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Educational reform by experiment

*The Norwegian experimental educational programme
for 6-year-olds (1986–1990) and
the subsequent reform*

Peder Haug

HLS Förlag

Educational reform by experiment.

The Norwegian experimental educational programme for 6-year-olds
(1986-1990) and the subsequent reform.

by
Peder Haug
cand paed

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a continuation of the evaluation of the Norwegian "Experimental educational programme for 6-year-olds" (1986-1990). The aim of the thesis is twofold. Firstly, to study what factors that have influenced the educational ideas and practice in the experiment. Secondly, to study what is the role of the experiment in the formulation of the educational reform that is to follow. This is done according to a theoretical model drawn up mainly on the basis of two groups of theories. One is an institutional theory (Nils Brunsson), the other is a curriculum theory (Ulf P. Lundgren).

Part one of the book is an introductory presentation of the field of research and of questions concerning the experiment. Part two is a study of the education given to the 6-years-olds. Part three is a discussion of the relationships between the experiment and the current developments in educational policy, and on the relationships between the experiment and the subsequent reform. Part four is a short summary and discussion.

The experiment consists of three models, kindergarten, school and a combined model of kindergarten and school. Although the study deals with an experiment, the research first and foremost is descriptions and explanations of what goes on in each of the experimental models, and is not concerned with measuring outcomes in terms of educational or psychological development. The data are comprehensive, and are composed of information about the historical, political and social background and context, mass data from all the municipalities involved in the experiment, detailed studies of a small sample of experimental groups, special studies of particular key questions and my own participation.

The educational provisions are influenced by the institution in which it is given, and not by either the national or the local curriculum plans. A programme located in kindergarten functions according to the kindergarten tradition, and a programme located in school is to a large extent influenced by the school tradition. The group of teachers could modify this pattern, nursery school teachers function differently than school teachers, given the same scope of action. This is interpreted as a function of state regulation and institutional and professional tradition.

There are few direct connections between the experiment and the formulations of the subsequent educational reform. This is mostly due to the political situation, but also to the general function of experiments and reforms as sources of legitimation for politics and the state.

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In memory of my father

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Ørsta 31. March 1992

Peder Haug

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Part I Introductory presentation

1 Background, problem and outline

The background¹

This work is a continuation of the evaluation I made of the "Experimental educational programme for 6-year-olds" for two Norwegian government departments.² I followed the experiment from before it began with the first gathering for personnel in June 1986 until it was completed in June 1990. In January 1991 I delivered the final evaluation report to the ministers in the two departments concerned (Haug 1991). A fairly comprehensive documentation has been made as the basis of this evaluation, a total of 29 reports and a large amount of other written material.³ Those reports which I have not written myself, have been produced under my supervision.

The aim of this thesis has been to further develop the train of thought and the analyses from the evaluation. The assembled material and the content of all the reports are too comprehensive to be reproduced here. Here I extract what is of most interest for my current research. I am more interested in the general and collective rather than the special and the individual. This does not do justice to the many details and the enormous variety of the experiment. The fact that the analyses have been made on the basis of aggregated data and in relation to collected variables such as type of institution and profession also means that the nuances in thought, concept and action that we know are present in the field do not become apparent. Neither does it provide an accurate picture of the fantastic

¹ This thesis is about Norwegian education, and a great deal of the written material referred to is in Norwegian. I normally do not translate the references, this is done only when it is necessary for the understanding of the presentation. Because Norway has its own tradition of education and educational policy, the concepts and terms in use do not automatically have the same meaning as in other countries. I therefore define several of these terms when they first are used in the text.

² The departments' names have been changed three times during the experiment. At the start these names were in use: The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration (FAD), responsible for kindergartens for children aged 0-7. The Ministry for Church and Education (KUD) administers the 9-year basic compulsory school (for children 7-16). Then the names were changed to The Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs (FAD) and The Ministry of Education and Research (UFD). The current names are: The Ministry for Child and Family Affairs (BFD) and The Ministry for Church, Education and Research (KUF). I mostly use the various names, according to whatever was correct in the period I am describing.

³ This was the most comprehensive educational experiment in Norway during the whole of the 1980's.

efforts of the personnel, both in relation to the 6-year-olds and in relation to developing the basic ideas of the experiment. And the main character in the experiment, the 6-year-old, does not make himself heard with his combination of clear, stringent observations, points of view and questions, and all the incredible misunderstandings and misconceptions that are so characteristic. For that reason, it is a relief to know that much of what does not appear here is to be found in the basic material that is available for all to see.

The previous history of the "Experimental educational programme for 6-year-olds" is actually rather long. The issue started way back in 1739, when the first law concerning general education in rural areas was passed.⁴ There it was decreed that Norwegian children should start school at the age of 7, and that still applies to this day. There are few other countries in Europe where children wait so long before starting school.⁵ Over the years several attempts have been made in Norway to change this, but always unsuccessfully.⁶ Instead kindergarten⁷ has been developed more and more for children up to and including the age of 6.⁸ Simultaneously, pressure has been exerted for a lowering of the age for starting school to 6 years old. Thus a clash of interests has become established between kindergarten and school as regards this particular age group. This became very apparent when the experiment started in 1986, with the aim of finding out how to organize a programme of education for 6-year-olds in the future. The representatives from the kindergartens fought to keep their 6-year-olds.

In 1986 the Norwegian national assembly, Stortinget, voted to initiate the "Experimental educational programme for 6-year-olds" (1986-1990). The experiment began in the autumn of 1986 with a pilot project, autumn 1987 saw the start of the first of three experimental years. The experiment was to develop

⁴ Only about 10 % of the people in Norway at this time lived in towns, this law thus covers the majority of the people in the country.

⁵ In 1990, in 25 of 32 European countries the children start school at 6 or earlier. In 7 countries they start at the age of 7 (Switzerland, Bulgaria, Portugal, Poland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway).

⁶ It is now possible for parents of individual 6-year-olds to apply for a dispensation to start school. They are then dependent upon a recommendation from the municipal School Counselling Service. Dispensation from the law on compulsory education (cf § 7 no 9) was necessary to allow 6-year-olds as a group to go to school in this experiment. This was given in a Royal Decree of 24 October 1986 (Kongelig resolusjon 24. oktober 1986).

⁷ According to the law on kindergartens from 1975 and its later revisions, all publically approved educational provisions for children under school age in Norway are called kindergartens, regardless of content and how long they are open daily. Under this main term, it is differentiated between full-day kindergarten (6-9 hours a day), half-day kindergarten (4-6 hours a day) and short-time kindergarten (3-4 hours a day).

⁸ I return in more detail to this topic in chapter 9.

a curriculum⁹ which was to be tested under three different experimental conditions: in school, in kindergarten and a combination of kindergarten and school.¹⁰ On the basis of the evaluation of the project, the Storting was then to decide whether special provisions for the education of 6-year-olds were to be made, where this was to be localized and what its curriculum was to be. The experiment was concluded in 1990, and the proposal for a comprehensive reform of the education of this age group is to be published in the spring of 1992.¹¹

The research problem

The overall aim of my study of this experiment is to examine how education is created, maintained and altered. The experiment and the reform that it is meant to prepare, offer an ideal opportunity to study this theme both in theory and in practice. This broad and comprehensive intention limits the possibility of going into special issues in depth. The intentions of the experiment were to change the existing educational practice and organization. The aim is educational reform via the construction of new curricula. In the first place, the experiment has an inner aspect. It concerns the curricula that were to be used, and the relationship between the curriculum and the educational ideas and practice in the experimental models. In a more restricted sense, the question may put in this way: what is the role of the new curriculum in the development of the educational ideas and the educational practice of the experiment? On the other hand, the curricula are not the only sources that are relevant to the education in the institutions. In a broader context the question is therefore: what factors have influenced the educational ideas and practice in the experiment?

The experiment also has an outer aspect. That is the relationship between the experiment and the subsequent reform. As to now, only formulations about the

⁹ The concept of curriculum is very often restricted to specific curriculum documents, in Norway referred to as "læreplan". Very often the term curriculum has stood for something much wider, thus causing confusion. I will use the expression "the national curriculum plan" to mean the specific document in this case. The term curriculum will be looked into and discussed in further detail in chapter 4.

¹⁰ In all the experimental models there was to be a certain amount of cooperation between school and kindergarten as well. The combined model was kindergartens cooperating with schools 2-4 hours a week.

¹¹ My information about the reform is based on internal documents available in the department, on information from key persons that have worked with the reform and I have also had access to a draft report. The document containing details of the reform has not yet been made public and will not be until May or June 1992 at the earliest. It is most interesting, because this report to the Storting first was promised published in late winter 1990, and has been postponed several times (cf also chapter 10).

reform exist. The question then is: what is the role of the experiment in the formulation of the educational reform that is to follow it?

The basic research strategy

The basic thinking is strongly influenced by the theory-orientated evaluation¹² (Franke-Wikberg & Lundgren 1982, cf also Lundgren (1978 p 15) who uses the term theory-related evaluation). This arose as a reaction against the existing evaluation models which Lindensjö & Lundgren (1986a, p 35ff) describe on the basis of the characteristics neutrality, policy-optimism and instrumentalism.¹³ The theory-orientated evaluation owes much to the frame factor theory of Dahllöf (1967).¹⁴ Dahllöf establishes the fairly obvious fact that in order to understand a result, it must be seen in relation to the process by which it was created. This also gives the theory-orientated approach a critical function. It is not sufficient only to study the official aims and then register whether these have been achieved. It is necessary to know and understand the process.¹⁵ And the context in which the activity is taking place is an essential element to help explain the process itself. In order to coordinate all this, it is important to obtain a theoretical understanding of the processes that are being studied. The function of the theory is to place the research work in a conceptual context concerning the functions and conditions for teaching.¹⁶ It provides a referential framework on which to base the formulation of research problems, and the gathering and analysis of data. The interaction with data also makes it possible to develop the conceptual understanding of the issues, and thereby increase the theoretical understanding of the problems.

This approach was the guideline for the gathering of data in the experiment. At the same time, it was necessary for me to follow what was happening in and around the experiment. The fear was of ending up in the same situation as Stake (1986) describes, where the evaluation of an experiment for the most part simply studied what was not taking place. The researchers did not manage to catch sight of what was happening, and that was successful and positive for the matter in question.

¹² The term theory-orientated evaluation is not really accurate, and leads to a focussing on just one of the elements that distinguish it from other evaluation strategies.

¹³ Franke-Wikberg & Lundgren (1982) also give a detailed presentation of the various evaluation models, their characteristics and the main criticism of them.

¹⁴ I discuss the frame factor theory in chapter 4.

¹⁵ Through interviews we also studied the teaching the 6-year-olds were given in school one year later, but this I will not go into here (cf Presthus 1991).

¹⁶ The term theory is used in a broad sense. A theory is an explanation based on available data about a phenomenon (Lundgren 1983a, p 19).

The general design

The main point in this study is to give insight into what is going on in the experimental groups and for what reasons, and what function the experiment has in relation to the subsequent reform. The aim is to be able to explain the activity and the actions that developed. With this perspective in mind, I registered and studied various aspects of the activity that took place each year. This was meaningful and seemed to be important and useful at the time. It was also necessary in the light of the situation in the experiment. It closely resembled a development project rather than a formal and strict experiment. Which variables were or might be important and relevant were not established in advance. From my position of involvement I experienced this "advance" as being rational and useful. With hindsight it is clear that the evaluation was influenced by forces in the context which mean that the progression does not necessarily now appear to be the most logical.

An enormous amount of data has been gathered.¹⁷ It can be divided into five main categories: (1) historical, political and social background and context, (2) mass data from all the municipalities involved in the experiment, (3) detailed studies of a small sample of experimental groups, (4) special studies of particular key questions and (5) my own participation.

The historical, political and social contexts are a study of the educational traditions of school and kindergarten, the background for this particular experiment, why it was established, its aims and how various attitudes to the experiment developed. This category also includes the studies of the development of educational policy and the relationship between the government and the experiment. The data at this level is mainly government documents, public statistics and historical material.

The mass data is standardized information from the experimental groups in all the municipalities in the form of questionnaires and observation records. The aim is to establish some sort of overall picture of the experiment, what ideas formed the basis of the work, what conditions were children, personnel and parents working under and what sort of practices were established.

The detailed studies are close studies of certain places involved in the experiment using field methods (Patton 1980, Burgess 1984, Hammersly & Atkinson 1987). The work with the children was subject to more intensive observation, and personnel and parents were interviewed at length. The relatively small number of groups involved, in all a total of 14, was restricted due to the time-consuming aspect of the work.

¹⁷ I present the data in greater detail in connection with the presentation of it in the relevant chapters.

Round the experiment there were a number of vital and crucial questions that needed to be addressed. Most of them had in common the fact that they were well-defined - and that they required special attention. I present here two such special studies. One is a study of the development of the national and local curriculum plans and their functions.¹⁸ The other is a detailed study of the classroom interaction in a limited number of groups.¹⁹

I have followed the experiment at first hand ever since the first plans began to emerge in the spring of 1986 and up to the present time. This means that I possess an enormous insight and experience that has not been documented elsewhere. This is of course problematical in many ways, but first and foremost I feel it to be an enormous advantage and a wealth of knowledge on which to base my research work.

The analysis of the data has been made in relation to a compound theoretical model.²⁰ In the model the distinction between formulations and realizations is crucial, as well as the key concepts institutional environment, institutional tradition, state regulation, curriculum, curriculum codes and notions.

The outline

The thesis is divided into four main parts, and each part ends with a short summary and discussion. The first part (chapters 1 - 3) is an introductory presentation. In chapter 2 I discuss the official view on reform work, and present a theoretical starting point. The theme in chapter 3 is the development of the experiment itself, why it was established and what its aims were. I carry out a more detailed analysis of the problems and aims, which reveals that the various actors defined different problems for the experiment. On the one hand, the question had been placed on the agenda, on the other there was political disagreement as to the nature of the problem and how it should be resolved. By establishing an experiment, the government in power showed initiative and managed at least to postpone, and thus maybe even solve, the problem.

In part two (chapters 4 - 8) I analyse the educational activity in the experiment. In chapter 4 I theoretically discuss problems associated with the main educational challenge in the experiment, namely to create and implement a "new" pedagogy, based on the best from kindergarten and the best from school. This was presented as a simple rational question of curriculum. On the basis of Lundgren's (1983ac) extended curriculum concept, I see this question as being much more complex and dependent upon a series of factors other than

¹⁸ Cf chapter 6

¹⁹ Cf chapter 8.

²⁰ The model is first presented in chapter 2 and is expanded in chapter 4.

formulations in a curriculum plan alone. I define a set of concepts in order to be able to enter into a discussion of the activity in the experiment in the light of this extended perspective. In chapter 5 I consider what it is that characterizes the kindergarten and school traditions respectively, in order to have a foundation against which to evaluate the activity in the experiment. The conclusion to that discussion is that kindergarten and school each represents its own separate and fairly different educational tradition, curriculum and practice. The curriculum perspective is continued in chapter 6, where I look at the development of the national curriculum plan for the experiment, and how this has been used in the view of the personnel involved. I also study the local curriculum plans²¹ that were produced on the basis of the national curriculum plan, and what their functions were. The main impression is that the plans have a fairly limited function in the practical work. In chapter 7 I present data on the educational activity in the experiment.²² One of the main problems is how to register the educational activity in such a way as to capture what is characteristic for each of the two educational traditions. This proved to be very difficult. I discuss the daily programme, the content of the adult-guided activity and of the free play, and I discuss the cooperation between kindergarten and school. It would appear that the daily programme and the content is mainly determined by the institution to which the activity is delegated and the type of teaching staff that works there. In chapter 8 I look more closely at a question that cropped up in connection with the observation of the teaching. These observations seemed to indicate that there were also differences in the teaching, dependent on who taught the 6-year-old group and whether it was in the kindergarten or in school. Employing a system for analysing classroom interaction I studied this phenomenon in greater detail and am able to point to such differences.

In part three (chapters 9 - 10) I place the experiment in a wider societal and educational context. This analysis is made on the basis of the theory presented in chapter 4, but explains a quite different area of it than in part two. I make use of both different terms and different data than in the study of the pedagogical section. In that way the two sections are linked, but more indirectly in-as-much as they illustrate the same theme seen from two quite different viewpoints. In chapter 9 I consider the experiment in the context of the developments in educational policy and the associated debate that has taken place in Norway since the 1970's. This context is a vital factor in explaining what has happened to the experiment. In chapter 10 I study the experiment on the basis of the

²¹ The local curriculum plans were to be adjusted each year.

²² In Norway we do not use the concept of teaching to mean the overall activity in kindergarten. Teaching goes on in school. In kindergarten we talk about educational activity in a very broad sense, where teaching could be one of several activities.

impression that has often existed, namely that it is to be carried out with the least possible "noise" and outside influence. It turned out that right from the outset of the experiment, the political level attempted to intervene, or exploit it for political gain. I therefore present a hypothesis that the debate on educational policy and the political intervention influenced the experiment far more than the experiment influenced educational policy. This chapter also discusses the connection between the experiment and the proposed educational reform.

In part four I summarize and discuss the main findings of the study.

2 Educational experiment and reform

The concepts of experiment and reform

The concept of educational reform that is used here corresponds with that of Weiler (1985, p 168 f), and is a more comprehensive political plan which (1) is intended to influence the whole or parts of the educational system in a more basic manner and (2) is constructed to reflect and reveal relatively clear ideas that have political priority about the society of the future and the role of education (cf also Pincus 1974). Educational reforms therefore refer to:

...the initiation, modification, implementation and/or nonimplementation of policies designed to change the "social product" of the educational process along the lines of ideological and political priorities of certain groups in society. (Weiler 1985, p 169).

This limits the term educational reform in relation to the continuous and limited adjustment to surroundings, tasks and new knowledge that is always taking place in an organization, as distinct from more revolutionary changes (Weiss 1980, p 381-382). The understanding of politics is thus broad and inclusive, and involves the whole process from the time an issue is prepared and approved in central political bodies, how the decision is interpreted and implemented centrally and locally and what the results are.

The term reform refers to a process. Cerych & Sabatier (1986, p 9f) divide this reform process into three stages. The first stage is a period of policy formulation. Weaknesses in the educational system are admitted, followed by investigations and reports, concluding with a superior political body passing a vote to decide to implement a new programme or establish a new institution. In the article "Reforms as experiments" (Campbell 1969), the main argument is that prior to the decision on a plan of action, there should be a period of systematic and controlled experimentation or research to find out the best way to achieve the approved aims. This experimental approach has formed the basis of a number of reforms during the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's, for instance the American "War on Poverty", of which the Head Start program was a part (Zigler & Valentine 1979), the Swedish educational reforms of the 50's and 60's (Dahllöf 1971) and to a certain degree the development of the Norwegian 9-year compulsory school (Telhaug 1990b). The second stage is to implement the decision. The final stage is to establish the implementation, followed by a period of redefinition and possibly innovation.

This thesis considers the first stage in this reform process.¹ It includes the preparations for the experiment, the definition of the problems, the decision to start the experiment, the experimental process and the results of the experiment up to the point at which the proposal for a new educational reform has been presented. The experiment is only a part of the educational reform. At the same time, an experiment goes through the same stages as a reform, with formulation, realization and evaluation. The principal difference between an experiment and a reform is that the latter is more comprehensive and permanent than the former.

The reform perspective

A strong normative tradition exists for how state reforms and experiments in the public sector are to be established and implemented (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 86ff, Brunsson & Olsen 1990a, p 11f). This reform perspective is almost universal in practical politics. It is difficult for other interpretations and understandings of change and attempts at reform to be heard and these are often not taken seriously (Brunsson & Olsen 1990a, p 24).

The reform perspective is based on a number of presuppositions. The points below are taken from Levin (1980), Brunsson (1986, p 9ff) and Lindensjö & Lundgren (1986a, p 86ff).

- It is a firm conviction that a planned reform is necessary and possible. There is belief in instrumentalism, that the state or local authority can influence and govern a pattern of development in society by implementing planned activities. By reforming education, it will be possible to change various aspects of the political and social system that has created the education.
- It is based on a rational perspective. The decisions are to be made after careful rational analyses of the problems and of the available solutions.
- There are notions of a hierarchy, a top-down perspective, in which the political system is superior to the organizations, which are superior to the individual. The reform process follows a definite linear sequence, where the actions of superior bodies are binding on a subordinate one.
- There is a clear division of labour between politicians and experts, for example teachers. Politics and educational activity are the responsibility of different organizations and of persons from quite different arenas. This also indicates a belief in causality, that the decision is the basis of action. In other words, the symbolic and ideological activities govern the material ones. This also means a

¹ It would be both interesting and important to follow the main reform through the process of implementation. Since this would be extremely time-consuming, it is not possible at this stage.

belief in intentionality, that it is possible to formulate aims, which in turn are followed by action.

- There is an expectance of consistency between decision and action. That the intentions that have been approved really are put into practice. The decisions are implemented in the way intended by those who made them.
- There exists a notion of consensus, both as regards aims and means, and these are respected loyally by all involved.
- When the reforms do not produce the expected results, explanations are often individualized. It is individuals who have failed, they lack competence, the plans are not good enough, etc.

Research plays a key role in the reform perspective in various ways. There are great expectations that research can contribute to general change in society. It is to serve as a basis for political decisions and for their implementation by producing results that solve problems directly (Weiss 1979).

In Norway there has thus been a fairly close link between the need for changes in educational policy and support for and arguments in favour of research. Growth in Norwegian educational research first took place when the point was made that it was useful for the formulation and realization of educational policy (Sandven 1945, p 39). I can see four different periods up till now.² The first one applies to the 1930's, in connection with the production of the national curriculum for school in 1939 (Normalplan 1939) and to the establishing of the Institute of Educational Research³ at the University of Oslo (Sandven 1944). The main argument was that education now must build upon exact scientific knowledge, and not as before on assumptions and discretion. The second applies to the 1950's and 60's, the great reform period with the law on innovation in schools⁴ and the National Council for Innovation in Education. An important part of the argument in favour of the law on innovation was the need for experimental activity that could provide a scientific basis for decisions about education (Telhaug & Haugaløkken 1984, p 18ff).⁵ In the third period, in the 1960's and at the beginning of the 70's, great changes took place in the education system in Norway, but the promised and desired results did not show up. Towards the end of the 60's and in the following years, educational research

² I will go into some parts of this topic in further detail in chapter 9.

³ The decision to establish the Institute of Educational Research was made in 1936, and its first professor, Helga Eng, was appointed in 1938. This was the only institution in Norway whose specific task was to carry out educational research, until the early 1970's, when among others the Institutes of Education at the Universities of Trondheim and Tromsø were founded.

⁴ This law was passed in the Storting in 1954.

⁵ The National Council for Innovation in Education took time to start its research activity, and the work is really little known (Telhaug 1987, p 156).

therefore had priority (Skoleforskning i Norge 1975, p 16f). The last period is into the 1980's when the education system is facing new demands and responsibilities which require reorganization and change. Among other things, the result is yet again the stated need for more investment in educational research (NAVF 1987a, 1987b).⁶

The result of experiments in the reform perspective

The simplest criterion to judge how well suited the reform perspective is, would be to study to what degree it contributes to change in accordance with the expressed intentions. In chapter 9 I do this in a more concrete form in relation to Norwegian educational reforms. Here I only give a general summary of the experiences that have been gained through experiments and reforms according to this perspective. The picture is complex (Cerych & Sabatier 1986, p 254), ambiguous (Orlich 1979, Schools and Quality 1989, p 9f), in many cases significant question marks can be placed on the basic documentation (Dahlöf 1984, Premfors 1984), there is quite important uncertainty concerning the criteria for the evaluation of the reform result (Light 1979) and the problems associated with the research methods are considerable and the viewpoints very dissimilar (Campbell & Stanley 1963, Patton 1980). Even allowing for variations between the nations and between different projects over the question of to what degree the experimental changes have been successful, the documentation reveals that the situation is far more difficult than the formulations in the reform perspective would seem to indicate. Two problems in particular have become apparent (Sannerstedt 1988, p 115f). One is that experiments and reforms are not carried out in accordance with the expressed political intentions, a problem of implementation.⁷ Weiler (1980) states that educational systems do not develop in accordance with the plans that have been laid down, but are the result of a complex set of social, political and economic factors (see also Berman 1978, Thomas 1983, Rothstein 1986).⁸ The other difficulty is the problem of

⁶ This latest newfound interest led among other things to the initiation of the Program for Educational Research under the auspices of NAVF (Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities).

⁷ This problem would appear to be fairly complex. Detailed studies of publically available local documentation of experimental activities in Norway reveal other results than the documentation published by the central authorities. And the difference often lies in the fact that the local reports are far more critical than the centrally published ones (Gundem 1989, p 528f, Telhaug 1990b, p 140ff). There would seem to be reason to believe that there is a strong element of prestige involved in experimental and reform activities which can possibly explain part of the problem of the coupling between experiments and politics, and the position of research.

⁸ I also return to this question in somewhat greater detail in chapter 4.

achieving the desired intentions, in particular that education is to change political, social and economic conditions in a nation (Jencks et al 1972, Karabel & Halsey 1977, p 16f, Levin 1980, Coombs 1985, p 211ff).

An alternative approach is to study what significance research on experiments and reforms has had within this reform perspective. This is also a difficult field of research, but in spite of considerable investment in research in connection with experimental and reform activity in education, one has today little knowledge about the educational reforms and what they lead to (Dahllöf 1971, p 141, Coombs 1985, p 113ff, 145f). The degree to which this research has influenced decisions on educational reforms and the direction of these reforms varies. Husén (1988, p 220ff) claims that the Swedish educational research in the 1950's and 60's has been of decisive importance for Swedish educational policy, because the research workers have participated in the development of educational policy. There are differences between Norway and Sweden in this area. Sweden has its own "expertise culture", where highly qualified researchers work together with politicians and administrators to produce reports on public matters.⁹ In this way the educational research is continually being confronted with the everyday problems of educational policy, and is forced to take notice of them, and vice versa (Marklund 1985, p 187f).¹⁰ In Norway Bernhof Ribsskog¹¹ and Hans Jørgen Dokka¹² are among the few educational researchers who have made a name for themselves in such work.

The scientific results by themselves have been of far less importance. The research has on the whole had little direct influence on the policy-making in the field in the short term (Cronbach et al 1980, Husén & Kogan 1984, Biddle & Anderson 1986, p 247f, Hellstern 1986, Sabatier 1986a, Stake 1986, House 1990). The research on the Norwegian educational reforms of the 1960's and 70's was of little significance (Telhaug 1990b, p 104, see also Telhaug 1987, p 156). On several occasions it has become apparent that in Norway, both politicians and the practising teachers are really sceptical, both to research as the

⁹ The close link between research and reports can wipe out the distinction between these two levels. Then scientifically based explanations can be classified as political or conspiratory, and politically based explanations can be seen as scientific. This is a tendency Lundgren (1986b, p 83) is afraid of.

¹⁰ Dahllöf (1986, p 61f) claims eg that Kjell Härnquist's work on public committees, and his research in connection with the work of these committees is one of the explanations of the positive results achieved in the field of education in Sweden. Härnquist (1987, p 26f), in turn, makes a similar claim about the role of Dahllöf.

¹¹ Bernhof Ribsskog (1883-1963) was an educational researcher, school administrator and member of several school committees.

¹² Hans Jørgen Dokka (1913-) played a key role in the Curriculum Committee for the 9-year compulsory school.

basis for making decisions and to researchers as members of commissions, despite many claims to the contrary. Instead they want to use their "common sense" (Dokka 1979, p 339ff, Telhaug & Haugaløkken 1984, p 64ff).

Levin (1978, see also Husén 1984) explains this weak direct relationship between research and politics as the result of differences in context, method and culture. Politicians and researchers have different roles, needs and interests. This applies to short-term demands for action on the part of the politicians and expectations about long-term critical investigations by researchers. This is also mentioned as one of the reasons why research into Norwegian educational reforms was controversial. Those who were impatient to implement changes because of political aims and motives regarded research as troublesome (Telhaug 1990b, p 104f, 139). I will point to two other key explanations.

Reforms do not follow the rational principles and stages in the reform perspective. They develop in quite different ways and on the basis of quite different premises. Political decisions are often the result of compromise, tactics, horsetrading, courting, struggles, positions, and thus have a limited rationality (Olsen 1988, p 15-27). This is particularly true when there is political disagreement about aims and means, which is very often the case in connection with reforms and experiments (Broadfoot & Nisbet 1981, Weiler 1985, 1989, Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986b, Cuban 1990). Experiments and reforms can also be started in order to legitimize. Then it is not the results of the efforts themselves that are important, but the fact that the efforts provide support to the political system (Weiler 1985, Brunsson 1989). In both these examples, possible concrete proposals from the research as to solutions will be one of several factors that could be taken notice of. A further explanation I will link to the narrow definition of the research ideal that has long dominated the scene in Anglo-Saxon educational research, including Norway:

The narrow scientific perspective within which educational research had developed, had given little encouragement to theory development and critical research on the objective constraints upon change. Even during the vigorous development of the primary and secondary school systems in Europe and the U.S. during the fifties and the sixties, educational research continued to be concerned with minor problems within the educational systems - problems that were often identified as psychological problems clinically independent of the educational cultural context. (Lundgren 1981, p 11).

This is a type of research that first and foremost has studied education more as an isolated system, independent of the society around it, and for technical and

practical purposes. Telhaug states this very pointedly when he says: "In many circles¹³ it is not good taste to talk about politics and education" (Telhaug 1978, p 9, see also Dahl 1986, p 165). Analyses of the Norwegian educational research show that it for the most part has been carried out within the bounds of and in support of the existing education policies (Aasen 1980, Karlssen 1989). Lindberg & Lindberg (1983) come to a very similar conclusion as far as Swedish educational research is concerned.¹⁴ Because political decisions provide the framework for the research, and not scientific interests, it is difficult to learn from reforms both in the case of formulating new policies in the field and in building on the experience gained (Orlich 1979, Cuban 1990, Brunsson 1990a, p 36f). The research is not particularly critical and to a large degree supports the political decisions that have been made at any given time. This has given much of the educational research the characteristics of the reform perspective (Bellack 1978, Broadfoot 1979, Broadfoot & Nisbet 1981, Nisbet 1981). The educational research is normative, orientated towards action and the especially on the basis of psychological criteria. Dahlberg & Åsén (1986, p 9) point out that the psychological basis of the educational research means that it lacks terms that make it possible to interpret the situation and to discover other factors than the psychological that govern and limit the educational reality. The educational research has also been more concerned with registering the degree to which aims have been achieved, rather than with investigating what has happened in the reform process and with finding the causes of what has happened (Aasen 1980, p 203f). This also means that much of the discussion about the quality of the research is centred on research methods. Implementation research is therefore little known in Norwegian educational research.

This present discussion would appear to reach the conclusion that experiments, reforms and research according to the reform perspective do not seem to function as intended. On this count there seems to be a sort of agreement among researchers. The reactions to this, however, are not similar, but can roughly be divided into two groups. One is the claim that the demands in the reform perspective have not been met in practice. The plans must be made better, the methods must be improved, the control routines must be developed etc (House 1974, p 204ff, Pincus 1974, p 128ff, Odin & Åhs 1985). The research must be

¹³ Meaning educational researchers and politicians.

¹⁴ Aasen (1980) has analysed Norwegian projects that received financial support from the Ministry of Church and Education's budget for "School Research" in the period 1970-1979. Lindberg & Lindberg (1983) studied Swedish educational research in the period 1948-1971. Karlssen (1989) carried out an analysis of projects that were part of ERIC under the heading "project- and school evaluation".

more exact and made more available (Caplan 1976, St. meld. nr. 28 (1988-89)¹⁵, p 33). As long as the design is good enough, it is not so easy to ignore the result (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris 1987). The other is that the reform perspective does not provide sufficient basis either of making reforms or for understanding what is happening in a reform process (Elmore 1980, Hjern 1985, Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, Brunsson & Olsen 1990a, Hargreaves 1991). Alternative approaches have been developed (eg Hargreaves 1991), but the train of thought in the reform perspective is such an intrinsic part of our culture that it is difficult to change.¹⁶

Despite the fact that this way of carrying out reforms has revealed considerable weaknesses, experiments for change in the education system are continually being initiated on the basis of the same argumentation and according to the same pattern as before. In certain fields the same measures are even being tried over and over again, even though the results never meet the expectations (Cuban 1990, Brunsson 1990a).¹⁷

Critical social science

The experiment and the reform that are the subject of this thesis have been planned and are administered in accordance with the reform perspective by two state departments. As a researcher I am not in a position to alter that fact. I can, however, choose how I myself approach and study the reform both theoretically and strategically. As I have pointed out above, a great deal of the research on experiments and reforms has had normative aims, to contribute to developing them as much as possible in relation to the official intentions. As the research questions in chapter 1 indicate, my interest lies in describing and explaining, not in being normative.

Kallós & Lundgren (1979) analyse Swedish educational research and educational policy, and formulate the basis for an alternative approach to educational research which is close to my research interests. They argue in favour of an educational research whose intention is to be analytical, informative, critical, challenging and corrective rather than being technically useful (se also Lundgren 1978, Broadfoot 1979, Weiss 1979, 1980). The

¹⁵ Report to the Storting.

¹⁶ Both March (1976, p 69ff) and Brunsson (1990b) explain this by pointing to the fact that the idea of the free will, and that the individual can freely choose both values and actions, is a basis for the whole Christian culture.

¹⁷ This also applies to this experiment, which is the fifth in line of experiments on the subject of providing formal education for 6-year-olds in 25 years in Norway (cf chapter 3).

consequence is that policy making and research are seen as two different areas, with different intentions. That means that policy making and implementation can itself be the subject of research (Lundgren 1986a, p 273ff). Thus the field of educational research includes both politics and education. From Kallós & Lundgren's (1979, p 105ff) presentation, I can extract three key research questions, which can also function as more precise definitions of my own research intentions.¹⁸ (1) What happens in education? How does education react in relation to the explicitly expressed aims? This stresses the need to map and provide a theoretical explanation of the processes that take place in education in general, and in particular the relationships between curriculum, teaching and result. (2) What links are there between various levels in the educational system? They point to a gap in understanding of the relationship between teaching and curricula or between state regulation and teaching. (3) What processes will the children meet in the classroom, and how is the space of options there made use of? Research into such questions has as its theoretical aim to explain how education is maintained.

I have found it of interest to use an institutional perspective as the basis for my research work. March & Olsen (1989, see also Brunsson & Olsen 1990a) state that the role of institutions in deciding the result of reforms has long been overlooked, but that a change is now taking place. The social, political and financial institutions have gradually become larger, more complex and more important for the community, therefore the number of studies on the topic of institutions has increased (March & Olsen 1989, p 1f).¹⁹ They claim that ever since the fifties, a non-institutional opinion has been allowed to dominate, with several different standpoints that are all linked to the reform perspective. The institutional perspective does not exclude either the power of the societal context over the institutions or the individual action in them, but stresses that the institutions are in a way "actors" that define the framework for the thinking and actions that take place within them.

Since the experiment described here concerns two institutions with special characteristics which are intended to cooperate, it is appropriate to start with a theoretical idea of what decides the actions within the institutions, what limits the persons are bound by and what they have the opportunity to do. It also requires insight into how the institutions function, are maintained and can be altered, and what relations there are between the institutions and the individuals and between the institutions and the state. The institutional perspective provides

¹⁸ Their purpose is to develop a general curriculum theory suited to any given school system, based on empirical studies. I return to the curriculum theory in chapter 4.

¹⁹ March & Olsen (1989) are most concerned with political institutions; in my experience their general argumentation is just as valid for education.

a useful basis for thus being able to embrace several levels of analysis. It creates a challenging and meaningful starting point for studying the individual actions in the institutions, the institutions' significance for these activities, as well as the institutions' place in relationship to the superior state system. All in all, it is my belief that such an approach provides an immense theoretical challenge and the conditions necessary to be able to understand and explain the activities in the experiment with the 6-year-olds.

Various patterns of action in the institutions

Institutional theory is not an homogenous area. Scott (1981) distinguishes between three different approaches: institutions as rational systems, institutions as natural systems and institutions as open systems (cf also Allison 1971). As a field of research the first one is mainly concerned with the functions in the highly formalized structure, the second concentrates mainly on the informal structure and the third is interested in various coalitions in the institution in a close interplay with the surrounding environment. None of these approaches on its own provides a completely satisfactory explanation of the behaviour in an institution. I will therefore study various aspects of all three perspectives. However, the major perspective is to view the organizations as open systems created in order to achieve a certain aim. Change is a spontaneous and natural process which grows through an historical and cultural development that is not governed or controlled by individual groups or reformers (Brunsson & Olsen 1990a, p 14, see also Durkheim 1977). The institutions and the institutional arrangements provide the framework for the action of the individual. What takes place in the institutions can be seen as a play between various actors, in many different arenas in a loosely coupled system (Allison 1971, p 67ff, Berman 1978).

The institutions are complex. The personnel who work there have a limited overview over and little opportunity of being able to control what is happening. The different activities and situations that individuals participate in are only loosely coupled with each other. Only limited rationality is possible (March & Simon 1958).

This institutional starting point is common to both the main parts of this work. It can be developed "inwards" in the direction of the educational activity. The perspective can also be expanded "outwards", to events in the political field. I regard this combination of the various social scientific approaches as very interesting, and as fruitful for the research problems I address in this thesis. I

make the concrete presentations of terms and theoretical discussions in several of the chapters as the need arises.²⁰

The institutionalization of organizations

Selznick (1957) distinguishes between organizations and institutions. An organization is a rational instrument created to perform a particular task. The organizations have a history, during which they have been through a process in which social needs and social pressure have given them a particular character over and above the formal structure. Over time they have developed ideas about what their tasks are, their aims and how they can best be achieved. This means that certain ways of thinking and understanding are taken for granted, and others rejected (cf also Lundgren 1983b). In this way the organization is filled with values that symbolize the social field it belongs to. It is a process of institutionalization, and this special institutional character is seen as part of the organization's identity (cf also Brunsson & Olsen 1990a, p 16ff). Membership in such an institutionalized organization can have a stabilizing effect on the members, and thus forms an institutional tradition (Brunsson 1989, p 162). This creates stability and resistance to change.

A great deal of the behaviour that can be observed in these institutions reflects routine actions. Simple stimuli release complex and standardized patterns of behaviour without comprehensive analyses, the solving of problems or the use of force in advance. The institutions have a repertoire of such procedures, rules and norms for use when problems arise or when new tasks appear. These are institutional routines, which regulate and restrict the actions in the institutions. The basis for the routines are the basic norms, interests and beliefs on which the organization is founded and which are handed down by the tradition. It is necessary to know the historical circumstances in order to understand "the rules of the game" (Goodson 1988, p 9). Reforms that are totally in conflict with the institution's identity will have small chances of success. The viewpoints lead to a recognition of the fact that the institutions are not passive executors of instructions given from above in an hierarchical system, but that they to a considerable degree influence attempts at change. They are governed by rules that restrict rapid changes in the form of pressure or demands from outside.

²⁰ This train of thought has been discussed and developed among other places in "the Research Group on Curriculum Theory and Cultural Reproduction", now "the Department for Studies in Educational Policy and Cultural Reproduction" at Stockholm Institute of Education, Department of Educational Research (eg Lundgren 1981, 1983a, Bernstein & Lundgren 1983, Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a).

Institutions and institutional environments

Brunsson (1989, p 13ff) distinguishes between two types of organizations, the action organization and the political organization.²¹ The ideal of the action organization is agreement and consistency both internally and externally. Everyone must pull in the same direction and avoid conflicts. They must demonstrate coordinated activity, and the aim is to produce goods or services. And the result must satisfy certain demands both as regards quality and method of production. That gives the institution legitimacy and support from outside. Brunsson (1989, p 6) calls the surroundings that evaluate an institution on the basis of the products it manufactures and the results they achieve as the technical environment.²² In action organizations, rules and norms are established to regulate the activity, and these create a high degree of inner consistency in thought and deed, thus reducing the need for other regulating measures. It is assumed that new members accept the existing aims and intentions.

The political organization's speciality and characteristic is to gain support and legitimacy because they reflect inconsistent norms. The political organization deals with a large number of ideas and demands, and has to satisfy the expectations of many groups in society. It must be able to tackle such situations by way of institutional structures and processes. The result of the activity can be concrete products, in the form of financial grants. Most of the results, however, are ideologies²³ in the form of talk and decisions. The principle of conflict dominates both the recruitment to the political institutions and the activity in them. The political organizations must demonstrate and cultivate a variety of ideologies and standpoints and be able to put forward and handle different values, views and questions simultaneously. Brunsson (1989, p 6) uses the term the institutional environment²⁴ about the surroundings that evaluate the political organization on the basis of these structures, processes and ideologies.²⁵ The institutionalization of the surroundings means that the environment around the institutions, through a long historical development process, also has developed definite ideas about how these institutions are to work. Some ways of thinking and acting are taken for granted and desired, and that excludes others. In this way, structures, processes and ideologies develop a value of their own for the environment round the institution.

²¹ These are analytical categories that are rarely found in this purest form in reality.

²² The terminology is taken from Meyer & Scott (1983).

²³ The term ideology has a very broad definition, "the views which an organization proclaims" (Brunsson 1989, p 5).

²⁴ Brunsson & Olsen (1990a) use the term institutionalized environment. Brunsson (1989) uses the term institutional environment. I will follow the latter.

²⁵ The terminology is taken from Meyer & Scott (1983).

These two types, the political and the action organization rarely exist in their purest forms. Every institution will to a greater or lesser degree be characterized by both and require both. This corresponds to Meyer & Rowan's (1977) distinction between formal and informal structures in an organization. The formal structures are formulations, with the organization's pattern, plans and program with defined aims and ideas. It is here decisions are made and plans laid. This is the structure that handles inconsistencies. Lindensjö & Lundgren (1986a) refer to this using the terms context of formulation and arena of formulation. What takes place here they call "the decision-making game" (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 58, cf Crozier 1977). And Brunsson's (1989, p 13ff) term political organization is also one that describes what happens in this structure, where the content is system of thinking or ideas. Altogether they represent a rational explanation of the activity in the organization.

The informal structure in an organization is also called the technical, where actions are coordinated and the production takes place. In the context of education I shall use educational activity or teaching as terms instead of production. In politics, action or implementation will be used to refer to the activity in this informal structure. Brunsson's (1989, p 13ff) term action organization can also be used to describe the same aspects. Lindensjö & Lundgren (1986a) use the expressions context of realization and arena of realization. They point out that the "implementation game" takes place in this arena (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 58, cf Crozier 1977).

According to these models, the institutions contain different arenas. I choose to employ the terms arena of formulation and arena of realization, context of formulation and context of realization.²⁶ Arena is defined very broadly and inclusive, as in Mazzoni (1991). The term refers to a restricted environment that contains the conditions necessary to formulate intentions about politics and education and realize politics and education. An arena is thus more than a place for passive and neutral actions and reactions. An arena legitimizes a set of participants. An arena provides institutional and social restrictions which again define what is possible and desirable in a given matter (Olsen 1990, p 54). In an organization with responsibility for a reform, there can be many different levels of administration, and at each level there can be several arenas that all produce formulations about aims and means, on the basis of their particular terms and contexts. They are determined by which persons are in each arena, the needs these persons feel it necessary to fulfil, by the circumstances that exist for making decisions and taking action and by the contexts in which this happens (Cohen, March & Olsen 1976, March & Olsen 1989). There are, therefore, many

²⁶ The main argument for this choice is that these terms are more neutral.

different arenas of formulation which make it possible to produce different formulations about the same issue. In a similar way, there can be different arenas of realization, but generally speaking these are more limited. This makes the link between formulation and realization problematic and vulnerable.²⁷

This distinction creates a foundation for two sets of organizational processes. One which influences the arena of formulation and one which influences the arena of realization. For the surroundings, it is difficult to measure the productivity and result of the educational activity directly and in the short term, even though the aim of the greatest possible personal development and increase in knowledge for each individual is quite clear (Brunsson 1989, p 4). That is why the evaluations made in the institutional environment are very important in education, in other words the environment's evaluation of structures, processes and ideologies in the institutions. For education the formulations are more vital as a basis for an evaluation of the organization than in "normal" production companies, where it is easier to evaluate the product. In that way, education is more a political organization than an action organization.

According to the reform perspective, there should be a concurrence in an organization, so that the realization corresponds with the formulations. Brunsson (1989, p 168) points to four possible connections between idea (formulation) and action (realization).

- That there is no connection at all.
- That the realization influences the formulations (ideas as control).
- That the formulations influence the realization (ideas as explanations).
- And that the two structures compensate for each other (hypocrisy).

According to Brunsson, hypocrisy arises when idea and action systematically contradict each other. The formulations are linked to one set of norms, the action to a different set. The two do not support each other, but it is possible to say that the ideas can protect the actions, in so far as talk about the actions can satisfy demands that the actions in themselves cannot live up to. Hypocrisy is furthered by increasing physical and chronological distance between idea and action. It is easier to avoid actions restricting ideas, if the talk concerns actions in the past or the future. Brunsson (1989, p 9ff) also maintains that it is a basic problem for some institutions that they at one and the same time must pay attention to different external demands and simultaneously produce organized action. This is made possible because of these two sets of arenas with different functions and purposes.

The arenas of formulation in the institutions are greatly influenced by, have become a part of and reflect the social and cultural realities in the institutional

²⁷ I look into this matter further in chapter 4.

environment (Meyer & Rowan 1977, p 343f). These often do not correspond to the conditions that exist in the arena of realization in the organization, or to the professional performers' understanding of the situation. Therefore the formulations about the organization can function as rationalized myths about the action. The formal organizational processes can take the form of rituals with the aim of creating legitimacy for the organization, without these two structures needing to have anything to do with each other. They then compensate for each other, and have become hypocrisy.

The formal organizational structure is usually simple, visible and easy to change. It gives the organization itself the opportunity to adjust to the institutionalized environment, at the same time as completely different forces can decide the practical work in the institution. It provides the conditions necessary to give the impression of changes, without changing the activity itself in the institution. In that way, the institutions can give the impression of being permanently in the process of reforming in the desired direction, and of adapting to constantly changing political signals. This provides legitimacy (Brunsson 1989, p 130f, Brunsson & Olsen 1990a).

There can appear to be contradictions between the two institutional perspectives, but in my view they supplement and explain each other (cf also Christensen 1991, p 18f). Selznick's perspective is that, due to the organizational processes, organizations become less flexible and less open to change. Meyer & Rowan's perspective is that the institutional environment constantly forces changes in the organization, but that these often take place in the formal structure and are determined by the need for legitimacy and support. As Selznick mentions, changes in the arena of realization are far more resistant to change.

To sum it all up in two main points:

- (1) Both organizations and environments are institutionalized, meaning that they establish ways of thinking about how tasks in the institutions should be handled and ways of handling these matters. These become routines resistant to change.
- (2) The institutions can be seen as divided into two structures, an arena of formulation and an arena of realization, each with different tasks and conditions. Ideally, in the reform perspective there should be full correspondence between these two structures. In reality this is very seldom the case. These structures in a way live their own lives, often totally independent of each other. The crucial matter is that the formulations often function as signals to the environment about what goes on in the institution, and thus give an impression of the realization which is not necessarily the correct one.

The consequence of this for research is that a study of a reform ought to include three aspects: knowledge of the historical institutionalization process in

and around the organization, analyses of formulations about the activity and of the realizations.

The individual action

At this stage I shall discuss further the individual actions in the arena of formulation inside the institutions. In chapter 4 I look more closely at the aspect of action, in the arena of realization. Just focussing on the actions of the actors is reductionistic (March & Olsen 1989, p 2ff), but provides an insight into and questions exactly what happens in the reform process and what the actors concretely are bound by. A number of forces both inside and outside the institution over which the individual has no control, influence what happens there. The institutions restrict the persons through traditions and routines. The persons participate, try to gain an overview and to solve problems that occur. On the other hand, this does not mean that the persons are completely tied in their behaviour. The individual action in the institution must be seen in the light of the conditions for action that exist in the arena of formulation at any given time, and it must be viewed in relation to the circumstances in the institutional environment. The literature offers several different patterns of action based on such an understanding of the decision-making processes in the institutions, the "political" pattern, the "garbage can" model and "routine actions".²⁸

The political pattern

Decisions are often the result of power struggles, compromise, cooperation, alliances and tactics. The individual's standpoints are, among other things, decided by one's position in the organization and to which profession one belongs. This explains conflicts between organizations, levels in organizations and professions. The results are not predictable, and will often be different from what each individual participant desires or expresses. Within these political models or interaction models (Majone & Wildavsky 1984, p 166f), the characteristics are that the actors form a relatively stable and straightforward group, with fairly distinct aims and where the alternatives for action are relatively clear (Allison 1971, p 144ff).

²⁸ The names of these models vary according to which author uses them. The "political" pattern is often called the negotiation model, the conflict-solving model, the interaction model or the compromise model. Routine actions are also called "muddling through" or actions as part of "standard operating procedures". The term "political" patterns must not be confused with the term "political organizations". In political organizations, the political ways of solving problems are just one of several strategies for dealing with problems there.

Routine actions

Lindblom (1959) emphasizes the fact that those who make decisions and implement measures develop a series of techniques that enable them to "muddle through" uncertain and complex situations. They act on the basis of previously established practice, and adapt that rather than change the measures completely. It is more a question of a careful reformulation rather than a reform, and the consequence is relatively small changes in relation to the status quo. The reason for this pattern is that there already exist established material and personell arrangements in an organization that are difficult to break.

The decisions in these models are neither rational, hierarchical nor consistent. They all emphasize that the persons cannot choose or govern completely freely what they do. Therefore it is not necessarily possible either to make decisions about reforms based simply on rational reasoning, or for that matter to carry through the reforms in accordance with the expressed intentions (Pincus 1974, p 125, Cohen & Ball 1990). It is therefore far simpler to take the initiative on reforms, than to decide on and implement them (Weiler 1985, p 184ff, Brunsson & Olsen 1990b, p 255ff).

The "garbage can" model

Both the aims and alternatives in a reform process can be vague and indistinct, and the participants in the process can be many and extremely varied. This is particularly the case in the education system (Cohen, March & Olsen 1976, p 25). That makes the choice situations basically ambiguous. The decision-making process in the "garbage can" model is an interplay between four variables or streams: situations, problems, solutions and part-time participants (Cohen, March & Olsen 1976). The authors imagine a stream of situations in which decisions can be made, and which the persons can make use of by linking solutions and problems. These four streams are partly controlled by the participants and are partly coincidental. Different participants experience different problems and alternative solutions, and do not have the same power and ability to link the two. Consequently the result is rather difficult to predict. The situation means that there is no automatic and direct link between participation and decision, decision and plans, plans and practice, practice and result (March & Olsen 1976, p 12ff).

Top down or bottom up?

A key question in the research into the decisions about and implementation of public reforms has been whether to base it on a "top-down" or "bottom-up" perspective (Berman 1978, Sabatier 1986b). The former has its starting-point in the official central decisions and studies to what degree these have been

realized. The "classic" problem is that the matter changes from arena to arena, so that the realization often produces quite different consequences than were intended at the outset (Presmann & Wildavsky 1984). By studying action on the basis of the premises set in the central arenas, it is possible to oversee what is really happening and who is making the decisions about the actions. The "bottom-up" perspective studies the local actors' actions and arrangements to find out what decides them (Hjern & Hull 1982). Of interest in this tradition is the term "street-level bureaucrat", mainly used to refer to persons who work with other people, Lipsky (1980). Because of the type of work they do, they have a fairly large degree of freedom of action. They are difficult for others to govern and control. In this view, policy is not created by decisions made by central bodies, but is created by teachers in their daily work, on the basis of the needs and problems they experience in their meetings with their clients. There are two normative implications in this. One is that change of policy ought to begin at the "grassroots" (Elmore 1980, Hargreaves 1991). The other is that the study of reforms must start where the concrete realization is taking place.

Sabatier (1986b) recommends a synthesis between these two approaches when the circumstances are as they are in the reform which is the subject of this thesis. On the one hand, the experiment has been approved by the national assembly, the Storting, and initiated by two departments, with central guidelines for the work and with a hierarchical structure. On the other hand, the experiment is decentralized, each municipality and each place that is participating has been left to develop the pedagogics in the experiment on the basis of fairly general guidelines.

I make use of both these perspectives, but the top-down approach will tend to dominate. This is a natural consequence of the fact that the reform itself and the experiment have been initiated and are administered centrally. At the same time, the area of interest for this research work is closely linked to what happens to centrally-passed premises and decisions.

The outline of a model

This discussion of theory paves the way for the outline of a first theoretical model on which to base understanding and analysis of the experiment and the reform. It is my belief that this model is so general that it can be used to discuss both the political and the educational ideas and actions both around and in the experiment. On the basis of this model, I shall in the next chapter look more closely at the preliminaries to the experiment. This model will be supplemented according to the area under discussion, and I here present it in the form of several short points.

- Institutions function inside a framework, symbolizing that they are influenced from both state and society.
- The institutions and the institutional environment are institutionalized, a process which fills them with values, ideologies, traditions, routines etc which affects what goes on inside, and how the political and institutional environments look upon the institution.
- The institutions are divided into two main arenas, the arena of formulation and the arena of realization. The arena of formulation has as its most important task to formulate intentions, aims, plans, organizational charts, to talk, but also to resolve fighting, contradictions and disagreement. The arena of realization has as its main task to make a product or a service, like eg teaching.
- In each arena the conditions are different as to the participants, state regulations, claims from the institutional environment, what tasks shall be solved, what needs must be met etc. This also makes the strategies of solutions different, dependent upon each situation and each task.
- The connection between the two arenas is complicated, there is not necessarily any direct relationship, but there could be.
- The formulations are mostly affected by the institutional traditions, by the conditions in each arena of formulation and by signals from the institutional environment.
- The realizations are mostly affected by the institutional traditions, by the conditions in the arena of realization and by the technical environment.
- The formulations are normally easier to change than the realizations.

3 Experimental background and intentions

Introduction

Chapter 2 was concluded with a model suggesting terms for discussing formulations and realizations in politics and education. In this chapter I shall discuss what sorts of problems the experiment was meant to solve, how the experiment was marketed and how it was built up and organized in relation to the terms in the model in the previous chapter. In other words, this chapter will mainly deal with what happened in the political arena of formulation. The background material for this presentation consists of extensive interviews with the local leaders of the project, public documents, articles in the professional press and personal participation and observation during the initial phase of the project. First I explain the background to the experiment with 6-year-olds, and present briefly its aims, content and organization.

The preliminaries to the experiment with 6-year-olds

The question of the education of 6-year-olds has a long history in Norway. The starting age for school was a matter of controversy when the first law on school in rural areas was passed in 1739 (Tveit 1991a, p 83ff). The question was whether children should start school at 5, 6 or 7, and with the decision of 7 years of age, Norway got a later age for starting school than most other countries. The main reason for this, according to Tveit, was the special topographic conditions in Norway. Later this question has been taken up at various intervals. As early as 1859, the Storting voted to establish infant schools for children under compulsory school age, in preparation for the general school, but the decision was never implemented (Dokka 1967, p 189). Since 1945 a number of reports on and experiments with education for 6-year-olds have been made in Norway.¹ "Experiment with the provision of education for 6-year-olds" is the fifth major experiment for 6-year-olds in some shape or form since 1965. Many municipalities have had organized educational provisions for this age group ever since the early seventies.²

¹ Sande (1984) and Jacobsen et al (1986) both give an overview over these experiments.

² The Law on Compulsory Schooling (Lov om grunnskolen 1969) of 1969 made provision for a voluntary pre-school year, but an amendment in 1975, made this more difficult to go through with.

In the period around 1970, most of the political parties in Norway supported the idea of two parallel educational systems for pre-school children.³ They were in favour of a shorter pre-school for 6-year-olds, at the same time as they developed the kindergarten including the 6-year-olds. Both the Labour Party and the Conservatives also wanted to lower the age at which children should start school (Sande 1984, p 64ff). These standpoints reflected a definite view both on education and on the two institutions. The pre-school was based on narrowly defined educational needs. The kindergarten served two functions, day care and education viewed more on the grounds of social needs. The country's first law on the kindergarten was passed in 1975, mainly due to an increasing need to provide supervision for children under school age, which in turn is connected with developments on the labour market. Partly for that reason, but also because of the progressive educational ideology⁴ of the period, many political parties gave up the idea of a parallel two-way system for 6-year-olds and the desire to lower the school starting age.

The project for 4 to 9-year-olds

The matter was not left alone for very long. Hernes & Knudsen (1976, p 81 and p 93)⁵ stated that the basis for social differences in intellectual capacity is established very early, before children start school.⁶ The introduction of compulsory pre-school education in some form or other was therefore seen as an interesting way of reducing these differences. In 1979 the Minister for Church and Education⁷ was asked in Question Time in the Storting whether the department would consider in more detail the educational and economic aspects

³ The terms describing education for children under compulsory school-age could be a bit confusing. In Norway we distinguish between kindergarten and pre-school. Kindergarten is an autonomous institution and provides day care and an educational programme highlighting play. Pre-school has been a part of the school system, and the educational programme gives more weight to formal learning. None of these are compulsory. Nursery school teachers have competence to work with the pre-school children (children under compulsory school age 7), and the school teachers have the competence to work with the pupils in basic school, grades 1 through 9.

⁴ Cf chapter 9.

⁵ Hernes & Knudsen (1976) is a part of the project: "Survey of Living Standards" (Levekårsundersøkelsen). It was begun in 1972, with a mandate to map "the real living conditions for various groups in Norway". In chapter 9 I present some of the results of this survey.

⁶ This form of argumentation is to be found in several countries at that time, cf among others Coleman (1966), Jenks & al (1972).

⁷ It was Hallvard Bakke (Labour) who put the question to the minister, Einar Førde (Labour).

of lowering the school starting age from 7 to 6. The arguments for this were partly educational and partly practical. The most important were that this would mean improved kindergarten availability⁸ and that 6-year-olds are very keen to learn. The fact that Norway is one of the countries in Europe where children wait longest before starting school was also mentioned (Stortingsforhandlinger nr. 16, January 1980, p 1844).

The result was not quite what the questioner had expected. The minister chose to start an innovation programme, "The project for 4 to 9-year-olds" (1982-85), strongly influenced by the educational tradition in the kindergarten, which is child-centered and progressive (Øverby 1986). There were three key areas for this programme:

- to gain experience with mixed age groups
- to develop cooperation between different professional groups and municipal departments across established boundaries
- to develop a form of education in which the children's local environment was integrated into kindergarten, school age child care and infant school. (Tiltak for barn i alderen 4-9, 1986, p 11 ff and p 21 ff.) Neither was the project a purely educational matter, but based on cooperation between several departments.⁹

Unofficially, key persons in the departments referred to the project for 4 to 9-year-olds as a gigantic smokescreen, intended to conceal and prevent the question of lowering the compulsory school age from being debated and put on the agenda. The project for 4 to 9-year-olds was a reform started in order to suppress demands for a different reform. In Brunsson's opinion (1990a, p 43), this is the only way to stop reforms.

