

# Teachers Enacting Complementation and Compensation in a Practice under Strain – Policy and Practice in Swedish School-Age EduCare

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to explore the way teachers enact policy regarding the tasks of complementation and compensation in Swedish School-Age Educare. As a result of numerous policy changes, school-age educare as an institution has undergone significant and substantial changes in terms of its social mandate, educational objectives, and content. In this paper, we investigate how these policy changes have transformed the everyday practice for staff working in these settings. We base our analysis on policy enactment theory, focusing on the way policy is transformed into practice. The research material consists of group interviews with 53 staff members interviewed in twelve focus groups, representing twelve different settings. The results highlight that enacting policy in Swedish school-age educare involves multiple interpretations of these concepts, being constrained by materiality in several ways, representing a mix of discourses in both policy and practice regarding the tasks of complementation and compensation.

**Keywords:** fritidshem, school-age educare, policy enactment, interviews, compensation

## Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' policy enactment regarding the tasks of complementation and compensation for the education of pupils in Swedish School-Age EduCare (SAEC). A historical and social pedagogical focus for SAEC was to compensate for children's different backgrounds and follow their interests and needs, as a complement to the family (Gustafsson-Nyckel, 2020). Since the first SAEC curriculum came out in 1998, focus has changed to complement the education pupils receive in school by doing something different than they do in school. Nowadays, the complementation task is described in the curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education [SNAE], 2019) which points out that the SAEC should complement: "(...) the compulsory school, to a greater degree, in that learning be situationally governed, experience-based and group oriented, as well as based on the pupils' needs, interests, and initiative" (SNAE, 2019, p. 23). At the same time, the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) highlights the compensatory task and points out that the aim is: "(...) to offset differences in the children's and pupils' ability to assimilate their education." (Chapter 1, Section 4).

These two foci could be described as a double-coded policy (see Gewirtz, Dickson, & Power, 2004), aimed to create conditions for both complementation and compensation for pupils within SAEC. How this double-coded SAEC policy is interpreted and enacted into practice regarding these concepts is important to explore and understand both from an equivalence and quality perspective.

In line with educational reforms across Europe, there have been numerous policy changes in the Swedish SAEC since the 1990 s. There is, however, a clear shift in policy from the 1990 s when day care for school-age children was integrated into the educational system in Sweden and incorporated into the national curriculum of the compulsory school and later into the Education Act. As a result of these policy changes, the SAEC as an institution has undergone significant and substantial changes in terms of its social mandate, educational objectives, and content. This change can be understood as care being replaced by education. At the same time as the educational intentions have been strengthened for SAEC, reports and research (Lager, 2020; Swedish School Inspectorate 2010:2018; Swedish Government Official Reports [SGOR], 2020:34) state that there are major challenges when it comes to enacting these policy changes in practice. These challenges consist of poor conditions for learning, large numbers of children in groups, only 30 percent of staff with degrees and qualifications for the work in SAEC, and constraints in living up to quality standards (SGOR, 2020:34). In other words, the lack of resources has increased while at the same time the policy has been strengthened. Consequently, considering these socio-material conditions, it will be interesting to investigate this double-coded curriculum and then especially the relationship between policy and practice. The aim of this article is therefore to investigate teachers' enactment of policy regarding complementation and compensation in practice. The following research questions are addressed:

- How do teachers understand the concept of complementation within an SAEC context?
- How is complementation in education enacted within SAEC?
- How do teachers understand the concept of compensation within an SAEC context?
- How is compensation for children enacted within SAEC?

This introduction is followed by a brief review of the research area concerning the SAEC task of complementation and compensation. After that, policy enactment theory is presented followed by methodological issues concerning group interviews with 53 staff members in SAEC. The findings are presented from interpretative, materialised, and discursive dimensions regarding teachers' enactment of complementation and compensation in practice.

## Previous Research

From an international perspective, Bae and Stecher (2019) discuss different arrangements for extended education to children and families around the world. They also argue that different state organised community programs can strengthen the possibilities for equality in society.

