

Keen on qualification? A comparative review of Danish and Swedish research literature on leisure-time pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

The basis of this article is an extensive review of research literature on leisure-time pedagogy in Denmark and Sweden. 68 Danish and 71 Swedish publications were included. The aim of this article is two-fold. First, we compare the findings and point out the dominating themes in the literature. Secondly, we want to discuss the themes in a power perspective, reflecting on what they could imply for existing and future leisure-time pedagogy as well as its position in both the scientific and educational field. In the analysis, we demonstrate that both countries have a strong focus on children aged 6–10 in primary school and leisure-time centers. Where Danish research focuses on collaboration between teachers and pedagogues, Swedish research concentrates on the professional identity of leisure-time teachers. Based on theoretical discussions, inspired by Pierre Bourdieu and Gert Biesta, we discuss power structures and prevailing themes in the pool of publications, and finally we conclude that both countries' general research foci can be understood as representations of a qualification domain.

Keywords: *Pierre Bourdieu; Gert Biesta; leisure-time pedagogy; leisure-time teachers; leisure-time pedagogues*

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Introduction

Denmark and Sweden are countries with a strong tradition of leisure-time pedagogy in institutionalized and state-based settings, primarily in leisure-time centers managed by school administrations and often organized in, or rather close to, the school buildings. Prior to establishing leisure-time centers in schools, Denmark had many so-called leisure-homes (Danish: *fritidshjem*), but today most of those have been replaced by leisure-time centers (Danish: *skolefritidsordninger*). In 2019, there were

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71 leisure-homes and 1,851 leisure-time centers in Denmark.¹ In Sweden, there were 4,250 leisure-time centers (Swedish: *fritidshem*) in 2017.² Both countries have higher education institutions that provide education for leisure-time pedagogy. In Denmark, the education is a 3.5 years professional bachelor programme, whereas in Sweden the education is the 3-year-long *Grundlärarprogrammet med inriktning mot arbete i fritidshem*.³

In both countries, these higher education institutions are required to train students based on research knowledge. In Denmark, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science states that students are required to have knowledge about scientific theories and methods in relation to pedagogical practice, and, accordingly, be able to analyze and evaluate the knowledge foundation of pedagogical practice with children and young people aged 6–18. Furthermore, when students write their final bachelor thesis, they have to be familiar with national and international research results in their respective fields of study, and use these results in professional argumentation.⁴ Similar requirements are present in Swedish legislation for the education in leisure-time pedagogy.⁵ The legislation *Högskolelag* from the Swedish Department of Education states that the education must be based on research⁶ and should offer students knowledge about scientific methods and theory as well as competences in searching for and analyzing scientific knowledge.⁷

In many ways, the traditions for leisure-time pedagogy and the educational background for leisure-time pedagogues are comparable across Denmark and Sweden. As researchers in the leisure-time field, we are a part of NERA network number 17 “Leisure Time Pedagogy”.⁸ In this network, we share Nordic research findings on leisure-time pedagogy and, often, we compare findings cross-nationally. Undoubtedly, this knowledge-sharing contributes to a strengthening of the sometimes overlooked research field in Nordic pedagogy. Recently, we conducted a review on existing Danish research literature, concluding that the amount of research on leisure-time

¹ Find the data at: <https://www.statistikbanken.dk/BOERN4>

² Find the data at: <https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/beskrivande-statistik/2018/pm---elever-och-personal-i-fritidshem-lasaret-2017-18>

³ Furthermore, in Sweden it is possible to do a master’s degree after the bachelor, and even a Ph.D. In Denmark, students can pursue a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in a regular university such as The School of Education at Aarhus University. Both the master’s degree and the Ph.D. are not offered at the University Colleges.

⁴ Find the legislation and exact wording (in Danish) here: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=188589>

⁵ The Swedish education is entitled “Grundlärarprogrammet med inriktning mot arbete i fritidshem”. Find the legislation and exact word in Swedish here: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/hogskolelag-19921434_sfs-1992-1434 and https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/hogskoleforordning-1993100_sfs-1993-100

⁶ § 2 and §3, part 1 in *Högskolelag* (1992: 1434).