The terms of the project were not as they had been intended. One important reason was the change of government after the 1981 election, before the experiment had got off the ground. The Conservatives who then formed the government, had already been sceptical to the project at an earlier stage.¹⁰ They were more interested in the position of 6-year-olds from an environmental and educational standpoint (St. meld. nr. 76, (1981-82), p 10), expressed in the view that the need was great to engage 6-year-olds in educational activities that would lead to greater preparedness for starting school (Norsk Skoleblad no. 30, 1982,

⁸ At this time, 38% of all 6-year-olds attended kindergarten, whereas the figure for all children under school age was 19%.

⁹ The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration and the Ministry of Church and Education. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs withdrew from the project in 1982.

¹⁰ This was a minority government with members from the Conservatives, but supported by the Christian Peoples' Party and the Centre Party, with Kåre Willoch as Prime Minister.

p 1). The new government reduced the grants to the project.¹¹ At the same time, they started to look into, and initiate an experiment on the question of education for 6-year-olds.

The decision on a new experiment

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration and the Ministry of Church and Education set down a working party in the autumn of 1983 to look at an alternative to the project for 4 to 9-year-olds. The working party was given a broad mandate, but it revolved around three main questions

- 6-year-olds' educational needs
- educational cooperation between kindergarten and school
- parents' needs for supervision of their children

From St. meld. nr. 62 (1982-83), p 123 and Innst. S. nr. 187 (1983-84), p 47 it is also clear that the law on kindergartens was not to be altered and that the work was to be based on the experience gained in the project for 4 to 9-year-olds.¹² The working party handed over its report in December 1984, "Cooperation kindergarten-school", (Samarbeid barnehage-skole 1984).

The working party took the initiative to investigate how kindergarten and school cooperated in three counties (Kvien et al 1984, Thaule 1984). They discovered that it was very common to have a specific educational programme for 6-year-olds in kindergartens as part of their regular activities.¹³ Cooperation between kindergarten and school was less common, but the kindergartens felt the need strongly for increased contact between the institutions.¹⁴ The working party suggested a voluntary educational programme offered to all 6-year-olds, to be located in the kindergarten. The educational programme was to build a bridge between the education of the kindergarten and that of the school, to create continuity over several age groups. This was to take place in mixed age groups in which the family's need for supervision was met. They also thought

¹¹ An at times vehement public debate about the experiment took place in the media between the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Church and Education and the leader of the project. It reached its peak with the project leader in effect being muzzled.

¹² The law on kindergartens applies to organized educational activity with children aged 0-7. It was therefore not relevant to consider a lowering of the compulsory school starting age, which the members from the Conservative Party voted for in the Standing Committee on Church and Education (Innst. S. no. 187 (1983-84), p 47).

¹³ 88% of those who replied to one of the surveys said that they had such a specific educational programme for the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten. The reply percentage was low, 66% (Kvien et al 1984).

¹⁴ About half had some form of cooperation. This was partly purely administrative, partly related to individual children, parts of this took place at fairly lengthy intervals, so that the number that had a more continuous form of educational cooperation was small.

that experiments on this basis should be carried out. The working party saw the need for inter-departmental innovations to establish a coherent educational programme for kindergarten and school. The oldest kindergarten children and the youngest schoolchildren were to get a common educational programme (Samarbeid barnehage-skole, 1984, p 1).

At almost the same time, the government presented its long-term program to the Storting, in which they pointed to two possible solutions to the question of making special educational provisions for 6-year-olds (St. meld. nr. 83 (1984-85), p 249f). One of them was identical with the working party's proposal. The other was to lower the age at which children started school, as the Conservative Party had indicated earlier (Innst. S. nr. 187 (1983-84), p 47).¹⁵

There was wide public support for the idea of an experiment on specific educational provisions for 6-year-olds in the Storting, in the political parties, in the government and in the Norwegian Union of Teachers.¹⁶ There was also agreement that the provisions should be drawn up in accordance with the principles of kindergarten education. The division for nursery school teachers in the Norwegian Union of Teachers¹⁷ asked their national executive to boycott the experiments, and instead support the idea of experiments in the kindergarten only, but only a minority supported this (Harlyng 1986). This request led some places to local demonstrations by nursery school teachers. In two municipalities this later resulted in the experiment being stopped and cancelled. An analysis I made of all the material about 6-year-olds in "Norsk Skoleblad" 1979-1987 and "Debattserien for barnehagefolk" 1984-1987 shows that there were relatively few contributions on the topic (Haug 1986).¹⁸ With few exceptions, only nursery school teachers contributed to the debate.

¹⁵ This initiative happened at so late a stage that it was not possible to include it in the working party's discussions nor in their report (personal comment Bjørn Berg, member and secretary to the working party).

¹⁶ The Norwegian Union of Teachers had decided in principle that the 6-year-olds should be in the kindergarten, but was of the opinion that a broadly-orientated experimental programme was necessary before the final reform was drawn up.

¹⁷ In Norway every kindergarten group is to be led by a nursery school teacher. From 1965 almost all nursery school teachers have been members of the Norwegian Union of Teachers. At about the same time as the debate on the experiment with 6-year-olds started, the nursery school teachers discussed whether to continue as members of that union. They were extremely dissatisfied with the situation there (see eg Norsk Skoleblad no. 30, 1985, p 3).

¹⁸ "Norsk Skoleblad" (Norwegian School Journal) is the organ of the members of the Norwegian Union of Teachers. "Debattserien for barnehagefolk" (The Debate Journal of Kindergarten) is an independent periodical founded by nursery school teachers who felt the need for their own professional publication.

At the same time, it became more and more obvious that there was disagreement about how these provisions were to be organized.¹⁹ Whatever the case, the discussion focussed on the fact that it was a question of organization. My impression is that for many, the question of organization was closely linked to the question of content. That is why the Conservatives wanted a gradual lowering of the age for starting school, and a lengthening of the school day. The Christian Peoples' Party believed that a pre-school year under the combined auspices of the kindergarten and the school was the best answer. The Labour Party wanted a more continuous public responsibility for children aged 0-7, and a more rapid development of provisions for the group aged 4-9 with cooperation between kindergarten, school and school age child care. The Socialist Left Party thought that children should start school at 7, and that 6-year-olds belonged in the kindergarten. The minister in the Department of Family and Consumer Affairs (Conservative) believed that 6-year-olds ought to go to school, the minister in the Ministry of Church and Education (KrF) thought 6-year-olds should be in the kindergarten (Kruge1986).²⁰ The Norwegian Union of Teachers was against children starting school earlier, and supported the idea of provisions for 6-year-olds in the kindergarten.

The idea of an experiment was developed by the government. In the spring of 1985, before the deadline for the working party to deliver its report, IMTEC²¹, a privately owned research and development firm in Oslo, was engaged to prepare a plan for the experiment. That was completed in November 1985, and an internal working party in the two cooperating departments took responsibility from then on and adjusted the plans somewhat.²² The government proposed starting an experiment with provisions of education for 6-year-olds with three experimental models.²³ Three main aims were formulated: (1) to gain experience that could form the basis for a possible future decision on whether to make educational provisions for 6-year-olds. (2) to find financial and

¹⁹ This is revealed in several public documents: St. meld. nr. 62 (1982-83), Innst. S. nr. 187 (1983-84), St. meld. nr. 50 (1984-85), Innst. S. nr. 263 (1984-85), St. meld. nr. 83 (1984-85, p 249 - 250). It is also apparent from an analysis I have made of the debate in Norsk Skoleblad 1979-1986 and of Debattserien for barnehagefolk 1984-1987.

²⁰ Kjell Magne Bondevik (Cristian People's Party) was minister in charge of the Ministry of Church and Education. In the Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs, the minister was Astrid Gjertsen (Conservative).

²¹ An abbreviation for International Management Training for Educational Change. The report from IMTEC: Forsøk med samarbeid barnehage-skole, 1985 (Experiment with cooperation kindergarten-school, 1985) is drawn up in respect of §5 in the law regarding public insight into the state administration, and cannot be published.

²² Cf chapter 10.

²³ Cf below.

administrative arrangements suited to local conditions and needs (3) to develop an educational program for that age-group (St. prp nr. 48 (1985-86), p 1, *Evalueringsnotat 7. februar 1986*, p 1).²⁴ The Storting discussed the matter at its meeting 18 March 1986, and the experiment was unanimously approved (*Stortingsforhandling nr. 24 1986*, p 2303 ff, *Innst. S. nr. 118, (1985-86)*, p 1). In the end, the Norwegian Union of Teachers gave its support to the experiment, but made a number of demands that meant that the experiment to make provisions for 6-year-olds in school was difficult to carry out.²⁵

The experiment

The experimental educational programme for 6-year-olds began in autumn 1986 with a pilot phase in 12 municipalities. In the autumn of 1987 the first of the three experimental years started in 42 municipalities. These had been chosen from among the 200-odd municipalities that had shown an interest and sent applications in the spring of 1986.²⁶ The experiment consisted of an educational programme comprising 12-15 hours per week, and three different models were to be tested. In all the experimental models there should be a certain amount of cooperation between school and kindergarten.

- the kindergarten model: the experiment located in the ordinary kindergarten
- the school model: the experiment located in the school.
- the combined model: the experiment as cooperation between kindergarten and school

Table 3.1 shows the frequencies of children and experimental groups for each of the models each year. The table shows that the number of children and groups is not constant, but varied from one year to the next. This was mostly

²⁴ *Evalueringsnotat 7. februar 1986* (The Evaluation note 7 February 1986) was an invitation to send the department suggestions for an evaluation plan. The note gave an outline of the experiment, and made clear the department's intentions with the evaluation.

²⁵ No experiment is to count as a year in relation to the the law governing compulsory education, the measure cannot be made compulsory during the experimental period, experiments administered by the headmaster of a school and involving teachers not specially qualified to work in kindergarten cannot be approved, local curriculum plans for the experiment must be drawn up that are in accordance with the national curriculum plan and in the tradition of the Norwegian kindergarten, the area requirements laid down in the law governing kindergartens must be respected and the number of experimental groups in the school model is to be restricted, (cf Stokke 1986, *Rammeavtale om forsøk ... mellom KUD/FAD og NL/NKF 1986*).

²⁶ As of 1 January 1989 there was a total of 448 municipalities in Norway. Thus, almost half were willing to take part in the experiment.

due to local conditions. This variation also means that the staff of the experiment could have changed somewhat, but this has not been looked into.

Table 3.1 Frequencies of children and groups for each of the experimental models for four years of the experiment.

Year	Kindergarten		School		Combined		Total	
	Children	Groups	Children	Groups	Children	Groups	Children	Groups
1987	45	5	236	18	128	16	409	39
1988	280	23	487	39	734	75	1501	137
1989	350	26	454	39	797	76	1601	141
1990	310	38	510	38	705	81	1525	157

In addition each year the experiment involved about 150 school teachers, 150 nursery school teachers, about 100 kindergartens and 90 schools. The nursery school teachers were the most active in the experiment. Their mean working hours with the 6-year-olds were five times as long as the school teachers', respectively 15 hours a week and 3 hours a week. This to a great extent gives the school teachers only a function as cooperating teacher, and the nursery school teachers are in charge.

The difficulties associated with getting the project off the ground were far greater than had been anticipated. It was not until November 1986 that this stage was completed in the pilot municipalities. Then the project plan (Projektbeskrivelse 1986) had been distributed to everyone involved. There, six aims for the experimental activity were formulated:²⁷

1. To gain experience and information about how various provisions for 6-year-olds work in practice
2. To strengthen the cooperation between kindergarten and school at all levels with the aim of creating greater continuity between the institutions in which children grow up
3. To calculate the financial implications of the various models, were they to include all 6-year-olds
4. To contribute to improving the quality of the education provided
5. To stimulate efforts to achieve an innovative process with a clear purpose in schools and kindergartens
6. To lay the foundations for improving the expertise and know-how of teachers and administrators in kindergartens and schools.

²⁷ My translation.

The strategy for the experiment

The plans for the experiment were partly in accordance with the new view of R&D and innovation in school that replaced the activities of the National Council for Innovation in Education when the latter was abolished (St. meld. nr. 79 (1983-84)).²⁸ The new model is complex and opens for differences of opinion. It assumes that control of educational reform is to lie closer to the state department, and the main responsibility should lie with the council of experts for the appropriate type of school. At the same time, innovation is not to be a matter for experts only, but a task for the teachers who have been entrusted with the day-to-day responsibility for the education. The National Council for Innovation in Education was supposed to build its activities on a traditional R&D-perspective, with a close connection between research and development. As mentioned, this model did not show the results promised. A new R&D concept was introduced, with more emphasis attached to the D, the practical development work and less to the R, the research (St. meld. nr. 79 (1983-84), p 6).²⁹

In the experiment with 6-year-olds, a separate secretariat was established in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration. The fact that the Council for the Primary and Lower Secondary School³⁰ was not granted responsibility for this experiment, as had been its wish and as was assumed would be the case in the new R&D model, can be linked to the fact that the relations between the councils of experts and the state departments had gradually become somewhat strained (Telhaug & Korsvold 1989, p 79ff).³¹ Just as important is the fact that this experiment was based on cooperation between two departments, and that the point of departure for the experiment was the kindergarten. From that quarter an eventual link with the Council for the Primary and Lower Secondary School was undesirable, since that would give the

²⁸ The National Council for Innovation in Education was in reality responsible for all centrally-initiated innovation and reform work in Norwegian basic and secondary school in the period 1955-1984.

²⁹ The term development work involves changing education by means of the educational and practical insight of the teaching staff. This must among other thing also be seen as a reaction to the lack of usefulness of educational research (cf chapter 2).

³⁰ The Council For the Primary and Lower Secondary School is a council of experts on questions concerning basic compulsory education in Norway. The Council was abolished from 1 January 1992.

³¹ The former director of the Council for the Primary and Lower Secondary School confirms this (Storaas 1991). He writes that never before in the history of Norwegian education had there been so many centrally organized and centrally determined areas of priority as there were after the Storting voted to decentralize R&D-activities and make them the responsibility of the councils of experts.

school a more dominating role. Neither does there exist any equivalent council which could have been an alternative. Another factor is that the experiment was centrally initiated and decentralized. Most of the development work was to take place locally in the experimental groups and the municipalities involved. Especially in that respect, the experiment is an example of how the new R&D model can function.³²

There were few centrally dictated frames and actions. There was a joint secretariat and an Executive Committee in the departments in Oslo. A joint reference group was established with members from other state departments, trade unions, employers, research staff and municipalities. A national curriculum was drawn up in the course of the experiment and was to function as a common framework of terms. It was to be developed in local curriculum plans in each experimental group. There was a joint evaluation body. The municipalities received grants in accordance with the rates for the kindergarten, and a small grant for project administration and cooperation between the experiment and the school. There was a coordinated program of instruction and guidance.

Which problems was the experiment intended to solve?

The problem area and the intentions of the experiment with 6-year-olds were neither static, stable nor distinct.³³ This is often the result when different interests are given the opportunity to influence a case (Gundem 1983, p 62f). Rothstein (1986, p 80f) discusses similar problems related to an evaluation of the intentions in Swedish educational and employment policy, and identifies a number of problems of interpretation and understanding, which leads him to draw the following conclusion:

This lack of unity in the decision-making process in relation to reform policy means that a decision on the intentions of a reform cannot usually take as its point of departure any form of literal interpretation of individual documents containing decisions. Instead, in order to be able (approximately) to establish the intentions of the reform, an analytically freer interpretation of a mass of material, of which the documents only form a part, must be made. (Rothstein 1986, p 81, my translation).

³² This is a very interesting question in itself, which I cannot go into in any detail.

³³ I discuss in greater detail in chapter 10 the changes made during the experiment.

On the basis of different forms of documentation, I have, as Rothstein (1986) recommends, studied the various ideas and problems in the arena of formulation. I make clear which problems were to be solved, who "owned" them, and what the role of the experiment might be in that context.³⁴

Both the Socialist Left Party and the Norwegian Union of Teachers believed that the place for the 6-year-olds was the kindergarten, no alternative was necessary. In their view the problem was that kindergartens were not being built fast enough. In that perspective they therefore considered the experiment to be unnecessary, and a step towards introducing a lower school starting age, which they were against. However, they accepted the experiment, probably mainly because it could be seen as important educational development work of value to the general educational programme for 6-year-olds in kindergarten.

Some people were dissatisfied with the way kindergartens made provisions for 6-year-olds. Kjell Magne Bondevik³⁵ claimed that the 6-year-olds were not happy in the kindergarten and that the kindergarten did not present enough of a challenge to them (Bondevik 1986). This indicated a lack of confidence in the kindergarten. Possible failings in the kindergartens were not documented. The research on the question of the benefits of a stay in a kindergarten is on the other hand, somewhat complex and does not provide an unambiguous result (Clarke & Clarke 1976, Belsky & Steinberg 1978, Berrueta-Clement et al 1984). New studies exist which argue against this criticism of the kindergarten. Ekholm & Hedin (1986, p 50-51) find that 6-year-olds enjoy the kindergarten more than any other age group. Andersson (1986) finds that in certain circumstances children from kindergartens get on better at school than other children. In relation to the expansion of kindergartens, the situation for 6-year-olds in

³⁴ The points I make are in the main based on Stortingsforhandling (The minutes of the Storting) nr. 16, (1979-80), p 1844ff, Stortingsforhandling nr. 24, (1985-86), p 2303ff, Samarbeid barnehage-skole (1984), Innst. S. (Report from standing committees in the Storting) nr. 263 (1984-85), NOU 1984:26, Prosjektbeskrivelse (Project Description) 1986 and on an examination of material about the experiment with 6-year-olds in Norsk Skoleblad and Debattserien for barnehagefolk. Evalueringsnotat 7.2. 1986, St. prp. (Proposition to the Storting) nr. 48 (1985-86), Innst. S. nr. 118 (1985-86), Letter dated 29. 01. 1986 to all Norwegian municipalities with an invitation to take part in the experiment (KUD/FAD: brev til kommunene 1986), Press release about the experiment with 6-year-olds starting autumn 1986, 28.01.1986, Minister Bakken's and Storting's representative Bondevik's speeches at the conference "Kindergarten - pre-school - school", National Child and Youth Council 30 October 1986, (Bakken 1986, Bondevik 1986), and Skisse til Rammepplan for forsøket (National curriculum plan for the experiment, 1986).

³⁵ Kjell Magne Bondevik (Christian People's Party) was Minister in charge of the Department for Church and Education when the experiment was introduced and approved by the Storting.

Norway has never been better.³⁶ The consequence of the dissatisfaction with kindergartens that was voiced certainly justifies looking for other alternative solutions.

The working party concluded that there was relatively little cooperation between kindergarten and school on the question of 6-year-olds.³⁷ On a professional basis they considered the result to be unfortunate. They recommended developments in this field as the kindergarten staff wanted, and as The Council for Europe had also recommended earlier (Woodhead 1979, p 117ff). The Christian People's Party and the Labour Party also voted for this as a solution to the problem of making educational provisions for 6-year-olds. They used expressions like: cooperation, link, gentle transition, inter-disciplinary, mixed age groups. Against this background, the problem area for the experiment is to develop cooperation between kindergarten and school. This was also the general basis of IMTEC's plans.

The fourth problem that lay at the root of this experiment was dissatisfaction with school. The Conservatives (H) were in favour of lowering the school starting age, and extending the length of the school day. A consequence of the Conservative's criticism of educational policy all through the 80's, where they have claimed there has been a lowering of standards and a deterioration in quality.³⁸ These are arguments that are in direct contrast with the ideas presented by the working party. Nor is the criticism of school and of its function and content documented. The result of the OMI-project³⁹ that investigated this early in the 80's would seem to indicate the opposite (OMI-rapport nr. 26, 1983). The task of the experiment would be to prepare for an earlier start at school.

The fifth problem that is mentioned in connection with the experiment is the need to develop a curriculum plan for the educational activities with 6-year-olds. It was claimed that such programmes did not exist, which is not quite correct. The Council for Innovation developed just such a curriculum plan in connection with their experimental activities in the 1960's (Førskolebarnet 1969). Both the

³⁶ In 1970 roughly 2% of pre-school children (age 0 to 7) in Norway attended kindergarten. The figure increased to 19% in 1979. At the end of 1990, 73% of all 6-year-olds attended kindergarten, with a total coverage of 36% in relation to all children under school age.

³⁷ In a later investigation Kjørholt et al (1990) has also confirmed this problem. The Norwegian kindergarten has enjoyed a very free position in relation to school, and much freer than in other countries (cf chapter 5).

³⁸ Cf chapter 9.

³⁹ The OMI-project "Oppfølging av Mønsterplanens Intensjoner" studied the implementation of the National Curriculum Plan for Compulsory School (Mønsterplan 1974) released in 1974 (cf also chapters 5 and 9).

programme and its use have been studied and evaluated by Hofset (1972). In the debate in the Storting, a little was said about the content on which the experiment was to be based. This is the only place from any official political quarters that any attempt has been made to say what is meant by the expression "best" for children. The content is to be chosen from and be typical of the best of the traditions in both institutions. There is to be cooperation between kindergarten and school and it is to be based on the needs of 6-year-olds. There was agreement that the work with 6-year-olds should be linked to the kindergarten tradition, at the same time as there was disagreement on where this was to take place. In this lies either a belief that any institution is free to choose to build on any tradition, or that the institution in which the provisions are made will influence them so much that it is worth fighting for. If so, then the first point cannot apply fully, namely that the tradition on which one builds is decisive. Viewed as a whole, these different interests can very easily end up in opposition to one another.

Expectations and assumptions

The documents from the planning phase⁴⁰ also express expectations of the experiment in other aspects than those of content and problems mentioned above. In many connections and especially in the public rhetoric of politics, the experiment is presented as being a classic scientific experiment, in which the results of the three models are to be compared at the end with a view to what gave the "best" benefit for the 6-year-olds.⁴¹ The evaluation is expected to provide clear-cut answers to the questions of the policy-makers. The experiment and its evaluation are to give the politicians a basis on which to make that final choice. The idea is to see the experiment as a link in an optimistic, rational strategy in accordance with the views of change and research in the reform perspective.⁴² As I shall point out later, the necessary conditions for this were not present.

The experiment's secretariat tried early on to tone down this classic experimental interpretation. They presented the experiment mostly as educational development, with the use of expressions like building up expertise, a process with a purpose, qualitative development (Prosjektbeskrivelse 1986).⁴³ In the course of the initiation, more and more emphasis was placed on the development

⁴⁰ See footnote 34, this chapter.

⁴¹ Although the term "the best" had not been clarified.

⁴² Cf chapter 1.

⁴³ The project leader also touches on this aspect in his evaluation of the work of the secretariat (Berg 1991). The aims formulated by the secretariat are very similar to those drawn up earlier by IMTEC.

aspect. There is also a trend away from few, relatively concise formulations towards many indistinct and ambiguous aims as the experiment proceeded. The experiment started with a fairly loose framework both in organizational and educational terms, with great stress placed on the developmental aims and emphasis on decentralized responsibility with little central control. This would seem to indicate that ideas about the experiment became more and more vague, the closer one came to the arena of realization with its demands for more concrete action.

Political clarification on the question of educational provisions for 6-year-olds was supposed to wait until the experiment had been completed and evaluated. The issue was then to be returned to the Storting for a broad debate and final decision. At the same time there was an ambivalent approach to what to do with the results of the experimental activity. Quite a few argued in favour of what solutions they wanted and would finally vote for, even as early as in the debate about financial support for the experiment. But they still voted in favour of the experiment. In that way, they signalled that the results of the experiment were not decisive for their standpoints and for a solution in the matter. Clear warnings were also given from several quarters that the results of the experiment and of its evaluation would not be binding for their standpoints on the question of future educational provisions for 6-year-olds. Among others, this applies to the representatives from the Socialist Left, the Labour Party, the Conservatives and the Norwegian Union of Teachers. And in an interview with Sissel Rønbech⁴⁴ (Labour) in 1986, it becomes clear that the Labour Party is beginning to have second thoughts on the question of 6-year-olds, away from the kindergarten solution (Solli 1986, p 50), indicating that the attitudes could be changed quite independent of the results of the experiment.

A vague project?

As is commented on already, the experiment is no experiment, in the classic scientific meaning, in the way suggested for instance by Campbell & Stanly (1963), even though the design in itself could be interpreted to mean that. It is not possible to compare the experimental models on certain psychological or educational outcomes. The experimental models and groups are biased, a form of self-recruitment has been working. The experimental treatments are partly unknown. The experiment is most of all a developmental project where the staff in the experimental groups are to choose and develop the content, organization

⁴⁴ Sissel Rønbech was for many years minister in several departments, and thus a key person in the party.

and educational methods as time goes by, according to local needs and priorities. The criteria for comparing experimental models are not defined. The experimental models are not comparable, they are localized to different institutions with different traditions and different conditions which, according to the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2, will function differently. For the research the consequences of this is to study the educational processes in each of the experimental models to get an understanding of what goes on and why, in accordance with the theory-orientated research-strategy.⁴⁵

Another picture of the beginning of the experiment gives the impression of chaos, which at that time raised the question whether this situation could be explained in any other ways than that somebody had not done their (home)work well enough, as would often be the interpretations in the reform perspective. I will point out a number of factors that can put this into some sort of system.

Reforms must be sold

Studies of the initiation of reforms show that it is often problematic to get them approved (Dahllöf 1971, Telhaug 1990b). Reforms are often the result of conflicts, at the same time as they often result in conflicts (Weiler 1985, p 190ff). Reforms therefore have to be marketed and "sold" both in the arena of political formulation and to the institutional environment. Key groups must be convinced that this is a correct, necessary and good idea and that it will give the organization a more modern and rational form (Brunsson & Olsen 1990b), and integrate them more effectively in the larger technocratic society (House 1974, p 254). Reforms are therefore often presented in simple and schematic formulations by way of principles, theories or metaphors. They are clearer and simpler than reality. They link the reforms more to the world of ideas and formulations than to the practical world (Czarniawska-Joerges 1988, p 159, Brunsson 1990a). House (1974, p 185ff) points to the same phenomenon when he uses the term "overselling" about reforms. Elsewhere this has been characterized as "over-advertising" (Brunsson & Winberg 1990, p 174).

The fact that the politicians now wanted to decide where 6-year-olds should be with the help of concrete experiments seems to have been felt by most people to be rational, logical and sensible. The many newspaper headlines of the type "6-year-olds at school?" indicate that most people can have understood this to be an experiment to find out whether 6-year-olds should start school or not. This gave the presentation of and argumentation for the experiment a simple and straightforward form. It makes the reform easy to understand, and was perhaps necessary in order to win support. With the exception of the reactions of the

⁴⁵ Cf chapter 1.

nursery school teachers in the Norwegian Union of Teachers, great interest for the project was shown by parents and in the municipalities.⁴⁶

The political situation

The next factor concerns the political situation, in other words the circumstances on the national political arena of formulation. The situation can best be described as unstable. There was disagreement over what the problem concerning the 6-year olds really involved, and how it should be solved. This conflict goes right back to before the 70's, and keeps on cropping up in various contexts. The main problem seems to be whether the 6-year-olds must either attend kindergarten or school. Behind this organizational question lie deeper and far more complex questions of principle. They are partly ideological, concerning what sort of childhood Norwegians are to have. They are partly dependent on professional ties, which professional group is to work with which category of children and that is linked to the question of formal qualifications.⁴⁷ The standpoints adopted by the various parties in this matter were first and foremost based on previous decisions in this or similar questions. There is a close link between the parties' general standpoints on educational policy and their positions in relation to the initiation of the experiment with 6-year-olds. This may be a signal to the effect that attitudes to the experiment are based more on traditional standpoints and ideas than on an analysis of the problems in the field. And vice versa, that there is opposition to the fact that the activities (meaning the experiment) shall "decide" what ideas one is supposed to represent. This could mean that the solutions are apparent first, which in turn decide the problems, indicating other functions of the experiment than those formulated.⁴⁸

The political parties cannot agree on one alternative, it is as if they have one each. The way out is to demonstrate the ability to act by initiating the experiment, as a political compromise. The result was an experiment with three models that reflect five problems and three different solutions: to develop the kindergarten, to find alternatives to a kindergarten that is not working well enough, to improve cooperation between kindergarten and school, to prepare for a lowering of the school starting age and to develop a curriculum for working

⁴⁶ The municipalities' interest cannot always be said to be concentrated on this question alone. Many municipalities claimed they were interested because they believed that the government would pay most of the cost, which was not the case.

⁴⁷ I return to all this in chapters 9 and 10.

⁴⁸ A vital point in the "garbage can" model is that the timing between problem and solution is certainly not always in that order. A more detailed analysis of these relationships would have given a broader foundation on which to base knowledge about the experimental activity.

with 6-year-olds. Each of the main standpoints in the question was given its own experimental model. Latent in this compromise is a reservation against allowing the results of the experiment too much significance for possible later decisions. The situation was very close to what we mean by the term hypocrisy, that ideas and actions at different times follow different interests and norms.⁴⁹ To make use of the experiment in this way is by no means an unusual way to solve political disagreements. These are well-known strategies, perhaps routines. Lindensjö & Lundgren (1986b) and Lindensjö (1988) have arrived at a model for this, on the basis of an analysis of the development of Swedish educational policy (table 3.2).

Table 3.2 The relationship between political aims, knowledge, experiment and research

	The knowledge is certain	The knowledge is uncertain
Political agreement on aims	1. Rational, technocratic decisions	2. Experiment and research
Political disagreement on aims	3. Experiments and research	4. Decentralization

When knowledge about an issue is perceived to be fairly certain, and there is political agreement as to the aims, the decisions will be relatively rational, and put into effect in the usual beaurocratic/technocratic manner as pure engineering (square no 1). When there is disagreement about the aims, or when the knowledge about the issue is uncertain, there is an increasing tendency to initiate experiments and research. (Squares no 2 and 3). When there is disagreement about the aims, and the knowledge is uncertain, the answer is increased decentralization and control of the aims. (Square no 4). The experiment with 6-year-olds belongs to a large extent in square no 3, with "certain" knowledge among the actors, in the sense that most of them had already made up their minds about their standpoint in the matter, but with strong political disagreement between the parties. The main question is then whether the parties would accept other solutions than their own, if the results of the experimental activities were to provide a basis for that. Based on documentation from other comparable experiments, that would appear to be doubtful (Weiler 1989, Cuban 1990).

⁴⁹ Cf chapter 2.

Routine solutions

This symbiosis between education and politics, or educational policy and experiment, has a tradition in Norway. As early as the Act of Innovation in School from 1954, many of the reforms in Norwegian education were carried out against a background of experimental activity. This experimental activity was to a large extent really an alternative way of creating an educational policy, and putting reforms into effect. The main concern then was not what independent results the experiment itself produced, but that the experimental activity guaranteed the implementation of certain reforms (Telhaug & Haugaløkken 1984). In passing, it is also interesting to note that the same ambivalence both with regard to experiment and to research was to be found in relation to the activity of the National Council for Innovation in Education, as with the experiment with 6-year-olds. And the definitions of experiment and of research that were used are just as unclear in both cases (cf Telhaug 1990b, p 25ff). And that can be an indication that the phenomenon is of a more general character, in line with the discussion in chapter 2.

Market orientation

From the material presented here, it would appear that it was politically more important to market the experiment than to prepare the plan and details. After what had happened in connection with the circumstances surrounding kindergarten-school in the years following 1979, 6-year-olds were firmly placed on the political agenda. There was great public interest in the project, as shown by the fact that over 200 municipalities wished to take part. When the issue was now on the agenda, it was more relevant to make decisions than to continue the analysis and discussion. This was a demand made by the world surrounding the politicians, from the institutional environment. The government must demonstrate the power to act in the question of making educational provisions for 6-year-olds. It is important in relation to government statements and party programmes. It is also important because of the strong criticism of the project for 4 to 9-year-olds and because of public opinion.

Thus the experiment did not arise out of a situation that is directly problematic or critical in the arena of realization or in the technical environment, although it is common belief that such reforms must concern felt or experienced problems in key groups in society. For Edelman (1988), reforms are symbolic actions that serve to strengthen ideologies. Hilgartner & Bosk (1988) claim that although a case is defined as a social problem, it does not necessarily mean that the situation has become worse than it was. The solving of problems is not the most important aspect, or that the reform is vital to the development of welfare, equality, etc. The reform is a signal about who is taking responsibility, who is

not, what is important right now for dominant groups and the institutional environment and what is unimportant for them, etc. What are the "real" problems or not is not the main question. In this situation, there exists no coordinated analysis of what problems either the experiment or the reform are to solve, what alternative solutions that might be relevant or what sort of strategies are to be employed. No concrete coordinated plan for the experiment exists. Many of the details and a presentation of the intentions and plans in concrete terms were lacking. During the initiation, the experiment was presented in rather general and vague terms. There was a complete lack of information from the departments and great frustration in the municipalities. One of the main reasons for this was that the departments and the experiment's secretariat had no information to give. The details that were so vital in order to get started had not been worked out and prepared. When the Storting voted to initiate the experiment, no official detailed plan existed for the experiment. The IMTEC plan was just a proposal, and had not been made public.⁵⁰ The report from the working party is used as documentation of the problems, but its implications are exaggerated. The party had concentrated almost entirely on the cooperation between kindergarten and school and how best to solve that question. The purpose of this report "Samarbeid barnehage - skole" (1984) is in this context first and foremost to provide legitimacy for both the experiment and the standpoints that were presented. In June 1986 the first national curriculum plan (Skisse til rammeplan 1986) was available. This plan contained little that was of help in the work.⁵¹ Not until November 1986 was the official project distributed. The experiment had really only been prepared with saleable "headlines" and not by way of detailed and thorough analyses and plans for what was to happen. Neither were the departments aware of all the problems they were to meet.⁵²

Legitimation

The experiment and the reforms are discussed on the basis of the circumstances in the institutional environment and the arena of formulation, and not so much on the basis of the circumstances in the arena of realization where the "real" problems exist. And the decisions that were taken were clearly of a temporary nature, since they are addressed more to the institutional than to the technical environment. This is a situation that can be interpreted in the direction of meaning that the decision to approve the experiment has other functions. Weiler

⁵⁰ Cf footnote no 21 in this chapter.

⁵¹ Cf chapter 5.

⁵² Among other things, the unions demanded a special tariff agreement for those involved in the project. It took a great deal of effort over a long period to produce such an agreement.

(1983b, 1985, 1989, 1990) has developed a theory that reforms first and foremost have functions of providing legitimacy. He expands the tradition from Max Weber (eg Weber 1990) and builds on a number of critical theorists both within and outside the Marxist tradition, who on varying bases claim that the modern state has a problem with its credibility and with being accepted by society and its members (Habermas 1975, Lindberg et al 1977). The state has a constant lack of legitimacy, which is compensated through increased state activity and state projects. This in turn further increases the need for legitimacy. In this way, the state becomes entwined in a spiral of legitimacy that becomes ever more complicated. Politics then becomes, as Brunsson (1989) mentions, strategies for compensatory legitimacy, to fulfil the need for legitimacy through conscious manipulation (Weiler 1983a, p 261). This occurs in particular in connection with education, because education is a key to status, power, etc., and because education is often associated with conflicts about norms and values and requires a high level of legitimacy.

The dilemma is that the rhetoric in the arena of formulation concerning the education reforms creates expectations and needs that are impossible to satisfy in the modern capitalist state. The state in the most highly industrialized countries has a tendency to maximize the political gain of creating reforms, and of pretending to implement them. At the same time the political price of carrying out the reforms is reduced as much as possible (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 58, Weiler 1989). This simplification has two important consequences. One is the distance to the complex everyday reality of the arena of realization becomes so great that the reform will not be able to keep its promises, at the same time as it raises the level of ambition (Brunsson & Winberg 1990, p 174ff). The other is that the reform as a whole becomes vague and thereby open to interpretation. This creates a climate for various interpretations and understandings, and for outside pressure (Pincus 1974, p 125f, Majone & Wildavsky 1984, Rothstein 1986, p 80ff). This is particularly the case when an educational reform aims to introduce a new curriculum that is intended to unite several educational traditions, as in the experiment with 6-year-olds. Then the intentions and plans often become ambiguous, full of compromises and vague (Lundgren et al 1983, p 13ff). At the same time, there is no doubt that the impression was given that the experiment would be significant for the outcome of the question of future educational provisions for 6-year-olds in Norway.

Two pictures

All in all, the background to the experiment and the initiation reveal two pictures. The official one is close to the reform perspective and gives the impression of rational and controlled experimental activity, with working parties, reports, planning and implementation as its characteristics. The other picture

reveals that it is not a rational process that has taken place in the preparations for the experiment with 6-year-olds. The process is characterized by a complex situation in which outer pressure, political marketing, political "horsetrading", the need for legitimacy and traditional solutions have all been combined. The government did not manage to implement a reform, and initiated instead an experiment, which in many ways had the same political effect as if the reform had been implemented. It provided legitimacy and demonstrated power. Once the idea of the experiment first became a topic of discussion, the terms of reference for its development have to a far greater extent been the circumstances in the political arena of formulation and the institutional environment, rather than analyses of practical and social problems in the arena of realization.

The experiment became a far different and far more comprehensive and complex one than that suggested by the working party in 1984. It is certainly possible to combine several of the problems and solutions in one and the same experiment, but it is difficult to imagine that it will be possible to compare the results of the work in the various fields with a view to what is best for the 6-year-olds. These are incomparable quantities, which each in its own right functions on the basis of its own set of premises. A comparison of the outcome or the result on scientific grounds is completely impossible and irresponsible. The experiment is little suited to more experimental reflections. The consequence for the research is to study what is happening in the three experimental models as a basis for comparison. I discussed this with the leaders of the experiment on several occasions, formulated it in reports and included it in verbal feedback to the staff involved in the experiment in many contexts. On the one hand, the comments were accepted. On the other, I met throughout the experiment formulations that also revealed that ideas about this varied considerably. This is perhaps an example of how deeply rooted the reform perspective and the experimental science sit.

Summary part 1, introductory presentation

In this part I have presented the field of research in theory and in practice. I study an actual educational reform, in which "The experiment with an educational programme for 6-year-olds" (1986-1990) plays a key role. I further develop the train of thought and analyses from the evaluation of this experiment, by building on the material gathered from it. The interest of knowledge in this thesis is the question of how education is established, maintained and altered, and what influences these processes. This raises two research issues: (1) What factors have affected the educational ideas and practice in the experiment? (2) What role does the experiment play for the educational reform that follows it?

The experiment is the first step in a political and educational reform process. The experiment is a part of the reform, at the same time as the actual processes in experiments and in reforms are very similar. The main difference between them is that the latter are more comprehensive and permanent than the former.

There exists a certain dominating normative notion about how experiments and reforms in the public sector are to be carried out. This reform perspective is virtually supreme in practical politics and education. It is a rational, top-down perspective, with a strong belief that both the experiment and the reform are implemented in the way intended, and that the intended results are achieved. Experience of this perspective over a long period shows that it has its failings. One is that the reforms are often not implemented in the way in which they were intended. Another is that there are difficulties in achieving the aims that were intended.

Research has an important place in the reform perspective, both as legitimation and to provide a concrete factual foundation on which to base decisions. However, the research has to a lesser degree affected decisions on educational reforms and the direction these reforms have been given. The reasons for this are partly that the research has not studied the reforms critically. It lacks an empirical and theoretical basis for being able to explain what is taking place in the reforms and why the intentions have not been fulfilled. This has been partly explained by the fact that the reforms do not adhere to the rational principles and steps that are formulated in the reform perspective. Often political decisions also have a limited rationality, in which the result of an experiment is just one of many factors that count.

The study of this experiment for 6-year-olds and the reform associated with the experiment is based on a different foundation than the reform perspective. It is based on an alternative understanding of how education is established and maintained. The research into the experiment is founded on a more critical analysis of the actual experimental process, where the most important factor is what happens in and around the experiment as it progresses.

Since both the experiment and the reform involve two educational institutions that are to cooperate on the curriculum and over the children, I regarded it as useful to base the study on a certain organizational theory. Organizations go through processes in interaction with the surrounding environment and in relation to the demands that are made of that environment. This creates various forms of institutionalized traditions both in the institutions and in the environment that is interested in them. The traditions are resistant to change, but at the same time they are carried forward. Two different types of institution are distinguished, the politically orientated and the action orientated. This provides a basis for developing two forms of structures in the institutions. The political structure is related to the environment round the institution, the institutionalized

environment. This structure is an arena of formulation that conveys information to the surroundings about what the institution is doing, and has as its aim to formulate intentions, plans and to solve disagreements and conflicts. The action-orientated structure regulates the actual activity in the institution, and is the actual realization of its tasks. The relationship between the two levels, the formulations and the realizations, can vary. Often there will not be any particular link between them. Then it is possible to formulate the necessary and publicly approved ideas about eg teaching, while the activity itself is not altered very much. Based on the same line of thought, reforms must be "sold", both to politicians and to the institutional environment, for them to be implemented or approved. These theoretical reflections function as a basis for the further study of the problems with which the study is concerned.

The background to the experiment with 6-year-olds can be followed from two different perspectives. The one is the rational, as in the reform perspective. In relation to this view, the experiment is the result of thorough committee reports, against which background the experiment was presented. The Storting decided unanimously to try out three models, one with the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten, one with them in school and one based on cooperation between the kindergarten and the school. The experiment was to decide which of these would be the best solution for the 6-year-olds. The experiment began in 1986 with a pilot phase in 12 municipalities. The main phase started in 1987 in 42 municipalities. The experimental strategy was decentralized, with few central measures.

The study of the experiment on the basis of the theoretical model produces a different result. There was political disagreement about the experiment, once the issue was placed on the public agenda. The background was a difference of opinion in the government in power and in the Storting about the educational programme for the 6-year-olds. These differences continued throughout the whole approach to the experiment, which was initiated in 1986. A more detailed analysis revealed that there were many different ideas about what problems the experiment was to help find a solution to and how this was to be done. Just one of these problems that were mentioned, is actually documented by research, namely that there was a lack of cooperation between the kindergarten and the school. Against this background, the experiment has first and foremost been used to solve a political problem. It provides legitimacy and demonstrates strength. To use experiments in this way is nothing new, either in Norway or in other countries.

Part II The education of the 6-year-olds

4 A theoretical model

Introduction

The initial aim of the experiment with 6-year-olds was to improve the relationship between kindergarten and school by ensuring greater continuity between the two.¹ This was still the case, even when the questions in the experiment were expanded and altered.² There was to be some form of concrete cooperation between kindergarten and school in all the experimental models, in order to make the transition to school easier for the children. More important, according to the official documents on the experiment³, continuity was to be achieved by creating a "new" educational approach, a transitional pedagogy that incorporated the best of school and kindergarten. The main argument for the creation of a new pedagogy was the great similarity in the way the overall aims of the two institutions were formulated.⁴ This is stressed very strongly in a separate analysis from the secretariat of the experiment, in which the following elements are listed as being common to both (Mål, innhold og arbeidsmåter i forsøket med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer, 1987)⁵:

- to work in understanding and cooperation with the home
- to build on basic Christian values
- to work for tolerance and equality, and to teach children to show respect for and take care of each other
- to provide children with good and varied conditions in which to develop
- to help develop independence and the ability to cooperate

The central project administration formulated the experimental tasks as follows: to take the best from the curriculum of the kindergarten and from the curriculum of school, adapt this to the pedagogy of the kindergarten and formulate a new curriculum. And the experimental staff should use this curriculum as

¹ Cf chapter 3.

² I look more closely at the changes in the intentions of the experiment in chapter 10.

³ Prosjektbeskrivelse (1986, 1988) Skisse til rammeplan (1986), Mål, innhold of arbeidsmåter i forsøket med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer (1987), Rammeplan for forsøk med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer (1988).

⁴ Noticeable differences can be found in just one area, namely as to what place the subject learning should have. And here the Executive Committee supported the idea of building bridges between the institutions.

⁵ Point for point it compares the formal aspects of kindergarten and school, and sums up the consequences for the experiment. This document has been approved by the Executive Committee in the experiment.

the basis of their planning, local adaption and practice. This way of thinking is characterized by a technical, rational understanding of how education functions, can be governed and changed by planning and plans and is typical of the reform perspective. The concept is that the ideas and plans govern and decide directly what happens in practice. The basic notion is that this new curriculum will be followed, and that this almost automatically will create a new educational practice. The consequence of this in the reform perspective is that the research concentrates on studying the results of the activity in the various models, and is not concerned with the educational process itself that leads to the said results. This is a very familiar pattern for a great deal of educational research (Bellack 1978, see also below).

In this chapter I put forward another theoretical explanation of what decides educational thinking and practice inside the institutions, and of what the functions of a curriculum are, by expanding the theoretical perspectives from chapter 2.

Educational activity is a social phenomenon in a social and political context with its own particular conditions linked to particular institutions. Plans, expectations, professions, etc - all are linked to these institutions and they all play a role in formulations and realizations. The task of research is then to study the educational activity in the context in which it takes place, to establish the forces and mechanisms that affect and influence the educational processes. The need to develop such a basis also arises out of the realities of the experiment itself. As I have pointed out in chapter 3, this experiment is no classical scientific experiment, in which it is possible empirically to compare the experimental models along defined experimental variables. In order to study the experiment and explain the activity there, a set of theoretical terms to which data can be related is therefore necessary. The curriculum development in the experiment was to be linked to the educational activity in the experimental groups. It is therefore natural to open with a more detailed discussion of research on teaching and classroom processes. That discussion reveals the fields of interest, the terms, principles and issues that have dominated this area of research. It provides this thesis with a general background and puts it into perspective in relation to the tradition of educational research of which this work forms a part.

Classroom research

Gustafsson & Lundgren (1981) distinguish between three forms of empirical research on teaching. (1) The experimental research that compares teaching methods and results directly (cf eg Campbell & Stanley 1963). Much of the

rhetoric in the experiment with 6-year-olds is based on just this model. (2) The second main approach is a combination of experimental method and statistical analysis in the search for differential effects, as Thompson & Hunnicut's (1944) study of the connection between personality types, praise, criticism and work efficiency in the classroom.⁶ (3) The third line of research is field studies based on observations, in which the activity is analyzed on the basis of direct insight into the teaching process. It is this approach that is most important here. This classroom research has also played a key role in curriculum research and has its origins in the USA as far back as the early 1900's (cf Medley & Mitzel 1963, p 254).

In the "Handbook of Research on Teaching", Medley & Mitzel (1963, p 247) claim that only rarely does someone look inside the classroom to see just how teachers teach or how pupils actually learn. The authors explain this on the grounds that it costs too much, that it is a demanding task, that the observers disturb pupils and teachers to such a degree that the results are not representative and not least, that previous classroom studies have not made any spectacular contribution to our knowledge about teaching and learning. These authors reject the objections and stress that this form of research is important. Activity in this field of research also increased dramatically after 1960 both in the USA⁷, in England and in eg Sweden.⁸ Hargreaves (1980) claims that the 70's was a notable decade for classroom studies, both because of the number of projects and on account of the broad theoretical and methodical approaches.

Gustafsson & Lundgren (1981) distinguish between two main approaches within field studies, a socio-psychological basis and a logical-philosophical basis. In the former field of research, the Chicago school is particularly well-known. They lay the foundations for "climate research" (eg Lewin, Lippitt & White 1939, Anderson & Brewer 1945, 1946, Thelen 1954). Gradually, the main centre of interest became directed towards measuring group climate and the role of the teacher in developing this climate. They were also concerned with the relations between climate and various aspects of pupil behaviour. The theory has been further developed by among others Withall (eg Withall 1949) and later Flanders (eg Flanders 1970). The latter's system of analysis and observation

⁶ They discovered that extrovert pupils performed better when they were criticized and introvert pupils when they were praised.

⁷ In the USA Simon & Boyer (1967) report at least 120 different observation systems. Rosenshine & Furst (1973) regard this figure as too low.

⁸ Classroom research in school has until recently not played a key role in Norway, but isolated projects do exist, eg (Rian 1968 and 1974). It is first now, in the 90's, that classroom research seems to be increasing. In the kindergarten research however, this sort of work is far more common and shows far greater variety.

techniques have been very widely used, although they no longer dominate the field in the way they did in the 70's, at least in the USA (Delamont & Hamilton 1986, p 27f). Gustafsson & Lundgren (1981, p 74) point out that a number of presuppositions form the basis of this approach.

- Teaching is regarded as a series of individual cause-&-effect relations.
- The teacher decides these chains.
- Teaching methods are patterns for teacher behaviour that can be repeated, can be adapted to the teaching of all subjects, used by all teachers and influence learning.

This climate research and the research into teacher-pupil relations clearly owe a great deal to the reform perspective. The studies do not provide a clear picture, and are in many cases contradictory. This is apparent from a number of studies of this research (Dunkin & Biddle 1974, Kallós 1974, Gustafsson 1977, Gustafsson & Lundgren 1981, Barrow 1984).

The logical-philosophical based classroom research belongs to a line of research trying to identify and describe how the rules for the teaching process are established. It is more concerned with the processes themselves in the classroom, and is more deeply rooted in theory. The aims have been to understand and explain why teaching takes in particular forms. Gustafsson & Lundgren (1981, p 74) point among other things to the following characteristics that underlie this approach:

- Teaching does not adhere to any simple cause-&-effect rules, but follows social rules that are expressed in the communication that is part and parcel of teaching.
- The rules that govern the teaching process are relatively independent of those involved.

This is an approach corresponding with the theoretical and practical interests I have formulated in relation to the study of the experiment with 6-year-olds. Common to all those who work in this direction is the developing of different types of models for registration and analysis. Teaching is seen as a series of logical actions (Smith & Meux 1962), as a game (Bellack et al 1966, Lundgren 1972) or is connected with linguistic models (Anward & Lundgren 1978, Anward 1983). A great deal of classroom research is carried out with the help of pre-established categorization, either in the form of rating systems or in the form of systems for analysis. These techniques have at times been strongly criticized. Hammersley (1986a) sums up this criticism in three points:

1. The use of pre-established categories prevents recognition of the complexity of a classroom behaviour and obstructs the development of theories that are sensitive to this complexity.

2. That by using arbitrary time sampling, systematic observation neglects natural patterns in classroom interaction.
3. That classroom interaction is studied without any attempt to understand the context in which it occurs and in particular the perspectives of the teachers and pupils involved. (Hammersley 1986a, p xiii)

The literature contains two reactions to this criticism. One is to study it, discuss and impart nuances to it (eg Hammersley 1986b). This has as its consequence a greater and greater degree of specialization, as "Handbook of Research on Teaching, Third Edition" (Wittrock 1986) is concrete evidence of. The other is to develop alternative methods, as eg Delamont & Hamilton (1986) choose to do. They prefer to use ethnographic or anthropological strategies, which require observers to be present in the classroom over long periods, to observe, talk to those who are there, conduct formal interviews, etc. There has been a considerable increase in this approach in the 70's (Erickson 1986), which can of course be explained by the general opposition at that time to positivism and quantitative research. Delamont & Hamilton (1986, p 27) couple research done according to pre-established coding schemes with positivism and research carried out from an ethnographic perspective towards interactionism. They see the link between research methods and a particular philosophy of science. This can result in a focussing on methods, in which the method itself becomes the key factor as is one of the main critiques of positivism (Karabel & Halsey 1977, p 57).

Petterson & Åsén (1989, p 41f) supplement this picture, pointing to yet another approach to classroom research. It is an historical-sociological direction, which has its origins in the critical educational sociology and an increased interest in history. An attempt has been made to combine an historical understanding of the conditions for education and teaching with our knowledge of the teaching process itself as it appears now (eg Goodson 1988, Gudem 1989). Lundgren (1983a) combines the logical-philosophical direction with the historical-sociological.

This survey of classroom research identifies a number of problems associated with what kind of data to collect, how to register them, categorize and analyze them. It seems not the case that any theme of interest to research fits in with the footsteps that others have left behind, or to be more concrete, can make use of methods and ways of registration that others have developed. The challenge lies to a large degree in developing the theoretical and terminological framework that forms the basis of the research interest and interest of knowledge in the work concerned. This applies even though the large majority of surveys are probably carried out without any such theoretical framework (cf eg Anderson & Burns 1989, p 40f). I am studying different institutions, with

different traditions for how to organize their daily work. I shall tread carefully, and study the factors that influence the daily programme itself, before I start analyzing the educational activities that go on in the classroom. In this way I will also be able to extend and supplement the perspectives on classroom research.

It is meaningful and lays the way open for interesting challenges and conclusions to study the educational activity in the experiment on the basis of a theoretical framework that has been developed within the logical-philosophical tradition of classroom research, but which has later been extended in the direction of a more comprehensive educational and curriculum theory (Lundgren 1972, Lundgren 1983a, Lundgren 1984, cf Petterson & Åsén 1989, p 44). This is a theory that corresponds well with the rest of the basis for this work that has been defined here. This chapter therefore continues with a discussion of the critical curriculum theory, the terms used and the relationship between them. This approach has proved itself fruitful in similar studies (eg Petterson & Åsén 1989) and is well suited to a discussion of the activity in the experiment with 6-year-olds.

Curriculum and curriculum theory

It is common to distinguish between a narrow and a broad type of curriculum (Gundem 1990, p 21f). The narrow concept is associated with the concrete syllabus. This is literally a plan for the learning that is to take place, a detailed plan for the educational activities. This concept is expanded in various ways, and then the term curriculum is often used.⁹ Such an expansion leads to a distinction between the curriculum as intention, as in the Norwegian national curriculum plan for basic school (eg Mønsterplan 1987) and in the experiment for the 6-year-olds (Rammeplan for forsøk med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer" (1988) and curriculum as practice, as in the term "the hidden curriculum" (Broady 1981). In his concept of curriculum, Lundgren (1983ac) also emphasizes the principles that lie behind the way aims and content are chosen, organized and presented. Thus the curriculum is a document that is meant to govern the content, organization and methods of the teaching, and which explains the choices that have been made (se also Dahlberg & Lundgren 1984). That is the way the term is used here, curriculum refers to a text that gives education social

⁹ In Norwegian the term "læreplan" is used in both meanings. The Norwegian concept of "læreplan" actually lies between these two conceptions of curriculum and syllabus. In English the term "syllabus" is used in the narrower meaning, and "curriculum" refers to the broader concept. For convenience, I use the expressions curriculum and curriculum plans.

legitimacy, but does not include what really happens in the teaching situation. I use the terms national curriculum (plan) and local curriculum (plan) about the plans, dependent upon the arena of formulation.

Curriculum theory is most often used to refer to how to develop the best possible curriculum. Theory of curriculum development is a tradition that has been established and maintained by among others Bobbitt (1924), Tyler (1950) and Taba (1962). These are prescriptive theories that either originate in philosophical and value-based ideas about what and how education should be, or on the basis of empirically tested conceptions of how learning takes place, and then usually based on psychological thinking (Lundgren 1972, p 30f, Lundgren 1983a, p 124ff). Taylor & Richard (1985, p 11f and p 176ff) use the term rational or scientific curriculum theories about similar viewpoints.

Lundgren (1972, 1981, 1983ac) presents another line of approach to curriculum theory, representing quite a different paradigm. He sees the relationship between the curriculum and the actual educational activity as curriculum theory's scientific topic. In his view curriculum theory ought to be based on empirical analyses of the educational processes in the classroom. It is descriptive and analytical and based on analysis of the empirical relationships in the actual educational field. He believes it is impossible to develop curriculum theory in the descriptive sense without such a foundation (Lundgren 1972, p 37). This argument becomes stronger, is expanded and is given new shades of meaning in Kallós & Lundgren (1979) and in Lundgren (1981 and 1983a). Taylor & Richard (1985, p 11f and p 176ff) have called this naturalistic curriculum theories, which provide a basis for insight into how curricula are developed and used. Gudem (1990, p 137) is, however, of the opinion that the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive curriculum theory is out of date both in relation to current dominating philosophies of science and of current curriculum research, and that these two approaches are gradually merging more and more. In my opinion the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive curriculum theory represents two different paradigms of thought and is relevant for the purposes of analysis, as in this case.¹⁰

Lundgren's studies of curriculum theories show that they have not been founded on empirical research of the actual teaching process (Lundgren 1972, 1981).¹¹ Very little research has been done with this perspective, and few theories put forward based on studies like this (Gudem 1990, p 82ff, Lundgren 1983a, p 231). A more comprehensive and general formulation of theory in the

¹⁰ Gudem in effect maintains this distinction, but imparts nuances by suggesting several categories of curriculum theory within each of the two main groups.

¹¹ One consequence of this approach is lack of insight into what really goes on in kindergarten and school in Norway.

field began at the end of the 60's within the new English educational sociology.¹² The background was changes in the understanding of what governs education, on the basis of the relatively negative experience with reform activity in the 50' and 60's.¹³

Lundgren (1983ac) formulates a conceptual framework of a curriculum theory, in which he tries to explain how a certain curriculum has developed, how different ideas about aims, content and methods have been established on the basis of different economic, social and cultural needs, and how these ideas have become entrenched, but also altered. This he does at three levels of description. The first level deals with how judgements, knowledge and experience are selected and organized. The second level concerns how a curriculum is actually developed, which processes of decision-making and control take place. The third level refers to how a particular curriculum governs the educational activity within the existing framework. Each of these levels requires different types of data and different methods for the gathering of these data. In order to coordinate the explanations on the various levels, Lundgren develops a set of terms: tradition, code, curriculum code, frame and notion, and which I will discuss in the following.

Educational institutions and curricula

To provide an overview of the problems associated with the curriculum, I begin by discussing the meta level, the relationship between state, society and the educational institutions. Education does not function mechanically in society, it is a question all the way of some form or other of dialectics. In the "simple" society (Hoëm 1978), upbringing and work were one and the same thing. Children gained the necessary knowledge and skills by participating in the life and work of society, teaching and education were not set apart as separate tasks (Lundgren 1983b, p 10f). Social and cultural production and social and cultural reproduction were inseparable parts of the same whole. In the "complex" society (Hoëm 1978), work and education were divorced from one another, leading to the growth of institutions whose responsibility was to educate (cf Lundgren 1983b, p 12). In Norway, this took place in the course of the nineteenth century for children of school age, and in particular in the latter part of this century for the younger children. This created two social contexts, one for production and one for reproduction or educational activity. When mass education really started

¹² The book "Knowledge and Control" (Young 1971) is one of the early and really important contributions. The basic theme of the book is that education is a social product, created for specific purposes, and on the basis of special interests which it is the task of research to discover.

¹³ I look more closely at this reform activity in chapter 9.

to develop in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, texts for education had to be formulated. What was to be learnt had to be expressed in words and pictures. The formulation of how the life and work of society was to be reproduced in other institutions than those in which it was really taking place created three problems. There was a problem of selection, a problem of organization and a problem of presentation (Lundgren 1983c, p 10f). What was to be taught, how was this knowledge to be organized and how was it to be taught. Curricula are texts containing just such formulations of intentions. This led to a split between didactical questions on the one hand and curriculum questions on the other (see below).

