THE FEMINIST PRESCHOOL? SWEDISH POLICY AND PRACTICE

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
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Since 1998 Swedish preschools are mandated by law to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. However, state inspection shows that preschools often reproduce rather than counteract these gender roles and patterns. To the extent that preschools are established as formal and informal structures for gender equality, does the feminist preschool in Sweden exist? This dissertation research examines the questions: Considering that the political-administrative system perceives it as a problem that preschools in the Södermalm district of Stockholm, Sweden, are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns—which is part of their mandate according to official preschool education policy, rules, and guidelines—how can this implementation problem be explained? Furthermore, what solutions emerge?

These questions are addressed from an interdisciplinary feminist theoretical framework, utilizing contributions from the sociology of education and organizational theory. The research uses discourse analysis of interview and archival data to analyze the history of Swedish preschool education, the discursive and ideological formations that policy has served, and the content and implementation of official policy. The analysis explores policy formation and implementation in a social and political environment and the interpretation and implementation of policy in preschools.

Findings suggest that although preschools are committed to implementing the mandate, there are a number of reasons for their uneven implementation practices. Four sets of explanations and solutions emerge: 1. Preschools fail to comply; 2. Preschools are incapable of implementing the mandate because they misinterpret central concepts; 3. Preschools lack the needed knowledge and resources and 4. The mandate is purposefully vague, entreating employees to internalize and externalize ideas counterproductive to implementation. Findings support the hypothesis that a combination of these issues contributes to explaining problems raised by implementation. Findings suggest that adopted solutions to explanations 1-3 include performance management and management by objectives strategies as well as inspection mechanisms. Preschools receive limited direction and guidance on implementation and investment in further educating employees in gender issues is limited. The analysis suggests explanation 4 is central to understanding problems related to implementation. The foundation of preschools, policy, and implementation serve patriarchal class society by reproducing dominant liberal-democratic and pluralist-functional discourses. These perpetuate a national self-image, positioning Sweden as equal, progressive, and rational, which challenges implementation of the feminist preschool.

Based on these findings the dissertation suggests that Swedish policy makers apply a feminist perspective to examine official policy, rules, and guidelines, definitions of central concepts, and whether these reproduce a myth of gender equality. Further, preschools could become more feminist by practicing gender pedagogy that for example utilizes gender-neutral language. Also, preschools could eliminate traditionally gendered and oppressive activities and activities that inculcate patriarchal and capitalist ideology.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The study of public administration is concerned with a wide range of different types of public organizations. Among these, public education is among the most important in the United States and in Scandinavian countries as well, where public education is a key part of the central welfare state. Public schools make up a significant part of the public budget, employ vast numbers of public employees, and are consistently rated by citizens as their highest priority (Raffel, 2007). According to Jeffrey A. Raffel, public administration has tended to ignore issues of public education. Because public schools also play the important role of implementing public policy, leaving public education out of public administration creates a knowledge deficit. Raffel notes that a public administration that included public education would describe and understand the administration of governmental policy with greater validity [and] improve public administration and policy development (ibid., p. 135).

This dissertation addresses this gap in public administration research. The broad focus of this dissertation is public education policy and implementation and the implications that these have on gender equality in a Swedish setting. It is structured as a case study of the universal Swedish public education system, particularly Swedish public preschools in the Södermalm district of Stockholm (Sweden's capital city). The dissertation considers a recent addition to preschool policy: that preschools should work to create more gender equality in the Swedish society. Does this mean that the feminist preschool in Sweden exists?

This case study, from an interdisciplinary feminist theoretical framework, utilizes contributions from the sociology of education and organization theory, adding to the

description and understanding of public education in public administration. I use

qualitative discourse analysis of interview and archival data to analyze the history of

Swedish preschool education, the discursive and ideological formations that public

preschool policy has served, and the content and implementation of official preschool

policy. I explore policy formation and implementation in a social and political

environment and interpretation and implementation of policy in preschools.

This chapter provides an introduction to the dissertation. I begin by setting the

context of the case explored in this dissertation and introducing my problem statement.

Here I provide a brief history of Swedish feminism and Swedish preschool history and

policy, which will provide the foundation for understanding the discussions in the

subsequent chapters. I introduce and define central concepts that will be applied

throughout the dissertation. I also introduce the setting that the Södermalm district of

Stockholm provides for this study and introduce the specific problems related to

implementing the feminist preschool, which this dissertation is concerned with.

Understanding where and when the case study is located provides a better understanding

of the specific context of the findings. Next, I present my key research question and a set

of sub questions. Lastly, I explain how this study is important to the study of public

administration and the gap that I seek to contribute to filling and provide a map to the

remaining chapters of the dissertation.

1.1 Context and Problem Statement

Since the mid-20th century, policies for the universal Swedish public education

system have begun to articulate the need to socialize children in fundamental democratic

values and basic human rights. This has included, among other things, counteracting

traditional gender roles and gender patterns, as well as eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment, and degrading treatment.

The focus on gender equality in preschools is part of a history of gender equality in Swedish society. The first wave of Swedish organized feminism took place during the 19th century. This movement made gains in many areas, including economic liberation, labor rights, and violence against women, issues that are still on the agenda today. The first wave of feminism culminated in securing women the right to vote in 1919.

The second wave of feminism began to take shape in the 1950s. Many participants in this wave of feminism mobilized through formal political channels rather than on a grassroots level. This branch of organized feminism has been referred to as *state feminism*. State feminists were influential in the process of establishing preschools as a formal structure for gender equality. Today feminists argue for the informal organization of preschools becoming an institution for gender equality as well.

The history of Swedish preschool education dates back to 1842, when elementary education was made compulsory for boys and girls. But, according to Lärarförbundet, already in 1830, schools for young children were opened in Stockholm and Göteborg. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of preschool education was articulated in two different ways - - as charity-based childcare to aid poor women or as pedagogic education for children of the wealthy. The former came to be labeled the child manger (in Swedish: *Barnkrubban*). This option was established to save workers for the sake of society and to foster morality and order and was open 12 hours a day. The latter was referred to as *Barnträdgården* [akin to the kindergarten] and was an option for affluent families. This part time preschool solution came first to the big cities Stockholm and

Göteborg and spread in Sweden during the 1890s. *Barnträdgården* was based in Fröbel's pedagogy (Lärarförbundet, 1993).

In the 1930s, a focus on child psychology and environmental factors to children's development was emphasized. Human development came in focus. Throughout the following decades, the idea of the scientific basis of preschool education was established. At the same time, state funding for preschools was established in 1944, with which followed a demand for preschool teacher education. During the economic boom of the 1960s, some voiced the need for women to enter the labor market, which once again brought preschools on the political agenda (ibid.).

The first legislation on preschool education was passed in 1973, which required municipalities to offer preschool to all children at the age of six. This goal was not reached. The Riksdag [Sweden's national unicameral parliament], passed legislation in 1985, which promised preschool for all children of workers and students by 1991. Children of the unemployed or of parents that work from home were offered part time solutions. In 1993 this goal was still not reached (ibid.).

In 1998, a curriculum for preschools was assigned to preschool education Lpfö98/2010.[1] This was amended in 2010 after the passing of the 2010 Education Act,[2] which assigned preschools to the Ministry of Education and Research. Previously, preschools were formally considered a social issue and under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Furthermore, at this time, both privately and publicly established preschools were required to work in accordance with the Education Act.

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[1] From here on referred to as the curriculum.
[2] From here on referred to as the Education Act.

Both the Education Act and the curriculum emphasize preschools as institutions for gender equality. Today, the curriculum for preschools states: "The preschool should counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles. Girls and boys in the preschool should have the same opportunities to develop and explore their abilities and interests without having limitations imposed by stereotyped gender roles" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 4).

The social democratic government commissioned a Delegation for gender equality in preschools[3] in August 2003 (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006). The Delegation's primary assignment was to "emphasize, strengthen, and develop work on gender equality in preschools under public and private authority" (ibid., p. 3). The Delegation concluded in its 2006 report that preschools have a difficult time reaching the curriculum's goals for gender equality. Furthermore, preschools can cement rather than counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns (ibid, p. 11). In 2011, a national inspection of preschools in Stockholm concluded that preschools in the Södermalm district are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. The Södermalm district of Stockholm is one of the city's 14 districts. It is an inner city district, which has experienced gentrification upgrading and transforming the social character of the once working class district during the decades 1970-1990. This has resulted in an increasing presence of the middle class in Södermalm and displacement of working class tenants (Franzen, 2005). According to Franzen, "in socioeconomic terms, Södermalm changed its class composition fundamentally in three decades. Thus, in 1997, only 23% of its population were still working class, while the middle class had grown to 58%, whereof a third were professionals" (Franzen, 2005, p. 59). Södermalm is

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[3] From here on referred to as the Delegation.

increasingly becoming an exclusive district where the privileged reside, although this trend is also found in other inner city districts of Stockholm.

In order to understand the recent focus on gender equality in preschools, I want to first make a conceptual distinction between sex and gender. The concept of gender was originally introduced in order to make a clear distinction between that which we understand as biological sex, and that which we understand as social sex and the roles attached to the male or female body. Throughout the years, however, in many settings, the term gender has come to take on both meanings. In addition, gender is often perceived to denote biological or psychological differences.

By viewing gender as a classification assumed through socialization, a constructivist view may suggest that gender is a definitive final project, rather than an ongoing process (Hutchinson & Mann, 2004, p. 90). Westernized feminist thinkers, such as Judith Butler, Bronwyn Davies, O. C. McSwite, Janet R. Hutchinson, Hollie S. Mann, and Dorte Marie Søndergaard, argue that gender should rather be analyzed as performance, in the sense of speech acts, or as discursive practices (Butler, Preface, 1999; McSwite, 2004; Davies, 2000; Søndergaard, 2001; Hutchinson & Mann, 2004).

Discourse can be understood in a "Foucauldian sense of 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'. … Discourse are structures whose traces manifest themselves at least partly in language" (Motschenbacher, 2010, p. 11). On discourse, speech, and silence, Foucault noted:

> Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways

of not saying such things, how those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (Foucault, 1990 (1978), p. 27)

Discourse can also refer to forces that constrain and enable what we can say in a given context (Barad, 2003, p. 819) or be understood as a multifaceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved (Davies, 2000, p. 89). These elaborations on the term discourse point to the repressive as well as the negotiable character of discourse. I assume that reproduction occurs when discursive practices work to maintain or literally re-produce certain discursive structures.

Butler finds that gender has no point of origin, meaning that we cannot see gender as a phenomenon that refers back to a truth, although we may feel individually and as members of a society that gender needs to be true. Butler explains,

Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self (Butler, 2010 (1997), p. 419).

I assume that gender is something we perform, maintain, and modify every day, individually and collectively. We do this by drawing on discourse to position others and ourselves as subjects, and in this process we also reproduce discourse. This performance makes us feel and appear as whole and complete gendered beings. This doesn't mean that bodies are not gendered; I assume that we are able to identify and categorize each other and ourselves into a binary gender system, ignoring or rationalizing inconsistencies with pure articulations of the norm. The binary gender system is also quite flexible and the

categories male and female inclusive enough to embrace people who have decided to live as the other sex and wide enough to include non-traditional expressions of maleness and femaleness. As Halberstam notes, "the failure of 'male' and 'female' to exhaust the field of gender variation actually ensures the continued dominance of these terms. Precisely because virtually nobody fits the definitions of male and female, the categories gain power and currency from their impossibility. In other words the flexibility and elasticity of the terms 'man' and 'woman' ensures their longevity" (Halberstam, 2004, p. 953).

The curriculum refers to traditional gender roles and gender patterns, but the meaning of these concepts remains vague. Traditional gender roles could signify an idea of gender as a normative social construct, which in a historical patriarchal expression oppress women. And traditional or stereotypical gender patterns could point to the traditional patriarchal division of productive and reproductive labor in society. But since the concept of gender is contested, the idea of gender roles and gender patterns, and traditional versions of these may also be.

What is clear though, is that equality, and recently also gender equality, are stated fundamental values in Swedish education policy. Gender equality can be understood both quantitatively and qualitatively. Common indicators of gender equality include comparing salary rates, literacy rates, elected offices held by women in relation to men, women on boards of directors, maternal mortality rates, etc. These quantitative data provide an evaluation of the status of equal rights, opportunities, and obligations in a society. More qualitative measures examine for example the meaning and construction of gender in society, how gender is reproduced, and how certain ideas about gender contribute to reproducing dominant social relations such as the patriarchy and class

society. According to Statistics Sweden, the Swedish goal of gender equality is articulated in both quantitative and qualitative terms: "The quantitative aspect implies an equal distribution of women and men in all areas of society, such as education, work, recreation and positions of power. … The qualitative aspect implies that the knowledge, experiences and values of both women and men are given equal weight and are used to enrich and direct all spheres of society" (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 4).

In Sweden, gender equality has primarily been articulated in terms of democracy and power, focusing on the aspect of participation and in terms of human rights, focusing on the aspects of equal opportunities, rights, and obligations. Swedish efforts related to gender equality focus on giving women and men the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education and paid work. They also focus on equal distribution of responsibility for household work and opportunities for giving and receiving care on equal terms (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 5).

The concept *jämställdhet* designates gender equality in Swedish state policy-making. The concept was introduced by state feminists in the late 1960s, signifying public agreement to a new focus on gender equality in society and politics. *Jämställdhet* appeared first in the 1969 national curriculum, entreating schools to promote gender equality in all areas and to educate students to critically evaluate the social order and gender relations. In this view, education has historically been a determining factor in achieving social as well as gender equality in Sweden. Despite trends toward deregulation and conservatism in Sweden today, *jämställdhet* remains a strong symbolic signifier of what it means to be Swedish (Forbes, Öhrn, & Weiner, 2011, pp. 768-769) and surfaces and is a prevalent element in discursive construction of Swedish societal

identity. Throughout the chapters, I utilize the concept of *jämställdhet*. When it appears in my data analysis, I refrain from translating it into the broader concept of gender equality in order to keep the symbolic content intact.

Despite this apparent focus on gender equality, gender equality in Sweden is complicated. Considering that the concept of gender is contested and that definitions of gender in terms of biological and psychological difference are still prevalent in Sweden, gender equality can take different meanings. As I discuss in chapter 6, conservative views on gender often surface in political parties' policies and in public opinion. Further, as I discuss in chapter 7 and 8, these views are also alive among preschool employees. It appears there may be a contradiction between the Swedish commitment to gender equality as well as the role that gender equality plays in the construction of a Swedish self-image and the widespread conservative beliefs about gender and essential gender difference that can be found in the political and social environments as well as in preschools. This contradiction results in an ambiguity about what gender equality means and how it should be achieved. To some extent this ambiguity is ignored in official policy, rules, and guidelines for implementation and in research about gender equality in Sweden. However, it is important to take into consideration the tensions between official commitment to gender equality and the internal contradictions inherent in the definitions of gender and gender equality if we want to understand whether and how implementation of a policy mandate striving for gender equality fails. I seek to address this by examining definitions of gender and gender equality throughout my analytical chapters.

Today, official policy portrays preschool education authorities and education institutions as responsible for promoting for gender equality in society. Preschools have

been viewed as promoting gender equality in Swedish society in at least two ways. Firstly, preschools are articulated as institutions for quantitative gender equality. Historically, preschools have served the purpose of freeing women from part of their domestic responsibility, providing women with increased opportunities to enter the labor market and gaining economic independence. Secondly, preschools are articulated as arenas for gender socialization or gender construction, depending on the definition of gender (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 57). In this light, the philosophies informing gender socialization or construction can lead to more or less equality in society. For example, viewing preschools as places where children are socialized into normative gender roles makes preschools and preschool employees responsible for reproducing normative gender roles and socializing children by posing as appropriate role models and engaging in appropriate pedagogic activities. As social values and normative gender categories change, preschools' practices and values should also change. Or, for example, if viewing gender as a social construction that children actively engage in, preschools and preschool employees are responsible for creating the conditions for children to grow up free from ideas of what are "normal" feminine or masculine behaviors and for engaging in gender-neutral pedagogic activities such as utilizing gender neutral language or toys that have no specifically gendered connotations. Both foci on socialization and construction of gender address gender equality in a more qualitative way.

Public preschool education authorities and education institutions are both mandated by law and official policy. Preschool education authorities are public bodies responsible for preschools within their geographical jurisdiction such as municipalities and districts. I use education institutions to refer to public organizations that practice

preschool education such as preschool units and individual preschools. The distinction between authorities and institutions in the field of education is that authorities have authority over the education institutions that are located in their jurisdiction. Education authorities share with education institutions that they engage in interpreting and implementing policy formulated at higher political-administrative levels, and that they are held accountable to their mandate. But municipalities have a dual role since they also determine local policy on gender and preschool education, which education institutions must implement.

Official policy on gender and gender equality in preschools has generated mixed responses in the political environment as well as in the social environment such as the mass media. The mass media, for example, feature news about gender and gender pedagogy in preschools and debates between supporters and opponents coming from all parts of the political spectrum.

One such preschool institution that has been emphasized as an example of gender pedagogy in Swedish preschools is the preschool Egalia. Since its opening in 2010, the preschool Egalia has garnered attention both inside Sweden and abroad. The preschool Egalia is a small, public coeducational preschool located in the Södermalm district of Stockholm. At Egalia, egalitarian values and gender pedagogy permeates the foundation of the preschool and pedagogic activities. Gender egalitarianism can be defined as the specific branch of egalitarianism, which is based on the assumption that people of various genders are equal and should be granted equal rights and freedoms, including freedom of gender expression and freedom from discrimination, violence, etc.

The practice of gender egalitarianism can be understood in at least two ways. One perspective assumes that men and women are different, regardless of whether differences are biological or socially constructed, and should therefore be treated differently in order to create a more equal situation. For example, if women tend to be more dependent on other people and men tend to be more autonomous, an egalitarian practice would be to work pedagogically to develop girls' autonomy and boys' closeness to other people. In pedagogic terms, this has been referred to as compensatory pedagogy, coined by Danish scholar Anne-Mette Kruse (Kruse, 1992; Kruse, 1996), and adapted to the Swedish context by Kajsa Svaleryd and Kajsa Wahlström (Bayne, 2009, p. 133). Compensatory pedagogy is widespread in Scandinavia, practiced for example in the Icelandic preschool model, *Hjalli*, and at the Swedish pioneer preschools in compensatory pedagogy, *Björntomten* and *Tittmyran*. Wahlström was the head of these preschools, and Svaleryd worked as a preschool teacher at one of the preschools (ibid.).

A different perspective, which seems closer to the gender pedagogy practiced at Egalia, assumes that society can be more equal by treating everyone in the same way, regardless of gender. If everyone is treated equally, or in a neutral way, gender differences will dissolve and we will become more equal. Pedagogy aims at de-constructing normative gender categories. To radical feminists, neutrality is something that exists outside of the binary gender system. Radical feminist argue that within a masculine symbolic order, sexual difference does not only denote binary opposition but a dimension of dominance and exclusion. This masculine symbolic order is in a relationship with what it excludes: femininity. And the masculine symbolic order requires the excluded feminine to reproduce itself in order to reproduce masculinity (Cheah,

Grosz, Butler, & Cornell, 1998, p. 27). Neutrality then takes a meaning of challenging the symbolic order that maintains the relationship between the included masculine and the excluded feminine.

Since Egalia works to create conditions for children to grow up free from expectations based on their gender, it has been necessary for the head of Egalia to repeatedly stress to the media that Egalia is not trying to either invert gender roles and gender hierarchies, which women-centered feminists have been associated with because they have expressed the need to educate children in so-called feminine values of caring, connection, and community (Maher & Ward, 2002, p. 91), and that Egalia is not trying to eliminate children's awareness of sex, or to make everyone homosexual. Swedish and international observers have reported on Egalia, sometimes referring to the concept of gender pedagogy in preschools in terms of what an active blogger and participant to public debate has labeled *gender madness* in Sweden.[4] Others have praised Egalia for their gender pedagogy, and the preschool also has a long waiting list.[5]

One aspect of the preschool Egalia's pedagogy involves utilizing the personal pronoun, *hen*, in order to create a more egalitarian and inclusive atmosphere at the preschool. The official Swedish national encyclopedia, defines *hen* as a gender-neutral personal pronoun to be used in place of *he* or *she* [*han* or *hon*] (Nationalencyklopedin,

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[4] See for example Huffington Post's June 26, 2011 articles "Gender Bias Fought At Egalia Preschool In Stockholm, Sweden," and June 27, 2011 "'Gender madness': Swedish pre-school bans 'him' and 'her'", Independent's July 3, 2011 article "'Gender-neutral' pre-school accused of mind control," BBC News' July 7, 2011 article "Sweden's 'gender-neutral' pre-school," New York Times' November 13, 2012 article "Swedish School's Big Lesson Begins With Dropping Personal Pronouns." See also Tanja Bergkvist's blog http://tanjabergkvist.wordpress.com/ for example: "Svenskt genusvansinne når utländsk press" or **"**Genuspedagogik i förskolan" part 1, 2, 3, and 4. Or Svenska Dagbladet's October 11, 2013 article "Genusförskola är inte jämställdhet," Aftonbladet's January 29, 2011 article "Förskola – utan flickor och pojkar," and Dagens Nyhetar's February 14, 2012 article "På Egalia tas fokus bort från könet."
[5] See the local newspaper Södermalmsnytt's February 3, 2012 article "Här ska ingen sorteras efter sitt kön."

2012). Another aspect that seems to make Egalia unique is that the preschool focuses on providing children equal access to emotions rather than simply focusing on equal access to teaching aids, physical space, and equal attention from the preschool teachers.

In 2006, the Delegation made a distinction between gender pedagogy and *jämställdhets* pedagogy. *Jämställdhets* pedagogy denotes a quantitative way of thinking about equality, equal opportunities, rights, and obligations, or equal access to something whereas gender pedagogy implies an understanding of how we perform gender in individual and collective actions, as well as in our social and material structure (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, pp. 166-167). While gender pedagogy may be central to implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, the term gender pedagogy seems clouded with confusion and the more qualitative expression may not have high status in the government, the public, or among preschool employees. The concept of gender pedagogy also does not seem to have high priority in Swedish preschool education policy and it might have to make way for prioritizing a more quantitative, so-called *jämställdhets* pedagogy involving concepts such as equal rights, equal opportunities, and anti-discrimination. This suggests that official policy is articulated and implemented in a field of discursive struggle for definitions of gender, *jämställdhet*, and pedagogy in preschool education. It relates to the coexistence of different ideas about what gender is; whether gender is a biological and psychological construct or a social construct. The coexistence of different types of gender pedagogy and the absence of any clear guidelines on what gender pedagogy best implements the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles also expresses a contradiction in the commitment to gender equality. It seems that gender equality is

central to Swedish state policy making and Swedish self-identity but that this commitment coexists with a tendency to allow essentialist definitions of gender to prosper in society and more quantitative definitions of gender equality and gender pedagogy to take the stage.

1.1.1 Problem Statement

In 2011 Skolinspektionen inspected preschools in the Södermalm district of Stockholm. Skolinspektionen is The Swedish Schools Inspectorate. According to Skolinspektionen, "the role of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate is to monitor and scrutinize. In connection with these supervisory and quality auditing activities, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate provides advice and guidance as to what a school needs to rectify on the basis of the requirements of legislation" (Skolinspektionen, 2011b). Skolinspektionen also has other tasks such as investigating and deciding on grievance reports from parents or students, regular supervision, specific quality audits, and issuing licenses to expand or start independent schools (ibid.).

Skolinspektionen concluded that preschools in the Södermalm district are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns - - which is part of their mandate according to official preschool policy, rules and guidelines.

Skolinspektionen's inspection "assesses to what extent the institution, at the time of the audit depart from the requirements and expectations expressed in the Education Act, curricula, and other regulations relating to the education system within the examined areas" (Skolinspektionen, 2011a, p. 2). Skolinspektionen emphasizes the quality assurance system that Stockholm has established. According to Skolinspektionen, the system for working with quality involves that:

Planning, monitoring, and evaluation of preschools occur at several levels. The work on quality is based on the municipality's quality system ILS (Integreret ledningssystem [Integrated management system]) in which goals, commitments, work methods, results, analysis, and development are documented. Based on the overall objectives that have been set, preschools develop concrete goals and commitments for activities annually in their plans for pedagogic activities. These plans are followed up and in turn broken down to the department level in local work plans. On an annual basis, each preschool unit compiles their work on quality in a quality report in which results, analyses, and proposals for development are reported. The work regarding development of the quality report us attached to the work on quality carried out within the unit throughout the year, during which employees also utilize self-assessment to evaluate pedagogic activities. The municipality's user survey also forms a foundation for assessing goal achievement in the district in separate quality reports. The district's reports are then compiled at an administrative level in the education department upon engaging in dialogue with districts regarding the overall results. The municipal government office (Stadsledningskontoret) follows up on the city council's goals for preschool education in respective districts via ILS. The municipality also has preschool inspectors whose tasks are to evaluate the extent to which preschools achieve goals (ibid., p. 2-3).

Despite this extensive and intricate quality system, the inspection finds that work on quality in some districts of Stockholm is not fully implemented. Furthermore, the inspection concludes that preschools across Stockholm have implemented the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns to varying extents. Some preschools have worked consciously with approaches as well as development of the pedagogic environment, but at some preschools, an active effort to counteract traditional gender patterns is missing (ibid., p. 4). The Delegation observed the same problem related to implementation at preschools across Sweden in its 2006 report (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 11).

Regarding preschools in the Södermalm district, the inspection concludes: "Preschools do not work sufficiently consciously to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles (Lpfö98, 1 the preschool's fundamental values and missions) [and] the

preschools' plans against degrading treatment do not meet the requirements of the regulations (14a chapter 8 § 1985 Education Act)" (ibid., p. 16).

In response to the inspection's findings that preschools in Södermalm are not working sufficiently to implement the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, the Södermalm district notes "We are aware that this is an area in need of development and we will discuss with heads of preschools different ways to support preschools. The district administration will also elevate the good role models we have in the district" (Södermalms stadsdelsförvaltning, 2012, p. 4). Specifically, the district elevates the preschool Egalia as a source of expertise and experience regarding gender pedagogy in preschools. The Södermalm district writes, "Egalia's knowledge and experience will be presented at a meeting with heads of preschools," (ibid.) and

> In order to spread good practices the district administration will arrange pedagogic weeks. During these weeks, employees from different preschools will present work methods and good examples from their pedagogic activities that employees from other preschools can utilize at their preschools. Employees from the preschool Egalia will participate during the pedagogic week in the spring (ibid.).

Lastly, the district stresses that three preschool units in Södermalm have so-called gender pedagogues, who will form a gender network to disseminate their knowledge (ibid., p. 5). The Delegation has also suggested that educating gender pedagogues can assist preschools in their work to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

Implementation of official policy is a complex issue in the study of public affairs and administration. The inspection points to the specific mandates and the gap that exist between the official policy goals and the implementation of these in the Södermalm

district. Three explanations for the issues related to implementation arise: preschools fail to comply with their mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns; preschools are incapable of implementing this mandate because they misinterpret the concepts inherent in the goal; or they lack the needed knowledge and resources. It is likely that a combination of these issues contributes to explaining the problems related to implementation.

In effort to solve the problems raised by implementation, official measures have been taken to increase accountability awareness and performance at the preschool level. For example, one measure that was institutionalized in response to the 2010 Education Act aims at mainstreaming of the role of the head of the preschool across the country. Today, the head of the preschool can only be referred to as such [in Swedish: *förskolachef*] and has strictly defined responsibilities that are parallel to a school principal's responsibilities (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2012). Also, a management by objectives system has been instated. Management by objectives is a management strategy that builds on the philosophy that when employees are part of the organizational goal setting process they will be more committed to reaching the goals. Official policy is coupled with a performance management system in which employees set objectives for daily pedagogic activities that are in accordance with official policy. These objectives are the foundation for performance measurement and evaluation. Informational lectures on gender have been held across districts, and so-called gender networks in which gender issues can be discussed and solved have been created.

