

3 Peasant amongst peasants

The role of the Scandinavian teacher as farmer in the nineteenth century

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Introduction

During the nineteenth century, school reforms in the Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Sweden and (to some degree) Norway – created a uniform financial foundation for schools and teachers, where the teacher effectively became a farmer, similar to other farmers in the village. This tied rural teachers to their communities and deeply affected their living conditions throughout the nineteenth century. Like teachers in other European countries (Maynes, 1979; Granier and Marquis, 1982; Day, 1983; Brühweiler, 2012; Young, 2016), Scandinavian teachers were given a plot of land as part of their salary, together with payment-in-kind and monetary reimbursement. This mixed mode of payment was a widely used form of remuneration in a society characterised by a natural economy, in which cash payments did not occur frequently. It also reduced monetary expenditures on schooling, enabling school boards to adjust their financial outflows to suit local conditions and the local economy (Westberg, 2015, p. 30). Swedish teachers received 68% of their wages in kind in 1842 (Westberg, 2018, p. 24), and in Denmark, 53% of a teacher's salary was paid in kind (DNA, Danske Kancelli, 1. Departement, 1789–1857). However, in Norway, in 1870, only 22% was in kind (Departementet for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsenet, 1877, p.VI).

In 1821, the Danish teacher Niels Jensen (1792–1833) received two awards from the Royal Danish Society for the Improvement of Agriculture for being a pedagogical pioneer in agricultural areas and using the school plot as an exemplary farm (DNA, Erhvervsarkivet, Arkivskabte Hjælpemidler, 1770–1968). Niels Jensen was a typical example of the eighteenth-century European 'people's teacher' (*Volkslehrer*) (Siegert, 1999, p. 62; Schreiber, 2015, p. 168) or – in the words of one nineteenth-century French teacher – 'the ideal rustic man, more educated, cultured, and elevated than the others, a living model for the younger generation, teaching them to love agriculture' (Day, 1983, p. 45). Teachers have played a prominent role in educational history; however, scholarship has generally focused on their pedagogical contributions, reflecting our present understanding of a teacher as having only one occupation, located *inside* the classroom (Westberg, 2019). In this chapter, I will analyse the role of teachers *outside* the classroom as 'people's teachers' – that is, as educated persons conveying knowledge for the common good in order to impact the opinions and conditions of the general public (Siegert, 1999, p. 62). By examining the social

roles given to rural teachers as farmers and agricultural role models during the long nineteenth century, this chapter aims to contribute to our understanding of Scandinavian teachers' sociocultural history by focusing on their occupational and social roles. In so doing, this chapter will address the role of the multiple occupations given to rural teachers by legislators and reformers and – to a large degree – accepted by teachers. The chapter will thus highlight the cultural history of teachers: the shared values, common ideals and roles of teachers, and how they fulfilled their roles in local communities as educators and role models. Were they, in the words of the two Finnish researchers Anttila and Väänänen (2013, p. 185), 'cosmopolitan' teachers following national trends and working as teachers of the people? Or were they 'locals', cultivating their land in a traditional way and not engaging with the dissemination of knowledge? Many of the teachers acting as role models were educated at the teacher training institutions (*lærerseminarium*) that arose during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century. Thus, this chapter contributes to the history of the early professionalisation of teachers and the recruiting pattern outlined by these institutions.

This chapter is structured according to the conceptualisation of space posited by three Swedish historians, Larsson, Norlin and Rönnlund, in their study of the history of the schoolyard. They were inspired by Henri Lefebvre's theories on the production of social space, where space is understood as an integration of physical, planned and social dimensions (Larsson, Norlin and Rönnlund, 2017, pp. 13–17). In the same way, one can divide the allotted farm and, in particular, the school plot into these three spatial dimensions. I will deal first with the planned dimension or representations of space by analysing the pedagogical ideas of the Enlightenment about teachers as ideal farmers. I will then consider how the planned dimension had to be transformed into a social dimension (the representational space) when teachers proceeded to, for example, introduce new types of ploughs or crops. The social dimension depended on the physical dimension, that is, the space itself. If the soil was poor or was far away from the school, this could have an impact on the social dimension. In this way, the school plot became an integration of all three dimensions. I will pay attention to Denmark, Norway and Sweden, which shared similar conditions, but will focus particularly on Danish conditions, as the farming teacher's function as a role model was more pronounced there than in Norway or Sweden.