With progressivism and Dewey in particular, a new dimension to the way of thinking on education appeared. Education should no longer just reproduce earlier social and cultural production as the tradition from among others Durkheim put it (Englund 1980, p 13ff, cf Durkheim 1977, p 9). It was also to be the point of a javelin towards the future, influence developments, and thus become an agitator for continued progress in society (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 32ff, cf Dewey 1899). In this way, education became a political instrument for social and economic change. This created a fundamental paradox. At one and the same time, education was to serve society and society's interests, as well as being independent, creative and critical to that same society. The purpose of the curriculum became both political and educational. It was to have consequences for the decision-making game in the arena of formulation, to be a sign to the institutional environment of political ability to act, at the same time as it was meant to give a lead to the actual educational activity of teaching in the arena of realization.

On the one hand, the curriculum is used in political contexts as part of an argumentation for gaining priorities in relation to other sectors. It is thus integrated into the negotiating system in the arena of formulation in which it is created. The curricula also have a function in relation to the cultural and social context, the institutional environment. Politically, comprehensive support for the formulations in the curriculum from their environments is absolutely essential (cf Brunsson 1989, p 5). In other words, the curriculum must simultaneously serve to market the school and reflect various standpoints. As a consequence, complex phenomena are often made simple, but abstract in order to convince people that the education has the necessary quality and is based on the desired foundation. Formulations in the curriculum are usually the subject of political disagreement, which is often solved with the help of vague and general expressions (Lundgren et al 1983, p 14).

The curriculum is also intended to provide aims and guidelines for the school for the organization and implementation of the education. It must give guidelines to the system of action. The realization of the plans, the didactical aspect, is the

teachers' responsibility, in accordance with the political formulations in the curriculum. The idea is also that it should be possible to reduce the distance between the formulated curriculum and the realization with the help of increased professionalism and research (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 32ff).

In reality the matter is rather more complex than this. Many different arenas of formulation and realization are involved in the production and implementation of the curriculum. The formulations are produced under different circumstances and with different aims than the realizations. We can get an impression of just how comprehensive and complex this is from two different formulations showing the "path" from plan to action. Dahlberg & Åsén (1986, p 51ff) divide the arena of formulation into three levels: the national level of formulation, the municipal level and the local level, which is also where the realization takes place.¹⁴ Goodlad (1986) has a division into five levels. (1) The ideological curriculum is the more basic and overall ideas on which the plan is based. These are often not to be found together in one single document. The preparations for the experiment and the premises established there are an ideological foundation for the whole project.¹⁵ (2) The formal curriculum has been officially approved. It is usually put in writing, and is an interpretation, a clarification and an elucidation of the ideological curriculum. The national curriculum in the experiment is a formal curriculum that applied to the whole experimental programme for six-year-olds and was centrally drawn up and approved. The local curricula for each experimental group have a similar status, but are drawn up on the basis of local conditions and needs.¹⁶ (3) What has been officially decided, does not necessarily correspond with what various individuals and interest groups believe is, or should be, the core of the matter. The perceived curriculum expresses their opinions on the educational programme.¹⁷ The formulations are implemented in the arenas of realization. Goodlad divides the realization contexts in two. (4) The operational curriculum is what goes on in the groups of children and classes, and can be registered by others.¹⁸ (5) The

¹⁴ In the experiment very few municipalities had common municipal plans for the experiment, but this varied.

¹⁵ The ideological curriculum in the experiment clearly bears the mark of differences of opinion and disagreement (cf chapter 3). I shall also return to this level both in chapters 6, 9 and 10.

¹⁶ Both these curricula are discussed in chapter 6.

¹⁷ This level is also discussed in chapter 6.

¹⁸ Chapters 6 and 7 deal with this part of the curriculum.

experienced curriculum is what the children experience and encounter in the educational programme.¹⁹

In each arena of formulation and of realization there are two phenomena that can be studied in this context. One is the actual process of formulation and realization. How is it done, what factors influence it, a parallel to the individual patterns of action in the institutions in chapter 2. The other is to study the link that exists between the different arenas, as eg Pressman & Wildavsky (1984) have done in their study of a federal rebuilding programme to help solve problems of unemployment and racial unrest.²⁰ The above explanations indicate that there is no guarantee that the formulations will have any consequence for the practical work in the kindergarten and school. This is confirmed by research that has been done in the field, and shows that the educational activity is a result of fairly complex processes, on which the curricula alone often have a rather limited influence (Lundgren 1972, Svingby 1979, Gudem 1989, p 532, Cohen & Ball 1990). The curriculum can very easily assume functions mainly in relation to the arena of formulation and the institutional environment, whilst the actual educational activity is formed by quite different considerations or mechanisms and in relation to the technical environment. In this sense, curriculum has the same function as talk (cf Brunsson 1989). The formulations in a curriculum are fairly easy to alter. The institutions can then give the impression of changing, of being modern and up to date without this having to influence the teaching. Alternatively, the plans can be a direct result of what is happening in the teaching, or they do not have to have anything at all to do with one another. This transfers the "power" from the arena of formulation to the arena of realization, as is explained among others in the expression "street level bureaucrat" (Lipsky 1980).

Tradition

Kindergarten and school are subject to continuous institutionalization processes in an interplay between economic, social and cultural circumstances in society and the state governing systems, in which each develops its own individual distinctive character.²¹ Lundgren (1983b) views this as two processes of reproduction, one horizontal and the other vertical. The horizontal forces are the

¹⁹ This curriculum level is not studied in the experimental programme for six-year-olds. Goodlad provides the reason himself when he explains the enormous resources necessary to collect data at this level.

²⁰ In their explanations, Pressman & Wildavsky (1984) place considerable emphasis on the statistical chance that exists for correspondence in intentions and actions between the many levels and persons who were responsible for the matter.

²¹ In chapter 2 I have looked in more detail at the institutionalization processes.

institutional arrangements and the educational tradition in the institutions. The vertical forces comprise the demands and expectations society and the state make on the institutions as to the qualifications they are to provide at any one time.

Over a period of time, individual characteristic traditions have grown up both for the formulation of plans, for thinking on education and for the way this is put into practice in each of the institutions. I use the term institutional tradition to illustrate the link between the institution and its distinctive educational character.²² These educational traditions change slowly, but are formed and altered during a constant confrontation between the horizontal and the vertical forces (Lundgren 1983b). The traditions are handed-down forms of understanding, norms, judgements, language and practice. These traditions lead to a certain stability and resistance towards change, because they influence both the ideas and the actions of those who are in the institutions and those who arrive there. They are conditioned by history and outside the direct control of the individual teacher (Lundgren et al 1983, p 21). These institutional preconditions are often "invisible" to the staff (Bernstein 1987), but it is necessary to know them to understand what is happening both separately in each of the two institutions and when they cooperate. Popkewitz puts it like this:

Our patterns of language enable us to lose sight of the socially constructed quality of schooling. What is socially constructed are made to seem natural and inevitable elements. Part of that "inevitability" is what we have come to accept as talk about schooling: Children are learners, teaching is motivating children, and the curriculum consists of subjects such as science or social studies. Yet in using of the language of schooling, we forget that learning, teaching and the school subjects have particular social histories. (Popkewitz 1987, p 2).

The term tradition is not then used about passive memories or anecdotes about the past. Williams (1980, p 96ff), however, puts great emphasis on tradition as an active and selective creative force in which some factors are chosen to be handed down, others are toned down, excluded or forgotten. Tradition is therefore almost always a product of and part of a struggle between groups (cf also Thavenius 1991, p 39ff). Petterson & Åsén (1989, p 59) point to several consequences of this view of tradition. The environment which teachers and

²² The term institutional tradition is used about kindergarten and school tradition respectively. It is not used to refer to individual schools or individual kindergartens.

children enter is already regulated, formed and limited. At the same time, before they arrive there, both teachers, children and parents have their own ideas of what is going to happen there. That would seem to indicate that what may happen, or what in fact happens, has to a large extent already been prepared. Tradition thus influences the processes of both formulation and realization.

The concept of code

It is people who act in the institutions, and it is necessary to be able to explain the relationship between the institutional traditions and the thoughts and actions of the personell both in the arenas of formulation and realization. Here the concept of code is vital. Characteristic for a code is that it contains principles or guidelines for interpreting the world around us, and that govern or decide our behaviour:

Thus a code is a regulative principle, tacitly acquired, which selects and integrates relevant meanings, forms of realisations and evoking contexts. (Bernstein 1987, p 567).

The term code refers to the transfer of a deeper structure of meaning from a culture or subculture, and is the most basic rule of interpretation (Bernstein 1971). A code cannot be studied or measured directly. In many cases the users of the code will not be able to put into words which basic principles they are the bearers of.²³ We can merely make out the code on the basis of a critical analysis of the formulations about practice, and on what happens in practice. Just this "invisibility" in the code makes it difficult, not to say impossible to "take" two institutional codes as in the experiment and combine them with each other.

The concept of a code is found in many contexts and in many areas. It is more generally used at an individual level to represent the principles that enable us to find our way in life or "orientation to meaning" (Dahlberg 1985). Arfwedson (1985 p 30f) uses the term school code about the "aggregate" of guiding principles for interpretation and action embracing everything that is significant with reference to work, work environment and general problems of any particular school. Bernstein's term linguistic code is linked to the terms classification and frame, and regulates communication (Bernstein 1975). The curriculum code is the combined set of homogenous and collective basic

²³ Cf the term tacit knowledge, which is broader, but which can also include this dimension (see below).

principles that determine the choice of content, organization and methods in a curriculum (Lundgren 1983a, p 21). Lundgren identifies four basic curriculum codes, which are all a consequence of the views on knowledge and education that have been characteristic for certain periods in history (Lundgren 1983a).²⁴

Among the concepts of codes mentioned above, the curriculum code is particularly important as a background to an understanding of the curriculum formulations.²⁵ Lundgren's categorization of curriculum codes has been developed on the basis of studies of school and its contexts and institutional environment. The question is whether the curriculum codes in school and kindergarten are identical. Not quite the same groups of people in society are concerned with school as with kindergarten, and kindergarten and school deal with different groups of children. Thus the institutional environment in kindergarten and school will only be partly similar. Implicit in the curriculum code that Lundgren (1983a) has defined, lie the school's distinctive institutional character, tradition and function, and it applies mainly to teaching and the learning of subjects. For the Norwegian kindergarten, as we shall see later in the next chapter, its distinctive character is more related to concepts such as experience, free play and self-expression, and to neither teaching nor subjects, a fact that will probably alter the basic principles behind the thinking on and shaping of the curriculum. However, I here briefly present Lundgren's (1983a) classification as a point of departure.²⁶

- The classical curriculum code has its origins in the antique Greek and Roman culture. The aim was to educate by teaching the pupils to think like Romans and Greeks in order to recreate the lost golden age in western civilisation. Only the privileged few in society received an education.
- The realistic curriculum code developed from the natural sciences, modern languages and industrialization. The knowledge was also intended to be of practical use.

²⁴ Englund (1986, p 106f) asks whether it is possible to imagine an homogenous set of principles as the basis for the comprehensive school. He believes that this overlooks different educational aims for different social forces, and changes in education over time due to these social forces and because of general political change. He formulates three competing curriculum codes that are characteristic for a certain period in Swedish education.

²⁵ I prefer to reserve the concept of code to the curriculum field, and use the expression of notion to represent the individual way of thinking and acting (see below).

²⁶ Lundgren (1983c) also has a fifth curriculum code, "the invisible curriculum code", which is not yet fully developed. It concerns educational research as the controller of mass education. This creates distance and makes insight and control more difficult. This concept must not be confused with Bernstein's term "invisible pedagogy" (Bernstein 1971). That expresses the consequences of letting children freely choose their own activities.

- The moral curriculum code was the result of the development of mass education. Religion, moral issues and the good of the nation were important themes in order to guarantee control, order and discipline.
- The rational curriculum code is based on the idea that the knowledge to be imparted is to be selected with a view to its value to society and the individual.

State regulation

The kindergarten and the school function in the face of different objective limitations. The term frame is generally used about the factors that limit the educational activity, and which teachers and children cannot control (Lundgren 1981, p 36). The frames determine the scope of action within the institutions. They provide limits for what it is possible to do, but do not determine the actions. Petterson & Åsén (1989, p 55ff) use the term "the educational space" to describe this. This use of the expression comes from Dahllöf (1967) and later Lundgren (1972, 1981) who both have developed the frame factor theory.²⁷ The point of departure for the frame concept was the comprehensive experiments in differentiation in Swedish schools in the 50's and 60's. In the Stockholm study (Svensson 1962) the school organization in the city was divided in two, and this was referred to by Marklund (1981, p 157) as "the Berlin Wall across Stockholm". In the one part of the city, differentiation was introduced after the fourth year, and in the other after the sixth year.²⁸ The results revealed that there were no significant differences in the level of knowledge between the two groups, and that a late differentiation did not lead to a reduction in the standard of knowledge (Svensson 1962). Dahllöf (1967) analyzed these studies again, and matched them up against new data. He discovered that what had happened in the classes varied greatly. Among other things, different classes had spent very different amounts of time on going through the same material, depending eg on the number of pupils and the composition of the groups. Dahllöf used the term frames about these limitations. He distinguished between frames beyond the control of the teachers and pupils, and factors that they were able to manipulate. He concluded that there exist certain key frames that have consequences for the activity and which are beyond the control of the staff in the schools: time, size of class, composition of class and access to rooms and teaching material.

What Dahllöf (1967) actually did, was to try to explain the earlier result, and not just accept that a certain result existed without knowing how. In relation to

²⁷ Lundgren (1984) gives a short presentation of the complete development of the thinking behind the frame factor theory.

²⁸ In reality, the terms of the experiment were more complex than this (see Svensson 1962, Dahllöf 1967).

the topic of this thesis, this is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it marks the beginnings of the development of a theory about what establishes particular methods of teaching, and this theory is related to both a structural and an individual level. Secondly, it emphasizes the significance of studying the actual process, which lays the foundations for a new concept of evaluation (cf Lundgren 1984, p 70).²⁹

In order to achieve the results that have been given political priority, the state³⁰ controls education by way of various types of regulations. And this second stage in the development of the frame factor theory is linked to this state regulation of education (Lundgren 1981, p 31ff, see also Lundgren 1984). In this version, the frame factor theory specifies three systems of state regulation.³¹

- The economic system, economic regulation via the allocation of resources. The frames concerned here are the physical and organizational arrangements, the staff and their qualifications, salaries, etc.
- The judicial system - regulation through laws and rules.
- The ideological system - regulations by way of aims, guidelines, education and in-service training of the staff.

The origins of the systems of regulation are complex, but are fairly strongly influenced by tradition, and will therefore also contribute to strengthening the traditions of the institutions. The relationship between the different systems can also be complex. They may strengthen each other, or they may be in opposition to each other, and they change as time passes. The kindergarten and the school have probably been subjected to quite different forms of state regulation, a topic I shall return to in more detail in the next chapter. That would indicate that the amount of room for manoeuvre in these institutions varies. Should that be the case, the differences in the amount and forms of state regulation would at least to some degree explain eventual similarities or differences between the work of the kindergarten and the school.³²

²⁹ This provided the foundation for the development of an alternative concept of evaluation which rejected the current viewpoints, what was to become the theory-orientated evaluation (cf Franke-Wikberg & Lundgren 1982, cf also chapter 1).

³⁰ The concept of state means institutions having power to introduce policy programs in society, and which have the legitimate power to control these programs (Lundgren 1983 c p 15 cf also Østerud 1991, p 48).

³¹ The terms used to describe the various factors vary a little from description to description. The terms I quote here are those used by Dahlberg, Lundgren & Åsén (1991, p 43f).

³² At the present time a fourth system of state control is under development in many countries, namely state evaluation of institutions and the activity there (Lundgren 1990, p 35, Dahlberg, Lundgren & Åsén 1991, p 52). This is also a subject of current interest in Norway at the moment, especially in the field of education in schools (Granheim & Lundgren 1990,

Notion and action

State regulation does not explain directly the educational activities, merely what is possible and impossible to do. What actually happens in the educational space must be explained on another basis. Terms are necessary to enable us to describe what mechanisms cause certain actions to be selected from within the educational space created by state regulations.

Above I strongly emphasized the fact that the actions and ways of thinking in the institutions are fairly consistent and linked to the institutional traditions. A term is necessary to function as a communicating link between the tradition and the individual's way of thinking, feeling and acting. The term code has been used (cf above). The term notion also has roughly the same meaning, and I shall use that from now on to avoid giving the code concept several meanings. Notion expresses a more general structuring principle, it forms the background for subjective explanations of relationships and connections that decide how various aspects of the world around us are perceived and understood. To a certain extent it is decisive for individuals' potential for action. The notions express the way of thinking that governs man's ways of organizing and making sense of the institutions and the surroundings. They comprise ways of understanding action, what is desirable and possible in a given situation and therefore form a basis for realization (Zetterström 1988, Frykholm & Nitzler 1989, p 128f, Petterson & Åsén 1989, p 59).

Notion is a communicating link between the tradition and the individual's way of thinking, feeling and acting. There is thus a close link between institution, profession, tradition and notion. The notions are part of the professional and institutional tradition, at the same time as the tradition is also a prerequisite for notions. This would indicate that different people's notions about school and kindergarten are important for the activity of the school and kindergarten.³³ The notions are not always conscious, and it is therefore not possible to register them directly. Only by way of statements and actions is it possible to support these fundamental structuring and integrating principles.

There is also a close connection between the terms tradition, notion and tacit knowledge.³⁴ By tacit knowledge, Polyani (1967, p 4) means: "We can know

Granheim, Kogan & Lundgren 1990).

³³ There is also a connection between the term notion and the term perceived curriculum (see above). The perceived curriculum is linked more directly with the formal curriculum level. It is a more concrete statement than notions are, closer to the term understanding.

³⁴ The Wittgenstein tradition assumes that a certain part of knowledge cannot be put into words. The Polyani tradition assumes that tacit knowledge is not verbalized, but used more as a tool to do something else (Rolf 1989). It is this latter sense of the expression that is relevant here.

more than we can tell". The tacit knowledge is part of the "inheritance", the tradition, the accumulated experiences, attitudes and methods of generations, which in the main can only be taught and learnt in the institutions in which it is practised. Most of an individual's knowledge is communicated with language. Language is incomplete. Consequently, part of the inheritance of knowledge handed down will always be non-lingual. Because the knowledge is tacit, it is also fairly resistant to change, although it can be modified by individual experience. According to Rolf (1989), tacit knowledge is a term Polyani uses to focus on man's inability to distance himself from and criticize the knowledge and the society that tradition hands down. Tacit knowledge is a term that can help to explain why the traditions in the school and kindergarten are so influential, and why they are different. And the tacit knowledge can also explain why human notions are so inaccessible.

A transitional pedagogy?

The terms and theories explained above, supplement the formulations of theory in chapter 2. Together they form a model of how formulations about educational activity are produced, and about what influences the realizations, and about what relationships exist between formulations and realizations. Naturally, the model is an over-simplification and is not "complete". The advantage of such a model is that it reveals a way of thinking which can prove to be fruitful.

The institutions function inside a framework symbolizing that they are influenced from both state and society. The institutional part of the model is divided in two, the arena of formulation and the arena of realization. In both these arenas, the traditions will be the medium through which everything else must be seen.

In the arena of formulation, there are several contributors. The formulations (eg the curriculum) are a product of:

1. The different views of the institutional environment about the matter at hand.
2. The political needs in each particular arena, defined by different actors and according to state regulations.
3. The traditions, through curriculum codes.

This means that the curriculum will be formulated in accordance with the fundamental principles in the curriculum codes, in such a way that it is adapted to meet the demands and expectations of the institutional environment, the preconditions and needs of the relevant arenas of formulation and is within the scope of action defined by state regulations.

In the arena of realization there are also several contributors. The educational action is a consequence of:

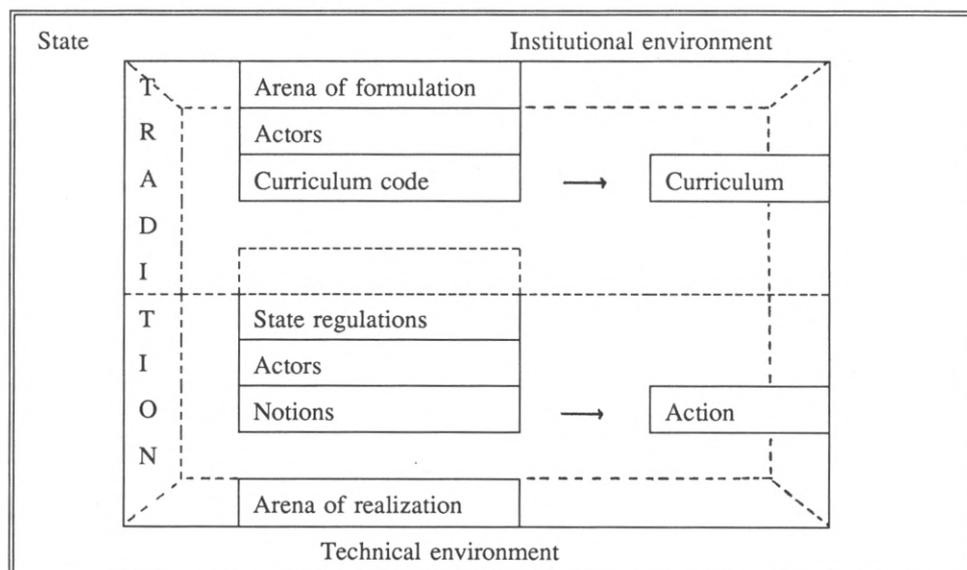
1. The educational space defined by state regulations.

2. The different actors present, representing different educational traditions conveyed through notions.
3. The institutional traditions also conveyed through notions.

This means that the educational activity is going on inside the educational space, and in accordance with institutional and professional traditions conveyed through notions.

There is a complex and rather vague relationship between the arena of realization and the arena of formulation, and between the environments associated with them, mostly imparted through state regulations.

Figure 4.1 A model for the understanding of educational formulation and realization



5 Kindergarten and school, state regulation and curriculum

Introduction

This chapter is a general discussion of the educational traditions of the kindergarten and the school. In the first part of the chapter I look at various aspects of the state regulation of the institutions. In the second part I present the curriculum in the kindergarten and the school on the basis of the broad interpretation of curriculum theory.

It should not really be necessary to document and discuss in detail the similarities and differences between kindergarten and school. The fact I do so can be explained in the following reasons: at the start of the experiment, it was fairly strongly claimed from several quarters that there were no real differences between the activities of kindergarten and school.¹ This is most apparent in an official publication from the Executive Committee ("Mål, innhold og arbeidsmåter i forsøket med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer" 1987), but it was also voiced during the experiment on several official occasions. The views were therefore both widely held and made public. Secondly, this discussion also provides a platform from which to determine the educational traditions more exactly, the state regulation, the curriculum codes, notions and actions which are necessary to analyze to what degree the work in the experiment with 6-year-olds has been influenced by the two traditions.

State regulation of school and kindergarten

I go into the three areas of state regulation, dealt with in the frame factor theory (cf Dahlberg, Lundgren & Åsén 1991).² That is the economic, judicial and ideological system. I do not go into details, but bring forward what is sufficient to establish a picture of similarity and difference.

¹ Comments on the traditions of kindergarten and school are contradictory and ought to have been studied in greater detail, but this will not be done. For example, the staff of the kindergartens are often extremely critical of the school. On the other hand, they also maintained that there is no significant difference between them.

² Cf also chapter 4.

Establishment and development

Norwegian education became compulsory and free for all children from the age of 7 in rural districts from 1739.³ In 1848 a similar law was introduced for children in urban areas.⁴ Right from the start, the school was given a clear and unambiguous educational mandate to teach children reading skill. The aim was to develop ability to read known texts, in order to remember by heart. For a long time the text that was Pontoppidan's⁵ catechism (Dokka 1988, p 12f, Tveit 1991b).⁶

The kindergartens in Norway have always been voluntary. They began as children's asylums modelled on Robert Owen's asylums in England.⁷ They had both a social and an educational function. Gradually the role of the asylums became more and more that of supervision (Grude 1987). The Frøbel kindergartens⁸ were purely educational, with an emphasis on learning and development (Balke 1982, p 24). The asylums and kindergartens gradually merged and are now called kindergartens and are for children aged 0-7.⁹ The spread of both kindergartens and school has been considerable. School has had the greatest increase, with compulsory 9-year education for all children introduced from 1969. Right up until the end of the 60's, hardly any kindergartens were built in Norway. In 1970 2% of all pre-school children in Norway went to kindergarten. It was only after 1970 that the real growth began.¹⁰

Judicial and economic regulation

The task of educational policy has primarily been to decide how to organize the school, and decide on its content. The fact that there should be school has been

³ The background was the introduction by law of church confirmation from 1736. School was to be compulsory for 5 years, cf also chapters 1 and 3.

⁴ Making education compulsory by law was not so necessary in the towns, the school system there had already become fairly well developed without the existence of a law.

⁵ Erik Pontoppidan the younger (1698-1764), a Danish theologian. The book "Sandhed til Gudfryktighed", (The Truth about Devoutness), is a detailed explanation of Luther's catechism, and was a set book in the Norwegian rural school for a long time.

⁶ Insufficient reading meant no admittance to confirmation. No confirmation meant no marriage licence, no land holding, no permanent job, no enlistment in the armed forces. It is also interesting to note that the teaching of writing came into school about 100 years later (Tveit 1991b).

⁷ The children's asylums looked after the children all day to help poor families, giving the parents the opportunity to work outside the home. The first ones opened in 1837.

⁸ They began to be established around the country from 1870, were mainly for the rich upper and middle classes and were not open for long, just 4 hours a day.

⁹ Cf footnote no 7, chapter 1.

¹⁰ Cf footnote 36, chapter 3

a general demand supported by all political parties and by the majority of the population ever since the nineteenth century (Dokka 1967, p 405ff). There has also been widespread agreement that school was the responsibility of the state to administer and regulate.¹¹ From early on, school became well organized. In rural areas, school was developed by way of state legislation and orders. In the towns, the laws were adapted to correspond with the changes that had already taken place (Dokka 1975, p 13, Høigård & Ruge 1963, p 128). As early as the nineteenth century, education already had its own laws, instructions, a separate administration, its own system of government, its own buildings, demands for special training for teachers and a separate budget had been raised (Dokka 1967, p 405). Developments in these fields during the twentieth century have made the education system even more regulated and administered.

For a long time the kindergarten policy has been to build more institutions and win them legitimacy. There has definitely not been agreement as to what extent this institution is necessary. As recently as April 1990, the Storting rejected a proposal to make it compulsory for municipalities to build kindergartens (Innst. S. nr. 124 (1989-90)). Private organizations and groups still own 40% of all Norwegian kindergartens. For a long time kindergartens were not controlled by law.¹² Not until 1975 did the Storting pass a separate law applying to kindergartens, which has since been revised on several occasions. Each revision has made the law freer and reduced the degree of state regulation. Among other things, compulsory development has been voted down in the Storting, political opposition to the drawing up of a binding national curriculum plan for the kindergarten, the requirements as to the area per child have been reduced, the norms concerning the number of children per member of staff have been relaxed and generous terms for making exceptions to the rules regarding the use of professionally qualified staff have been introduced.

The public administration of kindergartens is modest. The public grants in the national budget and from the individual municipalities are still not sufficient to cover the running expenses. The institution depends on the payment of fees by parents. A stated aim regarding the sharing of costs between municipality, state and parents has been formulated (St. meld. nr. 8 (1987-88)). In many kindergartens, the staff and parents must also spend time raising money to cover expenses, in addition to the standard parental fees. For the kindergarten, the consequences of little state interest and regulation have been that the institution

¹¹ Private education is very limited in Norway, in 1989 involving only 1.13% of all pupils of compulsory school age.

¹² A temporary addition to the Law on Child Care of 1947 required that kindergartens had to be approved by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Then the Law on Child Welfare applied to kindergartens from 1953, with separate regulations from 1954.

is also fairly independent and free both in relation to the school and to political interference in Norway (cf also Kjörholt et al 1990, p 108ff).

Kindergartens and schools are administered by two different departments, which leads to them developing in two different directions.¹³ Staff in kindergarten and school have different qualifications. In school, approved teacher training qualifications are required for those staff who work with the children. In the kindergarten, the regulations have led to a situation in which two-thirds of the staff who work with the children have no special qualifications whatsoever.¹⁴

The work in the kindergarten and in the school takes place under completely different practical conditions, as a result of the differences in the degree of state control. All the original frame factors that Dahllöf (1967) stipulated, are different for kindergarten and school. In school the children are expected to work through and complete a certain syllabus. This often means there is not enough time. Nothing like this is required of the kindergarten. In school, the ratio of child to adult is far higher than in the kindergarten.¹⁵ In school, classes usually comprise pupils of the same age.¹⁶ In the kindergarten, the normal pattern is that the groups are mixed as far as age is concerned.¹⁷ The ages of the children are, of course, not the same in the two institutions. Access to rooms and teaching material also varies greatly in the two institutions. The kindergarten building has the private home as a sort of ideal, with several different rooms for different activities and with a varied selection of teaching materials. The classrooms in the school building are small copies of the church, one room organized in such a way that all attention is focussed on the teacher, and where the access to other material is very limited.

Ideological regulation of kindergarten and school

The curriculum regulates the ideological basis in the institutions, and is particularly relevant here. From the start in 1739, the content in the school was limited,

¹³ Cf footnote 2, chapter 1.

¹⁴ The basic rule is that there must be a fully qualified nursery school teacher in each group of children. No formal qualifications are necessary for the rest of staff. Due to the lack of nursery school teachers available, it is often difficult to satisfy this requirement, and lots of exceptions are made.

¹⁵ At present, the ratio in school is 28, i.e. 28 pupils for each teacher. The normal situation in the kindergarten is two or three adults in a group of 18-20 children over the age of 3, a little dependent on the opening hours.

¹⁶ In Norway there is a long tradition of small schools in which children of various ages are grouped together in the same class. This arrangement is common in fringe areas, and is a precondition for a decentralized system of education.

¹⁷ The age range varies considerably, from age groups 0-7 and down to age groups 5-7.

well-defined and in writing.¹⁸ For a long time the plans for school were limited syllabus. As early as in the school laws of 1889, the municipalities were required to produce their own curriculum plans for the school. As an aid in this work, the department in 1890 published an outline. This was the first national curriculum for school. Since then, many curricula have been drawn up.¹⁹ This indicates that there has been a relatively strong state ideological involvement in education²⁰ There have been two main lines of development of the content of the school curricula up to the present day. There has been a constant expansion of the subject matter for the school and the school has been given increased responsibilities in the fields of care and social education (Telhaug 1986, p 172ff). With every single revision of the school curriculum of any consequence, the issue has been the subject of comprehensive hearings in commissions and of intensive public debates. And these exchanges of opinion have often created interest way beyond the ranks of the educational policy-makers and teachers (Telhaug 1986, p 71f).

Historically, kindergarten has served two functions, care and education. The institution has grown out of ideas related to philanthropy and social aid, at the same time as many of the ideals are linked to recreating the atmosphere of the home and the family. To the extent that there has been any public debate on the activities of the kindergarten in the period up to the 70's, the issue has been whether the kindergarten is to have an educational and/or a social aim. Around 1950 two public reports each supported a different view. The Coordinating Committee for the School (Samordningsnemnda for skoleverket 1951) came out strongly in favour of giving the kindergarten educational responsibility. The Child Welfare Committee from 1947 (Barnevernkomiteen av 1947) stressed the fact that it was urgent social needs that led to the establishment of kindergartens.²¹ The views of the latter won the day. Not until 1975 were kindergartens formally defined as educational activity, but then in the form of a law. In practice, these formulations have only partly had effect as yet. In the political

¹⁸ Cf the requirement of having to know Pontoppidan's catechism, in order to be confirmed in church.

¹⁹ National curriculum for rural public schools in 1922, National curriculum for urban public schools 1925, National curriculum for urban schools in 1939, National curriculum for rural public schools in 1939, Experimental curriculum plan for the 9-year compulsory school in 1959, the National Curriculum for the compulsory school in 1969, revised versions in 1974, 1985 and 1987 (cf Forarbeid til Normalplan for grunnskolen 1970).

²⁰ Recent developments have gone in the direction of greater decentralization in ideological regulation of school, as in many other countries in Europe. It is still uncertain to what degree this will actually change the reality of the situation (Granheim, Lundgren & Kogan 1990).

²¹ Their first report was published in 1951 (Barnevernkomiteen 1951).

argument in favour of more kindergartens both in the 70's and 80's, the need for supervision has been emphasized just as often as the purely educational arguments (Ot. prp. nr. 23 (1974-75), p 17f, St. meld. nr. 8 (1987-88), p 9).²²

No formal curriculum for the kindergarten exists in writing. Neither have its content and methods been the subject of comprehensive discussions in commissions or of broad public debate. The state and society have made little attempt to influence the content, organization and methods. The content and methods are based on personal experience and are handed down via close personal contact between the members of staff. Korsvold (1989, p 141) claims that the kindergarten movement in Norway has been carried forward by a group of girl friends. The curriculum is privatized. The curriculum and thus the ideological regulation has been passed on as part of the education of nursery school teachers, where contact with the practical work in kindergarten previously was very close (Balke 1984, p 2, see also Fredricson 1985, p 28ff).

As a result of the enormous expansion in the number of kindergartens and in the education of nursery school teachers at the beginning of the 70's, the previous close contact between education and practice was broken.²³ The oral tradition came more and more to be supplemented and replaced by texts. This accelerated the process of changing the knowledge imparted to nursery school teachers from being based on practice to being more related to psychological theory only. From the early 70's, the Swedish kindergarten reports presenting the "dialogue pedagogy"²⁴ became significant in Norway (SOU 1972, 26, SOU 1972, 27), and probably had greater influence than the corresponding Norwegian report (NOU 1972; 39). The Swedish report (SOU 1972, 26) was also translated into Norwegian and for a long time was a set book for potential nursery school teachers (Førskolen, innhold og metoder, 1974). Not until 1980 did a debate start in our country about a written curriculum plan for the kindergarten, and opinions vary (see eg Jansen & Røtnes 1982). This debate is still in progress. In 1982 the department published a book "Purposeful Work in Kindergarten" (Målrettet arbeid i barnehagen 1982)²⁵ This was the first comprehensive public attempt to make known the educational content and the educational thinking of the kindergarten. In the book's introduction, it says that it is based on and

²² Cf also chapter 9.

²³ The education was expanded and spread to many colleges of education with little contact with the kindergartens and with a teaching staff that had little experience from kindergartens (Haug & Ottestad 1978).

²⁴ The dialogue pedagogy has as its basis that a continuous dialogue should go on between children and the grown-ups on all matters, knowledge, experiences and emotions. And it is inspired among others by E.H Erikson and J. Piaget

²⁵ I shall return to this book on several occasions later.

presents the Norwegian kindergarten of today, as it has developed by way of tradition. A further step on the road towards a more formal curriculum for the kindergarten put down in writing is the requirement of local curriculum plans in each individual kindergarten. This demand was put forward in connection with the revision of the law in 1983, and is a parallel to the demands for school plans in the municipalities in 1890. In 1990 the government set up a committee to work out a proposal for a plan for the content of the kindergarten.²⁶

The support team round the school and the kindergarten

As time has passed, the production of school textbooks has grown enormously. There is a long-established and comprehensive programme for the training of teachers for the 9-year compulsory school, both at the colleges of education and at the universities.²⁷ A number of national and local professional bodies have been established to serve the school. Among these we find the Council for the Primary and Lower Secondary School, the National Council for Innovation in Education,²⁸ the Schools' Counselling Service (PPT)²⁹ and the Educational Advisory Service. Major reports and experiments have been going on in a great many fields in and around education throughout this century. Research and development have been given priority both nationally and locally, etc. A system of standardized tests has been developed in many subjects, by which schools are able to compare their results with a national norm, there is a national school-leaving examination which is marked jointly on a national basis.

No professional or professional/political body has been established nationally with responsibility for issues related to the kindergarten. The development of a public support team for activity in the kindergartens has begun in a few municipalities, but is by and large non-existent. The training of nursery school teachers was first established in 1935³⁰, but it did not assume significant proportions until the 1970's when the colleges of education were given responsibility for it. Research and development work in this field has barely started.

²⁶ This was done by the Syse government. The Brundtland government changed the make up and mandate of the committee somewhat. By 3.4.1992 the Committee for the Kindergarten is to present a national curriculum plan for the kindergarten.

²⁷ The Teacher Training Council celebrated its centenary in 1990. Not until the 1970's did the training of preschool teachers come under the auspices of this Council.

²⁸ The National Council for Innovation in Education was abolished in 1984, and a resolution of intent has been passed that will mean that the Council for the Primary and Lower Secondary School has ceased to exist from 1 January 1992.

²⁹ As the number of kindergartens increased, the PPT offices were also given responsibility for supervising the children there.

³⁰ Prior to that, Norwegian nursery school teachers received their education in Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

Different institutions

This brief presentation of the background to and the details of the state regulation of kindergarten and school shows that they are subject to very different conditions.

The institutions have reached very different stages of development. As regards formal arrangements, the school is superior to the kindergarten in almost every area. To put it briefly, the school has a far higher status and far greater influence and prestige than the kindergarten. By comparison with the kindergarten, the school is well-established, well organized and has a well-developed administration. As far as the economic, judicial and ideological system of regulation is concerned, the kindergarten is in the 1990's going through the stage of development that the public school went through up to about 1900.

The fact that the school is subject to more regulation than the kindergarten also means that the scope for action in school is more restricted than in the kindergarten. The school is therefore very likely to have far greater problems adjusting and making changes. Due to the lower level of regulation, control and administration, the kindergarten will find it much easier to be flexible. At the same time this makes the kindergarten far more vulnerable both to pressure and to demands for change. And this tendency is strengthened by the fact that the kindergarten is at a stage of development that also leads to less ideological stability.³¹

The institutions have different mandates from society. Purely historically, the school has primarily been meant to concentrate on teaching. The task of the kindergarten and its legitimacy is supervision, care and education. Nowhere has it been formulated what each child from kindergarten is expected to know or be able to do, as is the case with school.

The formal curriculum situation is very different in the two institutions. In the case of school, attempts are made to regulate the arena of realization by formulating plans as to what work should be done. These consist of texts, the texts have been composed in the political arena and are strongly normative. This gives the school legitimacy, even if the plans are not respected. In itself that will give the school power (Lundgren 1983b), because it can express aims and content, something the kindergarten has difficulty doing. In the kindergarten attempts are being made to formulate what is already happening in practice. Here the texts are being produced on the basis of what is going on in the arena

³¹ Among other things, this is apparent from the many "isms" that gain a footing in the kindergarten for a shorter or longer period of time, eg "work for children", "responsibility learning", "involvement education", "local environment pedagogy", "the dead mouse approach", etc. Also Kärby (1989) shows how the content of concepts in the kindergarten has varied and changed fairly rapidly.

of realization. The professional groups themselves have responsibility for many of the preconditions for state regulation. They are trying to create legitimacy for themselves by providing in the form of plans information about what they are doing. The kindergarten is growing "from the bottom up", not like the school as a result of state initiative. They are at present in the middle of the process of expressing their tradition in the form of texts.³²

The conclusion of all this is that the school and the kindergarten are far from being two equal institutions, now that they are being asked to cooperate and coordinate the best from each of their two educational traditions. The kindergarten is a weak institution, the school is strong. The school is the dominant one, with most prestige, and will be very likely to have an advantage over those who work in the kindergarten. The normal pattern in the amalgamation of schools with different traditions is that those with the highest academic status and prestige dominate (Goodson 1988).

The "best" from each tradition - criteria for analysis

In the above presentation, I have mainly concentrated on the more formal aspects of state regulation of the two institutions. From now on, I shall study the formulations and realizations of the educational activity as it takes place in the kindergarten and school. I wish to develop a sort of criteria based on what is "best" in the educational tradition of the kindergarten and of the school, and employ these criteria as tools of analysis in relation to the educational activity in the experiment. The concept of "best" is very difficult to agree upon, it is so dependent upon the ideologies of the persons behind the decisions. Therefore I have reformulated "best" to be a question of what is most characteristic for the two educational traditions.³³ This interpretation of "best" also clears the ground to use this analysis as a basis for defining the curriculum codes of school and kindergarten, respectively, which I also intend to do.

In order to register these traditions, I shall study two dimensions, each representing distinctive features of education: what is the educational object and

³² The curriculum situation in the school and kindergarten illustrates perfectly Brunsson's (1989) point about a complex relationship between plan and action. In the kindergarten it is actual actions that to a large extent decide the plan. The function of the plan is thus to explain the activity. In the school, the idea is that the plan is to determine the actions, the reality is more complex. The function of the plan is to control what is done in practice.

³³ The reason for making this reformulation is not only the difficulty in deciding what is best in a normative sense. Also in the debate in the Storting and in the national curriculum plan for the experiment, the same solution can be found, that the "best" is what is most characteristic for each of the institutions.

the educational subject in the kindergarten and the school respectively (Lundgren 1989, p 142).³⁴

The educational object refers to what the education is all about, its "core". Hoëm (1978) uses the terms psychological and sociological development. Psychological development applies to what is in a person in the form of personal qualities and character, and the creation of social development and relationships between individuals. The term personality development is also often used with the same meaning. Sociological development is to introduce children to what has been created by man. The traditional learning of subjects, knowledge and skills plays a key role in this dimension. Naturally, there are complex links between the two processes, personality oriented and subject oriented education, and they cannot take place independently of each other, but they can be given different emphasis (cf eg Hadenius 1990, p 15f).

The educational subject is the education's relationship to the person who is teaching and to the person who is to learn. The educational subject refers to who chooses the educational content and method. That is who has the educational authority. There are two extremes on this scale: on the one hand, the child. This is based on an optimistic view of man, which makes it unnecessary to control the influences children experience. The other extreme is the state. The idea behind this version is that in various ways the child lives in a cultural and social environment, which the child needs help to become part of, or which certain dominating interests want to control for other reasons.

In what follows, I shall analyse the formulations and realizations in the kindergarten and the school, with a view to placing the two educational traditions on the dimensions described for the educational subject and the educational object. Such an approach presents many problems and challenges. Developments are constantly taking place, at the same time as these must be understood in the light of what has happened earlier. The consequence of the theories on the institutionalization of organizations (chapter 2) is that an understanding of the history of the organizations is vital to an understanding of the way in which they function at any given time. The history is rather like a large frame which at the same time strongly determines what is going on within it.³⁵ There is no room for the comprehensive discussion and analysis that it would have been interesting to carry out. The aim is to arrive at formulations of the kindergarten tradition and the school tradition.

³⁴ Other dimensions could have been applied. Bernstein (1971) for instance analyse educational traditions according to the highly relevant concepts of frame and classification.

³⁵ In chapter 9 I look more closely at the context of current educational policy that the kindergarten and the school are part of.

The education in the kindergarten

What goes on in the kindergarten is broader and more complex than in school, judged on the basis of the usual curriculum categories of content, organization and methods of teaching. The kindergarten has no subject syllabus in the same way as school, whilst the kindergarten places far greater emphasis on activity and action. The concept of content in the kindergarten thus really applies to the total activity, and not just the subject element. The little research that has been done into the kindergarten in Norway does not provide much information about what goes on as a whole. A great deal of the research is of a purely psychological origin, and is also strongly normative.³⁶ The research is often limited to certain aspects of a very small part of the content.³⁷ In particular, the basis for being able to say anything about what takes place in the practical work as a whole is limited.

Formulations about kindergarten education

The dominant train of thought on the question of education in the kindergarten has always been child-centred, and can be traced back to Frøbel. Since the 1930's, the professional basis for ideas about and formulations on the work of the kindergarten has been psychological theory, but which theories has varied somewhat. The debate on the kindergarten and official documents are characterized by the pure age and stage oriented psychology of the 30's with Gesell and Bühler, dialogue pedagogy based on Erikson and Piaget in the 70's and to a certain extent have been replaced by the activism pedagogy of Leontjev and Vygotsky in the 80's.³⁸ In spite of using different terms and different approaches, the message all along has still been like this: the child is in the centre of attention, the teacher is to develop and not restrict the child's natural impulses by allowing the child ample freedom and opportunity for self-expression. The teacher must interpret the needs of the child and select the content on the basis

³⁶ I base this conclusion on my own general knowledge of this research, and after scanning the National Biographical database 1962-1990, from lists of thesis topics from those institutions that offer such qualifications and from lists of projects from the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF).

³⁷ Some of the Norwegian research on childrens' play is worth to mention as very interesting, but in this connection it only gives information about a little part of what goes on in kindergarten. There are also other exceptions, eg the historical works of Korsvold (1989) and Osborg (1990).

³⁸ Osborg (1990) has analyzed these variations from 1837 right up to the 1960's. Henckel (1990) has analyzed them in Seden from the 60's up to the present day. Dahlberg & Åsén (1986, p 6ff) draw corresponding conclusions. Their analysis is also based on the situation in Sweden, but in the main this is similar to the development in Norway.

of the child's maturity and interests, and allow the child to express its experiences and impulses. The fact that the child is active and learns in that way, is more important than what it learns.

In Norway this way of thinking has also to a large extent influenced the official formulations about the work of the kindergarten.³⁹ Nafstad (1978, p 101f) studied the documents on which the Law on Kindergartens (Lov om barnehager 1975) was based. She concluded that the views expressed there corresponded with the "invisible pedagogy" of Bernstein which has the following characteristics:⁴⁰

1. Where the control of the teacher over the child is implicit rather than explicit.
2. Where, ideally, the teacher arranges the *context* which the child is expected to re-arrange and explore.
3. Where within this arranged context, the child apparently has wide powers over what he selects, over how he structures, and over the time-scale of his activities.
4. Where the child apparently regulates its own movements and social relationships.
5. Where there is reduced emphasis upon transmission and acquisition of specific skills.
6. Where the criteria for evaluating the pedagogy are multiple and diffuse and so not easily measured. (Bernstein 1975, p 116).

Bernstein has formulated four requirements that are necessary if the invisible pedagogy is to work in practice (cf also Dahlberg 1982).

- A common understanding is necessary of the integrating idea that the emphasis is to be placed on personality development. The invisible education is demanding both for the children and the adults. And it requires that both children and adults share the ideas on which it is based. If not, it is difficult, especially for the children.⁴¹ In the rhetoric, this approach is referred to as

³⁹ This was to be expected, since it is the professional groups themselves that have formulated the ideological foundation on the basis of the tradition that has been established in the institution (cf also footnote 32, this chapter).

⁴⁰ This does not mean that there has been full political agreement about the ideology of the kindergarten, cf chapter 9.

⁴¹ Petterson & Åsén (1989) illustrate this in the subject of art and handicrafts. Those children who shared ideas with the teachers about the content, etc of this subject mainly had a middle-class background, and they got other forms of instructions from the teachers.

child-centred, meaning implicitly that it benefits all children. Bernstein (1975) questions this. His view is that this is a type of education that is closely associated with middle class values. The type of education has therefore been localized both socially and culturally.⁴²

- This in turn requires an extensive socialising of the staff, because neither roles, form nor knowledge content has been established in advance.
- Extensive cooperation between members of staff is necessary to avoid conflicts.
- The staff must be more concerned with the child's inner qualities than with its outward achievements. It is there their control over the children lies.

Bernstein believes that two aspects are visible to the staff, and on which they place great emphasis when they judge their children and their characteristics. One is the child's level of development. The other is the child's visible activity.

The book "Målrettet arbeid i barnehagen" (1982)⁴³ characterizes Norwegian kindergarten tradition as child-centred. The interests and experiences of the child are to a large extent the point of departure for what is to happen. The child's psychological development is more important than its sociological, and the child is to have great freedom to express itself and play. In a work of history from the Norwegian kindergarten in which elderly nursery school teachers were interviewed, it was stated that the ideal was that the child should busy itself in relation to its own level of development, and that the task of the staff was to organize and be present to support the children when they needed it (Korsvold 1989, p 131, see also Ladberg 1977). A number of Norwegian studies confirm that this view enjoys wide support among nursery school teachers (Nafstad 1976 referred to here from Balke 1980, Fagerli 1978, Sønstabø 1978, Balke 1980, Blichfeldt 1983, p 68f, Osborg 1990 and Kjørholt et al 1990). These views are also repeatedly emphasized in the literature that is used in the training of nursery teachers (eg Balke 1976, Karlsson 1990).

On the other hand, the content of the kindergarten cannot be applied in a cultural vacuum.⁴⁴ Little has been said or written on this topic, and it has hardly been studied. This in itself is proof of how little importance has been

⁴² This class perspective on the kindergarten tradition is very interesting, and has been followed up by others (eg Svenning & Svenning 1979, Dahlberg & Åsén 1986). The question is also relevant in my study, because it can help to identify the power base from which the traditions have grown. However, I do not follow this train of thought at this stage. It would require data with a degree of detail that is impossible and it would increase the volume of work too greatly.

⁴³ Cf footnote no 25, this chapter.

⁴⁴ Actually, Bernstein also mentions this in a comment: "It may be better to interpret the formulations as indicating an emphasis upon the interrelationships between skills which are relatively weakly classified and weakly framed". (Bernstein 1975, p 136).

attached to what cultural values and content the children actually are led into. The invisible pedagogy is based on a theory that is not educational, but purely psychological. That explains why the child is seen and judged independently of the institutional and cultural context in which it lives, and why the cultural content of the activities is not the most important aspect. Balke, Berg & Fagerli (1979, p 38) summarize an extensive study of the Norwegian kindergarten by way of questionnaire by stating that the staff do not very easily regard themselves as the bearers of culture.⁴⁵ The same signals are to be found in the book "Målrettet arbeid i barnehagen" (1982), in which the content of the kindergarten is divided into the categories of care, play, experiencing nature, creative activity and work.

The formulations in different arenas about the content and methods of the kindergarten are relatively unambiguous and unanimous. The psychological development of the child is stressed, with great emphasis on the child's freedom to activate itself. The sociological dimension and controlled activity are given far less emphasis in the formulations. According to Bernstein (1971), the invisible pedagogy has weak frames and classification and is of the integration-type.

Practice in the kindergarten

Nurss (1988) studied how rich in stimulation of the written language the actual environment of some Norwegian kindergartens was. There was a lot of material the children could choose from, but little of it was related to the written language. The conclusion is that the material environment in Norwegian kindergartens reflects the fact that the kindergarten gives priority to social and creative development, more than to the academic and cognitive aspects.⁴⁶ Fagerli (1978, p 93) claims on the basis of the Local Environment Kindergarten Project that the kindergarten is mostly characterized by its isolation from the life and work of society. The kindergarten is more a market for the consumption of ready-made teaching material and is equipped in a very similar way all over the country.

⁴⁵ The Local Environment Kindergarten Project (1976-1979) (Nærmiljø Barnehage Prosjektet) is the most comprehensive study ever made of the Norwegian kindergarten. There are problems associated with referring to the survey because the work of the kindergarten is only registered through the answers given by the staff to questionnaires. Strictly speaking, the survey then only really measures what applies to the arena of formulation.

⁴⁶ The survey can be criticized for applying ideas from the school tradition as a basis for studying the kindergarten. The kindergarten has its own form of language stimulation, which does not become apparent with this type of registration.

Of the three most common elements in the daily programme in the kindergarten, playing freely, routine situations and situations guided by adults, most time is spent in playing freely.⁴⁷ The percentage of time spent on each of these activities varies, but free play accounts for roughly half the time spent in the kindergarten (Sønstabø 1978, Ekholm & Hedin 1986, p 67, Kärrby 1982, p 10), but such that there is more free play, the longer children spend each day in the kindergarten. This also varies according to their age (Kärrby 1986, p 202f).

The daily programme is one matter, what actually happens there must also be studied before it is possible to draw final conclusions about practice. There is little to build on, but every indication is that practice is more complex than the formulations about practice would seem to indicate.

- The time allotted to free play does not necessarily result in play, and the incidence of playing is often relatively small (Ekholm & Heding 1986, p 69ff, Ressem 1986, p 62ff).⁴⁸
- The material and social frames within which play takes place to a certain extent determine the content of the play, an indication that the play is not really "free", but a product of the framework of terms (Floden 1978, Noren-Björn 1982, Åm 1984, Ressem 1986, p 70).
- Studies of gatherings, which are the most common adult-controlled element in the kindergarten reveal a practice along the same lines as the pattern of teaching in school, where the adults dominate and control, and the children are passive and form an audience (Vislie & Sønstabø 1976, Hedenquist 1986).
- The adults are not so concerned that the children should learn particular skills or actions (Ekholm & Hedin 1986, p 184). This is an expression of an indirect view of learning, learning by discovering.

All in all, almost as much time in the kindergarten is spent on routine activities and adult-guided activities as on free play. In the former, the children are under the control of others and have to do the things others have decided. At the same time, the critical studies of the content reveal that what happens within the various daily elements does not necessarily have to correspond to the

⁴⁷ In free play, the children themselves are free to decide their activities, choose the material they want to use, decide where the activities are to take place, who is going to take part, etc. By adult-guided situations we generally mean situations in which the adults play a leading role. The degree of directing on the part of the adults can vary in these situations, but the adults will have taken the initiative to set in motion the activity, or determined its content, or the form of work(method), or organized the activity, or chosen where it is to take place, or led the activity. Routine situations occur every day, and cannot be avoided. They are necessary to get the kindergarten to function, eg cloakroom, meals, tidying, visiting the toilet, waiting, transport.

⁴⁸ Here play is defined as an activity associated with suspension of reality, internal locus of control and intrinsic motivation (cf Levy 1978, p 1-21).

expressed intentions and ideals. The facts would seem to point towards a conclusion that the activities in the practical work of the kindergarten are more directed by adults, controlled and more related to subjects than the formulations would lead us to expect.

This contradiction can be explained by a "missing link", a factor that is not mentioned expressly, but which is practiced. Osborg (1990, p 229) comes to the conclusion that up until the 1950's, the Norwegian kindergarten was characterized by a moral curriculum code, but with some elements of a rational curriculum code. The main feature of a moral curriculum code is to establish control, order and discipline.⁴⁹ Korsvold (1989, p 146ff) emphasizes that in the period 1945-1960, the main function of the work of the kindergarten was to discipline. This was achieved partly by the way the daily programme was organized and partly through positive and negative sanctions from the adults. The aim was to develop the child's self-control. This was not altered when the dialogue pedagogy took over from the end of the 1960's onwards. (Kallós 1980, p 233). Johansson (1984) points out that the idea of the kindergarten has its origins in philanthropy, which greatly stressed moralising, normalisation and guardianship. And the disciplining that exists in the kindergarten today indicates that this philanthropic activity is still alive in the kindergarten.

In his studies, Ehn (1983) comes to similar conclusions. He sees the education of the kindergarten as marked by a tension between the uncertainty of freedom on the one hand, and system or order on the other (cf also Popkewitz 1987, p 20).⁵⁰ High professional demands made on the staff create uncertainty. He believes this uncertainty leads to a lack of demands being made, and that the children are left to do what they themselves feel is best. Opposed to this stands the attempt to establish some sort of system, or the necessary struggle against chaos. To tackle this, to establish order and system, the kindergarten develops certain rituals and disciplinary arrangements. The disciplining will then take place through the rules that are formulated for the activity, and through the sanctions that the child experiences. Thus the kindergarten primarily makes demands on behaviour and social skill rather than intellectual achievements. This also seems to indicate that in the kindergarten, there is in practice far more control of the child and far more cultural learning in the sense of norms and behaviour than the formulations would lead us to expect. In her thesis, Henckel (1990) concludes that, both in their ideas and in practice, the nursery school teachers gave the impression that they viewed the kindergarten as an institution for adjustment. By this she means that the kindergarten is to bring up the

⁴⁹ Cf chapter 4.

⁵⁰ Popkewitz sees the relationship between individualism and social order as crucial to the organization of education in general.

children to become capable and responsible individuals, where adjustment to norms and rules are important tasks. She also refers to other studies with similar conclusions (eg Lantz & Pingel 1988). In my own study of a kindergarten involved in the experiment with 6-year-olds, I found a similar pattern. The staff were most concerned with the fact that the children should respect the rules for the activities, and were far less preoccupied with the qualities implicit in the actions of the children within this framework of rules (Haug 1988).

The curriculum code in the kindergarten

On the basis of the above presentation, it is possible tentatively to formulate a curriculum code for the kindergarten. Four main features are to be found in the material, and these form the points in this code.

- The curriculum code in the kindergarten is child-centred, in the sense that it is the child's psychological development that as a whole dictates the choice of content.
- The curriculum code in the kindergarten is child-centred in the sense that the child is to be allowed the freedom for individual activity and self-expression, in which play is a key element.
- The curriculum code has a moral or disciplinary orientation, in the sense that psychological development and free activities are to be subordinate to and practiced within a certain set of norms for behaviour, action and thinking.
- The curriculum code is pragmatically orientated (rational curriculum code), in the sense that children ought to be engaged in activities that interest the child here and now, and which the child will therefore benefit from and enjoy.

The basic school

According to the OECD-evaluation of Norwegian educational policy there is also a lack of information about what happens in practice in schools in Norway (OECD-vurdering av norsk utdanningspolitikk 1989, p 167-168, cf also Telhaug & Haugaløkken 1989). Much of the research on schools also fits into the category psychologically orientated studies, and with a fairly strong normative approach.⁵¹

Formulations about school education

Basic education in Norway has been almost completely dominated by the teaching of subjects and topics. It is true that the social education tasks have gradually increased in number and importance, but that does not affect the foundation itself. As opposed to the case of the kindergarten, there have been

⁵¹ cf chapter 2.

very comprehensive reports and discussions about curricula, at the same time as there also has been general agreement as to the aims and content of school (Telhaug 1986, p 366ff). It is true to say that there have been intensive debates, including some which have demonstrated a fairly advanced art of interpretation (eg Harbo et al 1982). Intentions and plans also receive such characteristics as vague, superficial, unsystematic and contradictory and unsuitable as instruments by which to control the practical teaching activity (Tangerud 1980). The ideological conflicts, which have become more pronounced in recent years, are also pointed out (Telhaug 1990a).⁵²

Officially, the school is to provide its pupils with a comprehensive and varied education. It is to develop the individual personalities and impart the core of knowledge that is defined in the national curriculum for the 9-year compulsory school (cf *Innstilling frå Folkeskolekomiteen av 1963* (1965, p 111ff)). A clear message in all the plans for the compulsory school is the great emphasis that is placed on the responsibility for the "whole" child. This is to be seen from the subject-oriented point of view (*Forarbeid til Normalplan for grunnskolen, 1970*).⁵³ The subjects and their related activities form the framework for this. The preconditions for personality development in school first and foremost lie in the acquisition of knowledge and in the methods adopted in each subject. It is there that the school's way of making the child the centre of attention becomes apparent. With their background in psychology and their knowledge of children, the teachers adapt their teaching and subject matter to suit the children. As a whole, this greatly restricts the children's opportunity to themselves influence what is going to happen. The expression "free activity" is not to be found in the national curriculum for school. Free activities are restricted to the breaks.⁵⁴ All that is said in the national curriculum for school about the breaks is that they can be important for the social life of the school (*Mønsterplan for grunnskolen 1987, p 88*). The term "individually adapted teaching" (*Mønsterplan for grunnskolen 1987, p 26f*) could come close, but the term has a different meaning, applying to each individual pupil's right to a form of teaching that is adapted to suit its own individual abilities and capabilities. The national curriculum for school is also concerned about pupil participation (*Mønsterplan for grunnskolen 1987, p 54*). This applies to the planning of the teaching activities, and is meant partly as an introduction to a democratic approach and partly as training in taking responsibility. Bernstein (1971) maintains that the

⁵² I return to this topic in chapter 9.

