of children with well-educated parents is found to be associated with participation in arts education (Southgate & Roscigno, 2009). Southgate and Roscigno (2009) established that children’s involvement with music varies systematically by class and gender status, and they suggest that such involvement has implications for other school achievements. Reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, 2008) states that class-position tends to be reproduced from one generation to the next. The impact of reproduction, however, tends to vary from nation to nation and over time. In addition, social mobility is greater in some nations than in others (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Esping-Andersen, 1996).

This article is based on an analysis of empirical material gained through focus group conversations with *kulturskola* teachers about social stratification, in light of the theory of Bourdieu with a special focus on aspirations to disrupt reproduction. The analysis was inspired by the concepts *explicit* and *implicit pedagogy* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979,

2008; Yang, 2014) and *visible* and *invisible* pedagogy (Bernstein, 2003, 2004). The teachers' accounts and descriptions of their teaching or the strategies of the *kulturskola* were analysed in terms of explicit versus implicit assumptions interwoven in the teachers' accounts of their efforts. The aim is to shed light on music teachers' perspectives on their chances to disrupt cultural and social reproduction in music education in the Swedish *kulturskolor*, including perceived obstacles.

The research questions are:

1. What opportunities and obstacles do the music teachers describe in their talk about their efforts to disrupt reproduction in the *kulturskolor*?
2. What explicit and implicit components can be identified in the music teachers' descriptions of their efforts to disrupt reproduction in the *kulturskolor*?

The Swedish *kulturskolor*

In Sweden, the *kulturskolor* offer voluntary after school arts education to children aged approximately 7–19 in practically every Swedish municipality. The *kulturskolor* have offered music education since the 1940s for a relatively low fee due to municipal subsidies (Heimonen, 2006). The ambitions that shaped the first *kulturskolor* in different parts of Sweden were explicitly inclusive and built on the ideal of the social democratic society (Brändström & Wiklund, 1995; Persson, 2001). In line with the education tradition in Sweden, the Swedish *kulturskolor* stem from the political ideology of making music education available to all children regardless of their socio-economic situation (Bergman & Lindgren, 2014).

Even though there are numerous examples of projects that involve cooperation with compulsory schools, participation in arts instruction at the *kulturskolor* primarily takes place during the children's free-time. The children and their families decide on what subject to participate in, for how long, and their level of ambition. The schools are not regulated by any curricula, and no assessment system such as grades is used. In the study by Jeppsson and Lindgren (2018) approximately 16% of sixth-graders stated that they did not know what *kulturskolor* was. Consequently, it can be assumed that a large part of the *kulturskolor* target population has not been reached by either marketing initiatives or education practices within this system.

Previous research

The experience of art as part of a person's cultural capital is found to affect life trajectory and are associated with better opportunities in life (Andersen & Hansen, 2011; DiMaggio, 1982; Dumais, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 2008; Trondman, 1994). In the Swedish context, Trondman (1994) described how cultural capital, for example in the form of music

involvement, could influence a person's life trajectory and social class status. Hofvander Trulsson (2010, 2016) has found that immigrant parents sometimes see their children's education in the *kulturskolor* as an opportunity for *class remobility*. Thanks to a *kulturskola* education in western art music, families see an opportunity to restore cultural capital lost when they immigrated to Sweden (Hofvander Trulsson, 2010, 2016).

Children with foreign backgrounds are naturally not a homogenous group and their reasons to begin and continue *kulturskola* studies or not are likewise disparate. Obstacles to participation could be, for example, economic barriers, language barriers, or the geographical location of the activities. In a study by Kleppe (2013), the Norwegian Community School of Music and Performing Arts is referred to as a typically Norwegian phenomenon. The study also describes how parents with foreign backgrounds had expectations for their children's free time and leisure activities that were incongruent with *kulturskola* participation (Kleppe, 2013).

Wright and Froehlich (2012) highlight how music teachers, through their teaching choices, perpetuate a particular form of musical capital as valued knowledge and thereby function as vehicles for social reproduction. In the micro-interactions that take place between the teacher and the student, a hidden curriculum of cultural reproduction can be transmitted (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2008), but opportunities can also arise to disrupt the discourses that reproduce sociocultural inequality (Wright, 2014). Inspired by Bernstein (1996), Wright and Froelich (2012) envision alternatives where "future music educators should perhaps be encouraged to work in the gap that lies between the thinkable and the unthinkable knowledge" (212). Opportunities to disrupt reproduction appear, according to Wright (2014), when musical knowledge "is in free flow" (18) and "up for grabs" (13).

In Holmberg's (2010) description of the Swedish *kulturskolor*, popular cultural preferences are something that the students bring to the teaching situation and that teachers reluctantly adapt to. She writes that teachers are "the defenders of their activities, the last lifeline of high-brow culture on a sea of stormy cultural relativism" (195, author's translation). The teachers sacrifice themselves to the preferences of the students and the market, in Holmberg's (2010) description. In this way, music making in the popular music genre can be seen as a capitulation to the children as well as to the market and commercial media exposure. In contrast to Wright (2014), Holmberg (2010) seems to view the need to defend high-brow culture as more urgent than the need to disrupt the influence of traditional musical values.