⁷ § 8, part 1 in *Högskolelag* (1992: 1434) and *Högskoleförordningen* (1993: 100) – Bilaga 2.

⁸ Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA).

pedagogy is fairly small (Ringskou & Gravesen, 2019, 2020). A similar conclusion was made by Swedish researchers (Klerfelt & Haglund, 2014).

The basis of this article is an extensive review of research literature on pedagogues working in the field of leisure-time pedagogy in Denmark and Sweden. With a comparative approach, we aim at illustrating similarities and differences in the production of research literature in the two countries, as well as drawing attention to historically embedded power structures and dominant themes in the research. The research question underlying this article is the following: *What are the dominant themes in existing Danish and Swedish research literature in the field of leisure-time pedagogy, and what does such dominance imply for existing and future leisure-time pedagogy?*

The article is structured as follows: In the next section, we will present our methodology. We will focus on which type of review we conducted, the databases, search strings and inclusion/exclusion criteria as well as the theoretical perspectives, we use in the discussion section. Then, we will present the search results, findings, and comparative analyses, before theoretically reflecting on the results and findings in the discussion section. We close the article with a conclusion, in which we sum up, and point to, an implication for leisure-time pedagogy in Denmark and Sweden.

Methodology

To get an overview of the Danish and Swedish research literature on leisure-time pedagogy, we first conducted a general literature review (Grant & Booth, 2009). The general literature review offers an overview of existing literature in a specific area. When working with the comparative analysis, we were inspired by the critical review (Grant & Booth, 2009). In the critical review, the analytical focus is on themes, discourses, and methods across the collected material. Accordingly, we conducted inductive readings of all selected publications, and categorized each publication based on theme, type of institution, and to what extent the leisure-time pedagogues were the focus of the research projects.

The methodology we apply, is database searches. In the following, we list the databases and search strings as well as our inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The databases

When we conducted the Danish search, we used two databases, respectively *bibliotek.dk* (www.bibliotek.dk), a portal for public libraries, specialized libraries, and academic libraries in Denmark, and *The Danish National Research Database* (www.forskningsdatabasen.dk), registering Danish research publications from 14 Danish universities and research institutions.

For the Swedish search, we used *SwePub* (<http://swepub.kb.se/>), a database that lists articles, conference papers, dissertations, etc. published primarily by Swedish universities. When consulting a research librarian, we discussed other possibilities, eg. *DiVA* and *Libris* (Swedish databases), and *VIVE* and *EVA* (Danish databases).

The recommendation was, however, that relevant research literature would appear with the use of the three chosen databases.

The search strings

In the Danish search we used two search strings:

- 1: (*fritidspædagog** OR *skolepædagog* OR *skolepædagoger* OR *skolepædagogers* OR *skolepædagogen* OR *skolefritidsordning** OR *skolefritidspædagog** OR *klubpædagog** OR *fritidsklub** OR *ungdomsklub** OR *juniorklub** OR *ungdomsskole**)
- 2: (*skolereform** OR *folkeskolereform** OR *helhedsskole** OR *heldagsskole**) AND (*pædagog* OR *pædagoger* OR *pædagogen* OR *pædagogers* OR *pædagogerne* OR *pædagogernes* OR *skolepædagog**)⁹

In the Swedish search, we used the following search strings:

- 1: (*Fritidspedagog** OR *lärare** OR *grundlärare** OR *Fritidslärare** OR *fritidshem** OR "Öppen fritidsverksamhet" OR *fritidsklubbar** OR *fritidsgårdar**)¹⁰
- 2: (*Skolreformer** OR *lärare** OR *grundlärare** OR *Fritidslärare** OR *Fritidspedagog**)

The inclusion and exclusion criteria

In both the Danish and the Swedish searches, we constructed a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria (McKenzie et al., 2021) to ensure that only publications relevant for our research question would be included.