⁵³ This report discusses the content of school from a subject point of view. The question is which subjects are to be included, and which aspects of these subjects are relevant.

⁵⁴ The exception to the rule is the classes in optional subjects, where the children are allowed to choose between various courses or themes.

curricula in school have relatively restrictive frames and strong classification, and are of the collection type.

I have found very few studies that in a broad perspective discuss how the teachers view their own curriculum. It is true that some discuss such viewpoints in relation to the individual school subjects, but that is less relevant to the questions I am addressing here (cf eg Lorentzen 1984).⁵⁵ Vestre (1976, p 77) asked a representative selection of teachers in the Norwegian Union of Teachers to place in order of priority a list of certain key areas of responsibility in the compulsory school. The reply categories do not suit my purpose exactly, and that causes problems of interpretation. The most subject-related parts of the tasks received somewhat less support than those most concerned with personality development. He registered almost the same results in the national curriculum survey carried out some years later (Vestre 1980, p 92f). According to the judgement of the teachers, the opportunities for achieving the subject and knowledge aims were better than for achieving the aims related to personality development (Vestre 1976, p 82ff, 1980, p 93ff). In much the same way as Vestre, Osborg (1980) concluded that a development is taking place in teachers in the direction of formulating greater responsibility for well-being and the pupils' total function.

The teachers' answers about how they view the relationship between subjects and personality development are difficult to interpret. There were arguments about these questions when the data from Vestre's survey were being gathered, and it is tempting to claim that the teachers may have answered in the light of that debate.⁵⁶ The interpretations of the answers will also vary considerably, dependent on what sort of framework they are placed in. The most obvious approach is to view the replies in relation to the subject and knowledge point of view that applies in school, and which are the main terms of reference. In that perspective, the answers would seem to indicate that the teachers see the personality development as a consequence of learning subject matter and of the methods used.

The school justifies much of its activity on the basis of psychological knowledge, for which there is a long tradition (Ribsskog & Aal 1936).⁵⁷ Regard for

⁵⁵ Lorentzen (1984) carries out a broad analysis of curricula and practice in the social sciences.

⁵⁶ The data were collected during a period in which there had been lively discussions about whether there had been a lowering of standards in Norwegian schools. I return to this topic in chapter 9.

⁵⁷ Ribsskog & Aal (1936) carried out a survey of the level of knowledge of Norwegian pupils. The results were depressing, the pupils remembered little of the body of knowledge they had been through. This was explained with the help of psychological theory, and used

the child and its development is crucial also here. This has in fact been emphasized more and more, in the form of programmes such as individually adapted teaching and individualization. Even so, the framework within which the children are to function is still narrower in school than in the kindergarten, because the school has distinct aims for its teaching on the basis of a clearly defined subject matter, which is made concrete partly in the national curriculum for school and partly in local curricula.

Practice in school

The daily routine in school is determined by the number of lessons allotted in the national curriculum to each subject. The studies made of practice in school, are mostly analyses of work in the classroom and mapping of the patterns of behaviour of pupils and teachers. The OMI-project⁵⁸ is one of the few larger projects in Norway that in a broad sense has studied the work of the Norwegian school. Among other things, they studied differentiation, content and teaching methods. The results of the project reveal that the normal way of working in school is still to teach the whole class at once from a textbook on the subject. The teacher is the imparter of knowledge and in control. The pupils are the receivers of the knowledge. The children are active on the terms of the teachers. They have little opportunity to be active themselves on the basis of problems, needs and priorities that they experience and determine. These roles have been fairly stable over quite a long period of time and in a good many different countries (Bellack et al 1966, Stukat 1974, Biddle & Anderson 1976, Gustafsson 1977, Pedro 1981, Lundgren 1972, 1981, Andersson 1984, Goodlad 1984, Monsen 1989). This provides a rather stark contrast to the many alternative teaching methods that are introduced, and which at times are the subject of considerable attention. It may be that the surveys do not register the possible changes that have taken place, it may be that the changes are purely superficial.

Criticism of these surveys has at times been extremely intense.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Frønes (1989, p 96f) maintains that the changes in the practice of schools apply first and foremost to the relationship between teacher and pupil. This has become more open and less authoritarian than earlier. Studies of practice in schools reveal that the content is generally controlled by adults and subject-related. It is within the framework of subjects and plans drawn up by others that the children are active and may possibly be allowed some form of freedom. The result of the work of the school is often measured in the form of

as the foundation for changing the subject based national curriculum to be in accordance with the principles of activity and work oriented curriculum (Normalplan 1939).

⁵⁸ Cf footnote no 39, chapter 3.

⁵⁹ I look more closely at this in chapter 8.

the knowledge of subjects acquired by the children, which often dominates what is done in practice. The children have relatively little freedom, they are controlled by the state and by their teachers. According to Lundgren (1983bc), the core of knowledge to be learnt by the children is influenced by the rational curriculum code, which is pragmatically orientated. The children are to work with the subject matter that is of most use to them, and which will most benefit society in the future (cf also Forarbeid til Normalplan for grunnskolen 1970).

The curriculum code in school

In the same way as with the kindergarten, this outline presentation will lead to a tentative formulation of the curriculum code for school.

- The curriculum code in school is centred on subjects, in the sense that the basis of all activity is linked to the learning of subject matter and knowledge of topics.
- The curriculum code in school is centred on subjects, in the sense that the children are expected to learn subjects that in general have been determined by others.
- The curriculum code in school is child-centred, in the sense that both subjects and teaching are to be adapted to suit the children's levels of achievement and stages of development.
- The curriculum code in school is pragmatic (rational curriculum code), the children work with subjects whose usefulness to a large extent is linked to the future rather than to the present.

The kindergarten tradition and the school tradition

This chapter has demonstrated that school and kindergarten have originated from quite different needs, they have different functions in society, they are differently regulated, they have established completely different educational content and methods, they have different curriculum codes and different curricula. There is a certain degree of similarity in formulations, but mostly at a fairly superior and abstract level. The formulations must also be judged on the basis of the traditions to which they belong. They have different meanings, dependent on what notions lie behind them. In this case, the similarity of formulation does not, therefore, necessarily indicate a similar point of view or similar notions, on the contrary. The kindergarten primarily makes demands on rules of behaviour and social skill and not intellectual achievements. In school, on the other hand, more attention is focussed on the subject matter and intellectual achievements. In both institutions, the staff are concerned about and work for good of the child, but the perspective is not the same. Cremin outlines

a division of labour between the kindergarten, the basic school and the upper secondary school, in which they all share the same aims:

The essence of the enterprise is discipline, a discipline stressing orderly behavior in the kindergarten; mastery of the fundamentals in the elementary school ...; and concentration on the classics, languages, and mathematics in the high schools and colleges. The end product is the self-active individual, the reasoning person who can exercise true freedom in the terms of his own civilization. (Cremin 1961, p 18-19).

Table 5.1 The tradition of school and the tradition of kindergarten.

Area:	School tradition	Kindergarten tradition:
Curriculum	Written texts	Handed down orally
Educational object	Teaching subject topics	The child's personality
Basis of content	Subject matter	The child's interests & experiences
Basis of methods	Adapt the subject to suit the child	Choose activities on the basis of the child, allow for individual activity
Basis of organization	The structure of the subject	Themes and individual activity
Aims	Learning	Care, development
Use of psychology	To organize the subject matter	To understand the child
Situation of choice	Choice on the basis of the subject	Choice on the basis of the child
Knowledge	Rational-future	Moral, rational-present
Educational subject	The state and the teachers	The child

In table 5.1 I set up some of the differences between these two traditions. The idea behind the table is to provide an overall impression, the details and the nuances therefore can be absent. The table contains features from both the arena of formulation and the arena of realization.

The divisions can be characterized by the terms "centred on subject learning" and "child-centred". The term centred on subject learning means that the content and activities are controlled by others than the child, and in the direction

of the active learning of knowledge in which the aim and the purpose lie in the future. This is characteristic of school. Child-centred means that the provisions emphasize strongly the child and its interests, needs and wishes here and now. This is typical of the kindergarten. As I have been into earlier, these are the notions, and this is also what happens in school and kindergarten. On the other hand, what this divisions does not tell us anything about is whether all the children benefit, as is the aim.

On the other hand, if we judge the Norwegian school and kindergarten traditions in relation to other countries, we will discover differences. Lauglo (1990) stresses the fact that the Norwegian school is less centred on subject learning than is the case in many other countries. Kjørholt et al (1991) emphasize the fact that the Norwegian kindergarten is far more child-centred than in many other countries.

6 Curriculum plans and planning

The approach to the study of plans and planning

One of the main tasks of the experiment for 6-year-olds was to develop a new curriculum. This curriculum was to form the basis for local curriculum plans, which were to be drawn up by the staff in each project group. In this chapter I follow the process from the development of the national curriculum plan, via the local curriculum plans and on into the local preparation work. This is primarily a study of various aspects of what took place in the educational arenas of formulation during the project, from the ideological and to the perceived level.¹ I am concerned with four matters.

- To gain an insight into the actual formulation process, who took part, what influenced it and how it was done.
- To study the functions of the curriculum in the field of education and especially how the plans were used.
- To gain knowledge about which educational traditions the plans and planning carry on.
- The study of the content and use of the plans reveals information about the staff's collective notions about the work they are responsible for, and therefore provides a picture of the potential for action that they possess.

These questions have been studied on two occasions during the experimental project. In 1987 I carried out a questionnaire survey, with all the staff engaged in the experiment as respondents (Haug & Sætre 1987b).² This work provided extremely useful experience on which to base the most important and comprehensive study, which was carried out in 1988-89. This involved a combination of qualitative in-depth studies and quantitative mass surveys (Haug 1989a). To begin with, detailed interviews were held with 17 persons.³ In order to maximize the information about the planning, I chose to interview staff who, according to the municipal project leaders, had shown themselves to be

¹ This is Goodlad's (1986) systematization of the arena of formulation, cf chapter 3.

² I do not pay too much attention here to the first study. It is less relevant than the second one, as I will show.

³ I interviewed 10 nursery school teachers, 3 teachers, 2 municipal project leaders. Together they represent 12 different municipalities. I also interviewed 2 members involved in drawing up the national curriculum. The interviews were recorded and lasted about one hour. The interviews were unstructured, circling around the four questions mentioned above. The material represents a cross-section of municipalities and models.

particularly active in the local planning (Patton 1980, p 100f, Burgess 1984, p 54f).

Based on the interviews I formulated a questionnaire with open and closed questions on the same topics to the staff and parents involved in the project. The main results of this survey were later presented to the staff involved in the project, and they gave their views in writing. This gave fairly unanimous support to the views expressed. Miles & Hubert (1984, p 242) recommend this approach as one of several methods for verifying the reliability of data and conclusions. In this way, an attempt at triangulation was made, in which information about the same topic is gathered in various ways and from various sources (Burgess 1984, p 144f).

The national curriculum for the experiment

The national curriculum for the experiment was published in four versions. I studied closely the first (Haug & Sætre 1987b) and the third (Haug 1989a).⁴ The curriculum was drawn up in the form of a framework plan.⁵ In the reform perspective, the meaning is that a curriculum plan should govern the educational activity. The notion is that the plan will be implemented as intended. A thorough and substantial plan would, therefore, to a great extent guarantee that the experimental programme was given a high educational standard. At the same time, the aim was to be able to put forward a quality plan as a result of the experiment (Foreword in "Skisse til rammeplan" 1986). This also made the plan vital as a political document and an important signal to the institutional environment, in order to legitimize the experiment. All in all, this explains why the plan was seen to be so important, the considerable interest that its contents aroused and the conflicts that arose on the topic.⁶

⁴ Only minor formal changes were made in the second edition of the national curriculum plan as compared to the first version. The final edition appeared after the experiment had been completed, (Pedagogisk tilbud til seksåringer, veilevende rammeplan 1990), and has not been studied.

⁵ A framework plan forms the basis for further planning at local level, where the teachers work out their interpretation in local curriculum plans. The framework allows for control and an overview of the main functions of the educational provisions, it shows how local conditions can be taken into consideration and provides aims or directions and proposals as to content and organization, in accordance with the purpose and intentions (Rammeplan for forsøk med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer 1988, p 17 and 18).

⁶ Experience has proved this to be the case. The plan has later been presented both at home and abroad as an important and key product of the experimental programme for 6-year-olds (see eg Berg 1990).

The development of the national curricula

A working party made up of representatives from different interest groups and institutions was given responsibility for drawing up the first national curriculum for 6-year-olds (Skisse til rammeplan 1986).⁷ The group had difficulty agreeing on the content of the plan. The plan was drawn up during the initial stages of the experiment, at a time when there were considerable differences of opinion about the project. Especially the nursery school teachers were against it.⁸ The actual arena of formulation for the plan was a battleground where the differences of opinion were put forward. Each individual actor's standpoint was determined by the occupational group he or she belonged to. The actors were therefore stable and uniform groups with distinct aims and alternatives for action.

For the nursery school teachers there were two vital issues. One was to keep the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten and prevent them from becoming the responsibility of the school. The other was to ensure that the kindergarten tradition dominated the formulations in the plan at the expense of the school tradition. The representatives of the school-teachers marketed school in about the same way, but not as aggressively. The result was a curriculum plan which represented the little the participants in the working party were able to agree upon and is thereby a documentation of the ideological problems that existed at the start of the project.⁹

The plan was vague, defective, incoherent, general, full of contradictions and compromises, was little used and was in several ways a "thin" plan. Its most important function was that the plan had a unifying effect on the participants in the project. It was a policy document and a common point of reference at the start of the experiment.

The first national curriculum received so much negative criticism and had so many failings and weaknesses that a new one had to be drawn up right from square one. In the autumn of 1987, the Executive Committee chose to appoint one person to draw up the new national curriculum (Rammeplan for forsøk med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer 1988). This approach was adopted as a result of experiences with the drawing up of the first version of the plan. The Executive Committee hoped that this would produce a more unified plan, a coherent professional foundation to the document and that they would avoid having the conflicts surrounding the experiment being drafted into the plan. The author received the support of a liaison group, comprising persons with different interests and points of view in the field. The group was to provide the author

⁷ The working party was given very little time to draw up this plan, just a matter of a few months.

⁸ Cf chapter 3.

⁹ Cf chapter 2.

with feedback on his work, but he was free to decide the content of the curriculum plan, irrespective of this liaison group's views. The whole time, the Executive Committee was in full control of the drawing up of the plan, both through the preconditions they established beforehand, through regular contact during the work and in the finalization of the plan.⁹ The completed plan was discussed by the reference group and after minor alterations had been made, it was finally approved by the Executive Committee.¹⁰ This became the formal curriculum for the experiment, it was put into effect a year into the main phase of the project.¹¹

The author of the plan claimed that he followed a fairly clear and consequent line in his drawing up of the document. His proposal was commented on by the liaison group at joint meetings. At this time the experimental project was accepted, but the differences of opinion as to the content of the curriculum were unresolved. The members of the liaison group raised many topics and issues that could well have led to conflict, but which the author avoided by being flexible. He respected the objections and comments that were put forward by making additions or by altering his formulations (see also Lillemyr 1988, p 94).

Characteristics of the national curricula

The 1988 national curriculum plan included a mass of information both as regards education, planning and aims, content and methods. The plan was a "maximum" plan. The author's ideas are there side by side with those of others on the same issue. The curriculum therefore also becomes vague, general, contradictory and imprecise, as is often the case (cf eg Ruoppila 1975, p 201, Vestre 1980, p 12, Tangerud 1980, p 147). This applies particularly to the curricula that are to unite different types of school and traditions (Lundgren et al 1983, p 14f). The plan has wide and at times vague frames for what may be taken up with 6-year-olds, it has weak classification and is of the integration type (cf Bernstein 1971). Naturally enough, the formulations in the plan takes its place as a direct extension of the political signals about the activities in the project. The point of departure for the plan is the kindergarten. This can be seen from the terms used and the ideas presented. At the same time it stresses both

⁹ Representatives from the project secretariat always took part in discussions about the content of the plan.

¹⁰ The plan was circulated for comment, with a deadline of 1 June 1989. 124 comments on the plan were submitted to the project secretariat. The plan was also formally discussed in the Educational Section of the Norwegian Union of Teachers, which had a number of objections to the plan (Haug 1989a, p 27).

¹¹ It is interesting to note that the more comprehensive curriculum plan for the educational activities in the experiment did not exist until almost halfway through the project period.

subject learning and personality development and both freedom and control, and makes a show of pretending to represent both the kindergarten and the school. This does not mean that there are two curriculum codes behind the plan. Actually, it is not possible to determine more closely the curriculum code on the formulations in the plan alone. There is one element however, that more than anything else can be associated with the curriculum code in the kindergarten. The status of the national curriculum plan as an instrument of regulation of the educational activities in the experiment is not clear, apart from the fact that it assumes the development of local curriculum plans. The basic signal is actually that the staff can do what they themselves find best. All this is a consequence of the consensus and harmonization that was emphasized during its preparation.

Nor were the rational requirements of the reform perspective followed during the production of the plan, namely detailed analysis and consideration of alternatives and arguments with a view to including "the best". In practice almost the opposite happened, that the participants representing the kindergarten and the school arrived with their own separate ideas of what the plan should be like.

The two national curriculum plans studied, have been developed through negotiations and compromises, processes that are close to the models of political decision-making. That they turned out to be so different can be explained by the fact that the plan-makers formulated their way out of a problem in two different ways. The problem was that the representatives from the school and the kindergarten could not agree about the content. In the first version, the content is reduced to a lowest common denominator. In the other version, the content has been formulated so broadly and comprehensively that "all" reasonable interpretations and understandings in the field can be extracted from it. They show two different ways of arriving at a compromise.

This result is not unique in the case of national curricula either for the kindergarten or the school. Bae (1989) has evaluated the Swedish Educational Programme for Kindergarten (*Pedagogiskt program för förskolan*, 1987). She finds that it give unclear and ambiguous answers to basic educational questions, but that it expresses what a public body and interests managed to agree upon. Tangerud (1980) made a similar analysis of the national curriculum for school in Norway (*Mønsterplan for grunnskulen* 1974). His conclusion is that the plan is superficial, unsystematic and full of contradictions (p 146).

It is claimed that the four curriculum plans are the result of the experimental project (cf *Pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer. Veilendende rammeplan 1990*, p 5, Berg 1990, Langset 1991, p 9, Ot. prp. no. 57 (1990-91, p 5). This is, of course, correct, if "result of" is understood in the sense that the plans were drawn up in the course of the experimental period, on the initiative of the project administrators and paid for from the project budget. It is an exaggeration to say that

"result of" means that the curriculum is a direct product of empirical studies of the practical educational activity in the experiment. On the contrary. The national curriculum plans are not the product of a summary of the activity and experiences that the experiment provided. Even though the plans have been formally evaluated, and although official comments have been made, the most important source for the content of the plans is the plan-makers' own ideological basis and idea of what the educational content in the experiment should be. The educational tradition from the institution and the occupational group the persons belonged to, the curriculum codes associated with that, conditions in the arena of formulation and consideration of the institutional environment are far more essential in explaining the content of the plans. This is most apparent in the guidelines that were prepared to accompany the final national curriculum for the 6-year-olds (Langset 1991). Here there is not one single word about the experiences gained from an evaluation of the project, and which could be of interest to the users of the plan.¹² The actual formulations in the national curriculum for the experiment are a source of conflict and a result of conflict, and not so much an arena for summarizing the experiences and for reflecting over these experiences that have been drawn from the practical realities of the arena of realization. As Brunsson (1989) indicated, the activity in the arena of formulation is to decide on aims, intentions and plans, and to deal with conflicts and contradictions, and this has also had consequences for the content of the curricula.

The staff and the national curriculum for the experiment

A fairly high percentage of the staff involved in the experiment, about one third, did not answer the questionnaire about the national curriculum plan, and most of them were school teachers. My explanation is that this large group had not read and/or used the plan, and consequently were also unable to answer questions about it. This can indicate some ambivalence in attitudes to the plan. It can mean that support for the experiment has not been the same everywhere, and it shows that a nationally drawn up curriculum is not considered by everyone to be particularly important for the educational activity. It is also a signal that the plan is seen more as a symbol than as a practical tool. This is reminiscent of the result that Vestre (1980, p 78) registered. He discovered that only just over half of the school teachers had studied both the general and the

¹² This confirms the argument in chapter 4 that the political considerations are very important in the drawing up of curricula.

subject sections of the national curriculum for school (Mønsterplan for grunnskolen 1974).¹³

Those who answered the questions (a large majority of whom were nursery school teachers) were far more favourably inclined towards the version from 1988 (Rammeplan for forsøk med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer 1988) than towards the earlier versions. Answers were given on a four-point scale. 80% thought it was very good or good as information to parents and politicians, 78% believed it to provide a documentation of what was happening in the project, 98% replied that it provided useful help in their work with the local curriculum, 87% felt it was a source of inspiration. These results are also revealed in the comments on the plan when it was circulated.¹⁴ Whilst at the start, there was quite a lot of scepticism with regard to central plans, most of those involved now supported the idea of developing joint plans, as table 6.1 shows. There were no differences between either the experimental models or the groups of teachers in the answers.

Table 6.1 Answers from the professional staff involved in the project to the statement: "The experiment must result in a joint curriculum for the kindergarten and school".

	1987	1989
Agree entirely/agree	36%	80%
Agree to some extent/disagree	65%	20%
N (Number of respondents)	78	229

The opposition at the beginning of the project to joint curricula for the kindergarten and school must be seen in the light of the general differences of opinion that existed then. The staff, especially the nursery school teachers involved in the experiment saw a contradiction between the free and person-orientated approach in the kindergarten and the idea of working in accordance with plans. This was associated both with the school tradition and with the fear that they could no longer be flexible and child-orientated. The mere existence of such plans could be interpreted as a step in the direction of introducing the school tradition, no matter what was said in the plans. The change of standpoint from 1987 to 1989 is quite considerable and remarkable. I return to this topic

¹³ Vestre studied the national curriculum plan for school (Mønsterplan 1974).

¹⁴ Cf Forsøk med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer: Vedlegg 1 til sak 3 i møte i referansegruppa 6.11 1989, Revisjon av rammeplanen: Høringsuttalelser til Rammeplan 1988 - et sammendrag. (Enclosure 1 to item 3 in the meeting of the reference group 6.11.1989, Revision of the national curriculum plan: Comments on R88 - a summary).

in chapters 9 and 10, but it is already at this point apparent that the turnabout was due both to events in the institutional environment and in the central arena of formulation for the project. A debate on educational policy was taking place and political signals were given which emphasized the significance of systematic and well-planned work. This was also the message that the project executives sent out loud and clear. It would have been surprising if these signals had not influenced the staff's formulations on the plans. If not, they would have gone against one of the basic premises for the whole experiment. This way, the staff through their "talk" reassure "everybody" about them giving support to, and following the experimental intentions. On the other hand, these changes did not necessarily mean that the staff were more prepared to, or capable of, working in accordance with these plans. I shall return to this later.

The local curricula

The intentions were that in each experimental group, staff should adapt and develop the national curriculum plan into local curriculum plans. The nursery school teachers were the most active in drawing up this local curriculum, as they were the most active in every other aspect. Of the school-teachers, those working in the combined experimental model (combining kindergarten and school) distinguished themselves, but revealed less activity than the nursery school teachers. Table 6.2 shows who got the label "very active in drawing up the local curriculum" on a scale of four. There is full agreement between the teachers and nursery school teachers in these answers.

Table 6.2 Who has been "very active in drawing up the local curriculum" in the views of all the teachers and nursery school teachers. (Answers in percentages).

Model	Kindergarten	School	Combined	Tot
School-teachers	3%	14%	42%	31%
Nursery school teachers	81%	84%	77%	79%
N (Number of respondents)	36	50	159	245

The local curriculum planning

The staff received help in planning the year from a number of different sources, cf table 6.3. There is no difference between teachers and nursery school teachers in the replies. The staff themselves feel that they have had most help from their own experience, the national curriculum plan, specialist literature and specially

prepared booklets, and least help from the courses in preparing local curriculum. On the question of the value of the national curriculum plan and the courses in preparing local curriculum plans, the school model reveals somewhat lower percentages than the others. These results could indicate that the staff had quite a considerable degree of independence and freedom during the planning, and on the basis of careful rational judgements, collected material from whatever sources they felt necessary.

Table 6.3 Sources of assistance in drawing up local curriculum plans. The table shows those who replied "very helpful" or "helpful" on a five-point scale. (Answers in percentages).

Model	Kindergarten	School	Combined
Own experience	96%	93%	90%
National curriculum	92%	72%	86%
Specialist literature	68%	74%	74%
Specially prepared booklets ¹⁵	69%	72%	72%
Local courses in preparing local curricula	50%	19%	51%
Regional courses in preparing local curricula	39%	27%	47%
Number of respondents	36	50	159

The interviews, however, reveal that this was not the case. Both the national curriculum plan and the other sources were used selectively, as a reference book from which the staff could take ideas and formulations that were appropriate to the content they had already decided upon.

The main strategy was that the staff first decided what it was important to work on, and then found the formulations on this topic in the national curriculum plan or from the other sources. None of those interviewed felt that the national curriculum plan was so binding that they let that alone decide what the local curriculum plan was to contain. At the same time, they also agreed that the idea of the national curriculum plan was to control their activities. I found this same contradiction in attitude in the answers to the questionnaire from the professional staff involved in the project. 84% believed the national curriculum had been published in order to control the content of the educational programme

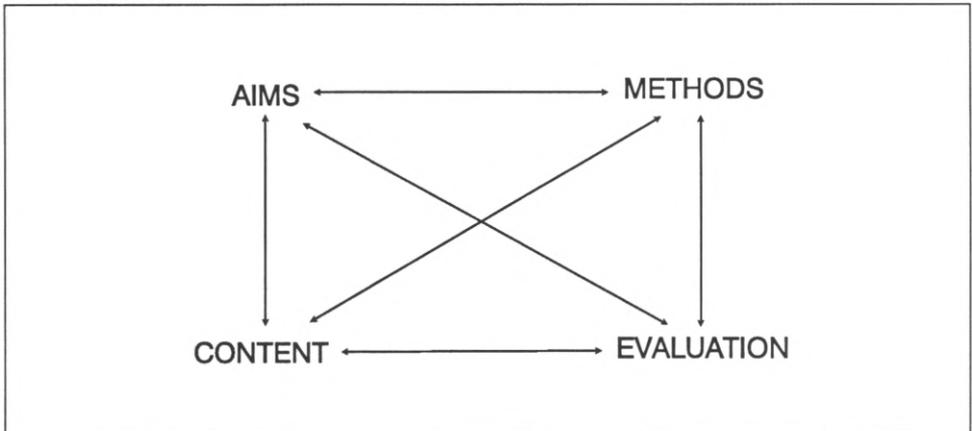
¹⁵ A total of 15 specially prepared booklets were made during the experiment. These booklets contains proposals to content, organization and method in a far range of subjects, topics and activities.

in the project, at the same time as 68% answered that the plan was an ideas bank from which they could choose at will.

The planning process

Good planning is in the reform perspective often associated with a deductive linear model, in which one moves from general formulations about aims, via specific goals to the content and methods, and conclude with an evaluation and feedback (cf eg Yinger 1980). The planning did not happen like that in practice. Nobody who was interviewed claimed that was the way they did it. The interviews revealed that the planning was a continuous reformulation of aims, content, methods and evaluation, so that they finally fit in with each other, as figure 6.1 illustrates.

Figure 6.1 A didactic relational model for the formulation of plans



This corresponds to a didactic relational model, in which all the links in the planning and teaching process are seen as parts of a whole (Bjørndal & Lieberg 1975, p 84, Bjørndal & Lieberg 1978, p 44). Where one started in the process varied. Some began with methods, others with aims and yet others with the content. And then the various elements were gradually adjusted so that in the end they formed a whole and fit in with each other.¹⁶ Within this process of mutual adjustment, the interview material reveals various patterns. The staff

¹⁶ It is rather interesting that several of those interviewed were a little embarrassed over the fact that they did not make use of the linear model, and that they in a way apologized for not doing so. This reveals the strength of the reform perspective in their way of thinking.

maintained that the most important help in the planning process was their own experience and the work that had been carried out in the institution earlier.

For most of those involved, the main issue in making the local curriculum was to adjust the plans from the previous year. The staff built on what had already been done, and their experience with that. They did not draw up a new plan from square one each year. A very important criterium in this adjustment was the children's reactions to the content of previous years. What the children had liked was usually retained, what they had disliked was replaced by other activities. There were considerable differences in how systematically the previous experience was evaluated, and whether it was written down. Usually the staff relied on memory, and that the impulses of the moment during the planning process were quite important for the evaluation that was made. Possible new tasks were solved by adapting earlier methods and content to the new context. Reformulation or minor alterations, in which tradition and experience both in the long and the short term formed the basis for the formulations that were selected, were far more common ways of solving problems than producing new formulations. This indicates that the local curriculum plans are based on a combination of prescriptive and descriptive curriculum. They are based on the traditions of the institutions and professions, which are normative and strongly influenced by values. Within this framework they also take account of previous experience.¹⁷ This is planning by way of routine solutions.¹⁸ They prepare plans on the basis of previously established practice, and make adjustments rather than change the plans completely. It is more a question of modest reformulation than of reform.

Which members of staff took part in preparing the local curriculum plans and in drawing up the more detailed plans for the activity also varied. Often several staff members and also parents were involved in developing the plans and were able to give their opinions before they were completed. These discussions led to several compromises, because the participants had different opinions about what ought to be included. The result of these compromises is often different from the ideas each of the individual participants had when the discussions started. Therefore the compromise content is unpredictable. Another feature of the compromises is that they are usually more vague and allow for further interpretations than the original formulations.

¹⁷ In the interviews an important difference was registered between the way the plans had been developed and the way they were used. The two who had based their local curriculum only on ideas and not on experience, were also the two who used the plans least and who found the planning least useful. This is too fragile a basis for drawing any conclusion, but a key theme to work on in more detail in another connection.

¹⁸ Cf chapter 2.

There are also examples of anarchistic features in the planning process. By that I mean that what happened was irrational and pretty coincidental, seen from a distance. (For the participants it seemed sensible enough). An example of this form of planning was when the staff refused to make plans for definite periods of time, but wanted to wait and see. Another example is when different persons are involved in the planning process at different times. Then something similar to the "garbage-can" process can take place. This happens when aims and alternatives are vague and indistinct, and there are many different participants in the planning process. Different participants experience different problems and alternative solutions, and do not have the same power and ability to link the two. The consequence is that the results are rather difficult to predict.¹⁹

The study of the processes behind the local curriculum plans reveals that the staff made them on the basis of other criteria and other considerations than just those involved in directives from without in the form of national curriculum plans or other ideological influences. They rely first and foremost on their own background and experience. Their terms of reference are clearly different from those of the people involved in drawing up the national curriculum plan. The actions are neither rational, purposeful, hierarchical or consistent, as would be expected in the reform perspective.

The functions of the national curriculum for the experiment

When it became clear how the first national curriculum plan functioned, there were no particular reactions from the Executive Committee, except that a new plan had to be made.²⁰ The fact that the national curriculum plan did not affect the education of the 6-year-olds may be due to it being very vague and ambiguous, and that it gave few instructions and direct signals to be followed. That would be the primary interpretation in the reform perspective. This is also Hofset's (1972, p 40ff) conclusion in an analysis of the use of a corresponding plan for 6-year-olds in one of the earlier experimental projects for 6-year-olds. That the nursery school teachers never earlier have had a national curriculum plan could also be a probable explanation. They were not used to this form of planning.

Another and more likely explanation, in the light of the perspectives on which this work is based, is to view this as a result of the arena in which the national

¹⁹ Cf chapter 2.

²⁰ This may indicate that at this arena, the formulations in the plan are more important than what is put into practice. This is a direct parallel to the view Weiler (1985) and Brunsson (1990a) have on experiments and reforms. The decision itself is what is important, because it is most effective as a source of legitimacy and support. I develop this train of thought more fully in chapters 10 and 11.

curriculum plan was drawn up and of the conditions that prevailed there. The plan was drawn up in the arena where the ideological discussion about the experiment dominated. In many ways the plan itself became the object of contention. It was essential to produce a plan that had wide support, and this was achieved by agreeing on a very broad, general plan. When it came to the plan being used, that happened in other arenas with new demands and needs, which the national curriculum for the experiment had not taken and could not take into account. The national curriculum plan gives support to several different attitudes to the work with 6-year-olds, which also explains why the plan was so widely accepted and which also had a conserving effect, since it was possible to use it to confirm previously established practice patterns. The main point of this is that the formulations in a plan do not alone decide what is and what is not carried over into the local curriculum plans. This means that the national curriculum plan's main and most important function could be to confirm to the institutional environment that the institution is working in accordance with approved guidelines.

The content of the local curriculum

I made a thorough analysis of the 12 local curriculum plans which the persons that I interviewed had drawn up. I also went through all the local curriculum plans for the whole experiment, but not in so much detail.²¹ This study revealed that the selection was above average as far as preparation and detail were concerned, which was to be expected in view of the method of selection. The analysis was made by comparing the local curriculum plans with the ideals for these plans as they were expressed in the national curriculum plan.²² Studies of corresponding local curriculum plans for Norwegian kindergartens reveal the same tendency as in my analysis. (Alvestad & Helland 1991). The results can be summarized in the following points:

The most typical feature of the local curriculum plans is the great difference between them. They vary both in content and volume. At the one extreme, the

²¹ The fact that I did not analyse more plans in detail had to do with resources and the time available.

²² The national curriculum plan for the experiment (Rammeplan 1988) presents a didactic model as a basis for the local planning. The main elements in this model are: establish a common ideological basis for staff, formulate general aims, define the preconditions in the institution, formulate general and specific goals for content matter, working methods, cooperation with school, parents, staff and evaluation, define the content for the children eg play, themes, work, define the area for the cooperation with parents, the school, staff, decide on time schedules etc. The analysis is presented in more detail in Haug (1989a).

plan has just a short list of themes and is barely two A4 pages. The most detailed version was over 30 pages.²³

Typical of many of the plans are vague distinctions between the categories aims, content, methods and organization. Generally speaking, the plans also have little in common with the national curriculum plan. A number of formulations from that are used, but the categories and sections in the national curriculum plan are almost ignored.

The main content of the local curriculum plans are formulations about aims and topics. They are more like a syllabus than a curriculum, which was not the intention. Topics that the 6-year-olds are to take part in dominate. They are not usually linked together in larger units, like subjects or areas of study. They tend to stand alone, like a list or a menu. A minority of the plans mention other relevant curriculum themes such as the basic educational approach, didactic preconditions, evaluation, attitudes and norms that are to play a key role in the education, the role of the adults involved, staff cooperation and parental cooperation. There are also considerable differences in what is said about cooperation with the school. The few plans that discuss this in any detail represent all three experimental models. Areas that are more typical of the kindergarten tradition, such as care, social skill, the establishing of attitudes, comfort, creative activities and free play have all been given less attention and are not mentioned at all in several of the plans. In other words, the kindergarten tradition has a weak position in many plans, and is at times very vague, in spite of the fact that it is nursery school teachers who have been most active in drawing them up in all the experimental models.

The local curriculum plans are fairly general, with the exception of the topics to be gone through. The language is rather abstract and characterized to some extent by terms from developmental psychology. The plans do not explain the background to or give the reader a deeper understanding of the actual fundamental ideas and arguments on which they are based. The plans are more or less a presentation of formulations, where the premises for why they have been chosen are not mentioned, where the reader gets to know nothing more about what they mean, over and above the actual wording and where the connections between them are not made clear. The plans contain little explanation, elaboration and argumentation.

There is little difference between the local curriculum plans for the various experimental models, with one exception. The plans for the purely kindergarten model say less than the others about the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic (the three R's).

²³ In the experiment there are examples of local curriculum plans that are well over 100 pages, but these are exceptions.

This content in the curriculum plans does not at all correspond with the traditions to which the staff involved are linked by way of their education and their institutions. The content of the plans appears to break with several of the fundamental curriculum codes that are established for the kindergarten in chapter 5, and is more close to the curriculum codes of the school. As they stand, the curriculum plans to a fairly large degree represent activities that are adult-controlled and subject-related, fairly remote from the kindergarten tradition. Neither does this correspond with the staff's own comments on how the plans were drawn up, that the main aim was to build upon the experience and work of previous years. Topics are not in themselves foreign to the kindergarten, but they represent only a small fraction of the content there. There are many reasons for these contradictions; I shall here point out four of them.

In the first place, it is reasonable to assume that planning is mostly associated with the adult-controlled part of the programme, and not with play and care. The latter are by definition difficult to plan in any great detail. Those who have drawn up the plans will therefore not associate them particularly with school. The character of the topics that are included also underlines this fact. They are not school subjects. They are traditional kindergarten themes with an emphasis on nature, the seasons and festivals, the 6-year-old him- or herself and broad topics such as fairytales or where mother and father work.

The formulations in the local curriculum may also be signals as to what is understood to be most important in the experiment. Topics and themes have the greatest prestige for many in the political arena and in the institutional environment, and are perhaps the area that most people associate with such an educational programme (Hofset 1972, p 71ff).²⁴ The fact that topics have been allowed to dominate the plans for the education of the 6-year-olds, can be a reflection of what kind of content is in demand at that particular time. In that case, it indicates that the staff have paid greater attention to the political and the institutional environment when they drew up the plans than they themselves know or are willing to admit. Another fact illustrates the likelihood of this being the case. Several of those interviewed mentioned that the local curriculum plan was also intended to present the occupational group's professional status and competence, in order to demonstrate just what the groups were made of and capable of doing. This was achieved by using specialist terminology in the local curriculum plan.²⁵ The emphasis in the plan on topics may at the same time be an outer way of approaching the school, and can be used as proof that the kindergarten is now concerned with more direct imparting of subject-matter.

²⁴ I discuss this factor in greater detail in both chapters 7, 9 and 10.

²⁵ Interestingly enough, without exception these attempts were all deleted by the formal bodies that finally approved the plans.

Thirdly, it may well be the case that this was the only content the plans could be given. One of the biggest problems associated with curricula is to draw up plans for, among other things, work involving attitudes and the establishment of norms (cf eg Reisby 1974, p 75f). It is difficult to put into words the "softer" sides of an educational activity. It is very likely that what has here been mentioned as lacking in the plans is known to the staff in the institutions. They do not have the same need to elaborate on it as outsiders do. This conclusion can be drawn from Arfwedson's (1985) school code concept.²⁶ This can be an example of tacit knowledge (Polyani 1967). This knowledge is not linked to terms or put into words. It may also be the result of the fact that the basic terminology of the kindergarten tradition is founded on general and abstract psychological theory, which is very difficult to put into concrete terms and translate into planned action. The combined consequence is that it becomes difficult for others than those who have formulated the plans and work on the spot to understand what was meant by them and how they are to be interpreted, and this goes a long way towards documenting the invisible aspect of the kindergarten tradition, as Bernstein (1975) has defined it.²⁷

In the interviews, the staff mostly quoted purely practical reasons to explain why the plans were like this. They have in common the fact that the plans are not a precondition for working with children, that work will go on regardless of the state of the planning. At the same time, the actual planning process is hard and difficult:

- some see planning the year ahead as useless coercion. This is something that has to be done, and which is done as simply as possible. The plans will not be used anyway.
- some lack the competence necessary for such work, and do it as simply possible.
- some regard planning as a process. The plans show how far the process has progressed in the 1988/89 school year. The plans will gradually be altered and improved as the work continues.
- some do not believe it is possible to include everything that should be included in a plan. The key elements are included, or perhaps what the plan is expected to contain. The staff must make priorities in the use of their time, and formulate in accordance with their needs. In any case, there will always be a number of preconditions which those who have drawn up the plan are aware of, but which

²⁶ Arfwedson (1985) shows that each school has a complex set of norms and rules that the participants there know, but which are not directly accessible to persons who do not know the institution.

²⁷ Cf chapter 5.

the reader cannot share. This can often be conditions that are perfectly natural for those involved in the activity, but completely foreign to others.

On the use of the local curriculum plans

The actual work of drawing the local curriculum plans each year is considered to be positive and useful for the activities in the experiment. Answers to open questions in the questionnaire from all the staff involved in the project reveal that the local curriculum plan helps to structure the work, it makes it easier to cooperate with others in the institution and with the school, it makes it easier to achieve progression and continuity in the teaching, it guarantees a similar programme for all children, it makes the content of the experiment visible and provides good information to those who require it, parents and politicians. The staff were asked some more general questions about the role of the local curriculum plans (cf table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Staff views on the local curriculum plan. The table shows the percentage of staff in each of the experimental models that answered "agree fully/agree to some extent" to the statements.

Modell	Kindergarten	School	Combined	Tot
1. The topics in the local curriculum plan are binding for the work in the experiment for 6-year-olds.	77%	83%	73%	76%
2. The local curriculum plan can hinder flexibility in the work of the experiment.	27%	40%	26%	29%
3. One of the most important functions of the local curriculum plans is to show what work is being done in the experiment with 6-year-olds.	78%	77%	75%	76%
4. The content of the work with 6-year-olds ought not to be decided until one has got to know the children in the group.	56%	27%	44%	42%
N (number of respondents)	36	48	169	253

There was no difference between the groups of teachers in these questions. The answers showed that the majority of the staff consider the curriculum to be binding and have little difficulty in working in accordance with the plans and at the same time showing consideration to the children. More of the staff in the school model than in the other models think that the planning can take place independently of any knowledge of the group of children, but at the same time that the local curriculum plan is more binding and more of a hindrance to flexibility.

There are actually built-in contradictions in the answers in table 6.4, if they are seen in relation to each other, that topics are binding and that the plan does not hinder flexibility, or that the content of the work with 6-year-olds ought not to be decided until one has got to know the children in the group and that the plan does not hinder flexibility. Ideally, the answers to these questions "ought" to be negatively correlated, which they are not.

The interviews with the project participants gave a similar result. It is possible to answer in this way, because the local curriculum plan that very many imagine, has special features and is to be used in a special way. I here give an overview of these aspects:

The local curriculum plan comprises just a small part of the work in the institution, for the majority a very small part. Most of those involved agree that the local curriculum plans first and foremost govern what topics that are to be worked on, from the list of topics that the majority have drawn up in the plan. As was mentioned above, the interviews gave the impression that to work according to plans and to work on topics or themes are almost one and the same. The other aspects of the work with the groups of 6-year-olds were not treated so thoroughly in the plans, and were not directly associated with working according to plans. That part of the activity was regulated by other factors.²⁸ Yet it may well be the case that the plans could have a negative effect on the free activities. Many were afraid of that happening. On the other hand, the plans did not always present all topics. I, for instance, asked the staff in one of the kindergartens who had not mentioned the celebration of 17th May²⁹ in their local curriculum plan: "do you not deal with this topic?" The answer was: "Yes, it is so self evident, that it is not necessary to write about it in the plan. This we do every year".

The local curriculum plan shall not be too "tight" or too "dense". It must have "white spots", where there is room for more spontaneous activity or new initiatives etc (see also Sæter 1988, p 15f).

The local curriculum plans were used as a basis for professional discussions in the staff groups, to develop their knowledge and insight in their work with the children, and to help establish joint methods. The local curriculum plan is also a document that makes it legitimate to raise and discuss in the staff groups various questions related to the activity, when this might otherwise prove difficult. Some mention in particular that the local curriculum plan can force the unqualified staff to join in the professional discussions. At the same time, such discussions, if genuine, will produce other results than those assumed in the plan. The discussions in the staff groups will often involve other people than

²⁸ I come into this below, and in chapters 7 and 8.

²⁹ 17th of May is the Norwegian Constitution Day.

those who have been engaged in drawing up the actual plans, and if their opinions prevail, changes can take place. The staff can decide in advance which content is important to the 6-year-olds. Then they can select their methods and implementation on the basis of the group of children concerned, and in that way adapt the work to the children.

It is possible in various ways to depart from the plans or make special adjustments. Many stress the fact that they do not adhere strictly to a local curriculum plan, they make decisions about the content and method as they go along, and modify this as they get to know the 6-year-olds. It should be possible to replace topics in the plan. For most of those involved, this plan is just one step on the way to the actual teaching situation. Between the local curriculum plan and what actually happens in the groups, there are several planning stages, during which formulations are made about what is to take place. This is mainly because the local curriculum plans are very general and not very precise. It is not possible to put them directly into practice. The local curriculum plan is further developed in the form of more detailed plans, period plans, monthly plans, weekly plans, daily plans and plans for each teaching lesson. It is not unusual to find three or four such planning levels between the local curriculum plan and its actual implementation. In one group, a total of seven planning levels was registered (Germeten 1990).

The drawing up and use of detailed plans

The results of the interviews show that the same factors were linked to the drawing up of the detailed plans as to the local curriculum plans. It was not just the local curriculum plan that determined the content of the detailed plans. Both the staff's own experience and consideration of the children were very important in this context, and for many, more important than using the local curriculum plans. The detailed plans were drawn up partly by others than those who had worked on the local curriculum plans. This could alter the content. Purely practical conditions contributed to making a change of plans necessary. There were cases where buildings, available rooms, timetables, teaching appointments, stand-in teachers, etc forced extensive changes to be made in the work in relation to the local curriculum plan. The actual group of 6-year-olds itself was the one single factor that was most frequently mentioned as the reason for altering the content and intentions of the local curriculum plan. The majority wished the plans to be adapted to suit the children.

Parental expectations also influenced the content of the educational programme in the experiment, over and above what was written in the local curriculum plan. It was not a coincidence that the children in some areas were wearing their

Sunday best and a satchel when they arrived at school for their one day a week, and a storm suit, outer clothing and a bag the rest of the time when they went to the kindergarten. This is a picture of expectations.

When the detailed plans were to be implemented, there were two factors in particular that could cause them to be changed. One was the reactions of the children and how much attention they paid. The other was events in their close environment, which could interest the children more than the theme that had been planned.

In this way, the planning process has a far more stabilizing or conserving effect and serves to maintain any traditions that may exist in the institutions (cf eg Barrow 1984, p 24f, Selander 1984, Cohen & Ball 1990). Between the national curriculum plan, the local curriculum plan and practice, there is room for a number of choices and definitions, in which many other factors and elements are considered than those that were part of the discussion during the drawing up of the local curriculum plan. All in all, this means that in many ways it is more a matter of chance as to whether the local curriculum plan is as expressed in writing is translated into practical work (cf Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984).

Changes of opinion about plans?

So far, it has become clear that the staff involved in the experiment at an early stage changed their opinion of national curriculum plans. They then drew up local curriculum plans with a content that was nearer the school tradition than the kindergarten tradition. Outwardly, this can give the impression that a significant change in educational orientation had taken place in this group of staff. Their reality is somewhat different. Firstly, because the plans they draw up are open. Secondly, because the staff certainly do not feel obliged to use them, and more detailed plans are to be drawn up. Finally, the plans only concern part of the teaching content, the topics in the adult-controlled activity. The consequence of this is that the function the plans are given corresponds far more with the tradition of the institution and profession from which they originate, than the actual wording of the text would seem to indicate. The plans govern and direct the teaching far less than would seem to be the case from the outside. In this way, the staff can satisfy both the institutional environment, the project administration, parents and politicians, at the same time as the professional tradition to which they belong is continued. This is first and foremost true for the kindergarten- and the combined models. The staff in the school model, including the nursery school teachers, have a somewhat different attitude. They give the impression of rather more school-like content related to reading, writing and arithmetic. And they claim that they feel more bound by what has been planned. This implies a greater degree of adult control of the

children than in the kindergarten. At this stage, I see a reason for this.³⁰ Both in the arena of formulation and in the institutional environment, there are expectations that the activity of the school should resemble school, and the state regulations in the project models have been drawn up with this in mind. It remains to be seen whether this is put into effect.

The staff's own formulations on the education

The study of the planning, and especially the local curriculum plans, shows that they do not include the total activity in the educational programme for 6-year-olds. To find out more about how the staff view the whole programme, it was necessary to chart various aspects of their perceptions more directly. I confronted the staff with a questionnaire, to find out their opinions about various aspects of the educational programme. Table 6.5 shows the answers to the questions on subject-learning and on being child-oriented in the education in the experiment.³¹ Questions 1 and 2 concern whether the content and activities should be directed more towards active subject-learning in which aim and purpose lies in the future. Questions 3 and 4 ask whether the programme should place great emphasis on the child's interests, needs and wishes here and now. The staff were given the same questions both in 1987, 1988 and 1989.

There were minor differences in the way the questions were formulated, but the results still give some indication that some development has taken place during the project period. In the table I only include data for 1987 and 1989, the data for 1988 are almost identical with those of 1989.

In the pilot phase (1987), the staff's views on the experiment had a strong child-centered bias. The main view was that the interests of the children were what counted most, with play as the most important element. Subject teaching etc was given low priority. This pattern is close to the kindergarten tradition as it is presented in chapter 5. In the course of the first year of the main phase, the staff had come to the conclusion that the programme ought to be altered to provide a much greater emphasis on the teaching aspect, but still adapted to suit the interests and level of the 6-year-olds. There are no significant differences in the answers from the various groups of teachers, with the exception of the first year. Then the nursery school teachers were rather more child-centered and less subject-oriented were the teachers in the compulsory school. As far as the statements about emphasizing the subject-teaching aspect are concerned, there are differences between the models. Throughout the project, the staff in the

³⁰ I shall return to the issue in both chapters 7 and 8.

³¹ Cf table 5.1, chapter 5.

school model are rather more than the others in favour of emphasizing the teaching aspect, but all the models were more or less alike in being child-centered.

Table 6.5 The views of the staff on the educational programme. The table shows the percentage who have answered "agree/agree entirely" with the statements.

	1987			1989		
	Kinder- garten	School	Combined	Kinder- garten	School	Combined
1. The experiment must make the 6-year-olds used to the teaching methods in school.	8%	13%	16%	57%	80%	60%
2. The experiment must give the children insight and knowledge that will be useful in their work with the subjects in school.	42%	56%	24%	89%	92%	79%
3a. Play ought to be the most important educational method in the experiment.	75%	69%	77%			
3b. Great emphasis should be placed on using play as a method of education in the experiment.				100%	96%	98%
4a. The activities must be organized on the basis of the needs and interests of the children.	100%	100%	92%			
4b. The content of the programme must first and foremost be planned with an eye to what interests and concerns the 6-year-olds.				97%	92%	91%
N (Number of informants)	12	16	51	36	51	175

At the level of the staffs' perceptions there is a gradual development from a fairly clear dominance of the kindergarten tradition towards more elements from the school tradition, with greater emphasis on subjects. The changes in opinion about the emphasis on the child and on subjects after the initial phase, are parallel to the development that took place in the views on plans and planning, and can be explained in the same way as the change in attitude to the development of plans was explained earlier in this chapter. It is a combination of pressure from the institutional environment and processes in the actual

project.³² I asked similar questions about the aims for free play and adult-controlled activity. Each of them is the most characteristic feature of the tradition of the kindergarten and the school respectively. The formulations of the aims were divided into two groups, questions about personality development (questions 1 and 2) and about subject-learning (questions 3 and 4). A four-point scale was used. In table 6.6 I show the percentages that have replied "very important" and "important".

Table 6.6 Staff about aims of free play and adult-controlled activity. The table shows the percentage who have answered "very important" and "important" to the statements below (1990).

Model:	Free play			Adult-controlled activity		
	Kinder- garten	School	Combined	Kinder- garten	School	Combined
1. The children are to develop good social habits and skills (eg: show consideration for each other, be independent, communicate).	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%	96%
2. The children are to develop their imagination and creative talents.	97%	100%	98%	90%	94%	91%
3. The children are to learn more about nature, culture and society (eg: learn about special topics or themes).	72%	72%	63%	92%	91%	83%
4. The children are to learn more that will make it easier for them to learn to read, write and do arithmetic.	62%	59%	55%	85%	91%	86%
N (number of respondents)	39	46	139	39	46	139

The nursery school teachers and school teachers had common views as to the most important aims of free play and adult-controlled activity for the 6-year-olds. Neither are there significant differences between the various experimental models. The development of personal qualities was at the centre of attention in both free play and the adult-controlled situations. The learning of facts was considered somewhat less important. In the adult-controlled situations, the aims

³² I go into this in more detail in chapters 8, 9 and 10.

linked to learning subjects received rather more support than those associated with free play.

A most interesting feature appears when we compare the content of the local curriculum plans with the staffs' answers to the questions in tables 6.5 and 6.6. To a certain extent the plans and the answers are contradictory. To make it simple: the local curriculum plans had their primary emphasis on adult regulation and the sociological dimensions. That is teaching and learning of subject matter or different topics. The answers from staff above to a greater extent place emphasis on being child-centered and are occupied with the psychological dimension, that is personality development. In certain contexts this could be taken as evidence of low alternate-form reliability (Anastasi 1968, p 80). In my view, this result demonstrates the differences between the separate arenas of formulations and shows the impact on the local curriculum plans from the institutional environment, as well as the importance of the educational tradition for the staffs' own perceptions.

In this survey, the school teachers as a group have become somewhat diffuse. I have interviewed only a few of them, and the reply percentage from the group to the questionnaire was on the whole low.³³ Those who have replied however, do not differ from the nursery school teachers in their answers. This could be interpreted to mean that they have given their support to the views of the nursery school teachers. I have grave doubts about that. The explanation is rather that the answers must be seen in the light of the tradition that lies behind the answers. Within the school tradition, the teachers' answers will then have a different meaning than the nursery school teachers' answers will have within the kindergarten tradition. This I will also go into later, in chapters 7 and 8.

The main functions of plans and planning

In relation to the theoretical model presented in chapter 4, this study of plans and planning first and foremost deals with the formulation arena. To the extent that I have got information about realization, it deals with how the staff talk about how they use their own plans.

The process from national curriculum plan to the more detailed practical plans is not rational and deductive. More and more detailed plans are drawn up, the nearer one gets to the practical implementation. It is continual adjustment, more coincidental solving of problems and not least the use of established routines that dominate, where the staff use well-known and well-established solutions.

³³ The nursery school teachers were the dominating ones in this experiment, as indicated in chapter 3.

The curriculum plans are just one of several elements that determine these new and more detailed plans. This means that the arena of formulation is not one arena, but many, meaning that the theoretical model in chapter 4 is too simple on this point. The arenas of formulation are quite complex, just as Goodlad (1986)³⁴ has suggested.

It seems that in each arena of formulation there exists a certain formulation space, defining what is possible or necessary to formulate, a near parallel to the educational space in the arena of realization. Especially two conditions seem to regulate the formulations. The first is different actors from one arena to the other. The next is the potential recipients of the curriculum plans and all other planning. The national curriculum for the experiment takes into account the political intentions, as well as ensuring support from all professional groups involved and from the institutional environment. It seems that the local curriculum plans especially are formulated in order to get legitimacy from the local political and the local institutional environment. The more detailed plans are often not public and for internal use only. For the staff interviewed, the most important factors they themselves took into consideration were circumstances in the group of children itself, the practical and material conditions and what happened in the institution from day to day. Making allowances for the institutional environment is not as necessary in this close to near practice, as it is in many others. This also means that at a certain stage, the educational space in the institutions defined by state regulation becomes a reference point for the planning. According to the frame factor theory the national curriculum plan is a part of the state regulation of the experiment, but this does not function. This most probably demonstrates that when the state ideological regulation does not conform with institutional and professional tradition, and other state regulations are as before, the chances are small of being able to change the practical activity.

When the more detailed plans are formulated and put into effect, it is factors in the arena of realization that to a certain extent decide whether they are followed or not. I interpret this to have two meanings. Firstly, the nearer the plans are to the practical implementation, the more the staff's scope of action is limited by the concrete regulations that exist on the spot, both materially and in the groups of children. This is partly a consequence of state regulation, and the educational space, which the staff cannot control, defines the limits for what it is possible to do. Secondly, when the staff plan within the bounds created by this state regulation, what actually happens is influenced far more by their own notions about how the work should be done, than by the national or local

³⁴ Cf chapter 4.

curriculum plans made long before.³⁵ And their notions are, as pointed to in chapter 4, closely related to the educational tradition they are a part of. This creates the basis for yet another question mark as to whether the local curriculum plans really are an illustration and a documentation of what is happening in the experiment.

The way the curriculum plans came into being, the way they were commented on and the way they were used indicate the existence of strong reservations against the educational activity being controlled and led by others. The message is that there is far greater scepticism attached to working according to plans laid in advance, than is revealed by the answers about the development of plans. On this point, there are also contradictions between the content in the national curriculum for the experiment, the local curriculum and the use of these plans. But there is far greater consensus between how the local curriculum plans were used and the staffs' own perceptions of aims and intentions for the experiment. The way I see it, it is on this point that we come closest to the staff's own basic notions about the educational principles adopted in the project, and the curriculum codes behind the formulations. The expressed fear is that consideration of the child would suffer as a result of the demands for working according to the plans. It appears that the experiment in general was dominated by an educational train of thought being child-centered, in accordance with the kindergarten tradition. It shows that the staff are part of a tradition in which the notion is that the content is defined by the children and where one is not willing to, or able to alter that fact. In certain areas I could here point out that there were differences between the models, such that the staff in the school model were rather more willing to work according to plans than the staff in the other models. This may mean that there is some connection between what sort of institution one is working in, and what attitude one takes to the work. At this stage, I shall not discuss this question any further, but I shall return to it later in chapters 7 and 8.

There is no reason to claim that the planning was a waste of time, even though it apparently has little to say for deciding the work with the children as a whole. I have reached almost the same conclusions as Cohen & March (1976, p 193ff) in a study of planning in American universities. They distinguish between four different functions. (1) Plans are symbols that unite and create a common identity. (2) Plans are advertisements, which outwardly show what is happening, and which can create support and interest for what is happening. (The fact that something else happens, is another matter that I shall return to). (3) Plans are like a game that can be used to argue a point. When an element

³⁵ Similar conclusions have also been reached by others in other studies (William-Olsson 1981, Henckel 1990).

is not mentioned in a plan, that can be used as an excuse for not doing it, at the same time as we have seen that it is not necessary or possible to do what the plan says either. (4) Plans are excuses for interaction. The interaction leads to discussions about the activity, which perhaps in turn lead to other results than those that were planned.

I would add a 5th point: The planning is a form of mental preparation for the educational activity. It is probably in this way that the plans are most important for the practical work. The results of research into "teacher thinking" (eg Clark & Peterson 1986) would seem to indicate that this is the case. This research shows that much of the planning is not included in what is written down, but that the planning influences what questions are raised and the teaching methods employed. The results also stress that the finer details in the classroom are unpredictable and therefore perhaps impossible to plan. The plans provide an outline of what can happen. Once the work itself has begun, the plans are placed more in the background and the decisions of the moment become more important. And it is then that the staff's general preparedness for action is the most important instrument. And that preparedness is in turn closely connected with the notions from the tradition in which they have been socialized.