From a Swedish perspective, Klerfelt and Ljusberg (2018) discuss the concepts of complementation and compensation regarding Swedish SAEC-settings. They argue for complementation as an issue of cooperation between SAEC and compulsory school among educational objectives and compensation as the SAEC effort to compensate for children's different backgrounds by giving them experiences they lack. Perselli and Hörnell (2019) report four different teachers' interpretations regarding what their work with complementation should involve: collaboration, working in the classroom, applying practical work and offering something that the school lacks. Andishmand (2017) reports that equality is currently chal-

lenged in SAEC efforts at compensation. Andishmand reports from three different social economic areas, where the groups are increasingly homogeneous and reproduce the contextual conditions in practice. She concludes that the increased emphasis on complementing the school can limit the possibilities of working to compensate children's different backgrounds.

Despite the fact that this field is unresearched, in Sweden there have been several research projects focusing on the profession in SAEC and the encounter with the work in compulsory school regarding the complementation task. These projects often focus on the problems that arose when SAEC was integrated with compulsory school. For example, Calander (1999), Hansen (1999), Gustafsson (2003) and Haglund (2004), found several challenges when two traditions of education were encountered in practice. Lately, Andersson (2013) and Ackesjö, Nordäng, and Lindqvist (2016; 2018) have researched the development of the profession since the teacher education program was revised. Nevertheless, there is a need for more research about how teachers in today's severely strained daily practice (Lager, 2020) enact complementation and compensation in practice and in relation to structural conditions.

## Theoretical Point of Departure

In this paper we investigate teachers' enactment of policy regarding complementation and compensation in practice. In our analysis, we take our point of departure in policy enactment theory (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). Policy enactment theory focuses on the policy process – the way policy is transformed into practice – and we are interested in how policy is enacted in SAEC settings. Enactment is related to how teachers interpret and understand policy in a way that makes sense for them in daily practice. In that way, they try to handle policy in relation to what they as teachers already do in practice. The understanding of policy through this perspective, means that policy is constructed by those who use the policy (Ball, et al., 2012).

To analyse teachers' enactment of policy, three dimensions are used: an interpretive, a materialised, and a discursive. Together, these three dimensions will construct the enactment of policy into practice. When policy is moved from one context to another, it is adapted continuously, implying that it is recontextualised (Bernstein, 2003), which changes the circumstances for policy and transforms it. More specifically, Bernstein argued that recontextualisation “is a principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses, and relates other discourses to constitute its own order or ordering” (Bernstein, 2003, p. 184).

## Methodology

This paper is part of a larger ethnographical project about children's leisure in SAEC, covering twelve weeks of fieldwork in twelve different settings. This specific paper consists of group interviews with 53 staff members interviewed in twelve groups, who were asked to consider the latest 20 years of changes in policy and practice. Group interviews were chosen to develop

an in-depth discussion of the current theme. The concepts compensation and complementation are commonly used both in policy and practice for SAEC and were an engaging subject for the staff.

The settings were chosen with the help of the administrators for teacher education programmes at two different universities in Sweden. Emails were sent to the settings in their areas with an invitation to participate in the research project. Fifteen settings responded and twelve of them were then booked into the schedule, see Table 1. The staff group shifts in number of workers due to different sizes of settings and the staff groups also differ in educational level. The settings belong to different social-economic areas, see Table 1.

*Table 1.* Interviewed Teachers and SAEC Settings.

Setting	Number of interviewed staff	Staff	Location P (private school)
Antelope	4	People with and without degrees	Countryside, rural, small school (P)
Bear	6	Mostly people without degrees, some with	Large town, urban, small school
Dolphin	4	People with degrees	Middle-sized town, large school (P)
Elephant	3	People with and without degrees, some substitutes	Large town, urban, large school
Fish	6	People with degrees	Small school, middle-sized town
Gorilla	6	Mix of people with and without degrees	Large town, urban, small school
Hare	2	Mix of people with and without degrees	Small town, rural, middle-sized school
Impala	3	People with degrees	Large town, small school
Koala	2	Mix of people with and without degrees, some substitutes	Large town, small school
Lion	8	Mostly people without degrees and substitutes	Large town, small school,
Swan	3	People with and without degrees and substitutes	Small town, middle-sized school, rural
Tiger	6	Mostly people with degrees	Large town, small school,

Note: In a Swedish context, it is common that SAEC settings have different names. In this study they are given fictive animal names.