But a fourth explanation, which requires a different approach, shines from right below the surface: The mandate to "counteract traditional gender roles and gender

patterns" may be purposefully vague, signifying a compromise between major forces in society such as labor market interests, feminists inside and outside the political-administrative system, political parties, and public opinion.

The mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns in preschools does not appear to be clearly defined, and as I have mentioned above, gender roles and gender patterns and traditional expressions of these can mean different things. Therefore, implementation may be more complicated than it appears.

Perhaps the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns in preschools, rather than providing a real directive to preschools to practice gender pedagogy, contributes to a discursive construction of Swedish society and education system as equal, progressive, free, and democratic, - - which only serves to mask and sustain a deeper state of inequality and lack of freedom. In this case, the instilled performance and management by objectives system serves an ideological purpose, imploring employees in the preschool education system to not think about the underlying causes of inequality but instead to internalize official Swedish values of democracy and human rights, hence reproducing a certain social order. I understand ideology as a system that keeps us unconscious of or unprepared to challenge our participation in reproducing a certain social reality. Ideology is in this way related to the "unknown knowns" that Slavoj Žižek refer to as a "horizon of meaning of which we are unaware, but which is always already, here structuring our approach to reality" (Žižek, 2006). In a way, ideology conceals discursive struggles for hegemony to define reality and the discursive struggles that are at the basis for policy formation and implementation.

1.2. Research Question

The 2011 inspection perceives it as a problem that preschools in Södermalm are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. The 2006 Delegation concluded that the same problem exists at preschool across Sweden. Above, I proposed different explanations to the problem, each of which entails a different solution. In this dissertation, I examine these explanations and the emerging solutions to the problem by asking the key research question: *Considering that the political-administrative system perceives it as a problem that preschools in the Södermalm district of Stockholm, Sweden, are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns - - which is part of their mandate according to official preschool education policy, rules, and guidelines - - how can this implementation problem be explained? Furthermore, what solutions can emerge?*

To address this key research question, I ask a set of sub questions:

1. What is the history of Swedish preschool education?

2. What are the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the Swedish education system?

3. What are the official policy, rules, and guidelines for values and goals that relate to gender and preschool education and how are they implemented?

4. How is official policy constructed and received in a wider political and social context?

5. How is official policy on gender and preschool education interpreted by preschools? And

6. How do preschool employees perceive implementation of this mandate and the concept of gender pedagogy?

Together these sub questions lead me on the way to an answer of the key research question by providing an understanding of how the policy to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns in preschools was formulated and mandated to preschools in a historically specific material and discursive context, how implementation is sought and how this implementation is perceived to fail. Understanding these conditions can lead to insight into explanations to the problems raised by implementation and the emergence of possible solutions.

Addressing these sub questions requires several tasks, which I will address throughout the chapters of this dissertation. The first task, involving the first and the second sub question, is to examine the historical foundation of preschool education in Swedish society, and to investigate the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the education system. I will address these issues in chapter four, after presenting a review of the relevant literature informing my study in chapter two and my methodological considerations in chapter three.

The second task relates to the third sub question and involves analyzing official policy, rules, and guidelines for values and goals that relate to gender and preschool education, and instructions of how to implement these values. This contributes to understanding the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and patterns and the desired implementation of this mandate. I will address this in chapter five.

Considering the position of official policy, rules, and guidelines in tension between discursive forces in society, the next task is to answer the fourth sub question by investigating how policy is constructed and received in a wider social context, which I will do in chapter six. This involves examining the political and social environment in which policy is created, interpreted, and implemented.

To further investigate the problems related to implementation, the fifth and sixth sub questions relate to the preschool level, by asking for an analysis of how official policy on gender and preschool education is interpreted by preschools, and of how preschool employees perceive implementation of this mandate and the concept of gender pedagogy. I answer these questions in chapter seven and eight, respectively. Finally, based on these analytical steps, I provide a comprehensive answer to the research question in chapter nine.

1.3 Research Significance

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the perceived gap between the policy goal to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, and the implementation of this mandate. The purpose is also to examine whether and how the problems raised by implementation can be solved considering discursive constraints in the policy formation and implementation environment.

This is an important management problem, which is rarely considered in public administration. It is also an important feminist concern relating to the degree to which state policy and its implementation contribute to reproducing and/or challenging a prevailing social order, particularly the patriarchal and class relations. Lastly, I see this also as an important concern for the sociology of education because the question

addresses education policy and pedagogy as arenas for social and political struggles and the extent to which education institutions reproduce a dominant social order. The research question therefore suggests an interdisciplinary study informed by literature from the fields of sociology of education, organization theory, and feminist theory.

Empirical studies of gender and preschool education in Sweden have tended to focus on the implementation of certain gender pedagogies and policies, see for example Bayne (2009), Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan (2006), Wahlström (2003), and Svaleryd (2003). Studies also consider construction of gender differences in preschools and how perceptions of these form patterns in interaction between children and adults, see for example Wahlström (2003), Svaleryd (2003), Månsson (2000), Hellman (2010), Hemborg & Söderberg (2011), Eidevald, 2009, Rithander (1991), and Odelfors (1998). Elisabet Öhrn finds that "Research on the various constructions of gender, including those of masculinity, certainly is most important. There has been a tendency in earlier Swedish and Nordic research into gender and education to concentrate on girls' subordination, thereby paying less interest to variation and agency within groups of girls as well as groups of boys" (Öhrn, 2000, p. 134). According to Elisabet Öhrn and Gaby Weiner, "Sweden has witnessed in recent years an upsurge of research (mainly doctoral studies) on gender and schooling ranging from examination of masculinities and femininities in the Swedish classroom to the intersectional influence of gender, ethnicity and social class on students' understandings of mathematics and science" (Öhrn & Weiner, 2009, p. 425).

Some studies have embraced the preschool as part of a political-administrative system; see for example Wernersson (2009). Herein, Charlotta Edström finds an equal

treatment discourse, an individuality-oriented discourse, and a knowledge discourse in the presentation of municipalities' mission regarding preschools' work on gender equality (Edström, 2009). But these discourses are not linked to broader socio-political and theoretical discourses. Angerd Eilard identifies a colonial white westernized discourse that interacts with other power-orders such as gender, sexual orientation (heteronormativity), and class in books for compulsory schools from 1962 to 2007. Eilard also identifies a patriarchal gender discourse, a heteronormative discourse within a discourse on *jämställdhet*, and a neoliberal individuality-oriented discourse (Eilard, 2009). This analysis goes into the deeper discursive structure and reproduction of social order, noting that the presentation of gender equality and diversity converge with typical norms and values of the time, as they are also expressed in curricula (ibid., p. 130). But the study does not focus on preschool policy, perceptions, or the wider social and political context in which these are constructed.

Despite attention to municpalities's responsibilities with regard to gender and preschool education, and perceptions of this responsibility, in previous studies, such as Henkel (2005), studies have rarely considered gender and preschool policy and implementation as situated in a wider discursive context, informed by feminist sociological and political-administrative theory. This is the gap my study contributes to filling. My review of the literature in chapter two below suggests an interdisciplinary feminist theoretical framework to answer my interdisciplinary research question.

1.4 Chapter Conclusion and Map to the Dissertation

I began this chapter by introducing the context of my study and my problem statement. I provided a brief history of Swedish feminism, so-called state feminism, and

Swedish preschool history and policy. I noted that Swedish commitment to gender

equality is contradictory to the extent the idea of gender as biologically or

psychologically determined is still widespread in society, while official policy expresses

commitment to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Furthermore,

gender difference remains a strong signifier of what it means to be Swedish, while

official policy holds gender equality is central to Swedish identity. I introduced and

defined central concepts to the dissertation such as discourse, gender, gender equality,

and egalitarianism. I noted the distinction between qualitative and quantitative aspects of

gender equality and gender pedagogies, introducing the concept of *jämställdhet* to

capture gender equality in Swedish state policy making. I explained how Swedish

preschools are held responsible for promoting gender equality in Swedish society today

and the special status that the preschool Egalia holds in the Södermalm district and to this

study. I introduced the setting that the Södermalm district of Stockholm provides for this

study, focusing on the affluent and highly educated segment of the population that resides

in the district. I discussed the specific problems related to implementing the feminist

preschool, which this dissertation is concerned with providing four potential explanations

to the problems related to implementation. I return to these in the conclusion to the

dissertation. I presented my key research question and a set of sub questions, which I

address in separate analytical chapters.

In chapter two I present my review of the literature related to my research

question. I also introduce my interdisciplinary theoretical framework for addressing my

research question. In chapter three I discuss methodology, which includes my data

sources, data construction, strengths and weaknesses of my data, and my analytical

framework. In five analytical chapters I address separate sub questions to my key research question. In chapter four I address sub questions 1 and 2: What is the history of preschool education? And, what are the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the Swedish education system? This chapter focuses on the history and ideology of preschool education and provides a more detailed setting to studying official policy, the political and social environment, and perceptions at the preschool level. In chapter five I address sub question 3: What are the official policy, rules, and guidelines for values and goals that relate to gender and preschool education and how are these implemented? This entails an analysis of key official documents related to gender equality and preschool education at the central and municipal level of government in Sweden and Södermalm, Stockholm. In chapter six I address sub question 4: How is official policy on gender and preschool education interpreted by preschools? I analyze policy documents and party programs of political parties in the Swedish national parliament in addition to public opinion shaped in part in opinion pieces and articles in major Swedish newspapers. In chapter seven I address sub question 5: How is official policy on gender and preschool education interpreted by preschools? To address this question, I present my analysis of interviews with preschool employees at three preschool units in the Södermalm district. This data also provides the foundation for my analysis in chapter eight, where I address sub question 6: How do preschool employees perceive implementation of this mandate and the concept of gender pedagogy? Finally, in chapter nine, I synthesize my findings and address my key research question. I also provide an answer to the question that the title of my dissertation poses: Does the feminist preschool in Sweden exist? The answer

is likely to be a yes with some hesitations. In chapter nine I also address key limitations to my study and suggest further research and policy implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to address an interdisciplinary research question, it is required to review different sources of literature, such as sociology of education and theories of public organization. The critical evaluation of these theoretical contributions is informed by a feminist perspective within each of these fields. I discuss how contributions and limitations can be utilized and mended to form an interdisciplinary and feminist theoretical framework.

Using a radical feminist approach to review theories in sociology of education as well as organization theories is useful to my study, because feminism as a critical perspective addresses the inference of power from reproduction of social relations such as patriarchy and class hegemony and is able to illuminate elements of feminist concerns that some theories are blind to.

2.1 Sociology of Education

Studies in sociology of education are commonly based on functionalist theory, conflict theory, and interactionist theory. Within recent decades, critical, postmodern, and poststructural fields of thought have contributed to theoretical debates and analyses in the field (Sadovnik, 2011, pp. 3-17). A combination of insights from different levels of analysis often contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of society. I review theoretical and empirical contributions below, highlighting how they engage traditional pluralist, managerial and class perspectives on the state. I add this perspective in order to establish education policy as an issue of governance in capitalist democratic society and to link sociology of education to organization theory.

2.1.1 Functionalist Theory

Functionalist theory has its origins in Émile Durkheim's general sociological theory and sociology of education (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 3). Following Durkheim's sociological theory, functionalists focus on the processes that maintain social order and a normal state of consensus and integration (ibid., p. 4). Durkheim notes:

> Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demands. But on the other hand, without a certain diversity all co-operation would be impossible; education assures the persistence of this necessary diversity by being itself diversified and specialized. … Education is, then, only the means by which society prepares, within the children, the essential conditions of its very existence (Durkheim, 1956).

Education is seen as a key institution that fosters cohesion, common consciousness, meaning, and harmony - - thus preventing the potential ultimate negative relation in modern society: a state of normlessness or *anomie* in Durkheimian terms (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 3 and Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 51). Within a functionalist, pluralist framework, "modernization is both a necessary condition for the emergence of a democratic state and a source of pathological influences that can undermine it. … Education produces political tolerance, inculcates the value of participation, and generates beliefs in democratic norms" (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 51)

Modern functionalist theory is also rooted in Talcott Parsons' pluralist theory on education, in which education performs a function in developing and maintaining modern, democratic society, particularly by creating equal opportunities for all people in society (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 5). Parsons analyses the school class as a social system, relating its structure to the primary functions it serves in society. According to Parsons,

First, from the functional point of view, the school class can be treated as an agency of socialization. … The socialization function may be summed up as the development in individuals the commitments and capacities which are essential prerequisites of their future role-performance. Commitments may be broken down in turn into two components: commitment to the implementation of the broad *values* of society, and commitment to the performance of a specific type of role within the *structure* of society. … Capacities can also be broken down into two components, the first being competence or the skill to perform the tasks involved in the individual's roles, and the second being 'role responsibility' or the capacity to live up to other people's expectations of the interpersonal behavior appropriate to these roles. … On the other hand, it is, from the point of view of society an agency of 'manpower' allocation (Parsons, 1959, pp. 297-298).

In Parson's view, social systems are always characterized by an institutionalized value system, and individuals hold values. They are "a functional imperative of a system is maintaining individual motivations to conformity with institutionalized role expectations" (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 37). These role expectations are in turn enforced by individuals at a psychological level (ibid., p. 38). Parsons finds that "bureaucratic organizations are defined in terms of their values, which derive from the individual roles that compose them and the society whose functions they serve" (ibid., p.116).

Functionalists argue that education serves a purpose in meritocratic society. Society is thought to be just if the state is able to create equal in opportunities for all people, but this set the stage for competition for unequal not necessarily equal rewards or results. Through education, among other things, the state provides students with necessary knowledge and crucial abilities to participate in technocratic and democratic society and prepares students to readily adapt to new conditions in the labor market (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 5). Education serves intellectual purposes by developing students' cognitive skills, knowledge, and higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking,

analysis, and evaluation. Political purposes prepare students to participate in the existing

political order, to assimilate diverse cultural groups and to foster allegiance to the

political order. Education serves a social purpose to socialize children into common

values, norms, and practices in society (ibid., p. 4-5), particularly modern values:

> Modern values include beliefs in *universalism* (all should be treated equally before the law and in the market), *achievement* (one should strive for individual excellence and be rewarded for it), *future orientation* (it is worth putting off present pleasures for long-term future gains), and *equality and trust* (all have a right to participate in decision-making). Without the diffusion of modern values, without a sense of achievement and individual worth, economic growth will be slow and halty or forced and unstable (Alford & Friedland, 1985, pp. 48-49).

Functionalist education theory converges with an overall pluralist perspective on

the state and society, within which liberal democratic and conservative politics and

policies emerge. Insights of functionalist theory contribute to our understanding of the

intellectual, political, social and economic purposes of education in modern democratic

and capitalist society.

Socialization and development theory emerges from a belief in community and

progress. These theories express an increasing sensitivity to individuals as productive

units. The development of individuals is then considered central to the well-being of the

nation state:

> While national development was contingent on individual development, individual development itself hinged on childhood experience. This assumption presupposed continuity of personality throughout the life cycle ('the child is the father to the man' [*sic*.]), the malleability of the individual child, and the feasibility of explicit intervention in the development of the child. All of this has been referred to as the eighteenth-century discovery of socialization theory (Ramirez & Boli, 2011, p. 227).

John Dewey's liberal democratic theory of education highlights the so-called integrative

social and political functions of education, as an instrument for the continuity of social

life. Dewey writes:

> A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder (Dewey, 1916, p. 99)

A developmental function of education promotes psychological and moral

development of the individual. According to Dewey,

> When it is said that education is development, everything else depends on *how* development is conceived. Our net conclusion is that life is development, and that developing, growing, is life. Translated into its educational equivalent, that means (i) that the educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end; and that (ii) the educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming (ibid., p. 49-50).

Furthermore, "All education which develops power to share effectively in social

life is moral. It forms a character which not only does the particular deed socially

necessary but one which is interested in that continuous readjustment which is essential

to growth" (ibid., p. 360).In Dewey's view, while inequality is inevitable, education

provides individuals with a fair chance to compete for privileges, serving an egalitarian

function (Bowles & Gintis, 2011, pp. 53-54).

Liberal, conservative, and radical feminist perspectives on gender and preschool

education all stress that normative gender roles are acquired and realized at a very early

stage in our lives, and that preschool education is an arena for socialization and

reproduction of normative gender roles (Maher & Ward, 2002; Davies, 2000; Davies,

2003). With regard to preschool education, Friedrich Fröbel's curriculum for preschool education draws on a functionalist view on education and has been the basis for liberal preschool pedagogy and reform in the Swedish education system (Broman, 2009; TAM-Arkiv, Lärarförbundet, Lärarnas Riksförbund, SFHL, 2010). Fröbel's writings on *Pedagogics of the Kindergarten* focus on purposeful development of the whole child: "Man is a created being and as such is both a member of a whole and also in himself a whole; he is both a part and a whole. On the one hand he is a member of the created universe and on the other he is a complete being, since his creator's nature, which is a unity in itself, lives in him" (Lilley, 1967, p. 93). Further, "A man becomes a whole person as he becomes conscious of all the conditions and relationships of his life and lives up to their demands. Then he is able to fulfill all his obligations as a human being" (ibid., p. 95). The function of preschool education is to educate children "in accordance with demands of their nature and with the present stage of human growth" (ibid., p. 97). Thus, "the aim of this institution is to make the needs and demands of the child's world correspond to the present stage of mankind's development and to provide parents and other educators with appropriate plays and means of occupation, i.e. of education, and so to manifest the general expedience of our appeal" (ibid.).

Fröbel's pedagogy is not free from gender. For example, Fröbel writes about differences in girls' and boys' perceptions about their roles in life, which emerge already during the second phase of education through play:

> Later on the differences in attitude and aim between the boy and the girl become clear. The boy will play longer with the sphere and the cube as separate and distinct things while the girl prefers the single complete toy, the doll. The boy feels that he must master the outer world, the girl that she is meant to foster life. This soon becomes more obvious. The girl sees the spherical and angular forms put together in the doll, her play-child; the boy sees them in his mother's

yardstick or his father's walking-stick which he uses as a hobby horse (ibid., p. 104).

Fröbel's pedagogy is founded on an "essentialist definition of women's biologically determined nature and role in society" (Beatty, 1995, p. 48), which links motherhood and mothers' engagement in play with children to children's welfare (ibid., p. 44). Fröbel writes: "The second plaything, as indeed all and every play with the child, is significant for the close connection which it establishes between the child and his mother. … Another point to notice is that it is actually the degree of satisfaction experienced in this play which determines the style and character and sets the keynote of his future life" (Lilley, 1967, pp. 105-106). According to Gilbert R. Austin, parental involvement in preschool has traditionally been central because preschools have been seen as an upward extension of the home rather than a downward extension of the state (Austin, 1976, pp. 173-174). To Fröbel, preschool education is a means to fostering social harmony and non-coercive social change by inculcating attitudes of voluntary self-control and cooperation in individuals from a very early age (Beatty, 1995, p. 38). Preschool education in this view serves important political and social purposes with nation-building elements.

Gender in functionalist theory. Functionalist theory on gender focuses on socialization into gender roles. According to its liberal-democratic perspective, schools reproduce normative gender roles through socialization. Hence, to the extent that liberal discourse maintains the binary gender system, it can be considered conservative (Cheah, Grosz, Butler, & Cornell, 1998). The frameworks of socialization and development assume that social forces operating on children will produce adults that fit into society's

negotiated gender categories. Changing gender roles can be understood as a generally smooth evolutionary process in which liberal values challenge the inequality traditional gender roles and gender patterns generate. Frances Maher and Janie Victoria Ward argue that liberal-progressive views on gender in preschool education tend to emphasize support of individual talents and encouraging children to explore a range of interests to develop talents, away from traditional limitations that gender imposes on boys and girls. In this view, teachers should be responsive to all students as individuals and include women's perspective in the curriculum. Preschools have a responsibility to incorporate feminine characteristics into the all aspects of the pedagogy from organization of pedagogic activities to rewarding students (Maher & Ward, 2002, pp. 84-87, 91). Liberal discourse on gender views society from the level of individuals and groups. Liberal-democratic and progressive feminists argue that gender-role stereotyping remains strong in westernized societies and that much needs to be done to correct remaining inequalities between men and women. Poor education and discrimination are barriers to people's full participation in society (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 413). As values in society change and new normative gender roles emerge, liberal feminists believe that the education system is capable of socializing children to these new values and gender roles.

For example, as feminism proved successful in increasing women's opportunities in the labor market and society at large, coeducation surfaced as a solution to the need for men and women to learn how to work together as equals in the labor market (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 51). This argument clearly locates gender harmony as important to capitalist society. The role of the state in this context becomes taking over the costs of reproduction and to provide the best conditions for capitalism, including addressing

social problems through public policy. The political-administrative myth, which asserts that public institutions, such as preschools, are "effective and efficient instruments for the realization of publicly proclaimed goals" (Ferguson, 1984, p. 16), supports this assumption.

Madeleine Arnot argues the discursive shift within the functionalist perspective to more neoliberal politics has transformed egalitarianism by reworking the concept of individual rights into a notion of individualized difference and diversity. This discursive change encourages teachers to take account of differentiations *within* rather than *between* groups and shift the attention from structural inequalities to individual responsibility (Arnot, 2002, p. 257). From this follows a reworking of normative gender roles, in which gender differences are also seen as individualized differences and diversity.

The overarching theme in neoliberal education policy "is that schooling is to be dominated by the knowledge and skills privileged in the (stratified) economy, and teachers and schools are to be held accountable to standards and performance targets" (Lipman, 2011, p. 15). Neoliberal notions of individuality challenge not only structural explanations of inequality but also the feminist idea that humans are individuals but are also people with gender, racial, class, and cultural identities (Maher & Ward, Gender and Teaching, 2002, p. 99). The concept of intersectionality stands in contrast to liberal perspectives on difference in general.

Conservative discourse on gender emphasizes that human bodies take two forms that are essentially different from each other and that we are meant to be either male or female. In this view, it is acceptable to assume that gender is a reflection of innate qualities determined by a person's biological sex. According to Motschenbacher,

The concept of two – and only two – sexes is so deeply entrenched in Western societies that it has gained the status of a natural fact in public opinion. Insights from the biosciences, however, suggest that a continuum would be a much more adequate characterisation of gender diversity. Yet, everyday discourses of gender sketch it as a strictly binary category (female/male), neglecting inter-gender overlap and intra-gender diversity (Motschenbacher, 2010, p. 13).

Conservative views on education and gender stress that individuals do not suffer structural constraints and are able to make fully informed rational decisions about their own lives. Stereotypical gender-roles are a not considered a problem and patterns in society are ultimately based on social agents' free choice. Conservative ideology holds that all individuals, regardless of gender, have responsibility for acquiring skills and traits that are attractive to the labor market, which will eventually lead them into higher-income jobs (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 413). Preschools, in a conservative view, should support children in their natural development and support children's interests, even if these interests take children on traditional gendered life paths (Maher & Ward, 2002, p. 76).

Understanding how functionalist sociological theory portrays the foundation and history of education systems and how functionalist and liberal democratic purposes of education surface in education policy are important to understanding the problem driving my research. Also, understanding implications that a belief in functionalist purposes of education have for the construction and reproduction of gender roles and gender patterns in society, and how these purposes can conflict is important to my analysis of education history and policy.

2.1.2 Conflict Theory
In conflict theory, functional theory has a theoretical counterpart that emphasizes conflict, power, and ideological hegemony. Conflict theory has its origins both in class

theory and managerial theory. Karl Marx founded the class perspective while the managerial perspective emerged as Max Weber's reaction to limitations in the class perspectives. Like functionalist sociology of education, conflict theory can be read in parallel to theories of the state and governance in democratic capitalist society.

According to Alan R. Sadovnik, conflict theorists believe that society is not held together by shared values but by the ability of dominant groups to impose their will. Ideologies or intellectual justifications created by those in power are designed to enhance their own position by legitimizing inequality and the unequal distribution of material and cultural goods (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 6).

Marxist conflict theorists view the economic structure as an epiphenomenon that influences all levels of analysis. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels note that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles (Marx & Engels, 1978, pp. 473, 483). The distinctive feature of modern bourgeois society is, however, that class antagonisms have been simplified and that society is split "into two great hostile camps; into two great classes facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (ibid. p. 474). Property is based on the antagonism between capital and wage-labor, which turns property into capital, into social power: "To be a capitalist, is to have not only a purely personal, but a social status in production. Capital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion. Capital is, therefore, not a personal, it is a social power" (ibid. p., 485). With this comes also political power: "the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of

the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (ibid., p. 775).

The internal contradiction of the state in class theory exists in the functional force of accumulation and the state's necessary endurance of crises and political class struggle. In a functionalist class view, states emerge with forms dictated by capitalism and the state must on the one hand sustain capitalist accumulation and on the other hand capitalist class rule (Alford & Friedland, 1985, pp. 288, 387).

In this perspective, theorists argue that there is a correspondence between the organization of schools and the organization of society and until society is fundamentally changed, reforming the education system will have little impact. The education system will only reproduce existing social relations and inequalities (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 6). As Marx and Engels note: "The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class" (Marx & Engels, 1978, p. 487). State policies reproduce the qualities of capitalism, and the state is seen in its historical specificity, not a universal structure, which maintains the legitimacy of the modes of production. In the functionalist expression of the class worldview, societal imperatives of production penetrate all institutions and levels of analysis, and power can be observed in the reproduction of hegemonic social relations. Thus mass education and class organization lay the foundation for class-conscious political action (Alford & Friedland, 1985, pp. 273-274).

The class perspective in conflict theory is exemplified in Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis' correspondence theory, which asserts the purpose of education is not only

to reproduce inequalities, but also to legitimate them. To make them look as if they are

not political and ideological. According to Bowles and Gintis, schooling's repressive

nature is inherent in the transformation of discipline into bureaucratic authority and

compliance into "behaviour modification". Rewards are given on the basis of conformity

to the social order of the school, which corresponds to the social order of society (Bowles

& Gintis, 2011, pp. 60-61). Bowles and Gintis are particularly sceptical of Dewey's

pedagogy and the internal conflicts between the functionalist purposes of education:

> If we accept for a moment the compatibility of various functions of education, we
> are confronted with a second group of questions concerning the power of
> education to counteract opposing tendencies in the larger society. If the education
> system is to be a central social corrective, the issue of its potential efficacy is
> crucial to the establishment of the liberal outlook. … Equality may be compatible
> with the other functions of education, but can the significant and pervasive system
> of racial, class, and sexual stratification be significantly modified by "equal
> schooling"? (Bowles & Gintis, 2011, p. 55)

Managerial conflict theorists also reject the functionalist, pluralist view that

society is integrated through a common value system (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 165).

Max Weber agreed with Marx that powerful forces dominate society, but he found that

inequality, or social stratification is more complicated than simply class; also political

power and social status should be analyzed (Weber, (1946) 1953). As Weber notes, here,

"The sociological concept of domination must consequently be more precise [than the

concept of power] and can only mean the probability that a *command* will be obeyed"

(Weber, 1968, p. 117). Power relations between dominant and subordinate groups

structure society but in addition to class, Weber examined status cultures because he

believed that people identify their group belonging by what they consume and with

whom they socialize (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 6). Social stratification is partly guaranteed by

status groups: "In content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle" (Weber, (1946) 1953, p. 69) and status privileges: "besides the specific status honor, which always rests upon distance and exclusiveness, we find all sorts of material monopolies" (ibid., p. 71). Weber argues: "With some oversimplification, one might thus say that 'classes' are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas 'status groups' are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special 'styles of life' (Weber, (1946) 1953, p. 73). According to Weber,

> Truly empirical sociological investigation begins only with the question, what did and still does motivate the individual functionaries and members of the community to conduct themselves in such a way as to bring about the creation of this 'community' and to insure its constitution? Any formal functional analysis that uses the 'whole' as its point of departure can accomplish only preliminary preparations for further investigation (Weber, 1968, p. 49).