This study reveals that, according to their own statements, the staff in their more detailed and private plans actually to a large degree have planned to do the same as they have done earlier, in spite of what is written in national and local curriculum plans. Neither the experiment nor the fact that plans have been drawn up have made any radical difference to that. At the same time they give strong support to the national curriculum plan as well as to preparing local curriculum plans. This could mean that the staff involved in many ways are more inclined verbally to agree to the intentions of the experiment than to act accordingly. This support they give to the national curriculum plan and the experiment can be interpreted as talk in the experiment's own language to give support to and get legitimation from the political and institutional environment, while they at the same time do not go through with this in practice. Then the talk compensate for action, which is hypocrisy according to Brunsson (1989).³⁶ If this is so will be discussed in the two next chapters.

³⁶ Cf chapter 2.

7 The educational practice with the 6-year-olds

Introduction

In chapter 6 I presented and discussed various curriculum plans for and formulations about the education of 6-year-olds. I studied both how the plans came about, their content and how they were used. The formulations had different origins and intentions, dependent on the level at which they were drawn up and on who had responsibility, indicating a formulation space at each arena of formulation, dependent of the actors present and who are the recipients.

In this chapter, I analyse the work with the 6-year-olds in the experiment, as it has been registered in the arena of realization. I will then be in a position to compare the formulations with the realizations. The practical research interest in this part is to study to what extent the two institutional traditions make an impact on this education. The theoretical interest is to discuss further which factors maintain and which change the educational activities, especially on the basis of the terms presented in chapter 4.

In the presentation and discussion I concentrate on these aspects. (1) The distribution of the main elements of the daily programme in each of the models: routine situations, adult-controlled activity and free play. (2) The content in adult-controlled activity and free play. (3) The working methods of the staff in these two elements. (4) The organization of the children as to age-group. (5) Cooperation between the experiment and kindergarten/school.

The data

Each year the activities in all the groups of children were observed with a systematic observation checklist.¹ Every 15 minutes, the observer from the staff marked for various permanent categories.² The categories on the form were chosen to register the content, organization and methods related to the kindergarten and school traditions respectively, in accordance with the analysis of the two traditions carried out in chapter 5. The observation sheet contains

¹ A special set of information on observation routines was drawn up each year, with detailed instructions about how the staff were to act. The municipal project leaders were responsible for going through the instructions with those who were to make the observations.

² In this way I eliminated the influences of an external observer. The checklist system also is a way to reduce the problems of bias during the registration.

information about where the children are, if they are with adults or other children, the age of the other children, what element of the daily programme is in progress at the time of observation and what activity the children are occupied with. This provides a coarse-meshed picture of what was going on. During the first two years of the main phase, the observers followed four different 6-year-olds for a whole day in each group, one child each day. To make the collection of data less time-consuming for all concerned, during the final year of the experiment the staff made the registrations every 15 minutes for every day in one week, but now for the whole group and not for each individual child.³ Table 7.1 shows the total number of observation days for each of the three experimental models over a 3-year period. As the table illustrates, the material is very comprehensive. Observation data exists for about 500 days in each of the years of the experiment, approximately 8000 individual registrations each year.⁴

Table 7.1 The number of observation days in each of the experimental models over a 3-year period.

Experimental year:	1988		1989		1990	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Kindergarten model	16	80	20	100	24	122
School model	32	157	29	143	29	150
Combined model	52	258	51	254	48	247
Total	100	496	100	497	101	519
Number of 15 min observations	7669		8213		8125	

In 1988 and 1989 the form registered individual behaviour, in 1990 it registered group behaviour. Discrepancies from 1988/89 to 1990 can therefore be explained either by changes in the programme or as a difference between individual and group behaviour. What is essential when the data from the three years are to be compared, is whether the activity of each individual child corresponds with the definition of the situation for the group in 1990. Experience indicates that this is not always the case. (1) Various types of combined situations are fairly common. In particular, routine situations often contain elements of gatherings

³ This change of observation method made the data easier to collect, but far more difficult to analyse (cf below).

⁴ The observations were carried out according to plan in almost 100% of the experimental groups each year. The differences in numbers between years in table 7.1 is primarily a function of different organization and definitions of groups and of change in observation method.

and/or the opportunity for free activities. (2) The age range will vary, especially in the free play, when the children themselves decide who they are together with. In the observations in 1988 and 1989, who the 6-year-olds really were with was registered. In 1990 the observations tell us who the children had the opportunity to be with in the whole group, not whether they actually were. (3) In the free play, it was impossible to register the content in 1990, because the children were engaged in so many different and parallel activities, which were impossible to register on just one form in this simple way. (4) What ought to appear most stable in the observations, because of the change of methods, is the content in the adult-controlled activity. This activity is mostly a collective activity, common to everyone.

The observations were carried out during the spring of each year, but at slightly different times. About 95% of the observations have been made by nursery school teachers, their assistants and trainees, about 5% by school teachers involved in the experiment.⁵ Each year the municipal project leaders and the staff involved in the evaluation carried out control observations.⁶ The average correspondence works out at 83% of all categories and years, and is fairly constant. The highest correspondence is found in the categories of where the children are (98%) and what was the element of the daily routine (86%). The lowest correspondence was in the category for content - where the figure was about 70%.⁷ Those who made the observations have also answered some questions about the observations. Approximately 90% each of the years think that the activity on the observation days is fairly normal, and that the observations give a representative picture of what goes on in the experiment. About 30% had negative comments to the method employed, related either to the extra burden this placed on the staff or to problems in categorizing the content (see discussion of content below).

The observation form also contains a section where the observer is asked to characterize each observation in his/her own words. In this way it was possible to check the use of the categories. How precisely these were adhered to varied considerably, but this to a large extent was corrected by changing the crossings-out to correspond with what was written.⁸

⁵ The nursery school teachers alone were responsible for over 80% of the observations.

⁶ These control observations were made parallel to those of the observer from the staff in the selected control groups. The number of control observations is approximately 8% of the total number of observation days, (about 40 of about 500 observation days each year).

⁷ The correspondence is calculated by dividing the figure for the joint marked categories by the sum of the marked categories.

⁸ The correspondence with the control observations has been calculated after the observations have been checked and adjusted.

Due the problems associated with the varying lengths of the educational programme,⁹ there is little to be gained in comparing the absolute total of occurrences of each observation category. Instead, I study the relative frequency of the individual observations. Varying relative distribution of the variables is then an indication of varying practice. Similar relative occurrence is interpreted as an indication of similar practice (see eg Gustafsson 1977, p 98). This gives an average expression of the activity in the project models. An important source of error may then be whether the relative distribution between the institutions and the observation days within each group is uneven. The results however, are fairly consistent both in the case of frequency distribution, the average for institutions and for observation days within and between models (cf Anderson & Burns 1989, p 92f).

In addition to the checklist, used in all the experimental groups, several more detailed studies from 14 experimental groups were carried out to get information about the work with the children.¹⁰

The distribution of the elements in the daily programme

Table 7.2 shows the relative distribution of the three elements in the daily programme, routine situation, free play and adult-controlled activity, according to project model for the three years of the main phase.¹¹

Relatively speaking, the routine situations show the most stable result, with minor differences between the experimental models. The main difference between the models is to be found in free play and adult-controlled situations. In the kindergarten model, there is relatively most free play, and more than in the other two models. In the school model, the same applies to the adult-controlled activities. In the combined model, the results are somewhere in between.¹²

The changes over the three years, and especially the last year, indicate an increasing number of situations in which adults control the activity, and reduced opportunities for free play. The changes in the data for 1990 correspond fairly closely with the expected consequences of the change in methods. The most

⁹ There was not full support for the demand in the project plan for an experimental period of between 12 and 15 hours a week. Over half the groups spent in effect longer time on the project (see chapter 10).

¹⁰ I will not go into these studies in detail here, only refer to the main results. They are documented elsewhere in separate reports (Cf also chapter 1).

¹¹ Cf the definitions in chapter 5, footnote no. 47.

¹² Below I will return to the results of the combined model.

important aspect of the data is thus the fairly stable pattern between the various elements.

Table 7.2 The relative distribution of three elements of the daily programme in the experimental models. The table shows the percentage of observations in each model, for three years.¹³

Model:	Kindergarten			School			Combined		
Year	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990
Routine situations	21	19	29	23	25	25	21	21	25
Free play	51	50	41	32	31	23	44	43	37
Adult-controlled activity	28	30	32	46	45	53	35	37	39
Sum	100	99	102	101	101	101	100	101	101
N (Obs)	1195	1694	1940	1825	1848	1883	4166	4671	4302

These results could indicate that the institution in which the project is located is an important factor in determining the distribution of the elements in the daily programme. This corresponds to some of the results that were revealed by the study of the planning process in chapter 6. In order to gain a more detailed insight into this aspect, I regrouped the data into three new categories, according to which institution the models were actually located in. The background for doing so, is lack of correspondence between the formal label of the experimental model and the genuine model.¹⁴

To provide material that was easy to analyse, I divided it into three new groups: (1) Kindergarten less than 20 hours per week. (2) Kindergarten more than 20 hours per week. (3) School up to 20 hours per week.¹⁵ Table 7.3 shows

¹³ In the data for 1988, a total of 483 observations are missing from this table. It was impossible to sort these observations according to the variable "elements in the daily programme". That the sum of percentages of the observations for 1990 is over 100% is explained by the fact that some types of activity occasionally took place parallel to each other.

¹⁴ I first discovered this after going through the project models in 1988, but then I lacked information that was detailed enough to enable me to calculate the extent (Haug & Sætre 1988, p 29f). In particular, there were a number of camouflaged school model experiments, groups with only 6-year-olds allocated to schools. In fact, this applied to as many as one fifth of the project groups (cf chapter 10).

¹⁵ That the opening hours are longer than the experimental time (12-15 hours a week) is a problem I go into in chapter 10. Its general significance is that the experimental time was not accepted. In fact, the opening hours of each experimental group became the time of the experiment. The choice of 20 hours a week as a split criteria is made to register consequences of the difference between short and long time in institutions. None of the groups in the school

the relationship between these variables and the distribution of the elements of the daily programme for data from 1989 and 1990.

Table 7.3 The ratio between localization, opening time and elements of the daily programme. The table shows the percentage of observations in three rearranged models.

Rearranged models:	Kindergarten less than 20 hours a week		Kindergarten more than 20 hours a week		School less than 20 hours a week	
	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990
Routine situation	21	27	21	27	21	24
Free play	46	37	49	40	34	27
Adult-controlled	33	36	29	33	44	49
Total	100	100	99	100	99	100
N (obs)	1933	2101	2608	2766	3672	3258

The real school models have relatively speaking the most adult-controlled activity and the least amount of free play. The kindergarten models with the longer opening hours, have correspondingly more free play and the least amount of adult-controlled activity. The short-time kindergarten is to be found between these two extremes. In other words, the table reveals a connection between type of institution, opening hours and daily programme. In kindergarten an increase in time is mostly associated with an increase in the relative amount of free play. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare this with a school model with opening hours of over 20 per week, since no such combination existed in the experiment.

The institution "decides" the daily programme?

It is the nursery school teachers who are mainly responsible for the planning and work in all the models. The staff in the models all state roughly the same aims for their work. They have the same qualifications. They have received the same training for the experiment. They have access to the same reference books to help them. They are working according to the same national curriculum. The staff in the school model are somewhat more biased in favour of teaching and are more prepared to be bound by the national curriculum and the local

model was open longer than 20 hours per week, the vast majority of the school groups were within the bounds of the official experimental time of 12-15 hours per week. I also go into the causes of this in chapter 10.

curriculum, but the differences are not considerable. Even so, the daily programme is organized in quite different ways in the three models.

The school model has a programme in which the adults to a larger extent than the children control the activity, in accordance with the traditions of school. In the kindergarten models, the children have more freedom to choose the activity, in accordance with the kindergarten tradition. Thus the institution to which the model is linked influences the outward organization of the content.

In the reform perspective, much weight would be given to the differences in the staffs' opinions, when explaining this result, indicating that the ideas regulate the action. In accordance with the model in chapter 4, I give another explanation.

As to organization of the daily programme, the kindergartens in the experiment show very little change compared to the situation before the pilot project started.¹⁶ The national curriculum has not had any direct effect on the practical work of the project. The state regulations are as they have been, the staff are the same. The kindergarten traditions are not altered, and cannot probably be altered in this short time. I would rather say on the contrary, due to the "fighting" about the 6-year-olds. The staff continue to organize their work as they always have done, within the tradition and the institution, with the existing regulations and on the basis of the notions they have about what education should be like. One of the results is that the organization of the daily programme in the kindergarten is no different from what it has been earlier. What is changed most seems to be the talk about the education.

Time at disposal in kindergarten seems to have a connection with the distribution of the daily programme, time and free play are positively correlated.¹⁷ Time is a form of state regulation, defining the educational space. This could mean that a certain amount of routine situations and adult-controlled activity is necessary as a basis before one can "fill up" with more free play. And this contradicts the rhetoric about the priority of free play in kindergarten.

It is first and foremost nursery school teachers who are engaged in the school model, they are not socialized into the school tradition in the same way as the school teachers, although they have been pupils and students. They do not represent the school traditions and are not bearers of it. They have not developed the notions that make it possible for them to interpret and understand the

¹⁶ Cooperation with the school for 1-2 hours a week or less is new for some of those involved, but this cannot give these outcomes. Investigations made in connection with the report "Samarbeid barnehage-skole" (1984) confirm that there has been little cooperation between kindergarten and school, but that the desire for such cooperation was great on the part of the kindergarten (cf chapter 3). I will return to this below.

¹⁷ This is a direct parallel to the findings of Dahllöf (1967), cf chapter 2.

situations they are involved in, in the same way as the school-teachers can. Even so, they fit in with the pattern of the daily programme. This happens even though they are a part of another educational tradition, and in spite of the fact that to a some extent they have expressed other ideas about the work with 6-year-olds than what is consistent with the school tradition. The explanation must be linked to the fact that the nursery school teachers enter institutions with established arrangements which are a consequence of the total amount of state regulations that apply to the institution and which are mutually linked to the educational tradition that exists there earlier.

Cooperation kindergarten and school, different age groups

The working party that first made suggestions of an experiment, was among other things especially occupied with two matters.¹⁸ One was cooperation between school and kindergarten. The other was the importance of making the educational provisions for the 6-year-olds in mixed age groups, an idea clearly from the kindergarten tradition. The Standing Committee of Church and Education in the Storting supported this, and said this should include all the experimental models.¹⁹ A closer study of this cooperation and the spread of mixed age groups can provide increased insight into what determines practice. And since these two topics are closely related, I discuss them together. The observation form registered who the 6-year-olds were together with according to age. This is used as an indication of both age mix and cooperation between the experimental group and kindergarten/school. The results appear in table 7.4.

The trends are the same for all three years. The project models were different both in the case of the age mix and of the cooperation between kindergarten and school.

- The kindergarten model had a fairly comprehensive mix of ages, but mostly internally, within each institution, where the 6-year-olds were together with younger children from the same kindergarten.
- The school model had the least mixing of ages of the experimental models, and little cooperation with the kindergarten (younger children). The cooperation with the kindergarten was about the same extent as the cooperation the kindergarten model has with the school. The cooperation was mostly with other school classes, and the age mix was mainly internally.
- The combined model had the most comprehensive pattern of cooperation between the institutions, at the same time as there was also a fairly extensive

¹⁸ Cf chapter 3.

¹⁹ Cf chapter 3.

age mix internally. The main explanation of the differences between the models on the question of cooperation is naturally that in the combined model, the staff were given greater resources to establish and implement cooperation, in other words a form of economic regulation.

Table 7.4 Age distribution in the experimental models, the age of the children the observed 6-year olds were together with. (The table shows the percentage distribution in each of the experimental models for the three project years).²⁰

Model:	Kindergarten			School			Combined		
Year	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990
Younger than 6	42	33	60	4	6	0	32	27	42
Older than 6	5	5	5	14	20	22	12	13	17
6 years	38	41	33	70	54	78	38	40	42
Alone ²¹	14	23	-	13	21	-	18	20	-
Total	99	102	100	101	101	100	100	100	101
N (obs)	1267	1694	1940	1958	1848	1883	4444	4671	4302

Mixed age groups

There is a great difference in the age mix between the models, and it seems completely dependent upon the organizational tradition in each of the institutions. The age mix and degree of cooperation in the various versions corresponds closely with the institution in which the version originates.²² And the explanation of this must again be tied to the institutional regulations and traditions. The urgent request from both the Storting, the Executive Committee and the national curriculum plan for the experiment at this point seems to have had very little effect.

²⁰ In the observations the 6-year-olds also were with both younger and older children at the same time. This happened to a small extent, 1-2% of the total amount of observations. I have included these registrations in the category "Older than 6", to supplement the measure of the cooperation between experiment and school.

²¹ In the data from 1988 and 1989 there was a separate category for "alone". It is only registered for adult-controlled activity in 1990, (individual work).

²² It is true to say that the small schools with several age groups in one class has by definition an age mix as its ideal. In this type of school the age mix is to a large extent a formal method of organizing the school in order to make it possible to maintain a pattern of small decentralized schools. In the practical teaching also in these schools, individualization is the most widespread principle (Spjelkavik 1983, p 198ff).

This provides completely different scope for action in the models. The question is then what connections there might be between the different age compositions of the experimental groups and the content and the activities of the 6-year-olds. To look at this more closely, I use only the data from the combined model. This is the model that on the broadest basis has put into effect both the most extensive form of cooperation with the school and has the most extensive age mix. This model actually comprises three quite different versions, short-time and full-day kindergarten and "camouflaged" school.²³ It gives the best circumstances for comparing the relationships between the two institutions on a common basis.

Table 7.5 The age mix in two versions of model 3 in free play and adult-controlled activity. The table shows the percentage distribution of each institutional version.

Institution	Free play				Adult-controlled activity			
	Kinder- garten	Kinder- garten	School	School	Kinder- garten	Kinder- garten	School	School
Together with	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990
Less than 6	44	70	3	5	30	40	2	2
Older than 6	7	11	11	27	28	31	14	14
Same age, 6	30	19	64	68	26	20	70	74
Alone	20	-	23	-	16	10	13	10
Sum	101	100	101	100	100	101	99	100
N (obs)	1398	1180	622	408	922	1112	767	561

In table 7.5 I show the distribution of age mix for free play and adult-controlled activity within the various versions of the combined model. I choose these two elements of the daily programme because they each in their own way are most typical for each of the traditions. To simplify the material, I have also amalgamated the observations for the two kindergarten versions, since they have the same pattern in the data. It is the comparison between the kindergarten versions and the school version that is most interesting.

The first point to notice is that the pattern of cooperation kindergarten-school in the different versions of the combined model corresponds to the results in the other experimental models. This is a further indication of the fact that the formal model definitions were not followed. The kindergarten cooperates with the

²³ Cf footnote 14, chapter 7.

school, the school hardly cooperates at all with the kindergarten. It almost only cooperates internally. In the kindergarten versions there is a considerable age mix, in the school there is not.

In the free play in the kindergarten versions in the combined model, there is a considerable age mix. It is here that the most time is spent together with younger children. That the data for free play in the school version for older children are so high for 1990 has to do with the observation method and is to a large extent a function of the joint breaks between lessons. From observations in earlier years we know that the distribution of the actual time 6-year-olds and older children spend together in free play is approximately the same in the two versions.

In the adult-controlled activity in the kindergarten version there were fewer younger children in the groups, more older children than in the other elements in the daily programme and no changes in the size of the single-age group, which is relatively small. It is in the adult-controlled activity that the majority of the cooperation between school and kindergarten takes place. In the school version, there is no difference in the age mix between free play and adult-controlled activity. The school version thus has most of the adult-controlled activity in single-age groups, far less cooperation with older children and hardly any cooperation with younger children. The school version in the combined model is not noticeably different from the school model. Below I also look into the connections between the detailed content and age mix.

A discussion of cooperation

Approximately two-thirds of the observations of cooperation with school shows that they take place in school. The kindergarten finds it easier to cooperate "upwards" than the school finds it to cooperate "downwards", as has always been the case (Gule & Vinje 1981). The staff from kindergarten are most interested in and motivated for a cooperation with school, but this alone could not totally explain this result.

In a broader perspective, it is the stronger of the two institutions with a higher status that wins the day. This can appear to be a more general rule, and it also what the kindergarten has generally experienced earlier. In a summary of the research into cooperation between the kindergarten and the infants school, Kärby (1982) concludes that the chances are greater that there will be more of the school's content than that of the kindergarten. It appears to be a special case of a more general tendency, that the institution with the lower status and position wishes to be linked more closely with one with a higher status and position, but not vice versa (cf also Langset 1989). Experience from coordination and merging in the field of education both in Norway and other countries reveals the same pattern, that the type of school that places most emphasis on

academic and theoretical teaching wins the day in competition with schools of a more practical nature, because the "weak" institution is melted into the regulations and traditions of the "strong" institution. This has happened in this country in connection with the merging of the secondary modern and the junior high school to form a new joint comprehensive school for all pupils. In that case, the content of the junior high school to a large extent dictated the curriculum of the new type of school (cf eg Telhaug 1978, p 36f). The same happened in England in connection with the development of the compulsory school there (cf eg Goodson 1988, p 117ff). This also results both from the state regulations and from traditions. As pointed out in chapter 5, school is more regulated than kindergarten, and thus has much less room for action, at the same time as this pattern of cooperation is the one established already.

When there is cooperation, it is the state regulations of the school that mostly apply, and as we already have seen, they lead to an increased emphasis on adult-controlled activity, a workform much closer to the school tradition than to the kindergarten tradition. When school cooperates with school, this pattern is less pronounced. The kindergarten tradition with free play is emphasized far less. Within the kindergarten tradition, this is legitimized by the fact that adult-controlled activity also belongs there. In addition there is also considerable pressure from the institutional environment, both from parents and children, to the effect that when the 6-year-olds are at school, then the content must be like school. At the same time, there have been many examples of statements the "other way", that the parents of schoolchildren do not want their children to be involved in a "kindergarten".

The content of the elements of the daily programme

The way the daily programme is organized has been interpreted first and foremost as a consequence of the fact that different traditions and regulations apply in the institutions. The question is to what degree this difference is also mirrored in the content and methods in the various elements of the daily programme in the institutions. I intend to look more closely at this aspect.

It was difficult, if not impossible, to draw up satisfactory categories for a detailed registration of the content of the various elements of the daily programme in the experiment. The first requirement in the registration of the content must be that it is fair to the two traditions concerned. No established standard exists that could be used. The content categories in the national curriculum plan for the experiment were probably the most natural alternative, but they had hardly been used, either in the local curriculum plan or in other conversations and discussions about the content. It is also clear from the study

of the traditions in chapter 5 and of the planning processes in chapter 6 that the kindergarten lacks terms that can explain what is going on there. This is not just a problem restricted to research and evaluation. It illustrates a central and comprehensive field in which the traditions of kindergarten and school are different, and where the lack of common conventions and terms can hinder further development.

I constructed some general categories for the observation form, which varied slightly from year to year. The categories were chosen after studying the curriculum plans for teacher-training in Norway and Sweden, textbooks on method linked to this training, public reports on the kindergarten and the school and diverse research on the kindergarten and the school. The categories are various subject areas such as nature studies, social studies, preparation for school, they are partly based on the material the children use, eg workbooks, books, games, building materials and different forms of activity such as eg arts, physical activity, roleplay, construction play. Both the independent checks that have been made and the comments of the staff who made the observations showed the whole way that it was difficult to register the content on the basis of the categories that had been established. They did not receive support, and the staff claimed that they did not to a sufficient degree have the conditions necessary to register the activities that took place. For this reason the results must be interpreted with care. They are uncertain. The safest way to use them is as a point of departure for a comparison between the experimental models. They are far more unreliable when it comes to explaining the total educational programme that took place.²⁴

Adult-controlled activities

In the presentation in table 7.6 I do not distinguish between adult-controlled activity outdoors and indoors, since over 90% of the adult-controlled activities took place indoors. In the presentation of adult-controlled activities I finally use four categories: two categories based on subject knowledge and two based on self-expression:²⁵

- Learning reading, writing and arithmetic: this category concerns more formal preparations for the learning of reading, writing and arithmetic and the actual teaching in these fields.
- Theme-work: theme-work means that in various types of activity, the 6-year-olds work on a certain topic, theme or area which they are to learn more about

²⁴ The danger is that the content of the models exists in areas which are not represented at all on the observation form.

²⁵ For the data from 1988 and 1989, these categories are arrived at by adding together the results for more detailed classifications.

(eg winter, fairytales, the body, the senses, themes from their closest environment etc).

- Spontaneous conversations about attitudes and experiences: this category includes all conversations with the children in which relevant questions are discussed spontaneously without having been planned in advance, and whose aim is to deal with attitudes and experiences the children have had. These can be experiences or things that have happened either in the group or to the individual child.²⁶
- Practical-esthetical activity: the children are occupied with various types of activity, in which self-expression is the most important aspect (eg: every form of arts and handicrafts, drama, theatre, music, movement, physical training, swimming etc).

Table 7.6 shows the percentage for the occurrence of each of the content elements in the adult-controlled activity. The pattern for the content is fairly stable, and the distribution of the content categories is fairly similar in all the models.

Table 7.6 The content of the adult-controlled activity in each of the experimental models. (The table shows the percentages).²⁷

Model	Kindergarten			School			Combined		
Year	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990
Reading, writing, arithmetic	17%	14%	10%	17%	15%	15%	15%	12%	12%
Theme-work	34%	33%	40%	31%	30%	41%	24%	36%	36%
Spontaneous conversation	-	-	17%	-	-	16%	-	-	14%
Practical-esthetical activity	43%	43%	38%	46%	49%	43%	45%	46%	38%
Total	28%	30%	31%	46%	45%	53%	35%	37%	38%
N (obs)	339	515	623	831	820	1000	1470	1689	1673

²⁶ This category was introduced in 1990, on the basis of experience from the detailed studies, with a surprisingly high number of spontaneous conversations as part of these activities, (see below).

²⁷ Several of the content categories overlap each other. There is therefore no direct link between the sum of the activities and the amount of adult-controlled activity. In addition comes the category "miscellaneous", activities that could not be placed in any category, on average about 8% of the total.

The main part of the adult-controlled activities in all three models is work on various themes and practical-esthetical activities. There are far fewer spontaneous conversations and less teaching in reading, writing and arithmetic. There is a tendency to certain changes in the course of the three years. It is the category "theme-work" which distinguishes itself and for which more observations are registered from one year to the next. The extent of the teaching in reading, writing and arithmetic is not particularly great. Kärrby (1986, p 200) discovers eg that this field comprises 3.2% of the total activity in her material from the kindergarten, which is less than the figures found here.²⁸ The most special feature is the extent of the spontaneous conversations. It is difficult to find comparable data, but both Stukat (1974) and Rian (1974) present information which indicates that in teaching in school, this is fairly unusual (cf also Schools and Quality 1989, p 17). Sønstabø (1976) registered eg conversations about children's personal experiences in 5% of the time in the group conversation session in kindergarten.

Teaching reading, writing and arithmetic

In spite of the fact that reading, writing and arithmetic did not represent a very large part of the content of the educational programme for 6-year-olds, there were two important reasons for studying this particular activity. The school has had almost the sole right to teach the three R's. Neither has the kindergarten been interested in teaching these skills, and has to a great extent reserved the right to not get involved in this activity.²⁹ The book "Målrettet arbeid i barnehagen" (1982) does not mention this field at all. Similar signals were given early in the experiment. In the official brochure providing information to parents about the experiment, it says among other things that there will be no systematic teaching of writing and arithmetic, but that children who show an interest in this, will be given support and encouragement (cf the official brochure: "Something exciting for your six-year-old!" 1987).³⁰ In the experiment the

²⁸ Kärrby calculates the percentage of the total material. If she had calculated the figure as a percentage of adult-controlled activity only, it would have been about half of the result presented from the experiment.

²⁹ In their comments on the regulations associated with the Law on Kindergartens, the department has registered this fact: "There has been a discussion as to whether children should be able to learn to read, write and do sums in the kindergarten. The compulsory school teaching has so far been based on the assumption that the teaching of these skills is to take place at the first level of the compulsory school. The children will not normally benefit from a situation in which the kindergarten anticipates the teaching given in school". (my translation from a departmental circular: "Retningslinjer for praktisering av barnehagelovens formålsbestemmelser", 1985, p 4).

³⁰ This brochure was also published in English.

executives went further in this field than first appeared to be the intention.³¹ Resources were also invested in this area of the project by developing idea booklets and by initiating specialist development work on the subject (Bondevik Tønnesen 1988a, 1988b, Hagtvedt et al 1988). The national curriculum plan for the experiment (Rammeplan 1988, p 63-65) has a separate section entitled "Symbols, concepts and communication", which deals with reading, writing and arithmetic.

The results from the observation study show that the relative share the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic has is roughly the same in all the models. The staffs' answers to a questionnaire on this point reveal that the kindergarten groups³² approached this issue in a rather different way from the school groups. The variations are great, but there was also a pattern. In the first place, kindergarten groups in all models concentrated mostly on being preparatory for the teaching of the three R's, whereas the real school groups to a greater extent offer teaching in these skills. When kindergarten groups made provisions for the teaching of the three R's, it was in those cases where the 6-year-olds themselves showed an interest in this.³³ In the school model and the school groups of the combined model, 6-year-olds far more often received some sort of teaching in this field, regardless of whether they expressed an interest. The nursery school teachers were the most active in the preparatory work for reading, writing and arithmetic, and in teaching the alphabet, reading, etc. Many school teachers were not involved in such activities at all. About 1/3 of the school teachers stated that they were engaged in such teaching activities, whilst 3/4 of the nursery school teachers said the same. The tendency was similar for the preparatory activities, but the figures for participation were higher for both groups. This result is surprising, seen in relation to what area(s) the staff felt they lacked qualifications (table 7.7). In answers to a questionnaire, it was revealed that it was difficult for the nursery school teachers to master the more formal teaching of the three R's. The nursery school teachers felt the need for more training in this area. The school teachers felt the need in the case of free play.

³¹ I go into this in chapters 9 and 10.

³² By group I here refer to the "real" experimental models.

³³ The activity in the kindergarten model is very close to what is said in the official circular and to what the working party (Samarbeid barnehage-skole 1984) considers to be normal preparatory activity for school for 6-year-olds in the kindergarten.

Table 7.7 The teachers' own experience of lacking qualifications (Those who answered "great need" or "some need" for training).

Special area:	School teachers	Nursery school teachers
Preparing & presenting material	41%	34%
Teaching the three R's	27%	70%
Conversations with children	28%	23%
Organizing free play	82%	35%
N (Number of informants)	90	110

What determines the content in the adult-controlled activity?

The relative distribution of the content in the adult-controlled activity is fairly similar in all the experimental models, and there is a slight tendency towards an increase in the amount of theme-work over the three-year project period. Because none of the models distinguishes itself, this could mean that once "inside" the elements in the daily programme, the nursery school teachers are free to do what they want and what they are able to do according to their own traditions. This does not go for the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. In that field, the direct relationship with the school seems to have changed the methods in the school model and the combined model more in the direction of the school tradition. They offer a programme for everybody, and not as in the majority in the kindergarten model, a programme only when the children are interested. There can be quite considerable sources of error in the way in which the information on this point was gathered. The answers can be more influenced by the ideal view than by the reality of the matter. With this reservation in mind, it seems that having some sort of relationship with school is a decisive factor and opens the way for these new forms of activity. What mechanisms are at work here is rather a complex issue, because it is the nursery school teachers with the poorest qualifications who are responsible for most of this teaching. It seems that the institutional tradition is affecting them. I have previously pointed to the expectations both parents and children have to the school and to going to school. There is outside pressure that makes it particularly difficult for the nursery school teachers to avoid working with some form of teaching of the three R's. The easiest way to cope with this sort of pressure is by way of formulations, by pointing out that this is being done. In this case, that is probably not sufficient, because both parents and children can keep a check on what is happening. And then the next alternative is concrete action. It is easy to imagine that the relationship to the school both forces this activity forward and legitimizes it, at the same time as the nursery school teachers are in control of

it as long as they are doing the work themselves. When the relationship with the school is weaker, as in the kindergarten model and the kindergarten versions of the combined model, tradition is against this being done, at the same time as the expectations of the children and parents are not so great. A question to be asked is what sort of teaching is done by the nursery school teachers in a field they themselves think they are not qualified? I go into that below and in the next chapter.

Content and age grouping in adult-controlled activity

Above³⁴ I have shown that the age groupings are different in the kindergarten and the school models, at the same time as the content of the adult-controlled activities all over are about the same. The question is whether there is any connection between the age grouping and the content. In table 7.8 I show the links between age grouping and content in the adult-controlled situations for the two versions of the combined model, cf the reasons in table 7.5 above. It is data from 1990 that provide the broadest foundation for such a comparison.

Table 7.8 The content in the adult-controlled activity in various age groupings in the kindergarten and school versions of the combined model. The figures show the percentage of observations in each age group, 1990.

Age group	6-year-olds and younger children		Only 6-year-olds		6-year olds and older children	
	Kinder-garten	School ³⁵	Kinder-garten	School	Kinder-garten	School
Spontaneous conversation	22	-	11	13	8	1
Reading, writing, arithmetic	3	-	26	12	15	0
Work with theme	29	-	22	37	37	81
Practical esthetical activity	42	-	30	37	43	34
N (obs)	460	14	367	460	263	83

When the 6-year-olds are with younger children in the kindergarten, the activities are dominated by ones in which self-expression is the key, spontaneous conversation and practical esthetical activities. When they are in the kindergarten in an homogeneous age group, there are by comparison more activities related

³⁴ Tables 7.4 and 7.5.

³⁵ There are so few observations of 6-year-olds with younger children in the school version, that I cannot draw any conclusions from them. Therefore I do not present the figures.

to reading, writing and arithmetic, and fewer occurrences of spontaneous conversation and practical esthetical activities.

In other words, relatively speaking a content with a more pronounced bias in favour of subject learning.³⁶ When the 6-year-olds from the kindergarten are together with older children (in school), the content is a cross between the two, with less activity related to the three R's and more practical esthetical activities. As far as the content is concerned, the kindergarten version has therefore a stronger bias in favour of subjects when the 6-year-olds are on their own and when they are with school children.

When the 6-year-olds in school are on their own, the content is not unlike the content when the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten are on their own. There is comparatively speaking less activity related to reading, writing and arithmetic. This must be seen in the light of the fact that the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten are also with younger children, in which case this component hardly ever occurs at all. The total relative extent is therefore not so different, as shown in table 7.6. When the 6-year-olds in the school model are with older schoolchildren, the cooperation is characterized far more by theme work than in any other situation. The same result is to be found in the data from all the comparable school model groups. What the 6-year-olds in school have to do without in relation to the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten, is thus the content that is characterized more by self-expression together with younger children, and instead they have to do more typical school work together with older children.

Unfortunately, the data cannot give a complete picture of the field, due to the lack of information about children from the school version in cooperation with younger children, but it is clear that both the children's age composition and the different institution where the education is given make a difference. These two factors are forms of state regulations, defining the educational space. Having 6-year-olds alone in a group seems to be more associated with subject learning while having 6-year-olds with younger children gives weight to freer expression.

When the kindergarten cooperates with the school, this mostly happens at school, and under the regulations of the school. This to a great extent defines the way these activities are organized, as adult-controlled. These data presented in table 7.8 provide a basis for the claim that the kindergarten in cooperation with the school gives a stronger element of the kindergarten tradition than when the school cooperates with the school. In the first case, two institutions with their own special character meet, this seems to have a modifying effect. It forms a basis for making adjustments in the programme, probably so that it is within

³⁶ In the case of the activities related to the three R's, these data confirm the information from the staff involved in the project, that this is first and foremost a matter for the nursery school teachers alone, and their responsibility in all the versions.

the bounds of what is possible and can be accepted by both the two traditions and corresponds to the notions from both nursery school teachers and school teachers. There is also a connection here with the purpose of the cooperation. When the kindergarten cooperates with the school, the main aim mentioned is to create well-being and a positive atmosphere with a view to getting used to school and facilitating a gentle transition from one institution to the other.

In the other case, there is cooperation inside the same institution. Now both the groups will belong to the same institutional tradition, and the situation will be characterized by the school tradition, even if it is the nursery school teachers that are responsible for the 6-year-olds. The problem of transition does not exist to the same extent, and the consequence is a far greater degree of subject and topic work.

Detailed studies

The data about the content of the adult-controlled activity that are available from the standardized observations provide limited information about how the teaching is really done. To gain more insight, I had to take a different approach. To begin with, direct and independent observation of the work of the project was the only real alternative. It was done as part of the detailed and close studies by trained and experienced external observers, and was already planned in order to give more detailed information about the work of the project.³⁷ These studies are very voluminous, it is not possible to present and discuss them in any detail here. I therefore only call attention to some of the main findings.

The results of the detailed studies reveal considerable variations. There are also tendencies that would seem to indicate that which group of professional teachers that is working with the children can make all the difference, in all the experimental models. This could mean that what goes on in the teaching is an act that the teacher decides through her own tradition, and the notions tied to this tradition. As is revealed in the detailed studies, the methods adopted by the nursery school teachers in the adult-controlled activity are different from those of the school teacher, indicating just the importance of the tradition. There is also a difference between the methods of the nursery school teachers and the results that are found in other studies of teaching in school (Lundgren 1972, Gustafsson 1977).³⁸ When the nursery school teachers worked, they did not force forward the topic or task that they had prepared. The adult-controlled programme was flexible, alternating between subject content and the care aspect. The children in the project had a fairly large amount of freedom to act

³⁷ Cf chapter 1.

³⁸ Cf chapter 8.

independently of plans and themes also in the adult-controlled situations. This became apparent in several ways. There was often physical contact between the children and the adults. Considerable scope was given for spontaneous comments from the children, and often with quite different content from the theme in question. In particular, they were allowed spontaneously to tell and make comments. This is apparent eg in art, when the conversation between the children and the adults very often never had anything at all to do with the art activity, but with experiences and episodes the children had had in connection with matters that concerned them. And in this context, there are very few examples of the children being stopped or corrected. In relation to the planned theme, there were a good many digressions and diversions (Bagøien 1988, p 7, Sæter 1988, p 39, Langset 1988, p 75).

The adults' reactions are very much associated with the fact that the children must keep within the set of rules that apply. During the group conversation session, you have to sit quietly, and preferably put your hand up if you want to say something. During the art session, you are supposed to work at art, and not throw paper darts, but you are allowed to talk about all sorts of things. One of the key aspects of the adult-controlled activities was that the children had to act in accordance with the rules that had been drawn up. Many of the adults' reactions were aimed at correcting the children's behaviour, and not at their opinions, achievements, what they talked about, thought or what knowledge they displayed (Haug 1988, p 43f, Sæter 1988, p 26). How they perform the subject activities is clearly less important. This is also apparent when there is little follow-up work, practice, repetition, which without doubt would have increased the learning value. Neither are the children met with negative reactions when they do not know something or do not do "good work".

The demands made on the children in these situations as to the quality of their performances subjectwise varied a good deal. In the situations with a mixed age group, which only occurred in the kindergarten models, fewer demands were made of the children than when the programme was offered in school and in single age groups. There is little doubt that this approach is close to the kindergarten tradition, and the kindergarten curriculum code with great consideration being shown to the child and great emphasis on its freedom. The learning aspect is toned down, whilst disciplining, the moral aspect is relatively strongly emphasized.

In the work in the single age groups, the content and method were more similar to those used in school. It was perhaps in these situations that the staff in the kindergarten models made most use of some of the school methods (Sæter 1988, p 43ff, Sæter 1988, p 28, 1990, p 35, Langset 1988, p 96f). This could mean, that in the school model the children would experience a lot more of a school-like teaching.

In some detailed studies, we were able to watch at close quarters school teachers at work with 6-year-olds. This was mainly in situations involving cooperation, either in the school model or in the combined model. Both the number of studies and the extent of the information in each study is less than in the case of the nursery school teachers. The school teachers had expectations of the individual performances and made greater demands on the children to achieve results. This happened by way of a more systematic repetition of earlier activities (Ongstad 1989, p 15). The school teachers pointed out things directly, and stressed quite strongly the point to be learnt. The school teachers also repeatedly motivated the children to achieve results (Bagøien 1988, p 17, Sætre 1988, p 73, Ongstad 1989, p 17). Greater demands were made subjectwise, not every answer was accepted straight away (Haug 1988, p 82ff). The comment was also made that the school teachers were more skilled at drawing on earlier common experience, in order to create continuity of learning (Mørkeseth 1990, p 44). The school teachers' activities and methods are very closely linked with the school tradition, and the school curriculum code with a greater orientation in the direction of subjects and achievement as the key feature.

We can begin to see the contours of two different methods of conducting the adult-controlled activity. One is to learn about, through more formal and directly instructive teaching (cf Rian 1974, p 240f). In situations where the 6-year-olds are in a group alone, this approach is more common, and especially in connection with teaching the three R's in the school model and in the combined model. The other method is more indirect (cf Rian 1974, p 241). The children learn from the situations in which they participate, and what happens there, without the learning content being pointed out or emphasized as the most important aspect. The detailed studies do not give any grounds for concluding that there are differences between the experimental models, even though the reports from the school models indicate a more controlled and direct teaching of subjects and topics than in the kindergarten models.

These results indicate that within the frames of the daily programme, the two groups of teachers have worked on the basis of their own professions' educational tradition. Anything else would hardly be possible in the light of the tradition perspective. In their work, the groups of teachers are closely linked to the tradition in which they have been socialized. It is this tradition that forms the foundation for understanding the situations, and is represented in the notions which form the basis for action. It is important to make the point that the staff function in institutions which have educational space that make this possible. A vital element in this context is that the methods are viewed as the domain of the professional group, something they determine. And this provides school teachers and nursery school teachers with the terms to allow them to function as "street level bureaucrats" in their groups, to work on the basis of their own premises.

Mørkeseth (1990) carried out a detailed study of one of the school model groups. She points to a phenomenon that can partly alter or modify the above conclusion. She registered that the nursery school teachers in this model started to adapt themselves to the school's way of teaching and working, among other things by using school textbooks and teachers' handbooks. As she pointed out, this is not without its problems. They cannot master the situation. She concludes:

What happens is perhaps that the nursery school teachers start using what they believe to be the school's methods of teaching children to read, whilst they have probably only had the opportunity to superficially understand the method a teacher uses. (Mørkeseth 1990, p 52, my translation).

On the one hand, these nursery school teachers are given new frames within which to function. Readymade textbooks also create new opportunities for action, which have not existed to the same extent for the work in the kindergarten. For a number of different reasons, which I shall discuss in chapters 9 and 10, the nursery school teachers start using these textbooks. They thus leave the basis of ideas and action in their own tradition, and try their hand at a new one (see also Sæter 1989). And what Mørkeseth does is to question how this works. On the basis of her work, it is not possible to give any answer, but the question has been asked, and is sufficiently vital both in theory and in practice, that I chose to study it in more detail³⁹

The content of the free play

I studied the content of the free play with the help of the observation form in 1988 and in 1989. In table 7.9 I show the results from the observations of free play outdoors. In 1990 the content of the free play was not included, mainly because other areas were more interesting and important to study further, and because it was impossible after the change in observation method that took place.

³⁹ Cf chapter 8.

Table 7.9 The content of the free play outdoors, in per cent. The data are from 1988 and 1989.⁴⁰

Model	Kindergarten		School		Combined	
	1988	1989	1988	1989	1988	1989
Nature studies	3	5	2	1	2	4
Social studies	1	4	2	0	1	8
Religious studies	1	0	0	0	0	0
Music/drama ⁴¹	0	1	2	1	1	1
Drama-activity ⁴²	-	2	-	1	-	1
Art	1	8	2	7	3	3
Physical activity	61	60	75	62	69	57
Work	1	2	0	1	1	2
Books and games	0	1	0	0	0	1
Construction play	8	15	5	16	5	10
Roleplay	7	13	5	15	7	14
Miscellaneous	25	24	10	25	17	21
Outdoors in % of total free play	48	45	43	39	49	49
Number of observations	299	385	250	224	873	994

During almost half of the free play, the children were outdoors, least in the school model. The relative distribution between the models of the content of the free play outdoors is fairly similar. The variations between the two years can probably be explained by when in the year the observations were made. In 1989 all the observations were made later in the spring than in 1988. Physical activity is the most common activity, plus a less frequent occurrence of construction play and roleplay. When the children were indoors during the free play, the content and activities were more varied, as table 7.10 shows.

The relative distribution between the models in the experiment of the content of the free play indoors is fairly similar. The main activity in the free play indoors is art, books and games, building games and roleplay. There are only

⁴⁰ The sum of the activities is more than 100%, because several of the elements of the content can take place at the same time.

⁴¹ For 1988 the categories of music and drama are combined. For 1989 this category only refers to music.

⁴² This category was used only in 1989, cf footnote 41, this chapter.

slight differences from one year to the next. I will point out some common features in the observation results in table 7.9 and 7.10:

Table 7.10 The content of the free play indoors, in per cent. Data from 1988 and 1989.

Model	Kindergarten		School		Combined	
	1988	1989	1988	1989	1988	1989
Nature studies	3	2	1	1	1	3
Social studies	6	9	4	4	6	11
Religious studies	1	1	0	0	1	1
Music/drama ⁴³	3	2	4	2	5	1
Drama-activity ⁴⁴		4		5		7
Art	21	23	24	20	24	22
Physical activity	8	13	9	10	15	11
Work	2	3	3	2	1	2
Books and games	19	21	24	29	23	20
Construction play	21	15	14	17	18	14
Role play	24	19	21	13	19	23
Miscellaneous	44	33	36	31	29	35
Number of observations	305	461	319	341	954	1003

- Although there are variations from one year to the next, it must be said that at the same time the results are fairly stable. In the context of the standards applied to the content here, the variations within the models are as great as those between the models.
- The miscellaneous categories have received many registrations, especially indoors. This indicates that the form lacks categories with which to fully register the total activity in the free play. Some of those that are lacking are categories for passiveness. Kärby (1986, p 201) found in her material that about 15% of the activities could be associated with such categories. Other categories that are missing can be more psychologically orientated process variables like eg cooperation, collaboration, support, and which can be an indication of the fact

⁴³ For 1988 the categories of music and drama are combined. For 1989 this category only refers to music.

⁴⁴ This category was used only in 1989, cf footnote 43, this chapter.

that the form is not good enough at registering aspects of the kindergarten tradition.

- The results of the observations say perhaps more about how the nursery school teachers view the content of the free play, than about what actually happens there. It is the activity the children are occupied with that has been registered, and not what kind of culture values these activities contain. This is a reasonable explanation as to why the three categories nature, social and religious studies have so few registrations. The immense concentration on "Physical activity" in the outdoor play also supports this view. By way of my own control observations, I documented that what the staff called physical activity was in reality a complex roleplay. The staff studied the playing from a distance, so as not to disturb the children. As long as the children were active and played by the rules, the staff kept their distance. I went closer, and gained an insight into what was actually going on. This emphasizes the claim in chapter 3, that in the kindergarten tradition the activity is more important than its content, and illustrates Bernstein's (1971) view on this point.⁴⁵

The play determined by the tradition in the group of teachers

The close studies gave far more detailed information about how the free play functioned and which processes operated there. The main conclusion is that the free play in the project functions in roughly the same way as other studies of free play in the kindergarten have indicated.⁴⁶ On this point, the activity in the experiment with 6-year-olds is no different from that of the kindergarten in general, and this applies to all the experimental models. On that background, I cannot see that the experiment gives grounds for the somewhat ritual and unreserved proclamation of the value of free play. The fact that the institutions practise free play does not necessarily mean that the free play functions in the ideal way. The free play is not "free", but operates within a distinct framework of rules and norms set up by the adults and strictly enforced. It is within these limits that the self-expression and activities take place. And the criterion for good activity is whether it is relevant to the age group in question, what the activity actually involves is not so important. There are two different approaches to the practice of free play. In the one, the staff motivate the children in various ways to carry out certain activities on the basis of systematic observations (Karlsson 1990, p 14, Osborg 1990, p 205ff). Observations, organization and continuous motivation are very demanding and require careful planning (Grundt-Pedersen 1960). The other approach is characterized by dialogue-pedagogy

⁴⁵ Cf chapter 4.

⁴⁶ Cf chapter 5.

(Karlsson 1990, p 16f). The children themselves are allowed to do what they like, within certain limits and rules, and with the material that is available. On this basis, it is not possible to plan free play. The first version (often called centre of interest) is more orientated towards subjects and knowledge than the dialogue pedagogics. It is this latter version of free play that is to be found in the experiment.

The activities in the free play situations are fairly close to the kindergarten tradition, the tradition that the majority of the staff involved in the project are linked to. This provides still further proof of the influence of tradition in the institutions, but within the programme determined by the institution.⁴⁷

It was not possible to observe the free play for which the school teachers in the project were responsible. There were so few school teachers who were involved in this activity to any great extent, that it was not practical to organize any observation. I therefore charted their understanding and use of free play by way of the questionnaires of a small group (Haug 1989b, p 95ff). The results reveal that the school teachers have a different understanding of and make use of free play in a different way from the nursery school teachers. The free activities in school are often a way of rewarding the children who deserve it when they have completed other tasks. And the play is usually linked to tasks that have some connection with the teaching of subjects and topics. There is a fairly limited degree of freedom, both with regards to premises, equipment and the surroundings in general. Free play has a lower status and is given less priority than purely academic work on subjects. The value of play is in creating well-being and social development, and as a method for learning subjects. On this basis I draw the conclusion that the school teachers' understanding of play is greatly influenced by their own tradition. It is notions from the school tradition that form the basis of their orientation, understanding and actions in this field, and not notions that have their roots in the kindergarten tradition. However, we were not able to test the school teachers' efforts in connection with free play in the kindergarten, and what would have happened, had they adopted a similar approach there. This limits the opportunity to draw conclusions.

The extent of the free play is related to the regulations of the institutions. The way in which the free play is organized is closely connected with the educational tradition which the staff represent. The framework of the school allows

⁴⁷ It would have been very interesting also to study the content of the free play in relation to the age grouping. Nevertheless, I have chosen to only study these questions in relation to adult-controlled activity, because this is the most common part of the daily programme in kindergarten and school, and also because the data about the content of the free play have clear limitations.

scope for this, and the traditions of the institutions "do not stretch as far as" this level. The fact that school teachers and nursery school teachers approach and use free play in different ways merely strengthens this claim. It indicates that the scope for action in the school allows for activities from both traditions. And this in turn indicates that the ideas and traditions that the groups of teachers represent are important for the terms offered to the children. The conditions for free play are different in the kindergarten and the school, the material and the scope are different. This also means that the play itself could be different, but I do not discuss this further here.

The differences

State regulations of kindergarten and school are very different in many aspects, as indicated in chapter 5. This concerns a variety of elements, of which almost none is changed because of the experiment. The general picture that has been revealed is that the institution in which the educational provision for the 6-year-olds is given defines how the education is organized and under what conditions this programme is performed. These elements the staff have no control over, they must accept the consequences of the state regulations as they are, which makes the education in the different situations and institutions different.

Inside this educational space defined by state regulations, it seems that the two groups of teachers do what they always have done. They work according to their own professional tradition, in harmony with their own notions of what education is and how education is realized. This means that the nursery school teacher is child-centered while the school teacher is subject-oriented, the nursery teacher gives freedom and the school teacher controls.

On two points I have given interpretations that could modify or go against the conclusions above. The first one is the fact that reading, writing and arithmetic have become a subject area to a greater extent than they have been earlier, also in kindergarten. This is due to pressure from the political and institutional environment breaking the institutional monopoly. On the other hand, indications are given that the models differ in the way the teaching in these subjects is done, and corresponding to the institutional traditions. The second is the information about how the nursery school teachers in school start using the textbooks and adopt the school methods of teaching and that could be a sign of "conversion". Whether this is so, I will go into in the next chapter.

The concrete educational work as presented in this chapter in many ways confirm the conclusions from the discussion of curriculum and planning. On the one hand that the established traditions are most important to explain what really goes on, and not national or local curriculum plans. On the other hand, the way

the interviewed staff said they used the plans, corresponds very closely to what is really done in the groups of 6-year-olds, and thus strengthens the indications of the element of hypocrisy, as indicated in chapter 6.

8 Classroom observations of teaching

Classroom interaction

The discussions in the previous chapters go a good way towards answering the questions that have been asked as to which educational traditions the programme for 6-year-olds is based on. Indications have been presented to show that the daily programme in the project models varies, and that this is connected with which educational institution the project groups are linked to and which professional groups are in charge. The daily programme in the kindergarten models is influenced by the kindergarten, and the programme in the school models is influenced by the school. This is explained as a consequence of the state regulations in the two institutions in combination with the educational traditions there. The content of the daily programme is also influenced by the traditions in the professional groups who are working with the 6-year-olds.

In the free play, the picture is fairly unambiguous. There the nursery school teachers in all the models are rather passive. Their roles are mainly concerned with organizing and care. The children are active on the basis of their own choices, but within fairly well-defined limits. This is the tradition from the kindergarten, but which the school teachers do not master. Their form of free play was adult-controlled, often with a directly instrumental aim. Both the groups work on the basis of the preconditions and notions that are part of their own tradition.

In the adult-controlled part of the programme, the results are more complex and vague. The content varies according to the professional group that is working with the children, and there is a tendency towards different content dependent on where the group is located, at school or in the kindergarten. Among other things, it has been proved that the age mix in the groups is significant for the content and methods, a result of different state regulations. The school teachers and nursery school teachers work in different ways, but there are also signs that the nursery school teachers work in different ways, dependent on which institution they are in. I will study this more closely to try to obtain a better understanding of the relationship between the state regulations and the educational tradition to which the staff belong.

There are two relevant strategies with which to study this in more detail.¹ The anthropological strategy was used in the close studies. Our experience with it is positive, but the problem concerns the systematics and comparisons

¹ Cf chapter 4.

(Hammersley 1986b, p 46f). The alternative I have used is a registration of the classroom interaction with video recordings of the teaching activity, and analysed according to the Bellack system (cf Bellack et al 1966).

The theoretical perspective on which this work is based is to a great extent the result of the work in the logical-philosophical tradition within classroom research. It originated with Smith & Meux (1962), was continued by Bellack et al (1966), and is further developed by among others Lundgren (1972, 1981). The choice also makes it possible to compare directly with earlier research, which can give this work a wider significance and a broader frame of reference. The choice of Bellack's system of analysis is also justified on the grounds that it is well-suited to enable answers to be found to questions concerning adults' and children's functions and roles in the institutions (cf Gustafsson 1977), and which is one of the key elements in differentiating between the institutional traditions.

Smith & Meux's (1962) aim was to identify actions or operations that give teaching behaviour meaning. They viewed teaching as a social phenomenon controlled by two sets of factors. The one set was beyond the control of the participants. The other set could be altered by the participants. The latter factors can be divided into two. The logical operations constitute the rules for the behaviour in the teaching situations. They are visible in the form of comments or dialogue. Next are the strategies, superior patterns of behaviour that are used to achieve certain effects, eg to give the pupils responsibility for certain tasks. It is these logical operations Smith & Meux are looking for in their registrations of the classroom research. The study of the interaction then actually becomes a study of the consequences of the regulations, and as such makes it possible to comment on them.

Bellack et al (1966) build upon the basic thinking of Smith & Meux, but use another theoretical perspective. They were interested in finding the rules in what they called the verbal game in the teaching. To play the game, you need to know the rules. The basic feature of the game is moves. A move is an utterance with a certain intention. The person who is classifying the verbal interaction decides when the content in the utterance changes the intention. All utterances can be defined as one of four moves, structuring, soliciting, responding and reacting. Lundgren (1972, 1981) expands this system to provide a basis for the development of the frame factor theory. Analysis of the classroom interaction shed light on what goes on inside the educational space as defined by state regulations, and give at the same time an opportunity to define the rules for the interaction. In the model from chapter 4, these rules are supposed to be a consequence of and closely tied to the educational and institutional traditions.

On the basis of this theoretical framework and the system of analysis, I raise two concrete questions which will provide a foundation for a further discussion of which factors maintain or change education: to what degree does the

classroom interaction vary from model to model in the experiment, and to what extent are there differences between the classroom interaction in the experiment with the 6-year-olds and that of the school, on the basis of comparable studies?

The Bellack system of analysis

The definitions of the categories below adhere fairly closely to Bellack's original system, as it has been adapted by Lundgren (1972).²

Structuring moves (STR)

Structuring moves set the context for the subsequent interaction. Structuring moves set the context for the behaviour by (1) launching or excluding interactions between teacher and child and (2) by indicating the interactions in terms such as time, agent, activity, topic and cognitive processes, regulations and instructional aids. Structuring moves do not elicit responses and are not direct responses/reactions. Neither are they the result of events in the situation, other than the person's concept of what should be thought and said (Bellack & al 1966, p 16).

Example: And you'll get grapes from me, but you must be very clever and do what I say. And then we'll eat up what is round the grapes, and then we'll take out the pips and plant them in the ground. /STR

Soliciting moves (SOL)

Soliciting moves are intended to elicit a response. This can be (1) an active verbal response on the part of the persons addressed (2) a cognitive response, ie encouraging persons addressed to attend to something (3) a physical response (Bellack et al 1966, p 18). Both questions and commands are included among these moves.

Example: Do you know this colour? /SOL

Can you turn round the right way, so that I can see you? /SOL

Look at that stone! /SOL

² Gustafsson (1977) has introduced far more sub-categories for each of the moves. I have chosen not to follow her classification, because her theoretical interest in the sub-categories is not relevant here.

Responding
moves (RES)

Responding moves are reactions to the soliciting moves, and bear a reciprocal relationship to them: They occur only as a result of them. Their pedagogical function is to fulfill the expectations of the soliciting moves.

Reacting
moves (REA)

Reacting moves are related to the previous three moves, but are not directly initiated / elicited by them. Their pedagogical function is to modify (by clarifying, synthesizing or expanding), to rate (positively/negatively) what was said in the move that occasioned the reaction. Responding moves are always a direct result of a soliciting move, while preceding moves only serve as the occasion for the reacting move. Reactions to physical behaviour belong here (Bellack et al 1966, p 18-19, 259).
Example: Child: How don't they manage it? /SOL
Nursery school teacher: If it comes up under a stone or something like that, then it can't come up out of the ground. /RES
Child: No, then it can't do it, can it. /REA

Bellack calls the first two moves initiating moves and the latter two reflexive moves. In his modification of the system, Lundgren (1972) has introduced a fifth move. That is "individual help" (HEP), where the communication concerns one individual child, and where no-one else can participate. This is a move that can contain a number of new moves, but which are not registered. I have not used this move (HEP) in the coding. There were very few elements of individual help altogether, and when found, the private conversations often developed into public ones, because the other children got involved in what was happening. Finally, there is also a move called "not classifiable" (ISO), which is used when the meaning is not clear, when the recording is of poor quality etc (Gustafsson 1977).