Our inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Publication must have been produced in the period 1980–2019.
- Publication must be a peer-reviewed research article, doctoral dissertation, scientific report or a peer-reviewed book chapter.
- Publication must include the professional category (leisure-time) pedagogue (Danish: *pædagog/skolepædagog/fritidspædagog*, etc. Swedish: *fritidspedagog, grundlärare, fritidslärare*, etc.)
- Publication must be based on research conducted within schools, leisure-time centers or youth clubs, and it must focus on the work of (leisure-time) pedagogues in one way or the other.

Our exclusion criteria were the following:

- Publication is produced in another country than Denmark/Sweden.
- Publication refers to schools and the leisure sphere (schools, leisure-time centers or youth clubs), but focuses on another professional group, e.g. regular teachers.

⁹ We translated/converted the search strings into English and conducted the search in English as well.

¹⁰ In the Swedish search, we also performed the search in English.

Bourdieu and Biesta applied: Theoretical perspectives in the discussion section

In the discussion section, we include theory from French sociologist Peirre Bourdieu and Dutch educational thinker Gert Biesta (Biesta, 2009, 2015; Bourdieu, 2006). With the use of Bourdieu’s concept *scientific capital*, we analyze the historically anchored power structures embedded in the Danish and Swedish research on leisure-time pedagogy. To illuminate the specific themes dominating the literature, we draw on Biesta’s understanding of the three domains of education: qualification, socialization, and subjectification.

The search results

The searches resulted in 68 Danish and 71 Swedish research publications across the following four genres: peer-reviewed research articles, doctoral dissertations, scientific reports, and peer-reviewed book chapters. Naturally, before narrowing down the numbers to the 68 and 71 included publications, we looked through large numbers of hits using our inclusion- and exclusion criteria. This screening was carried out by the two authors of this article. Initially, we screened the abstracts of all the hits, followed by more thorough readings of the selected titles. When going through the screening process, we faced a variety of challenges. For some publications, it was difficult to judge whether it was in fact peer-reviewed material and, in some cases, we contacted the authors/editors for clarifications. In other cases, we rejected publications that might touch on pedagogy related to leisure-time, if the focus was on preschool pedagogy. See figure 1 (below) for the final number of included publications spread across four literature genres.

Country	Literature genre	Peer-reviewed research articles	Doctoral dissertations	Scientific reports	Peer-reviewed book-chapters	Total number of included publications
Denmark		16	5	26	21	68
Sweden		49	14	7	1	71

Figure 1. Included publications from the Danish and Swedish searches

Findings and comparative analysis

Quantitative analysis

In this section, we present the quantitative findings and the comparative analysis of these findings. We will focus on themes and institutional types covered in the included publications. The analysis is based on three basic findings that provide interesting opportunities for comparison: difference in research themes, similarity in institutional types, and difference in research object.

Finding no. 1: Difference in research themes

The majority of the Swedish literature revolve around a theme, we identify as *The professional identity of leisure-time teachers*.¹¹ More precisely, 54.9% of the Swedish publications (39 of 71 publications) examine professional identity, focusing on the different work spheres and tasks of leisure-time teachers. Only 4 of the 71 (5.6%) Swedish publications are related to the cooperation between leisure-time teachers and school teachers. On the contrary, in the Danish research, the majority of the 68 publications (63%) are concerned with the collaboration between school teachers and leisure-time pedagogues. In our analysis of the Danish publications, we did not identify any research related to *the professional identity of leisure-time pedagogues*. Apparently, this is not a relevant theme in Danish research and as such, this shows a distinct difference between the research focus and interest in the two countries. We will return to this difference in the discussion section later in the article.

Finding no. 2: Similarity in institutional types

We looked at the institutional settings and age groups included in Swedish and Danish research projects. 87% of the Swedish publications (62 out of 71 publications) focus on primary school settings and, accordingly, looks at children aged 6–10. In contrast, only 13% of the publications looked at youth clubs and children or young people aged 10–18 (for examples, see Forkby & Kiilakoski, 2014; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). This finding shows a similarity between the Swedish and Danish research literature. In the Danish publications, 66% focus on primary schools and students in grade 0–3, aged 6–10, whereas only 8.8% of the material focus on youth clubs and children aged 10–18.