Of these 53 staff members, 23 were people with degrees and qualified to work in SAEC. Six of them were qualified for teaching in other school forms. Two of them were caretakers with long experience of working with children and four of them were youth and recreation leaders. Six of the interviewed staff members were students on teacher education programmes and twelve had no degrees for working with care, education, or children. In each setting, the members of the staff were interviewed through focus groups with one of us leading the discussion. Due to the low number of qualified teachers in the interviewed staff group, we will from now on use the term “staff” instead of “teachers” when presenting the findings. However, the low number of educated teachers on the staff teams represents the situation in Sweden today (Swedish Government Official Reports, 2020).

The interviews were carried out at school, for one-two hours. In some groups there were eight staff members participating, in some only two. This reflects the different participating staff-teams but also the selection of settings regarding small and large municipalities, small and large schools, municipal school and independent school, rural and inner city.

The validity of the current study is linked to our ability to control and to dispute the knowledge presented through the analysis (Cukier, Ngwenyama, Bauer, & Middleton, 2009). In terms of legitimacy and truth aspects, we have tried to critically assess our empirical data and the analyses that have been developed. The credibility of our analyses is important in this context, and in this process, it has been important to reflect on our theoretical and methodological perspectives, as these influences and frame our analyses. As part of this validation process, we have reflected on our empirical material. Validity such as clarity and sincerity mean that the study’s credibility should be tested in conversations with the study’s informants. This part of the validity work had to be cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. Our plan was that the conversations should be conducted on the basis of our interviews and thematic analysis (Hammersley, 1992).

Ethical considerations were made in line with ethical guidelines (Swedish Research Councils (2017). All participants were informed about the whole research project, and except for one person, the participants have provided written consent for participation in these specific interviews. This non-consenting person has been removed from the transcripts and is not part of the results. All participants, settings, and schools have fictive names in the reported findings.

## Findings

Policy enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012) is used to analyse the interpretation and translations of policy regarding teachers’ enactment of complementation and compensation with the dimensions enactment as interpretation, materiality, and discourses. An interpretive dimension focuses on how the teachers interpret what can be complementation and compensation. From a material dimension, complementation and compensation are analysed regarding transformation into practice by searching for examples of how teachers explain their work in practice. The discursive dimension analyses which discourses are circulating according to how they interpret these concepts and what materiality is in play in practice.

While analysing, the interviews were read several times, searching for themes and empirical patterns (Braun & Clark, 2006). We have done this by especially focusing on differences and similarities according to interpretations of complementation and compensation, how it is materialised in practice and which discourses are recontextualised orally when staff talk about their everyday practice. The findings are presented in two parts, *Enacted complementation*, and *Enacted compensation*, with all three dimensions given.

## Enacted Complementation – During the School Day or During SAEC?

Complementation is described through examples of how complementation is interpreted by staff, materialised in practice, and recontextualised in discourses about practice.

### Interpreted Complementation – Cooperation and Collaboration

First, complementation is generally interpreted by the staff as collaboration or co-operation with the compulsory school and its teachers. Second, there seem to be interpretations of complementation regarding both the work SAEC-staff do during the school day and about the SAEC work before and after school as a complement to the school day. These two interpretations are often intertwined and hard to separate from each other in the transcriptions of the staff's speech.

One way of interpreting complementation as collaboration or co-operation is that the staff in SAEC and the school complement each other, they know what they are good at and work together to achieve common objectives.

Ilse – We complement each other, the [school]teachers know what they are good at, we know what we are good at and we work together to achieve the objectives, that is at least our position. (Ilse, SAEC teacher in Impala)

Ilse, cited above, talks about how teachers in SAEC and compulsory school know each other's competences and work together to achieve common objectives. At least she says that this is their common point of view. Noteworthy is the fact that this interpretation of complementation comprises both, at least the way it is articulated: the work during the school day as well as the work in SAEC.