It has not been my intention to carry out a complete analysis of the material I have gathered, as has been done in the studies to which I refer below. This is purely a replication, in order to make comparisons with similar relevant analyses from the activity in school, and does not go into all the detailed questions put forward by others.³

It is quite impossible to choose a statistically representative selection of adult-controlled situations for the purpose of this comparison. There is a considerable

³ I do not identify each child that is talking, only what is said.

work load associated with even the relatively limited amount of data that is presented here.⁴ To expand the material so that it is statistically representative is unthinkable, even as a separate longterm research project. It is only replications over a long period that can provide a basis for comparison, and which can serve as a basis on which to assess the representativeness (Gustafsson 1981, p 109-110). There is also the question of how much data is necessary in order to establish "the grammar" of the teaching. In principle, it might be possible to register the pattern of the teaching simply by studying just one lesson, in the same way as it is possible to study the grammar of a language merely by studying one single person's speech.

Earlier research using the Bellack system of analysis

Very many of the studies done on the basis of this system in several countries find the same common pattern in the roles in the interaction, (Bellack et al 1966 (USA), Lundgren 1972, 1981 (Sweden), Gustavsson 1977 (Sweden), Koskeniemi et al 1974 (Finland), Pedro 1981 (Portugal). The roles of the school teachers and children are well-defined, but different. The school teachers are responsible for more than half of the utterances, and the school teachers' utterances are longer than those of the children. The school teacher's role is mainly to structure the content, activity and situation, to ask questions and to comment on the answers. The children all together are responsible for less than half of the utterances. The children's most important task is to answer the school teacher's questions, who then comments on their answers. So far these results confirm the very clear picture of the educational tradition in school as rather adult-dominated. It is the school teachers who have the authority and control. The pupils have a far more passive role. Höghielm has made a study of the teaching of adults in Sweden, using Bellack's system. His result deviates from those presented above. The teaching of adults is characterized by a far greater degree of lecturing and the imparting of facts than other teaching in school (Höghielm 1985, p 175). This must among other things be understood to be a consequence of quite different regulations than those that apply in school.

I am not aware of similar studies having been done in the kindergarten using the same system of analysis. Reitehaug (1984) studied the verbal control in the kindergarten and the school on the basis of sound recordings, observations and her own categories of analysis. Her conclusion is that children in the kindergarten are far more verbally active, and use far more words than the pupils in

⁴ Anderson & Burns (1989) quote Medley (1982) and Galton (1987) and claim that one hour's recorded material takes about a week to write down, and about an hour to code. In my case, the actual preparation of the material took longer time.

their first year at school. She compared the language in the free play in the kindergarten with the language in the adult-controlled situations in school. These are not identical situations, and have completely different regulations for interaction. For my purpose, it would have been more relevant to have compared the adult-controlled activity in both the institutions. Hedenquist (1987) devised a model for such analysis in the kindergarten, based on a language-theoretical model from Anward (1983). Vislie & Sønstabø (1977) studied the conversations in the teaching session, and used a somewhat modified Flanders' system. Both these latter two studies provide a picture that to a large extent corresponds with the results from school.

Since the same pattern is usually repeated in different grades, in different countries, at different times and in different institutions, this would seem to indicate that it is a consequence of forces beyond the control of the individuals. It can appear that the school teacher and the children are bound by the same outside regulations and traditions both in school and in the kindergarten.

In the light of the conclusions in chapter 5, that the school tradition and the kindergarten tradition are different, this is unexpected. If the regulations and the traditions within which the staff function in the various experimental models are principally dissimilar, this will be likely to show itself in the classroom interaction. On the basis of the difference in tradition, I expected that the children in the kindergarten model would be more structuring, soliciting and reacting, and that the adults to a greater extent would provide answers, than would be the case in the school. Lundgren (1981, p 148) also points out that younger children in school ask more questions than older children. Pedro (1981, p 124), on the other hand, does not find a similar result.

Criticism of the Bellack system of analysis

There has been a fairly detailed general criticism of the research into interaction in the classroom.⁵ The criticism of Bellack's system has gradually become relatively extensive, but differs little from the more general criticism:

- Several claim that the categories in the system are too comprehensive and not precisely enough defined. They are not sufficiently sensitive to nuances and correlations (cf Gustafsson 1977, p 172, Pedro 1981, p 126, 199f, Petterson & Åsén 1989, p 43.).
- The actual categorizing can force data into forms that create a certain result (Pedro 1981, p 119). Then it is the categories that decide the result, and not the data. This may explain the fact that there is so little variation from study to study. The value of systematic observation therefore is totally dependent upon

⁵ Cf also chapter 4.

the descriptive and explanatory power of the concepts inherent in the system used (cf McIntyre & Macleod 1986).

- At its most basic, the Bellack system is founded on a presupposition that education is context-free, which is contradictory to the actual theoretical formulations that the system is designed to throw light on (Pedro 1981, p 119, 202f).
- Bellack et al (1966) developed the system on the basis of observations made in high school and in the teaching of economics. The system therefore has an empirical basis from that particular context. The question is whether it is suitable in other contexts than those in which it had its origins, eg in work with kindergarten children and in the kindergarten. I shall return to this point in my discussions of the concrete work with the data.
- The categories in the system are comparatively open. This applies both to the term intention and to the educational moves. The person doing the coding, must have control over and be aware of the use of language in the context in which the recordings have been made. This is in itself a problem, and not least when the analyses are made on the basis of written texts. To what extent the "original" intention in the material has been successfully coded has not yet been investigated, in spite of the enormous problems this creates for an interpretation of the data (Gustafsson 1977, p 79ff).

It is possible to be prepared to meet some of the objections. I have the help of the knowledge of the field, information from the participants and in this case, video pictures to accompany the sound recordings. Only further use and analyses can provide insight into other critical areas.

The classroom study

On the basis of a combination of opening hours, group size, geographical location and type of municipality, two experimental groups were chosen for each of the experimental models. For practical and financial reasons, it was not possible to make recordings of the adult-controlled situations in the same institutions that we had earlier studied with the anthropological approach. This would have provided a better background on which to interpret the results, but it is not decisive. I engaged qualified people locally to make the recordings, partly to reduce the effect of having total strangers present as observers, and partly to reduce the expense involved. The feedback has been positive regarding

this way of organizing the recording work. The staff in the groups do not think that the recording process has made any difference to their work.⁶

The data-collection

In each of the selected groups, recordings were to be made of a total of 7 adult-controlled teaching sessions. The first three were to be done to accustom the staff and the children to the extra persons being present, to the video-equipment and to the recording. The next four were to be used in the analysis. To ensure a necessary variation in the material, these last four recordings were to be distributed like this: one recording from a traditional conversation session, one from a teaching session in reading, writing or arithmetic, one recording from group work or workshop activity and one recording from a collective activity like physical activity, art etc. There were a great many practical problems associated with the collecting of the data, and which meant that not all the plans were put into effect. I received material from five of the six groups. In the sixth group, it had not been possible to make any recordings.⁷ This information reached me too late to arrange for alternative recordings. Some of the material recorded is of no use in the subsequent analysis, due to a combination of vague instructions being given, poor recording equipment and the actual way the experimental groups were organized. The main difficulties have been:

- that the actual activities have created so much noise that it has been impossible to hear what was being said. This has been most difficult in the collective activities and group activities, and especially in connection with art and handicrafts.
- that the recordings have not been systematic enough. Some of the recordings span across several groups in a way that makes it impossible to make sense of what has been said and done.
- that some of the children are obviously overreacting because of the recording and other people being present in class.

The consequence of this was that I could not use four of the main recordings, two from teaching sessions and two from collective activity/group activity. To compensate this, I considered using test recordings to replace the main

⁶ It is difficult to know whether the staff more unconsciously have taken account of or reacted to the recordings being made. The period of adjustment during the test recordings should have reduced the danger of this happening, cf also Kerlinger (1970, p 506) who concludes that observers seem to have little effect on the situations they observe, (cf also Lundgren 1972, p 231f). Anyhow, the influence of the observers must be considered when the data are analyzed.

⁷ The reasons for this was a combination of technical break-down of the video-equipment, illness and a short time limit.

recordings that could not be used. All the additional recordings come from teaching sessions, and also from other groups than the ones missing (cf table 8.1 showing this distribution). There is no difference between them and the main recordings when it comes to the variables we are concerned with.

Table 8.1 Overview of the video-recordings used in the analysis of the adult-controlled activity.

Model:	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	School	School	Combined	Total
Institution no.	1	2	3	4	5	5
Teaching sessions	3	0	3	3	3	12
Collective activities/ group activities	1	2	2	1	2	8
Total no of recordings	4	2	5	4	5	20

The available material was intended to form the basis for a comparison of the three experimental models. After a total assessment of the data and because of the missing recordings, I made the data for the kindergarten model and the combined model into one set of data. All these recordings were made in kindergarten and there were no significant differences between them. I have therefore two sets of data available—one from the two models mostly associated with kindergarten and one from the school model, which allow a comparison to be made of the activity localized in the kindergarten and the activity localized in the school, which corresponds to the main theoretical interest in this study. In all the recordings, nursery school teachers are in charge.⁸

The dialogue on the video-recordings has been written down over three stages. First it was written down by a research assistant. Then it was checked by a second, and finally checked by me. This guarantees fairly well that the transcripts are verbatim. On the other hand, it is impossible to avoid the fact that choices were made during the written process that had possible consequences for the result. The Bellack system was developed for the upper secondary school and this shows. There the communication in the classroom is fairly disciplined, and mainly between school teacher and pupil. In the recordings from the project with the 6-year-olds, there are often two sets of conversations. One is between the nursery school teacher and the children. At the same time there is one going on between the children, and often not directed towards the nursery school teacher or meant for her ears. In some groups, and especially in the art

⁸ Cf footnote 10, chapter 1.

sessions, these two sets of verbal interaction are so pronounced that at times it is possible to follow both of them simultaneously. The problem is that the sound recording equipment first and foremost registers the "public" communication between the adult and the children, and not the "private" one between the children themselves. That is far weaker. If we were to have recorded all the verbal activity, we would have had to equip each child with a microphone. I chose to get hold of as much as possible of the communication between nursery school teacher and child. One consequence of this is that the number of utterances from the children is lower in the tapescripts than in reality. Another is that I have decided where each individual utterance belongs - on the one level or the other. And I have excluded those I have interpreted as "between children, and not intended for adult ears". Also here it is possible to make mistakes. The

6-year-olds are far less disciplined than pupils in the upper secondary school. They often talk at the same time, interrupt each other. Many answer, even though just one has been asked to say something. It is rather difficult to make out what everyone is saying in this sort of situation. Especially when they get very eager, the sound picture is chaotic and impossible to interpret. Koskenniemi et al (1974, p 4) mentions similar experiences when they say that the system itself was unsuitable for classifying other situations than those that are part of normal classroom teaching. On the other hand, the results show that there is no real difference between the uncoded utterances in this and other studies (eg Gustafsson 1977).

The coding of the recordings

The tapescripted lessons have been coded in accordance with the guidelines given by Bellack et al (1966), Lundgren (1972) and Gustafsson (1977). To obtain stability in the classifications that are made from one study to the other (cd Lundgren 1972, p 247) the first two lessons were coded together with Christina Gustafsson in Uppsala. She has also control-coded a third lesson, which shows a very strong agreement in the use of the classification rules.⁹ This procedure has given a fairly good guarantee that my coding corresponds with the coding rules employed in the earlier studies. I coded all the lessons twice, in order to make adjustments for possible changes in the use of the coding rules during the process, and to establish a greater degree of general correspondence in the use of the coding rules. During the second round of coding, about 6% of the categories were altered.¹⁰ The coding did not cause any special problems,

⁹ I have not calculated the formal interscorer reliability, rather studied and discussed the classifications we did not agree upon to establish a common basis.

¹⁰ One sixth of the changes was due to finding new "intentions" to be coded, about one third of the changes was from STR and to REA, and one sixth was from SOL and to STR.

but certain choices also had to be made there. It was often difficult to distinguish between structuring (STR) and reacting (REA) when the children were talking. The reason for this is that children often associate with utterances that have been made earlier. In the 20 lessons, I identified a total of 9374 utterances with varying intentions, and all these are coded in a corresponding number of moves.

A presentation of the lessons on the basis of themes.

The lessons are first divided into themes. A theme is a lengthy sequence with moves having a common content (Lundgren 1972, p 234f). Lundgren's themes have been constructed on the basis of lessons in mathematics in the upper secondary school. They are not particularly suitable for educational work with 6-year-olds. After viewing the video material, I therefore constructed a new set of themes appropriate to the educational activity in the programme for 6-year-olds, which corresponds as far as possible with the explanations of Lundgren (1972) and Gustafsson (1977, p 88ff).

Lundgren's (1972) themes:

1. Not subject relevant theme (NOS)

Themes in the evaluation of the experiment

Themes that are not relevant to the topic in question. In the kindergarten, this is a theme that is very difficult to define, because the children's interests and needs must be taken into consideration, which often leads to a host of spontaneous elements on their part.

2. Classroom management (CLM)

Administrative routines, joint planning, collective regulation and collective announcements.

3. Going through theory (TEO)

This theme is used as a collective theme for the presentation, discussion and work on various topics and activities. The normal classroom conversation is included here.

4. Working with exercises (EXE)

The category comprises all activity in which the children individually, in groups or collectively, practise, do exercises or compulsory activities. In addition, all collective action is included, eg singing, choral speaking etc.

Table 8.2 The themes in the recordings. The table shows the percentage share of themes for various situations.

Theme	NOS	CLM	TEO	EXE	TOT
Kindergarten	7	7	52	34	100
School	8	15	59	19	101
Joint sessions	2	15	67	17	101
Text creation, mathematics	10	5	50	35	100
Theme work	6	5	64	25	100
Collective activities	16	18	25	40	99
Lundgren (1972, s 259) ¹¹	1	2	65	32	100

The collective activities and the teaching sessions were fairly easy to sort into themes. It was more difficult to decide themes in the teaching sessions, where the children in principle are free to talk about "anything under the sun". In table 8.2 I show the distribution of themes on the basis of different groupings of the material, and compared with data from Lundgren (1972, p 259). It would have been more natural to use Gustafsson (1977), but she used time as a unit, whilst I, like Lundgren, use the number of moves related to each theme.

The table shows that there are differences between the institutions in the project, and between lessons with varying content. There are far fewer exercises (EXE) in the school model than in the kindergarten models, and more classroom management (CLM). This could have connections with fewer collective and group activities in the observation material from this model. Data from the four types of lessons reveal variations in the material, which is a precondition for obtaining as comprehensive a picture as possible of the activities (Gustafsson 1977, p 90f). There are similarities between our data and that of Lundgren. The occurrences of TEO and EXE are fairly similar. The main difference is that in the work with the 6-year-olds, far more utterances about non-subject themes (NOS) and classroom management (CLM) were used than in the upper secondary school, where Lundgren's data is taken from. The first reaction is that this is perfectly natural, given the considerable differences in the age groups involved. However, I am not sure that this is the only explanation, and I return to the issue later in the chapter.

¹¹ Lundgren's data for TEO is arrived at by combining his categories TEO, TYP, CON, GIV, in accordance with our definition of TEO.

The distribution of the various moves

There are several studies to choose from in order to compare data from the experiment with 6-year-olds with similar studies from the school, but very few have been carried out in the basic school. I chose to limit the comparison to Gustafsson's (1977) two data sets B and C.¹² In table 8.3 I present figures to show the distribution of the moves in the various categories for nursery school teachers and children respectively in the experiment.

Table 8.3 The relative distribution of moves in the data from the experiment with 6-year-olds and from data sets B and C in Gustafsson (1977, p 93), the figures in percent.¹³

Institution	Person	STR	SOL	RES	REA	ISO	Tot	N	%
Kindergarten	adult	19	39	5	36	0	99	3101	52
Kindergarten	child	9	12	35	38	6	100	2820	48
School	adult	27	35	4	34	0	100	2048	59
School	child	6	11	39	37	7	100	1405	41
Data set B	adult	18	43	6	33	0	100	3295	65
Data set B	child	0	20	60	15	5	100	1803	35
Data set C	adult	17	45	7	29	0	98	4496	60
Data set C	child	1	21	46	26	6	100	3081	41

The nursery school teachers' utterances in the project are mainly structuring (STR), soliciting (SOL) and reaction (REA) moves. In the school model, the structuring moves (STR) comprise a larger percentage of the nursery school teachers' utterances than in the kindergarten models. The percentage distribution of the children's utterances is also fairly similar in all the models. The children's utterances are mainly answers (RES) and reactions (REA), fewer questions (SOL) and least of all structuring (STR). As for the school teachers, the pattern in Gustafsson's data and ours is the same, but with slight deviations in the percentages. In the experiment the nursery school teachers ask (SOL) less than in the comparable data from school, and in the school model in the experiment the nursery school teachers structure (STR) more, compared with the data from

¹² Gustafsson's (1977) two sets of data are from the 4th (A) and 5th (B) grades in the Swedish basic school.

¹³ The adults in the experimental data are nursery school teachers. The adults in Gustafsson's data sets are school teachers.

school. The distribution of the children's utterances shows greater differences. The children in the experiment structure (STR) more, ask (SOL) less, answer (RES) less and react (REA) more than the children we compared them with in school. The same data can be presented by looking at the distribution of the nursery school teachers' utterances and the children's utterances in each of the moves, cf tables 8.4 and 8.5.

Table 8.4 The relative distribution of the various moves, nursery school teachers and children in school and kindergarten in the experiment with 6-year-olds, numbers in percent.

Move	Kindergarten				School			
	Adult	Child	Total	N	Adult	Child	Total	N
STR	70	30	100	844	85	15	100	638
SOL	79	21	100	1542	82	18	100	888
RES	14	86	100	1157	12	88	100	620
REA	51	49	100	2193	57	43	100	1214
ISO	6	94	100	185	3	97	100	93

This table shows that the nursery school teachers are responsible for the great majority of the structuring moves (STR) and questions (SOL), whilst the children give the answers (RES). The reactions (REA) are more evenly distributed. There is a difference between the school model and the kindergarten models. In the school model, the nursery school teachers have a larger percentage share of the structuring moves (STR) and of the reacting moves (REA) than in the kindergarten models.

Table 8.5 The relative distribution of the various moves for data sets B and C in Gustafsson (1977, p 100), numbers in percent.

Move	Data set B (%)				Data set C (%)			
	Adult	Child	Total	N	Adult	Child	Total	N
STR	100	0	100	600	94	6	100	832
SOL	80	20	100	1769	76	24	100	2676
RES	15	85	100	1271	19	81	100	1754
REA	80	20	100	1357	63	37	100	2121
ISO	12	88	100	101	11	89	100	194

The tables 8.4 and 8.5 show that the children in the experiment have a somewhat larger percentage of the structuring (STR) moves and the reacting (REA) moves than in the data I am comparing with from the school. There is greater similarity between the school model in the experiment and the school data, than between the kindergarten models and the school data in the distribution of these two moves. As for the distribution of questions (SOL) and answers (RES), it is similar in the two sets of material I present. The school teacher utters over three-quarters of the questions, and the children give over four-fifths of the answers.

The level of activity

The utterances of the children and the nursery school teachers are different in quality. From table 8.6 it is also apparent that the level of activity for children and adults is different. The level of activity is registered in two ways. First by comparing the distribution of uttered moves, then the distribution of the number of uttered words. The table shows that the nursery school teachers are more verbally active than the children, but at the same time the children in the kindergarten models are more active than the children in the school model. On the other hand, there are no differences between the data that we are comparing with from school and the results from the school model in the experiment.

Table 8.6 The level of activity of nursery school teachers and children in kindergarten and school in the experiment with 6-year-olds and in Gustafsson (1977, p 104), data sets B and C, numbers in percent.

Institution	Uttered moves (%)				Uttered words (%)		
	Adult	Child	Total	N	Adult	Child	Total
Kindergarten	52	48	100	5921	63	37	100
School	59	41	100	3453	73	27	100
Data set B	65	35	100	5098	76	24	100
Data set C	60	41	100	7577	71	29	100

The results I put forward may, as I have been into in chapter 7 have some connection with the state regulation of the institutions. There I pointed out that the age mix of the groups of children, that the number of children and the activity carried out could be significant for the behaviour of both teacher and children. This may also be significant for the distribution of the moves. I have studied these three factors. Unfortunately, in the material the variables age mix and number of children vary greatly together. When there is an age mix, the

number of children is fairly high in the kindergarten model. When there is no age mix, the number of children is rather small. I will therefore not be able to distinguish these two variables from each other in the case of the kindergarten. With this in mind, the main result of the control is that the interactions vary both according to the type of activity and with the number of children in the group. The differences I have noted above between the kindergarten models and the school model in the experiment show little change, and do not appear to have any connection with these factors.¹⁴

Discussion

The results that are presented in this chapter show that in adult-controlled activity, there are no principle differences between the roles of the adults and children in the experiment with 6-year-olds and in the school, according to the picture in the studies with which I am making comparisons. The nursery school teacher dominates the adult-controlled activity. It is the nursery school teacher who controls the communication by giving instructions, telling stories and asking questions, and making comments on and assessments of the children's questions. She does most of the talking. The children say less, and with fewer words. Their main task is to respond to the signals of the nursery school teacher with answers and reactions.

This pattern appears to be the same, both at different times, in different countries, subjects, levels in the educational system and institution. This happens in spite of the fact that many school teachers and nursery school teachers disassociate themselves from this method of working (cf eg Monsen 1984). It happens in spite of the fact that the national curriculum plan for school and the national curriculum plan for the experiment establish quite different ideals (Mønsterplan for grunnskolen 1987, p 47ff and Rammeplan for forsøk med pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer 1988, p 67ff, 77ff). It happens in spite of the fact that the groups of teachers involved in the experiment with 6-year-olds have expressed attitudes that point in quite different directions.¹⁵ This gives reason to believe that this pattern is a consequence of the regulations that apply to these institutions, and that these regulations to a certain extent are the same both for the kindergarten and the school.

¹⁴ In collective and group-activities the adult structuring and reactions are less frequent than in teaching sessions and the child structuring and reaction are slightly increased (Haug 1991 p 250-251).

¹⁵ Cf chapter 5.

Which regulations are involved is more difficult to see, since throughout this study I have stressed that the kindergarten and the school are very different in this respect. The explanation could be found in the adult-controlled situation itself. What is common to both the kindergarten and the school is that one or two adults are to control and lead activities for a large group of children, so that they are all offered the best possible opportunities. Built into this situation, there are objective limitations linked to organizational¹⁶ and ideological¹⁷ conditions. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the character of the pattern of communication changes according to the number of children and the type of activity. When there are collective activities, the adult-dominated pattern is considerably toned down in relation to the teaching sessions. The same thing happens when the number of children is reduced.

Differences have been registered between the studies done in school and the experiment, and between the activity in the kindergarten models and the school model in the experiment. In the project with 6-year-olds, it is the adult communication which is closest to the results from the studies done in school, with one exception. In the school model in the project, the adults structure far more than in any of the studies done in school that I know of, and more than in the kindergarten model.¹⁸ The nursery school teachers instruct, teach and tell more in the school model in the project than they do in both the kindergarten, in the basic school and in the upper secondary school, on the basis of those studies that have been made of these situations using similar methods. The same phenomenon is registered in two of the close studies in the school model. Mørkeseth (1990, p 52) claims that in the teaching of reading, the nursery school teachers use the school methods, but have only had the opportunity to superficially understand the methods a school teacher uses. It would appear that the nursery school teachers in the school model "exaggerate" one of the elements of the methods employed in school. When two different groups of professionals in the same situation in two different institutions work differently, the explanation most obviously must be sought in what is most different in the setting, namely the institutions with different educational traditions. The statements from the nursery school teachers in connection with the initiation of the experiment indicate that their impression was that the school teacher teaches from the front of the class while the pupils sit at their desks and listen (see also Reitehaug 1984, p 64ff). The reality revealed by the studies we use as a

¹⁶ That there are many children.

¹⁷ That all the children are to participate, or have a certain minimum opportunity for benefitting from the situation.

¹⁸ The exception is the work of Höghjelm (1985), he studied the teaching of adults and found far more adult structuring.

comparison, is that the school teacher does most of the talking, but that the pattern of communication is soliciting, not lecturing. The nursery school teachers do not know the tradition, they state that they need further education in parts of this field. The theoretical model from chapter 4 explains action by saying that the professional group represents certain notions based on a tradition and which implies a certain preparedness for action. This also corresponds to the term competent membership in a teacher culture (Handal & Vaage 1986). According to these authors, for a person to develop competent membership in an educational tradition he or she has to learn it on the spot, linked to the type of institution and the profession where it is practised. The nursery school teachers in the school model have probably become bearers of the more hidden and tacit parts of the tradition represented in notions directed towards school. Therefore they place exaggerated emphasis on the elements which, on the basis of their notions, characterize the teaching in school. They lack competence, which actually could be seen as a form of ideological regulation.

This does not explain why the teaching takes place in this way, simply how. What is it that makes them do this? My explanation can only be tentative, it has not been studied in sufficient detail to draw definite conclusions. My theory is that this is a consequence of being localised together with the school, and having to function within the regulations of the school. It is a consequence of the expectations of the school to this educational programme and of the expectations of the institutional environment. These expectations are mostly linked to making the 6-year-olds capable of being pupils and accepting knowledge. The staff experience the parents as being concerned that the content should in some way resemble school. The children have similar expectations. I see here a parallel to Frykholm & Nitzler (1989, p 331f). Inspired by Dahllöf (1967) and Lundgren (1972), they put forward an hypothesis about a steering group for the content of the teaching. Consciously or unconsciously, the teacher adjusts the content and the plan of the teaching to those thoughts that exist in this group and which both create and control the educational process. The dominating notion for the 6-year-olds in school will be characterized by expectations about school, in accordance with the school tradition. This is a consequence of the collective notions that exist about this institution in the institutional environment, and which the school itself to a large extent fulfills and from which it receives legitimacy.¹⁹

It is the utterances of the children that show the greatest differences compared with earlier studies. The 6-year-olds in the experiment give instructions and relate more and they comment far more and talk more than the children in

¹⁹ In chapter 9 and 10 I go into the question of why this was so important in this particular experiment.

school, and the differences are greatest in the kindergarten model. At the same time, they ask fewer questions and answer less. The following example illustrates the point. The children are eagerly engaged in art activities, which to a large extent are interrupted by utterances about things that the children are concerned about:²⁰

Child: Can you draw a line like that for me? /SOL
 Teacher: Yes. /RES
 Child: He put some modelling dough in his mouth. /REA
 Teacher: That wasn't a very good idea. /REA
 You'd better go out and have a drink. /SOL
 Child: No, I don't want to. /RES
 Teacher: You can be ill, it's salty. /STR
 Child: Some boys killed a cat. /STR
 Teacher: Yes, that was horrible, I saw it in the paper. /REA
 Child: What did you see? /SOL
 Teacher: Per had probably seen it in the paper. /RES
 Child: No /REA It was me who heard about it. /REA
 Child: Heard about what? /SOL
 Teacher: If you keep quiet, perhaps Per can tell us. /STR
 What was it, Per? /SOL
 Child: No /RES
 Teacher: Yes, come on - tell us. /SOL
 Child: Oh no. /RES

On the other hand, the results give a somewhat distorted picture of the communication. Many of the children's reactions are that they repeat answers that others have given before or they make associations. In several of the lessons, there are examples of as many as 5 and 10 such reactions to one and the same statement, without any of the reactions contributing to developing the conversation, but it can be important for the children to have the opportunity to express what they feel. The example below can serve to illustrate this:²¹

Nursery school teacher: What shall we sleep in on the trip,
 then, Eva? /SOL
 Child 1: Sleeping bags. /RES

²⁰ My translation.

²¹ My translation.

Child 2: I haven't got one. /REA

Child 3: We've got several. /REA

Child 4: So have we. /REA

Child 5: I haven't either. /REA

Child 6: We have. /REA

Child 7: So have we. /REA

Child 8: We have too. /REA

Nursery school teacher: Mm, it'll be alright. /REA

On this evidence, it can appear as if other rules apply for talking in the experimental groups than in the studies I have compared them with. The children are given more opportunity to talk, even though it is rather like a ritual. This ritual-like aspect is probably at the core of the traditions. The staff often reward those who take the initiative or who make comments, by giving them the chance to speak. There are few examples at all of the nursery school teachers stopping or interrupting the children once they have been allowed to say something.

This pattern has been registered and commented on in several of the close studies. In one of them, it says that the nursery school teachers control the theme, and keep it "simmering", at the same time as the children are responsible for the associations it raises, with the blessing of the nursery school teacher (Sæter 1989, p 39). These data show that the 6-year-olds display more spontaneity in connection with their own experiences and associations than the children on whom we have data from school. The 6-year-olds are keen to express their own experiences and feelings. They react less to what is happening in the situations and to what is said by others. The 6-year-olds tell and make comments almost as much as they ask and answer questions, whilst the children in the studies from the school to a large extent simply ask and answer questions. We also find these differences between the kindergarten models and the school model in the experiment, but to a lesser degree. Again we can discern a link between the institution and the tradition, albeit an incomplete one.

It is tempting to explain these differences, both between the experiment and the school, and between the kindergarten models and the school model by referring to the age of the children. They have so much "inside themselves" that they want to say, but that does not always have anything to do with the topic in question. They are spontaneous, full of experiences and feelings that build themselves up and have to be "released". This is typical of children of that age and can be a psychological explanation of the results. It does not clarify why the nursery school teachers allow this to happen, and that they allow more of it in the kindergarten than in school. My understanding of the patterns of reactions is that they are a consequence of the traditions with which the staff are associ-

ated. The nursery school teachers' bias in favour of the child-centered tendency allows the children to be spontaneous, and the regulations in the institution have been established with this in mind. Those who work in school face a sort of "double" expectation. Their own tradition on the one hand, and that of the school on the other.

In the analyses that have been made earlier, I have emphasized the fact the institutional regulations define how the content is organized, while the professional groups to a large degree have the opportunity of being active on the basis of their own tradition within the bounds of the daily programme. Here we have seen that this is only partly the case. It can only be an hypothesis, because we have no data on school teachers working on similar terms. The modification in the roles of the adults and the children has been created by the professional group that has had responsibility for the work. There have been nursery school teachers at work in all the groups. On the one hand, these nursery school teachers have lived up to the expectations of the institution to which they are linked by entering into the form of daily programme as it exists there. On the other hand, they have simultaneously implemented parts of the professional tradition in which they have been socialized. But the nursery school teachers in the school model structure more strongly than in the kindergarten models. At the same time, in both places they are sensitive to the reactions of the children, more so in the kindergarten models than in the school model. A comprehensive scope for action is not in itself any guarantee for it being made use of. The actions cannot be understood simply as a passive adjustment to the scope for action, the actions are to a considerable extent linked to the tradition of which the professional groups are a part and the notions they have inherited for action (cf also Ball 1987, p 247). These actions seem also to be fairly independent of the planning and the talk, actions are explained in other ways, meaning that the talk to a certain degree has other functions than to lead the practical educational activities.

Summary part II, the educational activity with the 6-year-olds

In this part I have discussed the educational activity in the experiment with 6-year-olds. The main question I try to answer is what decides or influences formulations about, and realizations of the education in the experiment. The task that the experiment was to solve was to establish a new pedagogy by combining "the best" of the tradition from the kindergarten with "the best" of the tradition from the school. Then this was to be implemented in the three experimental models, and in such a way that the institutions were able to approach each other. The way of thinking came from the reform perspective. It reduces educational

work to a limited technical exercise, in which formulated intentions can without problems become reality, when the necessary conditions exist in the form of good plans and relevant strategies. And the research interest within the perspective is primarily related to the connection between teacher behaviour and the benefit to the children, and not to the actual educational process.

I study the experimental activity from an approach that emphasizes the fact that education and educational activity are the result of a complex process in which various social, cultural and political factors, both inside and outside the institutions, play a part. The research interest, therefore, lies in gaining further knowledge about the actual educational process and the factors influencing it. The curriculum that is to be used in the three experimental models is just one of these elements. The basis on which I have studied these issues is divided into four. (1) A theoretical model has been developed involving terms that can explain the educational process, how education is established, maintained and altered. (2) In this model, the term tradition has a key role. Actually, the term "best" is defined as what is most characteristic in the pedagogy of each of the institutions. There therefore follows a study of the educational traditions of the kindergarten and the school. (3) This foundation is then used to analyze and discuss the curriculum processes in the experiment and (4) the concrete educational activity in the experimental groups.

The theoretical model that has been developed is a continuation of the institutional thinking from part I. The organizations go through institutionalizing processes that provide them with the values of the social field to which they belong, which provide legitimacy and social and cultural identity in the institution. And in an interplay with the activity in the organization, the institutionalization creates traditions which cause the members to think and act in special ways. These traditions in and round the institutions embrace the activity there and to a large degree provide the frame within which the actions take place. What is happening must the whole time be understood in relation to these traditions and is in a complicated manner also directly and indirectly a consequence of the traditions.

In the institutions, the distinction between formulation and realization is vital. In the arena of formulation the traditions of the institution are transmitted through curriculum codes. They represent the basic principles for the choice of content, methods and organization in the educational activity, and are as a rule expressed in the form of educational texts or curricula, but which also contain a more tacit and hidden aspect. The formulations on education (the curricula) must satisfy demands from, among others, the political arena of formulation, the institutional environment's expectations of the activity, at the same time as they are to control and guide the teachers in their work with the children. These are

so contradictory demands that they more often than not are impossible to unite. The consequence is that, in order to win support from the forces outside the actual educational activity, the formulations are to a large degree drawn up with the arena of formulation and the institutional environment in mind. This makes the curricula the subject of ideological controversy with strong symbolic overtones and with less direct value for the actual educational practice.

In the arena of realization, thought and action also have their roots in the institutional tradition. Even so, the educational process is not a passive adjustment to this tradition. There are many areas that "come in between" and influence the conditions. One of the key areas is the state control of the activity. This takes place through frameworks which define the scope for action within which teachers and pupils can act. Three such areas of state regulation are described: judicial, economic and ideological regulation. The teachers and children have themselves the freedom to act within these. Explanations are given of the deeper structural significance and of how interpretations and understandings of a tradition are transmitted through the term notion. This involves the set of thoughts that controls and codes a person's way of understanding action, what is desirable and possible in a given situation and which thus provides a basis for the realization.

A variety of sources form the basis of the data. A study of the research related to the school and the kindergarten has been made. This reveals that there is a huge amount of information about intentions and about normative approaches to the institutions. There is a far greater lack of information about what goes on in the institutions, and of analyses of these processes. In itself, this says something about the strength the reform perspective has and has had in connection with the control of education and research into education. The planning is investigated through more detailed interviews of a small number of staff from the experiment. Certain questions have also been put to everyone involved in the experiment. An analysis has been made of the content of a small number of local curriculum plans. The educational activity has been studied in three different ways. First by standard observations in all the groups over three years. The observations have been made of the activity all day on certain days. These observations provide a picture of the situation in the institution. They are supplemented by close studies, participating observations and interviews in a small number of experimental groups. Based on the results of these two sources, I went on to make video recordings of the teaching with a view to analyzing the classroom interaction.

As far as development and state regulation are concerned, the kindergarten and the school are at different stages. The school is well developed and well organized. The kindergarten is in a period of expansion and is far less well

organized. The school is quite strictly regulated by the state, which is not the case with the kindergarten. It enjoys a much freer position. The educational subject concerns who chooses the content and the activity, the children or the adults. The educational object refers to what is central in the educational activities, the development of the personality or the learning of subject matter. The kindergarten has the centre of gravity of its formulations and realizations in the child-centred and personality dimensions. The kindergarten is first and foremost concerned with the freedom of the child and its personality development. The school's corresponding centre of gravity places most emphasis on subjects and the learning of knowledge, and far less on the freedom of the child.

As far as the national curriculum for the experiment is concerned, the theoretical model from chapter 4 provides a relatively adequate picture of what happened. There was an ideological conflict, and the plan was formulated in accordance with the models of political decisions, so that it to a large extent received the support of the most relevant groups in the political and institutional environments. The consequence was that the national curriculum plan was broad, general and vague, and did not function as an element of control or guidance in the activity, but it became an important symbol and legitimized the activity with the 6-year-olds. After a brief period, the staff in the experiment accepted the idea of developing and working according to centrally drawn up plans. At the start of the experiment, they were strongly opposed to this idea.

I have not been given the impression of any particular conflict in the drawing up of the local curriculum plans. The terms of reference of the staff were their own experience and practice, their own viewpoints, preferences and the earlier plans in the institution. To a large extent, the local curriculum work involved continuing what had been done earlier and had been successful, and is mainly an example of routine solutions. The content of these plans was influenced by the school tradition, with the greatest emphasis placed on aims and topics. The kindergarten tradition was less apparent. The way the local curriculum plans were drawn up, the way they were discussed and the way they were used reveals strong opposition to the work being controlled from the outside, and is in contrast to the comments made on the planning. Vital to the use of the plans was consideration of the children, that they were not to suffer as a result of the plans. In the experiment, an educational tradition existed which placed great emphasis on the child and the child's premises, both in regard of who was to choose the content and what the aims were, closely akin to the way of thinking in the kindergarten. And this tradition applied, regardless of what it said in the plans. It is on this point that the staff's own fundamental notions about education become most apparent. It also proved to be the case that the practical framework in the institutions became more and more decisive for the content, as the plans became more and more concrete and detailed. What it was possible

to implement on the spot became more and more decisive, the closer the staff came to the level of formulation that was close to the situation in practice. Less attention was paid to the institutionalized environment and to the official formulations as the "distance" to the children narrowed. This is a basis for proposing the existence of a scope for formulation, dependent upon who are the actors and who are the recipients of the formulations made.

The consequence of this is a lack of consistency between plans and practice in several ways and at several levels. The staff do a great deal that they have not formulated in the plans. Some of what they have formulated in the plans, they do not do. At the same time, teachers and nursery school teachers are saying the same thing about what they emphasize, but they are acting differently. This latter feature I understand to result from the fact that the same terms have their origins in notions from different traditions and are formulated in relation to the tradition from which they originated. It can also be seen as the result of more tactical talk, an adjustment to the institutional environment. The greatest correspondence is actually to be found between the educational traditions to which the staff are linked through their training and experience and their actions, but this is complex. An experiment located in the kindergarten is affected by the traditions of the kindergarten, with a relatively strong emphasis on free activities. An experiment located in the school is influenced by the tradition of the school, with a relatively strong emphasis on adult-controlled activities. I interpret this to be a consequence of different state regulation of the institutions. The experiment with the 6-year-olds takes place in established institutions with certain fixed arrangements, and the experiment becomes a part of these. Since cooperation between the kindergarten and the school takes place in the school, the content thus emphasizes more the typical features of school rather than of the kindergarten.

Within the framework of the daily programme, the professional groups have had a modifying effect. Roughly speaking, the nursery school teachers have worked in the way nursery school teachers usually do. And the basic school teachers have worked in their usual way. The staff act on the basis of their own tradition and do what is typical for the methods there. This becomes even more apparent when we look at what happens when these two groups try to leave their own tradition and take part in the other one. This happened for the most part only in the school model. The activity in the kindergarten models was almost without exception no different in relation to the normal kindergarten. The school teachers have, for example, organized a form of free play that the nursery school teachers would not have called free play, but adult-controlled activity. They worked with elements from the kindergarten, interpreted on the basis of their own tradition. The nursery school teachers in the school model taught with greater control in some areas than the basic school teachers did. They enter

another tradition and exaggerate it, in my opinion due to of false notions about what teaching is often like in the school tradition. They either interpret the situations on the basis of their own tradition, as the teachers did in the free play. Or they do as the nursery school teachers did, interpret and act in the situations on the basis of a tradition that is foreign to them. Their notional world leaves them poorly equipped to do so, and that provides a basis for exaggeration. This indicates that to change groups of teachers' educational actions is a fairly complex and complicated process. It is not sufficient to want to do things differently. Because of the socialization they have been through, they are relatively poorly equipped to do things differently. And if they do so, their work is open to questioning. They are to a fairly large extent bound by the traditions they are a part of.

The aim of the experiment with the 6-year-olds is that these two traditions were to "merge together" to a new pedagogy. An important question in that context is what criteria are to be used to determine when the "new" pedagogy has possibly made an impact in practice. When has a change taken place? (Fullan 1991, p 37ff). On the basis of the theoretical model, and in fact also on the basis of the expectations in the experiment, the requirement will be that the staff are capable of working according to the other tradition as well.

Based on what has been documented here, I cannot see that this has happened, even though there is a great deal of rhetoric to indicate the opposite. And this is actually well documented through the very way the nursery school teachers work, which does not show any great change, perhaps with the exception of when they address the topic of the three R's in the school model in more direct and compulsory projects. At the same time, they are still orientated towards the child and less towards knowledge and achievement. In any case, the fundamental traditions in the institutions remain intact. The same applies to the educational notions of the two groups of teachers.

Experience from the experiment with the 6-year-olds shows that it is not enough to change the curricula, in order to alter the educational work. Changes require also that those who are working within the frameworks have changed the basis of their understanding or the basis of their notions of what the work itself involves. They must internalize another tradition, they must acquire the tacit knowledge about the ideology in which they are to function. They must be able to interpret the signals, give them meaning in a new sense. They must have other notions as to what is important, and how educational work can be done. This has not happened in the experiment with the 6-year-olds. On the contrary, the actual developmental idea is that the new national curriculum, combined with in-service training, is to be sufficient to create a new pedagogy, a transitional pedagogy. The national curriculum has had other functions. The

most important are that it was a symbol of unity for the experimental activity and it legitimized the activity and gave it status in the eyes of the institutional environment. There is also a problem related to the short period this experiment lasts, 3 - 4 years, because the results of change can often not be expected until after 5 or even 10 years. The support for the experiment has been such that individual points of departure and tradition have provided the terms of reference, and the experimental ideas have then been interpreted in relation to these. The use of the national curriculum for the experiment (Rammeplan 1988) illustrates this phenomenon well. And it can be recognized from many other similar circumstances. Selander (1984) found the same in the use of Friere's liberating pedagogy in connection with the development of the kindergarten in Sweden. Cohen & Ball (1990) come to exactly the same conclusion about an experiment intended to change the teaching of mathematics in California. And then it is the established tradition which forms the terms of reference for what is happening, which makes it possible to talk of reform, without anything in particular being altered.

This may just be part of a transition. For most of the nursery school teachers, it is a new experience to work according to a national curriculum plan. The same applies to the local curriculum planning, even though that has been included in the guidelines for the kindergarten for some time. Experience of what happens when the school is given a new plan would seem to indicate that the process of change is a slow one. The OMI-project found few traces of the national curriculum (Mønsterplan 1974) 5-6 years after the plan had been introduced (OMI-report no 26, 1983). Sabatier (1986a) claims that it can take between 10 and 15 years before the effects of plans like this can be seen. This can in turn be explained by the term "street level bureaucrat" (Lipsky 1980). With the relatively large degree of freedom in their dealings with "their clients", it is the teacher or the nursery school teacher who actually "decides" what is going to happen, within the existing traditions. And in that work, it is the conditions on the ground that are most decisive for the content of the work, and to a far less extent signals and instructions from above (Lipsky 1980, p 82ff). In these circumstances, the educational traditions will play a fairly dominating role.

Part III Educational policy and the experiment

9 Trends in educational policy

Introduction

In the previous chapters I have presented the educational activity in the experiment, and analysed it with an emphasis on the relationship between plans and practice. In the experiment, the organization, content and methods of the educational work were to a large extent influenced by the tradition and routines of the institutions responsible for providing the educational programme, by the tradition and competence of the professional group that is working with the 6-year-olds and by the state regulations that apply in the kindergarten and the school. An experiment carried out in the kindergarten took on the characteristics of the kindergarten tradition. An experiment located in the school took on the characteristics of school tradition. The group of teachers that was working with the 6-year-olds modified the influences of the institutional tradition in the direction of their professional tradition. These factors appear to have been far more significant and had far greater influence than the national and local curriculum plans and the instruction given to the participants during the experimental period. There are few indications that the experiment has led to changes either in the practical educational work or in the actual and fundamental understanding of the basic educational activity. This may indicate that the direction of the educational practice is a consequence of forces and mechanisms over which neither teachers nor politicians have any control or can influence directly. On the other hand, the nursery school teachers and the school teachers in their talk and rhetoric seem to support the educational ideas that dominate in the experiment. This is taken as a possible indication of hypocrisy, where one organizational system in the institutions compensate for the other.

In the theoretical model in chapter 4, the institutional environment is defined as an important influential factor. In the presentation so far, I have touched on some such elements, but not systematically. In this chapter I place the experiment more accurately in the context of the educational policy out of which it arose and was implemented in. This is a continuation of chapter 3, but on a different level of description with partly different terms, which require other types of data and thus also a different approach to the collection of data (cf Lundgren 1983a, p 232). The aim of this chapter is to explain the development of educational policy in order to study which interests form the basis of the state reform activity in school and in the kindergarten. I make use of this as a foundation on which to discuss what this development has had to say for the activity in the experiment and for the function of the experiment for the educational reform that follows it. The developments in educational policy are

closely linked to the general political development. To explain the one without at the same time discussing the other is not satisfactory, but to do so would go beyond all reasonable limits for what this study can present. Therefore, I base a great deal of the content of this chapter on public documents and on research that has already been done. As a general background to the content of this chapter, I use the only complete presentation of Norwegian educational policy from 1945 up to the present day (Telhaug 1986), but supplemented with various other contributions.

The background to the growth in education

Two controversial economic theories¹ have in spite of criticism formed the basis for much of the official thinking on educational policy in the postwar period (Karabel & Halsey 1977, p 8ff, Lundgren 1990, p 24f).² (1) Greatly simplified, the theory of "human capital" states that education is not a cost, but an investment. It creates economic growth in the same way as factors such as labour, capital and means of production. It is an investment which in the long term increases the standard of living and quality of life of each individual, and which is necessary for rapid economic growth in society (Schultz 1961).³ (2) The point of departure for "the functional perspective" on education is that a modern society becomes more and more specialized, and therefore needs people who can master the new tasks. By exploiting and specializing the human resources in society to take responsibility for those tasks for which each individual is best suited, the gain will be maximized both for the individual and for society (Inkeles & Smith 1974).

A fairly clear and positive connection has been documented between the level of education and how far a country has developed in industry, science, welfare, social equality, democracy and political stability. There is also a positive correlation between individual education, income and social status (Hernes &

¹ Broady (1978) gives a detailed introduction both to the basis for the economic thinking in connection with education and to the criticism of the various trends.

² The growth in education is explained in different ways by various theoreticians. Meyer et al (1977, p 255) explain it eg as a result of what they call "characteristics of the contemporary world system". The marxist criticism of the economy of education is ambiguous, but common to much of this criticism is that the educational development is linked with economic interests and has its basis in a hegemony of power (Broady 1978, p 17ff).

³ The actual thinking behind the theory dates way back to the 20's, and became more and more relevant during the 50's and was formalized by Schultz. The article was first presented orally in 1960 to "The American Economic Association", of which Schultz was president. The article was published in 1961.

Knudsen 1976, Woodhall 1988). Education is therefore also looked upon as a democratic right with its own intrinsic value. There are therefore both ideological and economic arguments in favour of state involvement in education (Lundgren 1990). In these two theories, education has been considered to be one of the most important tools the state possesses with which to create economic, social and cultural development, equality and growth both for the individual and for nations (Eide 1973, p 36, 39ff). On the other hand, these educational-economic theories have been "pulled apart" by several critics. Broady claims that the belief in investments in education as a relatively independent investment factor was a typical phenomenon associated with times of prosperity (Broady 1978, p 11f). This does not mean that the idea itself has been forgotten. Gesser (1985, p 68) believes that although the theories of human capital have been said to be dead or at least irrelevant, they are actively in use in planning and argumentation.

Against this background, I shall study the development of education, especially in Norway, but also compared with other western countries. I begin around 1960, when the issue of a special educational programme for 6-year-olds again was raised in its entirety. I divide the period from the 1960's up to the 1990's into two. The first period, (Equal opportunity for education) up to 1985/86, ends with the experimental programme for 6-year-olds being planned and approved, and the time from then until 1991 (Individual quality of education), when the experiment had been completed and evaluated.

Equal opportunity for education

There was a period of strong expansion in education in Norway after the Second World War, made possible by economic growth. There was a strong growth in investment in education in the period up to the mid-1970's. The development was centrally directed, well-planned and rational, and supported by experiment and research.⁴ (Telhaug 1990b). There was fairly broad political agreement on the direction of educational policy right up to the 1980's. It is true that certain ideological differences of opinion, especially between the socialist and non-socialist parties, made themselves felt (Telhaug 1986, p 366ff). The policy was characterized by an enormous optimism linked to the consequences of increased education for everyone. The aim was to give everyone an equal opportunity for education by developing a comprehensive system of public education. Extensive reforms were initiated which led to a longer period of compulsory education and

⁴ In Norway this took place under the auspices of the National Council for Innovation in Education, from 1955.

a far wider recruitment (Hernes & Knudsen 1976, p 1-3). The kindergarten, the basic compulsory school, the upper secondary school and higher education were all reformed. A new law on compulsory education in 1969 increased the length of compulsory schooling from 7 to 9 years. A trial period was initiated in 1969 for the regional colleges and these were made permanent in 1975. A new law on teacher training (1973) increased the length of studies from 2 to 3 years. The law on upper secondary education in 1974 placed all public upper secondary education under one law and introduced the principle of a three-year upper secondary education in a number of fields. The first law on kindergartens was passed in 1975, etc. In connection with the changes in law, the curricula were revised extensively. Hadenius (1990) describes a similar trend in Sweden, which she calls "the first road", education for the masses.

In this period there was renewed interest in an educational programme for 6-year-olds. And then as a provision to further an educational policy of equalization.⁵ The issue was also raised in several public committees,⁶ and the matter was gradually given sufficient political priority to allow several experiments to be initiated. Before the experiments had been concluded, interest in it had dwindled, for reasons I shall explain in time.⁷

The new-radical wave of liberation and opposition from the end of the 1960's led to increased emphasis on a child-centered education. In Norway, this neo-radical approach to education was given a very strong anchorage in local cultural traditions. It placed more emphasis on the social-educational functions of the school, and rejected the subject- and knowledge-orientated education.⁸ It emphasized the greatest possible equality, unity and wholeness in the education system, and to a certain extent took up other tasks than simply the learning of subjects and skills, eg establishing attitudes, joint responsibility, cooperation and dialogue, and has placed relatively little emphasis on formal assessment and examinations. Telhaug (1990a, p 33) calls this direction in education innovative and neo-radical. Intellectual differences between children were interpreted as cultural differences, and compensatory educational thinking was seen as forms of cultural imperialism (see eg Hoëm 1972). It was impossible to keep intact the

⁵ The actual line of thinking was influenced considerably by the American compensatory projects such as Head Start.

⁶ The most important are "Folkeskolekomiteen" (The Basic School Committee) appointed 1963, and "Normalplanutvalget" (The Curriculum Committee) appointed 1967.

⁷ Sande (1984) has analyzed this period in the history of Norwegian education, and is my main source.

⁸ The perhaps most important spokesman in Norway for this way of thinking was Erling Lars Dale, whose book "Education and Societal Change" (Pedagogikk og samfunnsforandring) from 1972 laid the foundation for an enormous controversy with the educational establishment.

idea of a compensatory pre-school year for 6-year-olds in such a climate.⁹ The political parties also gave up this idea, and concentrated on the laws concerning the kindergarten.

Criticism of education

Even by the end of the 1970's, the criticism of the Norwegian school system was rather strong from many quarters, but it was complex (Telhaug 1978, p 91ff, 1986, p 398 - 401). The extensive development and change in the education system took place without anyone really knowing in detail what the consequences would be of the enormously increased institutionalization of children and youth. The organizational and structural changes of the school system were implemented, but the effects of the altered pattern of recruitment and of the reduced social and economic inequality were not possible to document (Hernes & Knudsen 1976).¹⁰ The criticism is also a consequence of the political swing to the right in the 1970's, and gave notice of ideological differences of opinion which increased as the 1980's went on. The non-socialist parties criticised the Labour Party for a hardhanded central regulation, and for showing little consideration for those who were to be responsible for implementing the reforms. They believed the reform tempo was too high and wanted to quieten things down in school (Langslet 1977). In particular the representatives from the Conservative Party claimed that the extensive radical and innovative reform programme had created a poorer education than before. Academic standards had been lowered and behaviour problems in school had increased as a result of the reforms. The documentation provided was very open to questioning, even that of the most central critics, eg Langslet (1977) and Austad (1981),¹¹ and is far more ideologically than empirically based. It is characterized by not taking into account the fact that education has been provided for everyone and not just for a tiny elite.¹² It is also very complicated and maybe

⁹ This is a direct parallel to Basil Bernstein's article: "A critique of the concept of Compensatory Education", Bernstein (1973).

¹⁰ Here it should be added that the central Norwegian studies of this question were carried out very close in time to the implementation of the reforms. This applies to Hernes & Knudsen (1976) and the OMI-survey (OMI report no 26, 1983). Whether the reforms had been allowed time to work is therefore uncertain.

¹¹ Both these persons were key members of the Conservative Party, and had been ministers in various non-socialist governments around the 1980's.

¹² Austad's (1981) documentation is in six parts: (1) An associate professor at the university has informally asked his new students the same questions over a number of years, and registers a lowering of standards. (2) The university provides more preparatory courses now than earlier. (3) More students were qualified for acceptance at the Norwegian Institute of Technology (NTH) according to the old system of secondary education than according to

impossible to find definite answers to such questions (Dokka 1981, Lundgren 1987, p 35f, Schools and Quality 1989, p 48f).

The conflict about falling standards also appears in the discussion surrounding the OMI-evaluation¹³ (OMI-report no 1, 1983). The majority in the Storting (Labour Party) wanted to find out whether the policies of reform that had been agreed upon for the 9-year basic compulsory school, had been implemented. The minority (including the Conservatives) wished to find out whether the policy, with which they partly disagreed, had led to a lowering of standards. The OMI-project was carried out on the terms of the government party (Labour Party) and showed that the intentions in the revisions of the National Curriculum for school from 1974 had not been implemented. The project did not either provide empirical support for the claims about a lowering of standards (OMI-report no 26, 1983).

This growing criticism of education was not restricted simply to Norway. It occurred in a great many western countries, but to varying degrees, with varying results and at somewhat different times (Schools & Quality 1989). Already as early as the middle of the most expansive period for education, Coombs (1968) warned of a worldwide crisis in education. He claimed that developments in education were not keeping pace with developments in society in general. Experience after the great period of reforms in the 1960's was that a change in the systems, structures and curricula did not necessarily lead to changes in method and content in education. It is easier to change laws and systems than to alter educational practice (Schools & Quality 1989, p 17-18).

The public sector was facing some sort of crisis. Questions were being asked as to whether the state could create and develop welfare (Olsen 1988, p 31f). This increasing criticism of education laid the foundation for raising more principle doubts about whether education would be able to lead to social and economic changes for people. Both the reports from Coleman (1966) and Jencks et al (1972) confirmed that the home environment is a more important cause of differences between children than schools are. Similar investigations were also carried out in Norway (Knudsen 1980). Some go a step further and reject the claim that education can contribute to social equality and increase the economic profit in the way the theories of human capital, functionalism and later the market economy assume (Karabel & Halsey 1977). Their point of departure is

the new one. (4) Today it "occurs" that a Norwegian student examination is assessed as equal to American High School, before it was considered to be 1-2 years ahead. (5) A survey shows that pupils in the 9-year basic compulsory school do not understand much of the mathematics they are supposed to have learnt. (6) Teacher-training students have difficulty in solving exercises in mathematics from the final grade of the 9-year basic compulsory school.

¹³ The OMI-project, cf chapter 3.

that education and educational reforms are a question of power, control and conflict. The social arrangements reflect historical and contemporary relationships between groups with varying power. The reasons for this are to be found outside education and in the class structure of the capitalist society. For groups with power and hegemony, the aim of education is to reproduce society and increase productivity. Education and educational reforms therefore maintain, develop and legitimize the inequality in society (Bowles 1977, Levin 1980).

The inner life of the school

The consequence of the criticism of education was that educational policy concentrated to a greater extent on the actual educational activity and content in school and how the plans actually worked out in practice. According to Hadenius (1990), this is the "second road". The school was to be adapted to suit the groups of pupils that had, and partly comprised problems in school. The SIA-reform¹⁴ in Sweden is a close parallel to what happened in Norway. Telhaug (1990b, p 118ff) says of the work of the National Council for Innovation in Education in the period 1975-1984¹⁵ that the time was ripe to begin the work of follow-up and realization. The reports from the major school commissions were replaced by reports on the progress of the implementation. With increasing force the professional educational interest for change and renewal was to make itself felt.

As in so many countries, the consequence of this was a period of innovations, projects that were to enable education to meet the challenges facing it. In the 70's and 80's, the policy was more aimed at reforming education from the inside to provide the expected gain, at the same time as this was to be done as cheaply, effectively and up-to-date as possible (House 1974, p 249ff, Telhaug 1986, p 161ff). The projects were often limited in extent and area of impact, and carried out within the approved frameworks for education. Cuban (1988) characterizes these corresponding innovations in the USA as changes to make the already established system more effective, without disturbing the fundamental features of the institutions. This is the same characteristic I have given of Norwegian educational research in the 1970's.¹⁶ The results of these projects are often presented as being relatively unsuccessful, seen in relation to impressive aims for education's contribution to social and political change (Coombs 1985, p 21ff). This is also Telhaug's conclusion as to whether the ideas at this time had any effect on methods and forms of teaching (Telhaug

¹⁴ SIA: "Skolans inre arbete": The inner work of school.

¹⁵ The National Council for Innovation in Education was abolished in 1984.

¹⁶ Cf chapter 2.

1986, p 318ff, cf also Telhaug 1990b, p 157ff). Similar conclusions were reached in connection with the research into interaction in the classroom.¹⁷ Coombs claims that if a picture was taken of world education early in the 80's, it would be exactly like a picture taken 10, 20 or 30 years earlier. The more things are changed, the more they become as they were before (Coombs 1985, p 113, cf also Cohen 1988). The consequence was an increasing pessimism about the significance of education and research. In Norway, this had concrete results in the political parties' programmes before the General Election to the Storting in 1977. Several parties went in for a period of calm in the school system, in the sense that the demand for new reforms was to be strongly toned down (Kjøøl & Telhaug 1979). Parallel to this there was an increase in the lack of confidence in research and the contributions it could make to solving problems (Husén 1984, p 5-6).

The kindergarten

The main concern in Norwegian kindergarten policy in this period was first to establish a legal basis. Afterwards the task was to build enough institutions so that as many children as possible could be offered places.¹⁸ The reasons for this development were a combination of many factors, where the increased need for labour was perhaps the most important, but where also demands for sex equality, the worsening conditions under which children were growing up, increased costs of living and increased knowledge about the effect of educating children at an early age all played a part.¹⁹

In some areas the kindergarten policy was the subject of intense discussions. The first was whether or not children ought to attend kindergarten at all, and if so how long they should attend. The Christian People's Party in particular was sceptical to this state interference in an area of family responsibility. They gave priority to short-time kindergarten for children, because they believed that gave the greatest benefit (Kristelig Folkeparti: Familien i dagens samfunn, 1974, p 93ff). The opposite point of view is held by the Socialist Left Party. They gave priority to all-day kindergartens for the sake of the children, and to give women an equal opportunity for work and education (Sosialistisk opplysningsforbund, undated). The other great source of conflict was whether or not the Law on Kindergarten was to have an explicit clause based on Christianity (eg Evenshaug et al 1975, Joner 1979). This question was repeated again and again in very much of the discussion from the time the Committee of Kindergarten presented

¹⁷ Cf chapter 8.