Finding no. 3: Difference in research object

In nearly 75% (53 of 71 publications) of the Swedish publications, the leisure-time teachers are principal research objects. The case is profoundly different in the Danish research. Only 7% of the Danish publications position the leisure-time pedagogues as central research objects. In contrast, 93% of the material see the leisure-time pedagogue *either* as a (subordinate) partner, who collaborates with regular teachers, *or* as a relatively peripheral figure, who may be present in the research project, but by no means is the “leading actor” in the research questions raised.

Qualitative analysis

In this section, we present a comparative analysis based on the qualitative content in our findings. To demonstrate the differences and similarities between the Swedish and Danish research on leisure-time pedagogy, it is illustrative to look at the focus points and research questions articulated in the included publications. In other words, we

¹¹ In Sweden entitled leisure-time teachers in English and *fritidslärare* in Swedish.

now look behind the numbers presented above, to the content and meaning of the literature.

Finding no. 1: Difference in research themes

When examining the Swedish publications about professional identity, there is a number of different perspectives and themes at stake. Some publications examine the dual-professional identities of leisure-time teachers working both in schools and leisure-time centers (for examples, see Ackesjö et al., 2016, 2018; Falkner & Ludvigsson, 2012; Haglund, 2004; Hjalmarsson & Hultman, 2015), whereas others focus on systematic quality measurement and documentation (see Andersson, 2013; Hjalmarsson, 2019; Holmberg, 2017). Another group of publications focus on the leisure-time teachers' work with play, relationship-building, care, participation, etc. (for examples, see Dahl, 2014; Kane, 2015; Närvänen & Elvstrand, 2015).

In the Danish literature, cooperation between leisure-time teachers and school teachers dominates. Especially the cooperation on curriculum activities is prominent, not least in the scientific reports. A reform of the Danish school system in 2014 led to prolonged school days and a series of new curriculum initiatives. A fair part of the literature examines and evaluates the cooperation on these new initiatives (EVA, 2017; Flarup & Ejersbo, 2016; Højholdt & Sederberg, 2017). Another group of publications focus on the potentials of this cooperation – such as to develop a holistic approach to pedagogy, increase inclusive-learning environments, and offer a more seamless day for children as they move from school to leisure-time center (EVA, 2017; Stanek, 2014). The challenges of cooperation between the two teacher groups is also a theme in Danish publications. Analysis show that some leisure-time teachers feel insecure about their new tasks when it comes to class management, and find it difficult navigating their roles in leisure time and during the school day (dual professional identity) (Andersen et al., 2014; Rasmussen et al., 2016).

Finding no. 2: Similarity in institutional types

When examining the Swedish publications, we see that the majority of research focus on primary school settings and leisure-time centers for children age 6–10 – with analysis of leisure-time teachers' professional identity. As an example, Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl examine care at leisure time centers: “This article aims to explore how leisure-time teachers understand and interpret aspects on care in their tasks and work, and what consequences this might have for the children enrolled” (2014, p. 91). The article focuses on the leisure-time teachers' ethical skills in care-work. The minority of the Swedish publications looking at youth clubs (13%) deal with themes such as citizenship, leisure and gender equality, and youth clubs as health-promoting settings (Fredriksson et al., 2015; Lindström, 2012).

When looking at the Danish publications, we see that the majority of the material similarly looks at children age 6–10. As mentioned, the focus here is on the

cooperation between leisure-time teachers and regular school teachers. Though a relatively large number of publications say they focus on all age groups, most often they focus on the cooperation up to grade 3 (see for instance KORA, 2017). Apart from the prevailing cooperation theme, some Danish publications handle *school start*, both from children's and a pedagogical perspective (Hviid, 2001; Ramböll, 2012; Stanek, 2011). Fewer focus on the pedagogy in youth clubs, examining such themes as quality, the cooperation between youth clubs and schools, and inclusion (EVA, 2013, 2016, 2018; Langager, 2004, 2009; Østergaard, 2015).