In a study by Kuuse (2018), *kulturskolor* teachers constructed the mission to promote social inclusion as separate from the more artistic core of music teaching and these two functions as requiring different competences. Even though the teachers reported that both tasks were important, they described them in part as conflicting aims. The teachers in Kuuse's study were concerned that an exaggerated focus on social projects risked leading to a devaluation of their artistic competence.

Theory

In the following section, Bourdieu's concepts *field*, *capital*, and *habitus* are introduced. In Bourdieu's theoretical framework, these concepts are connected in such a way that they are filled with meaning through their relations with each other. All these concepts are relevant to an understanding of the teachers' habitus and their negotiations over what capital is to be recognised as valuable in the *kulturskola* field. The concepts *explicit* and *implicit* pedagogy are discussed from the perspectives of Bourdieu and Passeron (1979, 2008), Bernstein (2003, 2004), and Yang (2014). The different perspectives on explicit versus implicit pedagogy are explored as a possible way to understand explicit versus implicit assumptions in the teachers' accounts.

Bourdieu as non-deterministic?

Bourdieu has been repeatedly criticised for being deterministic in painting a dark and pessimistic picture of an inevitably socially stratified society (Broady, 1998; Moi, 1994; Yang, 2014). This critique is understandable as the majority of Bourdieu's scholarship focuses on the social relations between dominating and dominated groups (e.g. 1977, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999). Indeed, it is hard to find any work by Bourdieu that is not built on the precondition that power relations create a stratified society. Nonetheless the perspective of Bourdieu can be better understood as social constructionism, born out of a deep critique of class-based society, and consequently out of an aspiration for change. In descriptions of intergenerational reproduction, the potential for social mobility is embedded in the theories of Bourdieu. It can be argued that Bourdieu's theories are a "tool kit" and that the descriptions are contingent upon the context to which they are applied. The many differences between the French mid-twentieth century France, and Sweden in the 2010s can arguably motivate different applications of the tool kit and disparate interpretations.

Capital, habitus and field in the perspective of Bourdieu

From Bourdieu's perspective, to be recognized in a *field* is to have a "feel for the game" and to embrace the rules and values that make the game worth playing (Bourdieu, 1996, p. X11). Recognition is not something that is determined by the agent him/herself nor by other agents in the field, but is something that is a consequence of an agent's dispositions or *habitus* and of what is recognized as *capital* in the field (Bourdieu, 1990b; Broady, 1998). Applied to the *kulturskola* field, the *kulturskola* teachers' talk in focus group conversations can be seen as an opportunity to contribute to the reproduction of as well as the transformation of the capital valued and recognised in the *kulturskola* field. Bourdieu (1977) defines habitus as "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (72). In other words, the Bourdieusian concept of habitus corresponds to the sociological debate around structure versus agency

and acknowledges the structure as well as the agent as significant in shaping the trajectory of an individual. The acquired cultural capital is embodied in habitus, which can be described as the sum of a person's experiences (as part of their upbringing) and includes habits, education, opinions as well as manners and characteristics of speech. In definitions of cultural capital, linguistic skills and arts activities are often mentioned alongside formal education. Typical operationalisations of such activities include the ability to play a musical instrument, the habit of visiting art galleries, and the possession of a large number of books (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Habitus is associated with unconscious qualities (Bourdieu, 1990a) but can be brought to awareness through *socio analysis* (Bourdieu, 1990a; Broady, 1998). According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) teachers can play the part of facilitators for socio analysis for their students and thereby help them realise how obstacles to change may originate from social conditions rather than from personal shortcomings.

Implicit and explicit pedagogy

In the works of Bourdieu and Passeron (1979, 2008), *implicit pedagogy*, as opposed to *explicit pedagogy*, is the main way to transmit and acquire knowledge and cultural capital. Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) describe the work of teachers as potentially reproducing a system that legitimises privilege, for example through valuing the idea of essential giftedness and rewarding skills that are not explicitly taught. Cultural capital acquired beforehand is thereby rewarded. Bourdieu and Passeron (2008) discuss the challenging task of teachers to disrupt reproduction and whether an authoritarian or a softer approach better serves this purpose. It is hard to discern optimism in this discussion, as both strategies – the authoritarian idea to teach Latin to the masses, for example, or to heed and recognise diversity – both risk the exercise of power through *soft violence* and thereby contribute to reproduction.

Yang (2014) draws on Bourdieu's theory but, in contrast to Bourdieu, Yang seeks to draw attention to the feasibility of promoting social mobility through explicit pedagogy. From Yang's (2014) perspective, change can come about if a person *reflects* on the change that is required of him/her in response to *explicit pedagogy*. Explicit pedagogy may be the starting point for the formation of new skills and a new form of habitus as opposed to reinforcement of an inherited habitus. Yang (2014) conceives of today's society as an open system in interaction with other fields, cultures and traditions. Analogously, Dyndahl, Karlsen, Skårberg, and Nielsen (2014) describe the contemporary music education field as open to recognition of a large variety of genres as cultural capital, referred to as *musical omnivorousness*.