The chapter uses a source pluralism method (Myrdal, 2012). As the Scandinavian archives do not contain specific archives or archival series on teachers as farmers or on school plots, the chapter builds on a wide range of sources, especially for the Danish materials: case files from the Ministry of Education, contemporary pedagogical debates and statistics, the archives of the Royal Society for the Improvement of Agriculture, etc.

The planned dimension

Although rural teachers in the Scandinavian countries were farmers during the long nineteenth century, the planned dimension, that is, the school plot as a pedagogical and agricultural concept, was quite different as the school acts of the three countries emerged in different periods.

In eighteenth-century Denmark, most farms were owned by private landlords. Amongst these, the leading families set new agendas and standards for estate schools with the ambition of creating a new, better-educated rural community. These landowners were inspired by German Cameralism, which prioritised agriculture as the country's primary profession and strongly emphasised the economic and moral value of labour. Peasants would be motivated to introduce new tools, crops and cultivation methods, thus increasing production and revenue. However, if the peasants were to fulfil this new role, they had to be provided with better schooling and enlightenment, which would set the farmers free and make them citizens of the state. Thus, the pedagogical ideas of the Enlightenment and agricultural reforms were closely connected (Larsen, Nørr and Sonne, 2013, pp. 69–79; Markussen, 2017, pp. 126–128). For schools to fulfil this new role in rural communities, there was a need for a new type of teacher who could teach subjects vital for reforms, which were of direct utility to the peasantry and their children (Larsen, 1914, p. 10). This new teacher was to be a 'bridge builder' between the new agricultural science (the Royal Society, professors and landlords) and the peasants of the new era. As a 'people's teacher', he would transform traditionalist peasants into modern, capital-producing and entrepreneurial farmers (Henningesen, 2006, pp. 118–119, 220–221). Thus, the Western eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century teacher's role was to teach the children as well as their parents, as part of the Enlightenment ideal of popularising science – what American historian Daniel R. Headrick termed 'to make information available to the greatest number of people' (Headrick, 2000, p. 15). F.G. Resewitz, a pastor at the German church in Copenhagen, wrote that the sciences of agriculture and gardening should be made mandatory, in order to supersede peasants' existing ways of farming. Through his teaching and practical exercises, the teacher would demonstrate to the children new, 'modern' ways of farming: 'So will they see with their own eyes whether the old sloppiness or the new method brings the most benefit' (Resewitz, 1773, p. 61). The government also promoted the royal forest inspector Esaias Fleischer's *Agricultural Catechism* to teachers. In this, Fleischer stated that a garden had a pedagogical function in educating the rural population. A well-managed garden was a 'sign of a diligent farmer and farmer's wife' whereas a garden overgrown with weeds was a sign of 'lazy people' (Fleischer, 1780, p. 195).

Under the 1814 Rural School Act, Danish parish commissions were to ensure that in addition to paying salaries in the form of grain, cash, housing and fuel, they provided teachers with a piece of land big enough to feed two cows and six sheep, thereby lowering their financial expenditures. Danish pastors, clerks and judges received similar forms of remuneration. Teachers were also to be given a space for an agricultural 'showroom'. Even though there was no mention of agricultural science in the 1814 Act, agriculture remained a mandatory subject in teacher training programmes until 1824, when teacher training institutions were reduced (Larsen, 1914, pp. 87, 164, 347, 412, 428–431; Larsen, 2005, pp. 133–139). Thereafter, even though agriculture was no longer a mandatory subject, most pupils at Danish training institutions were recruited from rural areas, as the 1818 Teacher Training Act gave precedence to sons of farmers and teachers (Larsen, 1914, p. 591; Larsen, 2005, p. 143). Teachers at rural schools were thus, for the greater part of the nineteenth century, tightly connected to an agrarian society.

In Sweden, the number and range of farms allotted to teachers increased in the early decades of the nineteenth century and became more numerous after the Swedish Elementary School Act of 1842 (Westberg, 2015, p. 26). In contrast to Denmark, where farming teachers were connected to agrarian reform, the Swedish Act emerged from Liberals' hopes of a more extensive popular education: from their point of view, a primary school system was a mechanism to create virtuous citizens. However, the Act can also be understood in the context of social and political conditions. Mass education was seen as a way of controlling and disciplining a growing underclass of landless agricultural workers, tenant farmers and squatters (Westberg, 2019, pp. 198–201). The Act required Swedish parishes to organise school districts, and each school district to establish at least one school. In addition to remuneration in the form of grain and cash, teachers would be provided with housing, fuel and grass for a cow. The Act also recommended that school districts make a plot available to teachers to supplement their teaching income and provide extra scope for educating schoolchildren in the arts of forestry and gardening, like in Denmark. Besides being farmers themselves, teachers were thus also cast, to some degree, as agricultural role models (Westberg, 2015, p. 27).