¹⁸ Cf note 36, chapter 3.

¹⁹ In Haug (1982) I provide a more detailed discussion and analysis of the reasons for this development.

its reports in 1971 and 1972 (Dagsinstitusjonsutvalget 1971, NOU 1972:39), right up to when a decision was taken in favour of a clause based on Christianity in 1983.²⁰ This discussion was really about several themes. One was, of course, whether the kindergarten should be made to give the children a Christian upbringing in the same way that the school is. A second was the question of whether the legal right of the parents could allow this. A third topic was whether or not the kindergarten should try to influence children at all in any direction, whether or not the characteristic of the kindergarten should be to work on the basis of children's need for self-expression. An order in favour of one particular ideological foundation meant a demand for direct influence, which was foreign and undesirable especially in the view of large groups of nursery school teachers.²¹

There are similarities between the formulations about the innovative educational policy and the kindergarten tradition. They both have the same roots, child and psychologically oriented reform pedagogics. This does not mean that the formulations and realizations in the kindergarten and the school during an innovative phase of educational policy are identical. The innovative element must be understood in the tradition to which it applies. This was not done in the case of the experiment with 6-year-olds. This is apparent amongst other sources in the national curriculum plan from 1988. There it was pointed out that both institutions are developing in the direction of dialogue pedagogics. This element was strengthened even more by pointing out that the institutions had common aims, and that they could therefore easily cooperate and coordinate their activities.²² The initiation of the experiment made it clear that the actual differences and the differences of opinion were obvious and distinct. The two traditions did not interpret the innovative terms in the same way. The differences of opinion, especially on the courses for the staff involved in the project, were considerable. Especially at the beginning the teachers felt exposed to public contempt when the ideals from the kindergarten were compared with the gloomy examples of the practice in schools.²³

²⁰ In the law of 1975, the articles were nondenominational.

²¹ The Norwegian Union of Teachers, on the other hand, supported the same ideological foundation as in the 9-year basic compulsory school based on Christianity (Norsk Lærerleg: Barnehageloven i praksis, 1979, p 10). Cf also chapter 5.

²² Cf chapter 3.

²³ One of the lecturers from the kindergarten said eg on one of the courses, that if a pupil from the first grade came into school hungry, dirty, with wet feet, without socks, in wellington boots in the winter, nobody would take any notice. In school they were only concerned with teaching. In the kindergarten, on the other hand, the child would have been taken care of in every possible way, and perhaps the daily programme would have been changed completely in order to give that child the care and attention it needed.

In my view, many of the topics of dissent surrounding the kindergarten have much the same content as the debate about the school. It is an ideological debate with disagreement about direction and content in education and upbringing. And somewhat simplified, the lines of demarcation went between the socialist and non-socialist parties. The Labour Party represented a social-educational basis of kindergarten policy, with the emphasis on the traditional values of the kindergarten, such as freedom and self-expression. The non-socialist parties presented a more school-oriented kindergarten policy. They were to a greater extent concerned that the kindergarten should influence the children through more controlled measures, as eg the standpoint on the issue of a denominational kindergarten and the desire to use the name pre-school rather than kindergarten indicate (Sande 1984, p 125ff).

The project for 4 to 9-year-olds

It was in this context that the project for 4 to 9-year-olds was initiated.²⁴ In many ways the project became an arena for asserting various points of view on educational policy. This project went further in being innovative than any other project in this field had done previously. Much of the innovation consisted in getting the kindergarten tradition to approach the school tradition, with a child-centered emphasis on greater opportunities for individual freedom and self-expression. The project for 4 to 9-year-olds was the government party's (Labour) response to increasing political pressure to change the direction of kindergarten and educational policy to be more school-oriented. As we have seen in chapter 3, there was also a certain amount of opposition in the party, but it did not play a very dominating role for the time being. The non-socialist parties, and in particular the Conservatives, wanted a period of calm in the school, they wanted measures to prevent a further lowering of standards and they wanted a kindergarten with a stronger bias towards school, a sort of pre-school of the type that had existed earlier.

The project for 4 to 9-year-olds was intended to form the basis of the experiment with 6-year-olds. This had been stated publicly on several occasions during the planning of the experiment. It was thus this innovative foundation that the experiment with 6-year-olds also grew out of and was to be based on.

²⁴ Cf chapter 3.

Individual quality of education

The experiment with 6-year-olds was put into effect towards the end of the 80's, which had been characterized by a different debate on educational policy, dominated by quite different assessments and values than those that prevailed at the time it was prepared and planned. The political context became more and more neo-liberal and neo-conservative, and the direction of educational policy and ideals from the 60's and 70's received increasingly strong criticism as the 80's progressed. There was a debate in which the concepts quality of education and effectiveness of education gradually became more dominant over most of the western world (Skilbeck 1990, p 17ff). In the OECD-report "Schools and Quality" (1989), the concept quality of education is analyzed. The conclusion is that the concept is very complex and complicated, and varies according to a number of factors. The authors will not therefore present one definition as more authoritative than another, but let the actual discussion stand as a common basis of understanding (School and Quality 1989, p 27ff). Such an approach to the problem of the concept has only partly been mentioned in the debate in Norway. Quality is often synonymous with concrete factual knowledge.²⁵ The criticism of the school and the demands made of it are ambiguous. The term knowledge is "rehabilitated", the term "knowledge oriented school" is taken into use again. Many are worried about the level of knowledge in this country, but the solutions to the problem vary somewhat. Some stress more strongly the learning of subjects and knowledge as the main task of the school, "back to basics". Coombs (1985, p 107) associates this with a sort of golden age way of thinking, in which the solutions from earlier times are thought to be the right ones now too.²⁶ Others are more concerned with business and industry's special need for competence, including the ability of reflection, imagination and critical thinking (eg NHO, (Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry) 1991, cf also Skilbeck 1990, p 75). This is really what Coombs (1968) defined as the main reason for the crisis in education, that education is out of step with the needs of society. A third demand is to develop a national system of control that can guarantee the development of competence and the increased learning of knowledge (eg NHO 1991). Strangely enough, at the same time there are also

²⁵ The document that in 1991 more than any other has dominated the Norwegian debate on effectiveness does not define the concept quality at all (Førsund et al 1991). The content on education in the document implicitly defines quality as what is measured with tests of knowledge (Robertsen & Friestad 1990).

²⁶ This is very reminiscent of "routine processes", where previously known solutions are presented without the problems they are meant to solve having been studied more closely.

strong demands for increased decentralization of power and authority in the education system (Granheim, Kogan & Lundgren 1990).

The new demands made on education are not limited to certain grades in school or types of school, although the upper secondary school and higher education have perhaps received most of the attention (Neave 1988, af Trolle 1990²⁷). In the report from the OECD on curriculum work, it is clear that, in addition to the debate on developing "basic skills", the curriculum work in the 9-year basic compulsory school (elementary stage) was greatly influenced by demands for more structure and continuity in the curricula, stricter assessment, documentation of results and more formal procedures in teaching (Skilbeck 1990, p 54). In many OECD countries, there has been a clear development in the direction of centrally drawn-up national curricula, with a more closely defined core syllabus, and with a far more detailed follow-up through evaluation (Skilbeck 1990, p 45f).

Lorentzen (1991) has analyzed the school development in the USA in the 80's, and finds exactly the same trends there as in Norway. It is a conservative development, with demands for a return to an emphasis on basics, increased demands on discipline, orderliness and support for fundamental national norms. It has neo-liberal features, being orientated in the direction of the business world's current needs for competence and knowledge. It is a movement for conservative values, which places great emphasis on national control, but also on decentralization, accountability and market-orientation in the education system. Also in the USA, Lorentzen (1991) registers an increasing demand for emphasizing critical thinking and reflection.

Fears as to the quality of education are not restricted to the non-socialist or conservative parties (Skilbeck 1990, p 22). On the rhetorical level it is by and large a joint political product. In Norway several public reports and reports to the Storting have been published in this period on the subjects of knowledge and education, which document this fact.²⁸ That the formulations appear to be similar, does not necessarily mean that there is agreement between the parties either on the definition of the solutions or of the problem, I will return to this later.

²⁷ af Trolle is mainly concerned with academic education and the recruitment to research. He also sees a connection between the late age at which children start school in Sweden and the quality in these two fields, and believes that a great deal can be achieved by lowering the age at which children start school (af Trolle 1990, p 84f).

²⁸ NOU 1988:28, NOU 1988:32, St.meld. no 28 (1988-89), St.meld. no 43 (1988-89), St.meld. no 37 (1990-91), St.meld. no 40 (1990-91) and "Studiekvalitet", Innstilling fra studiekvalitetsutvalget (1990).

The authorities in Norway have also implemented measures in accordance with this, namely the revision of the National Curriculum (1987). Ålvik (1989, p 24) claims that the National Curriculum for school from 1987 (Mønsterplan 1987) gives the teacher the opportunity to organize the work in such a way that he/she can win back the function as teacher and educator, and distance him/herself from the image of a "social worker", indicating a connection between certain professional interests and the dominating ideological thinking of the time. This also concerns projects that are to develop a better foundation on which to evaluate the quality of Norwegian education (Granheim & Lundgren 1990, Granheim, Kogan & Lundgren 1990). It concerns attempts to simplify the whole system of control in education and make it more responsible for a common national basis of knowledge and culture (St. meld. nr 37 and nr 40 (1990-91)). And it concerns raising the issue of a lowering of the age at which children start school, which gradually came into focus in the project with 6-year-olds.

Telhaug (1990a, p 27) calls the rhetoric of educational policy in the 80's restorative. It is neo-conservative and neo-liberal with key concepts of quality, competence, and competition. A clear alliance is seen between the restorative educational policy and the non-socialist parties in Norway. According to Neave (1988), there is a mechanical and rational vocabulary strongly influenced by terms from business, economy and production life, as if human beings were merely a form of raw material.

Changes in the kindergarten

A similar debate has taken place about the activities of the kindergarten, but it has been more internal, and not aroused the same public interest. There were reactions to the dialogue pedagogy which was the ideal in the 70's (Kallós 1980).²⁹ More and more demands were made for a more purposeful, structured and systematic education for the kindergarten (eg Broström & Rasmussen 1981, Gunnestad 1983). The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration published the book "Målrettet arbeid i barnehagen" (1982)³⁰, and formulated in 1984 the demand in the regulations accompanying the law on kindergartens that local curriculum plans were to be drawn up. They were to show and motivate the basis for the education in kindergarten and to provide an overview of the activities in the kindergarten and the educational activity

²⁹ Cf chapter 4.

³⁰ Cf chapter 5.

through the year. I have also mentioned the national curriculum plan for kindergarten that is now in progress in the Ministry.³¹

In an analysis of the development of education of children aged 4 to 7 in the USA, Japan, France, England and Norway, Kjørholt et al (1990, p 93ff) conclude that there are two particularly significant tendencies. They register an increased institutionalization of children and that the content of the institutions is becoming increasingly academic. Walsh (1989) has studied this development in the USA. The narrow orientation towards subjects is to be found increasingly lower down the age scale in the kindergartens there.³² At the same time, the demands for achievement made on children coming from kindergartens are increasingly high. They are so high that children born late in the year have difficulty in achieving them. Therefore more and more US-states start refusing to accept children born late in the year into the kindergarten in the year they were "supposed" to begin. Walsh also shows that the percentage of children taking the last year of kindergarten twice because they do not achieve the standards has increased enormously.

There have also been debates in other countries than Norway on a lowering of the age for starting school, but these have concerned 4- and 5-year-olds. The discussion also in these countries concerns these two questions: Where shall the children be, in the kindergarten or in school, and what provisions should be made for them, care or teaching (Kagan & Zigler 1987)? There are many reasons for this debate, and they partly have their background in educational policy. It has to do with changes in the family situation. It has to do with research showing that early educational influence may be important for development and growth. The estimated generally poor condition of education requires that an earlier start is made in mastering the demands, and that the learning is concentrated on the "main thing", subjects and knowledge (Kagan & Zigler 1987).

It is, on the other hand, obvious that Norwegian kindergarten policy is not completely oblivious to the ongoing debate on knowledge. For several reasons I still have my doubts as to whether the driving forces behind a more knowledge-oriented school are also keen to establish kindergartens with such an emphasis, as in the USA. In this period, several amendments to the laws and regulations applying to kindergartens have been made in Norway, reducing the

³¹ Cf chapter 5.

³² The term kindergarten in Norway and in the USA is not similar. In USA the kindergarten usually is a short-term provision of 2-3 hours daily for children less than 5 years old (Kjørholt et al 1990, p 79).

degree of central regulation.³³ This can be interpreted as a weakening of the educational and a strengthening of the social dimension of the institution.

The background to the changes that have been made is the desire to build more kindergartens more quickly. The idea is that the fewer the regulations, the easier and cheaper it will be to build more kindergartens. In St. meld. no 8 (1987-88), the Brundtland government proposed the target of providing enough kindergarten places to meet the demand by the turn of the century. This has top priority. At the same time, there is praise for the quality of the kindergarten. Mention is made of the need to develop it within the tradition of the Norwegian kindergarten, and various measures are suggested as to how this can be achieved. The kindergarten is not here seen in the context of educational policy, but as a more isolated project with its own intrinsic value and its own independent tasks, in accordance with Norwegian tradition. The same argumentation as earlier is used, a combination of the need for supervision, a worsening of the environment for the upbringing of children, changes in the family structures, the question of equality, etc. The government also received the support of the other parties in its comments on the kindergarten in the committee report (Innst. S. no 157 (1987-88)). The kindergarten is still on "the first road", characterized by the fact that all children formally have an equal right to a place. A comparison with Sweden reveals that there they are now on "the second road", concerned about the quality of the work that is being done. They can afford to be, because demand is much more being met. The discussion on the evaluation of the kindergarten has begun (Dahlberg, Lundgren & Åsén 1991).³⁴ There are so far no signs of any great changes in Norwegian kindergarten policy. The development in Norway so far has mainly concentrated on updating the pedagogical vocabulary, and making minor adjustments. This also indicates that the kindergarten as an organization is still seen to be relatively independent of the system of education and not included in this context.

The context for restorative educational policy

The context of this change in the area of interest in educational and kindergarten policy is naturally fairly extensive, and varies somewhat from country to country (Telhaug 1990a, *Schools and Quality* 1989). In 1987 the OECD initiated a "state-of-the-art" study of trends and issues in the field of curricula (Skilbeck

³³ Cf chapter 5, see also the next chapter.

³⁴ Dahlberg, Lundgren & Åsén (1991, p 22ff) also say that within Child Care in Sweden, an assessment has already been started of productivity and the development of quality in the kindergarten.

1990). The report maintains that the renewed interest in education and educational issues cannot be understood simply by studying the inner dynamics of the education sector.

Crucial to understanding that debate, however, is awareness that practically all of the major public education policy issues now under review are part of broad and complex socio-cultural movements which are being increasingly related to economic, political and strategic concerns in Member countries. (Skilbeck 1990, p 17).

Skilbeck (1990, p 20f) points to three vital factors that are found again and again. They are changes in demography, economy and politics (cf also eg Neave 1988, Weiler 1989).

Demographic change

The number of pupils per age group in Norway has been reduced from 68 000 in the top year 1969 to around 50 000 at the beginning of the 80's (St. meld. no 62 (1982-83, p 23)). In time the number of pensioners will increase, whilst the numbers of the working population will go down. This makes demands on education in many ways. It presupposes flexibility and the ability to implement relatively rapid changes and introduce new priorities. At the next stage it can be a problem to provide sufficient qualified labour. And that will require that the school becomes more effective and able to qualify a larger percentage of the age groups than it does today. Neave (1988) also points to the enormous increase in social costs. He sees a connection between a market-orientated culture in school, and the state's need for those who are able to, to take care of themselves and make use of their own resources.

Economic difficulties

As early as the 1970's, the situation was characterized by economic stagnation, with record-high unemployment, and great demands for readjustment (Coombs 1985, p 9ff). In Norway state subsidies with the help of oil revenues meant that the full effect of these conditions was not felt until the 80's (OECD vurdering av norsk utdanningspolitikk 1989, p 15f). These were then reinforced by the consequences of the liberal credit policy that lead to enormous bank losses. As the 80's progressed, it became clear in Norway that the theory of human capital had failed. The high unemployment in most areas showed that education alone was no guarantee for either work or economic well-being. In spite of the increase in the numbers receiving education in the western world, this no longer

had the same effect as before on the national economy. This makes it legitimate to question the role of education. It also leads to increased opposition to new reforms and to demands for a return to the education system of bygone years. The reasoning is said to be that an ineffective education has left huge numbers, especially the younger generation, unemployed, because they lack qualifications (Neave 1988). Others go even further and accuse the education system of being to blame for the economic and social problems facing the country (Skilbeck 1990, p 19).

House (1991) discusses a similar problem in the USA. He believes that the economic development in the USA since as far back as the 60's has had a great influence on educational policy in a very special way. Due to wars, tax relief, the oil crisis etc, the nation has gone through several economic depressions that have set the nation back. Then the causes of the decline are linked to education, which is criticized as not being good enough. The notion is that a better education will result in a better development for the nation. House doubts whether it is possible to implement the "new" restorative educational theory, and whether it will have the expected effect on the nation's economy.

In a wider context, this is linked with the competition in international trade. In order to be able to be successful there, it is a prerequisite that business and industry can function with top-qualified personnel. If not, the nation will lose in competition with other countries, with the economic, social and political consequences that will have both for the nation and for each individual (Telhaug 1990a, p 106ff, af Trolle 1990). There is an almost universal trend towards new analyses of education as an instrument of national economic policy (Skilbeck 1990, p 21).

The latter part of the 80's was characterized by greater caution as far as investments were concerned, and demands for more efficiency and profit in both the private and public sectors. And it became more usual to compare measures in the private sector with those in the public sector. The demand was raised for the use of market-economy criteria in the evaluation of activities in the public sector, including education (eg Olsen 1990, p 61ff). This brings with it demands for greater efficiency. In 1990, eg, a report was published that concluded that it was possible to reduce the number of teachers in Norway by 15 000, without this having any negative effect on either quality or efficiency. (Robertson & Friestad 1990).³⁵ The report was commissioned by the Norwegian government.

³⁵ Had the proposal been implemented, it would reduce the number of teachers in the Norwegian basic compulsory school by a 1/3, at the same time as it would lead to an enormous centralization.

Problems of control and management

From many quarters there have come claims that the state generally speaking has considerable problems of control and management, even though the term political control is very complex (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 46, Lindensjö 1987). In this context, it is sufficient to point out that often, the state decisions on educational policy do not have the intended effects. There is disagreement as to the reasons for this, and whether it is possible to do anything about it (Lindensjö 1987). It appears that in the field of education, the conditions are particularly difficult for both control and management. How to establish state control of the content and methods in education is a question the OECD countries are very concerned with (Skilbeck 1990, p 23ff). There is a general lack of information about what goes on in this system and what results are achieved. This uncovers a considerable problem of control and insight in the whole education system. The need for such knowledge has become more and more acute, not just in Norway, but in many parts of western Europe. These are also some of the main conclusions from the OECD evaluation of Norwegian education policy in 1987 (OECD vurderinga av norsk utdanningspolitikk 1989). In the widest sense, the most important aspect of this evaluation in my view is, however, not the result, for that was given in advance. The most important was that the evaluation and discussion in the OECD legitimizes taking up the need felt by politicians and administrators for increased insight into the school system, to gain better control of it, and thereby also increase its efficiency. In this lies the feeling that education is too important for it to be left in the power and control of the teachers only. One of the consequences of this is, according to Nisbet (1985, cf Nisbet & Nisbet 1985), that one of the main trends in educational research the last 25 years is an increased centralizing and control of research.

Restorative educational rhetoric

The interest in the quality of education can be seen as a rehabilitation of the theory of human capital, but in a somewhat new attire (Schools and Quality 1989, p 19-22). The problem now and in the future seems to be that business and industry are dependent on personnel with a high level of knowledge in order to function as part of the rapid technological development that is taking place. It is the quality of education of each individual that is at the heart of the matter, not as in the 50's and 60's that as many as possible were to be given education. Hadenius (1990) calls this period "the policy of the third road", with the aim of getting Sweden out of its economic crisis. And the means are greater emphasis on individualization at every level. The idea of equality has now been changed in favour of saying that each pupil shall receive an education suited to his or her

abilities and talents.³⁶ Neave (1988) points out that the social aspects of educational policy, that education is to create greater social and economic equality, have been toned down considerably. Instead, education has to an increasing extent become a subsidiary of the economic policy, in which the needs of the market are more important than the social needs, and in which the state as a solver of problems will in time play a less active role.

Rhetoric or action?

To discuss the rhetoric of educational policy further, as a separate topic, lies outside the aim of this study. When I below, however, raise some questions about the changes, it is more to illustrate the situation surrounding the development- and formulation of educational policy.

The core of the criticism is that the values and principles in the innovative educational policy have led to developments in the wrong direction, and that now there is a strongly articulated need for restoration. This comes especially from the right-wing parties and business and industry. A really key question is to what degree the innovative educational policy has actually been implemented in practical pedagogical work. The answer to that question is neither simple nor obvious. Purely in the organizational field, the reforms have been carried out in accordance with the intentions. The actual structures and regulations have been changed. In the classroom, in the work with the children, the documentation indicates that the changes are far less extensive than the discussion leads us to believe.³⁷ The view taken here is that traditions in both the kindergarten and the school are very stable and resistant to change. The innovative line of thought in education has thus had much less influence in practice there. Some of the main criticism of the school from many quarters in fact concerns the lack of change, and not that it has changed too much (eg *Schools & Quality* 1989, p 17f). In chapter 6 one of the conclusions was that the closer the teachers came to the practical situation, the less attention they paid to plans and intentions agreed in advance. Lundgren (1987, p 44) formulates this in a slightly different way when he characterizes the results of the struggle for reform of education: The closer we get to the teaching, the more stable are the teaching processes. The further away we move from the teaching and look at educational policy and changes in the educational system, the more education appears to have changed. At this level, the innovative as well as the restorative educational policy is to a

³⁶ It is interesting in this connection that the Norwegian National Curriculum for the 9-year basic compulsory school (*Mønsterplan* 1987) places so much emphasis on adapted teaching (teaching adapted to suit the abilities and talents of each individual pupil), than the corresponding version from 1974.

³⁷ Cf chapter 6.

certain extent rhetoric or myths, ways to speak of education. Skilbeck also makes this point as an element in certain of the OECD countries (Skilbeck 1990, p 56, cf also Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986a, p 54). The conditions are a very close parallel to Brunsson's (1989) term hypocrisy. That the changes in the institutional surroundings lead to rapid changes in the way one speaks about the school. The school absorbs these changes into its rhetoric, without them having consequences for the practical work in the institution. This gives the innovative educational rhetoric clear camouflaging functions, it serves to conceal the inequality and the contradictions that is associated with education.

Another important question is what documentation exists to support the claim that education has created the difficulties it is supposed to have done? Such documentation does exist, but very little from Norway or the Nordic countries. The documentation that is used internationally is strongly disputed (eg Lundgren 1987, p 35f, *Schools & Quality* 1989, p 48f, Fullan 1991, p 51f). This indicates that the linking of unemployment, economic decline and an education system that is not good enough could mainly be rhetoric, done at the formulation level, and first and foremost on an ideological basis. Much of the foundation for the evaluation of the school could be found in dissatisfaction with the formulations about what is emphasized and what is done, rather than what education actually does. The situation can be understood to be that the political and institutional environment does not agree with the priorities that have been formulated for education, and criticizes education on that basis.

This illustrates three key phenomena of educational policy, as well as illustrating the reform perspective well. (1) The first is a problem of implementation, that different aspects of the reforms that have been approved are not implemented. This applies in particular to the concrete work with the children. (2) The debate on educational policy has not been particularly concerned with whether the reforms have been put into effect.³⁸ The discussion on educational policy is carried on as if decisions and intentions have been put into practice, and as if education has been changed directly as a result of the political decisions that have been taken. Through such a discussion, the aim is to create the impression that the debate is "true", and on that basis create legitimacy for actions. (3) The consequence of the second point is that the discussion does not involve what really controls education, which kind of factors are decisive in "keeping in place" the stable practice of education.

³⁸ The discussion of the OMI-project is one of the few examples I know of where this is raised and discussed. The background for this being done is rather special, in view of the conflict with the Conservative Party about a lowering of standards.

The development of educational policy and the experimental project with the 6-year-olds

What is happening with the 6-year-olds in Norway is just part of a larger change in educational policy, which is international, and has its basis in trends in economy, trade and the labour market. The experiment with 6-year-olds is being planned towards the end of a period with a tendency towards an innovative educational policy, and implemented in a period with an increasing tendency in the direction of restorative policies.

It was in relation to this innovative rhetoric and kindergarten tradition that the experiment was planned and led centrally for the four years. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration was given the main responsibility for the day-to-day running of the experiment, even though the initiative in the question of 6-year-olds was first taken by the Ministry of Church and Education.³⁹ Public documents from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration have hardly mentioned the work with the 6-year-olds at all. One exception is St. meld. nr. 93 (1980-81). That was prepared by a Labour Party government, and withdrawn by a Conservative Party government. There it says, among other things:

In a number of municipalities, there are kindergartens that only accept 6-year-olds. Some municipalities have sufficient capacity to accommodate virtually all 6-year-olds. In the opinion of the Ministry, it is from an educational and social point of view not a good idea to have kindergartens restricted to one particular age group. Groups with an age mix offer better opportunities for both independence, readiness to help and social training. (St. meld. nr. 93, 1980-81, p 17, my translation).

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration was not against an educational programme for 6-year-olds, or against cooperation kindergarten-school. The Ministry's point of view was that both of these ought to be implemented within the frames of the law on kindergartens. The fact that this Ministry played a more dominating role in the planning and implementation had to do with the early history of the experiment. For a long time it was thought of as an experiment in cooperation kindergarten-school, with the kindergarten as its point of departure. The experiment was to build upon the

³⁹ Cf chapter 3.

educational tradition of the kindergarten, and take notice of the experience gained during the project for 4 to 9-year-olds. At an early stage, the Storting assumed that the law on kindergartens was not to be amended. Although the two ministries cooperated, and even though they had an equal number of representatives in the Executive Committee, it was The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration who to a large extent prepared the project, and that was also where the functions of the secretariat were located. This placed the experiment in more of a kindergarten context than a school context, and it placed the experiment in the kindergarten's institutional environment rather than in the school's. It gave the kindergarten way of thinking, the kindergarten tradition and the trend towards innovative educational policy far better conditions than those of restorative educational policy and the school tradition. And this happened in several ways.

- recruitment, almost all those appointed to the central, regional and local project administration came from the kindergarten.
- the leader responsible for the evaluation was recruited from the environment surrounding nursery school teacher training.
- the nursery school teachers were responsible for most of the work with the 6-year-olds.
- the leaders of the development of all the national curriculum plans in the experiment came from the kindergarten, the nursery school teachers did most of the work on the local plans.
- the teaching material, instructions and course content provided by the central administration had a relatively clear bias in favour of the kindergarten.
- the new restorative political signals were only partly integrated in the project plans.

All this had consequences for the experiment. Those working in the school model feel that they have been given less support and help than those involved in the kindergarten models. The teachers are less positive than the nursery school teachers towards both the national curriculum plan from 1988, the specially prepared booklets for the experiment and the special courses. A consequence of this seems to have been that in many places, the school has not considered this to be its project, but that of the kindergarten. From the kindergarten's standpoint, it was felt that the school had let them down, and was not interested in the 6-year-olds. In a close study, Bagøien (1989) finds this tendency expressed by a whole region involved in the experiment.

This had an effect on the relationship to the world outside the project. The rhetoric of restorative educational policy, which was first heard as early as the mid-70's, had its breakthrough around the middle of the 80's. These were policies that in many ways were more in keeping with the fundamental curriculum codes of the school, and more in keeping with the teaching there

than with the kindergarten tradition. In a very short time, a difference of opinion developed between the foundation for the experiment and the generally accepted contemporary ideas on education. There was also a clash of interests between the kindergarten tradition and the contemporary rhetoric. In other words, the institutional environments represent other values and norms than those on which both the experiment and two of the experimental models tied to kindergarten are based. In this case, there are also real contrasts between what is happening in the kindergarten and the views of the institutional environment. This is an untenable position in the long run. Institutions that cannot document that they are in line with the standpoints that prevail in the institutional environment will experience considerable problems of legitimacy. Only when a system signals that it fulfills the responsibilities that society believes it should have, and in the way in which this should be done, will that system gain support and thereby legitimacy.

The staff involved in the project, therefore, had not much choice, they supported the changes and the new formulations. In that way, the necessary signals were forthcoming, in the form of rhetoric. This explains the changes in the view of the staff on a bias towards subjects. It explains why the nursery school teachers and the teachers had a similar view on most of the issues concerning the aims of the experiment. It explains the change of opinion as regards the national curriculum plans. It explains the positive reception given to the national curriculum plan. It may be one of the reasons for the local curriculum plans with a bias towards school. It may be the reason why the teaching of the three R's has been included, etc. This support is mainly at the formulation level, but it does have some practical effects. The formulations about practice are determined by the institutional contexts. Practice itself is mainly determined by other factors, but the pressure for structure and a bias towards knowledge also influences the activity of the project. The fact that the three R's were taught would indicate that. This also resulted in pressure the other way. When the local curricula and talk were to a large degree directed towards the new ideology, the experiment exaggerated this trend, as I shall return to in the next chapter. The combined effect of all this is increasing pressure in a restorative direction, for a solution for the 6-year-olds located in school and for more work for 6-year-olds with a bias towards school.

Right from the outset, there was a conflict between the kindergarten and the school built into this experiment. The differences of opinion about this led to an experiment in which each of the standpoints was given its own experimental model. Disagreement therefore became an integral part of the project. The relationship between the ideals that were emphasized in the project, and the formulations made outside the experiment have helped to exaggerate these problems. The attitudes to education and educational work in the planning

period and the experimental period represent at the formulation level each of the two educational traditions that the project is meant to unite and try out. This illustrates how difficult the situation for the experiment was from the very start. Because of the way it had been planned, it was in effect impossible to carry out the project as planned. In reality, if it is taken seriously, the idea behind the project is that it is to serve to make a choice between different values in educational policy on a rational basis. That does not work, and there is extensive documentation to prove the point (Cuban 1990, Weiler 1989).

10 Political interference and educational reform

Introduction

When the experiment was approved in the Storting in 1986, the representatives of several political parties and both ministers involved said that the question of an educational programme for 6-year-olds was to be left alone until the experiment had been completed and evaluated. In the autumn of 1986 I contacted all the political parties in the Storting to hear their views on an educational programme for 6-year-olds.¹ Ap, KrF and Sp had "no" standpoint, they were awaiting the results of the experiment. SV gave priority to the kindergarten for 6-year-olds, as they had done when the Storting debated the issue. The standpoints mainly correspond to the principles in the reform perspective, and were in reality the only official answers that were possible without going against the experiment. They are in accordance with the scientific ideal of how the experiment should be carried out. It must be as controlled as possible. Possible events and interference along the way can affect the results, and reduce both the inner and outer validity (Campbell & Stanley 1966). It then becomes impossible to explain what is most likely to have produced a certain result, and the experiment is worthless in scientific terms. The experiment with the 6-year-olds was not a strictly controlled laboratory experiment, but a field experiment with the character of development. However, this does not prevent the ideal of the least possible "superfluous noise" being maintained and implicit in the rhetoric of those involved.

This ideal was not respected. Both nationally and locally, the political environment put forward wishes, made decisions and initiated activity that both directly and indirectly affected the experiment. In this chapter I shall look more closely at and discuss what happened to the issue of the 6-year-olds, especially in the national political arena of formulation during the experimental period. This is a continuation of chapter 3, where I suggested a close connection between the experiment and functions of legitimization. I also study how what happened in this arena affected the work in the experiment. The information on which this chapter is based, is from official documents, my own observations and by way of conversations and interviews.

¹ I received replies from the Labour Party (Ap), the Christian People's Party (KrF), the Centre Party (Sp) and the Socialist Left (SV).

The design of the experiment

IMTEC,² who drew up the plans for the experiment for the Ministries, suggested concentrating the municipalities geographically to four regions with short distances between them. The main arguments for this solution were partly with regard to efficiency and partly with regard to the comparison and evaluation of the results of the experiment. There was a political wish against this, that the municipalities were to be spread as widely as possible across the country. This explains why municipalities from all the country's 19 counties were represented in the experiment, officially in order to achieve greater effect in spreading the knowledge and experience gained from the experimental activity (Prosjektbeskrivelse 1986, p 13-16). In truth, this was just as much a political gesture to earn as much political gain as possible from the experiment. The issue was topical and received a great deal of attention from the media. Almost half the municipalities in the country, from every corner of the land, had announced their interest in being involved in the experiment. There were obvious negative consequences involved in excluding counties or regions from participating. According to the leader for the experiment, this was felt as an extra and unnecessary burden, which counted more than the professional advice.

It is hardly likely that a different selection of municipalities involved in the experiment, or a greater concentration of municipalities, would have altered the characteristic features of the experiment, except that it could have affected the cooperation and exchanging of experience across municipality boundaries. What is most interesting is that even before it had begun, the design of the experiment had become a game of politics. In this case, for political gain, to achieve publicity and through that some form of legitimacy. The plans from IMTEC outlined five different experimental models, in which they wished to experiment with shorter and longer periods both in school and in the kindergarten, in addition to a model based on cooperation.³ The Willoch government asked the Storting to approve an experiment that was based on 12-15 hours per week. The models involving the highest number of hours per week were excluded on the advice of the Ministry of Finance, which maintained that these would prove too costly. This is an example of state control on economic terms which also had ideological consequences:

- It placed the experiment in a definite educational tradition and context. A short-time programme, as in the experiment, has greater academic status. It is also more associated with the school tradition than a full-day kindergarten

² Cf footnote no 21, chapter 3.

³ The short-time provisions were to last up to 15 hours per week, the full-day ones up to 40 hours per week.

(Nafstad 1976, p 20ff, Sande 1984, p 51, Kärby 1986, p 202ff). In chapter 7 I have shown that this is the case also in this experiment.

- The municipalities did not adhere to the centrally given definitions of the various models, but gave names to the local experiments on the basis of other criteria than those that were expected. Among other things, the size of the state grants increased noticeably when the experiment was referred to as a kindergarten experiment and when it lasted more than 15 hours per week. The experiment then became eligible for grants as part of the general arrangements for state compensation for kindergartens, which was not possible in the case of the school.⁴ When in addition, many local branches of the Norwegian Union of Teachers were against the school model, it was favourable not to use the name school model. For these reasons, almost a fifth of the experimental groups were called kindergarten experiments, but were in reality school experiments.
- The decision assumes that those kindergartens with longer opening hours than the experimental time, were to divide the day for the 6-year-olds into two, in which one part was associated with the experiment, but not the remainder.⁵ The kindergartens have been reluctant to do this. It was therefore difficult to know what was involved in the experiment and what was not.⁶
- The opening hours did not solve the problem of supervision for quite a large group of the 6-year-olds, about 57%.

A decision in favour of limited opening hours was rather controversial in the debate that concerned the educational provision for 6-year-olds. The result was that the decision in practice was not respected, since it was against the local interests. The plans for the experiment and its organization were not implemented as they were intended. This is proof of a problem of control. It is an example of how interests and formulations in one arena in some cases have had considerable unintended effects in other arenas. Central political decisions are not automatically accepted and respected. Much of the power to decide in such cases is to be found locally. These examples also show that factors other than those that were planned can affect the activity. It is also strange that no special effort was made to change this situation, apart from the Executive Committee

⁴ An experiment in the kindergarten model or in the combined model with opening hours of 16 hours a week was particularly profitable. For a group of 15 children, this one extra hour per week resulted in 1990 in an increase of NOK 40 000 in the state grant, from NOK 46 000 to NOK 86 000.

⁵ This applies to over half the experimental groups.

⁶ In the autumn of 1986, The State Child and Youth Council presented the French kindergarten model, "École Maternelle", which aroused considerable interest. In France, the kindergarten programme is divided into two. One limited session of no more than 6 hours daily is defined as educational. The rest of the time in the kindergarten and all the routine activities are supervision, and with unqualified staff (cf also Kjörholt et al 1990, p 32ff).

emphasizing the experimental models in even greater detail, which had no effect whatsoever. This was explained officially by the fact that the experiment was decentralized, and therefore the municipalities had a great deal of freedom. Naturally, this creates a great problem for research, but is yet another argument in favour of the research strategy that was used.

The issue is resolved before the experiment has started?

In December 1987, just after the main phase of the experiment had begun, I was informed that the government party (Labour Party) would propose that 6-year-olds should start school.⁷ This was revealed during a private conversation at a conference⁸ on the experiment for the staff in the two departments involved. This was also officially mentioned during the negotiations later in the conference. The standpoint was the result of work on a report to the Storting (St. meld. nr. 43 (1988-89)).⁹ This information was not officially made known to the participants in the experiment until later.

In September 1988 a national conference on the experiment with 6-year-olds was held with staff from all the municipalities involved. Both government ministers were present and made speeches. The minister from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Governmental Administration was most concerned with increasing the capacity of the kindergartens and with the cooperation between kindergarten and school, which she felt to be very valuable. The minister from the Ministry of Church and Education discussed questions concerning continuity between the local environment as a context for growing up and the full-day school. She also said:

It is possible to imagine that the municipalities will be allowed to continue to make these provisions in various forms, but it is also possible that the results of the experiment and economic considerations point in such a direction that the government choose one solution. We will follow the results of the experiments closely, so that we, if possible, can form an opinion on this matter before the experimental period is over. (Kvidal 1988, p 3, my translation).

⁷ This was the second Brundtland government (9.5.1986 - 16.10.1989).

⁸ A conference for the staff of the Ministry of Church and Education and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration on 16 December 1987.

⁹ The publication of the report was postponed several times, and it did not appear until April 1989.

The message to the staff involved in the experiment was to keep up the good work. Both ministers encouraged them and looked forward to the experiences that were to help to determine a future educational programme for 6-year-olds. At the same time as these speeches were being delivered, a rumour spread in the audience that the Labour Party (who were in power) had already chosen to introduce the idea of school for 6-year-olds. The draft party programme in connection with the coming general election in September 1989 was published shortly afterwards (Norsk Skoleblad no 29, 1988). There it says:

When such an extension of the school's opening hours is introduced (the offer of activities over and above the normal lesson time), we will gradually make provisions for the 6-year-olds to be given compulsory teaching combined with the offer of activities which together will comprise a full-day programme in school. (Arbeiderpartiet, Forslag til arbeidsprogram 1990-1993, p 35, my translation).

This was later confirmed at the party's annual conference, and by the government. The Conservative Party passed a similar resolution. The message was clear. The 6-year-olds were placed in school. This was done without the activity in the experiment in any way forming the basis for the decisions, and without questions being asked of the ongoing experiment. It is true to say that Norsk Skoleblad writes after an interview with Mary Kvidal that:

On the basis of what has happened so far in the experiment with 6-year-olds, she believes there are grounds for drawing the conclusion that the 6-year-olds' place is in school. (Norsk Skoleblad no 3, 1989, p 5, my translation).

At that stage, the only material that had been presented from the experiment were reports from the evaluation body. They certainly did not provide a basis for these sorts of conclusions. The nearest they get is to say that the school model is most clear-cut and straightforward, and therefore enjoyed better terms in the experiment than the others. This was a consequence of the opening hours and the definitions of the models determined in the government departments, and not a result of the experimental activity (Haug & Sætre 1988, p 29ff).

In a report to the Storting (St. meld. nr. 43 (1988-89)), the choice of school for 6-year-olds became official government policy. There the government presented some arguments in favour of 6-year-olds gradually being introduced into school. The provisions can then be made compulsory and without any cost

to parents, and without amending the law, and it will free capacity in the kindergarten (St. meld. nr. 43, (1988-89), p 25). At the committee stage of the report, the Conservatives also supported the idea of school for 6-year-olds. Their argument was partly that it would create a greater continuity in the teaching for the children. It would also provide increased competence and greater similarity with other European countries. The Christian People's Party proposed provisions being made by the kindergarten and school in cooperation. The Centre Party voted for an unchanged school starting age, and to evaluate the experiment with 6-year-olds before new standpoints were taken. The Socialist Left maintained their earlier position of starting school at 7, and that 6-year-olds should be in the kindergarten (Innst. S. nr. 267, (1988-89), p 7 - 10).

There are several interesting features in the developments described above. The first is the actual argumentation that is used. The Labour Party arguments are purely practical, but behind them is the consideration of providing increased capacity in the kindergarten, which this party gave such high priority, as we saw in chapter 9. The Conservative arguments are part of the trend towards restorative educational policies. The second is the standpoints in relation to the situation before the experiment. The three non-socialist parties that initiated the experiment have not changed their opinions at all. Neither have the Socialist Left. The Labour Party has altered its point of view, but it is uncertain for what reasons. I shall return to this point. However, the most surprising feature of all is that in the middle of the experimental period, a political document is produced that states what the solution to one of the main problems in the experiment is to be.¹⁰

Varying interest in an educational programme for 6-year-olds

At the same time as the 6-year-olds were "placed" in school, the offer of a educational provisions for 6-year-olds was given lower priority than extending the length of the school day in the lower primary school, than increasing the capacity in the kindergarten and to establish a system of after school care (St. meld. nr. 8 (1987-88), St. meld. nr. 4 (1988-89), St. meld. nr. 43 (1988-89)). There had been a change of minister in the Ministry of Church and Education in 1988.¹¹ Fairly soon after the change, minister Kvidal proposed the idea of

¹⁰ It is also interesting that the proposal conforms to the dominating contemporary educational rhetoric, but for quite different reasons.

¹¹ Mary Kvidal, Labour party (Ap) replaced Kirsti Kolle Grøndahl (Ap) as minister in the Ministry of Church and Education in the summer of 1988.

fairly extensive educational reform, the full-time school,¹² which she also incorporated in the government party's election programme and in the government's list of priorities for educational policy (Monstad & Tønnessen 1989). This did not happen without any opposition. At the Labour Party's annual conference there was strong opposition to this. The proposal to extend the length of the school day was, therefore, not linked to the educational programme, but to family politics, due to the need for extended child care for the youngest school children beyond the compulsory teaching hours. This also indicates that the party was sceptical to making school and the school tradition more dominant in the lives of the children.

On the basis of educational policy in the post-war period, it should come as no surprise that this party made this proposal. This was a proposal for a new step in the direction of greater unity and equality in a unified environment for growing up, as the innovative educational policy has emphasized, and is actually a continuation of the equal opportunity development. The consequence was that an educational programme for 6-year-olds was no longer a matter of such current interest, as when the experiment started. It looked as though the experiment had become superfluous long before it was over. The main issue had been solved politically, and the proposal for a new reform toned down the interest for the experimental activity in connection with the 6-year-olds. The new reform received a great deal of attention, and it dominated the educational debate for a very long time. The Norwegian Union of Teachers encouraged opposition to these proposals, and called for renewed efforts to find other solutions than those that were politically acceptable (Norsk skoleblad no 23, 1989), but they have received little response to this.

After the general election in 1989, there was a change of government, with prime minister Syse leading a non-socialist coalition of the same three parties that in 1986 had initiated the experiment with 6-year-olds.¹³ For a long time they had difficulty in formulating anything about the educational provision for 6-year-olds and about the experiment. In the negotiations to find common ground for the coalition, it was decided that the decision about an educational programme for 6-year-olds should be put before the Storting in a separate report (Steensnæs 1990). The reason for this result was, in my opinion, lack of agreement between the three parties. The parties' standpoints on the issue of 6-year-olds in Innst. S. nr. 267 (1988-89) show this quite clearly (see above). The

¹² From August 1992 the pupils in grade 1-3 have to be at school for 21 hours a week. A full-day school would mean that they would get the opportunity to stay at school up to 40 hours a week.

¹³ The Conservatives, the Christian People's Party and the Centre Party. The government was in power from 16.10.1989 until 3.11.1990.

parties had come just as far on this issue now as they were when the experiment was started.¹⁴ And the experimental activity had not solved any problems for them at all. This government's standpoint suddenly increased the current interest in the experiment yet again. On the other hand, it was now common knowledge that there was a majority in the Storting in favour of lowering the age at which children were to start school.¹⁵

The final phase has come after the experiment was formally completed. The change of government in October 1990 put the Labour Party back in power, and put the clock back to how things were before the change of government in 1989.¹⁶ The more detailed plans will be presented to the Storting in a separate report in 1992. There has also been turbulence round this report. It was originally intended that it was to have been put forward early in 1991. Both the staff in the ministries and in the evaluation body were mobilized in order to get the material ready by the deadline. Since then the report has been postponed time and again and will most probably be published in May or June 1992. The whole procedure has also been moved from the Ministry for Child and Family Affairs¹⁷ to the Ministry of Church, Education and Research. The reform with 6-year-olds is now also formally defined as a matter for the school, and placed in the wider context of other measures for the very youngest schoolchildren.

The cooperation between the experiment and the political administration

The whole time, the secretariat of the experiment has had its offices at the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration. With the exception of the representative for the Advisory Council for the Primary and Lower Secondary School, all the members of the Executive Committee have come from the top layer of the two cooperating departments. For strategic reasons, the departments wished to keep in relatively close contact with the activities of the experiment. They wished to avoid an experiment that had a life of its own, independent of the rest of the workings of the ministries. There were two departments who were cooperating. If the effects of this cooperation were to be really felt in the departments, it was necessary to place the responsibility relatively high up in the hierarchy.

There were no less than five different ministers at the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration during the period of the experiment, and three at the Ministry of Church and Education. Two of these changes were in

¹⁴ Cf chapter 2.

¹⁵ The Conservatives and the Labour Party together represented a majority in the Storting.

¹⁶ This was the third government led by Brundtland (3.11. 1990 -). The Syse coalition broke down because of the negotiations about the European Economic Area (EEA).

¹⁷ The former Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration.

connection with changes of government. According to information received from the members of the Executive Committee, there has been no question of stopping the experiment in connection with any of these changes, but the political standpoints were adjusted or altered from the one government and minister to the other. At every such change, the secretariat and the executive Committee became passive until the minister and government had formulated their policy in the area concerned. This affected the contact between the secretariat and the municipalities and experiment staff. The change of government in 1989 also coincided with the replacement of the project leader in the secretariat, which reduced the external activities of the secretariat even further.¹⁸

The clarification as to what was to happen to the provisions for 6-year-olds in the municipalities involved in the experiment after the project had been completed was a long time coming. The Brundtland government formulated transitional arrangements in 1989. Those municipalities that had organized the experiment using the school model could continue with that arrangement. The kindergartens were to be run as before. It took a very long time before the Syse government gave the go-ahead for these arrangements, not until February 1990. Also in connection with this matter, the working capacity of the secretariat was tied down for quite some time. It also had a detrimental effect on the level of activity in the municipalities and the individual experiments. There were also many municipalities that wanted to introduce provisions for 6-year-olds in school when the experiment was over. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration refused them permission to do so, which led to a great many reactions. This problem was finally solved by revising the law on kindergartens in 1991. The principal can administer a kindergarten, with the liaison committee as the formal management committee. This clears the way for groups of 6-year-olds in school, administered by the school, but formally under the auspices of the law on kindergartens.

This is an example of the fact that the secretariat and the Executive Committee functioned as something far more than a project administration in the narrow sense of the word. They used a lot of their time and capacity on other tasks than ensuring the development of the experiment.¹⁹ In that way, the situation is sharply reminiscent of the description Telhaug (1990b, p 61ff) gives of the tasks of the National Council for Innovation in Education. They had administrative responsibilities vis-à-vis the municipalities, were an advisory body

¹⁸ The replacement of the project leader must be seen in the light of the fact that the issue of the 6-year-olds was no longer as important politically as it had been.

¹⁹ The first project leader also comments on this in his summary of the experience gained from the project (Berg 1991).

for the departments, influenced public opinion through information and planning, were involved in running courses for teachers and developing teaching aids, were involved in research by taking the initiative to commission reports on concrete issues, etc. The project administration in the experiment with 6-year-olds had a double role, with a mixture of responsibilities. They were to administer a free and independent experiment, at the same time as they were helping to develop and implement policies in the same field. On the one hand, this has guaranteed a development in a politically desirable direction. On the other hand, it is very clear that this at times happened at the expense of following up the work of the experiment. It is likely that this also placed restrictions on the actual experimental activity. Whatever the truth of the matter, the staff involved in the school model were more satisfied with the efforts of both the secretariat and the evaluation body than were the staff involved in the other models (Haug & Sætre 1989, p 37). The new political and economic contexts and what was happening in the arena of formulation had consequences for the experiment. The interest in favour of a strong kindergarten bias decreased early in the experiment. The experiment more and more became a matter for the school and the school tradition. Aims were retreated from and adjusted, and this caused reactions among the staff involved in the experiment.

The consequences of unrest in the arena of formulation

From the round of comments on the report "Samarbeid barnehage-skole" (1984), it is clear that the greatest interest was in the question of the localization of the provisions for 6-year-olds. 89% replied that the provisions for the 6-year-olds ought to be linked to the kindergarten, 5% said the 6-year-olds should have some sort of programme in school. The majority standpoints are very close to the recommendations from the working party.²⁰ Neither the criticism of the project for 4 to 9-year-olds nor the more conservative direction in the debate on educational policy received any support at this point. A probable explanation of this result is that at that time, many considered the issue surrounding the 6-year-olds to be more of a kindergarten issue than a matter for the school. And as has been pointed out earlier, the kindergarten is usually seen as independent of the school. A study of the comments reveals a clear tendency in that direction. 61% came from kindergarten management committees, kindergartens, nursery school teachers and local nursery school teacher branches of the Norwegian Union of

²⁰ The working party suggested the experiment, cf chapter 3.

Teachers. 28% came from local education committees and schools.²¹ To what extent these comments and the public political statements are representative of larger groups is uncertain. On the basis of the analysis I made of the debate about 6-year-olds in *Norsk Skoleblad* 1979-1986, there are clear indications that the kindergarten staff "put more pressure" on the bodies asked to give their opinion than others did. It was the nursery school teachers who got involved in the issue, the teachers did not. When the reactions were so unambiguous from large organizations and municipalities, it is at least a sign that the public involvement at this time was more closely connected to the kindergarten than to the school.

School bias on the part of parents and staff

As early on as the pilot phase, parents expected the programme for the 6-year-olds to have an element of teaching that would benefit the children when they started school. Here the parents differed from the staff involved in the experiment. The parents expected the children to do better at school as a result of this experiment (Haug & Sætre 1988, p 59ff). The parents were interested in a programme with a teaching bias, but adapted to suit the level and interests of the 6-year-olds. They showed little interest in a programme in which free play dominated the activities. In the data from 1989, over 90% of the parents were satisfied with the programme. Very few (8%) thought the experiment was too like normal school. Almost a quarter thought the experiment was too like a normal kindergarten. 41% of parents in the kindergarten model thought so, 10% of those in the school model and 22% in the combined model. The impression of the nursery school teachers²² was also that the parents were most concerned with the adult-controlled activity, and the teaching of the three R's. They were far less interested in play and routine activities. All in all, this indicates that the parents were concerned that the 6-year-olds were to receive concrete knowledge and teaching in certain areas. They are more teaching-oriented and school-oriented and less child-oriented and kindergarten-oriented than the staff.

The conflict on the issue of kindergarten or school in general interested the nursery school teachers most. Not until 1989 did any data exist on how the parents who had children in the experiment wanted it to be organized, and then in the form of answers to a questionnaire. The staff were asked about this every year. Parents, teachers and nursery school teachers give very similar answers as

²¹ 12% of the comments were discussed in both the kindergarten management committees and the local education committees, and are included in both percentage figures. 23% of the comments came from central organizations, colleges and state representatives in the counties.

²² Only the answers from the nursery school teachers have been included. It is they who know the children and the parents best.

to how they would like a future provision for 6-year-olds to be organized. All three groups moved away from a programme located solely in the kindergarten, very few gave that any priority. A large majority wanted some link with the school. It could be some form of cooperation between kindergarten and school, or that the school has sole responsibility. Those who were working in the school model experienced greater interest for the project from bodies outside the experiment, than the staff in the other models (Haug 1991, p 89-92).

Those groups that were asked, had different views both on the organization and partly on the content than had been apparent from the preparatory work, in the round of comments and in the initial stages of the debate. The development is fairly unambiguously in favour of the school. Even so, the nursery school teachers in general think that the kindergarten is able to make satisfactory provisions for 6-year-olds. When they answer otherwise, it is more a consequence of the debate on knowledge and other political signals. There it is fairly obvious that the kindergarten alone is not a realistic alternative, which also coincides with the wishes of the parents. The experiment took place in the context of a trend towards restorative educational policies. There the importance was strongly emphasized of increased efforts as far as formal learning was concerned. It is claimed that Norwegian children do not know enough. At the same time, it is pointed out how important school is for children. When most parents receive information to the effect that children will do better if they go to school, then it will be paramount for the parents that their children go to school. There they will receive more of the knowledge "they need". The debate has made it clear and emphasized that the school can offer a programme that the kindergarten is not able to do alone. When several political parties choose a policy of school for 6-year-olds, and the government do likewise early in the experiment, this has a signal effect to the whole of the institutional environment and to the experiment that the solution lies in school. There was pressure to get the 6-year-olds into school, and this created the foundation for public opinion to say that there should be an educational programme for 6-year-olds in school. The result has been that the school model has enjoyed more support from outside than the other two experimental models. This model comes very close to the intentions in the current discussion on educational policy. In this there lies a demand to all the experimental models that they must place greater emphasis on a more structured content with a clear bias in favour of school. Therefore, most parents choose a programme located in school or in cooperation between kindergarten and school. The choice of the parents shows that they see a connection between institution and content.

Adjusting and retreating from aims

The debate on knowledge and the initiatives in educational policy led to an adjusting and retreating from the aims of the experiment. Wildavsky (1987, p 41ff) believes this is the result when the aims of reforms and measures are formulated far more ambitiously than there is a realistic basis for. When the aims of a plan are then not achieved, it is not unusual to alter the aims and formulate them so they become achievable. In Brunsson's (1989) terms, this is an example of how practice determines the formulations about practice.²³

When the experiment started, the main issue was the localization of an educational programme for 6-year-olds. The key issue, the centre of conflict, was school or kindergarten. After the two biggest political parties came out in favour of 6-year-olds starting school, the Executive Committee and the secretariat signalled that the main emphasis of the experiment was to develop an educational programme for the 6-year-olds, which could be used regardless of which model was chosen. The main thing was to develop the educational activities on the basis of the national curriculum plan. At a meeting of the reference group, one of the members of the Executive Committee even claimed that the question of localization had never been important, and that the process of developing a curriculum had always been far more essential. After having been contradicted directly, he withdrew his standpoint. Attention was thus transferred from the organizational to the educational. Both were formulated in the plans for the experiment. This tendency was further strengthened by the way the experiment was planned. The plan was to focus more on the actual educational content when the question of how to organize the experiment had been settled. And this coincided in time with the new political signals. In an article, the project leader claimed:

There has been a danger that the debate about who is to have responsibility for the 6-year-olds and where they are to be placed has overshadowed the question of the content of the educational programme and how it is to be implemented. (Hauge 1989, p 26, my translation).

The standpoints on the relationship between content and organization are actually fairly complex and have been used in different ways.²⁴ Some have wanted the 6-year-olds to be in a certain institution because that would

²³ Cf chapter 2.

²⁴ Cf chapter 3.

guarantee a certain content. That is why the Socialist Left want the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten and the Conservatives want them in school. They see content and institution as parts of the same whole. The opposite notion, that as long as the plans and the arrangements are good enough, they can be implemented "anywhere" and by "anybody" with certain qualifications and competence, is also to be found in the political documents relating to the matter. I interpret for instance, the comments from the standing Committee on Social Affairs in Innst. S. nr. 263 (1984-85)²⁵ in this way. The question of the content is thus reduced to a technical rational matter, determined by plans and the efforts of the participants, and not by which institution the offer is associated with. This expresses a rational understanding of the processes of change and renewal in education. It is this latter understanding that took over more and more of the discussion about the experiment. In earlier chapters, I have shown that the realities of the experiment were different. It was other factors that determined the educational content of the work.

The experiment administration also toned down the demand for work in mixed age groups, if this proved to be difficult to organize, which especially was the case in the school model and in fringe areas. This is a clear case of retreating from an aim, in the sense defined by Wildavsky (1987, p 41ff). The signal is unexpected, especially against the background of the preparatory work for the experiment, where the key elements were mixed age groups and cooperation kindergarten-school. In reality, this meant that the school avoided establishing any form of cooperation with the kindergarten as part of the experiment. What came in its place was to develop the work with the 6-year-olds. The practical arguments were neither the only nor the most important background for this retreat. It is tempting to believe that this change of priorities was also a result of the change of opinion as to the value of mixed age groups in education and upbringing. Mixed age groups have never received much mention, support or been an aim in the policies of restorative education, only in the innovative. A change in the basis of ideologies is therefore a contributing factor to the strategic retreat.

The effect on the staff

What was happening in the arena of educational policy surprised many, and the changed role of the experiment gave rise to many and often strong reactions along the way from the staff involved. It helped to reduce the belief that the evaluation of the experiment and the experiment itself could have any real

²⁵ This document underlines that the kindergarten tradition shall be the basis for the educational programme, irrespective of localization.

significance when the politicians were to decide where the provisions were to be located. Less than half believed that the results of the evaluation would have very great/great significance in determining where the provisions for the 6-year-olds were to be located. A higher percentage of those working in the school model (75%) thought the evaluation would have some say in the matter. It was that model that enjoyed most political support at the time the question was asked. Another similar indication is the interest shown in our data. For the nursery school teachers, the percentage of those who replied to the questionnaire went down year by year, but not in the school model.

What was going on centrally has certainly caused reactions, but it does not appear to have affected either the work or the benefit the participants have had to any great extent. This extract from an interview with one of the staff involved in the experiment can serve to illustrate the situation:

It is a bit frustrating to hear that you're involved in an experiment that's supposed to provide an answer as to where the 6-year-olds are to be, what to do with them, and then all the political parties suddenly produce the answer, sort of. It has a rather frustrating effect, I think. It's sort of a bit irritating.

You feel as if you're a bit important when you know you're part of an experiment where the result is going to be evaluated for something or other. If the right answer comes along long before you've finished doing the sum, then it's not very exciting. But I don't think it's had any effect on the work we do every day. That's exciting enough in itself, with the kids. How he or she'll get on when they go into the first grade, and so on. (My translation).