Similar to Bourdieu, Bernstein (2004) describes education as unavoidably characterized by hierarchy – the teacher is always placed in a position superior to the student. Explicit and implicit pedagogy – or in the vocabulary of Bernstein (2004) *visible* and *invisible pedagogy* – solely represent how obvious the power relations appear to the student. When a teacher uses implicit pedagogy, it means that the student has the impression that he

or she has a high degree of influence on the education, but that power relations are merely masked or hidden by devices of communication – the hierarchy remains unchanged. Explicit pedagogy, on the other hand, means being transparent about the criteria used to assess students' accomplishments. Bernstein (2004) writes that implicit pedagogy favours middle-class children because their cultural capital and communication skills are more highly developed. Communication skills are thus seen as important in navigating an educational structure with unspoken and ambiguous demands.

Bernstein (2004) also describes situations where principles of implicit and explicit pedagogy mix. In the interplay between the principles of implicit versus explicit pedagogy, Bernstein (2004) claims explicit pedagogy is advocated for by the fraction of the middle class that has connections to the production and circulation of capital. Proponents of implicit pedagogy, on the other hand, emphasize weak boundaries, and space and freedom for the child, which makes the child subject to mechanisms of symbolic control. Although the proponents of implicit pedagogy in Bernstein's (2003, 2004) scholarship are preschool teachers rather than representatives of the cultural elite, the tension between the ideals of implicit versus explicit pedagogy, I argue, can be related to the tension between cultural capital and economic capital in Bourdieu's descriptions. Further, Bernstein's (2003) concept of *social control* bears resemblance to Bourdieu's concept of soft violence.

Method

The empirical material for the present study consists of transcripts of five video-taped focus group conversations with 18 music teachers at five Swedish *kulturskolor*. A focus group conversation is defined as a conversation with a small number of participants from a well-defined group led by a moderator with a predetermined focus (Wolff, Knodel & Sittitrai, 1993). The schools were chosen based on the aim to represent variation in socio-economic conditions and larger and smaller towns.

After consent was given from each respective *kulturskola* leader, the teachers, who were selected by this leader, were contacted via email and asked to participate in focus group conversations on the topic of *kulturskolor* and social stratification. Formal information about the research project was attached. After the teachers gave their informed consent to participate, I suggested a time and place based on the recommendation of the leaders or the participants. The focus group conversations were carried out in Swedish and took place at the teachers' workplaces. The teachers signed consent forms at the start of the conversations, which lasted between an hour and two and a half hours. The number of participating teachers in each conversation varied between two and five.

The moderator's task during a focus group conversation is to guide the conversation around the focus of the study while encouraging an open atmosphere (Knodel, 1993). These

ideals guided me as I initially presented the results of a previous study (Jeppsson & Lindgren, 2018) and thereafter took a significantly less prominent role. I tried to encourage an open and generous conversation climate through active listening and follow-up questions.

The point of departure for the conversations was the results of a previous study on children's participation, which showed an overrepresentation in the Swedish *kulturskolor* of girls born in Sweden with well-educated parents who in many cases practiced an art themselves (Jeppsson & Lindgren, 2018). The conversations evolved relatively freely around questions concerning which groups of children the *kulturskolor* reached, reasons for not reaching some groups of children when applicable, and the teachers' descriptions of their efforts and strategies to reach new groups of children.

The analysis was based on excerpts from the conversations at the schools, which are referred to here by the numbers 1–5. The videotaped focus group conversations were transcribed verbatim including gestures and conversation-specific details in passages where they were considered potentially significant. Upper case letters indicate specific emphasis in the talk. The qualitative analysis was conducted using the software programme NVivo.

The initial coding was inductive and based on the research questions: the teachers' perspectives on their chances to disrupt reproduction, including obstacles and opportunities the teachers talked about. In the second stage of the analysis the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu and Passeron (1979, 2008), with priority on the concepts *explicit* versus *implicit pedagogy*, was applied. Bernstein (2003, 2004) applied the concept visible and invisible pedagogy to analysis of teaching situations. In this study, however, these concepts are applied to an analysis of the teachers' talk about their teaching. Although the teaching situation per se is absent in the conversations, the teachers gave vivid descriptions of teaching situations, and in these accounts a different kind of transparency is present. This transparency, I argue, bears the potential to expose the teachers' implicit assumptions as well as their more explicit aspirations in their teaching. The explicit and implicit components of the teachers' descriptions were identified based on what was spoken and emphasised in the accounts – interpreted as explicit components – and what was unspoken and taken for granted – interpreted as implicit components. The explicit accounts often relied on implicit assumptions and the implicit components were traced through an identification of these assumptions. The credibility of the descriptions was strengthened by reference to situations and dialogues that appeared to be experienced in real life by the speakers (*active voicing*, Potter, 1996).