Finding no. 3: Difference in research objects

When reading the Swedish publications, as noted earlier, a majority of the literature positions the leisure-time teachers as principal research objects. As an example, the Swedish material covers a high number of publications concerning the leisure-time teachers' own understanding of their professional identity. With the Swedish leisure-time teachers taking the role as the "leading actors" in the research questions raised, most often it is *their* competences and reflections concerning play, learning, care, relations, cooperation, democracy, and aesthetics that are revealed in findings, analyses and conclusions (for examples, see Calander, 1999; Hjalmarsson & Löfdahl, 2014; Lager, 2018; Maare, 2015). Three examples are: In their work, Hjalmarsson & Hultman (2015) declare that their "article focuses on how leisure-time teachers (LrT) in Sweden both confirm and resist the array of new demands related to leisure-time centres". Perselli & Hörnell (2019) declare that they "aim to analyse and describe leisure-time teachers' understanding of the leisure-time centres' public function to complement the school with its activities", and later, that the study is based on answers from a web survey that was sent to all leisure-time centres in Sweden. Dahl (2014) poses the following research question "How do leisure-time teachers work with children's relationships and how do they view such relationships?". While the above mentioned examples illustrate a dominating tendency to focus on the leisure-time teachers as principal research objects, Danish literature differs.

In Danish research, it is common that research questions focus on other agents (often the children) or specific pedagogical themes like well-being, transitions, school start, or the effects of the school reform of 2014. The leisure-time pedagogues are present, but to a limited extent (for examples, see EVA, 2013; Højlund, 2002; Thingstrup & Schmidt, 2016; Winther, 2016). An appropriate example is a research report from The Danish Center for Social Science Research (VIVE) that examines the experiences of the school teachers and leisure-time pedagogues in relation to the prolonged school day—a consequence of the school reform of 2014 (Jacobsen et al., 2017). Although the title of the report, *School teachers' and leisure-time pedagogues' experiences with a longer and more varied school day three years into the school reform*, indicates an equally divided research interest between the school teachers and leisure-time pedagogues, a closer reading of the report reveals that the perspectives and

understandings of the leisure-time pedagogues are only present in the last of eight chapters. We interpret this as an illustration of the focus on the formal school day and the teachers, rather than the leisure-time pedagogues and their priorities.

Discussion

In this section, we bring our findings and analytical comparisons into a theoretical discussion, based on notions from French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and Dutch educational thinker Gert Biesta. In the discussion, we focus on leisure-time pedagogy as a specific scientific field. With inspiration from Bourdieu, we analyze research activities on leisure-time pedagogy in Denmark and Sweden and look at how these are historically anchored and embedded in power structures. Biesta's view of the three areas of education: qualification, socialization and subjectification will help us to highlight the results. We will use these three domains to explore the agendas behind the dominating themes in the two countries' research activities.

In his book *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2006), Bourdieu reflects on the power structures in research. He notes that "to exist scientifically is to have a 'plus' in terms of the categories of perception prevailing within the field" (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 55). The core of Bourdieu's understanding is that research activities are historically anchored in a specific field, coming to life through *distinctive contributions* recognized by peers and competitors. Within the limits of the specific field of research, such recognition of scientific capital functions as symbolic capital. The scrutiny of specific themes, similarities and differences in the pool of Danish and Swedish publications included in this review project gave us an understanding of the prevailing categories of perception within the two countries' research fields. When we looked at the themes of research, we could identify a distinct difference of focus. In Sweden, a majority of research is about professional identity of leisure-time teachers, whereas in Denmark, the prevailing theme is the collaboration between pedagogues and teachers. Bourdieu emphasizes that scientific power relations are set up and exerted through cognitive and communicative relations (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 55). This means that the balance of power and distribution of scientific and symbolic capital among researchers is based on what is previously known and discussed in a specific scientific field. Accordingly, Bourdieu also notes that "the scientific field gives credit to those who already have it" (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 56). Inherent in these statements is a historical logic that might explain why Swedish research insists on focusing on the professional identity of leisure-time teachers, whereas Danish publications almost solely focus on collaboration. To put it simply: These are the prevailing themes that researchers in the two countries have been in the habit of exploring—and successfully have been able to fund. Accordingly, it seems obvious that the historic tradition for research on leisure-time pedagogues and their specific professional identity is far stronger in Sweden than is the case in Denmark. As illustrated earlier, in Sweden almost 75% of all publications position the leisure-time teachers as principal research objects. This is only the case

in 7% of the Danish publications. It is also worth noting that Swedish publications have been published relatively evenly throughout the last three decades, although a majority of the peer-reviewed articles were published in the last decade. In Denmark, roughly said, it took a school reform in 2014 dictating collaboration between pedagogues and teachers, to wake the scientific interest in leisure-time pedagogues and their position and situation.