In terms of co-operation or collaboration, the interviewed teachers in SAEC say that they would like to have a common strategy with schoolteachers. This is however hard to accomplish without time for planning, both individual and shared. Some of the staff say that today there is neither co-operation nor collaboration with the school.

Tina – Yes, these are the objectives in math, Swedish, technology and all that we have, and then we lack a united approach with the school, I have no planning time with the class teachers.

Thea – I have a quarter of an hour, which is usually ten minutes with the second grade I'm in.

Researcher – But what are you planning for those ten minutes?

Therese – You have time to say hello.

Thea – Yes, it's a good question, then we usually go through the parents we have heard from, either negatively or positively, a lot of these things, you have to keep each other up to date, what I have said and what they have said.

Researcher – Well, so it's more some kind of checking off with each other.

Thea – Yes, it's nothing else.

Therese – Me and L [schoolteacher] managed to get half an hour on the schedule but, it has not happened more than maybe twice during the whole semester because there is always something happening (Tina, Thea, and Therese are SAEC teachers at Tiger).

At SAEC Tiger, the staff tells us about how there is supposed to be a united approach and shared planning for the cooperation with school, but it seems to be hard to manage any cooperation with limited time for planning, both common and individual. The cooperation they refer to above is neither about content or a common objective, but more about what is happening with the pupils so they can inform parents about their child's school day. It is not clear what the SAEC work is in this interpretation.

A second interpretation is that complementation is about teaching more playfully during SAEC time than traditional schoolwork, meaning that staff in SAEC must find other ways, more creative ones, to work with school content.

Greta – Like our work with music and creative things so that they might also improve their knowledge in math and, but it's also one thing about that, now I'm upset here!

(...)

Greta – But you can write that the school complements the SAEC?

Gerd – Or that we should complement each other, or that you can write a little more evenly perhaps.

Greta – But it doesn't really matter, I can feel that it is sad that we have so little impact really. It's about how you view it and what attitude you have at the place you work, about insight into each other's work. It probably has to do with the way in which we should then complement the school, I don't know if everyone knows or understands it, I don't think it is common knowledge.

(Greta and Gerd are SAEC teachers at the Gorilla)

When the staff in Gorilla recounts how in SAEC they can complement the classroom work done in various subjects by working with them in a more playful and creative way, another more frustrated discussion emerges about the way SAEC is told to complement the school. Greta argues that there is not enough knowledge and understanding about the complementation work. This is shown in mixed attitudes toward their work with complementation, she argues.

A third common interpretation of complementation is to "help" or assist individual children or teachers in class during the school day. Some say that a benefit of working in the classroom during the school day is that they are with the children all day. Working during the school-day is good for the relational work, she explains, and it is easier in the afternoon if the staff have insight into what the children experienced earlier in the day. This interpretation, however, is only valid when a work team is constructed around a special group of children. For many staff, their duties during the school day have nothing to do with the children they meet at SAEC in the afternoons.

It is interesting that complementation seems to be interpreted more in line with what staff do during the school day than how their work in SAEC can complement the children's learning in school, by doing something different. In the national curriculum for SAEC and compulsory school, it is formulated that SAEC should complement the education in compulsory school; but the complementation is not described in terms of how. This is left to the staff to work out and there is an argument made in earlier research that it is difficult for those in this profession, and still is. This seems to make an interpretation possible that the SAEC staff could be used to complement work during the school day instead of planning and organising a practice in SAEC that complements the children's education after the school day.



## Materialised Complementation – Assistants to School

In the absence of “good” examples of collaboration or cooperation with the school, the SAEC staff talks about problems they refer to as the task of complementation. Due to a lack of time and space, as well as leadership, complementing the education pupils receive in school – meaning the work in SAEC before and after school-day – is impossible in several ways, according to some staff. They say that the relation to school in practice is just a structural drain, nothing like the intentions in written policy. Most of the time, the work SAEC-staff do during the school day has nothing to do with SAEC-work; their work is more a kind of assistance to children or to class teachers.