Results

The results are structured in two sections titled “Obstacles” and “Opportunities (with impediments)”. A summary of the results and a more in-depth analysis concludes the results section.

Obstacles

Social stratification in the *kulturskolor* was often described as difficult to change. Obstacles were sometimes referred to as connected to other entities than the teachers themselves, locating the ‘problem’ elsewhere.

Hard to change structures

The description I initially offered to the teachers in the conversations about the typical *kulturskola* student as a Swedish girl with parents who were well-educated and interested in the arts (Jeppsson & Lindgren, 2018) did not surprise but rather verified the teachers’ perceptions of their students in general. The teachers talked about strategies to reach children who did not spontaneously apply and perhaps did not have parents who explicitly urged their children to apply. The excerpt below describes an initiative to reach children who had not, at that point, applied to participate in music lessons. Despite efforts to disrupt reproduction, the results, all the same, confirmed that middle-class children, from residential areas with more expensive stand-alone houses, were the ones the teacher was able to convince of the value of participating in *kulturskola*:

- Teacher 3: So, and so I did promotion campaigns for several weeks and went out there and you got a free lesson ... ONE application!
- Moderator: Yes ...
- Teacher 3: And then it’s from the small residential area, just on one side of the school, there are some stand-alone houses, on the other side there are apartment buildings. Then, of course, it’s the child of a doctor in the stand-alone house area! The ONLY child that has applied! (School 4)

The teacher articulated how difficult it was challenging the existing pattern of many local children lacking interest to participate in *kulturskola*. The results of the teacher’s efforts were clearly discouraging. The teacher framed the events as peculiar and remarkable, but at the same time typical. Reaching children who were not already interested in taking part was described as a difficult task. The teachers at School 1 also talked about how difficult it was to recruit new groups of children to *kulturskola*:

- Teacher 1: They surely need (*outreaching gesture*) ... the help of the parents or relatives to ... then they need a push (*pushing gesture*). We can’t really make it on our own ... to get them, even if we do promotion campaigns in the schools like the other day, instrument demonstration, they must have a parent who drives them there, who brings them there, someone who is interested as well, who may have also attended a music school or who has also been engaged in the arts somehow like ... It takes a few generations to make

something (*rolling gesture in one hand*) roll (*watching moderator, pause*) ... actually.

Teacher 2: In order to have ... as many children as possible, it's the parents really, how do you give information to all the parents so that they know about it and to make them [the children] positive, like ... it's probably very important. (School 1)

The teachers stressed the importance of reaching parents. Before a child applied, the parents first had to be convinced of the value of their child participating. The teachers appeared to find it very difficult to convince a child to participate if the child did not have the support from his or her parents. Even if the teachers did not rule out the possibility of influencing children directly, this process was constructed as difficult and requiring a long-term perspective. The influence of parents regarding whether or not children attended *kulturskola* came up repeatedly in the conversations.

Another example of structures that were described as hard to change is presented in the following excerpt about difficulties to reach a shared understanding with immigrant parents when it came to information about *kulturskolor*. The difficulties were attributed to the parents' lack of understanding:

Teacher 1: Yes, it has something to do with the parents (*moderator nodding*) that that's hard ... to get on the same level, linguistically speaking. Many of them can't, they can't read this paper (*teacher looking at moderator*), but they can get help from someone who translates, but they still don't understand what it is all about really.

[Later in the same conversation]

Teacher 5: It goes without saying that you should practice and manage that at home and it is a very (*pause*) special form (*shaking head and watching the others*). (School 1)

This lack of understanding was not framed solely as stemming from language barriers but as a natural disinterest stemming from parents' immigrant status. The teacher's conception of what *kulturskola* is and can be, seemed static and remained uncontested. The discrepancy between what *kulturskola* is – referred to as a “very special form” of music education that expects students to practice on their instruments – and the expectations of parents and children with immigrant backgrounds, was not bridged in any way but taken for granted. Even though the teacher expressed hesitation and sought approval from the other participants, he or she did not question this interpretation of the situation.

Constructing the *kulturskolor* programme as a “very special form” of education did not show any obvious gaps for negotiation – the reasonableness of expecting home-practice was implicit. This “very special form” might suit some students well and work out

successfully, while it might not be appropriate for children who do not have the facilities or intention to practice at home.

To blame other parties

The teachers in the excerpt below talked about strategies that would make it possible for children who play an instrument to take their music lessons during the school day at their regular compulsory school. The teachers seemed to expect resistance from the compulsory schools regarding such an arrangement.