Although these historic aspects express significant differences between the scientific traditions in the two countries, there is a distinct similarity too. In both countries, research on leisure-time pedagogy in the area of older children and young people in youth clubs, is somewhat of an exception. In both countries, a great majority of the research look at pedagogues working with younger children in leisure-time centers and primary school environments. This similarity, however, might even be a bit of a stretch. In Danish youth clubs, professional pedagogues constitute the primary workforce, whereas in Sweden, many other professional groups handle such pedagogical tasks. This could explain the lack of research on pedagogues working in youth clubs in Sweden, whereas in Denmark, we believe it illustrates the general lack of historical interest in research on pedagogues working with leisure-time pedagogy.

Although we can see the differences and the (somewhat stretched) similarities when we compare the Swedish and the Danish publications, we cannot fully explain why this is so. We do not know enough about why the prevailing themes are recognized as scientific capital, and why and how researchers choose their focus. Answering these questions would require other data on institutions, faculties, and research environments, and how these were established, maintained, and funded in the two countries. Such questions are beyond the scope of this review.

What we *can* do, is look closer at the thematic content of the research publications included in our review. When doing so, we find it useful to involve Biesta's notion of the three domains of education: qualification, socialization, and subjectification (Biesta, 2009, 2015). While qualification regards students' academic knowledge, skills, and development, socialization has to do with (the passing on of) social and cultural values. Lastly, subjectification is related to individual and emancipatory aspects of students' lives. Accordingly, Biesta emphasizes that all three domains are present in education, but depending on context and era, specific domains might dominate, causing tension in an educational field. According to Biesta, in present-day pedagogy, the qualification domain reigns:

A one-sided emphasis can often have a damaging impact on one or more of the other domains [...]. This is what we are witnessing with the current emphasis on achievement in the domain of qualification where excessive pressure on students (and teachers, for that matter) to perform in that domain (and within that domain in a very small number of subjects) is beginning to have a negative impact in the domain of subjectification. To put it bluntly: excessive emphasis on academic achievement causes severe stress for young people, particularly in cultures where failure is not really an option. (Biesta, 2015, p. 78)

The question following this rationale, is: Across the bulk of research publications from the two countries, does a certain theme prevail? And if so, which of the three domains does it relate to?

In the Danish publications, thematic focus revolves around the collaboration between leisure-time pedagogues and teachers in primary school setting. This interest relates to the question of learning, as the overall theme in those publications is about ensuring that pedagogues and teachers collaborate in the most fruitful and effective way during students' hours in school.

Historically, leisure-time pedagogues spent most of their working hours in after-school activities at the leisure-time centers. With the reform of 2014 in Denmark, formal school hours increased, after-school activity hours dropped, and leisure-time pedagogues were required to focus on the school environment for the majority of their working hours (Gravesen & Ringskou, 2016, 2017). This shifting focus of the pedagogues is represented in the research, but as we have seen, not as an exclusive interest in the pedagogues' actions, activities, and beliefs. As revealed earlier, only 7% of the Danish research publications positioned the pedagogues in the center of the research questions, which indicates a lack of interest in the specific skills of pedagogues—be they practical, theoretical, or moral. With Biesta in mind, it seems plausible to say that the underlying reason for the overpowering interest in the leisure-time pedagogues' collaboration with teachers is based on qualification being the dominant domain in contemporary leisure-time pedagogy in Denmark.