Weber also finds that the state exercises political and military power without reference to capitalist interests, and has monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in a society. According to Weber, a compulsory political association with a continuous organization will be called a 'state' if, and insofar as, its administrative staff successfully claims the monopolization of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its authority" (Weber, 1968, p. 119). Furthermore, Weber finds that bureaucratic ways of thinking are bound to shape educational reforms (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 6), serving the needs of the rationalized bureaucracy: "Expressed in slogan-like fashion, the 'cultivated man,' rather than the 'specialist,' has been the end sought by education and has formed the basis

of social esteem in such various systems as the feudal, theocratic, and patrimonial structures of dominion" (Weber, 1922 (2007), pp. 242-243).

Randall Collins contributed to the Weberian perspective on conflict theory, arguing that education is used by dominant groups to secure more advantageous positions for themselves and their children in the occupational and social structure. Collins views society as shifting networks of groups and organizations held together by one or both of two principles: coalitions of interests, or dominance and submission. Collins developed status completion theory, which" explicitly rejects the notion that society is held together by common values, as held by Durkheim and Parsons, and he also rejects the Marxist view that the state and the society derive from some overall imperatives of the class relations of production" (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 172).

Collins states that power is not disembodied or floating in the "political culture" but held by individuals in organizations. Hence, important values are those that are publicly expressed by individuals occupying positions in dominant political institutions. In response to the functionalist idea that education produces equal opportunities Collins examines the link between education and stratification in American society suggests that the expansion of education requirements cannot be explained by increases in the skills needed to fulfill the job. Rather, education credentials are added on as necessary requirements for certain jobs with the intention to exclude certain groups from qualifying. Collins concludes, "The evidence best supports the conflict theory, although technical requirements have important effects in particular contexts" (Collins 2011). This finding converges with Weber's argument:

> When we hear from all sides the demand for an introduction of regular curricula and special examinations, the reason behind it is, of course, not a suddenly

awakened 'thirst for education' but the desire for restricting the supply for these positions and their monopolization by the owners of educational certificates . Today, the 'examination' is the universal means of this monopolization, and therefore examinations irresistibly advance (Weber, 1922 (2007), pp. 241-242).

John Meyer provides an institutional version of conflict theory, which links conflict theory of education with organizational isomorphism discussed below. Meyer abandons the "view of education as a production system constructing elaborated individuals. Modern education is seen instead as a system of institutionalized rites transforming social roles through powerful initiation ceremonies and as an agent transforming society by creating new classes of personnel with new types of authoritative knowledge" (Meyer, 1977) Meyer argues that the expansion of education in a worldwide perspective occurred not due to functional requirements or demands from the labor market but due to a worldwide process in which notions of citizenship and a democratic belief in education as necessary requirements of a civil society spread (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 7). Meyer argues that expanded and institutionalized education has legitimating effects:

> First, education functions in society as a legitimating theory of knowledge defining certain types of knowledge as extant and as authoritative. It also functions as a theory of personnel, defining categories of persons who are to be treated as possessing these bodies of knowledge and forms of authority. Second, education validates both elites and citizens. Discussions of the legitimating function of education often emphasize only its role in supporting elites and inequality. But the overwhelmingly dominant kind of education in the modern world is mass education, closely tied to the modern state and notion of universal citizenship (Meyer, 1977, pp. 66-67).

Hence educational expansion was legitimized by institutional ceremony and ritual rather than actual need (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 7).

Institutional explanations of the rise of universal public education in western European democracies resemble functionalist liberal-democratic explanations in stressing that education historically functioned to create coherence, unity, and equality in socializing children into society but also find that conflict between groups over access and opportunity have dominated education institutions (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 15). Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli argue, "The emerging systems of mass schooling were expected not only to preserve the social order but also to create the new national society, that is, to make progress possible" (Ramirez & Boli, 2011, p. 227). Institutionalists argue that mass schooling takes similar forms throughout the world driven by a dynamic world culture (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 15).

The new sociology of education adds complexity to conflict theory. Pierre Bourdieu's social and cultural reproduction theory argues that the education process reflects the interests of cultural and social elites. A key term in this analysis is cultural capital, which captures the idea that individuals' cultural characteristics are significant indicators of social status and class position. Bourdieu elaborated on cultural capital and symbolic violence, finding that education is a part of a symbolic process of social and cultural reproduction. Cultural reproduction ensures reproduction of the social order and social inequality. Here the education system is key to reproducing the social order in the society in which it is produced to serve this function:

> Among all the solutions put forward throughout history to the transmission of power and privilege, there surely does not exist one that is better concealed, and therefore better adapted to societies which tend to refuse the most patent forms of the hereditary transmission of power and privileges, than that solution which the educational system provides by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of class relations and by concealing, by an apparently neutral attitude, the fact that it fills this function. (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 72)

Jean-Claude Passeron and Bourdieu argue:

Because the traditional system of education manages to present the illusion that its action of inculcation is entirely responsible for producing the cultivated habitus, or, by an apparent contradiction, that it owes its differential efficacy exclusively to the innate abilities of those who undergo it, and that it is therefore independent of class determinations - - whereas it tends toward the limit of merely confirming and strengthening a class habitus which, constituted outside the School, is the basis of all scholastic acquirements - - it contributes irreplaceably toward perpetuating the structure of class relations and simultaneously legitimating it, by concealing the fact that the scholastic hierarchies it produces reproduce social hierarchies (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 205).

The education system conceals this function by establishing an illusion of its

absolute autonomy (ibid., p 198):

The educational system has never been able to present more completely the illusion of absolute autonomy with respect to all external demands, and in particular with respect to the interests of the dominant classes, than when the consonance between its essential function of inculcation, its function of conserving culture and its function of conserving 'the social order' was so perfect that its dependence on the objective interests of the dominant classes could remain unnoticed in the happy unconsciousness of elective affinities (ibid.)

In this analysis, Bourdieu and Passeron link macro and micro processes, pointing

to the misrecognition of the social conditions of a harmony between structures and

habitus (ibid.). For example, another way that the education system conceals the function

that it serves to reproduce social inequality is by claiming neutrality and complete

openness to all, regardless of social background. It is crucial that transmission of power

from one generation to the next and the process of masking the relationship between

social origin and academic performance in the education system involves that the

excluded comes to the understanding that they are themselves responsible for their own

exclusion: "The difference between deferred self-elimination and immediate elimination on the basis of a forecast of the objective chances of elimination, is the time required for the excluded to persuade themselves of the legitimacy of their exclusion" (ibid., p. 209).

According to Bourdieu and Passeron, the education system's ideological function is to provide legitimacy to the social order. This depends on social recognition of legitimacy of the institution of education and by misrecognition of the delegation of authority on which the education system bases its legitimacy (ibid., p 206). Power is to impose meaning in a way that articulates it as legitimate by concealing power relations (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 11).

Basil Bernstein argued that structural and interactional aspects of the education system reflect each other and should be analyzed holistically. Bernstein demonstrated empirically that micro level processes result in the reproduction of social stratification at a macro level (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 8). His code theory, in which restricted and elaborated class codes reflect different aspects of capitalism, can be seen as an effort to synthesize Marxist, Weberian and Durkheimian views.

According to Alan Sadovnik, contributions from Bernstein and Bourdieu have added the perspectives that "schooling corresponds to the dominant interests of society; as a result, upper- and middle-class forms of cultural and social capital become codified in the school's curriculum. Unlike functionalists, Bourdieu and Bernstein viewed these patterns as leading not to social cohesion and agreement but rather to class domination" (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 11).

Gender in conflict theory. Radical feminist sociologists of education have synthesized feminist and Marxist theory to link patriarchal gender relations to capitalist

economic processes, arguing that traditional gender roles are inexorably linked to reproduction of economic inequalities (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 17). In this view, Marxist feminist do not find that the bourgeoisie put to an end patriarchal relations. Rather, the bourgeois reworked patriarchal domination of women in terms of exploitation of women's labor. As Marx and Engels note:

> The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women. He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production. For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial (Marx & Engels, 1978, p. 488).

Radical feminists recognize that patriarchy has been incorporated in new ways into class society and that historical materialism provides a framework for also understanding patriarchy. Nancy Fraser, for example, notes that sexism functioned as distinction, in Bourdieu's sense:

> New gender norms enjoining feminine domesticity and a sharp separation of public and private spheres functioned as key signifiers of bourgeois difference from both higher and lower social strata. It is a measure of the eventual success of this bourgeois project that these norms later became hegemonic, sometimes imposed on, sometimes embraced by, broader segments of society (Fraser, 1990, p. 60).

Marxism and radical feminism are both social as well as intellectual movements and critical theories in the sense expressed originally by Marx[6] and applied to gender by Fraser:

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[6] Marx (1843) explains: "Now philosophy has become worldly, and the most incontrovertible evidence of this is that the philosophical consciousness has been drawn, not only externally but also internally, into the stress of battle. But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready-made solutions for all times

A critical social theory frames its research programme and its conceptual framework with an eye to the aims and activities of those oppositional social movements with which it has a partisan though not uncritical identification and interest. Thus, for example, if struggles contesting the subordination of women figured among the most significant of a given age, then a critical social theory for that time would aim, among other things, to shed light on the character and bases of such subordination (Fraser, 1987, p. 31).

Feminist conflict theorists argue that traditional gender roles and gender patterns in society are sexist and inherent in a capitalist and patriarchal social structure. The very concept of gender roles represents the dominant interests of male and class hegemony. Feminist theory rejects the economic and patriarchal ideology of reciprocity, which was nurtured in ideas about the family governed by need. They consider it an illusion that women get love and motherhood in return for taking on the responsibilities of the household, and that they fulfill themselves through others regarding. Feminist theorists argue that the changes that are made within the existing social order occur only grudgingly and hence traditional gender roles must be challenged through revolutionary conflict.

Feminist education theorists have proposed alternative feminist pedagogies to interrupt sexist gender socialization in schools, such as balancing curricula and pedagogic practices (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 17). Frances Maher and Mary Kay Tetreult propose incorporating more complex identities and intersectionality into the preschool curriculum, balancing it by gender, race, class, and culture. Feminist gender pedagogy is rooted in awareness that children from birth are socialized different, treated differently, and

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is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present – I am speaking of a ruthless criticism of everything existing, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of the conflict with the powers that be" (Marx, 1978a, p. 13). "So we can express the trend of our journal in one word: the work of our time to clarify to itself (critical philosophy) the meaning of its own struggles and its own desires. This is the work for the world and for us. It can only be the work of joint forces" (ibid., 15).

expected to behave differently depending on their gender. Practicing gender pedagogy means that production of knowledge in classrooms happens "from a self-consciously gendered and student-centered point of view" (Maher & Tetreault, 2001, pp. 41-42).

As mentioned above, Maher and Ward find that a liberal-progressive view on preschool education and gender tends to emphasize support of individual talents and encouraging children to explore a range of interests to develop talents, away from traditional limitations that gender imposes on boys and girls. In this view, teachers should be responsive to all students as individuals and include women's perspective in the curriculum. Preschools have a responsibility to incorporate feminine characteristics into the all aspects of the pedagogy from organization of pedagogic activities to rewarding students (Maher & Ward, 2002, pp. 84-87, 91). In contrast to a radical-multicultural perspective, which Maher and Ward advocate, the liberal-progressive view on preschool education does not consider that teachers must engage with pupils as individuals but also as people with gender racial, class, and cultural identities. In a radical-multicultural view, Maher and Ward stress that to these ends, teachers must be culture- and gender-sensitive, aware of their own journeys, their own struggles, and their own limitations as gendered, raced, and classed members of society (ibid., p. 99-101). This view supports the idea that gender pedagogy is an important investment in social change.

Arnot argues that the image and social relations of the patriarchal family has been a determining influence "on the shape of schooling, its authority relations, its shaping of the concept of teacher and the curriculum. The 'long shadow' of the family has influenced what Bernstein (1975) called 'the expression order of the school', or what Bourdieu (1993) called its 'institutional habitus'" (Arnot, 2002, p. 207). She explains

how we come to take up and reproduce certain gendered subject positions in a stratified structural setting:

> Men and women become the embodiment of a particular gender classification by internalizing and 'realizing' the principle that underlies it. They externalize their gendered identities through their behaviour, language, their use of objects, their physical presence and so on. It is through a process of 'realisation' that the dialectics of objective structures and social action are created. In the process of producing classed and gendered subjects who unconsciously recognise and realise the principles of social organisation, the reproduction of such power relations are ensured. Thus individuals internalise the objective and external structures and externalise them, transformed but not radically changed (Arnot, 2002, p. 121).

From a radical feminist position, gender roles are not based on consensus but on dominance and ideological hegemony. Change requires not only changing the content of established gender roles but also dismantling gender roles from actual bodies and uprooting the concept of gender roles itself by deconstructing the social construction of gender. For example, Donna Eder, Catherine Colleen Evans, and Stephen Parker have suggested the damaging effects of aggressive competitive sports in schools when it comes to gender equality:

> Increasingly, we are faced with the realization that only broad scale social change can address the problem of gender and sexual inequality. This includes a serious examination of our society's focus on aggressive competition. One action arising directly from the findings of this study would be to consider eliminating particularly aggressive and/or violent sports such as football and wrestling from secondary schools" (Eder, Evans, & Parker, 1995, p. 158).

This discussion could be relevant on a preschool level as well, but as the authors also note, aggressive competition is framed as necessary for our social well-being, given our need to compete with other individuals and other highly competitive countries in a global economy.

A radical feminist critique also emphasizes that knowledge is constructed in interaction and that socialization theory's tendency to assume that teachers are providers and students are receivers of knowledge disguises the ideological base of the hierarchical structure between teacher and student. For example, Barrie Thorne argues that the concept of socialization signals a one-directional impact of adults on children and that a view on children as social actors in a range of institutions would be less problematic from a radical feminist position (Thorne, 1993). A focus on adults as role models to children in a socialization process assumes that children have no separate concept of gender other than that provided by direct role models and that they have no agency related to re-producing traditional gender roles and patterns. Feminist theorists have shown that children in fact have clear concepts about gender and boundaries of femininity and masculinity, respectively, and that they guard these boundaries actively (Thorne, 1993; Davies, 2000; Davies, 2003).

When children at a very young age begin to behave as so-called gender guards, they do so on a basis of norms found in their families, the preschool, and the societal environment in which the family and the preschool is located (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 153). Children not only become gender guards of their own gendered behaviors, but also toward their peers and adults in their environment. Davies explains that once we position ourselves as a certain gender, we come to see the world from the perspective of someone in that position. This entails emotional commitment to our gender and we tend to develop a moral system organized around our specific belonging (Davies, 2000: 89-90).

From a very early age we learn to pick up on gender, and we actively defend our ideas about our gender. Thorne has analyzed reproduction of gender roles in schools finding that children do play with each other in schools but that they separate in schools much more readily than they do in other settings, and that teasing is one way that children enforce gender segregation (Thorne, 1993, p. 50). Bronwyn Davies adds nuance to the understanding of teasing in preschools, noting that "teasing is most usually understood as "peer pressure" by which the group chooses to make the individual conform to a more or less arbitrary set of "norms." But it can better be understood as the struggle of the group individually and collectively to achieve themselves as knowable individuals within a predictable, knowable, transparent collective reality" (Davies, 2000, p. 23). Furthermore, radical feminists critique the functionalist view on socialization and development for suggesting that children are 'adults-in-the-making' which defines children at their current stage as incomplete, a sort of 'adult ideological viewpoint': "It distorts the vitality of children's present lives to continually refer them to a presumed distant future" (Thorne, 1993, p. 3).

Davies' research on gender in preschools backs this view (Davies, 2003). Davies explains that discursive practice refers to all the ways in which we actively produce social and psychological realities. The constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions (Davies, 2000, p. 88). Once we take up a particular position we come to see the world from the perspective of someone in that position. This entails emotional commitment to our position as well as development of a moral system organized around the specific belonging, which we actively enforce (ibid., p. 89-90).

Since the 1990s, Nordic research on gender and education has been founded in a poststructural approach with inspirations from Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Thorne, and Davies. These approaches emphasize the active role that individuals play in everyday construction of gender, recognize that individual expectations to gender finds nourishment in collective conceptions, and are interested in how gender as a discourse materializes in the body. Nordic poststructural scholars of gender and education thus study how we 'do gender' in preschools and schools. For example, Dorte Marie Søndergaard practices a destabilizing discourse analysis, aiming to stimulate and encourage reflexivity by deconstructing strict discourses and storylines and the limiting subject positions they provide (Søndergaard, 2001, pp. 71-72).

Discourse analysis focuses on how gender serves as a cultural necessity for legitimation and recognition of self and others within established discursive formations. Destabilizing discourse analysis can be understood as exploring ways to make visible the "patterns of power and powerlessness and the multiple and conflicting discourses through which gender is accomplished as an obvious and taken for granted fact of everyday life" (Davies, 2000, p. 24). Similarly, Davies has also "developed the idea of category maintenance work, whereby children ensure that the categories of person, as they are coming to understand them are maintained as meaningful categories in their own actions and in the actions of those around them" (Davies, 2000, p. 23). Davies finds that the child is an active participant in the reconstruction of normative gender categories, not a passive recipient of socialization. She observed children "engaging in category maintenance work around any activities that disrupted the obviousness that each of them was exclusively

male or female. Male and female were achieved in this activity as opposite categories that take their meaning in a hierarchical relation to each other" (ibid.).

Nordic research on gender and education also takes a cultural approach, which is often inspired by Bourdieu. This perspective is often utilized to analyze how categorizations, such as gender, order life in the preschool. Eva Gulløv, for example, studies the function of gender in preschools, finding that it is used to practice dominance and classify children. She considers the effect of such classifications on children over time and in the interaction between children (Olesen, Aggerholm, & Kofoed, 2008, pp. 14-15).

Empirical research on preschools in Scandinavia has found that the preschool is a social and cultural organization with certain conceptions and routines attached to its central responsibilities, which in a complex manner interact with the production and reproduction of gender. Some research concludes that preschools are given the responsibility to care for children in the absence of parents, meeting their need for care, development, and learning. The preschool is also expected to administer central values in society among which equality and equal opportunity are central, and it is specifically designed to solve this problem in society (Olesen, Aggerholm, & Kofoed, 2008, p. 20).

Still, limited critical-feminist work has been published on Swedish preschools and education and the "majority of all the research on pre-school and school does not discuss either class, gender and ethnicity or the concepts related to those perspectives. School, instruction, subjects, activities, school leaders, teachers and pupils are all essentially dealt with as neutral concepts in the school system" (Broman, Rubinstein, & Hägerström, 2002).

2.1.3 Interactionist Theory

Interactionist theory represents an analytical transition from the macro level to the micro level and an attempt to make the "commonplace strange" by examining everyday behaviours and interactions that we commonly take for granted (Sadovnik, 2011, p. 8). Origins of Interactionist theory can be found in George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley's *symbolic interactionism*, in which the self is perceived as an active product of human agency rather a deterministic product of social structure (ibid.). About the self as and meaning, Mead notes:

> Thinking is a process of conversation with one's self when the individual takes the attitude of the other, especially when he takes the common attitude of the whole group, when the symbol that he uses is a common symbol, has a meaning common to the entire group, to everyone who is in it and anyone who might be in it. It is a process of communication with the participation in the experience of other people. … Now it is this inner thought, this inner flow of speech and what it means … that constitutes the mind, in so far as that lies in the experience of the form. But this is only a part of the whole social process, for the self has arisen in that social process; it has its being there. … And this is what constitutes the self as such. A self which is so evidently a social individual that it can exist only in a group of social individuals is as much a result of the process of evolution as other biological forms. A form that can co-operate with others through the use of symbols, set up attitudes of others and respond to them (Mead, 1956, pp. 37-39).

Interactionist theory is also founded in Erving Goffman's functional interactionism. He analyses social interaction patterns as rituals that serve to maintain society through an invisible micro-social order (ibid., p. 9). In the *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman argues that performance is a central concept to understanding social life, particularly inside organizations and institutions. For example, the natural superiority of males is demonstrated and the weaker role of the female is affirmed through girls downplaying their intelligence around boys that they would like to date: "American college girls did, an no doubt do, play down their intelligence, skills and

determinativeness when in the presence of datable boys, thereby manifesting a profound psychic discipline in spite of their international reputation for flightiness" (Goffman, 1959, p. 39). In *Asylums*, Goffman defines the concept of a *total institution* and writes about the social situation of inmates in different types of total institutions; for example mental hospitals, prisons, armies, boarding schools, and monasteries (Goffman, 1961, pp. 4-5). Order is a central theme in bureaucratic institutions, especially in total institutions. Goffman discusses how the self and moral life is managed through different mechanisms such as personal defacement, dispossession, and violation of personal space, all of which mortify the self (ibid., p. 20-23, 78-79). Research has shown that order and avoiding chaos is essential to the functioning of preschools. Order is instituted through rules and guidelines, but also as a social and cultural phenomenon in which concepts, symbols and classifications serve to structure experiences and events – controlling and directing future events (Olesen, Aggerholm, & Kofoed, 2008, p. 21). Order can be achieved by force of rule and authority, but Goffman asserts that, importantly, "inmates must be caused to self-direct in a manageable way, and, for this to be promoted, both desired and undesired conduct must be defined as springing from the personal will and character of the individual inmate himself, and defined as something he himself can do something about" (ibid., p. 87).

In general, interactionist theorists try to look inside the so-called *black box* of education, recognizing that education institutions that are supposed to make society more equal often end up reproducing inequalities in society the education system's contribution to these. If teachers have little influence on the institution and often – unintentionally – reproduce dominant patterns of inequality in society how can we conceive of social and

institutional change? I mentioned above that a functionalist argument for coeducation could be that it provides an opportunity for boys and girls to learn to work together. From an interactionist perspective, another argument for coeducation could be that coeducation provides a "great chance to look at classroom dynamics" (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 52). This argument aims at understanding how macro-structures are reproduced on a micro-level in interactions between humans; how, despite our egalitarian values, we often unwillingly reproduce social inequalities in our social reality.

Ray Rist's labeling theory states that interactional processes of the school results in educational inequalities mirroring and contributing to maintaining the larger structures in society (Rist R. , 2000). Rist talks about a self-fulfilling prophesy in processes of education. Teacher's expectations based on students' non-cognitive attributes such as gender, have an effect on students beyond their individual cognitive abilities (Rist R. C., 2011). The theory has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on labels, ignoring the actual differences that exist between students, but the theory's emphasis is that our attribution of meaning to categories and labels is socially constructed and should not in themselves be deterministic of individual abilities. For a long time, research and practice in schools have been dominated by a conception that sex/gender determines the cognitive abilities of human beings. For example, a biological perspective is evident in Nordic research on gender and education. This perspective is primarily used to establish differences between children and legitimate different treatment based on the gender classification.

Paula J. Caplan and Jeremy B. Caplan critically evaluate these ideas. Two main [and prevailing] societal assumptions are challenged: First, that "if we find a 'sex

difference' in some ability or kind of behavior, that means that all males do a particular

thing and all females do some quite different thing"; second "the assumption that

psychological sex differences are biologically based, and, therefore, inevitable and

unchangeable" (Caplan & Caplan, 2009, pp. 2-3). Myths about sex/gender differences in

schools exist in, among other things, math skills, spatial abilities, verbal abilities,

relational abilities, and aggression. When it comes to verbal skills, for example, Caplan

and Caplan argue that traditionally, ideas about femininity and masculinity build on

beliefs that women talk a lot and possess highly developed verbal skills – despite the fact

that it has never been established what exactly the concept 'verbal skills' refers to.

Feminist theorist Gloria Steinem has explained that the belief that women talk a lot can

be attributed to the fact that women have traditionally been expected to remain silent and

stay in the background. Consequently, when women practice these qualities they easily

come to appear exaggerated, as too much (ibid., 52-57), also in educational settings.

2.1.4 Postmodern and Critical Theory

Postmodern theory rejects the overarching modernist project of enlightenment and

reason. The theory also rejects all metanarratives, replacing them with localized,

particular theories. Henry Giroux calls for a democratic, emancipatory and anti-

totalitarian theory and practice, viewing education systems as sites for democratic

transformation, encouraging teachers and students to explore seemingly inherently

different positions in efforts to achieve understanding, respect, and change (Giroux,

1983). Postmodern theory shares objectives with critical education theory, which draws

on the work of Paolo Freire (Freire, 1993) in the mission to explore classrooms as critical

sites for political action and teachers as agents of change (Sadovnik, 2011, pp. 15-16). To

postmodern theorists, the state is understood as power scattered throughout the society.

Reconceptualism of curricula critiques the previously dominating views of curriculum for not taking into account ideology and hegemony, power and knowledge, presenting a view of society as a closed system which functions in a stable and harmonious way. Giroux examines the dominant positivist culture that exists in schools. This culture builds on technical rationality, assuming a value free environment and a direct relationship between means and ends. The positivist culture that was institutionalized in schools is facilitated by managerial theory. There is a tendency for positivist culture to reproduce a social order in which administrative concerns are depoliticized and in which goals are not questioned as long as the means are efficient. We see this particularly in educational movements that encourage pay-for-performance measurements for teachers.

Educational policies that focus on technical rationality include a risk of becoming blind to the power exerted in institutional settings and operations. This is a central element in both the reconceptualist movement and in feminist theory's critique of classical views of curriculum and the state. Jean Anyon's analysis exemplifies this kind of critique. Anyon critically analyses US policy on education and poverty, "which undermine school quality and potential by maintaining large poverty populations in urban neighborhoods" (Anyon, 2005, p. 83). This poverty is detrimental for the development and achievement of students (ibid.). Her work also shows that the kind of knowledge which is accepted and which counts in education is the kind that provides formal justification for and legitimation of prevailing institutional arrangements and forms of conducts and beliefs (Englund, 2004, pp. 54-61).

Sadovnik points to a number of limitations of postmodern and critical theories of education. The main concern is that postmodern and critical theory is not backed by sufficient empirical evidence to test their propositions (Sadovnik, 2011, pp. 16-17).

2.2 Theories of Public Organizations

In reviewing the organization theory literature, I rely primarily on the fourth edition of Hal G. Rainey's book *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations*. Within the study of public organizations, theories on the position of public agencies in relation to their environment, implementation of public policy, and accountability and goals of public organizations have relevant insight that can inform my study. I discuss major contributions to these fields below. I also draw in perspectives from other sources, particularly to include a critical feminist perspective.

2.2.1 Theories of the Environment

Organizational theories of the environment aim at understanding the position of public organizations in relation to their environment. Important environmental conditions that influence public organizations involve legal conditions (such as laws, regulations, and values in legal institutions), political conditions (such as the form of government and economy, democratic practices, degree of centralization, political stability, party alignments), and policy initiatives within specific regimes. It also involves cultural conditions (such as predominant values, attitudes, beliefs, customs), and socialization processes concerning sex roles, family structure, work orientation, as well as religious and political practices. Furthermore, economic, demographic, technological, and ecological conditions can influence organizations (Rainey, 2009, p. 91). I assume these environmental conditions also influence education systems and public preschools.

Philip Selznick's 1949 study *TVA and the Grass Roots: a Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization* laid the foundation for a trend in organization studies to investigate the effects that environmental factors can have on organizations within a pluralist framework (Selznick, 1966). Selznick finds that "environmental influences play a crucial role in institutionalization processes in organizations. Values, goals, and procedures become strongly established, not necessarily because managers choose them as efficient, but in large part as a result of environmental influences and exchanges" (Rainey, 2009, pp. 92-93). Tom Burns and George Macpherson Stalker (1961) continue this line of research into the impact of environmental uncertainty, contributing to the emergence of contingency theory. They find that so-called mechanistic organizations with traditional hierarchical structures do well in stable environments while more organic and loosely structured organizations succeed in less stable environments. Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch (1967) also find that organizations have better chances of succeeding if their structural arrangements match that of their environments. James Thompson (1967) synthesizes studies utilizing contingency theory finding that organizations contend with the demands of their tasks as well as the demands of their environments by trying to isolate the technical core and use buffering methods to try to provide stable conditions for working on their core tasks. It means that the internal structure of organizations often become increasingly complex as the complexity of their environment increases (ibid., pp. 92-94).