Kristin – Yes, I was class support in X, I was supposed to be in one of the preschool classes as support but then the teacher left and I got a little more responsibility so I am not class support now. I am the teacher in that class now. I have been working there since then, but I do not teach math or Swedish, but I teach art and work with relations and circle-time, such things, but it is good enough.

Kerstin – But when I think about it, everyone who works in SAEC is class support in some way.

Kristin – Yes, no one has..., we both teach subjects, I teach my subject.

Kerstin – Yes but when I don't teach my subject, I am support in class and it is obvious that sometimes it feels like I am doing a good job, but sometimes it feels like a waste of time that I should be at the back of the classroom when they should have a briefing for half an hour, I could have used that half hour in so many other ways.

(Kristin and Kerstin are SAEC teachers at Koala)

In SAEC Koala, the staff talk about their work during the school day. They say that there is no meaningful work going on where they can use their SAEC competencies; they are just assistants. If the staff are qualified and certified to teach a subject in school, their duties in the school are generally connected to that subject. Otherwise, with no certification, they are treated like assistants to teachers or pupils with special needs.

The answers from staff in interviews are often about too little time to plan their work, whether it be in school or in SAEC, and there is also a lack of time between work during the school day and SAEC. Many of the staff express the feeling that they would like to work in long term cooperation or collaboration but lack time for planning, and time to meet and talk to each other, making their work short term with just separate activities.

In many settings, the staff explains, the spatial environments for SAEC are the same rooms as school, a classroom. Not having their own designated rooms has consequences for putting everything back together for the school day. Consequently, this is a common problem when it comes to doing something else, since in SEAC, the more playful or creative the work, the more likely it is to complement the education pupils receive in school.

Despite the interpretations of complementation during the school day or during SAEC work, the materialised dimension shows that SAEC staff assist the school both during the school day as assistants to teachers or children in the classroom and as school assistants even while doing SAEC work, by handling the contact with parents about the school day, or assisting children that need some help with schoolwork.

## Discursive Complementation – a Subordinated Position

As has been visualised above, the task of complementation is both interpreted and materialised in different ways. The different interpretations regarding complementation, such as the work SAEC staff do during the school day or the work they do during SAEC, are somehow



recognizable in the SAEC struggling to understand their task as stated in the curriculum. Complementation in policy and practice contains a mix of recontextualised discourses.

In the interpretations, complementation is something they have in common, as in objectives in the long term, and at the same time there are differences since they have various competencies that they use in their work, or that SAEC-work is something different from school work, more playful or creative. In practice however, collaboration is not happening; daily practice seems to be materialised as serving school from a subordinated position. SAEC is in that sense a resource for dealing with school problems, where staff can be borrowed or used to make schoolteachers and children's school-day successful. The only way this subordinated position can be valuable for SAEC is when staff is talking about the fact that it is good to know what the children experience during the school day, since the parents may ask when they pick up their children from SAEC in the afternoon.

The staff are constantly referring to the notion that they are supposed to back up school, and the fact that they are not only helping out in school during the school day; staff from SAEC can be selected to help in classes that have longer school days so the staff in SAEC are not in place when they are needed there. This in fact means that what is done during the school-day is at the expense of SAEC. Another example is when there is time for SAEC staff planning, they have to leave their planning to help in a class. These are very typical examples of how school becomes the norm and the SAEC is subordinated. One staff member thinks this is sad and explains how she thinks about this:

Gerd – We should not have to live up to school norms to be taken seriously, we should be taken seriously just by being SAEC.

(Gerd is a SAEC teacher at Gorilla)

Listening to the staff in interviews one can visualise that their subordinated position is due to a lack of leadership and lack of both personnel and material resources. Despite this, the staff in SAEC perceive that they are the ones who decide about what happens in the SAEC daily practice, with the conditions they have. They explain that the head-teacher is not questioning their activities or content, but is constantly borrowing the staff from SAEC, which has consequences, as described above. A possible interpretation regarding head-teachers not interfering with SAEC is also a consequence of the subordinated position.