- Teacher 4: With goodwill from the school ... but it requires a lot of commitment getting it together. But we are like ... we are the ones who run it.
- Teacher 3: (At the same time as 4 above). Yes, yes.
- Teacher 4: It is the [*kulturskola*] music teacher who drives it, not the school.
- Teacher 3: No, no.
- Teacher 4: This compromise. So, we, kind of, have it in us, all the time, we have to... (School 1)

One strategy pursued by the teachers was to be flexible and work out creative compromises in cooperation with compulsory schools in order to make it possible for the children to take part in music lessons during the school day. It was seen as necessary that the *kulturskola* teachers be flexible, driven and persevering in their negotiations with schools – otherwise such arrangements would not work out. The teachers also conveyed the image of *kulturskola* teachers as hard-working, creative and flexible.

The teachers positioned obstacles to change outside their sphere of influence:

- Teacher 5: How can we reach the ones we don't reach? We always carry it with us, and the teachers are not where the problem lies. We have shared as many ideas as you can dream of in different inquiry committees, different bosses, we've reviewed and offered so many solutions to these things.
- Moderator: Yes.
[Later in the same conversation]
- Teacher 5: Yes, I can say that sometimes you get labelled, when you are called the cultural school, music school, municipal music school, that you are corny and outdated!
- Teachers 1 and 3: Yes.
- Teacher 5: And I absolutely protest, it is definitely not so! We do our very best, and we have lots of new ideas all the damn time! Otherwise we would not survive. (School 4)

The teachers explicitly portrayed themselves as creative and flexible in the face of obstacles. This self-narration often assumed a defensive form, implying a reaction to some implicit

questioning of their efforts. One possible explanation might be that the framing of the research project partly focused on the teachers' approaches and strategies to counteract social stratification in the *kulturskolor*. Perhaps the teachers felt unfairly accused of not doing enough or wrongly blamed for a problem that should have been dealt with on another level of the organisation.

Opportunities (with impediments)

The teachers also spoke about opportunities through their work to contribute to change and make a difference in the children's lives. Cooperation with compulsory schools was highlighted as an opportunity to disrupt reproduction. Other approaches included offering a wider selection of courses, fostering long-term learning, and providing "social training" for the children. Impediments mentioned were, for example, regulations that restricted opportunities for children to take part in *kulturskola* during the school day.

Cooperation with compulsory schools as an opportunity

The theme of cooperation between *kulturskolor* and compulsory schools was common in the conversations. The teachers seemed to agree that the opportunity for children to take music lessons on their instruments during the school day was something that determined many children's opportunities to participate in *kulturskola* or not. This was constructed as an equity issue:

Teacher 2: But also, if it was the case [if it was allowed] it might be possible to attract those who would not come otherwise. With parents who may not know anything about the *kulturskolor*, who don't have that background. And then mobilize these kids. (School 1)

A cooperation model between *kulturskolor* and compulsory schools was framed as an opportunity for increased access that was jeopardized by counterproductive regulations.

In the excerpt below, a teacher spoke about the effect of teaching a preschool boy in the context of his regular school day and how it influenced the other children's perceptions of and acquaintance with the *kulturskola* teacher and *kulturskola* activities on a more general level:

Teacher 1: It's very interesting because I'm out at a school here ... All parents and everyone are happy that they do not have to go down here [to the center of the town where most *kulturskola* activities are located]. I have a little boy in the preschool class that started and he's so young so I pick him up and we walk across the schoolyard. And in this preschool group... And, you know, the children (*stronger*) they are always around me and [the boy] and go like "Where is [the boy] going and why is he doing that?" (*in children's voice*) "He plays

the violin.” (*own voice*) “Why?” (*child’s voice*) ... and now he has performed on his violin for his friends, he sure has. Then he comes, this little (*shows the height*) and the violin (*showing walking motion*) ... and then I have to return him, and I say “hi” (*waves*). And the thing is that I live in the very same area so the other day when I was out walking, some children jumped on a trampoline and then they stopped and watched me: “I know you! You’re at our school!” (*child’s voice*) ...from preschool then.

(Teacher 5 and moderator, laughter.)

Teacher 2: And that effect is quite brilliant, I think ... in the long run (*gesture forward*) that you are out there and the other children can see. (School 1)

Through vivid accounts of positive encounters with the children the message about playing an instrument as something valuable was conveyed. In the excerpt, a situation was described where the arrangement with the young pre-schooler was forming a situation where playing the violin was seen as a normal activity and the teacher as someone the children engaged with in a positive manner. Implicitly this was thought to encourage other children to imagine themselves learning to play the violin as well – perhaps with the same teacher and at the same place as their friend.

Breadth and variety creating opportunity

The teachers at School 2 expressed that the natural focus of their programme was the children’s interests. When asked whether the choice to offer courses in oriental instruments was a strategy to reach immigrant children, the teachers explained:

Teacher 1: Not for me in any case. THEY choose. That everything is the instruments, they could start with a Western, maybe later a little more oriental, but they are the ones who decide. ...