Educational reform and the experiment with 6-year-olds

The experiment with 6-year-olds was a link in a reform strategy in which the Storting was to discuss whether they should continue with a programme of major reform on the basis of the experience gained from the experiment. As of today I have no official knowledge of what the reform in connection with an educational programme for 6-year-olds will result in. The government has not yet sent any concrete proposal to the Storting.²⁶ This will be done in the spring of 1992. As far as I know today, the main proposal will be that the 6-year-olds

²⁶ On the information about the reform, cf footnote no 11, chapter 1.

are to start school, on the condition that satisfactory supervision can be arranged for them there. The number of lessons per week is to be increased for the three lowest grades.²⁷ A sufficiently large number of places offering leisuretime supervision at school are to be provided. Then the 6-year-olds are to be transferred to school. The national curriculum plan from the experiment is considered to be a good point of departure for developing the further work on methods and content.

The issue has been solved as a direct continuation of the activity of the experiment. It would appear that the reform strategy that was planned at the time the experiment was initiated has been followed. After the experiment has been formally evaluated and the government have analyzed the matter carefully, a report will be presented to the Storting with a clear recommendation to choose one of the models from the experiment. The fact that the completion of the experiment and the solution of the issue concerning an educational programme for 6-year-olds come at the same time, does not necessarily mean that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the two. This must be studied more closely.

The result of the analysis in chapter 3 was that the experiment with the 6-year-olds reflected five stated problems:

- to develop the kindergarten
- to find alternatives to a kindergarten that functioned badly
- to improve the cooperation kindergarten-school
- to prepare a lowering of the starting age for a qualitative better school
- to develop an educational programme for the 6-year-olds

The experiment presented three alternative solutions to these five problems, in the form of three experimental conditions:

- the 6-year-olds in the kindergarten
- the 6-year-olds in school
- the 6-year-olds in combination between kindergarten and school

The demand was made of all of these models that they should work on the basis of the kindergarten tradition. All the models were to include some form of cooperation between the kindergarten and the school, and all the models were to work with mixed age groups. Finally, there were many participants in various arenas, with different understandings of the problem and different ideas as to the solution. The situation was confused and complex.

Which of the above problems will be solved by the reform with the 6-year-olds is not easy to say. In fact, it is far easier to point to the questions that have not been resolved.

²⁷ The school week for first-grade pupils today consists of 21 lessons per week. Very many children need supervision for far longer.

The reform has not led to any solution of what was the point of the whole experimental project, if we look back at the mandate of the working party that produced the report "Samarbeid barnehage - skole", (1984). The task then was to improve the cooperation between kindergarten and school. The experiment has shown that when the 6-year-olds are part of the school model, there is hardly any cooperation with the kindergarten. The explanation for this has little to do with the will of the staff in school, and much more with structural conditions and tradition. No real change in this situation can therefore be expected of its own accord. The problem has now been transferred one step lower, the problem of cooperation between the kindergarten and the school will now apply to the 5-year-old age group.

The proposal can hardly be said to benefit the development of the kindergarten for the 6-year-olds. On the other hand, the choice of the school as the solution for the 6-year-olds is to a great extent based on the argument that it will improve the situation in the kindergarten. It makes available a considerable number of places, and reduces the demand. One of the most important changes in this reform may be that it will contribute to the solution of a problem that was paid little attention to when the experiment started, namely an increase in capacity in the kindergarten. Of course the problem was there, but it was not linked to the issue of provisions for 6-year-olds in this way. This connection also existed long before the experiment was completed and evaluated.

The reform has increased the extent of the school. On the condition that more school also helps to raise the standard of the work in school, having the 6-year-olds in school will represent a certain improvement in quality. There is no extensive documentation that this is the case, even though the teachers who have worked with 7-year-olds who have gone through the experimental programme especially in school, experience them as more ready for school, in the sense of being better prepared to receive teaching (Presthus 1991). The government party does not use this argument to defend its choice either. Other political parties do. The same solution presents itself on the basis of different argumentation.

The reform has also given the school completely new responsibilities, the organization of leisuretime supervision at school. The supervision of 6-year-olds, and the youngest children in school was not a key issue in the experiment when it started. As I have pointed out, the Ministry of Finance excluded this angle of the experiment on financial grounds. It is true that the evaluation of the experiment produced confirmation of official statistics in this field, that a considerable number of the 6-year-olds require supervision over and above 12-15 hours per week. On the other hand, the supervision of schoolchildren is considered to be a social issue that it is important to find an early solution to, and this has been an established problem long before the experiment.

The centrally prepared national curriculum plan is considered to be a useful instrument in the further work on content and methods.²⁸ The plan is also accompanied by a text with instructions as to how it is to be used (Langset 1991). In this handbook, there is not a word about the main difficulty with the plan in the experiment. The problems associated with the function of national and local curriculum plans that were revealed in the experiment are not stressed, nor even mentioned here. The reform perspective continues on its way?.

Let me summarize all this: The reform intends to

- increase capacity in the kindergarten
- increase the length of compulsory schooling
- establish some form of supervision for children in grades 1-3, organized in school
- continue the work with the content and methods of the experiment with 6-year-olds, in the concrete form given in the national curriculum plan.

Two of these areas were a part of the experiment. It concerns the lowering of the school starting age. The real decision about the lowering of the school starting age was taken long before the experiment was completed and evaluated. The experiment has also made contributions to the content and methods in the reform, in so far as the national curriculum plan is to be continued. I have disputed the fact that the curriculum plan actually is "a product" of the experiment. As I have also pointed out, the relationship between the national curriculum plan and the experiment is weak. Neither was the plan used in the experiment in the way intended.²⁹ Experience has shown that if it is to have more than a symbolic function, the plan requires a series of supporting measures in the form of instruction, amendments to state regulations and so on.

According to the report that will be given to the Storting, the experiment has contributed to solving practical-pedagogical problems and led to educational developments and increased competence both in the kindergarten and the school. This is a very difficult matter to comment on. The issue is vague, and more time should be allowed before effects possibly will reveal themselves.³⁰ In the analyses of the educational activity, I stated that no particular changes had taken place in the fundamental pattern of practice in the experimental groups. However, there are signs that contradict this. I mention certain areas. (1) Most of those working in the experiment were satisfied, thought they had learnt a great deal and felt that they had changed both their notions and way of working.

²⁸ This is said from government about the 4th edition of the national curriculum plan: *Pedagogisk tilbud til 6-åringer. Veiledende Rammepplan, 1990.*

²⁹ Cf chapter 6.

³⁰ Cf eg Sabatier (1986a) who claims it can take over ten years before significant changes make themselves felt.

In the context of the reform, the question is how this possible increased competence can also be made to benefit others. (2) It has been fairly comprehensively confirmed that the kindergarten and the school each represents its own individual tradition, and that the two groups of teachers have different competence. This has also been strongly emphasized by the government in the proposed reform, which also intends to take this into account. How and to what extent is uncertain. And whether this will succeed depends entirely on the strategy chosen. (3) The experiment has led to the production of a large amount of written material concerning work with the 6-year-olds. This varies from simple practical measures and good advice to some of the more theoretical reports from the evaluation body. To what extent this material can be of use is not clear. Experience so far is not wholly positive. There are many examples of state bodies that were to work on the issue of an educational programme for 6-year-olds without making use of the experience gained from the experiment while it was in progress.³¹ (4) The experiment became an arena for identifying problems that could arise in connection with an educational programme for 6-year-olds. Examples are the problem of supervision, how to organize the school day, tariff agreements, who was to work with the 6-year-olds, etc. Few of these questions have been solved in the experiment, but their existence as problems is perhaps accepted more now than when the experiment started. (5) Representatives of the Norwegian Union of Teachers, the division for nursery school teachers, have stated that the experiment has given new impetus to the nursery school teachers. They have renewed their efforts to work for the kindergarten and show that it has important qualities also for 6-year-olds. Whether this is the case is uncertain. And if it is, the explanation may just as well be that this is the result of a set of factors, in which the demands for more structured work, the discussion on educational policy and the experiment involving the 6-year-olds have all had a combined effect.

The critical point in connection with the development that has taken place in the experiment is the continuation, how will the experience gained benefit the reform. No systematic strategy has been established for this. The answer will not be clear until the new reform has begun to take effect, but it is without doubt an important issue.

The conclusion of all this is that only to a small degree does the reform address the problems that were most important when the experiment was planned and initiated. If it is implemented in accordance with the proposals that I am aware of, the reform will certainly solve problems that were mentioned in the debate at the time, but which were not the key issues. Vice versa, the

³¹ This applies eg several of the expert advisory committees and colleges of education that were planning to start additional courses to qualify teachers in this particular field.

experiment has only to a small degree contributed to solutions in the proposed reform. In other words, the background for the choices that have been made is not to be found in the experience gained from the experiment. Some of the recommendations made in the reform have been made in spite of the experience gained in the experiment. This applies in particular to the use of the national curriculum plan. Those results have been quietly ignored.³² The most important area with direct relationships between the experiment and the reform are the vague statements to the effect that pedagogical experience has been gained and development work carried out that will benefit the new reform. To what extent this will be the case is, as I have said already, too early to know anything about. I shall come back below to what appears to have had most to say for the content of the new reform, but without discussing it in detail, since this in itself forms the basis of a new and comprehensive research topic on which I have already started.

In the question of the connection between the experiment and the reform, one aspect of the role of the evaluation is important. Through innumerable comments during the experimental period, and in the final report, I have, on the basis of a scientific evaluation, claimed that the experiment could not directly provide answers to the most important political questions, among others where the educational programme for the 6-year-olds should be located.³³ This legitimizes separating the link between the experiment and the reform, as has happened in reality. According to experiences with earlier reforms, the result would not have been any different, had the signals from the evaluation body been different.³⁴

The background to political action

The experiment was a way of solving a political problem. It can be looked upon in two ways. There was a desire to use scientific methods to solve political disagreement and to get help in choosing priorities between different alternatives that represented different values, with a view to carrying out concrete actions at a later stage. This is the understanding in the reform perspective, which is also probably the general public understanding of experimental and reform activity. The result so far can, therefore, be interpreted as proof of a relatively unsuccess-

³² The point is made in the proposal put before the Storting, but without comment. The plan is considered to be a useful instrument.

³³ This was one of the questions minister Sandmann in the Ministry of Child and Family Affairs was concerned about, when I delivered my final report. He appeared to be satisfied with my point of view.

³⁴ Cf chapter 2.

ful experiment, but a process which has produced effective results in the form of a proposal for a new reform, which is also referred to as the most comprehensive in the whole postwar period (Telhaug 1991).

The political activity in and around the experiment with the 6-year-olds, the missing use of the experiences gained in the experiment and the direction of the new reform must be seen in the light of the traditions and regulations that apply in the arena of political formulation. In chapter 2, I presented Brunsson's (1989, p 13ff) distinction between an organization of action and a political organization, and decided to use the terms arena of realization and arena of formulation. One of the few purely political systems and formulation systems in existence is the Storting and the government. The main purpose of political institutions is to be able to document and deal with disagreement, inequality, inconsistency and a multitude of ideologies and norms. The basis for this is that there exist in the society, in the institutional environment, corresponding differences of opinion, which the political institution must reflect and deal with in order to win support and legitimacy. The most important products of the activity in such institutions are ideologies in the form of talk and resolutions. It is such situations that "hypocrisy" is born:

... hypocrisy is a fundamental type of behaviour in the political organization: to talk in a way that satisfies one demand, to decide in a way that satisfies another, and to supply products in a way that satisfies a third. (Brunsson 1989, p 27).

Based on Brunsson's theories, the issue can be interpreted to mean that there was a wish to use the experiment to demonstrate that the political arena was able to deal with disagreement and multiple demands, in order to win support and legitimacy from the institutional environment. In that way, experiments and reforms are stages in influencing opinion, signals of the will and ability to change which in itself wins support, without any concrete change or action having taken place.

Below I discuss in this perspective, the activity that has taken place in the national political arenas of formulation, both during the experiment and in connection with making use of the experience gained from the experiment. In the political organization, both talk and resolutions follow certain patterns. Below I will point out three such patterns that can be identified in the experiment. There is a "political pattern", "routine solutions" and "garbage

can".³⁵ These patterns explain how the different standpoints and actions originated. At the same time, I will also mention what functions the result of these processes had.

The political pattern

In one perspective, eg in a government or a committee, the actors have been a fairly stable and clear-cut group with relatively distinct aims and the alternative courses of action have been relatively clearly defined. This situation is well suited for mastering disagreement by way of negotiations, compromise or tactics, a "political model" (Allison 1971, p 67ff, cf also chapter 2). On several occasions, I have pointed to such "political" solutions of problems and disagreement, eg the use of the national curriculum plan.

In this context, I will stress that the experiment itself is a political compromise in the government, where different points of view are linked in what appears to be a single unified solution. The experiment was a way of resolving the political disagreements between the parties through negotiations. The disagreement was founded on different priorities of values, where one of the key questions was at what age a child should enter into structured learning processes, an issue on which there were differing opinions also in society at large. The expectations this created in the institutional environment were that the experiment with the 6-year-olds was intended to provide knowledge on which to make a choice between these values. Weiler (1990, p 64) refers to a similar experiment with the comprehensive school in West Germany. The experiment was constructed so as to test the two main standpoints in the issue. The result was that both sides' points of view were confirmed through the activity in the experiment. This led to the conclusion that when disagreement exists as to the aims of an evaluation, the result will at best be unsatisfactory as a basis for making decisions, and at worst will be the source of further conflict. This is not particularly suitable as the subject of scientific testing. By being initiated, the experiment solved a problem in the political arena, but it also laid the foundation for continuing unrest on the issue.

The Labour Party has been involved in and is in favour of both the experiment, the restorative educational policy with emphasis on developing competence and knowledge, but in quite different ways than the other political parties. In its proposed solutions, this party has been concerned with creating greater unity in the environment in which children in the age groups 4 to 5-9 to 10 grow up. Although there has been disagreement in the party on this question.

³⁵ Cf chapter 2.

The innovative tendency is still present.³⁶ Just as important is the link with the increasing of capacity in the kindergarten, which is a form of political compromise. Priority was given to increasing the number of kindergartens being built and to achieving the ambitious target of meeting the demand completely before the year 2000. And the 6-year-olds were pawns in that game. With a whole year off for mothers in maternity leave and with the 6-year-olds in school, the target of kindergarten places for all who want them becomes far easier to reach. It reduces the demand for kindergarten places by two-sevenths, and that releases capacity to the equivalent of 70% of one year group. In other words, demand is reduced by over a third without building a single new kindergarten. Two demands were made of the school to allow the 6-year-olds to be admitted. One of the preconditions was the full-day school, with a properly organized school age child care, due to the need for such supervision. The other precondition was that the pedagogy of the kindergarten was to form the basis of the activity with the 6-year-olds in school. Thus it would appear that this party has negotiated internally and arrived at a solution which they have then worked towards, and which is not essentially any different from the party's educational policy in recent years. In 1990-91 it was possible in the political arena to couple these issues, and the party exploited this opportunity.

The experiment worked well as a political solution to solve problems in the arena of formulation.³⁷ The experiment as an attempt to clear up the substantial problem of an educational programme for 6-year-olds was less clear. The term experiment was obscure and the notions of what it was to be used for were vague. On the one hand, there were expectations of something in the direction of a scientific experiment, with a comparison of alternatives and choice on the basis of which gave the best result. Aims were formulated about development work and increasing competence. Finally, the project secretariat was to function as a sort of commission, and explain and plan the new arrangements. All this is a situation reminiscent of the terms relating to the National Council for Innovation in Education (Telhaug & Haugaløkken 1984, p 62ff). The ambivalence in relation to the experimental activity I interpret as meaning that politics

³⁶ This is apparent eg in the party's comments on the proposal to increase the time at school for the first three grades in the primary school. It says there, that at the beginner level, the children should learn skills, but not necessarily separated into special subjects. There should be better opportunities to see everything in the context of a whole (Innst. S. nr. 267 (1988-89), p 7). This is the consequence of the decision at the party's annual conference in 1989 to link the arrangements for the leisuretime supervision in school to the family sector rather than the educational sector, for fear of increasing the extent of school (see below). This message is also underlined in the formulations in the new report to the Storting about the 6-year-olds.

³⁷ I return to this point.

does not allow results from science or research, or for that matter any sort of result a priori to have decisive influence on an issue. The consequence was that the issue of the 6-year-olds was not resolved, with the resulting political activity in relation to the experiment.

Routine solutions

The ways of solving the problems can also be interpreted as routine solutions. Action is taken on the basis of an established practice with careful reformulations and minute amendments compared with what has usually been done. This is repeated in several areas. The pattern of political intervention can be found in the tradition that has developed round Norwegian educational experiments earlier. This appears to me to be the way educational experiments are carried out in Norway. This is particularly obvious in much of the work of the National Council for Innovation in Education, for instance until the law on the 9-year basic compulsory school was passed in 1969. Then the Storting regularly discussed the activity of the Council and made clear what they considered to be useful and not useful in the experiments while they were in progress (Telhaug 1970, p 73ff, p 110ff, p 120ff). In this way, the politicians conveyed the impression of being in charge and having control over the general direction of the research activity, and they demonstrated to the institutional environment that they had the ability to take action.

Those parties that had initiated the experiment, and done so because they disagreed about how to solve the issue, could still not agree when the experiment was completed. They have the same standpoints now as they had then. It is true that the experiment led to a postponement, so that they did not have to make a final decision. And when they again came to power towards the end of the experiment, they were back to square one. It was the concrete political situation and the longterm political orientations that determined the new educational reform. The political process that took place parallel to the experiment was strongly influenced by the parties' general policies on the kindergarten and on education, as they had been maintained for a long time. The party tradition in the area dominates, but in interaction with the political, economic and social conditions in society in the period during which the experiment was being carried out. As far as I can see today, the experiment has not affected the parties' principle choices of values and their fundamental attitudes towards the kindergarten and education in general.

The so-called "maturity theory", that the experiment has postponed a decision and led to changes in political standpoint, is in fact not likely. On the contrary, the experiment and the institutional environments were probably more influenced by events in the political arena, than the other way round. Those who were involved in the experiment and the parents of the 6-year-olds appear to be those

who have been most influenced by what happened in the experiment. According to the data I have collected, it is these two groups who show the greatest changes in standpoint on the issue. The nursery school teachers in the Norwegian Union of Teachers and the Norwegian Union of Teachers have formally speaking not altered their stance on the question of a lowering of the school starting age. This is clear eg from resolutions at their national congress and from comments on the proposed amendments to the law on kindergartens, put forward in Ot. prp. nr. 57 (1990-91).³⁸ Even so, the reality is slightly different. The nursery school teachers' division accepts homogeneous groups of 6-year-olds in schools, but administered as kindergartens with nursery school teachers as principals. This is an adjustment and a gentle approach towards placing 6-year-olds directly into school. The experiment and all that has happened in its wake has served to put pressure for change on the institutional environment. When the experiment was first initiated, expectations were created of a further solution of the matter. In this way, the experiment may have had an agenda function (cf eg Edelman 1988). Since the experiment served to put the issue on the agenda, it may have been a force in itself towards finding a solution to the question. The institutional environment now makes demands on the political environment, which correspond very closely to the viewpoints already present in the political arena early in the experiment, or which may perhaps have been there before the experiment began.

In my evaluation, the fact that opinion is now in favour of making provisions in school for 6-year-olds is in any case a result of combinations of factors, in which the discussion about restorative educational policy and the political initiatives on school for 6-year-olds have been most decisive. The reasons are not to be found in the experiment alone. In addition, the large institutions with their status and prestige come out in favour of the school model. The representatives from kindergarten have not played any particular role in the debate on education. Kindergarten has not been seen as a factor in the context of educational policy or as a purveyor of knowledge, in the same way as school has been. There are the odd exceptions, but they have not had any special affect publicly so far (eg Bjørkevold 1989). It may be that the experiment with 6-year-olds has made it easier to accept the solution that has been chosen. The fact that I am not sure about this, is first and foremost due to the contemporary debate on education. This has clearly targeted the chosen solution, and in any case strengthens the function of the experiment in this field. Experience from the continuation of the earlier experiments with 6-year-olds, at the end of the 60's

³⁸ Cf the resolution §8.6 in Program of Educational Policy (Skolepolitisk program) approved at the national congress and the letter on this matter, dated 25 April 1991 to the Ministry of Child and Family Affairs (Norsk lærerlag, brev 25 april 1991).

and the beginning of the 70's, supports this conclusion. Then the context was different, and strongly biased in favour of the kindergarten. Then it was almost unthinkable that a school solution could have been chosen. Nor did that happen.

"Garbage can"

Not everything that happened can easily be accommodated in "political" patterns or "routine solutions". The data do not provide a good enough basis to study what really happened in detail. Nor do they provide a basis for drawing any definite conclusions. The information I possess about the total situation and development, from the time the experiment was planned and up to the time when the reform has been announced, has features that are reminiscent of a "garbage can" process (Cohen, March & Olsen 1976, cf chapter 2).

The garbage can process, as it has been observed, is one in which problems, solutions and participants move from one choice opportunity to another in such a way that the nature of the choice, the time it takes, and the problems it solves all depend on a relatively complicated intermeshing of the mix of choices available at any one time, the mix of problems that have access to the organization, the mix of solutions looking for problems, and the outside demands on the decision makers. (Cohen, March & Olsen 1976, p 36).

During the course of these years the political situation was rather complicated. Four governments were in the arena, and in the one department there were further changes of minister. The trade unions were very active. There was disagreement about the issue of 6-year-olds in more than one respect. The actors had different views as to what comprised the problems of the 6-year-olds, which problems were to be solved and which solutions might be relevant. There were many participants in the processes, in different arenas, who argued in different ways and introduced different solutions and problems, dependent on who was inside or outside the arena of decision.³⁹ Behind the reform lies a comprehensive and complex process. Compared to the point of departure, what would appear to the result is surprising. On the one hand, it is in fact still not clear what the proposal will mean in detail. Secondly, the issue of cooperation between kindergarten and school has now been used to argue for increased

³⁹ This is clear from the discussions in chapter 3, and also follows as a consequence of the standpoints in the more general context of educational policy from chapters 9 and 10.

capacity in the kindergarten and to extend the length of compulsory schooling, both in the number of years and the number of lessons per week. And what was considered to be the official solution originally, namely to increase the cooperation between kindergarten and school, has not been linked to any problem at all.

Legitimization

With the situation as it was in the government when the experiment was initiated, it was not politically possible to pass a resolution on a reform, at the same time as strong signals were given from the same quarters that this was desirable. A lack of political ability to act resulted, therefore, in an experiment that gave the impression of political strength. They gained the political benefit that lies in initiating an experiment (Brunsson 1990a). This gives the experiment a strong legitimizing function on two levels. Firstly, as Weiler (1989) claims, it will give the state legitimacy, by demonstrating that the state can control differences of opinion and solve problems.⁴⁰ In his opinion, the interest is then linked more to passing resolutions in favour of experiments and reforms rather than in implementing them. It is the actual decision itself about experiments and reforms that provides the legitimizing benefit, and not the implementation. That takes place in other arenas and is organized and controlled by other institutions. Brunsson (1989, p 188ff) and Brunsson & Olsen (1990b) also stress this when they claim that experiments and reforms are produced in the world of ideas and belong there, rather than in the practical world. Pincus (1974, p 125) exaggerates the point when he maintains that the school is often more interested in the language of reforms than in the complex work involved in putting a reform into practice. In an analysis of trends in the development of curricula in the OECD countries, Skilbeck (1990, p 11) draws a conclusion along the same lines: "We must not confuse the sometimes fervid declamations in the public arena with the quieter and more orderly transformations that are occurring in the schools". It gives reforms strong ideological functions, both as motivation, legitimization and control, (Czerniawska-Joerges 1988, p 183ff), at the same time as they first and foremost are of a symbolic nature. The result can be, that neither the experiment nor the reform have any consequence in practice, but rather for the world of ideas, through rapid changes of formulations that give the system benefits from the institutional environment. This can be said to be the situation, as far as the relationship between the experiment and the reform is concerned.

⁴⁰ Cf chapter 3.

Secondly, the experiment will also legitimize the reform, by linking it to the notion of a piece of scientific work. In education, this legitimization takes place in reforms in which the procedure is essential, in other words detailed planning and reports. Expertise is vital. To base the reform on scientifically prepared and evaluated experiments is important symbolically. The experiment has in that context the highest scientific status of any measure. It guarantees rationality and objectivity, and thus gives a special legitimacy to the political process. The experiment tests various alternatives, and therefore camouflages the different viewpoints on principles and any conflicts these might happen to arouse, and thus contributes to a notion that the political control is working (cf eg Weiler 1985, p 187). The experiment as the background to a reform maintains the fundamental idea that the state is genuinely positive to reform, even though the state has difficulty in creating reforms.

In the last two proposals to the Storting in matters relating to the 6-year-olds, reference has been made to the experiment.⁴¹ The fact that there is no direct connection, either positive or negative, between the experiment, the problems or the solutions chosen, is not mentioned at all. In this way, the experiment is linked to the planned reform in an arena of formulation, but without the formulations about the one necessarily being connected to the formulations about the other or with the realizations. The fact that there has been an experiment in this field gives the policy far greater legitimacy from the institutional environment than it would otherwise have had. This illustrates very clearly how the outside expectations about links between experiment and reform are fulfilled on the formulation level. What really lies behind all this and controls the actual policy, is quite a different matter. The function of the experiment is then, at the political level, first and foremost to legitimize the reform that is now being planned and which will soon receive political approval.

Summary part III, Educational policy and the experiment

Part 3 concerns what happened on educational policy in the institutional environment and in the national political arena during and immediately after the experiment. This is a continuation of chapter 3, but at a different level of description. The reason for giving this topic a prominent place is the significance the societal context has for the formulation of and realization of education.

⁴¹ This concerns Ot. prp. nr 57 (1990-91) and the report to the Storting on the reform with 6-year-olds that has yet to be published.

The enormous increase in investment in education by the state, especially in the 50's and 60's, can among other things be traced back to the human capital theory, even though this is controversial. There, education is seen as an economic investment. Education will lead to increased welfare for the individual and for the nation. Therefore it became an aim to allow everyone an equal right to education and as much education as possible. In this period most of Norwegian education was reformed both judicially, economically and ideologically. Telhaug (1990a) refers to the trend in educational policy from this period and up to the mid-80's as innovative. It was strongly influenced by progressive educational thinking, and was a reaction against the subject bias and the strong teacher control. It emphasized the greatest possible equality, uniformity and coherence in the education system. To a certain extent, the school was given responsibility for other tasks than just teaching subjects and skills. Increased attention was paid to the formation of attitudes, joint responsibility and cooperation. The innovative pedagogy has placed relatively little emphasis on formal assessment and examinations.

Criticism of this direction in educational policy falls into two periods. The first is the 70's; as early as the end of this decade, it became clear that the growth in education did not lead to fundamental social, economic and political changes in society, and this meant that the human capital theory had gone out of fashion. Focus was therefore concentrated on the inner work of the school and especially on the work with groups of pupils that did not fit in. These innovations did not change the conditions to any significant degree either. The wave of support for the political right-wing was growing simultaneously, and this accused educational policy of leading to falling standards and poorer education than earlier. This happened at the same time as it became more clearly documented that the school had not changed as much as the intentions in the political decisions had assumed. A number of studies show that the fundamental approach is still the same as it always has been, with a subject bias and with the teachers controlling the teaching.

In the field of kindergarten policy, the main problem was one of legitimacy and of how to increase capacity. Simultaneously, a debate was also taking place about the educational methods in the kindergarten, with the same elements as in the debate on the school. The discussion revolved around to what extent the kindergarten was to be regulated. Is the kindergarten to continue in its free and innovative tradition, or is it to be steered more in the direction of the school with greater emphasis on adult-controlled and subject-oriented teaching. This was the situation when the experiment with the 6-year-olds was being planned. And being planned on the basis of innovative educational policy both in the kindergarten and in the school, and on the basis of the kindergarten tradition's characteristics and way of thinking. When the experiment with the 6-year-olds

was being planned, the criticism of education had not yet made any impact, although it was strong.

The experiment with the 6-year-olds was carried out in a period with a different direction of educational policy than had been current at the time it was planned. Telhaug (1990a) uses the term *restorative* to describe the thinking on educational policy at the end of the 80's. It is neo-conservative and neo-liberal. It adopts a technical and rational vocabulary from industry, business and economics, where the terms quality, competence, efficiency and competition play a key role. All these terms are closely related to subject knowledge. The demand is first and foremost improved knowledge, but also greater creativity and relevance. The term knowledge is rehabilitated, the term school of knowledge is used. Many people are worried about the level of knowledge in this country.

This debate has also entered the kindergarten in several ways, but more in other countries than in Norway. Even though the demands for more structured work in the Norwegian kindergarten have been expressed more clearly, also in official documents, one of the main features of the kindergarten is that it is not linked to the school, and not seen as a part of educational policy. The kindergarten policy in Norway is still intent on increasing capacity to accommodate everyone, as was the case with school in the nineteenth century, and it has its basis more in social policy than in educational policy.

The background to this change in the rhetoric of educational policy is to be found in somewhat complex socio-cultural and economic changes in society, but it is also the result of a lengthy process of development. Population changes, with fewer children and more elderly people is one cause. The economic problems resulting from a combination of excess national consumption and tougher international competition are another factor. The problems of political control are generally recognized. The result is that the human capital theory is rehabilitated. The quality of education is seen as a prerequisite for getting out of the economic malaise, but now in such a way that the emphasis is to be on the cleverest pupils, and market forces are to be allowed to dominate also education to a greater extent.

I have pointed to two consequences for the experiment with the 6-year-olds of the changes in the social-political and educational-political context. The experiment was initiated and carried out on the basis of the innovative orientation of educational policy. The recruitment, the content of the courses and the rhetoric of the project were to a large degree linked to the kindergarten tradition and to the innovative way of thinking. This meant that those who represented the kindergarten in the experiment received far greater support from the experiment, than those who worked in the school model. Vice versa, those who were representing the school model, received far more support from the

institutional environment outside the experiment, than from those who were part of the experiment. At the same time, this meant that the experiment was subjected to fairly intense pressure from the institutional environment to work in accordance with the current rhetoric on educational policy. In concrete terms, this means both demands for more activity in the experiment biased in favour of school, and increasing support for choosing the school as a solution to the issue of the localisation of the educational provisions. It is apparent that this pressure from the political and institutional environments to quite a large extent can explain much of what happened in the educational arena, both as regards support for the use of plans and the actual educational activity. Initially, this support is found at the level of formulation, and does not necessarily have any great practical effect. It is to a great extent sufficient to win legitimacy and institutional support. By couching the formulations in terms very close to the current demands, all the experimental models give the impression of being up to date and abreast of the times. This can explain the local curriculum plans with a school bias. In one area it would appear that the outside demands have had an effect on the practical work. This concerns the teaching of the three R's. This area would probably not have been accommodated in the experiment, had it not been for outside pressure. And the reason why the experimental models had to change their practice in this area, was of course that both parents and others can check to what extent such topics are worked on in the experiment through direct insight.

Ideally, the experiment should have been allowed to work according to the classic ideals of experiment, without any outside interference that could influence the result. It did not turn out that way. In two key areas, political action was taken in ways that directly affected the experiment, or which had consequences for the activity of the experiment. The first area concerns the plans for the experiment. The selection of the municipalities to be involved in the experiment and decisions about the length of the daily sequence in the experiment were political decisions. These did not take account of educational needs, but were made on the basis of direct political assessments of what would win the best possible institutional support for the political system, and against the professional advice as to how best to organize an experiment so as to find the answers to the questions that had been raised. The consequence was that the municipalities to a certain degree boycotted the official models, at the same time as it placed the experiment in the educational tradition of the pure preschools, which is close to that of the school.

The other area concerns the main issue itself in the experiment, what was officially the key issue, where were the 6-year-olds to be placed in the future. This was also resolved after quite a short time in the experiment, after about six

months of the main phase. What regulated this was by which governments were in power. And since there were four governments during this period, standpoints were altered four times. The pattern was as follows: The non-socialist governments were coalitions, with three political parties with totally different attitudes to the issue, and with different motives for wanting a change. It was disagreement between these parties that created the experiment, and the plan that was tried out. The Labour Party governments had a different understanding of the problem. They voted to place the 6-year-olds in the school, out of consideration for being able to increase the capacity of the kindergarten and because of the need for supervision of the youngest schoolchildren. And this firm belief was held for almost the whole experimental period. This mixing up of politics and experiment also had consequences for the experiment itself, and contributed to exaggerating the effects of the circumstances of educational policy in general. Firstly, there was a fairly comprehensive change of opinion as to where the 6-year-olds were to be placed. At the start of the experiment, those who expressed their opinion were strongly in favour of the kindergarten. Towards the end of the experiment, the standpoints were almost as strongly in favour of the school, either just the school, or a combination between the school and the kindergarten. The other point concerns adjusting and retreating from aims. As the political signals appeared and were altered, the emphasis of the experiment changed accordingly. I have pointed to such adjustments in aims in concrete terms in two fields. One of them is that the experiment was no longer to focus on the choice between kindergarten or school for the 6-year-olds. The other is the demand for work in mixed age groups. This was removed, this demand that was one of the key requirements in the preparations for the experiment. All in all, this led to a clearly expressed frustration on the part of those involved in the experiment.

This then raises the question as to what functions this experiment has had for the subsequent educational reform. Here we can follow two paths. One is the rational one in accordance with the reform perspective. After the experiment is over, and has been evaluated, the government puts forward a proposal for a comprehensive educational reform. In the reform proposal itself, a good deal of space is devoted to describing the experiment. There would appear to be close links. The fact that the formulations coincide in time and space does not necessarily mean that there is any direct connection between them. The analysis of the role the experiment may have played in the new educational reform reveals that it has played a relatively small and periphery role. The reform has in part a different content than the experiment, and is based on quite different premises than the experiment with 6-year-olds. The main element in the reform was also determined long before the experiment was completed and formally evaluated. With the exception of the national curriculum for the experiment,

those areas from the experiment that have been included, concern more vague results such as increasing competence, personal experience, insights into differences and contrasts between the kindergarten tradition and the school tradition etc, and which it is today impossible to know whether they will have any significance. Only the implementation will reveal this, and even then in the relatively long term.

This means that when the function of the experiment is to be evaluated, we must look to other areas than whether it forms a concrete basis for an educational reform. To a large extent I build on the difference between the arena of formulation and the arena of realization. What took place in the national political arena can only be understood in the light of traditions and needs in the arena of formulation. The political system, the arena of formulation, is evaluated to a very large degree on the basis of its ability to tackle disagreement and differences of opinion. And the arena of formulation depends on support and legitimacy from the institutional environment. That is how experiments and reforms come about, to win support, because they demonstrate the will and the ability to change, without such changes actually having to take place.

Within this understanding of the function of the experiment, I can identify three patterns of action. There was a "political" pattern characterized by compromise, negotiations, tactics and horsetrading. The experiment came about in this way, and solved the problem that a reform had been announced, which the government parties could not agree upon. The experiment did not solve the issue itself, which is why it became the object of political action. There were examples of "routine solutions", in other words making use of established solutions to the problems. In the time when the major educational experiments took place in Norway, there was repeated political interference in and control of these activities. Another example is that the standpoints of the parties are generally speaking identical both before and after the experiment. They are the result of developments over a long period, and are not necessarily easily influenced by experiment. Several governments were in the arena, with various ideas about what the problem was and what solutions were available. This provides grounds for processes that certainly are similar to "garbage can" solutions. The non-socialist government did not agree with the solutions, and wanted to put off a decision for as long as possible. The Labour Party's primary interest was not initially educational policy, but kindergarten policy. This gives grounds for quite different decisions on the same issue at different times, depending on who is in the arena.

The experiment was initiated to demonstrate the power to act because the government was not able to come to any agreement about a reform. In that way the experiment gave the state and the political system legitimacy. In addition, the experiment legitimizes the new educational reform by way of a variety of

links. In public reports these two are mentioned in the same breath. Even though the experiment does not really have very much to do with the reform, the formulations will make it look as though such links exist.

Part IV Summing up

11 Educational reform by experiment

Background

In 1986 the Norwegian Storting voted to initiate "A Pilot Project comprising an Educational Programme for 6-year-olds" (1986-1990). This study of the experiment with 6-year-olds is based on an empirical study and a theoretical discussion of the questions: (1) What factors have influenced the educational ideas and activity in the experiment? (2) What role has the experiment played for the formulation of the educational reform that follows in its wake?

The practical research interest is linked to gaining knowledge about the background to this particular experiment, what happens in the experiment, what results appear and what connection exists between experiment and reform. This broad approach limits the opportunities to go in depth on the individual points, but offers the chance to discuss the topic that holds the theoretical interest behind this study, how education is established, maintained and changed.

Perspective

The experiment with 6-year-olds is based on notions from what is referred to as the reform perspective, and which forms the basis of most reforms. It maintains that the state can govern and control education through systematic and rational measures initiated centrally or locally. Essential to the perspective is the belief that actions can be governed through formulated ideas, in this case by way of curricula. As with most corresponding international research, the Norwegian educational research is to a large degree carried out within this perspective. The research has had a normative purpose to provide knowledge and premises on which to base political decisions and implement reforms in the best possible way. This experiment is studied from another angle, an approach in which the purpose has been to map and explain what takes place on the basis of an analytical interest, in accordance with the theory-oriented evaluation strategy.

Little knowledge of education exists, based on this perspective. Therefore I have an overall theoretical model as a basis for the empirical and analytical research work. This model involves three different levels of description, in accordance with Lundgren's (1983a) broad curriculum theory. The first level is to explain how particular educational traditions develop and become established. The second level concerns the actual concrete control of the experimental activity through the formulation of curricula and the establishment of other state regulations. The third level involves how the curriculum governs the educational work, and what else influences these processes.

In concrete terms, I began by describing the political background to the experiment (level 2). On the basis of the emphasis the experiment placed on the relationship kindergarten-school and based on the theoretical research interest, I discussed the educational traditions in the kindergarten and the school (level 1). Then I studied the development of the curricula in the project (level 2) and studied to what degree the various experimental models were influenced by the curricula and by the two traditions both in the arenas of formulation and realization (level 3). Finally, I returned to the political dimension, to study the experiment and the reform in a wider context of educational policy, in relation to the current debate on educational policy towards the end of the 1980's (levels 2 and 3).

The data I build on are comprehensive, and as far as method and content is concerned, are adapted to suit the levels of description in relation to which they are to function. The data are composed of information about historical, political and social background and context, mass data from all the municipalities involved in the experiment, detailed studies of a small sample of experimental groups, special studies of particular key questions and my own participation in the evaluation during all these years.

The answers given here must not be taken as final. They are based on continuous discussions and confrontations of data and theory. What I present here is the understanding of this topic that I have gained during this research project.

The theoretical model

Over time organizations develop their special characters or traditions, and become institutionalized both in relation to the members within and in relation to environments and society outside. In principle, this applies to all organizations, from the political to pure production companies.

A distinction is made between political organizations and organizations of action. The political organizations' main responsibility is first and foremost formulations, of aims, intentions and plans, and not least the solving of conflicts and differences of opinion. For this purpose, various strategies and procedures have been developed. In addition to the conditions in the actual arena, the actors in the arena of formulation must also formulate in such a way as to win as much support as possible from the institutional environment around the arena and the institution. The organizations of action are to produce some product or service, and are far more characterized by unity and action, and address first and foremost the technical environment. Most organizations are made up of both arenas of formulation and arenas of realization.

There is a complicated relationship between formulations and realizations. What happens in the arenas of formulation can influence what happens in the

arenas of realization, but this is not necessarily the case. The opposite could be true. The concept of organizational hypocrisy is important, the fact that one thing is said to compensate for the fact that something else is done.

The establishment of the educational institutions and the process of institutionalization means that certain educational methods, knowledge and forms of organization are chosen and become tradition, and others rejected or neglected. This happens through the continuous confrontation between the institution's tradition, horizontal forces and the contemporary demands on and expectations made of the institutions, vertical forces. This process influences and decides the notions of what the educational tradition of the institution is, and gradually roots this foundation in the ideological and material structures in society and becomes part of the environment surrounding the institutions' notions of and demands on the institutions. These guiding principles are called curriculum codes, and have both openly and secretly controlled the activity. The curriculum codes are not necessarily visible, intentional or conscious. Curriculum code is a term used to establish a link between the established educational tradition in the institutions and the curriculum formulations.

The state influences the activity in the institutions through certain regulations, judicial, economic and ideological. These provide a particular educational space, a scope for action in the institutions that are teachers' and children's possible areas of action. The state regulations do not influence what happens within the framework, but they define the limits of what is and is not possible.

Within this scope for action, the staff in principle have "free choice", but it does not work that way. Within this room, the educational tradition they are a part of, will have a governing effect. This is made concrete by using the term notion as a term that lies in between tradition and action. Notion is the filter through which the surroundings are understood. Notion expresses a more general structuring principle. It forms the background for subjective explanations and thus influences how different relationships are perceived and interpreted, and is therefore also decisive as to which actions can be implemented.

The experiment

Two important factors lie behind the experiment. One is political disagreement between socialists and non-socialists along traditional lines, where the latter made far greater demands for reaping the benefit of traditional teaching than the former, who were more concerned with cooperation between kindergarten and school and of increasing the capacity of the kindergarten. As a result of events in the 70's and early 80's, this issue also became relevant as far as 6-year-olds were concerned, mainly because children in Norway start school at a fairly high age, at 7-years old. The other was strong disagreement in the government as to what consequences this should have for the 6-year-olds. The Norwegian Union

of Teachers played an active role, and in particular the nursery school teachers were active in trying to prevent 6-year-olds being taken out of the kindergarten.

Initiating the experiment was the government's way of resolving the conflict, and at the same time giving legitimacy to the political system from the institutional environment. Voting in favour of initiating experiments or reforms leads to considerable political gain, often more so than implementing them. It became a political compromise, where each of the main standpoints was given its own experimental model. The experiment was to develop a new pedagogy, a transitional pedagogy which can also be looked upon as a compromise. It was to consist of the best from both the kindergarten tradition and the school tradition. What is "best" is not clear. The new pedagogy was to be formulated in a curriculum that was to be tested under three different sets of experimental conditions: in the kindergarten, in the school and in cooperation between the kindergarten and the school. At the same time, all the models were to develop improved forms of cooperation between kindergarten and school. Then, on the basis of the results, the Storting was to decide where a possible educational programme for 6-year-olds was to be localised and what its content was to be. The experiment was concluded in 1990, and the proposal for a comprehensive educational reform for this age group is ready for publication.

The education of the 6-year-olds

In reality, the experiment is not a classical experiment, but rather three parallel development projects. And that is what the research also treats them as. It is quite another matter that a widespread notion exists that this is an experiment and this is believed by many, which gives the issue greater legitimacy.

Because a major part of the educational work in the experiment was intended to unite the traditions of kindergarten and school, both in a new curriculum and in concrete forms of cooperation, the study of these two institutions has been made at two levels. One is to give an impression of the state control of them, the other is to establish curriculum codes for the two educational activities as a background for being able to formulate more clearly the educational tradition in each of these institutions.

Educational institutions and traditions

The study reveals that the school is under far greater state control than the kindergarten in every area, both as regards the economic area, the judicial and the ideological. In this respect, the school enjoys far higher status and significance than the kindergarten. They have different mandates. The main task of the school is to be responsible for the teaching of knowledge. The kinder-

garten has a more vague role, in which supervision, care and establishing a basis for personal development are mentioned. Finally, the curriculum situation is also different. The school has long had curricula formulated by the state, which do not exist for the kindergarten. All these differences show that the school is subject to far greater state control and therefore has a far more restricted scope for action than the kindergarten.

I have attempted to formulate curriculum codes for the two traditions. The kindergarten is child oriented, gives priority to the personal development and self-expression of the children, but within a moral and rational framework, where attention to behaviour and usefulness here and now is the dominating element. The school has a subject-based curriculum code in which the children are to learn subjects that others have decided for them, it places the focus on the child in the sense that the learning of subjects is adapted to suit the psychological development of the children. The material the children are to learn is influenced by the rational curriculum code, but in such a way that the usefulness pays attention to the future, not to here and now. On the basis of this analysis, it is proven that when persons enter the kindergarten or the school, they enter different worlds, which have already influenced the notions that are possible to have there. It is therefore not a simple and rational task to prepare a new pedagogy by writing a new curriculum, in which the special characteristics are merged, so that "the best" is actually formulated. The institutional traditions linked to codes, notions and regulations are the result of a process of development over a long period of time, and the question is whether they allow themselves to be changed so easily.

Curriculum and planning

In the arena of formulation, the national curriculum was the subject of debate, especially between the representatives for the kindergarten tradition and the school tradition. In the end the plan was formulated in such a way that it received the support of the dominating groups in the debate about the experiment with 6-year-olds. To achieve this, the plan became broad, general and vague, and a typical product of compromise. Thus the plan became a very important symbol and an important legitimization in both the political and institutional environments. On the other hand, as expected, it did not function as an instrument of regulation or as guidelines for the staff who were responsible for the educational activity.

In the beginning of the experiment, the nursery school teachers who formed a majority, opposed the idea of drawing up plans and planning, for fear of the fact that the children would suffer as a result. A national curriculum plan went against their ideas of being child-centered. After a short time in the experiment, the nursery school teachers changed their views, and supported the idea of

national curriculum. To a large degree, I interpret this as "talk", aimed at the project administration, the political environment and at the institutional environment. Through this talk, they showed that they were in agreement with all the intentions, and thus got the necessary public support.

The reality was different. The local curriculum planning involved continuing what had been done earlier in the institution, and which had been successful. What was formulated in the national curriculum did not matter very much. The local curriculum plans concerned mainly the adult-controlled part. The staff reserved the right not to use these plans, if they found that necessary out of consideration for the children. The way the local curriculum plans were produced, the way they were referred to and the way they were used can be interpreted as implying strong reservations against the activity being regulated and administered from the outside. This is how the staff's notions about the activity in the experiment have been most clearly expressed. And it contains a message about an educational way of thinking and understanding with an emphasis on the child and its self-expression, closely corresponding to the tradition of the kindergarten.

What it was possible to achieve within the scope of action in the institutions became more and more decisive, as the staff gradually approached the level of formulation that was close to the practice, and at which the notions of the staff group dominated. There, they did not have to pay attention to the institutional environment and to the official formulations in the same way. These results in a lack of correspondence between plans and practice in several ways and in several fields. The staff thus do a great deal that is not included in the plans, and some of the things that are there, they do not do. These results have led to the putting forward of a theory of a certain formulation space in each arena of formulation. Some formulations are possible and feasible, others are not, dependent upon actors and the recipients of the formulations. This also, of course questions the idea of curricula as ideological regulation of educational practice. Curricula seem to have most effect upon the talk about what is done.

The actual education

An experiment carried out in the kindergarten takes on the characteristics of the kindergarten's daily routine, with the greatest emphasis placed on free activities. An experiment in the school is influenced by the daily routine of the school, with a fair amount of emphasis on adult-controlled activities. The cooperation between the experiment and the school takes place more on the premises of the school than of the kindergarten in two ways. The cooperation mostly takes place in the school and is dominated by adult-controlled activity. All this I interpret as a result of consequences of state regulation and tradition. Tradition, state regulations, notions are the same as they have been. Put another way, the two

institutions are regulated in different ways, have a special way of organizing their activities on the basis of that tradition, and the experiment with the 6-year-olds has to fit into those frameworks and those patterns.

Within the framework set by the daily routine, the staff are freer and can work on the basis of their own tradition and of notions that are typical for that tradition. Generally speaking, the nursery school teachers have worked the way nursery school teachers usually work, whether they have been in the kindergarten or the school. And school teachers have worked in the normal way, but I have no data as to how the teachers work in the kindergarten. This may indicate that the framework within which the actual educational activity in the experiment takes place, is so broad that this is possible. On the other hand, this shows that the tradition in which the staff are trained, have their education and their experience is the most decisive when it comes to the actual teaching. And this shows just how the notions of which they are the bearers form a regulating filter which can explain differences and actions.

In the school model, there is one exception, which actually confirms this pattern. And this is one of the central aspects of this study. There, there are indications that the nursery school teachers in the adult-controlled activity control the activity more than in the other models, and also more than in studies that I use as comparisons to illustrate teachers' pattern of work in school. I interpret this first and foremost as indicating that the tradition in the school has "rubbed off" on those who are working with the 6-year-olds. This is a consequence of being located together, of demands and expectations from the school, from the children, parents, the political and the institutional environments. The parents in the school model are more focussed on the school tradition than other parents, and all this makes an impact in the form of demands made of the practical work, which the nursery school teachers feel duty bound to respect. The nursery school teachers then try to work on the basis of a tradition they do not know well, for which they are not qualified and which is therefore not represented by adequate notions. This gives grounds for exaggeration, they are working on the basis of the notions they have of this activity, and which are "mistaken", therefore they exaggerate in particular one of the elements, the one that in their minds is more associated with school than any other, structured teaching. A corresponding phenomenon becomes apparent when the school teachers are to organize free play, which has no place in their training or in school. They do this in ways that are quite different from those of the nursery school teachers. They organize the play themselves. They interpret this kindergarten element into their own tradition, and thus it become an adult-controlled activity.

This indicates that the most important factors determining the educational activity in the experiment were the state regulations in the institution, the

educational tradition in the institution and the groups of professionals' own tradition. Within the daily programme, those who teach exercise great power over what happens in the meeting with the children. On the other hand, the results indicate that these street level bureaucrats are not all-powerful within this scope for action. They themselves are to a fairly large degree bound by the traditions they are a part of. A comprehensive scope for action is not in itself any guarantee that it will be made use of. The actions cannot be understood simply as a passive adaption to the educational space. The actions are to a large extent linked with the tradition the groups of professionals are a part of and those preconditions for action that they have inherited in the form of notions. This indicates that to alter groups of teachers' educational actions and thinking is a complicated and complex process. It is not enough to want to do things differently or to have the scope to do so.

The national curriculum and the training for the experiment appear otherwise to have changed the talk about practice, altered attitudes towards plans and adult-controlled activity more in the direction of the school tradition. The analyses I have made do not indicate that this has influenced the actual actions to any great extent. The national curriculum in the experiment did not have any particular significance as an instrument of control or as a basis of ideas for the practical educational activity in the experiment, nor does it appear to have altered the curriculum codes. The way the talking has changed is perhaps the most important in the short term, because that legitimizes practice, compensates for the lack of any practical follow-up for which the conditions were not present. This is how the term hypocrisy is defined.

What the experiment did not provide an answer to, was what would have happened in relation to the curriculum, if it had continued over a longer period of time, and when the nursery school teachers had got used to this new feature. On the one hand, perhaps the plan would have been used more often. That is also likely, had the plan formed the basis of a comprehensive production of textbooks and teaching material. And then it would have had a controlling effect by way of these elements, as has happened in the school system.

Political action

In the reform perspective, the context in which experiments and reforms take place is not considered relevant to the development and resolution of an issue, other than as sources affecting control and validity. There the attention is concentrated on the inner research activity. In the theoretical model on which I base my research, emphasis is placed on studying the social context of the experiment, and what consequences events there have had for the experiment

and the reform. This is an analysis of the experiment and the reform at a different level of description than what has been done before, but with relevance for educational thinking, talk and action.

I consider two contextual conditions. One is the general development in educational policy in the period in question. This registers the political and institutionalized environment's attitude to educational issues in general. The other is the direct political actions that concern an educational programme for 6-year-olds during the period of the experiment. This is a study of what took place in the national political arena of formulation in relation to the experiment and that was available to the public.

Educational policy

The experiment was planned and implemented as part of the direction of educational policy that had applied throughout the postwar period in Norway, an innovative direction in educational policy. It was characterized by progressive educational thinking with an emphasis on equality, unity and totality and on social-educational tasks. From the beginning, the experiment was also closely linked to the kindergarten, with kindergarten educational theory and practice as a key educational direction. This has in many ways common origins with the innovative direction in educational policy. The experiment took place during a period of restaurative educational policy. It is neo-conservative and neo-liberal. The terms quality, competence, competition, quality of education and efficiency of education are vital and make the kindergarten educational theory and practice more peripheral. It placed the actual experiment in opposition to the current ideology and way of thinking. It increased the differences of opinion in the experiment, and helped to emphasize the contrast between the experiment and the institutional surroundings. The consequence of this is that one of the models, the school model, has had most support outside the project, the kindergarten model has had most support inside the project.

The shift in educational policy put the experiment under pressure to formulate itself in accordance with the current trends, which is what happened. This was a way of achieving legitimacy for the entire experiment. I see this as the main reason for the development of the experiment with a focus on the school as regards attitudes to plans, the content of the local curriculum plans and the fact that the three R's were taught.

Political intervention

This was further emphasized by direct political involvement in the experiment in several ways. At the national political level, decisions were made that directly affected the experiment along the way. The main problem, where the educational

programme for the 6-year-olds was to be located, was resolved politically at an early stage of the experiment. As early as six months into the main phase of the experiment, signals were received that 6-year-olds were to start school. The direct cause of this change of policy was a change of government. A new government came to power that did not share the same view on the issue of the 6-year-olds as the government that had initiated the experiment.

The experiment was initiated to solve a political problem with the help of a scientific approach. The concrete political problem involved where the educational programme for the 6-year-olds was to be located. The ideological problem was at how early an age were Norwegian children to be exposed to public and formal learning contexts. The three coalition parties could not agree on the issue. The new government placed the 6-year-olds in school mainly to solve the problem of increasing the capacity of the kindergarten sector. There were two further changes of government before the proposal on an educational reform was complete, and each time the signals regarding the location of the 6-year-olds were different, and the significance of the activities of the experiment changed. The consequences of this were that the institutional environment was to an even greater degree orientated in the direction of the school and on work with a focus on school as the outcome of the experiment. Internally in the experiment, this resulted in a readjustment of aims and retreats from goals. In other words, the intentions that had been formulated earlier were rejected. This became very apparent in two fields. One concerned the question of the localization of the educational programme for 6-year-olds, which was no longer relevant. The other was that working in mixed age groups was no longer of importance.

New educational reform

As a continuation of the experiment has come a proposal for a comprehensive educational reform. I am acquainted with the proposals, but that have yet to be made public. When I consider all the various intentions of the experiment with the 6-year-olds and all the experience gained through the experiment up against the content of the new reform, the conclusion is that in substance they have very little to do with one another. I push things to extremes when I say that the experiment is one thing, the reform is something quite different. It is difficult to see direct connections, and those that exist are vague. There are several reasons for this.

It can be linked to the fact that the actual experimental activity was not a great success, that it provided little in the way of viewpoints and experience that could throw light on the new reform. This would be an explanation in the spirit of the reform perspective. The signals from the departments about the value and usefulness of both the experiment and its evaluation are very positive, also in

the report to the Storting. I will point to another explanation, which concerns the conditions in the political arena. For it is there the proposed reform has been drawn up, not in the experiment. That is why what has happened must be understood in the light of the situation in the arena of formulation. In this arena, legitimacy and support are dependent on the ability to tackle different points of view, disagreement and conflicts of values, and which mirror similar differences of opinion in the institutionalized environment.

The experiment and the reform can then be understood to be the political system's method of demonstrating its strength to the institutionalized environment by way of formulations. The various actions in the national political arena can then be interpreted as steps in the struggle for support and legitimacy. I point to three main patterns in these actions. There are political actions, in the sense of compromises and negotiated settlements, where the experience gained from the experiment has not been a key factor. There are routine solutions, in which earlier ways of resolving problems are used on both the old and the new problems. The three political parties that initiated the experiment have not changed their standpoints on the issue from 1986 and up to the present day. They claim that they have. And there are tendencies that can be interpreted as "garbage can" processes, characterized by outwardly appearing to be rather coincidental and difficult to follow because of different interests and participants in the arena at different times. The fact that there were several changes of government can have contributed to such processes, and then it will be rather coincidental whether the experiment and the experience gained there count for anything.

Politically the experiment has had two main functions. One is to give the state and the political system legitimacy, which is what much criticism from society claims they constantly lack. The other is that the experiment provides the reform with legitimacy, by coupling the experiment to the reform in the formulations, so that it appears as a guarantee for the reform, without it directly having had very much to do with the reform.

What controls and maintains education?

The empirical and theoretical analyses of the experiment with the 6-year-olds show that the educational activity to a large degree is a function of the institutional traditions, general state regulations and notions about such work in the various groups of professionals that work with the children. Both the activity in the institutional environment, in the relevant arenas of formulation and the curricula have first and foremost consequences for the talk about education, and not for the practical implementation of it. This indicates that in this experiment,

politically expressed intentions had little to say for the educational activity that took place.

The talk about the experiment, and the proposed reform are fairly strongly influenced by the general debate on educational policy that was taking place at the time. And the debate is international, and not originally linked to any particular national interest groups. In the same way, what happened in the national political arena of formulation provides an important background for an understanding of the lacking relationship between the experiment and the reform. The experiment functioned as state legitimization and provided legitimacy for the proposed reform that followed in its wake.

Seen in relation to the reform perspective, with which I opened in chapter 2, this research work have shown that the experiment on very many points has not followed the trains of thought that apply there. The use made of the experiment and the experience gained there has to a large extent been determined by changes in the direction of educational policy and interest along the way, and not so much by the actual experience gained.

This development is to a fairly large degree a consequence of forces which neither politicians nor educationalists have any control over. This applies both to the power of tradition as the bearer of international trends in educational policy and to the changes of government. The tasks for both politicians and educationalists seem to have been to keep in position in a landscape formed by others, but with very little scope for action. That this is the case, becomes apparent when we carry out a little flight of fancy. Transfer this experiment and this reform 15 years back in time, to the mid-70's. What did the landscape look like then, and what possible solutions existed? A time of innovation, an economic boom, with a focus on the kindergarten and "everything" was rosy. More likely than not, the 6-year-olds would belong in the kindergarten, and school could wait, the children have plenty of time and must be allowed to be children as long as possible.

This explanation can be seen as extremely structural, in which individuals have very little significance. This is not the case. In the experiment as well as in politics, I have seen, and I see again and again, what enormous differences there are between people, their personal efforts, enthusiasm, methods of approach, attention, language, pleasure. What I have pointed out in this study, is that we all have scope for action, and that we within that scope are bound by traditions that we ourselves can realize in personal and unique ways.

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Peder Haug's thesis is a continuation of the evaluation of the *Experimental educational programme for six-year-olds (1986–1990)*. The aim of the thesis is to identify and study the factors which influence the educational ideas and practise in the experiment and to study what role the experiment plays in the formulation of the educational reform that is to follow. This is carried according to institutional theory (Nils Brunsson) and curriculum theory (Ulf P Lundgren).

The main results of this study are that education is influenced more by the institution in which it is given and if it is given by school teachers or nursery school-teachers than by either the national or the local curriculum plans.

The study shows few direct connections between the experiment and the formulations of the subsequent educational reform. This is mainly due to the change of government, and also to the general function of experiments and reforms as sources of legitimation for politics and the state.

The primary target-groups for this interesting thesis are researchers and politicians. On times when the question of whether children should start school at the age of six or not, the thesis of Peder Haug provides up-to-date reading-matter, for also teachers, nursery school-teachers and school-leaders.

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