To conclude, regarding complementation within SAEC, the analysis shows a subordinated discourse which means that the staff has no mandate to impact their situation regarding the school as norm when it comes to organising daily practice or spatial environments. Through this discourse, the staff are positioned as subordinated visitors in school both during the school day and during SAEC work. SAEC work with meaningful leisure time, learning and development in more creative and playful ways, seems not to be valued in the same way as schoolwork. If the staff had better conditions, their work with the children during SAEC could have been complementing the children's learning and development in a meaningful way, but that does not seem to be possible.

## Enacted Compensation

Enacted compensation is described by examples of how compensation is interpreted by staff, materialised in practice, and recontextualised in discourses about practice.

### Interpreted Compensation – Equality

Unlike enactment of complementation, the interpretations of compensation seem to be all about the time the children are at SAEC. Compensation is generally interpreted as offering children experiences they do not get with their families. The staff offers the example that they are doing the best they can for all children by doing more for children who are doing less with their parents by compensating with experiences they assume the children do not get in other ways. At the same time, children are often talked about on a group level when it comes to what children need, and activities are arranged in relation to what they think most of the children need.

There is also an interpretation about not all children having the chance to practice all these abilities that children can do at SAEC because their parents are at home with younger sisters and brothers and in that they are not able to be at SAEC, due to the regulations.

Göran – Yes I believe, I don't know if this has to do with it, but we have pupils who have younger siblings and first they take part in the school day but afterwards they have to go home. But their friends can stay and practice skills for more hours if their parents work long days, and it is unfair for those who are not allowed to be here.

Greta – Or if you recently had a sibling, everyone must, if you have three children for example, then all three children must be at home. Then the child doesn't have the right to be in SAEC. It feels too damn wrong. The child who maybe has always been there, now must go home right away and might not get so much stimulation being among their friends anymore or get involved in activities and things like that. It's not equal! But I don't know how, it's another part, it's not mandatory as well and you can apply for a place, and it's a bit like this ...

(Göran is a health educator and Greta is a teacher in SAEC Gorilla)

In this example the staff is talking about the regulations that allow only the children of parents that are working or studying to have access to SAEC. If a child gets a younger sister or brother, the child cannot be at the SAEC due to rules. Besides not being able to practice and improve different abilities, the staff highlights that these children are excluded from communities with their friends. In the next example, on the other hand, the staff at Impala talks about how they sometimes ignore these rules:

Ilse – Yes exactly, that's right. I mean we cannot control what the children experience at home, no, we have to leave that. What we can do, is to make sure that they have a meaningful leisure time here and that we are flexible in what the child needs instead of sticking to the rules. From an educational point of view, we can overlook the regulation because the children will actually have a better time here and then it's probably better that they're here.

(Ilse is a teacher at the Impala)

In Impala, Ilse says that some of the children have a better and more meaningful leisure time experience at SAEC than at home, according to their knowledge about children and their families. This knowledge they say, makes them able to neglect the rules and let the child be at the setting instead of going home to their parents.

Another interpretation of compensation is about compensating for a school that lacks time for play and recreation. This interpretation refers more to complementation, as described above, we argue.

## Materialised Compensation – on Special Occasions

Teachers say that in practice they try to talk to each child, getting to know them so that in dialogue with children and parents, they can explain why SAEC activities are so important.

Sven – I also think that since our goal is to get to know each pupil very well, it will be easy for us to do compensatory work, because we know what it is, we can compensate. As an example, these social abilities we try to practice with them to take their own initiatives and then during their lives have sustainable relationships with others.

Stig – You can, of course, if there is something, they feel they need, support from home, then we can call home and talk about it. It was like that once when there was a pupil whose parents never showed up. This became very difficult when he saw that everyone else had their parents present in our SAEC-day. Then I phoned and had a conversation with that parent “Your child would probably feel very happy if you came”, I presented it in a very good way, you do not have to come or anything but “He would probably think it was really fun if you came”, “Yes but I will come by”, and he did.