Further developments of contingency theory analyze for example the relations between organizational environments and organizational performance. Rhys Andrews (2009) finds that tax resentment and pressures to cut government spending in recent

decades show the importance of environmental capacity for public organizations (ibid., 95). This finding is relevant to the study of education systems. A state's spending on education is crucial to the functioning of a public education system.

Turnover of public officials and rapid shifts in political priorities create instability and confusion and may, according to Carolyn Ban (1987), Marissa Martino Golden (2000), and Irene S. Rubin (1985), affect the morale of managers and influence their acceptance of reforms. Rainey notes: "Studies of public policy implementation provide numerous accounts of policy initiatives that had many unanticipated consequences and implications" (ibid., p. 96).

Contingency theory has important implications for further studies of public organizations. In under to understand the structure and processes of organizations, we must to some degree analyze external environmental conditions. But contingency theory's environmental concepts and theoretical developments are very generally defined, and Rainey finds that no conclusive, coherent theory of organizations explain how environmental dimensions relate to one another and to public organizations (ibid., pp. 94, 96).

Recent studies on the environment of organizations move beyond contingency theory. Population ecology applies biological and evolutionary concepts to study the processes of variation, selection, and retention of organizations. Critics have raised questions about the applicability of this perspective outside small populations of organizations to for example large-scale public bureaucracies. Resource dependency theories stress the role of managers obtaining resources from their environment. Jeffrey

Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik (1978) find that both internal and external power relations are important when it comes to analyzing resources. Transaction-cost economic theories apply market logic to understand how managers in firms strive to keep down costs while maximizing profit. Oliver E. Williamson (1999) conducts studies of public bureaucracies and finds that these handle so-called "sovereignty transactions" more effectively and efficiently than other modes of organization. But he also expresses concern that transaction-cost economics may not apply to non-market organizations (ibid., pp. 96-99).

Political scientists argue that organizations need support from so-called mass publics, and especially from attentive publics (ibid., p.112). Certain institutions, such as the education system, hold a more central place in a society, and the public is usually concerned with policies and activities relating to the education system. Research also shows that the media influences the tenor of reforms and policy and the public's views on governance in a diffuse way in which "media coverage develops a climate that pervades the informational environment, and this in turn influences public opinion" (ibid., p. 117).

Alford and Friedland find that the public definition of issues by the mass media is almost exclusively based on pluralist or managerial perspectives. Problems are presented and discussed in ways that stress either market solutions (increasing information, public choice, or changing incentives) or in ways that stress bureaucratic solutions (establishing new agencies, increasing coordination, or overlooking operations). In Alford and Friedland's view, "the dominance of language associated with the pluralist and managerial perspectives is an excellent example of ideological hegemony" and "under the historical conditions in which the state has not only bureaucratic and democratic aspects, but also capitalists ones, the *primary visibility* of the leader-citizen relation and

the official-client relation is an empirical indication of class hegemony" (Alford &
Friedland, 1985, pp. 403, 428). Public opinion is to a large extent class opinion – the
ruling opinion of the ruling class. Class theory thus expresses an instrumental view of
governance and politics in democratic societies: politics are an instrument of the ruling
class. This suggests that an analysis of public policy formation and implementation takes
into account public perceptions about the policy and the institutions in question, and how
language is used to define problems and solutions in certain ways.

2.2.2 Institutional Theory

According to institutional theory, organizations operating inside the same field
come to resemble one another either as a result of shared values and myths or as a result
of coercion (Rainey, 2009). Like contingency theory, institutional theory is founded in
Selznick's influential work. According to Charles T. Goodsell, Selznick provided
organizational theory with the distinction between organizations and institutions. An
organization can be defined as a formal system of objectives and rules expressly designed
to achieve the coordination and discipline for complex work. "It is a creature of human
rationalism set up (or modified) at a given moment in time to achieve a current purpose.
An institution is an organization upon which a mantle of informal relationships and
shared values have settled" (Goodsell, 2010, p. 6).

Pamela S. Tolbert and Lynne G. Zucker (1983) show that many local
governments adopted a merit based civil service system because it had become accepted
as the appropriate personnel system. John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan (1983) have
argued that organizations like schools often adopt new structures and practices based on
"myth and ceremony." Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell (1983) also argue that
shared ideas about how organizations should look result in organizations becoming

increasingly similar within a field. Jeffrey Pfeffer (1982) argues that because performance criteria are often less clear in the public sector, the institutional perspective is particularly applicable to public organizations.

The concept of *isomorphism* developed as a compromise between debates about imitation and coercive forces among institutional theorists (Powell & DiMaggio (editors), 1991). According to DiMaggio and Powell and W. Richard Scott and Gerald F. Davis (2006), institutionalization of similar structures and practices is based on three different types of isomorphism: coercive isomorphism suggests that organizations must comply with laws and regulations; normative isomorphism suggests that organizations comply with professional and moral norms within their field; and mimetic isomorphism suggests that organizations imitate one another based on prevailing orthodoxy or cultural beliefs (Rainey, 2009, p. 99).

Insights from institutional theory add to an understanding of how values, structures, and practices in and among organizations become institutionalized. An organization's environment causes it to morph with other organizations in the field. As I discussed above, sociological theorists of education, Meyer and Ramirez & Boli have argued that worldwide expansion of education systems with remarkably similar structures, processes, and values were driven by a dynamic world culture that saw education as a means to creating national societies, cohesion, voluntary self-discipline, progress, and economic prosperity, etc. These views are compelling to understanding the foundation of education systems as public organizations.

However, institutional theory does not explain how prevailing values or beliefs reach dominance at different levels of government, and how individuals contribute to

maintaining and modifying these values and normative. It is Bourdieu's insights that inform us how education was adapted in societies worldwide because it proves to be an excellent instrument for continuing hereditary transmission of power and privileges in societies that have discursively distanced themselves from such practices. Education is a popular institution for reproducing the structure of class relations precisely because it appears to be neutral, which works to conceal that it fills this function (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

According to institutional theory, the major issues of governance involve institutional maintenance and creation of improvements that can make social roles and the relations they set more compatible to so-called "natural sentiments" of human beings. Discourse theory, however, suggests that the basis of relationships and meaning is not static institutional frameworks but rather dynamic processes of discourse (McSwite, 2000, pp. 54-55). According to feminist scholar(s) O.C. McSwite, institutional theory has failed to develop a model of human agency. Its framework proposes that humans need institutions to create stable social structures and establish a normative order from which we can derive meaning. In this perspective, values inhabit people and we act on a basis of a sense of *objective* meaning. McSwite notes, "Selznick (1992), have qualified this claim significantly and is now saying that norms have to be defined through a continuing process of what I would call social construction that is invoked when there is conflict or confusion about what to do. But this does not solve the problem" (McSwite, 2000, pp. 55-56).

Discourse analysis shows that overarching discursive formations permit certain values to reach normative status, and that institutions are formed in and through discourse.

When organizations take on similar characteristics within a given field, it may be explained by institutionalization of values and practices enforced coercively, normatively, or mimetically, but these three aspects are subject to the same discursive contestations at a much more pervasive level. The content of laws and regulations, professional norms and standards, and cultural beliefs and practices as institutions exist in and through discourse. And it is through ideology, that we provide justification and legitimation for the specific institutional contents.

2.2.3 Accountability and Goals of Public Organizations

Political scientists have argued that political and administrative authorities, regardless of other environmental uncertainties, often directly mandate public agencies' structures and processes. The political and institutional environment of organizations involve traditions, values, constitutional provisions such as the democratic form of government, as well as the prevailing economic system influence public organizations and so do values and performance criteria.

Competence values refer to demands for priority of things such as efficiency and effectiveness in an organization's performance. These values may sometimes conflict internally, when for example the most efficient solution may not guarantee effective goal realization. Competence values may also conflict with responsiveness values, which refer to ideals of remaining responsive to authorities and complying with laws, rules, and directives and providing accounts of this compliance (Rainey, 2009, pp. 105-106). Rainey notes that Grace Hall Saltzstein (1992) finds that responsiveness values can be defined in relation to the public's wishes or to the interest of the government and that this adds complexity to the institution's position in society. But it does so only if assuming that the will of the government is different from the will of the public. Selznick argues in

a pluralist view that the state is open and vulnerable to diverse interests making demands for various benefits. Such bureaucratic responsiveness introduces what appear to be irrationalities, but they are viewed as a necessary price to maintain democratic responsiveness. Conversely, from a class perspective, there is no such thing as public values, only class values, and the state is fundamentally biased in favor of those who privately control the means of production in a society (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 272).

Research distinguishes between high levels of control in hierarchical and legal notions of accountability, such as imposition of rules and procedures as well as oversight and monitoring, and lower levels of control in professional and political notions of accountability, which focuses on moral and normative control. These overlap in practice and can work in combination (Rainey, 2009, pp. 106-107).

These perspectives are useful to understanding the different ways in which organizations are held accountable, but they do not address of how different notions of accountability are favored in some settings over others and how employees respond to certain types of accountability measures.

Representativeness is another value that has been added to public agencies and organizations. It is based on the idea that government should reflect the population in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, etc. It is perhaps on this topic that the issue of gender equity has emerged most strongly in public administration literature. One perspective assumes that an increase in the number of women or men – or any other category applicable – will qualitatively change the service public organizations provide through either passive or active representation. For example:

Representative bureaucracy theorists claim that if a bureaucracy is demographically representative of the public it serves, the decisions made will

generally represent the interests of those publics. This would suggest that the representative inclusion of men and women, people of color, different ages and classes, each "voting" their interests when making policy decisions, results in decisions that favor their respective groups (Hutchinson & Mann, 2004, p. 87).

The theory on representative bureaucracy presumes that the organization is a neutral, non-gendered structure (ibid.). Camilla Stivers (2002) has argued strongly for recognizing the masculine hegemony in studies and practices of public administration in her book *Gender images in public administration*, revealing the masculine and feminine images of public administration. She has also argued that the founding narrative of public administration has masculine underpinnings and that it has attempted to cast off femininity (Burnier, 2006). Ferguson agrees that bureaucracy is far from neutral:

> Contemporary bureaucracy needs to be understood as a structure and a process. As a structure, it can be describes as a fairly stable arrangement of roles and assignment of tasks; since individuals in their day-to-day interactions with bureaucracies tend to experience them as static and fixed authority structures, it is the established structural dimensions of bureaucracy that are most readily identified. Bureaucracy is also a process, however, a temporal ordering of human action that evolves out of certain historical conditions toward certain political ends. The maintenance of bureaucracy is an ongoing process that must be constantly attended to; its modes of domination must be reproduced and the opposition it generates must be located and suppressed (Ferguson, 1984, pp. 6-7).

Radical feminist positions question the potential for change inherent in increasing quantitative representation of women if this leaves the patriarchal social structure untouched. Unless revolutionized, symbolic structures that support status quo will continue to reproduce prevailing patterns regardless of whether the bodies in public organization are male or female.

In fact, the idea of representative bureaucracy can be compelling to critics of the so-called feminization of the education system. In this framework, the concept of

representative bureaucracy is used to postulate that because preschools are occupied by female teachers and administrators, boys are being neglected, which has resulted in developments of boy pedagogies designed to compensate for the negative influence that the presence of female bodies and so-called feminine qualities is assumed to have on children's gender identity and educational successes.

John W. Kingdon (2002) finds that the process concerning how certain matters gain prominence on the political gender (such as gender equality) while others remain unnoticed resembles the "garbage can model" by James G. March, Michael D. Cohen, and Johan P. Olsen (1972). He refers to "streams of problems, policies, and politics flowing alongside one another and sometimes coming together at key points to shape the policy agenda" (Rainey, 2009, p. 140).

This theory may explain how a policy that requires preschools to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns could emerge. At a specific time in history, it is viewed as a problem that the education system reproduces social inequalities, threatening to undermine social harmony. At the very same time, feminists in the legislative and executive branches of government have policy ideas ready which integrate gender equality formally into the operation of preschools changing the notion of preschools as external institutions for gender equality to include internal aspects as well. The momentum for approving such policy occurs at a time when forces in the public demand that the problem of inequality be addressed and the politics of liberal democracy insist on articulating gender equality as a human right, which must be integrated into all areas of government. The politics ideologically compensate for the inequality in the market, averting political instability by absorbing the sentiments of the public.

This could be an interesting analysis of the influences on the policy process but it does not take into account the overarching issue of how gender inequality comes to be addressed in a reformist rather than a radical revolutionary manner; how both the problem, the policy, and the politics prefer reformism over radical change. A more comprehensive understanding would draw on insights about the state's position as an external mediator between the capitalist and democratic forces that press upon it and influence how definitions of specific problems, policy and politics are subject to discursive struggles for hegemony. Discourse analysis provides an opportunity for uncovering the discursive framework that both constrains and permits what can be said and done in a particular time and place. Further, meaning as well as collective and individual identities are formed in discursive processes and come to take on an existential importance to us. Policies can therefore be seen as constructing collective and individual identity. Lastly, ideology works to conceal discursive processes, and to make policies appear neutral and legitimate.

Rainey explains that public organizations are goal-directed, purposive entities and that one of the strongest trends in public management implores organizations to state missions, core values, general objectives, strategic and performance plans which express specific goals and performance measures. Mission statement can be understood as expressions of official goals, which are generally meant to enhance an organization's legitimacy and to motivate and guide employees. This raises an important question of how useful such measures are and whether they have an influence on the effectiveness of organizations.

Although clarifying goals can motivate employees, goals are always multiple and possibly conflicting. It is important that managers clarify what is meant by repeated references to vague, conflicting, and multiple goals. "Managing by objectives" assumes that engaging employees in goal-setting and strategies to achieve goals improves commitment to and fulfillment of goals. Basic assumptions are that public organizations will perform better if employees clarify goals and measure their progress against these.

"Managing for results" is a connected and emphasized theme in the literature, and some link the goals and performance with budgets in performance-based-budgeting and pay-for-performance systems. Performance management procedures try to use performance measures to improve the performance of public agencies. Performance tools often include gathering and reporting information on various performance indicators. Often, performance reports are published on governmental websites enabling anyone who feels so inclined to review and compare organizations' performance. Experts in the field of public management have not clearly developed ways to define and measure goals and performance (Rainey, 2009, pp. 145-151, 442).

This may be the most problematic aspect of measuring performance on goals such as counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Each concept in the goal must be clearly defined and it must be established exactly what practices work to fulfill the goal. Further, according to Rainey, "effectiveness" implies that the organization brought about the success intentionally through management design or individual practices. I assume that it would be hard to distinguish clearly whether good management and pedagogic practice or lucky circumstances outside of the influence of the institution,

such as broader shifts in societal sentiments on gender, will bring about changes in traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

2.2.4 Implementation of Public Policy

Governmental institutions and agencies are created on the basis of legislation, which states missions and duties of agencies and authorizes their activities. According to Rainey, some scholars observe that legislation often transmits vague, idealized directives to the agencies. Theodore J. Lowi (1979) argues that on the basis of these grants of authority, agencies have considerable discretion, which hinders direct control over the agencies and the policy process (Rainey, 2009, p. 121). Political scientists have found that so-called "iron triangles" and variations of such networks dominate the public policy system preventing authorities outside the triangle of congressional committees, administrative agencies, and interest groups from influencing policy areas. This perspective may oversimplify the policy process and the problem of policy implementation. Difficulties in coordination and control of policy implementation result from complex issues, interests, and participants involved in the process. Also, implementation efforts occur on a very practical day to day level among employees (ibid., p. 131).

Policy formation and implementation is a central part of the study of public organizations. Michael Hill and Peter L. Hupe (2003) provide an overview of the implementation literature, giving special emphasis to the so-called "multi-layer problem." According to Hill and Hupe, Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildawsky introduced the classic idea of "implementation deficit" in 1973, in which implementation deficits at a number of in points in the implementation chain add up to a large implementation shortfall at the end of the chain. Studies by Andrew Dunsire (1978) and Brian W.

Hogwood and Lewis A. Gunn (1984) refer to this deficit as an "impact gap" of implementation. Implementation can be viewed from a rational, top-down perspective, which often, implicitly or explicitly, presents adaptations along the way as "either involving disobedience on the part of implementers or a poor judgment about reality on the part of policy originators" (Hill & Hupe, 2003, p. 473). From a bottom-up perspective it has been argued that a negative view of policy transformation at the bottom is inappropriate. Benny Hjern and Chris Hull have argued for accepting the legitimacy policy innovation at the bottom, and Randall B. Ripley and Grace A. Franklin argue that it is more interesting to investigate what is happening and why at the bottom level rather than asking whether implementers comply (ibid., p. 474).

In the 1990s, Peter J. May "carried out a number of studies which explore 'mandates' supplied by one layer of government to another," (Hill & Hupe, 2003, p. 475) exploring the responses to coercive or cooperation-seeking mandates. Hill and Hupe interpret May's findings as evidence on the importance of the predisposition of the agencies being mandated and that "any propositions about the effectiveness of mandates are likely to depend upon the extent to which the layer of government doing the mandating is seen as a legitimate policy maker for those being mandated" (ibid.). Hill and Hupe (2003) find that "if there are multiple layers then some transformation is inevitable in the transmission of a policy objective from top to bottom, whatever the degree of consensus. The other issue is that such a transmission process may involve changes made by low-layer parties that have a legitimate right to make them" (Hill & Hupe, 2003, p. 477). They therefore place the implementation issue in the overall policy process.

The 'phase-' or 'stage-'model of the policy process concerns how issues get on the agenda, who takes which decisions on what, the more detailed formulation of what and how. Implementation follows this process including feedback and evaluation, and at the final stage, decisions about policy maintenance, succession or termination are analyzed (ibid., p. 478). This model may provide analytical structure but may not capture practice well. For example, education practitioners have a relatively high level of discretion in their daily work and their realization of mandates from above. This considered it is likely that organizational values at individual preschools differ significantly and that there will be variation in the interpretation and practice of mandates from above. The implementation part of a policy process can therefore reproduce or challenge official goals and values, and often constitute 'policy co-formation' (Hill & Hupe, 2003, p. 481). It is also necessary to consider the legitimacy of the implementers' actions. Furthermore, in a multi-layer system, implementation is located within a system of vertical public administration. It is problematic if implementation is seen as taking place in a layer where legitimate policy formation actually takes place (ibid., p. 484-485).

The strengths of the implementation research include significant attention to the top-down and bottom-up forces operating in the public policy process and the legitimacy of different layers in the policy process. Implementation research pays less attention to discursive forces that both constrain and enable the formulation and implementation of policy and that systematically form the objects of which they speak whether that is the society, the government, the education system, or individual employees. There may be an ideological dimension to public policy that can both facilitate or obstruct implementation

of significant change. As such, public policy may contain internal contradictions that counteract implementation of the very same policy.

Feminists have argued that insights from interpretive policy analysis including how meanings are produced through the strategic use of language, symbols, etc. and that policy is designed to create paradoxes and resolve them in a particular direction (Burnier, 2006). According to DeLysa Burnier,

> The way a policy frames a problem and employs language, metaphors, and examples to promote some values, beliefs, and interests over others is the means by which policy paradoxes are resolved ... Taking an interpretive stance to study public policies from a gender perspective entails understanding how gender figures into public policies explicitly and implicitly in order to expose their reliance on stereotypical conceptions of gender, highlighting policies' multiple forms of gender bias and creating a broader awareness of how gender operates in policy narratives and language (Burnier, 2006, p. 862).

2.3 An Interdisciplinary Framework

Some elements from the theories I have reviewed within these intellectual fields are relevant to my study. Understanding the pluralist and functionalist foundation of liberal-democratic politics and policies contributes to my theoretical framework for analyzing educational policy as well as public and individual perceptions of gender and efforts to address gender inequality in and through the education system. Functionalism and institutionalism capture well the spirit in which many education systems and pedagogies following the Prussian tradition emerged and spread. Dewey and Fröbel's pedagogies have for example been extremely popular in education systems worldwide. Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory adds a conflict perspective to this understanding, which allows a more critical feminist perspective.

Pluralist functionalist theory on education explains how socialization succeeds in fostering unity and consensus on an everyday situational level, which dominates public

experiences and opinion, and which makes structural and systemic power seem quite vague and diffuse. It is ideology that maintains the public under this "false consciousness". Functionalist pluralist theory also fosters liberal-democratic politics, which justify state policies in terms of consensus and participation.

In feminist functionalist theory, the state is an instrument for liberal reform and education an institution for changing gender roles through socialization: "Liberal ideology holds that there are barriers in poor education and discrimination to full participation as citizens in the political marketplace and that the state should do whatever is necessary to assure rights to enter the appropriate markets" (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 412). Liberal policy on gender equality aims at redistributing income in the market and influence over decisions of an existing government.

I agree with conflict theorists who doubt that supporting opportunities is a sufficient strategy to modifying pervasive gender inequality and stratification in society. The attention to rights in the liberal-democratic discourse depoliticizes inequalities and ignores the sources of inequalities, which makes is impossible to address the economy as the source of inequalities. In a critique of the liberal-democratic discourse on equal rights and opportunities, Paul Willis notes: "the system would break down if everyone believed in the values of equal opportunity and acted on them, taking pluralism seriously. … The state, via the schools, would face a far greater "problem" of "career guidance" than at present. But, because social reproduction of the class society in general continues despite the intervention of the liberal state and its institutions, it may be suggested that some of the real functions of institutions work to counter their stated aims" (quoted in Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 306).

Insights from feminist class theorists of education include associating patriarchal gender relations with capitalist economic processes. Reproducing traditional gender roles is linked to reproducing economic inequalities, and addressing one is a challenge to the status of the other in society. Schools correspond to the patriarchal and capitalist society. In this view, a focus on equal opportunities is insufficient because it does not address the systemic and symbolic power and violence exercised in the education system. Feminist class theorists see that capitalist states are able to manage incipient mass movements with repression, cooptation, and symbolic reform (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 421) and that the only solution entails challenging the institutional boundaries that separate the state from the capitalist economy and from democratic participation.

I will apply insights from social and cultural reproduction theory and feminist class theory to analyzing official policy on gender and preschool education. Arnot's concepts of our *realization* and *internalization* of gendered and classed identities, which in the process reproduce and externalize them, and the established social order, are very useful to my analysis of the reproduction of social relations and systemic and structural power in preschool policy and implementation processes. These concepts bear resemblance to Bourdieu and Passeron's useful concept of "habitus, as the site of internalization of externality and externalization of internality" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 205), which seeks to bring to light how education works to legitimate and reproduce the social order.

Implementation theory shows that the inspection's interpretation of the problem that preschools in the Södermalm district are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is articulated in a top-down perspective in

which preschools are not complying, willingly or unwillingly, with policy goals and therefore not realizing their mandate. As I will argue later, policy and managerial strategies work to implore employees to internalize and externalize official discourse on gender and gender equality, ensuring reproduction of the social order and only superficial transformation of traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

Accountability research provides me of an understanding that the Swedish education system has adopted a higher emphasis on both competence and responsiveness values in combination with an investment in internal hierarchical accountability such as rules, procedures, and evaluation systems, and external legal oversight and monitoring such as the School Inspection. Professional accountability has generally been deemphasized, although professional norms and morals are coupled with hierarchical accountability measures.

It may prove to be an inherent contradiction in preschool policy that real change is promoted by attention to equal opportunity, which is counteracted by internalization, realization, and externalization of this very same ideology. As such, successful implementation is prevented by commitment to liberal-pluralist ideology and language and by performance management and management by objectives systems that serve an ideological function, considering the theoretical problems inherent in these systems.

Within an overall liberal discourse, changing our values and facing our own prejudices are articulated as the deepest challenges to gender equality, and creating an egalitarian society in general, in which people of all ages with different gender identities and expressions, ethnicities, cultures, belief systems, disabilities, and social classes, etc. face no overt or covert discrimination, marginalization, or exclusion. We tend to focus on

opposing and countering what Žižek refers to as subjective ideological violence, carried out by social agents, be it individuals, crowds, or apparatuses (Žižek, 2008, pp. 10-11).

I believe that systemic power and capitalist patriarchy can be addressed only within a feminist class perspective on sociology of education as well as organization theory, in which the inference of power from reproduction of social relations is confronted. Systemic power is made visible when the existing relations between capitalism, the state, and democracy are threatened and reproduced or transformed. Systemic power can maintain or transform these relations.

Since managerial analysis adds understanding of structural power, managerial conflict theory is also relevant to my analysis. A managerial perspective allows an understanding of organizations as dominated by elites, which can be observed in the capacity of politically biased public and private organizations to dominate each other (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 7). In this, insights from organization theory are useful. Central accountability measures and management strategies such as performance management can for example be seen as an instrument for dominating organizations and individual organizational behavior.

A pluralist functionalist perspective is only conscious of situational power, which can be measured by influence over the outcome of conflicts and participation. In a pluralist perspective, violence is defined as subjective, i.e. carried out by individuals and groups; structural or symbolic violence is invisible. Violence is also viewed as abnormal, and "endemic only when institutionalization of political demands, expectations, and responses has disintegrated" (ibid., p.109). However, insights from all levels of analysis across sociology of education and organization theory can inform analysis of the power

of language and discourse. Within these different perspectives, liberal, reform, and socialist politics share that they are *democratic* in the sense that they stress popular participation in politics and economic markets, public control over social resources, and abolition of the systemic power of capitalism, respectively.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter I discuss methodological considerations. Methodology involves theoretical considerations, conceptualization, operationalization, methods for gathering or producing evidence, strengths and weaknesses of data sources and methods, as well as framework and methods for analyzing data. This part is divided into three subsections, each detailing different aspects of the methodology. Section 3.1 presents my evidence and considerations with regard to gathering evidence. I present my analytical framework in section 3.2, and discuss limitations of my study in section 3.3.

3.1 Evidence

In this section I present my data sources, the nature of these data, and how I gathered these data. I also include a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of my data sources and methods. Table 3.1 shows my primary and secondary sources of data for each chapter.

Table 3.1 Primary and secondary data sources

	Primary sources		Secondary sources
	Interview data	*Archival data*	*Archival data*

Chapter 4	Interviews with three public officials	Government website information
		Government offices information
		EU information
			Academic books
			Journal articles
			Government reports
			   · Delegation for gender equality in preschool's 2006 report
			   · Statistics Sweden
			Encyclopedia entries
			Teachers' union information

Chapter 5	Interviews with three public officials	· Education Act of 2010 · Curriculum for the preschool Lpfö98/2010 · Discrimination Act of 2008 · The Equality Ombudsman's advice to preschools · Skolverket's advice and guidelines to preschools · Government policy on gender equality and preschools · Stockholm city's preschool plan of 2009 · Södermalm district data · Skolinspektionen's report (also used in chapter 1) · The formal degree requirements for the preschool teacher program	

Chapter 6		Political parties' policies on gender and preschool education	55 Newspaper articles from four Swedish national newspapers and one local newspaper:
			   · Dagens Nyhetar
			   · Svenska Dagbladet
			   · Aftonbladet
			   · Expressen
			   · Södermalmsnytt

Chapter 7	Interviews with 8 preschool employees	Organizational written testimonies from three preschool units such as:
		   · Website data
		   · Plan of Pedagogic Activities
		   · Equal Treatment Plan	

Chapter 8	Interviews with 8 preschool employees	Organizational written testimonies from four preschool units such as:
		   · Website data
		   · Plan of Pedagogic Activities
		   · Equal Treatment Plan
		Written data sent to me by the head of Maria Gamla Stan's preschool unit	

3.1.1 Primary Sources

I make a distinction between primary and secondary sources. According to Bruce L. Berg, primary sources involve the oral or written sources of eyewitnesses (Berg, 2009, p. 301). Interviews are primary sources of data for my study. I gathered interview data in two separate phases, which inform two separate parts of my analysis. First, I gathered interview data to inform my analyses in chapters seven and eight of how official policy, rules, and guidelines on gender and preschool education is interpreted by preschools and preschool employees as well as how preschool employees perceive implementation of this mandate and the concept of gender pedagogy. Second, I gathered interview data to add personal testimonies to my analysis in chapter five of official policy, rules, and guidelines relating to gender and preschool education.