For Norwegian rural teachers, the School Act of 1827 stipulated one permanent school in every parish as a supplement to an existing system of ambulatory teachers. The church singer and (ambulatory) schoolteacher was to have the old parish clerk's farm; other teachers were to have their salaries fixed according to local conditions (Lov, 1827, §§2–4). Despite ambulatory schooling, many children were still illiterate, and there was a progressive wish to strengthen the education system and establish common institutions. For those with more conservative leanings, school reform was seen as a tool to prevent social unrest and the growth of sectarian congregations (Mydland, 2011). In response to a reform proposal submitted by the prominent pedagogue Hartvig Nissen, the government proposed that every school should have a piece of land to improve the teachers' conditions by increasing their wages, and thereby promote the development of public elementary schooling (Kongeriget, 1859–1860, proposition 10, p. 3). The School Acts of 1860 stipulated that each parish should give at least one teacher a family residence with a plot of land big enough for two cows to graze on and for a garden to be established (Mejlænder, 1885, pp. 830, 833; Norsk, 1889, pp. 136–137). However, there was no mention of agricultural education for Norwegian teachers; agriculture did not have the vital importance as in Denmark, or the same pedagogical meaning as in Sweden and Denmark.

In all Scandinavian countries, therefore, the school plot was a substantial part of most teachers' incomes. In two of the countries, the school plot also had a role in agricultural teaching, and in Denmark, in particular, the teacher was encouraged to use the plot as a model farm. In practice, however, the implementation of these ideas depended on the physical dimensions of the plot.

The necessary land for two cows and six sheep

As the concept of teachers as farmers and role models was transformed into everyday practice, the size of the plot was important as it could either limit or create

possibilities for fulfilling the aims of the planned dimension (Westberg, 2015, p. 29; Larsen, 2018, p. 15). The location of the plot was also important.

In Denmark, legislation stipulated that all teachers were entitled to a share of the village fields and should be given ‘the necessary land plot as close to the school as possible to allow two cows and six sheep to graze’ (Larsen, 1914, p. 430). The school plot was usually adjacent to the school building or close by. However, as the negotiations on the allocated plot differed from village to village, so, too, did the location (Larsen, 2018, pp. 15–18). If it was located on the outskirts of the village fields, greater effort was required to clear the land for cultivation, as the outermost land was often the least cultivated (Porsmose, 2008, p. 133).

The government did not prescribe to school commissions specific plot sizes, which were to be decided locally, as the quality of the soil differed from region to region (Skibsted, 1866, p. 143). Although no specific size was prescribed, there was, amongst local school boards, a general perception that a school lot should be about 6 acres of medium-quality land (Schwartzkopf, 1859, pp. 208–210). In Denmark, the smallest lots were found on the islands of Zealand and Funen, and in East Jutland, where fertile clay soil dominated. Large school plots were prevalent in North Jutland and West Jutland, where the heath spread into sandy areas (DNA, Danske Kancelli, 1. Departement, 1789–1857). In both cases, the school plot was comparable to the plots of the local farmers, making the teacher a smallholder amongst other smallholders.

Compared to Denmark, the Swedish school plots were small. The 1842 School Act did not contain precise stipulations about the allotted farms, except that the school was to be placed near the churchwarden and should have a piece of land if possible, according to local conditions (Westberg, 2014, p. 174). In the Sundsvall area of central Sweden, the average size of a school plot was 4.6 acres (2.3 ha) – distinctly smaller than farmers’ homesteads and comparable to a smallholder’s plot or to parish clerks’ allotted farms (Westberg, 2015, pp. 27–28). However, as noted by Swedish historian Johannes Westberg, school plots were not supposed to be the main source of income (2015, p. 28). As in Denmark, the location, nature and quality of the farmland allotted to schools varied, from a plot near the school or a piece of lowland pasture, to a plot some distance away or a stony piece of land or wet meadows (*ibid.*, pp. 29–30). The allotted farms in Sundsvall were either created using ‘glebe land’, an area of land used to support the parish pastor, or they were bought for or donated to the school district (*ibid.*, p. 28).