(Sven and Stig are teachers at SAEC Swan)

At the Swan, the staff are keen on getting to know all the children even though there are so many of them. In practice this can be accomplished by talking to the parents about the child and explaining why, as in this example, it is important that the parents show up on SAEC-day.

Arranging for compensation is otherwise most talked about as there are too many children. Regarding large child groups, some staff explain that the school holidays are a good time for doing compensation work, there are few children, and they can do more, like plan an outing with the children who are not able to do that otherwise.

Asta – It was very fun when we ate a buffet at a nice restaurant during the sports holiday, then it became very clear who has experienced that before and is used to such situations.

Researcher – Yes.

Anders – I know, that was fun.

Asta – Yes, it was interesting.

Alfred – Some were just ...

Asta – Yes, they couldn't figure out how it worked.

Alfred – what to do.

Anders – Yes, because it is often, for some of them it becomes an exposition, it is obvious that you, that you have an important role to give them these experiences as well.

(Asta has no degrees for work in SAEC, Anders is a teacher in SAEC, Alfred is a youth and recreation leader at the Antelope)

In Antelope, the staff refers to a school holiday when they visited a restaurant with the children who spent their holiday at SAEC. In this way, they realized that some children lack knowledge and experiences in how to behave in these kinds of situations. They say that they compensate for children's lack of experiences, so they will not fail in similar social situations.

Compensation, as in compensating for children's lack of experiences, seems otherwise hard to do in today's large child groups. The staff say they can see what children need but they cannot do anything about it with the large number of children. Instead, staff say that there is a tendency that all children are treated the same way. Subsequently, it seems hard to work with differences and diversity in today's practice. The compensation work is instead on a group level and not a child level. This in practice, means that the individual needs of a few children take all the focus for the staff and the others are left behind.

Another consequence of this in practice is that the SAEC practice becomes more structured with very limited choices for the rest of the children. Staff say they try to do things in smaller groups but there are not enough rooms to be in.

## Discursive Compensation for Special Needs

Compensation in policy and practice is a recontextualization of different discourses. It is about shortcomings in families, about school, children with special needs and large numbers of children. The main discourse is the large number of children in relation to being able to compensate the children.

Another main discourse that is recontextualised is that compensation is related to the staff feeling sad about children, in groups and individually, and that they as staff at SAEC have an important role in giving children something they do not get at home, or in school. But the other way around, the structural practice shows that with this large number of children, compensation is not happening for anyone, due to lack of staff and rooms. About shortcomings in families, it must be considered in relation to the often-used group level. Children are different and so are families' possibilities for bringing up and guiding their children. The interpretation of compensation as "the same for all" also reflects the views about a lack of resources in families.

To conclude, regarding compensation within SAEC, the analysis shows a discourse of enacted policy as meaning it should be the same for all. The staff wants to offer children new experiences and compensate for lack of resources in family life but must adapt to socio-material conditions, which means that policy for compensation is enacted as the same for everyone or everything for a few individuals.

## Discussion

The aim of this study is to investigate teachers' enactment of policy regarding complementation and compensation in practice. The study consists of interviews with 53 staff members working in twelve different settings representing a variety in large and small settings, schools, and municipalities.

The careful process of reading the interviews several times and analysing them in line with policy enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012) strengthens the results regarding the enactment of complementation and compensation. This analytical process of finding valid patterns is also connected to how we conducted the focus group interviews, which has been described earlier in this article. On the other hand, these results are not generalizable to all forms of SAEC practices around the world, but they are a valuable contribution to building up the research field in extended education

With these aspects considered, the results show that through recontextualization, staff interpret the two concepts as two deficiency concepts. They must partly supplement the school for its shortcomings, and partly compensate for shortcomings in the family with regard to, for example, social background. The analysis also shows that these two concepts are in many ways recontextualized together by the staff, which can probably be linked to the curriculum's double-coded language.