Other sources of primary data include archival documents such as the Education Act, the Discrimination Act, the Curriculum for preschools, Stockholm's preschool plan, the Swedish National Agency for Education, *Skolverket's* guidelines and general advice to preschools, the Equality Ombudsman's guidelines to preschools, the Swedish government's policy on gender and *jämställdhet*, Skolinspektionen's inspection report, Södermalm's reply to Skolinspektionen, and the formal degree requirements for the preschool teacher program, which inform chapter five. Policies by political parties represented in Sweden's national parliament are primary sources for chapter six. To inform chapter seven and eight, I gathered primary data on preschools' websites, and additional documents were sent to me by email or handed to me by participants at the time of interviews.

3.1.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources of data involve the oral or written testimony of people not immediately present at the time of an even, representing secondary accounts of someone, some event, or some development (ibid.). For chapter four, I relied on secondary information from textbooks, journal articles, and government reports to help me understand how the Swedish universal public preschool education system emerged in a historical context, how the preschool has been articulated as an institution for gender equality, and to investigate the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the education system. I also utilize secondary data such as newspaper articles to investigate how gender and preschool policy and implementation are perceived in a wider social context in chapter six. I explain below how I defined the setting and population for the study and how I proceeded with sampling and gaining access to data.

3.1.3 Primary Interview Data: Setting, Population, Sampling, and Access

Berg regards the research question a primary guide to identifying an appropriate setting for research (ibid., 46). I used purposive sampling to sample from preschools in my study population, which is the Södermalm district (which share similar conditions with regard to geography, demographics of the population served, degree of urbanization, and formal rules).

Stockholm is organized into 14 political-administrative units. The Södermalm district of Stockholm is an inner city district where the preschool Egalia is also located. I delimit my geographical focus to this district because I want to study preschools that operate under similar conditions as the preschools inspected in 2011 and as Egalia which holds special status within the district. Within Södermalm there are 59 preschools

(Stockholms stad, 2013b) from which I sampled for my interviews. I have thus sampled

theoretically based on my research question and the knowledge I have about the political-

administrative organization of preschools in Stockholm and the Södermalm district as

Berg suggests (Berg, 2009, p. 51).

In January 2013, I visited Stockholm and the local government office in

Södermalm. I left copies of a flyer with information about my proposed dissertation and

myself. I included an open invitation to preschool directors and teachers to contact me if

they would be interested in participating in my study. I left these flyers with the

responsible administrator for the preschool area in Södermalm, who shared these with

preschools in the district.

Initially, this approach seemed to be fruitful, since the head of Egalia contacted

me in February 2013, sending me a number of organizational documents from preschools

under her management, and expressing interest in participating in my study. The head of

the preschool Egalia is also preschool director at Maria Gamla Stan's[7] four other

preschools[8] (ibid.).

After acquiring IRB approval of my research protocol[9] and formally reaching out

to preschools to sample for my study during the summer of 2013, I was unfortunately

unable to schedule any interviews at Egalia or with employees at Maria Gamla Stan's

preschools. After several attempt to reestablish contact, I had to give up. I can only

assume that the head of Egalia's reason for backing out is that Egalia has been receiving

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[7] Maria Gamla Stan is a former political administrative unit, which, in 2007, was integrated with Katarina-
Sofia to form Södermalm (Stockholms stad, 2012).
[8] Mullvaden, Nicolaigården, Spira Öppen förskola för adoptivföräldrar [Sprout open preschool for adoptive
parents], and Södermalms montessoriförskola [Södermalm's Montessori preschool]
[9] See appendices for certification of completion of the Rutgers University Human Subjects Compliance
Program, initial IRB approval and approved informed consent forms, addendums to my approved protocol,
recruitment materials, and informed consent forms.

anonymous threats to their safety and has been subject to repeated break-ins, which the head of Egalia had complained to me about in earlier email exchanges. This has also received attention in the Swedish media.[10]

When it came to sampling among Södermalm's preschools, I contacted the responsible administrator for the preschool area in Södermalm, to get permission to contact each head of preschool in the district directly by email with an open invitation to participate in my study. The contact information for the responsible administrator and each head of preschool in Södermalm was available online through the citywide preschool portal, *Förskoleportalen* (ibid.). Upon being granted this permission[11], I contacted heads of preschools in the Södermalm district on July 27, 2013 inviting them to participate in interviews for my dissertation. I provided information on the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of participating, as well as my contact information, in case respondents needed further information or clarification on my study. I sent a follow-up email on August 23, 2013 encouraging those who had not yet responded to the first email to do so.

Three heads of preschools responded and facilitated contact to employees at their respective preschool units. In total, eight people from three occupational categories contributed to constructing interview data for chapter seven and eight. Of these eight people, two are heads of preschool units, five are preschool teachers, and one is the head of pedagogic development to a preschool unit. Interviews with six out of the eight participants took place in Stockholm on August 28 and 29 and lasted between 30 and 120

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[10] See for example Södermalmsnytt's February 3, 2011 article "Hot mot förskola på Södermalm," May 25, 2012 article "Genus‐ varför så provocerande?" and Dagens Nyhetar's February 14, 2012 article " På Egalia tas fokus bort från könet."
[11] See appendices for the authorization letter.

minutes. Two preschool employees submitted written answers to my interview protocol that were sent to me by email.

At a later stage in my research, after reflecting on the amount of interview data I was able to construct with preschools, I decided to recruit additional participants to my study to supplement the archival data forming the basis for my analysis in chapter five. Upon getting IRB approval to change my protocol, I contacted elected and appointed public officials to the legislative and executive branches of the Swedish national and municipal governments on November 23, 2013. I contacted elected or appointed public officials involved in the political formulation, approval, execution, and/or evaluation of educational policies and guidelines as well as policies and guidelines on gender equality at the levels of the national government of Sweden and Regeringskansliet (The Swedish national government offices), Skolverket, the Stockholm city government and government offices, and the Södermalm district government of Stockholm. I sent a follow up email on December 13, 2013. I received replies expressing interest in participating from a political adviser to the Swedish Minister for gender equality and preschool education, two employees at Skolverket, Stockholm's school commissioner, the speaker of Stockholm's committee on gender equality, and the district head of preschools in Södermalm. However, some participants eventually dropped out of participating. The interview with political adviser to the Swedish Minister for gender equality and preschool education took place on Skype on December 11, 2013. Two participants from Skolverket submitted answers to me by email.

Interview protocols. I wanted to utilize the unique character of interviews as a source of data. For the purposes of my dissertation, I find that unstructured and semi-

structured interviews facilitate qualitative research well, since participants are free to articulate answers in their own words, giving the researcher access to their conceptual world. I consider interviews to be knowledge producing, not only because they are open to the participants' worldview and conceptualizations, but because they also function as communication between humans in which mutual understanding is sought and meaning constructed.

As such, interviews are different from other more naturally occurring sources of data since the interviewer is part of the knowledge construction. If it were not for the interview situation and the topic of conversation specified in the interview protocol, the information would not exist in the form that it came to take. Consequently, and importantly from a methodological perspective, the information produced in an interview is specific to the time and place of the interview and the people participating in the conversation.

Interviewer-participant dynamics highly influence the type of information created in interviews. Although this may be considered a source of bias, I work from the perspective that all types data for research in the social sciences are gathered with a specific purpose and with intent to answer a specific research question. Hence, researchers play an explicit part in constructing interviews data may not necessarily be a disadvantage from a knowledge perspective. Furthermore, I find that the type of conversation and interaction facilitated by an interview situation encourages reflection on both sides of the table.

I designed interview protocols to guide interviews lasting about 45-60 minutes although interviews in practice varied in length between 30 and 120 minutes. The

protocols are semi-structured, with standardized open-ended questions, meaning that key themes and questions were prepared with the intention to remain open to following up on unexpected and interesting ideas, as well as changing the order of the questions if necessary in the interview situation. Following Berg's advice, I began with easy, nonthreatening questions relating to demographics and work history, approaching more sensitive questions gradually. Upon completing the first round of interviews in Stockholm, I was able to see what questions worked better than others and to revise the interview protocol to better suit the additional interviews with public officials. The interview protocols can be found at the end of this dissertation in the appendices.

3.1.4 Primary Archival Data: Sampling and Access

I sampled archival data purposively in order to gain variance in official and political discourse to analyze the hegemonic discourse on gender equality in education as well as its boundaries. Certain types of official documents can be considered public archival records. Public archival records are prepared with the expressed purpose of being examined by others. These types of data tend to be written in more or less standardized form, and arranged systematically in an archive (Berg, 2009, p. 271). Access to archival records may be restricted to certain groups by law, and in some cases, it is necessary that the researcher apply formally for access to the records. The Swedish political system is relatively transparent and accessible to the public and has the most extensive freedom of information legislation in the world (Regeringskansliet, 2013g).

Also, according to the United Nations, Sweden ranks among the top in the world on e-government, including overall commitment, development, online services, transparency, and access to information (United Nations, 2012, pp. 4, 10, 31, 61). Public archival data such as national curricula, the Education Act, and publications such as the

government's policy on gender equality and gender equality in Swedish preschools are readily available on the official government website, regeringen.se and the Swedish National Agency for Education's website, skolverket.se (Skolverket, 2012; Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006; Regeringskansliet, 2013e). In addition, many of these documents are available in official English translations.

The primary data on which I based my analysis in chapter five are: the 2010 Education Act, the national curriculum for the preschool Lpfö98/2010, the Discrimination Act of 2008, Swedish governmental and municipal and policy on gender, *jämställdhet,* and preschool education, Stockholm city's preschool plan, the Equality Ombudsman's advice to preschools, and Skolverket's official guidelines on gender in preschools. Primary archival data for chapter six are political parties' policies on gender and preschool education. For chapters seven and eight, I analyzed organizational written testimonies, such as preschool missions and visions, Equal Treatment Plans, Plans of Pedagogic Activities, and approaches to gender pedagogy. These were found on the Internet at preschool's websites, and other organizational testimonies on gender, equality, and equal treatment were either handed to me by participants or found located online. I also included written data from the preschool Egalia which was sent to me by the head of the preschool unit or found on the preschool's website.

3.1.5 Secondary Data: Sampling and Access

I consider newspaper articles contributions to public debate and part of preschools social environment. Articles were purposely sampled by typing Swedish key search words into article databases and newspapers' websites. I conducted a set of searches on

key words "genuspedagog,"[12] "genusförskola,"[13] "Egalia," "traditionella könsrollar" and "stereotypa könsrollar"[14] in the Swedish newspaper-article database *Artikelsök*. I delimited my search to the two largest Stockholm based morning newspapers, *Dagens Nyhetar* and *Svenska Dagbladet* and the two largest Stockholm based evening newspapers, *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*. I also conducted a search on the same keywords in the local newspaper, *Södermalmsnytt*. These searched resulted in a total of 55 relevant articles[15] written between September 2002 and February 2014 (See appendix for a list of articles).

3.1.6 Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Sources

Sampling. Purposive sampling departs from the ideal of probability sampling. The choice to not do a random sample includes sacrificing the ability to make direct statistical inference and the opportunity to generalize. However, making statistical inferences in order to generalize to the population is of a lesser concern to my dissertation than understanding the perceptions and experiences of particular subject participants as well as analyzing participant's perceptions in relation to hegemonic discourse and ideology. I therefore justify purposive sampling of interview data, official documents, and contributions to public discourse in light of my research question, which suggests an explorative approach.

Working with constraints. I wrote this dissertation under constraints in terms of time and in terms of resources, such as access to networks, travel expenses, inexperience, and status in the academic community, which may or may not have influenced my ability

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[12] [Gender pedagogue]
[13] [Gender preschool]
[14] [Stereotypical gender roles]
[15] Many of the articles I include surfaced during several of my key word searches.

to recruit participants for interviews. Increasingly archival work can be conducted over the Internet, which requires much fewer resources than having to travel across country or internationally to gather archival data (Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 115). I had to make compromises regarding how many interviews I was able to conduct, how and where these interviews took place, and whether interviews were conducted face to face or through some intermediating device such as the telephone or Skype or in writing. Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True emphasize that it is becoming more common and accepted to conduct interviews using the Internet, although such interviews cannot be considered pure substitutes for other methods (ibid). It may be more difficult to establish rapport when conducting interviews over large distances. Rapport refers to positive feelings between interviewer and subject participants (Berg, 2009, p. 130). I discuss how this served as a constraint in my data collection process below.

  Interview data and written answers. Establishing contact with both preschool employees and public officials was a challenge; in most cases my attempts were simply ignored. In some cases preschool employees and public officials agreed to participate if they could submit their answers to me in writing. I decided to accept this solution from the perspective that written answers are better than no answers at all. However, the quality of written answers cannot be compared to the quality of face-to-face interview data. First of all because the collective construction of knowledge is undermined to a certain extent when participants write down their answers to questions. In that case, rather than being an interview instrument to provide some structure and coherence within and between interviews, the interview protocol becomes a strict list of questions that the participant reads and answers in a certain order, each of which encouraging an answer

that is based on the participant's interpretation and the order of these questions. The semi-structured interview protocol thus comes to resemble a survey instrument, which was not my intention.

Furthermore, when participants submitted their answers in writing, I was not able to establish rapport, to clarify, or to adjust the questions to the specific situation and the participant's answers to other questions. The answers I received from two preschool employees and from two employees at Skolverket, for example, suffer from these limitations.

Two participants from preschools submitted their answers in writing. Although they answered all questions thoroughly and their answers are very valuable to my analysis, I found that some answers closely resembled text from the preschool's website and organizational documents. It means that rather than sharing their personal perceptions, they informed me of the organizational position on certain topics. This can, however, also be interpreted as an interesting finding in itself, considering that preschool employees appropriate organizational statements to express their own views. But I would have preferred to have more variety in my data and that the participants had shared their personal perceptions with me.

Participants from Skolverket were determined to answer my questions in their role as publicly appointed officials to a politically run administrative agency. It means that each question containing phrases along the lines of "what do you think" were skipped by reference to their decision not to answer as private persons. They did answer questions simply asking "what is". Had I been present at the time, I could have prevented missing data by reformulating questions and probing for answers.

Despite this limitation, I have decided to still use these data, considering that whether we speak from a personal or professional position we still engage discursive practice. The data are also interesting when viewed in light of how the political-administrative system functions and how appointed officials perceive their role in the state and speak from this position. For example, the participants from Skolverket stated that they are active in developing support and guidelines to employees in the education system, a task that includes interpreting, ruling, and influencing institutions and employees in the education system. In these tasks participants implicitly state that they are able to "leave their personal opinions at home" and adhere only to officially proclaimed goals and values.

The emerging image of these appointed public officials resemble Weber's well known ideal type bureaucrat, whose official duties and interests are separated from the private lives and interests of the official and whose loyalty "is devoted to impersonal and functional purposes" (Weber, Bureacracy, 1922 (2007), p. 45). One argument of my dissertation is precisely, as Weber argued, that behind the official duties (and impersonal and functional purposes of public agencies) "ideas of culture-values" usually stand (ibid.). Official policy and its implementation are not neutral processes. Hence, participants from Skolverket internalize, embody, and realize hegemonic discourse.

The image of the conforming and impersonal public employee is also mirrored in Skolverket's advice to preschool employees. As I discuss throughout the chapters of this dissertation, preschool employees are directed to align personal values with the values expressed in official policy documents such as the Education Act and the Curriculum. As

I also discuss, this task is proving to be a challenge to preschool employees, as expressed by participants.

Language. Language was another constraint on dealing with my data. Three different languages are at play in this dissertation. My native language is Danish, and although I speak English fluently and I understand Swedish, the linguistic nuances of a native language are difficult to capture and transfer to another language. The majority of my data are written or spoken in Swedish. Reading Swedish is relatively uncomplicated for a native Danish speaker, since the Nordic languages are all closely related. In order to process and analyze the primary and secondary text based data I had to read documents in Swedish and write my analysis and conclusions based on these data in English. This challenge became remarkably easier with practice.

Regarding the process of gathering interview data, interviews that took place in Stockholm in August 2013 were conducted in a combination of Swedish and Danish. I assumed that interview participants were more comfortable speaking about their work in their own native language, considering their everyday discursive practices and their conceptualizations are constructed in Swedish. Most Danes and Swedes are able to communicate with each other, each speaking their own native language. The key is to speak slowly and clearly, and compromise on some words that are known to be different in the languages. The task proved much less challenging than expected. In the interview situation, whenever language felt like a barrier, we quickly switched to English, which all Scandinavian people speak and understand, and then back to our native languages again.

During the interview I conducted via Skype in December 2013, we both spoke English. This was an advantage when it came to transcribing the interview because I

didn't have to translate from Danish/Swedish audio to English text. I am responsible for all translations from Swedish to English.

3.2 Analytical Framework

Below, I present my analytical framework. I utilize discourse analysis throughout the chapters, based on my review of the literature and my interdisciplinary feminist theoretical framework. Discourse analysis can be used as a theory as well as a method. I utilize this capacity. Below, I introduce my analytical strategy, as well as a plan for writing up the analysis.

3.2.1 Discourse Analysis

I apply discourse analysis to my data informed by theoretical perspectives in the fields of sociology of education, organizational theory, and political analysis. Discourse analysis investigates for example how ideas gain hegemonic status through reproduction and institutionalization of meaning as well as through construction of normative structures. Further discourse analysis can point to processes of internalization and externalization or realization of social categories and cultural characteristics.

Søndergaard recommends a set of analytical tools for discourse analysis, but she stresses that the poststructural tradition offers metatheoretical reflection, and that there are no fixed standardized analytical guidelines to be found within the poststructuralist tradition (Søndergaard, 2002, pp. 189-190; Søndergaard, 2005, pp. 253-261). I have chosen analytical tools in the context of an overall sensitivity to normativity and subjectivity. Søndergaard recommends a central analytical theme of seeking normativity in processes of subjectivity. Normativity is one way of speaking about the codes and socially structuring principles that are available for concrete individuals to construct

subjectivity through, with, and against (Søndergaard, 2005, p. 255). Normativity, in other words, points to the construction of ideas and perceptions, and is based on legitimacy and cultural recognizability. Discourse analysis in this view analyzes text as establishing collective and individual identity through normativity.

My analytical framework is also inspired by the work of Bronwyn Davies whose work on discursive practice informs my understanding of discourse as something we individually and collectively draw on in order to construct recognizable and legitimate self-images or identities.

3.2.2 Analytical Strategy

My analytical strategy for analyzing both primary and secondary sources of data builds primarily on Søndergaard's guidelines for structuring a discourse analysis, since she provides a relatively practical and concrete approach for poststructuralist research. Below, I present the elements of my analytical strategy, which serves to provide a relatively systematic approach to the analysis.

Transcription and reading of interviews. I constructed data by transcribing audio recordings of the interviews and organizing interview notes. A written transcript of interview data entails a significant reduction of the data from the multidimensionality of the real-life interview through audio recording to text. Thus, I took care to capture words into detailed records of the conversations. The process of transcribing interviews also signifies an important initial analytical step, which means that I became familiar with the data through the detailed listening and construction of textual data.

Reading of primary and secondary data. I generally applied the same analytical strategy to reading and analyzing both primary and secondary sources of data. As interviews are transformed into text, they come to resemble other sources of written

testimonies, and it is possible to conduct thorough and repeated readings. In technical

terms, this step represents conducting an open thematic coding. In the open coding I took

note of everything that came to mind when reading through the data. At this stage, it is

important to be as inclusive as possible in the coding strategy, a point that is also

highlighted by Berg in his recommendation for qualitative content analysis (Berg, 2009, p.

356). In this process, I identified themes and patterns and documented these in analytical

memos and visual mappings of the data. The mapping and coding became another

analytical data reduction and a bridge between multiple interviews and other data. I find

visual mapping of themes and codes helpful in locating overall patterns and themes in

and across testimonies and utilized this when analyzing interview data in particular.

Selection of analytical perspectives.

Storylines. A storyline can be understood as the logic behind stories that we work

to establish around our being a person, a culture, a subculture, a group, or a society, etc.

The concept of a storyline as an analytical perspective was developed by Davies and Rom

Harré, and refers to the essence of a naturalized and normalized cultural tale, which often

also functions as an interpretive framework for one's own and others' actions and

sequences of actions (Davies & Harré, 1990) (Søndergaard, 2001, p. 77).

Storylines can be understood as the construction of subjectivity through everyday

discursive practices that 'add up' to a consistent narrative about who we are in the world.

This can be interesting when analyzing official as well as personal views on a topic such

as gender and preschool education. A story needs to be consistent and make sense, and

usually it also follows a chronological or a developmental logic. When we engage in

conversations with other people, whether individually or collectively (public records such

as legislation, political policies, official documents, news articles, blog entries, etc. all assume an audience) we also engage in implicit storytelling about who we are in relation to our environment; other people, institutions, structures, cultures, etc.

In conversation, elements that are of importance to our positioning in the world usually surface, and these elements can be analyzed in the light of storylines. On the one hand, storylines are collective, but they become reproduced and changed through the integration in our ongoing constructions of self-narratives. This means that it becomes analytically interesting to notice the ways in which we locate our own positions in relation to available social and collective subject positions and storylines – and if none of these available positions seem relevant or appropriate to us, which alternative storylines or bits of storylines can be detected (Søndergaard, 2002, pp. 191-194).

Approaching discourse analysis by analyzing storylines is a practical tool for acquiring an understanding of hegemonic and marginalized discourse. Sometimes, drawing on a discourse with an expert status to add legitimacy to a marginalized position can point to discursive struggle for hegemonic status. Silences in storylines can also point to hegemonic discourse and ideology.

Exclusions and inclusions. Exclusions and inclusions point to normativity. Normativity refers to the construction of ideas and perceptions, and is based on legitimacy and cultural recognizability. Normative evaluations often reveal central elements in the construction of the interviewee's or the author(s) storyline, the moral system organized around subject positions, as well as the construction of the topic at hand. Exclusions and inclusions are central elements in the construction of subjectivity and social categories such as gender (ibid., 188). In the process of analyzing data, I tried to

remain sensitive to positive and negative remarks made by the individual or collective speaker.

Inconsistencies. Finally, I tried to keep in mind to ask myself what was not being said and what did not fit in to testimonies and the overall picture while analyzing data. Inconsistencies or paradoxes may need further explanation, or they may be silenced or ignored. This can point to the relative marginalization or hegemonic status of discourse.

3.2.3 Writing up Analysis

Writing up of research should be structured around answering the research question. My research question suggests a structure, in which separate sub questions are addressed in separate chapters. Each chapter addresses sub questions and sums up the preliminary findings. I present conclusions regarding the sub questions and the key research question in its entirety chapter nine.

3.3 Limitations

I already touched upon some limitations of my dissertation when I discussed the strengths and weaknesses of my data sources and methods above. Also, I will return to the topic of limitations in the conclusion to the dissertation in chapter nine. According to Ackerly and True, "scholarship gains it credibility from its research design and execution. Appropriate choices in research methods and analytical tools enable findings to be convincing to other researchers" (Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 121). I have attempted to make my methodology as explicit as possible throughout my work. Still, my study has limitations. As mentioned above, some limitations have to do with my resources as a relatively inexperienced doctoral student doing dissertation research. Some limitations have to do with time constraints and sequencing. For example, I was only able to make

one trip to Stockholm to do research, in August 2013, and all other data had to be gathered from a distance after this point. Since my analytical framework suggests in depth analysis of textual data, the amount of data I was able to include in my study was also limited. Interviews produce large amounts of data, and processing them takes time and must be done with care. Hence, I rely on primary and secondary archival data as well as interview data.

Furthermore, I was unable to conduct observations at preschools, which means that my data provides information regarding perceptions, not practice. Due to the more invasive nature of research engaging in observation of settings in which children are involved this would require a different level of IRB approval. However, I consider perceptions an important dimension for research, given that we act and speak on the basis of conscious and unconscious perceptions about ourselves and our surroundings. Perceptions also provided me with a discursive context to official policy and discourse.

3.3.1 Biases

Among several sources of bias that must be addressed in research what Bourdieu refers to as participant objectivation (Bourdieu, 2003) are of specific concern:

1. Researcher's location in social space

2. Conventions of researcher's academic discipline

3. Position in the scholastic universe

   According to Bourdieu,

   What needs to be objectivized, then, is … not only her [*sic*] social origins, her position and trajectory in social space, her social and religious memberships and beliefs, gender, age, nationality, etc., but also, and most importantly, her particular position within the microcosm of [scholars]. It is indeed scientifically attested that her most decisive scientific choices (of topic, method, theory, etc.) depend very closely on the location she (or he) occupies within her professional universe… with its national traditions and peculiarities, its habits of thought, its

mandatory problematics, its shared beliefs and commonplaces, its rituals, values and consecrations, its constraints in matters of publication of findings, its specific censorships, and, by the same token, the biases embedded in the organizational structure of the discipline, that is, in the collective history of the specialism, and all the unconscious presuppositions built into the (national) categories of scholarly understanding (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 283).

These three sources of bias "work together as unconscious determinations that are inscribed in the scientist's mind or in the social condition in which he [*sic*] produces" (Fries, 2009, p. 334). I am aware that my skills and resources for conducting this study are biased by my experience as a woman in the society and by my position as a student in an American school of public affairs and administration. The worldview I take is far from pragmatic. However, this can also be an advantage. As a feminist trained in political science in Denmark, which is highly interdisciplinary, I have theoretical knowledge and practical understanding of Scandinavian culture and the permeation of patriarchal and capitalist structures on all levels in society. On the basis of my interdisciplinary research question and broad review of the literature of different academic schools relevant to my research question, I hope to challenge the conventions of my own scholarly position and my own experiences as an international researcher.

3.3.2 Validity and Reliability

Søndergaard argues that giving up the possibility of reaching the truth about a phenomenon no doubt involves giving up the objectivity-based and essentialist foundation for claiming validity and reliability, but instead the possibility of imagining and arguing in terms of other criteria for quality and reliability becomes available.

Marianne W. Winther Jørgensen and Louise J. Phillips have developed a set of guidelines for working with discourse analysis, which differ from conventional positivist or postpositivist ideals, but which address the subjectivity versus objectivity concern

which is often attached to qualitative theory-seeking research. The first two guidelines contribute to establishing a sort of validity:

1. It is important that the analysis consists of consistent statements, which can be connected in a way that outside audiences can accept the analysis as complete and believable.

2. The analysis should attempt to bring about a new understanding of the phenomenon, which points to the significance of the study.

3. With regard to concerns about reliability, the analysis should be transparent, in the sense that analysis and conclusions are presented explicitly. The reader will then be able to evaluate all steps in the analysis and form their own impressions and conclusions (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2006, pp. 133-134; Ahl, 2004, pp. 32-34).

I hope that my dissertation demonstrates that I have paid attention to these guidelines and that following these guidelines have established and will be able to communicate the quality of my work.

Chapter 4: Historical Foundation of Preschool Education in Sweden

In this chapter, I address the first two sub questions to my key research question:

1. What is the history of Swedish preschool education?

2. What are the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the Swedish education system?

Below, I introduce Sweden's structural, institutional, and societal context within which I examine the historical foundation of preschool education in Swedish society. I investigate the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the education system. I also discuss the notion of the preschool as an institution for gender equality in Swedish society, as well as some characteristics of the preschool Egalia. This preschool, as mentioned above, has been emblematized by the Södermalm district as a significant initiative which results run against the inspection's finding that preschools in the district are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

4.1 Structure

Sweden is formally considered a constitutional monarchy with a capitalist economy and an extensive welfare system (Regeringskansliet, 2006). The Swedish state funds its welfare system through high taxes and redistribution of resources. Alford and Friedland, note that the state "is not merely the specific regime in power at any one moment – the governing coalition of political leaders – but also the basis for a regime's authority, legality, and claim for popular support" (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 1).