In Norway, parishes were also responsible for giving teachers and their families, a place of residence and for allotting farms. As in other parts of Scandinavia, there were no central rules about the size and location of farms, except that the plot should be big enough for at least two cows and a garden (Mejlænder, 1885, pp. 830, 833; Norsk, 1889, pp. 136–137). In order to fulfil the provisions of the 1860 School Act, Norwegian parishes spent 5.3 million *Speciedaler* (specie-dollars, the Norwegian currency of the time) on primary schooling in the period 1861–1875. Of this amount, 2.5% was spent on buying school plots and 18% on building, renting and maintaining schoolhouses (Departementet for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsenet, 1877, Table II). However, by 1875, only three out of ten teachers had a lot of the stipulated size. The rest had only a small plot or none at all (Departementet for

Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsenet, 1877, pp. 4–5). The size of school plots varied and was usually between 1.8 and 2.7 acres. Even by the beginning of the twentieth century, the situation had not changed, and nearly half of all teachers did not have a plot (Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet, 1904, pp. 6–7).

In practice, in all three countries, the different physical conditions of school plots in different parts of the country provided disparate bases for implementing government visions for teachers.

The teacher as agricultural role model

Governmental visions of industrious teachers had to be transformed into social practice by the teachers themselves. Teachers were responsible for transforming the planned dimension into social endeavours and, not least, to gain the requisite skills if these were not acquired at teacher training institutions. The philanthropic enthusiasm for education in horticulture and related fields was not necessarily shared by all teachers, some of whom saw it as a ‘voluntary’ extension of their duties, one which gave them even more work (Kohlstedt, 2008, p. 81). In 1828, a Danish county official complained that ‘those new clerks and teachers who have learned gardening should willingly use the opportunity to do so, which has not happened’ (Brinck-Seidelin, 1828, p. 260).

Cultivating the plots was a lot of work: it involved caring for animals; ploughing, sowing and fertilising in the spring, and harvesting in the autumn; taking care of the garden according to the seasons of the year; and maintaining outbuildings (Westberg, 2015, p. 39). The teacher was solely responsible for the cultivation of the plot. Requests from Danish teachers that school district residents help them cultivate the land were rejected by the government which feared that this would impose a further burden on taxpayers and fuel resentment against schools (Larsen, 1914, pp. 402–404, 12). However, teachers’ limited teaching obligations were beneficial for the cultivation of the plots. In 1857, Danish children attended school for 220–259 days a year (Det Statistiske Bureau, 1859, p. 91); children in Sweden attended for 60 days in 1842 (Westberg, 2015, p. 38); and in Norway, the figure was 54–72 days a year (Lov, 1860, §6). These short school years enabled teachers’ livelihoods to be diversified and, amongst other things, gave them the time and opportunity to tend their school plots and gardens, and carry out other tasks entrusted to them, such as singing in church, playing the organ, keeping church records, making official reports and fulfilling other duties for the school board and parish council (Grinder-Hansen, 2013, p. 119).

Household members helped with the agricultural work and gardening. Some gardening could be left to wives, while older children could help with such things as tending to the animals. For many teachers, it was also necessary to have domestics who could help both inside the home and outside. The Danish census of 1850 shows that almost all teachers had a maid, and some also had a male servant (DNA, Danmarks Statistik: Folketællingen, 1850), which was also the case in Sweden (Westberg, 2015, p. 39). A typical schoolteacher’s household, therefore, consisted of the teacher, his wife and children, as well as a maid, and everyone was part of the working community necessary to obtain a yield from the school garden and plot.

A Danish teacher was able to grow the crops he found most suitable for the school plot in terms of providing his family with basic necessities and feeding his animals. When selecting crops, the teacher would probably have followed the majority of farmers, with oats, barley and rye (in this order) being the most common cereal varieties cultivated in Denmark (Bjørn, 1988, p. 40). Legumes such as peas, vetches and beans were grown from the first part of the nineteenth century in Denmark, and clover cultivation also became more prevalent, together with potatoes, rapeseed and flax. This was partly due to much agitation for the cultivation of these new crops by the Royal Society for the Improvement of Agriculture, which urged farmers to grow potatoes to help improve the soil and as a hedge against bad harvests, as potatoes could be eaten if the grain yield was not good. Danish pastors, teachers and landlords therefore tried (from the mid-1700s to the late 1800s) to make peasants grow potatoes, but faced reluctance at adopting a new and untested crop when grain was felt to be a safe choice (Ax, 2008, pp. 55–56, 64–65). In Sweden and Norway, pastors tried to promote the cultivation of potatoes – in Norway, this earned them the nickname of ‘potato priests’ (*potetprest*) (Brandt, 1973; Bodensten, 2020) – and the same occurred in Germany (Siegert, 1999, p. 68). Many teachers in rural Denmark cultivated potatoes or cabbages. According to a report from 1837, one teacher in a small rural school had grown tobacco for several years and annually produced 150–250 kg, which he sold to the neighbourhood farmers, thereby supplementing his income. He was also the first in the parish to grow potatoes, hay and hops (Dalgas, 1992, p. 254).