One example is the interpretation of the complementation task, where several alternative interpretations of the task appear, i.e. there is no unambiguous wording in the interviewed teachers' speech. When these multiple interpretations of the complementary task (see Ball et al. 2012) are materialized and discursively formulated through the pedagogical practice, an

adaptation and reformulation of the policy takes place; a pedagogical discourse is created which subordinates SAEC in relation to the school and this discourse argues these children's families lack the resources other families have. A similar recontextualization process takes place in relation to the compensatory assignment. The teachers in our data interpret it as an equality goal where SAEC as an institution must provide the children with experiences and opportunities that they do not get through their families.

When this equality discourse is recontextualized together with the material discourse, a policy practice is created that once again points to a lack of resources in these children's family life. It is the double-coded policy discourse that enables this recontextualization process, opening up for a subordinate discourse for SAEC and that emphasizes a deficiency discourse and lack of knowledge in relation to the children. This is both an unintended consequence and an undesirable effect of policy (Ball et al. 2012).

The curriculum's goal of complementation, that children be taught through situational learning: "(...) governed, experience-based and group oriented, as well as being based on the pupils' needs, interests, and initiative" (SNAE, 2019, p. 23), does not appear in our empirical material. Likewise, teachers formulate a compensatory task that focuses more on children's lack of social skills than on the opportunities for children to acquire education and skills.

At the same time, the analysis shows that the concepts are transformed and recontextualized through the enactment process and there is an adaptation to the local socio-material conditions in the SAEC settings. In practice, two policy discourses are created which we describe as *subordinated* and *policy as meaning the same for all* which are far from the intentions in the curriculum. Both of these discourses reflect shortcomings, and in the double-coded policy a discourse of shortcomings is constructed.

In relation to our analysis, there still seem to be problems regarding SAEC staff collaboration or cooperation with schoolteachers, as found earlier when the integration with school was researched (Calander, 1999; Haglund, 2004; Hansen, 1999; Gustafsson, 2003). Complementary the school has not been easier or less challenging over time. This result reflects the findings by Perselli and Hörnell (2019) with different interpretations regarding the task of complementing the school in various ways. There seems to be an ambition on the part of staff to accomplish something together but instead there are currently several socio-material conditions in practice constraining this. Today, it is a strained SAEC practice that is limiting this collaboration for staff (Andishmand, 2017; Lager 2020). The interviewed staff refers to lack of time for planning, lack of leadership, no spatial environment or material for SAEC work, and last but not least, the large number of children in the groups. It can also be assumed that the many interpretations of the concepts refer to the variation of competencies and educational level among the staff teams.

The large number of children in the groups is also a recurring problem in the enactment of compensating. Compensating for children's different backgrounds with so large a number of children is forming a practice based on the same activities for all children, or all efforts for a few children.

## Concluding Remarks and Future Research

To conclude, enacting policy in SAEC regarding complementation and compensation consists of being constrained by socio-materiality in several ways. Further, the analysis highlights a mix of competing discourses in this policy enactment process. Complementary work done in the classroom is more directed towards the children's school day and less toward the work in SAEC. Compensation, on the other hand, is directed towards the work in SAEC and their work with families. It is interesting to reflect upon this result because the task of complementing as it is formulated in policy texts, is only directed towards the staff in SAEC. On the other hand, the school and the SAEC share the work with compensation and equality. It is also interesting to reflect on how these two concepts are intertwined both in policy and practice, and how complementing what is done in the classroom is also a part of compensating the children for their home environments. Still, according to Andishmand (2017) the work done on complementing is threatening the compensation work, due to lack of socio-material conditions in practice. This is confirmed by this study's results, showing how an underfunded practice with a large number of children, lack of qualified staff, no spatial environments and lack of time impedes the staff's work. In addition, the subordinated position in relation to the school is not helping. The staff understand these two concepts in line with the intentions, but the socio-material conditions in practice impede them. As Ball et al. (2012) point out, it is difficult to have total control over the policy process and the creation of policy and its goals, or whether policy can achieve any changes within the schools or SAEC. Our result is in line with the above reasoning and clearly shows that policy enactment often has both unintentional and unwanted consequences. We therefore argue for more research into the way policy and practice are related concerning the changes made to SAEC. It would also be valuable to explore the consequences for children's everyday lives in these settings.

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