As demonstrated earlier, when going through the Swedish publications, we found that almost 75% of the publications positioned leisure-time teachers in the center of research questions, while 55% of the publications examine the professional identity of the leisure-time teachers. This indicates a distinct difference between the two countries' research traditions in this field. When first categorized, and held up against the Danish data, we thought the Swedish interest in the professional identity of the leisure-time teachers illustrated a more profound interest in (what could be framed as) traditional leisure-time pedagogical values, such as democracy, general well-being, free play and child-centered pedagogy (Ankerstjerne, 2010; Dupont et al., 2019; Højholdt et al., 2014). To some extent, this was the case. More than a few of the Swedish publications looked at subjectification and socialization in Biesta's triad of domains. One example is Hjalmeresson & Löfdahl (2014), who look at aspects of care in leisure-time pedagogy, another is Dahl (2014), who explores understandings of leisure-time teachers' work with children's relationships (for other examples, see Berg et al., 2011; Dahl, 2014; Hjalmarsson, 2013; Hjalmarsson & Löfdahl, 2014; Holmberg, 2017; Kane, 2015; Närvänen & Elvstrand, 2015).

However, when we scrutinized the research questions in the Swedish materials, we found to our surprise that a majority of the publications categorized under our headline *The professional identity of the leisure-time teachers*, included questions of learning and formal school-like activities. Despite pointing to socialization and subjectification, many publications ask research questions and form analysis in ways that

point to the qualification domain. Many researchers focus on integration processes between the leisure-time teachers' traditional activities and new tasks in schools. Prevailing themes are the new roles of leisure-time teachers, assessment procedures, systematic quality work, and state-governing of leisure-time pedagogy (for examples, see Andersson, 2013; Calander, 1999; Falkner & Ludvigsson, 2012; Haglund, 2004; Hjalmarsson, 2019; Hjalmarsson & Hultman, 2015; Holmberg, 2017; Lager, 2015; Rohlin, 2001).

This illustrates that although the Swedish research interest in leisure-time teachers is indeed more pronounced than in Denmark, the actual research might not be that different in the two countries. In both, it seems fair to categorize the majority of research in the qualification domain, and Biesta's notion that such dominance can cause tension in a field makes us wonder about the other two domains. Are they not as important? For the students' personal and academic development? For the work of leisure-time pedagogues? And for the children and young people subjected to contemporary leisure-time pedagogy? Biesta's essential understanding is that modern-day education has become too fixated on the qualification domain. Perhaps this is the case with leisure-time pedagogy, too?

Conclusion

In this article, we have presented the results of a review of Danish and Swedish research literature on leisure-time pedagogy. Based on database searches with fixed inclusion and exclusion criteria, we included 68 Danish and 71 Swedish publications in the review. Our findings and comparisons demonstrate that both countries have a strong focus on children age 6–10, who attend primary schools and related leisure-time centers. The central theme in the Danish material is collaboration between regular school teachers and leisure-time pedagogues, whereas the dominant theme in the Swedish research is *The professional identity of the leisure-time teachers*. This reveals a significant difference. The positioning of the leisure-time pedagogues in the research is also striking: In Denmark, only 7% of the publications position the leisure-time pedagogues as central research objects. In contrast, nearly 75% of all Swedish publications place leisure-time teachers centrally.

In the discussion, we looked to Pierre Bourdieu and Gert Biesta to get a deeper understanding of our findings. According to Bourdieu, power relations in research are historically anchored, and credit is given "to those who already have it". Historically, as demonstrated throughout this article, Sweden holds a strong tradition for research on leisure-time pedagogy and for spotlighting leisure-time teachers. In Denmark, research interest in this group was sparked by a school reform in 2014 that dictated a closer collaboration between teachers and pedagogues. Before that, hardly any research had been conducted. That finding marks an important difference in what is recognized as scientific capital in the two countries' spheres of leisure-time pedagogy.

With Biesta in mind, we have discussed both countries' general research foci as representations of the qualification domain, although some (namely Swedish) publications also relate to aspects of subjectification and socialization. With this in mind, we ask if Danish and Swedish (research on) leisure-time pedagogy is—or has become—too keen on the qualification domain. With this article, we hope to contribute to the continuing discussion of such important questions, and we look forward to see which themes, research on leisure-time pedagogy in Denmark and Sweden will look at in future studies.

Author biographies

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