Teacher 2: And then ... you can only imagine that if you have the conditions and qualities we have and that range [of courses] that we can offer anyway ... we have the resources to offer and do ... reach ... the student whatever they are interested in. (School 2)

Teacher 2 described it as a strength that a wide variety of courses were offered in order to meet the children’s diverse interests. The teachers did not appear to prioritise one genre or instrument over another, but instead seemed to concentrate on the children’s preferences. They rejected my possibly stereotypical assumption that there was a link between offering oriental instruments and recruiting immigrant children. One art form is not privileged over another as cultural capital in Bourdieu’s sense (1996). The quality of the school and the teachers’ competences displayed versatility and cultural *omnivorousness*, as elaborated on by Dyndahl et al. (2014).

Other teachers highlighted, for example, initiatives to translate information about the *kulturskolor* to various languages, and to invite the children to introduction days where they could test different instruments and activities:

Teacher 2: ...it caused discussion in the beginning, but then we decided somehow, recruiting students is not the point, but the only important thing is that people come here and get an experience and play instruments. (School 4)

In the description of the introduction day, the teacher expressed low expectations for recruitment. It was implicit in the description that the children targeted by the introduction day would be difficult to convince to sign up for lessons on a regular basis.

In the description below, the teachers discussed a “Swedish for immigrants” (SFI) sing-along choir, primarily organized for adults studying Swedish. The focus group jointly constructed the choir as a potential arena where parents’ perceptions of the *kulturskolor* could be influenced in a (more) positive way. The idea to distribute a translated information flyer seemed to be born during the focus group conversation itself:

Teacher 5: But that’s really ... it’s amazing! All those people who come here now, they will know, they know this is *kulturskola* kind of ... it’s very ... here you actually reach the parents. (*agreeing sounds*) You don’t know who stays in the city in the long run, but all the same ... no matter where they are, they’ll still have ... maybe some little barrier has disappeared (*showing barrier with hands*) from this “*kulturskola* - what on earth is that?”
[Later in the same conversation]

Teacher 1: We could hand out this ... flyer! (*it seems like a new marketing idea is born*) (School 1)

Even though the choir strategy was not expected to lead to an immediate rise in applications to the *kulturskolor* from immigrant children, it was seen as a potentially successful way to disseminate a positive image of the Swedish *kulturskolor* to immigrant families.

To foster long-term learning

At School 5, Teacher 1 described students’ practice habits and drew an analogy to learning on a general level:

Teacher 1: I consider it a little MISSION because I think it’s good for them in the wider perspective. ... “OK, you’ll benefit from this in maths or English in school, because this is the way to learn things! ... you can’t give up”, like “I CAN’T!” they say. “No, but, no, you don’t

master it today, and not tomorrow but I bet you do in three or four days". ... Yes, like ... you have a phrase or whatever it is ... "Now we do it this way! We divide it. You play from THIS note to THAT note, then you play from THAT note to THAT note." (*Points at imaginary music sheet.*) "But there ain't no melody!" (*Imitating a student in the local accent*) "No, it isn't. But in four days it will be, if you do it this way." (*Own voice*) ... THIS way, I think you make a difference ... for those students. In a WIDER sense too, that's how to learn things. They need to learn how to learn. (School 5)

Such a story can be interpreted as an example of explicit pedagogy. A specific goal was defined by the teacher and conveyed in a clearly articulated way. The teacher used rhetoric that constructed as fact the idea that learning strategies in music are transferable to other subjects, which was also assumed to open up opportunities beneficial to the children more generally.

The focus on retaining students in the programme can be seen as a consequence since *kulturskola* education is voluntary – there is always a risk that students will drop out if they are not satisfied with the programme:

- Teacher 3: It can easily happen, that you praise the student regardless of progress.
- Teacher 4: Exactly.
- Teacher 3: Because you're so grateful they don't quit, sort of! And then they think it's enough. And later they come to the conclusion that, "I am no good compared to other groups" ... And that means, I have FOOLED that student, sort of! (School 5)

The teacher in the excerpt above stressed the risk of deceiving students through encouragement and neglecting to convey more objective or transparent criteria for musical progress on an instrument. The hidden assessment criteria could be interpreted as implicit pedagogy in Bernstein's (2004) sense – being clear about the criteria used to assess students' progress would have been explicit pedagogy.

Social training

The following example from School 3, an El Sistema school, highlighted features of social training in the El Sistema music education programme. El Sistema has been described as an initiative to, by means of orchestra and choir education, change the lives of children in areas where it is "needed the most".¹ Learning how to behave was described as positive and of value for the children in the living area:

1 From the "platform" on El Sistema's Swedish website: <http://www.elsistema.se/om-el-sistema/el-sistema-i-sverige/elsistemasplattform/>

- Teacher 2: I feel that what I'm doing here, for these kids, is very... like, to a large part, social training. You have to learn how to behave, how to do things ... How to...when the teacher is speaking...what to do, what to say, what not to ...
- Moderator: But that's things you practice, you mean ... in El Sistema?
- Teacher 2: Yes, to a large degree! I think a lot of ... the education is all about that, because then we'll have them here and then, suddenly, we're going to play with the Philharmonics!
- Moderator: Uhm...
- Teacher 2: At the concert! And, like, and it's supposed to be ... (*a stiff, big gesture with the hands*) (School 3)

The teacher described how the children were socialised to behave in accordance with values associated with the concert performance together with the Philharmonic orchestra. It is implicit that the norms and behaviour associated with the concert were of high value and worth attaining.