Cultivating the soil required tools, notably a plough. The wheel plough had been the most widely used plough type in Denmark from the 1100s onwards, since its wooden body and iron blade could be manufactured with the help of the village blacksmith. The Royal Society, on the other hand, agitated for the so-called English swing plough, a shorter and more compact tool. Although more efficient and durable, it was also significantly more expensive because it was made entirely of iron. From 1818 and onwards, the Society provided financial support for things it wanted to promote, including better cultivation tools (Degn, 1968, p. 230), and 18 teachers were awarded prizes for propagation using the swing plough.

In Denmark, reformers also placed great emphasis on the role of teachers as gardening pioneers, which is why gardening was included in teacher education and in schools on reform-friendly estates. The Royal Society awarded prizes to teachers who promoted gardening (Degn, 1968, pp. 213, 244). However, a garden is somewhat changeable, influenced by changing owners and their interest in horticulture, and the amount of time they have available for tending land (Jørgensen, 1986, p. 50). For school gardens, this meant that cultivation depended on teachers’ knowledge, abilities and level of interest and (not least) the time when the school soil was to be cultivated and the children to be taught.

What social practices did Danish teachers engage in, and did they live up to the expectations of reformers? Did they engage with teaching peasants’ children as well as preaching the gospel of agricultural reform, thus continuing the Lutheran tradition of ministers being both spiritual and worldly shepherds of the local community (cf. Chapter 2)? In many places, much attention was given to cultivating fruit trees, in which the government had shown early interest, and some teachers

created an area for fruit in the school garden. In several places, there were 'tree schools' or nurseries, where trees and shrubs were cultivated by teachers, which the local farmers could collect free of charge. Hops had been ubiquitous in peasant gardens for centuries and were added to home-brewed beer as a preservative and to improve the flavour (Skougaard, Hansen and Rasmussen, 1984, pp. 29–31). Some teachers also produced honey, an indispensable sweetener for their own households, and any excess could be sold (*ibid.*, pp. 19–20, 31). Several teacher training institutions offered beekeeping lessons, and in 1811, bees and hives were procured for each institution at the expense of the state. However, beekeeping disappeared from teacher training institutions during the economic crisis of the 1810s and 1820s (Larsen, 1893, pp. 224–228).

As mentioned earlier, Danish teachers were intended, like pastors, to build a bridge between the emerging science of agriculture and traditional farming methods, passing on elements from the national land reforms to peasants' everyday practice (Henningsen, 2006, p. 435). The Royal Society rewarded industrious farmers and officials for being local pioneers. The prizes were intended to inspire other peasants, and pastors were sent lists of prize winners to read out at church services (Degn, 1968, pp. 192–201). During the period 1770–1832, when the largest number of awards were given out, 313 prizes were awarded to 255 deans and schoolteachers, with some recognised repeatedly (*ibid.*, p. 227). Although teachers only accounted for 4% of all prize winners, their importance, along with that of the pastors, was greater than the numbers suggest. These individuals often acted as encouragers, initiators and role models (*ibid.*, p. 228).

Amongst the winners were both older schoolteachers without formal education and new seminary-trained teachers. New teachers were only able to replace older teachers when the latter died or retired, and it took some decades after the introduction of the seminary system before all schools had an educated teacher (Larsen, Nørr and Sonne, 2013, p. 306). Consequently, seven out of ten prizes were awarded to older teachers who had not attended a teacher training institution but who wanted to make an effort in their local area. This was the case, for example, with Jens Nielsen (1761–1848), who was a schoolteacher in the small village of Lystrup for over 40 years until he retired in the early 1840s (then in his late 70s) and was replaced by his stepson. He was awarded a prize in 1798 for planting a garden and establishing a fruit tree plantation – then again in 1799 and 1804 for teaching children to write and calculate. His last prize came in 1806, when he was rewarded for summer barn feeding of cattle (DNA, Erhvervsarkivet, Arkivskabte Hjælpebidler, 1770–1968). The vast majority of prizes for schoolteachers were in the category of education during the 1780s and 1790s, when qualifications for peasants were the subject of debate and reform efforts (106 awards). Horticulture was another commonly recognised topic, with 57 awards given to teachers, while 25 awards were given for beekeeping.