Capitalism and democracy can be seen as social forces that press upon it, although the state may also have capitalist, democratic, and bureaucratic aspects (ibid., p. 31). The Swedish welfare state ensures a level of equality, at least ideologically, which could not be reached without regulating the market. According to Alford and Friedland,

> The inequalities created by the capitalist economy were concealed by the formal rights of all citizens to buy and sell all factors of production, including land and labor. The population was symbolically integrated by the emerging rights of citizenship, which established a form of universal equality – the adult franchise – as a substitute for economic equality denied by capitalism (ibid., p. 427).

Until the mid-1990s, the Swedish state increasingly engaged in and restricted the free market, increasing public spending and controlling a large part of the economy. The social democratic government that led Sweden for most of the 20th century is responsible for the reform politics that dominated Sweden for a long time. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s the social democrats used workers' pension funds to finance housing and also directed the flow of public capital into industries that were likely to be the basis for long term economic growth. Alford and Friedland argue, "Reform politics attempts to replace markets with state authority over corporate and labor elites. … The ideological assumption of this politics is that the working class and the general public can use public authority to supplant democratically the operation of capitalist markets. … Workers and citizens must use the state to force the market to serve its interests" (ibid., p. 415).

Today, Sweden has cut spending drastically but still has full or part ownership of 52 companies. Since 2006 when the center-right coalition government came into power, Sweden has experienced a shift away from reform politics to more liberal politics. The current government's policy on state ownership of companies states that: "In principle, the Government believes that the state should not own companies that operate in

commercial markets with effective competition, unless the company has a decided social mission that is difficult to manage in the market. Hence the Government aims to reduce government ownership" (Regeringskansliet, 2013f). The government's trade policy emphasizes free trade as a means to decentralizing decision-making to happen as close to the buyers and sellers as possible and sees protectionism as detriment to the economy (Regeringskansliet, 2013i). This policy reflects how the logic of capitalism and the logic of democracy contribute to defining government policy; the market is seen as an efficient means of gathering and allocating resources as long as citizen's rights to services are not compromised. This dynamic is important because education policy is likely to be influenced by those very same forces.

Sweden has been a member of the European Union (EU) since January 1, 1995. To be a member of the EU means to give up a degree of state sovereignty to the union. Also, some decisions that were formerly made in the state are now made in the EU. One such area of decision-making is politics on trade with countries outside of the EU (Regeringskansliet, 2013h). Membership in the EU involves coordinating national economic policies, which takes place at different levels (European Union, 2013). EU membership affects various policy areas such as trade and the free movement of labor, climate and energy policies, asylum policy, and fishing. However, education and childcare remains the preserve of member states (Sveriges Riksdag. EU-Upplysningen, 2014). Sweden remains outside the monetary union, the highest degree of economic coordination, with a free-floating currency, the Svenska Krona.

4.2 Institutions

Sweden's political-legal system is one of parliamentary democracy within a civil law system. Members are elected by direct popular vote on a proportional representation basis to the 349-seat unicameral Riksdag, which is the central legislative branch (United Nations, 2006, pp. 1, 6; Regeringskansliet, 2006). Eight parties are represented in the Riksdag, and women hold 45 percent of the mandates (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2011).

In 2004 the Swedish government adopted a strategy for gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming means that

> Analyses of women's and men's, girls' and boys' situations and conditions shall be included in decision-making data, and that the consequences of proposals are analyzed with consideration to gender equality among women and men. Gender mainstreaming is based on the understanding that gender equality is created where the resources are distributed and decisions are made (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 5).

The Minister for Gender Equality is responsible for coordinating policies of gender equality in the Swedish government while each minister is responsible for gender equality in their distinctive policy area (Statistics Sweden, 2012, pp. 5-6).

Sweden is organized in three political-administrative layers; the national state, 21 regions [*län*], and 290 municipalities [*kommuner*]. These jurisdictions are treated equally in the constitution, although they hold responsibility for different task and geographical areas (Regeringskansliet, 2006). Sweden's capital, Stockholm City, is the largest city in Sweden, and a region in itself. According to Statistics Sweden, every county administrative board has experts in gender equality, so Stockholm may have experts in gender equality available on at least two administrative levels (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 6).

4.3 Society

Society is a complex concept. In Alford and Friedland's view, different

theoretical perspectives stress the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of society.

Functionalist pluralists interpret society and organizations and their political and

economic dimensions from the perspective of individuals socialized into a culture.

Conflict theorists either view society from a political perspective in which society and

individuals and their cultural and economic dimensions are interpreted from the

perspective of political relations, authority, and resources managed by elites; or from an

economic perspective in which organizations and individuals and the political and

cultural or ideological dimensions of society are interpreted from the perspective of their

consequences for the reproduction or transformation of class relations and the mode of

production (Alford & Friedland, 1985, pp. 25-26).

Above, I discussed some of Sweden's structural and institutional aspects that

seem relevant to understanding policy and implementation of gender equality in

preschool education. Below, discuss societal aspects of Swedish gender equality and state

feminism, from a conflict perspective that stress political and economic dimensions of

persistent gender inequality and oppression.

4.3.1 Gender Equality

In the introduction, I noted that the definition remains vague but that gender roles

may refer to an understanding of gender as a social construct and traditional gender roles

as patriarchal, oppressive expressions of these. Furthermore, traditional gender roles

could point to the historical patriarchal division of productive and

reproductive/unproductive labor in society. It may thus be argued that traditional gender

roles and gender patterns in Swedish society mirror traditional gender roles and gender

patterns in other westernized capitalist democratic societies in Scandinavia and internationally - - although Scandinavian countries are often seen as rather women-friendly states with a weaker male breadwinner model than the rest of Europe (Broman, 2009, p. 63).

According to Statistics Sweden, gender inequality is visible in unequal distribution of power and influence, economic inequality, unequal distribution of unpaid care and household work, and persistent physical and psychological violence against women. The goal of gender equality is articulated in both quantitative and qualitative terms:

> The *quantitative aspect* implies an equal distribution of women and men in all areas of society, such as education, work, recreation and positions of power. If a group comprises more than 60 percent women, it is women-dominated. If men make up more than 60 percent of a group, it is men-dominated. The *qualitative aspect* implies that the knowledge, experiences and values of both women and men are given equal weight and are used to enrich and direct all spheres of society (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 4).

Other proclaimed goals of Swedish gender equality are that 'Women and men shall have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education and paid work that provide them with the means to achieve lifelong economic independence. [And] women and men shall take the same responsibility for household work and shall have the same opportunities to give and receive care on equal terms" (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 5). In statistical terms, these goals have not yet been reached. In 2011, 32 percent of gainfully employed women in Sweden were employed in part time positions that have a lower status and lower pay compared to only 10 percent of men (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 55). The part time work solution became popular in the 1960s and 1970s in order for women to combine family obligations with paid labor (Elgqvist-Saltzman, 1992, p. 47).

Today, women work about 30 hours per week for wages while they have about 26 hours of unpaid work per week. The ratio is about 37 hours to 21 hours for men (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 39). Capitalism is sustained by what Marx would label reproduction, which includes both productive and unproductive labor - - the means of subsistence, and productive consumption, which concerns both productive and non-productive consumption (Marx, 1978b, p. 230). If the value of a commodity is established by the labor power that goes into its production, only productive labor contributes to surplus value. Feminists argue that housework, which is usually labeled unproductive labor, is in fact productive labor, because it goes into the labor power that goes into production. It is therefore an important contribution to gender inequality that women on average contribute more hours per week to unpaid work, which essentially subsidizes capitalism and reproduces gender and class relations.

Gainfully employed women may not be dismissed due to pregnancy, childbirth, or marriage since 1939. Furthermore, legislation against sex discrimination in employment was passed in 1980 (Statistics Sweden, 2012, pp. 8-9). Yet, women in the reproductive age are still being excluded from full gainful employment in a systematic fashion and are systematically channeled into part time positions.

Inequalities and exploitation of women's paid and unpaid work have been justified on the basis of women's presumed physical and psychological inferiority. In Swedish society, "the decisions to open new doors for women in education and in public life … were almost always preceded by debates on the mental or physical abilities of the female sex. … Women's ability to bear children was, at that time, used as an argument against their ability to use the brain in intellectual studies and in professional work"

(Elgqvist-Saltzman, 1992, p. 43). Today, capitalism sustains gender stratification, as well as degradation and exploitation of women through color coded gender segregated product lines, competitive sports, films and television shows, literature and publishing practices, advertisements, fashion and grooming standards, etc. What is constructed as female is traditionally associated with lower value, utility, and status in society.

4.3.2 State Feminism

Despite persistent inequalities Sweden has comparatively high standards of gender equality compared internationally. The fact that Swedish feminism has penetrated the central state may be key to understanding this phenomenon. The first wave of Swedish version of organized feminism took shape during the nineteenth century and ultimately secured that universal suffrage was extended to women in the early twentieth century. Women gained suffrage for municipal elections and the right to hold office at municipal and county levels in 1919, and in 1921 women participated in the national election with equal rights to men (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 7). This is much earlier than other European countries, such as France, where women got the right to vote in 1944, or Italy, which extended the right in 1945. But Sweden was still slower than its Nordic neighbors on this issue. Finland, for example, extended universal suffrage to women in 1906. And in Denmark women gained the right to vote in local elections in 1908 and in national elections in 1915 (Walter, 2003).

Thanks to the feminist movement, women and men gained equal inheritance rights in 1845; widows, divorcees and unmarried women became entitled to work in manual trades and some commerce in 1846; husbands lost their legal right to strike their wives in 1864; married women gained the right to control their own incomes in 1874; and women gained the right to 4 weeks unpaid maternity leave in 1901. In 1938

contraceptives were legalized, child support assistance established, financial assistance to mothers established and universal maternity allowance established (ibid.). Comparatively, in Italy, women and men gained equal inheritance rights in 1865, in Finland in 1878. In France, equal inheritance was established in the early 1800s but a woman lost her right at the time of marriage. It was not until 1985 that France "abolished all legal authority in property disposal that gave any advantage to the husband" (ibid., p. 210). With regard to legalizing contraceptives, France did not lift the ban on birth control until 1967 and Italy did not make contraception readily available until the mid-1970s (ibid., p. 213, 354).

The second wave of Swedish 'liberation' issues emerged early in Sweden, from the 1950s onward. The movement mobilized through political parties and representation in political elections, as opposed to the international tendency for feminist activism to materialize in grass-roots social movements (Forbes, Öhrn, & Weiner, 2011, pp. 767-768). The achievements of the feminists at that time were significant in various areas. For example, in 1950, both parents were declared a child's legal guardians. Three months paid maternity leave for working women on birth of child was established in 1955. The birth control pill was approved in 1964. One hundred years after the right to strike their wives was taken from husbands, rape within marriage was criminalized in 1965 (Statistics Sweden, 2012).

The Swedish version of organized feminism is referred to as *state feminism*. State feminism grew strong through various strategies such as seeking and gaining consensus, avoiding conflicts with male labor unions and labor market interests, and emphasizing women's role as workers. Through the efforts of state feminism, the state assumed responsibility for childcare and care of the elderly in order to free women from their

traditional domestic responsibilities. This allowed women to enter the workforce and gain

higher levels of independence. As a result of state feminism, Sweden became a pioneer of

policy making on gender (Forbes, Öhrn, & Weiner, 2011, pp. 767-768).

According to the former minister for gender equality, Margareta Winberg

(Jämställdhetsminister 1998–2004), however, gender equality has always been a low

priority because it is a very controversial issue, and because men are in power. In an

interview, Winberg said she basically had free hands to conduct and active gender

equality policy and saw this as a sign that gender equality was not of the highest priority:

"I reported to Göran Persson on which areas I was going to prioritize and he said: 'That is

great, go ahead!' One can interpret that in many ways" (Halldin, 2013).

Although state feminism has tended to focus on issues related to equality for

women, there seems to be a growing concern for issues of intersectionality, the role of the

man and masculinity in Swedish society, as well as LGBTQ issues (Länsstyrelsen

Västmanland, 2010). Furthermore, Swedish state feminism made an accomplishment

when the concept *jämställdhet* became generally accepted and incorporated into the

Swedish language.

State feminism was influential in articulating the preschool as a formal structure

as well as a measure for *jämställdhet* in the welfare state. It has been instrumental for the

construction of the Swedish model of a universal preschool for care *and* education for all

children across the country (Broman, 2009, p. 66). *Jämställdhet* as an informal structure

tied to the inner organization of the preschool has in turn depended on an activism within

central state institutions such as Skolverket and the Department of Education and

professional teachers unions such as Lärarförbundet that can be labeled

skolmyndighetsfeminism [school authority feminism] (ibid.).

According to the Delegation, the commitment to *jämställdhet* has been strongest

at a central level and lesser at a regional and local level in Swedish government

(Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 26). Further, according to Ingegerd

Tallberg Broman, the increasing decentralization occurring in the Swedish government

contributed to a dismantling of important central support structures for working with

gender equality in preschools. A general lack of knowledge and low interest, as well as

poor preparation given by teacher training programs to work with fundamental values and

gender have been reported by the Delegation and other studies (Broman, 2009, p. 67). A

survey study of preschool teachers' reaction to increased requirements for working with

gender equality revealed that preschool teachers generally value their professional

expertise very highly. However, when it comes to dealing with cultural and social

diversity, gender equality, and considering children's and parents' right to influence on

the preschool, their estimates were lower than for other variables (Broman, 2009, p. 73).

State feminism generally accepts the structure of Swedish society. State feminists

tend to practice liberal and reform politics, demonstrating a belief in political consensus

and reform rather than radical revolution. Paradoxically, due to the significant

achievements of state feminism, a myth of gender equality permeates Swedish society

and political administrative system, preventing radical transformations of persistent

gender inequalities. Arnot explains how a belief in reform and regulation as an instrument

for change in society through education can seem paradoxical: "Education writing

seemed to suffer what I called following Bourdieu (1973), a 'misrecognition of the action

of the state.' Benevolent or enlightened action was demanded of central government by liberal feminists in order, paradoxically, to transform precisely those gendered relationships which the state had historically helped to construct" (Arnot, 2002, p. 154). State feminists express confidence in the state and in liberal and reform politics. But as Arnot notes, "there is a danger if we do not understand the location of schooling within [a] political and economic context that we will be naively optimistic in believing that educational reform can change society" (Arnot, 2002, p. 98).

In Sweden, gender equality is typically positioned in a framework of power (participation) and human rights (equal opportunities, rights, and obligations). These relate to democracy and specific definitions hereof. Human rights and participation are here seen as a cause of democracy in that they produce democratic outcomes. It is seen as a consequence of democracy since democracy allows participation and protection of human rights. And it is seen as a logical attribute of democracy itself meaning that democracy is defined in part by participation and protection of human rights (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 394).

Definitions of concepts such as power, human rights, and democracy are mandated by dominant usages in society and are part of the hegemony of language itself, what Alford and Friedland refer to as "the "deep structure" of meanings buried in the foundations of social order" (ibid., p. 395). It means that the dominant definitions may marginalize and sanction radical "wrong" discussions of gender, normativity, and symbolic and material structures.

Gender inequality may be maintained in part through definitions of gender equality in a participation and/or rights discourse. Simultaneously, it is possible that these

discursive practices contribute to the myth that Sweden is an ideally progressive, egalitarian, and solidary society: "Gender equality, as a kind of general principle, has come to be strongly associated with Swedish culture. It fits well into the Swedish self-image as "sensible, rationality-affirming, and modern". It can be seen as part of the Swedish national identity, which allows it to be discussed in terms of an ethnic marker" (Broman, 2009, p. 77).

4.4 Swedish Education system and Preschool Education

The Swedish education system was decentralized in the 1990s when responsibility for educational provision was delegated to the municipal level. The comprehensive school system includes grades one through nine and, overall, the education system consists of several different levels of education. Preschools as well as the preschool class, which is a separate one-year educational entity, are optional and prior to beginning first grade (TAM-Arkiv, Lärarförbundet, Lärarnas Riksförbund, SFHL, 2010). A curriculum must be applied to each level of education, specifying basic educational values and missions in addition to setting goals and guidelines for education (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2012, pp. chapter 1, 11 §), a national curriculum is dictated centrally and schools are allowed but not obliged to develop local plans.

According to the Swedish Education Act of 2010, municipalities are now generally responsible for education unless other responsible entities are specified (ibid., chapter 2, 2 §). The financial responsibility lies with the municipality, although state grants may be applied for and granted to the municipality. The number of children enrolled determines the municipality's financial contribution to a preschool (Ibid., chapter 8, 21 §). For the care and education of children under the age of three, schools

may charge parents with fees, which must be set at a reasonable level. For children over the age of three, fees may only apply if the time a child spends at the preschool exceeds 525 hours per year (Ibid., chapter 8, 16 §). Since 2003, all children ages four and five are guaranteed free access to preschools (TAM-Arkiv, Lärarförbundet, Lärarnas Riksförbund, SFHL, 2010). Preschools can be established either publicly or privately and function under the same formal rules. Part of the neoliberal turn in Swedish politics materializes in Sweden's education policy that allows private schools to compete with public schools via a voucher system. Parents are given free choice regarding which preschool to enroll their children in.

The pedagogic work in Swedish preschools must be directed and coordinated by the head of the preschool who is responsible for the preschool's organization. The head of the preschool makes decisions and has responsibilities set forth by provisions in the Education Act and other regulations (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2012, pp. chapter 2, 9 § & 10 §). The head of the preschool is a central figure in the process of translating official preschool policy and plans into organizational goals and values as well as daily pedagogic activities and has significant discretion when it comes to interpretation and realization of these educational goals and values. Considering that official policy tends to state broad and vague goals it is likely that the head of the preschool expresses clearer, more explicit values and goals and missions. Also, there may be significant regional differences when it comes to values and practices in preschools across different regions in Sweden.

4.4.1 History and Foundation of Preschool Education

The universal Swedish public education system began to take its current shape in the mid-nineteenth century when "elementary education was made compulsory for girls

as well as for boys" in 1842 (Elgqvist-Saltzman, 1992, p. 42). Sweden's preschool history also dates back to the 19th century when care for children became a concern due to the rising industrialization and women's burgeoning entrance into the labor market. Sweden's transition from an agricultural to an industrial society took place during the 1800s.

In a functionalist view, education is part of a modernization project in which it serves a specific function: providing children with critical abilities to participate in an increasingly democratic, meritocratic, and technocratic society. Universal public education in Western European democracies historically has been designed to create coherence, unity, and equality in socializing children into society. According to Ramirez and Boli's institutional analysis, "Motivated partly by the desire to uplift the Swedish nation and partly by the perceived need for an educated populace in the monetarized economy that Sweden had begun to develop, the liberals pushed through a school reform bill in 1842 that founded a state system of elementary schools throughout the country" (Ramirez & Boli, 2011, p. 222). Both boys and girls were now required to attend elementary school.

Generally, Sweden followed in the emerging trend of European public education, in which education came to be seen as a central tool for constructing a coherent and thriving society within the framework of nation states located within an international system of sovereign nation states. With the emergence of the concept of sovereign power, a process of state making began, which reduced social, economic, cultural and legal variation within states and at the same time increased variation among them. Increases in activities within the state led to increases in administrative power, which in turn increased

the state's dependence on cooperative forms of social relations, which education was believed to foster (Held, 2006, p. 57).

In many European countries, education became accepted in the 19th century as a legitimate and efficient means of establishing and maintaining cooperative forms of social relations. Hence, ideologies concerning children and education have been closely connected to structural and institutional developments in the European system of nation-states. Socialization theory, an essentially functionalist idea, can also be seen as corresponding to these structural and institutional conditions.

Across Europe, socialization of children through mass education came to be a public concern for the state to manage:

> The welfare of children had previously fallen under the authority of the family and, in some circumstances (e.g., extreme poverty or abandonment), the established churches. But once the welfare of children was linked to the national interest, the pertinent question became, what agency or organization most legitimately exercised original jurisdiction over the national domain? The European model of a national society clearly allocated this jurisdiction to the state (Ramirez & Boli, 2011, p. 227).

Sweden adopted this model by assigning responsibility for socializing and educating children of an increasingly younger age to the state and its institutions. Throughout its constitution and development, unity and progress became central goals for the Swedish education system.

At that time, however, education of young children was considered a social rather than educational issue. Therefore, developments in the elementary school system and the preschool system took different paths (TAM-Arkiv, Lärarförbundet, Lärarnas Riksförbund, SFHL, 2010). According to Broman, "state involvement [in preschool education] was very limited and temporary and state funding was virtually nonexistent

until the mid-1900s. Care, nurturing and education of younger children were not perceived to be an area for the state to control and regulate. It was the family's responsibility" (Broman, 2009, p. 62).

In a European perspective, preschool education was considered a prerequisite for increasing the share of the population that enter the labor market and as a prerequisite for improving Europe's competitive position. Like in other parts of the world, inspiration for the *kindergarten*, which was one of the first shapes preschools took in Sweden, can be attributed to Friedrich Fröbel (TAM-Arkiv, Lärarförbundet, Lärarnas Riksförbund, SFHL, 2010). Fröbel's curriculum was widely popular and it fit well in the educational spirit of the time since the pedagogy had nation building elements and focused on "play as a teaching medium, creating games and songs designed to inculcate attitudes of cooperation and voluntary self-control. This social curriculum attracted a wide range of reformers who saw the kindergarten as a means of fostering social harmony and preventing class conflict" (Beatty, 1995, p. 38).

According to Broman, the European model of education for the labor market and competitive concerns differs from the argument justifying the development of the early Fröbel inspired preschool in Sweden. Fröbel justified preschool education for the child's sake, its development and socialization, and for the sake of the community. Fröbel's preschool curriculum was introduced to be an educational and integrative force and society. Preschool education was seen as an institution for modernization (Broman, 2009, p. 71). But according to Elgqvist-Saltzman, after the second world war, "When the gender- and class-bound old Swedish school system was replaced by a system characterized by 'sameness' in strivings to promote equality, labor market considerations

and productive work was given a high visibility in the policymaking and subsequently in educational research models. Reproductive duties were made invisible" (Elgqvist-Saltzman, 1992, p. 53). And according to Englund, Swedish intellectuals were concerned with the changes in society brought about by the capitalist industrialization, the extension of suffrage, as well as emigration from Sweden and a general social disintegration of society. Integration of the growing working class into society thus became a central interest and concern of intellectuals, who began to view the education system as one means to achieve this end (Englund, 2004, p. 288).

Preschool education is associated with capitalism in at least two ways: by securing an expanding pool of qualified labor; women and – in the future – children; and by socializing children in hegemonic ideology and values of productivity and competition. These objectives intersect with gender. Fröbel's curriculum was designed with only boys in mind, in the spirit that also Rousseau's treatise on education, Émile, was written. Fröbel's curriculum and the Swedish preschool model may explicitly express concerns for unity, community, and children's development and socialization, but these ideas are not ideology free. If they seem appropriate and justified they do so because they engage hegemonic ideology and because they construct Swedish preschool education and society in a specifically legitimate and recognizable way. The invisibility of gender and capitalist bias in Fröbel's curriculum and the Swedish model point to the hegemonic status of patriarchal and capitalist ideology.

The women's liberation movement's influences. In the 1970s, the historical foundation of preschools was brought up for debate. A new preschool model emerged to rewrite the relationship between the woman, man, child, and the state, but also to be a

force for change in itself (Broman, 2009, p. 64). The goal was to make women equal to men, primarily in the labor market, which was still being shaped by the male breadwinner model and capitalist-patriarchal norms and values. What made women's access to the labor market, and the dual income family, possible was that the rapidly growing public sector took over the care and education of young children.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the number of women employed in the public sector doubled, specifically in municipal administration (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 60). Since the growing municipal sector was increasingly staffed by women, and preschool education took place on a municipal level, the redistribution of care and education of children occurred between women rather than between men and women (Broman, 2009, p. 65). Still today, the vast majority of preschool employees are women. About 77,500 women were employed in municipal preschools in 2011, amounting to about 97% (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 41).

A deeply founded conception that children and women belong to the private and unseen parts of society, while men belong to the state and the public has influenced perceptions about the preschool's position in the public sphere (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 35). Women have historically been responsible for childcare, and this partly explains how preschools have become institutions of gender equality, that it, by relieving women from that responsibility for some hours of the day.

The image of childcare without educational aspirations has stuck to preschool activity, influencing both perceptions about preschools as part of an education system and views about the nature of the preschool teaching profession. Pedagogic activities in preschools have been seen as less educational, as less work than natural instincts for the

majority of women working in preschools. Employees in preschools are still struggling to counter perceptions about women's natural ability to care for children (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 19).

But childcare is still a central part of preschool activity, despite trends to make pedagogic activities in preschools more educational and instructional and measures to align preschools with other institutions in the education system. The government explains that care and pedagogy should be combined in preschool education; a model my participant referred to as "edu-care" (Interview with political adviser, audio code 2:45):

> Since the fall of 1998, the preschool has had its own curriculum in form of a regulation. Sweden's Riksdag and government determine the curriculum. The preschool's importance as a first step in the lifelong learning is hereby marked. The pedagogic principles in the curriculum for the preschool are based on an idea that care and pedagogy go together (Regeringskansliet, 2013b).

4.5 The Preschool as an Institution for Gender Equality

The preschool has been articulated as an institution for gender equality in Swedish society. The institution is seen as an external structure for equality that has allowed women to have equal access to positions in the labor market. Since 1972, the percentage of children aged 1-5 in preschools has risen from 12 percent to 83 percent. In 2013, about 95 percent of children aged 3-5 were enrolled in preschool (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 42) (Skolverket, 2013b).

In similar terms to its trade policy, the government's preschool policy recognizes the outer structure of the preschool as an institution for gender equality in Swedish society: "Today, the preschool is an obvious part of the lives of families with children and a prerequisite for combining parenthood with paid work" (Regeringskansliet, 2013b). The preschool has emerged as an institution for economic equality by securing men and

women equal access to the labor market, and by providing children from different backgrounds with equal opportunities in the education system: "In recent decades, the preschool has transitioned from pure childcare to becoming more educational and to form the foundation for children's future schooling. This is an important development to give children from all homes equal chances at school" (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2010a). The government does not specify how gender equality should be integrated into the inner organization of preschool activity. The preschool, as a state institution for gender equality, ideologically compensates for the inequality that is created in the market and that systematically devalues women.

According to the Delegation, there has been a change in the way that preschools have been understood as an institution for gender equality in Swedish society. The traditional focus of the outer structure of the institution (securing men and women equal access to parenthood and the labor market) was supplemented by a focus on the inner organization. This implies attention to how the pedagogic environment and adults' attitudes toward girls and boys shape the direction that Swedish society is going in terms of gender equality. The Delegation credits the curriculum of 1998 for this shift (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 57). The goal of gender equality was articulated to include individuals' entire life, and in this light, gender patterns and gender relations should be changed so that both men and women have an opportunity to give and take care, practice active citizenship and have economic independence. Hence, procedures that could assist in reaching these goals, including attention to questions of gender equality inside preschools and schools, became interesting (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 40).

This shift does not, however, entail a critique of the patriarchal-capitalist coalition; rather, it may be an ideological expression. I will return to this idea in chapter five. Neither does it necessarily entail letting go of the idea that men and women are categorically different.

For example, in Sweden, educational research as well as public policy and discourse have centered on the assumed difference between males and females. Öhrn observes,

> In particular, the tendency to explain complex contemporary social relations by reference to fundamental physiological, neurological and psychological differences between the sexes was advocated by strong media voices during the 1990s … This perspective also appeared to have its proponents in the Ministry of Education, which published a report entitled *'We certainly are different'* (Öhrn, 2000, p. 130).

According to Öhrn, the report *'We certainly are different'* was also widely

> Criticized by gender researchers for undermining the understanding of power relations and presenting biological explanations with thin evidence. Still, it re-appeared in a program of measures, which among other things suggested that girls and boys in school should receive compensatory education to counter their differences in ability. Girls, for instance, were said to be more in need of developing their spatial ability than boys (Öhrn, 2000, p. 130).