Another implicit assumption in the argumentation was the association between “social training” and learning “how to behave”. Less hierarchical meanings of the word “social”, were not touched upon in the excerpt, as for example social bonding among peers or reciprocal and more equal social connections between teachers and students.

To make a difference

The commitment and work required to make a lasting difference in children's lives was described as difficult due to persistent structures resisting change, but also as deeply meaningful and rewarding. Teacher 2 at School 3 described how the learning experience could shine through as an elevating and great experience for the children, and how this was meaningful for the teachers as well:

- Teacher 2: The thing is, it's so rewarding when you make these kids... when they suddenly get it, you know. “Ding, (*gesture to the head*) it says!” And then it's (*laughing*) it's like a whole ...! It's a lot bigger “thing about getting it” for them, for these kinds of kids, I think. It's such a great experience for them, when they grasp certain things! (*Everybody laughs*) I mean, WOW! (*Stretches arms in triumph*) ... really ... (School 3)

The learning experience for “these kids” – apparently referring to less socioeconomically privileged children in the area – was described as a more significant experience compared to other (perhaps more privileged) children. The vivid description, referring to the teacher's own lived experience is convincing, although it is unclear why the elevating experience of learning would not occur with any group of children. The other teacher and I were

laughing in encouragement, which indicated that we understood the implicit assumptions that made the account understandable. To conceptualise the children in separate categories is something we seemed to recognise and accept in the teacher's description of the situation.

Summary and analysis of the results

The *kulturskola* teachers recounted some opportunities to potentially disrupt reproduction and make a difference in the lives of children. Offering a wide range of courses and subjects was highlighted as positive, as was arranging introduction days without explicit expectations for or demands on the children. A choir targeting SFI-students was considered to be an activity that contributed to making the *kulturskolor* recognizable in the wider community in a proactive and positive way. Offering music lessons to children in cooperation with compulsory schools was also considered to be an opportunity to make *kulturskolor* more accessible to children who would not take part otherwise. The *kulturskola* teachers' presence in the regular compulsory school environment was seen as a means to persuade children to see *kulturskola* as a possible, positive, and "normal" option in their lives. One teacher mentioned the tendency to praise pupils regardless of progress as a strategy to retain children in the programme, but also highlighted the cost of this strategy in terms of misleading the children with regards to their musical achievements. To conceal more objective assessment criteria from the pupils appeared to be a short-term inclusive strategy that turned out to be more of a disservice for the children in the long run.

The active strategy of one teacher to teach practice habits and another teacher's social training strategies are examples that can be interpreted as explicit pedagogy due to their potential to disrupt the habits of a habitus and motivate the formation of a new habitus (Yang, 2014). The children are thereby given a chance to incorporate new cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1994) into their existing habitus.

However, obstacles to disrupting social and cultural reproduction were seen by the teachers as an effect of social stratification in itself, and they faced difficulties in their efforts to challenge these structures. These difficulties were exemplified in the response to a recruitment campaign where the only child that applied was the child of a doctor, while no one living in the less affluent apartment buildings applied. The teachers, in a self-evident way, constructed parental interest as a pre-condition for children's participation in *kulturskola*. They also talked about difficulties getting through to immigrant parents with full and correct information about *kulturskolor*. Other obstacles that the teachers pointed to were compulsory schools lacking a solution-orientation regarding cooperation between the institutions. The teachers also claimed to be flexible and creative in their proposals designed to reach new groups of children. According to the teachers, obstacles found in other levels of the organisation hindered them in their efforts.

The explicitly articulated aspects of the teachers' accounts convey a picture of hard-working teachers trying to disrupt reproduction and make a difference in the lives of

children, although not always successfully. According to the teachers, obstacles were either inevitable or dependent upon factors beyond their control. Some obstacles can be interpreted as associated with the conditions under which the teachers are required to work. The *kulturskola* programmes are voluntary and as a consequence it can be expected and regarded as natural that some children lack the interest to enrol or continue with lessons. Furthermore, it can be seen as reasonable that compulsory schools, directors at different levels, parents, and broader societal structures are all factors contributing to the social stratification of *kulturskolor*. Nevertheless, there are implicit aspects of the teachers' accounts that can be analysed as important starting points for potential openings for the teachers to "work in the gap that lies between the thinkable and the unthinkable knowledge" as Wright and Froehlich suggest (2012, p. 212). Implicit aspects are, per their definition, not articulated openly and represent what is taken for granted. What is taken for granted is, however, contestable, in line with Wright and Froehlich (2012). In order to pinpoint the implicit assumptions in the accounts, I have tried to identify what assumptions are taken for granted – and without which the accounts do not make sense.