Prize-giving started to peter out in Denmark during the 1830s, but some teachers still received prizes up to the end of the nineteenth century. This decline was, *inter alia*, due to the general fall in prize-giving, but also because other types of professionals were emerging within modern agricultural science. During the 1840s and 1850s, the Royal Society encouraged landowners and farmers with large

holdings to form local societies where they could meet and discuss agricultural issues. In addition, a profession of agricultural science emerged with, amongst other things, agricultural schools from 1837 and an agricultural university from 1858 (Bjørn, 1988, pp. 166–170, 175–179). Teachers and pastors were no longer identified as local agricultural pioneers. Although the role of teachers became minor, the ‘people’s teacher’ continued engaging in other activities for the benefit of parish residents: teaching evening schools, acting as an accountant for the local dairy and serving as a member of the parish council and nationwide in teaching associations and national politics (Grinder-Hansen, 2013, pp. 125–126).

Conclusion

In 1846, a Danish publisher said of the school plot, ‘such a wonderful recreation for the rural schoolteacher (...) [I]t is able to maintain the teacher’s interest for this equally enjoyable, profitable, rentable work’ (Hanssen and Jørgensen, 1846, pp. VIII–IX). During the second half of the nineteenth century, however, less importance was attached to the allocation of teachers’ farms, and the arrangement became marginalised in both Denmark and Sweden (Westberg, 2015, p. 42).

With the Danish School Act of 1899, payment-in-kind changed to monetary salaries for teachers and, upon agreement between the parish council and teachers, school plots could be sold (Lov, 1899, §26). During the following decade, 55% of plots were sold and 30% were rented out. In 1910, only 25% of teachers were still tending to their plots (Benthin and Poulsen, 1911, p. 485). The same development occurred in Sweden as a consequence of the expanding monetary economy, which diminished the role of all ecclesiastical, military and civil allotted farms. In addition, increasing teaching obligations and a prolonged school year meant teachers had less time to devote to efforts outside the classroom (Westberg, 2015, p. 42). For Norwegian teachers, the 1927 and 1936 School Acts made it voluntary for municipalities to provide teachers with a plot of land as part of their salary (Norsk Lovtidende, 1927, p. 354; Norsk Lovtidende, 1936, p. 919). By the mid-1930s, only 37% had the stipulated plot, while 63% either had a minor plot or were given monetary compensation (Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet, 1939, p. 7).

For almost a century, rural teachers in the Scandinavian countries had put considerable effort and time into their work as ‘people’s teachers’, serving as agricultural pioneers, creating libraries, conveying new knowledge for the benefit of school district inhabitants, or helping with applications and letters. By examining these common ideals and roles entrusted in rural teachers in the nineteenth century, this chapter contributes to our understanding of Scandinavian teachers’ socio-cultural history by focusing on their multiple occupations and how they fulfilled their social roles in local communities. Using the concepts of Anttila and Väänänen, one can talk about ‘cosmopolitan’ teachers who obtained their knowledge outside village frameworks, followed national trends, and whose status in the local community was based on their work as teachers of the people (Anttila and Väänänen, 2013, p. 185). Many of these teachers had obtained their knowledge at the teacher training institutions that arose in this period. However, these teachers only constituted a small proportion of the total and the vast majority were ‘locals’ who

cultivated their land and took care of their animals in more traditional ways. The latter, like most other peasants, did not necessarily engage in the Enlightenment project of disseminating knowledge through parish libraries or agricultural education. For such teachers, the school plot was, first and foremost, part of their salary and a source of income.

School gardening was revived with the school garden movement which emerged around 1900 in the Western world and the Scandinavian countries (Jolly and Leisner, 2000, pp. 9–12; Åkerblom, 2004; Kohlstedt, 2008; Larsen, 2020). Here, the garden was seen as a means of employing children, deterring them from committing crimes and keeping them on the straight and narrow path, as well as ‘satisfying their desire for bodily activity, while enriching their thoughts and imparting [much] useful knowledge to them’ (Lindholm, 1907, pp. 7–8). Thus, the school garden was no longer justified purely by its immediate benefits. During the first half the twentieth century, the pedagogical and educational aspects of this new type of garden – the pedagogical school garden – became a part of the teacher’s pedagogical work, thus adding new aspects to the social and cultural history of Scandinavian teachers.

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