A concern about boys' position in the education system has surfaced in Scandinavia and the United Kingdom (Csonka, Bindslev Jørgensen, & Fridberg, 2009, p. 5). The education system has been blamed for favoring feminine ways of understanding and for emasculating boys. A specific focus on boys' educational needs give legitimacy to the idea of schools practicing a specific boy-pedagogy. This international wave of gender specific pedagogy could also be materializing in Sweden. It adds to an increasing stigmatization of female teachers and the teaching profession, i.e. blaming it for being too

feminine, inefficient, unaccountable, wasteful, etc. When male teachers dominated the

profession, there was no systematic protest that girls were at a risk of becoming

defeminized. This tendency demonstrates the lower status attached to the female body

and institutions dominated by its presence. It also demonstrates that status is still

allocated on patriarchal terms. The low status of the teaching profession is illustrated in

an overall decrease in pay for teachers (not to mention that women are systematically

paid a lower wage compared to their male counterparts).

One of the main reasons boys are thought to be suffering a loss in their

masculinity is that most teachers in the lower levels of education, such as preschools and

the compulsory school, are women. According to Öhrn, a report from Skolverket

> Draws on several evaluations concerned with the fulfillment of the values of the
> curriculum in comprehensive school, and points as a general conclusion to 'girls'
> supremacy when it comes to almost all aspects of civic – moral competence
> compared with boys'. Little is said about the possible reasons for this pattern, but
> its existence is emphasized as well as the need, in contemporary schooling, to
> give heed to the boys. The assumption is put forward that boys need to be paid
> attention on their own terms and in situations that they are well acquainted with.
> What seems to be reflected is a view of schools as being in some ways less
> responsive to the needs and requirements of boys for developing competencies in
> the moral/democratic domain. Schools are seen as needing to adjust to boys to
> further their development (Öhrn, 2000, p. 133).

4.5.1 Egalia

The Södermalm district elevates the preschool Egalia as a model for fulfilling

official goals to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns and as a resource

for informing and educating the district's preschool employees in gender pedagogy.

Egalia is a small, public coeducational preschool located in the Södermalm district of

Stockholm. Egalitarian gender pedagogy permeates the foundation of the preschool and

pedagogic activities. Egalia is a gender preschool but it is first of all a public preschool

that functions in accordance with the policy, rules, and regulations that any other preschools operating in Sweden must adhere to. As such, according to written testimonies, Egalia shares many characteristics with other preschools in Södermalm. Egalia expresses a strong commitment to the goals proclaimed in official policy documents and guidelines.

Egalia writes: "We want to teach and show children that all people, regardless of gender, age, physical and mental ability, or ethnic origin should have the same rights, opportunities, and obligations" (Written testimony on gender equality at Egalia). This commitment echoes the official definition *jämställdhet*. Likewise, "at Egalia, all toys, books, materials, and treatment of children and adults are thought from a gender equality perspective. Egalia has a norm critical approach and we want to work actively to prevent cementation of gender stereotyping" (ibid.) also clearly references the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

In addition to working with gender and gender equality, Egalia works in accordance with the national curriculum for preschools and incorporates dance and movement, drama, creativity, language, math into the weekly schedule. On a weekly basis, teachers discuss environmental concerns, thoughts and feelings, and what it means to be a good friend with the children, in the subject referred to as "life-skills". Depending on the age and maturity of children, these issues are communicated in different ways through teaching aids such as books, games, role-playing, and the EQ-doll.[16] The institution is divided into two groups; Northern and Southern Egalia. Northern Egalia consists of 20 children and 5 teachers/members of staff. Southern Egalia consists of 15

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[16] The EQ-doll is a Swedish pedagogic invention developed to help children to gain awareness of and manage their feelings. Six dolls express six different basic feelings, anger, sadness, fear, joy, discontent and calmness.

children and 4 teachers/ members of staff. The head of the preschool serves as head of

Egalia and the preschools in the Maria Gamla Stan unit (Stockholms Stad, 2013a).

As I mentioned in the introduction, one aspect of the preschool Egalia's pedagogy

involves utilizing the personal pronoun, *hen*, which may explain much of the controversy

as well as the air of uniqueness surrounding Egalia. I discuss the concept of *hen* below.

The personal pronoun *hen*. A personal pronoun, *hen,* was added in the official

Swedish national encyclopedia, which defines *hen* as a gender-neutral personal pronoun

to be used in place of *he* or *she* [*han* or *hon*] (Nationalencyklopedin, 2012). *Hen* dates

back to the 1960s when far-reaching social changes were occurring in Sweden and

internationally. In 1966, Rolf Dunås wrote in the Swedish newspaper, *Upsala Nya*

Tidning, that he had a dream of creating a word, *hen*, which would be double-sexed

(Björkman, 2012). Similarly, in 1994, Hans Karlgren, who at the time wrote a language

column for the Swedish newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet*, argued that the Swedish

language needed a new pronoun complementary to *han* and *hon*, for those cases when the

person spoken of could be either a man or a woman, or the gender of the person was

irrelevant to the conversation. In Finnish, the personal pronoun *hän* is double-sexed, it

holds the pronouns *he* and *she* in one word.

In recent years, public debate on the use of *hen* as a personal pronoun has

reemerged in Swedish society. Confusion about whether *hen* is a replacement of the

generic male, an elimination of gender categories all together, or a linguistic construction

to introduce the possibility of gender-neutrality has made consensus on the concrete

application of *hen* difficult to reach. According to Olof Lindquist, the debate turns heated

when *hen* is understood as a neutral replacement of the gendered *han* or *hon*: "Somewhat

simplified you can say that both proponents and opponents believe that the words *she* and *he* divides humans into two different sorts, men and women, with different properties. *Hen* would counteract this, which people then either like or dislike" (Lindquist, 2012).

Despite a lack of consensus in the general public, trends in legislative bodies open up for future official institutionalization of *hen*. According to Karin Milles, Karin Salmson and Marie Tomicic, "In the most recent revision of the discrimination act, recognition of 'cross-gender identity and expression' as basis for discrimination was introduced, which points to the need for *hen* to be available to people that do not identify as either or" (Milles, Salmson, & Tomicic, 2012). Lindquist argues that the use of *hen* as a gender-neutral pronoun in itself does not make language, society or people gender-neutral: "the day when we no longer delineate the sex/gender of people we're talking about, do not have gendered names, do not use the words woman and man, etc., we will absolutely need *hen*. So *hen* is surely one necessary condition for gender-neutral language - but not the only" (ibid.).

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

This analysis suggests a number of findings related to my sub questions. My analysis of the history of Swedish preschool education suggests that:

- Sweden's structure and institutions provided conditions for adopting a universal public preschool system.
- Ideologies concerning children and education are connected to structural and institutional developments.
- Care for children emerged as a concern during the 19th century in the context of rising industrialization in Sweden and across Europe.

- Sweden followed in the emerging trend of European public education. In this framework education was seen as a condition for modernization, national coherence, and unity.

- Preschool education in Sweden is associated with feminist activism. Women in solidarity organized to take care of children and the elderly via the state.

- Today about 97 percent of preschool employees are women.

- State feminists were central to articulating preschools as a formal structure for *jämställdhet* in the welfare state. In turn, *Skolmyndighetsfeminists* articulated the informal structure of preschools as an institution for gender equality.

- Today, preschools are viewed as institutions for gender equality. This includes both the formal structure and the inner organization of preschools.

- The preschool Egalia is an example of a preschool that attempts to be an institution for gender equality in both meanings.

- Utilizing the personal pronoun *hen* contributes to Egalia's special status in the Swedish preschool system.

- The current government's liberalization of the preschool area means that public and private preschools today compete for money via childcare vouchers.

- Other studies indicate that regions and municipalities are less committed to *jämställdhet*. It appears that also the national government lacks commitment.

- Increasing decentralization of government in the 1990s has resulted in dismantling of central support structures for working with gender and gender equality in preschools.

- Employees appear to lack knowledge about, interest and confidence in, and preparation for working with gender.

My analysis of the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the Swedish education system suggests that:

- Since 2006 when the center-right coalition government came into power, Sweden has experienced a shift away from reform politics to more liberal politics.

- The logic of capitalism and the logic of democracy contribute to defining the current government's policy; the market is seen as an efficient means of gathering and allocating resources as long as citizen's rights to services are not compromised.

- In official policy, gender equality is typically positioned in a framework of power (participation) and human rights (equal opportunities, rights, and obligations). These relate to dominant definitions of democracy.

- Policy on preschool education and gender equality has served to reproduce class relations and patriarchal social relations and continuation of exploitation of women's paid and unpaid labor.

- Capitalism and patriarchy form a coalition in Swedish society. This structure keeps women in an inferior position in society and assigns lesser value to what is constructed as feminine.

- Policy such as gender mainstreaming and protecting liberal rights seem to have served the ideological purpose to keep the population unconscious of its participation in reproducing this social order.

On the basis of my main findings related to the history of preschool education in Sweden, the preschool as an institution for *jämställdhet*, as well as the discursive and ideological forces that policy on this area has served, I proceed to examine more closely the current official policy, rules and guidelines below in chapter five below. I also examine the desired implementation of policy, rules, and guidelines on gender equality and preschool education. These tasks address my third sub question.

Chapter 5: Official Policy

In this chapter, I address the sub question:

3. What are the official policy, rules, and guidelines for values and goals that relate
   to gender and preschool education and how are they implemented?

In doing so, I analyze official policy, rules, and guidelines for values and goals
that relate to gender and preschool education, and instructions of how to implement these
values. This contributes to understanding the mandate to counteract traditional gender
roles and patterns and the desired implementation of this mandate.

The primary data on which I base the analysis are: the Education Act of 2010, the
national curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö98/2010, the Discrimination Act of 2008,
Swedish governmental and municipal and policy on gender, *jämställdhet,* and preschool
education, Stockholm city's plan for preschools of 2009, the Equality Ombudsman's
advice on gender equality and preschool education, Skolverket's official guidelines on
gender in preschools, and Södermalm district data. Further, I include interview data with
a political adviser to the Swedish Minister for gender equality and preschool education
and two employees at Skolverket. Interview data are meant to supplement the official
written testimonies.

In order to provide a better understanding of the official discourse on gender and
preschool education in the Swedish education system, I first analyze official policy, rules
and guidelines on gender and preschool education. I then analyze the Swedish

Government's policies and Stockholm's municipal policy on gender and preschool education, respectively.

5.1 Official Policy, Rules and Guidelines on Gender and Preschool Education

In this section, I examine available archival documents published by different authorities in the Swedish government that focus on ideological and discursive elements to official policy, rules and guidelines. I analyze these texts in the context of a wider conversation about society and as contributions to a specific construction of Swedish societal identity, politics, and administration. In this light, official policy such as the Education Act, the curriculum, or Skolverket's rules and guidelines, participate in maintaining and modifying hegemonic discourse in Swedish society and political-administrative system. By referring to and drawing on internationally or generally accepted ideas or declarations, official policy documents also place Swedish society in a broader temporal, spatial, and symbolic context.

In my analysis, I utilize some insights from critical and poststructural theory to challenge the natural status of dominant ideology and status quo. Discourse analysis of official policy investigates how ideas gain hegemonic status through reproduction and institutionalization of meaning as well as through construction of normative structures. These structures involve ideas about values and goals of gender and education policy and practices, as well as the proper procedures to achieve these goals. Normative structures involve also sets of categories, the maintenance of which has a social function to the advantage of a certain social order. Some categories that surface in the analysis include cultural categories such as Swedish children in contrast to children of other ethnicities, boys and men in contrast to girls and women, and adults in contrast to children. The

meaning attached to such categorizations and their position in society can be analyzed in terms of ideological and discursive efforts to define the relationship between the state, capitalism, and democracy – to reproduce a certain social order and construct societal identity in a particular and legitimate way.

5.1.1 The 2010 Education Act and the Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö98/2010

In 2010 the Swedish national government passed a new Education Act. The Act specifies regulations concerning the entire education system and also includes provisions specifically for the preschools. A major change from the previous Education Act of 1985 is that preschools are now established as a distinct part of the education system and that preschools under public and private authority must work in accordance with the Education Act, in addition to the rules and guidelines that have been issued to complement the Act. Of these, the curriculum holds significant ideological and discursive power, but also the Discrimination Act and rules and guidelines passed by Skolverket and municipal authorities contribute to dominant discourse on gender and preschool education. Stockholm City is the municipal authority for the preschool units included in my analysis. Stockholm City manages preschool activities through several districts, of which Södermalm is one.

As mentioned before, Södermalm's preschools were inspected in 2011. The inspection concluded that Södermalm is not working sufficiently with the mission to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns in preschools. The same result was reported in 2006, when the Delegation issued a report on the status of gender equality at Swedish preschools. The Delegation found that preschools across Sweden have a difficult time reaching the nationally proclaimed goals of gender equality expressed in the curriculum, and that preschools rather than counteracting traditional gender roles and

gender patterns often reinforce them (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 11).

Municipalities play a role in this because they distribute resources and organize institutions within municipalities and local districts so that national goals and missions can be fulfilled. According to the Delegation, pressures from above in the political-administrative system and the environment have an impact on the way that municipalities prioritize gender equality. In order for gender equality to become institutionalized as part of preschools' pedagogic practices, gender equality must be articulated as an obvious priority for preschools. The municipality should thus initiate knowledge and competence development for preschool employees. According to the Delegation, what is needed in order for preschools to better reach national goals and missions regarding gender and *jämställdhet* are not further rules and regulations but increasing knowledge at an institutional level (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, pp. 219-220, 11).

To address problems raised by implementation, measures have been taken to increase accountability awareness and performance at the municipal and preschool level. According to Lärarförbundet,[17] pedagogic activities at all Swedish preschool are now regulated by the Education Act, which is directed at the local bodies responsible for preschool education (i.e. the municipal or the private authority) but also directly at the profession; at the heads of preschools and preschool employees (Lärarförbundet , 2013).

The Education Act and the curriculum formulate clearer values and goals for heads of the preschools and preschool employees, and in Stockholm these have been tied into a management system in which employees set objectives in daily pedagogic activities. In organization theory, this is referred to as management by objectives. In this

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[17] Lärarförbundet is Sweden's largest teacher and educator's union.

management system, objectives set by employees are the basis for municipal performance

measurement and evaluation. The municipal results are then evaluated and inspected

locally and by Skolinspektionen in relation to officially proclaimed values and goals.

In the introduction I mentioned that Skolinspektionen concluded that despite an

extensive performance management system, preschools in Stockholm are still not

working sufficiently with the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender

patterns. According to Skolinspektionen, the system for working with quality involves

that an Integrated management system (ILS) documents

> Goals, commitments, work methods, results, analysis, and development. Based on
> the overall objectives that have been set, preschools develop concrete goals and
> commitments for activities annually in their plans for pedagogic activities. These
> plans are followed up and in turn broken down to the department level in local
> work plans. On an annual basis, each preschool unit compiles their work on
> quality in a quality report in which results, analyses, and proposals for
> development are reported. The work regarding development of the quality report
> is attached to the work on quality carried out within the unit throughout the year,
> during which employees also utilize self-assessment to evaluate pedagogic
> activities. The municipality's user survey also forms a foundation for assessing
> goal achievement in the district in separate quality reports. The district's reports
> are then compiled at an administrative level in the education department upon
> engaging in dialogue with districts regarding the overall results. The municipal
> government office (Stadsledningskontoret) follows up on the city council's goals
> for preschool education in respective districts via ILS. The municipality also has
> preschool inspectors whose tasks are to evaluate the extent to which preschools
> achieve goals (ibid., p. 2-3).

The measure to increase accountability awareness and performance in the

education system has a dual character as it holds both municipalities and preschool

employees accountable for politically proclaimed values and goals. Direct attention to the

profession clarifies the profession's responsibility for internalizing and practicing official

values and priorities, ensuring, at least in principle, a unified implementation and

accountability to official policy.

The Education Act of 2010. The Education Act mandates all activity in the

Swedish Education system. The Education Act is 134 pages long with 29 chapters

covering all levels of education in the Swedish education system. The Education Act

focuses on gender equality in Chapter 1: Introductory Provisions. This chapter applies to

all levels of education including preschool education. Chapter 8 concerns preschool

education and is 3 pages long. This chapter does not focus on gender equality.

In chapter 1, the focus on gender equality is part of an overall focus on democracy

and human rights. Swedish education policy has historically focused on democracy as a

fundamental basis for Swedish society and education. Democratic values were infused

into the education system in the aftermath of the Second World War, when the Swedish

government sought to safeguard democratic values in Swedish society.

Democracy in Sweden is about legal and formal influence but also about human

relationships. Swedish government is founded on the ideal that all people[18] have a right to

vote for, or be elected as, political representatives in free, anonymous elections. Swedish

democracy is also founded on a set of fundamental values and principles about human's

equal value and individual freedoms (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, pp.

141, 144). In this context, chapter 1, 4 § of the Education Act frames democratic

socialization as one of the central objectives of all education within the education system:

> Education within the education system is intended for children and pupils to
> acquire and develop knowledge and values. It should promote all children and
> pupils' development and learning as well as a lifelong desire to learn. The
> education should also impart and establish respect for human rights and the
> fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based
> (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2010b).

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[18] You must be of a legal age and have Swedish citizenship to vote in elections for the national parliament.
Furthermore, not until 1921 were women given the right to vote in national elections (1919 in local
elections). It means that women have been included in Swedish democracy for a little less than 100 years.

The particular objectives of preschool education are specified in chapter 8, 2 § "The preschool should stimulate children's development and learning in addition to offering the child a safe care. Pedagogic activities should be based on a holistic view of the child and the child's needs and should be planned so that care, development, and learning form a whole" (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2010b).

The Education Act frames gender equality, the equal value of all people, and solidarity between humans in the context of democracy and human rights values. The provisions are relatively vague and the Act leaves it to the curriculum to interpret the intent of the Act and specify the fundamental values and mission of education as well as goals and guidelines for the education (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2010b, pp. chapter 1, 11 §). Democratic values and human rights should also be translated into the plan and practice of education at the professional level. Subjective accountability for a pedagogic practice that promotes human rights and counteracts degrading treatment manifest as a means to achieving desirable societal outcomes:

> Chapter 1, 5 § the education should be planned in accordance with the fundamental democratic values and human rights such as the inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, *jämställdhet*, and solidarity between humans. Each and every person acting within the education should promote human rights and actively counteract all forms of degrading treatment (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2010b).

Analysis of the Education Act shows that the Act is a foundational element in the state's reproduction of a definition of democracy in terms of values and human rights. Official policy defines democratic values and human rights as freedom from certain evils such as violation of life, discrimination, harassment, and social conflict. This definition of democracy within which gender equality and preschool education policy emerges is

characteristically liberal and pluralist. Securing democratic values and human rights

establishes stability in society, subjective, i.e. individual and group participation within

formal democratic channels, and a collective feeling that all individuals have equal power

in society.

Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö98/2010. As mentioned previously, Swedish

preschools were given a separate curriculum in 1998, which was revised in 2010 after the

new Education Act recognized preschool activity as part of and the first in the education

system (Regeringskansliet, 2010). Skolverket was responsible for publishing the

curriculum but the parliament and the government determine the contents of the

curriculum politically.

The curriculum is an 18 page document covering two main topics: 1.

Fundamental values and tasks of the preschool and 2. Goals and guidelines. Goals and

guidelines include provisions on a. Norms and values, b. Development and learning, c.

Influence of the child, d. Preschool and home, e. Co-operation between the preschool

class, the school, and the leisure-time centre, f. Follow-up, evaluation and development,

and g. Responsibility of the head of the preschool. The directives in the curriculum are

rather specific with regard to goals and guidelines. Each section lists goals and guidelines

separately in addition to how individual preschool teachers are responsible and how the

work team is responsible. However, the goals and guidelines do not include directives on

how to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, only that it is a goal that

"The preschool should strive to ensure that each child develops … an understanding that

all persons have equal value independent of social background and regardless of gender,

ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief, sexual orientation or functional impairment"

(Skolverket, 2011, p. 8).

Gender is a focus in the first section of the curriculum on fundamental values and

tasks of the preschool. Here gender equality is one of several democratic values that the

preschool should promote: "The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and

integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between the genders, as well as solidarity

with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the preschool should actively promote in

its work with children" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 3). Gender equality is presented as a

fundamental value that children must be socialized to embrace. Three different aspects of

the socialization include democratic socialization, gender socialization, and cultural

socialization all mentioned in the curriculum. I explain each separately below.

The curriculum reinforces the democratic foundation and objective of preschool

education and stresses that preschool employees are central to realizing the preschool's

democratic mandate:

> Each and every person working in the preschool should promote respect for the
> intrinsic value of each person as well as respect for our shared environment. The
> inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all
> people, equality between the genders, as well as solidarity with the weak and
> vulnerable are all values that the preschool should actively promote in its work
> with children. The foundation on which these values rest expresses the ethical
> attitude that should characterize all preschool activity (Skolverket, 2011, p. 3).

Socializing children in the values and norms of Swedish society may be the most

basic element of the education system. Socialization theory assumes that children are

influenced by their immediate environment when acquiring and developing a moral

system. Responsibility to act as proper role models to the children can therefore be

assigned to employees: "Children assimilate ethical values and norms primarily through

their concrete experiences. The attitudes of adults influence the child's understanding and respect for the rights and obligations that apply in a democratic society. For this reason adults serve an important role as models" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 3).

Preschool employees must personally acquire Swedish society's fundamental values and they must impart these values and norms to the children through pedagogic activities within the preschool: "The activities of the preschool should be carried out democratically and thus provide the foundation for a growing responsibility and interest on the part of children to actively participate in society" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 3). Hereby, children will come to embrace society's moral system and desire cooperative forms of co-existence and self-discipline.

The curriculum reflects the history of the Swedish education system, which was created by liberal motivations to inspire Swedish national sentiment, and by a perceived need to educate the population to participate in the economy (Ramirez & Boli, 2011). It also reflects Fröbel's inspiration on Swedish preschool education with socialization fostering specific cultural values of cooperation and voluntary self-discipline favorable to a nation-building project. The socialization function of preschool education conveys a functionalist belief in the ability of the education system to instill social morality and cultural belonging in children through the values, structure, and processes of education which reflect wider social values. As Englund notes, socialization is not only confined to subject matters taught in schools "but is also very much dependent on school organization and methods of working, as well as on the place of schools in the 'political culture' and indeed the very existence and nature of such a political culture" (Englund, 2004, p. 26).

The Education Act and the curriculum clearly position preschools within a political culture, the aim of which appears to be to reproduce cultural values and societal status quo. Framing democracy in a human rights perspective ideologically contributes to an understanding of the state as apolitical, meaning that the system is not constructing and perpetuating inequalities. Inequalities are matters of subjective evils that can be managed through reinforcing human rights and democratic values and participation. When we proclaim commitment to fighting violations of human rights, limiting stereotypes, and discrimination we also position ourselves discursively as egalitarian, open and free, and as acting in solidarity with the otherwise excluded individuals and groups in society. When society adheres to these values, departure from this norm can occur only at a subjective level, and this should be countered through measures preventing such actions. It also means that conflicts in society are subjective and do not signify structural problems or inequality.

*Gender socialization***.** The framework of socialization assumes that social forces operating on children will produce future adults that fit into society's normative gender system. In the curriculum, adults are influential figures in children's gender socialization:

> The ways in which adults respond to girls and boys, as well as the demands and expectations imposed on children contribute to their appreciation of gender differences. The preschool should counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles. Girls and boys in the preschool should have the same opportunities to develop and explore their abilities and interests without having limitations imposed by stereotyped gender roles (Skolverket, 2011, p. 4).

Gender socialization implies that children develop understanding of what gender is in relation to others. The curriculum holds preschool employees responsible for

counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns and for providing equal

opportunities for children. The intentions resemble the objectives for children's

democratic socialization as gender equality is defined in terms of freedom from influence,

restriction, and discrimination. Equal opportunities foster gender harmony and prevent

conflict in society.

A dimension of the liberal-pluralist ideology and the functionalist theory about

socialization is that it downplays the state's role in existing inequalities as well as

children's own active role in doing gender. An important consideration for the

socialization framework is that employees may have differing views about what it means

to be a gendered human, to be gender-neutral, or to emphasize biological and

psychological differences. This may cause confusion about how to be role models to the

children in a way that observes values and goals in the curriculum. The Delegation found

that there is a tendency for many adults in preschools to explain gender differences by

reference to biological and/or psychological essences within respective gender categories.

My own findings (that I present in chapter seven) support a similar observation. It means

that preschool employees sometimes work from a perspective on gender that seems

traditional and conservative but they do not perceive their views to conflict with the

curriculum.

The curriculum does not offer a complete definition of gender, gender roles, and

gender patterns, or how to counteract traditional expressions of these. In fact, the

curriculum can simultaneously be interpreted from perspectives of neutrality and

difference because it stresses equal treatment while also communicating the value in

categorical differences, as I will discuss below. A heavy social responsibility therefore

rests on preschool employees and the resources. Yet, the support they receive in this responsibility may be inadequate.

Research has shown that boys and girls in Swedish preschools agree that it is better and more fun to be a boy than a girl (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 71). Many adults and children at preschool age understand what makes a person a boy in relation to what makes a person a girl:

> What is "boyish" is simply something that is not "girlish" and hence has a higher value … For most girls it is more acceptable to engage in activities that are considered typical for boys than the other way around. To be a "tomboy" is often viewed as something positive and is a generally accepted concept. In contrast we have never heard talk about [the male equivalent or a "girlyboy"] (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, pp. 68-69).

When children and adults in preschools are actively guarding the category of masculinity from feminine elements, it suggests that there must be a wider a social and discursive structure that assigns lower value to femininity and that this construction benefits our social order in some way. Following the curriculum's directions to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, it is unclear whether a human rights perspective that focuses on combating subjective evils will be able to change this social and discursive structure, and whether this is in the interest of the social order.

Many of the messages we receive about gender come not only from role models in our near environment but are also inherent in our symbolic and material structure. Language, for example, provides a structure within which we come to exist and are able to communicate who we are to others and ourselves. Language can put something or someone into existence but can also violently take it away. Assuming that I am a social

being and I enjoy being recognized and accepted on an existential level, if I am called by my gender I am also compelled to become that gender and vice versa.

The political economy also serves as a real structure that frames our existence. This relates to the structural context in which we position ourselves as gendered beings. Material and social conditions affect definitions of what it means to be a boy or a girl. Within westernized regulated capitalist economies, markets exist for celebrating and upholding gender categories by filling these categories with distinctively different signifiers and meanings. In capitalist society, gender also serves as a marker of certain types of behaviors more or less desirable to capitalism, such as competition, dynamism, nurturing, and passivity.

Whether the curriculum aims at combating the symbolic and material capitalist structure shaping definitions of gender and equality is unclear within the frameworks of socialization and equality-as-a-human-right that is presented.

Cultural socialization. Not only does the socialization theory apply to democracy and gender, it applies also to culture in the curriculum. I discuss this aspect because gender is often treated parallel to culture under an overall concept of "diversity" and the value hereof. Diversity is articulated as a valuable element in democratic education but also as a means to categorize children in distinctive groups with different needs. Diversity and individuality can be understood within a framework of democratic education that fosters unity, community, and cultural harmony: "Increasing mobility across national borders creates cultural diversity in the preschool, which provides children with the opportunity to show respect and consideration for each individual irrespective of background" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 4). And:

> The internationalization of Swedish society imposes high demands on the ability of people to live with and understand values inherent in cultural diversity. The preschool is a social and cultural meeting place, which can reinforce this and prepare children for life in an increasingly internationalized community. Awareness of their own cultural heritage and participating in the culture of others should contribute to children's ability to understand and empathize with the circumstances and values of others. The preschool can help to ensure that children from national minorities and children with a foreign background receive support in developing a multicultural sense of identity (Skolverket, 2011, p. 5).

Considering the Swedish education system's history, diversity in terms of ethnicity, cultural, and socioeconomic status and the intersection of these dimensions with gender must pose challenges to institutions that were established to create unity and coherence, and as the Delegation notes, to a system that seeks "to increase conditions for equality between different children, between single parent and two-parent households, regardless of class, gender, and ethnicity. An increasingly individualized and heterogeneous society challenges ideas of community and equality" (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 35).

