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### Chapter working abstract

The study presented in this chapter aims to illuminate the dialogical and chained character of the development of inscriptions in the context of learning and instruction in the nation-state of Sweden. More specifically it will, based upon the analysis of policy documents across time, map the nature of inscriptions in settings like educational institutions (i.e. schools, agencies, etc.), with a special interest on what is demanded of teachers.

Governmental commissions, curricula and EU regulations constitute examples of inscriptions as conceptualized in actor-network theory (ANT) and socio-cultural perspectives. Our focus is upon documents related to the Swedish digitalization initiative, that is scheduled to be implemented from 2018 onwards. Taking a point of departure in EU’s eight key competencies for lifelong learning 2006, this study attempts to throw light on the nature of inscriptions related to the Swedish digitalization initiative during the period 2006 – 2017. The document based data includes EU recommendations, the yearly survey of Swedish customs on internet (Svenskarna och internet), governmental commissions, school authorities’ accounts and recommendations, syllabi and curricula. The selected documents can be considered to be dialogical and chained since they build upon one another. They can thus be traced by following formulations backwards across time.

Inscriptions, e.g. diagrams, pictures and documents, have a hegemonic dimension in that they are rhetorical and polemical artefacts that empower key actors (Latour, 1987). Like Roth and McGinn (1998), we are interested in exploring which actors are served by specific inscriptions, and what political, ideological, moral and ethical implications such inscriptions are endowed with. Understanding the nature of how people learn, requires a focus on the development of collective knowledge manifested in the mediating tool of inscriptions (Säljö, 2005).

In critical analysis of discourse, and its branch nexus analysis (Hult, 2015), policy documents can be considered “frozen action” (e.g. Hult, 2015; Norris, 2007). This implies that inscriptions, like policy documents, are products of human interaction. Inscriptions are considered actors in ANT, and in that sense, are at par with humans. They are considered to be an inseparable part of social action in sociocultural perspectives, and have agency (Bagga-Gupta, 2017). Discourses, i.e. languaging as a dimension of social interactions, can become fixed. For instance, spoken language gets transformed when it is written down (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). This process is analogues to the notion of translation in ANT (e.g. Callon, 1986; Latour, 1987).

Our analysis will use critical discourse analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), with the aim to illuminate power dimensions of inscriptions. The chained nature of inscriptions is related to power, where one inscription mandates the production of the next one. The teacher is at the end of this chain; inscriptions here become an important part of the teacher’s historical body (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). Shifts in curricula across time shapes teachers work. The study highlights the opposition between the explicit and dominating nature of inscriptions on the one hand, and the relative freedom of teachers to shape their work within institutional contexts that are framed by inscriptions.