One implicit assumption that is taken for granted is that children will practice at home between lessons. This is considered part of the "very special form" of the *kulturskolor*. The possibilities of using learning approaches that do not require home practice were not mentioned. When the teachers discussed the immigrant parents' lack of understanding of the "very special form" of the *kulturskolor*, they did not mention anything that could be done to increase immigrant parents' interest in *kulturskola* activities. In the description of El Sistema's practices, the idea of different learning associated with different categories of children is taken for granted. Some of the teachers' accounts revealed favoured (middle-class?) values that were implicit and not questioned. In accounts about practice habits, great patience was construed as a virtue transferable to learning in general. It was taken for granted that improved maths learning is motivation for learning to play an instrument, as if learning an instrument were not enough in itself. Social training aimed at teaching the children how to behave, for example behaviours appropriate for concerts with the Philharmonic orchestra, implicitly favours behaviours associated with middle-class ideals and high-brow culture. To explore ways to disrupt reproduction in a more radical fashion, each of these implicit assumptions could be examined, reflected on, and possibly questioned.

Conclusion

Opportunities to disrupt reproduction that the teachers in this study talked about are, for example, promoting cooperation with compulsory schools, strategies to reach out to new groups through special initiatives and information, offering a broad range of courses and subjects, teaching practice habits, and social training. These different strategies to influence

underrepresented groups of children to take part in *kulturskolor* can be summarized in two overarching ideas: To try to convince these children of the inherent value of the “very special form” of the Swedish *kulturskolor*; or for the *kulturskolor* to embark upon a process of adaptation to the different expectations of underrepresented sociocultural groups.

The teachers who participated in this study pointed to obstacles stemming from social stratification in society as a whole, which was reflected in the fact that different groups chose to participate in the programmes offered by the *kulturskolor* to varying degrees. Other obstacles were traced to other levels of the *kulturskola*-organisation, compulsory schools, and the influence of parents. In Kleppe’s (2013) study, immigrant children’s lower degree of participation in the Norwegian equivalent to *kulturskolor* was attributed to the schools being a typically Norwegian thing. In a similar vein, the teachers in this study talked about a mismatch between the “special form” of education in the *kulturskolor* and the expectations of children and parents from immigrant backgrounds.

The teachers’ efforts to teach the children instrument practice habits and appropriate behaviours can be interpreted as examples of explicit pedagogy and thereby provide opportunities to change one’s habitus in the way Yang (2014) has advocated. A legitimacy of certain ways to learn and act, and a privilege of one genre of music over another is however, implicit in these strategies. Some research points to the risk of perpetuating western art music as an unquestioned ideal (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Hess, 2015; Philpott & Kubilius, 2015; Regelski, 2014) if practiced without reflection and flexibility. If the music education field is conceived of as an open system (Yang, 2014), and if we recognize omnivorousness – or engagement with different genres – as a form of cultural capital (Dyndahl et al., 2014), it can be seen as justified to include different genres on an equal footing rather than to prioritize one genre over the other.

Although opportunities for effecting change are highlighted in the teachers’ accounts, obstacles are also exposed in the teachers’ explicit reasoning, based on an analysis of the implicit assumptions interwoven in the accounts. How can we understand the teachers’ tendency to refer to limited opportunity to influence the state of affairs and to blame structures and other parties for shortcomings regarding disrupting reproduction in the *kulturskolor*? In Kuuse’s study (2018), the teachers expressed a need to defend their artistic competences and motives in their work based on an experienced threat from expectations to work toward social goals. A similar explanation might be applicable in this study. A conflict of goals can be traced in defence of the traditional *kulturskola* programme when teachers are confronted with perceived expectations to reach new groups of children.

In the theories of Bourdieu and Passeron (1979, 2008) as well as Bernstein (2004), the hierarchy between teachers and students is inevitable – authoritarian as well as softer approaches risk resulting in the exertion of soft violence and the reproduction of inequitable power relations. However, if the reproduction of power relations is the result of implicit and weakly reflected assumptions, the effects of these assumptions might be unintended.

One step towards “work[ing] in the gap” (Wright & Froehlich, 2012, p. 212), as a means to disrupt reproduction, could perhaps be to reflect on implicit assumptions that are taken for granted, which perpetuate existing, or even unrecognized, power relations.

The methodological approach of this study has limitations when it comes to an examination of the concrete effects of teachers' efforts to disrupt reproduction. To investigate the long-term effects, longitudinal and quantitative studies would be necessary. Another suggestion for further research is to explore pedagogy more in detail through observational studies with the potential to come closer to the teaching situations in the *kulturskolor*. Interviews with present or former *kulturskola* pupils could potentially expand upon existing knowledge on the effect of *kulturskola* education on a personal level. However, the findings from this study do shed light on *kulturskola* teachers' underlying implicit assumptions that arguably have a considerable impact on the strategies implemented in the Swedish *kulturskolor*.

About the author

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