In a liberal-democratic and pluralist view, tolerance and understanding contribute to social harmony and prevents disruptive conflicts that arise from inequalities. When we are asked to understand others, we automatically assume that we have an understanding of ourselves and our culture. We assume that our own individual and cultural identities are stable and consistent. Furthermore, we assume that we can protect our own culture if we understand and participate in others' cultures. This is a problematic idea from a feminist, psychoanalytic, and/or existential perspective. Moreover, participating in and understanding cultures (including our own) does not mean that we are making the world a better place.

The curriculum contributes to cultural socialization in this vision of cultural harmony by encouraging understanding, by targeting discrimination, and by fostering children's solidarity:

> No child in the preschool should be subjected to discrimination due to gender, ethnic group, religion or other faith, sexual orientation of a family member or functional impairment, or be subjected to other degrading treatment. Preschool should aim to develop the child's sense of empathy and concern for others, as well as openness and respect for differences in people's views and ways of life. The child's need to reflect on and share their thoughts with others in various ways about questions of life should be supported (Skolverket, 2011, p. 3).

Cultural diversity assumes that people from different cultures are different and that this difference is natural and valuable. Reality may be more complex than this. We need to investigate into what culture actually is, how well we understand our own existence in culture, and whether culture is necessarily good. Culture can be seen as a collective imagination about who we are as individuals and as societies, through which we ascribe meaning to life and our surroundings. Ernest Becker conceives of culture as religion, as hero-systems:

> Each script is somewhat unique, each culture has a different hero system. What the anthropologists call "cultural relativity" is thus really the relativity of hero systems the world over. But each cultural system is a dramatization of earthly heroics… It doesn't matter if the cultural hero-system is frankly magical, religious, and primitive or secular, scientific, and civilized. It is still a mythical hero system in which people serve in order to earn a feeling of primary value, of cosmic specialness, of ultimate usefulness to creation, of unshakable meaning (Becker, 1973, pp. 4-5).

To the extent that when we pass on a cultural heritage we receive a sense of immortality because our own values and practices continue after our death.

Culture can also be seen as a product of historically specific and repeated structural, institutional and individual actions that have assumed a status of legitimacy in

Bourdieu's sense. Our cultural activities are not necessarily valuable simply because they are cultural, have been passed on from one generation to the next, and provide meaning and 'cosmic specialness' for the privileged in that specific cultural system. Much evil has been committed in the name of culture and the reproduction of culture. Cultural diversity cannot be argued as valuable without scrutiny of cultural elements and the position of gender herein.

The curriculum defines cultural diversity as unproblematic and also as a separate concern from gender issues. But cultures often clash precisely because they tell different stories about who we are, and gender roles are a central part of our cultural tales. It means that the mere presence of and our encounter with other cultures can threaten us on an existential level, and participation in the culture of others is not always so straightforward. It also means that we sometimes excuse actions and inequalities on the basis of culture.

In the curriculum, Swedish children emerge as having a stable and consistent cultural identity while children with a foreign background or national minorities should be supported in developing a multicultural sense of identity. It is unclear what it means to develop a multicultural sense of identity, but one reading could suggest a version of cultural existence in which we are able to pick and choose the best of the cultural elements available and weave them together into an individual fit. Another reading suggests that a majority culture can maintain its hegemonic status by participating in (i.e. absorbing) cultural elements that are not threatening on a deeply existential level as a means to indoctrinate minorities and foreigners into the dominant culture to create a peaceful coexistence.

The tendency to advocate tolerance and acceptance of difference could be interpreted as hegemonic discourse at work. Claiming adherence to human rights, anti-discrimination efforts, tolerance and appreciation of diversity, gender equality, etc., positions a society and education system as equal and progressive in which problems arise at subjective levels only. The overarching symbolic and material structure that produces both the "normal" and the "minority" and the evil outbursts of harassment, discrimination, hate, etc. are disregarded within this discourse, preventing any real investigation into these concepts and the structures producing them. To the extent that gender intersects with other dimensions such as cultural and ethnic belonging, it is problematic to assume that cultural diversity is positive per se if we do not inspect the position of gender within our own cultural existence as well as the cultures of others.

5.1.2 The Discrimination Act

The Discrimination Act serves as a further basis on which preschool activities rest. The preschool as a formal structure to ensure equal access to the labor market finds support in the Discrimination Act, which encourages institutions (employers) to help enable both female and male employees to combine employment and parenthood (Regeringskansliet, 2008, pp. Chapter 3, Section 5). The Act defines different aspects of unlawful activity that fall under the Discrimination Act, and specifies how the education system must comply with the Act. In Chapter 3, Section 5, it is generally stated:

> A natural or legal person conducting activities referred to in the Education Act or other educational activities (an education provider) may not discriminate against any child, pupil or student participating in or applying for the activities. Employees and contractors engaged in the activities shall be equated with the education provider when they are acting within the context of their employment or contract (Regeringskansliet, 2008).

This position forms a foundation for holding municipalities and preschool employees accountable to the Act and education policy. According to the Discrimination Act, institutions in the Education system must work goal oriented, preventatively, and in accordance with an equal treatment plan. Section 14 specifies what it means to work goal oriented with the Discrimination Act: "An education provider … is to conduct goal-oriented work within the framework of these activities to actively promote equal rights and opportunities for the children, pupils or students participating in or applying for the activities, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability or sexual orientation" (Regeringskansliet, 2008).

The Act forms a legal and ideological basis for the performance management system and management by objectives to institutionalize official values and goals. Preventative measures must be taken to comply: "Section 15: An education provider … is to take measures to prevent and hinder any child, pupil or student who is participating in or applying for their activities from being subjected to harassment associated with sex, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability or sexual orientation, or to sexual harassment" (Regeringskansliet, 2008). Equality is understood as freedom from harassment and discrimination. Work on equality can be operationalized in these terms and carried out in a systematic and goal oriented way through the equal treatment plan. The plan specifies values, goals, and measurements of these goals:

> Section 16: An education provider … is to draw up a plan each year containing an overview of the measures needed to (1) promote equal rights and opportunities for the children, pupils or students participating in or applying for the activities, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability or sexual orientation, and (2) prevent and hinder harassment referred to in Section 15. The plan is to contain an account of which of these measures the education provider intends to begin or implement during the coming year. An account of how the measures

planned under the first paragraph have been implemented is to be included in the next year's plan (Regeringskansliet, 2008).

The Equal Treatment Plan has become a central instrument to working with gender and *jämställdhet* in Swedish preschools. The tendency for the Swedish education system to structure work to prevent and counteract discrimination through management by objectives and performance management originates partly in the Discrimination Act.

The Equality Ombudsman. Up until recently, the institution overlooking the Discrimination Act was named Jämställdhetsombudsmannen.[19] A focus on universality and intersectionality lead to the closing of Jämställdhetsombudsmannen in 2009 and its merger with three other similar bodies into a new type of 'portmanteau' authority for general discrimination (Forbes, Öhrn, & Weiner, 2011, p. 770). Diskrimineringsombudsmannen[20] (DO) is now the official ombudsperson for complaints that fall under the Discrimination Act: "The Equality Ombudsman is a government agency that seeks to combat discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities for everyone. In pursuit of this goal, the agency is primarily concerned with ensuring compliance with the Discrimination Act" (Discrimineringsombudsmannen, 2013a).

DO refers to promoting children's equal rights and opportunities as equal treatment work, which "must permeate all pedagogic activities - pedagogy, didactics, teachers' attitudes, rules and procedures, planning and implementation of activities" (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 9). At this stage, democratic values have discursively transitioned from human rights, participation, and equal opportunities to a more practical "equal treatment work" definition, which articulates the goal of the work

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[19] The ombudsman for gender equality.
[20] The Equality Ombudsman.

as equal treatment despite differences. Egalitarianism becomes framed as a gender-neutral approach. In a tutorial named *Equal rights in the preschool*, DO describes how preschool employees can act to contribute to making equal treatment work an integral part of all pedagogic activities. The tutorial revolves around the so-called Equal Treatment Wheel. The Wheel explains the several and cyclical stages involved in working with equal treatment in preschools. Stages include evaluating last year's work, promoting positive conditions, identifying the current situation in the preschool, preventing discrimination, harassment, and degrading treatment in the preschool, and resolving emergency situations (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, pp. 10, 23). The tutorial provides examples of problematic situations and changes that can be made to fix these and may be a constructive tool for preschool employees to get specific pedagogic advice. For example, DO explains what norms are and what it means to take on a norm critical approach:

> Norms are informal rules, conscious and unconscious, that can be found everywhere, even in preschools. Some norms are helpful and inclusive, such as the rule of listening to children's stories without interrupting, other norms are restrictive and exclusive. This is important to understand in order to implement equal treatment work in the preschool. It may for example concern how people's vulnerability is affected by norms about ethnicity and norms about gender. Other strong norms relate to family constellations and celebrations that are linked to religion (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 12).

DO's definition of norms and norm critical thinking can provide a basis for a more comprehensive understanding of what social categories are and how we come to see our own culturally specific definitions and meanings attached to categories as normal and valuable. It encourages investigation into our own cultural existence. Compared to the curriculum, DO's explanation of preschools' responsibilities to counteract traditional

gender roles and gender patterns is more tangible and critical of biological of

psychological definitions of gender. Preschool employees are specifically told that a

binary gender norm exists, which should not be reproduced. DO also explains how norms

about gender and sexuality can surface and create problems for children and adults in the

preschool:

> Young children may in various ways experience that their gender identity does not conform to the norms and expectations that are attached to their biological sex. That feeling may exist even before the child can put it into words. It is the teachers' task to give the individual child opportunities to develop their identity and feel safe in it. Children's identity development should not be limited due to societal norms and adults' expectations attached to gender. It is important that conversations with children about sex, gender identity or gender expression are not marked by the binary gender norm (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 30).

In DO's terminology, "the binary gender norm involves an idea that only two

genders exist and that a person's gender identity and expression is determined by their

biological sex. The norm also says that women and men have different properties and are

opposites" (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 12). This norm provides the

basis for another normative position: heteronormativity, which assumes that opposite

genders are attracted to each other. According to DO, the norm is very strong and works

to keep homosexual and bisexual relationships invisible (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen,

DO, 2013b, p. 13).

All employees are advised to adopt and apply a norm critical perspective, which

on a societal and institutional level means "focusing on the norms and power structures

that are associated with gender, gender identity or gender expression, ethnicity, religion

or other belief system, disability, sexual orientation and age, and how these affect the

current pedagogic activities" (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 13).

Considering the duty that rest on preschool employees to create social change, DO's

advice coming from a central level is invaluable to implementation of official policy in

decentralized municipalities and preschools. Some actions that can be taken at a very

general level to prevent to binary gender norm from dominating the preschool are given.

For example:

> If you are planning activities in groups of girls and boys - think about the purpose. Be aware that it may help to maintain and consolidate the binary gender norm and involve a risk that children experience the approach as disadvantaging and degrading. Make sure to have unisex toilets so that children do not have to choose between the boys' or the girls' restroom (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 30)

These suggestions center on a critical evaluation of the conditions that children

are provided in the preschool, and how children may experience restrictions or

discrimination based on these conditions in ways that may be invisible without a norm

critical outlook.

DO also gives advice about how employees can apply a critical perspective on a

self-reflective level:

> It is important that employees examine their own position, that is, the personal experiences they have about how norms affect their lives. Questions that employees can ask themselves are: What societal norms do I draw advantage from? And what norms restrict and complicate my life? It is also important that employees consider how different norms manifest in their actions and affect work in the institution. All employees need to acquire knowledge and tools for making norm critical reflections in order to participate in the equal treatment work. They also need to be given time to discuss norms and attitudes among themselves (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 13)

Considering the shortage of specific guidelines in the curriculum regarding

working with gender and gender equality, DO's guidelines seem very useful and DO

clearly advocates that resources should be allocated to educating employees and to give

them time during regular work hours to build consciousness together with colleagues. But some problematic elements also surface in DO's tutorial. One relates to the conflict between promoting freedom of religion and recognition of religious activity in the preschool and promoting freedom of gender expression and sexuality in the preschool.

DO recommends that preschools acquire a multi-religious almanac, and that preschool employees become conscious of and observe religious holidays and celebrations, along with other traditional celebrations such as the name day. Teachers are advised to educate children about freedom of religion and what this entails, including the right to not believe in a god. It is recommended that different ethnic groups, cultures, and religions are treated equally and that Swedish traditions and Christianity are not presented as the norm (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO, 2013b, p. 35). DO's advice regarding employees' development of a norm critical perspective on religion centers on allowing children to develop their abilities and interests without being restricted by stereotypes about people who practice a particular religion. It does not entail employees and children critically evaluating religions, religious activities, and the position of gender or sexuality herein.

DO stresses that an important focus in working with equal treatment entails countering homophobia and limiting gender and sexuality norms. DO notes, for example, that homophobia violates the principle of the all people's equal value and equal rights. But it is common knowledge that homophobia, heteronormativity, and misogyny are practiced and celebrated in many religious belief systems. The practice of religion inside preschools can be experienced as participating in traditions and as degrading to people who are excluded and discriminated against in the name of religion.

When we participate in religious activity, regardless of whether we are individually to blame for collective evils of religious belief systems or whether we actually believe in some or all elements of religions, it could be argued that we take part in reproducing the belief system on a structural and symbolic level. Hereby we provide it with legitimacy and relevance to our social reality. If religion is promoted and observed in preschool's pedagogic activities without critically evaluating and discussing the norms and values of these belief systems with the children there is a risk that the preschool contributes to reproducing limiting and degrading gender roles and patterns as well as homophobia and heteronormativity, which goes against the intentions of the curriculum, the discrimination act, as well as DO's own advice.

5.2 The Swedish Government and Skolverket's Policy on Gender and *Jämställdhet* in Preschools

Sweden has a center-right coalition government made up of the four parties Moderata Samlingspartiet (Moderaterna),[21] Folkpartiet Liberalerna,[22] Kristdemokraterna,[23] and Centerpartiet.[24] The government was formed in 2006 under Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of Moderata Samlingspartiet, and is currently serving a second term. In Swedish parliamentary democracy, elections are held every four years, after which the Riksdag appoints a prime minister. The prime minister appoints ministers to head the government offices. The government determines policies and sets priorities while government agencies implement the laws adopted by the Riksdag

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[21] The Moderate Coalition Party.
[22] The Liberal People's Party.
[23] The Christian Democrats.
[24] The Center Party.

(Regeringskansliet, 2013c) (Regeringskansliet, 2013a). Skolverket is one of Sweden's government agencies.

The government's policies reflect, in part, political compromises between the ruling parties and are published by the government offices' official portal Regeringskansliet. In chapter six, I examine political parties' policies separately as part of the political and social environment of policy formation and implementation. According to the center-right coalition government, gender equality is a democratic concern; it is about creating an equitable and fair society. Gender equality is also seen as desirable from an economic perspective, where supporting all people's competency and creativity can lead to economic growth in a capitalist economy:

> The government's *jämställdhets* policy is aimed partly at counteracting and changing systems that conserve the distribution of power and resources between the genders at a societal level, partly at creating conditions for women and men to have equal power and opportunity to influence their own situation in life. When women and men share equal power and influence in all parts of societal life, we will have a more fair and democratic society. *Jämställdhet* also contributes to economic growth by promoting humans' competency and creativity. (Regeringskansliet, 2013e)

The government's policy on gender equality invests in gender mainstreaming, which aims at integrating *jämställdhet* into all policy areas. In addition to this investment, the government notes that *jämställdhet* is a prioritized concern in the government's education policy:

> In recent years, extensive resources have been added to the policy area of *jämställdhet* and it has hereby been developed, become more forceful, and plays a more active role. Work on gender mainstreaming, which aims at providing impact throughout all of the government's policy areas continues at the same time that increased opportunities have been created for implementing complementary actions within other parts of the government's policy. Examples of such actions include … the investment in *jämställdhet* within schools, on which the government decided in June 2008 (Regeringskansliet, 2013e).

One of my interview participants is political adviser to the Swedish minister of gender equality and deputy minister of education. My participant works within the legislative system with new legislation, and advises the minister on preschool policy and external matters such as communication (Interview with political adviser, audio code 1:45). In our conversation I inquired about the tools that preschool teachers have to assist them in their work on counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns. My participant explained: "when it comes to gender equality, it is quite integrated into the profession. When you read about the goals for passing the degree, for example, being able to work with gender is explicitly stated, so that is one that puts lots of effort is into education. But I know that there are ongoing programs and education about how you can pursue that" (Interview with political adviser, audio code 13:30).

The curriculum for the ordinary preschool teacher degree sets goals for students in two different sections: 1. Knowledge and understanding requirements and 2. Skills and abilities. Gender equality is mentioned only in the latter set of goals, which suggests that gender is not considered a specific area of knowledge but a practical competence. Students are required to "show an ability to communicate and establish the fundamental values of the preschool, including human rights and the basic democratic values; demonstrate an ability to prevent and combat discrimination and other degrading treatment of children; demonstrate an ability to consider, communicate, and establish a *jämställdhets* and equality perspective in the pedagogic activities" (Regeringen och Utbildningsdepartementet, 2010, p. 5).

According to my participant, the government has allocated 250 million kronor[25] to different gender mainstreaming projects across Sweden, although I was not able to find out when and for how long. This was given to municipalities and county councils to distribute. My participant is not sure that any of this funding has been used for preschools in Stockholm because funding has been applied for on a project basis, but it is a possibility (Interview with political adviser, audio code 14:15-15:30).

5.2.1 Skolverket's Guidelines on Gender and Gender Equality

As Swedish National Agency for Education, Skolverket is a public administrative agency, part of the executive branch under the Swedish government. Skolverket summarizes its own tasks as "drawing up clear goals and knowledge requirements, providing support for the development of preschools and schools, developing and dissemination new knowledge of benefit to our target groups, and communicate to improve" (Skolverket, 2010, p. 3). According to 13 § of the Statute for the National Agency for Education, "the Agency should integrate a gender perspective and the perspective human rights in their operations. The Agency should also analyze the impact of its operations on children with particular regard to what is best for the child according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2011). Inspection takes place in a separate unit within Skolverket, Skolinspektionen.

Two public officials from Skolverket worked together to provide answers to my interview questions in writing. As appointed public officials, they declined to answer any questions that related to their personal views on gender and gender equality in Swedish preschools, and the answers they provided were brief and formal: "As officials in a politically ruled organization our personal opinions are not important, our mission is to

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[25] About $38.5 million.

work according to the policy documents. In the policy documents *jämställdhet* is a key

concern for the preschool" (Written data from appointed public officials at Skolverket.

Transcript code: 2.7). Besides "the preschool should counteract traditional gender

patterns and gender roles" (Written data from appointed public officials at Skolverket.

Transcript code: 1.4), participants did not specify what *jämställdhet* means in

Skolverket's guidelines to preschools.

According to participants' answers, important conditions for reaching the

politically proclaimed goals for preschools in Swedish society are "The Education Act,

the Curriculum for the preschool Lpfö98, well-educated personnel (preschool teachers),

pedagogic leadership (the head of the preschool); an appropriate composition and size of

the group of children, appropriate premises; and an otherwise good environment"

(Written data from appointed public officials at Skolverket. Transcript code: 1.3). The

tools available to help preschool teachers in their mission to counteract traditional gender

patterns and gender roles are: "From the State's side, we have developed support about

jämställdhet in the preschool and the school. In addition to that, Skolverket recently

issued general guidelines for the preschool, which, among other things address this area"

(Written data from appointed public officials at Skolverket. Transcript code: 2.12).

The analysis of Skolverket's recently issued guidelines shows that they are

directed at municipalities and the profession, including heads of preschools, preschool

teachers and other employees. The guidelines on gender are based on the Education Act

and the Curriculum, and are directed specifically at work teams in preschools. The

general advice relating to gender falls under the preschools' work with norms, values and

employee attitudes: "the team should continuously analyze, reflect on, and critically

examine own values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding norms and values and how these manifest in pedagogic activities" (Skolverket, 2013a, p. 23).

Skolverket's guidelines rearticulate how adults can be role models to children in preschools: "children assimilate ethical values and norms through concrete experiences, and adults therefore function as role models. Adults' attitudes contribute to children' perceptions. It is therefore important to analyze, reflect on, and critically examine how these manifest in pedagogic activities and link them to fundamental values" (Skolverket, 2013a, pp. 27-28). Preschool employees' responsibility for counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns is also reinforced: "Part of working with fundamental values involves counteracting traditional gender patterns and that all children have equal influence over and space in the pedagogic activities regardless of gender. Children's perceptions about what it means to be a boy or a girl are formed in interactions with adults and each other" (Skolverket, 2013a, p. 28).

Rather than giving concrete advice on how one can develop sensitivity and consciousness of gender, Skolverket's advice repeats what is already proclaimed in the curriculum. Skolverket's advice also aims at specifying employees' responsibility for demonstrating and cementing the value of difference and diversity, tolerance and acceptance: "Employees have many opportunities to promote and together with children cope with and discuss that people are different. In an environment where differences are seen as something natural and positive, children are given an opportunity to develop an understanding and tolerance for different ways of thinking and being" (Skolverket, 2013a, p. 28). Skolverket engages in reproduction of the values and goals that have already been explored in this chapter.

Skolverket's guidelines identify the Discrimination Act as the basis for municipalities' obligation to manage by objectives to promote equal rights and opportunities for children participating in the institution, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief system, disability, or sexuality. As a government agency, Skolverket successfully reinforce official policy, values and goals on gender and preschool education.

5.2.2 Governmental Policy on Gender Pedagogues and Gender Pedagogy

The current government prefers a broader and quantitative definition of *jämställdhet* that can be integrated into all policy areas, i.e. to counteract and change systems that conserve the distribution of power and resources between the genders at a societal level, and to create conditions for women and men to have equal power and opportunity to influence their own situation in life.

The Delegation discusses what can be labeled *jämställdhet*s pedagogy, which denotes a quantitative way of thinking about equality, equal opportunities, rights, and obligations, or equal access to something whereas gender pedagogy implies an understanding of how we perform gender in individual and collective actions, as well as in our social and material structure:

> By gender pedagogy, we mean a consciousness of gender patterns, which besides boys' and girls' behaviors also finds expression in material, content, architecture, etc., all of which can be understood in terms of sex and gender … A gender conscious approach to work also includes what the research community refers to as intersectionality, that is, the intersection of different dimensions of power like ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age, and social background or position … A gender conscious approach requires knowledge among employees at preschools … and gender conscious perspective can be utilized as a way to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, pp. 166-167).

That the government prefers *jämställdhets* pedagogy rather than gender pedagogy may explain the change in the role of the gender pedagogue, as explained below.

To assist preschool employees in gaining knowledge of and managing gender in preschools, the so-called gender pedagogue was introduced into the Swedish education system. The previous Swedish government (1996-2006) led by the Social Democratic Prime Minister Göran Persson budgeted 10 million kronor[26] over two years to educating resource-persons within the field of *jämställdhet*. The goal was that by 2004, at least one gender pedagogue should be found in each municipality (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 222). The main task of the gender pedagogue has been to share knowledge about gender and gender pedagogy with preschool employees.

Since this time, there has been a change in Swedish national policy on gender pedagogy and gender pedagogues. As my participant political adviser to the minister of gender equality and preschool education explains, the government today prefers to focus on gender mainstreaming and integrating gender issues into the education of all preschool teachers rather than a educating a small group of gender pedagogues to infuse municipalities and preschools with an educated gender perspective. When I asked about the role of gender pedagogues, my participant explained:

> It is a role that doesn't exist in all municipalities. I know of [one university] that has a special course where you can focus on becoming one of these gender pedagogues, and I think that the role where they exist is that they sort of move between different preschools and they work with gender issues and help the teachers to intensify their work with gender. But I think that what this government has done, because [the gender pedagogue] was a project that was very much conducted by the social-democratic government, and what we have done is that we have instead integrated the gender perspective into the ordinary degrees. So our goal is that everybody should become gender pedagogues, that everyone has the competence to work with it all the time so that you can't point your finger at someone and say well that is her role or his role, and they can come and solve this

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[26] About $1.5 million.

gender question here right now (Interview with political adviser, audio code 15:50).

This view echoes the government's *jämställdhets* policy mentioned above and could be an indication that education and training in gender and gender equality is an arena for political struggle and positioning.

Discursively, there can be no end to the construction of an egalitarian and progressive political image. When one government invests in educating key resource persons in gender pedagogy, the following government positions itself as even more progressive by committing to educating everyone to become gender pedagogues.

My participants from Skolverket's answers to my question about the role of gender pedagogues in Swedish preschools also signal a low priority of educating and promoting gender pedagogues: "There is no requirement stating there must be gender pedagogues in the preschool. However, several preschools do have gender pedagogues and in those cases it is up to the head of the preschool to decide what role that person should have" (Written data from appointed public officials at Skolverket. Transcript code: 2.9).

In its 2006 report, the Delegation recommended gender pedagogues as an important investment in the education system, noting that the need for knowledge about gender pedagogy is significant among preschool employees. The Delegation recommends that Skolverket[27] should be commissioned to implement and follow up on educating gender pedagogues, and Skolverket also describes that its tasks include further education of preschool teachers: "competence development is also an important part of our work.

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[27] The recommendation mentions the Authority for School Development, which was created in 2003 when Skolverket was divided into two. Since the Delegation's report was published, however, this authority was closed in 2008, and the authorities returned to Skolverket.

The Agency is responsible for the National School Leadership Training Programme and the initiative for professional supplementary training of preschool teachers and teachers" (Skolverket, 2010, p. 5). The Delegation's ambition was to have at least one gender pedagogue per 25 employees in preschools across the country by 2012 (Delegationen för jämställldhet i förskolan, 2006, p. 15/222).

According to the Delegation, educating gender pedagogues has been a successful endeavor to increase knowledge about gender in preschools and, gender pedagogues can serve as a jump-start in the process of creating more knowledge among all employees. Still, many municipalities lack competences about gender pedagogy, and the Delegation found that the interest for the gender pedagogue education has been disproportionally weak considering the need to develop employees' competences. (Delegationen för jämställldhet i förskolan, 2006, pp. 220, 225-226). It suggests that the government is less committed to educating already practicing preschool employees in gender issues.

But today, neither the current government nor Skolverket prioritizes the education of gender pedagogues. Skolverket is a public administrative agency, which primarily serves the government in power. So the previous government's official goal to have at least one gender pedagogue in each municipality has not been reached.

It appears that the role of the gender pedagogue is disputed. Skolverket strictly implements and channels official policy. The political shift from a social-democratic government to a liberal coalition government in 2006, which coincided with the conclusion of the Delegation work and the publication of its report, signified a shift in discourse about gender pedagogy and the role of the gender pedagogue from a nationally prioritized knowledge area and a figure of this source of knowledge to a "complementary

action" which can be decided on at the preschool level. With this shift in national

political leadership the Delegation's recommendations about gender pedagogues may

have been overlooked and a resource for increasing knowledge about gender has been

lost.

5.3 Municipal Policy on Gender and *Jämställdhet* in Preschools

Municipalities are accountable for preschool activities within their geographical

area. In Stockholm, the local government issued a plan for all public and private

preschools in Stockholm in 2009 while the administration of preschools is assigned to the

district level. Preschool activity is therefore inspected and evaluated on a district level.

Below, I present an analysis of Stockholm's preschool plan and Södermalm's plan for

actions after the inspection in 2011.

5.3.1 Stockholm City's Preschool Plan

Stockholm's preschool plan resembles the curriculum in that certain elements are

reinforced. The plan expresses a positive view on change in society and a belief in culture,

progress, and the future: "An ever changing society places high demands for

communicative abilities and ability to master the Swedish language"

(Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 7). In this view, society undergoes

continuous change, which seems to be out of our hands. The forces of change operating

on humans and society are viewed as natural, inevitable, and to some extent

unpredictable. Such as fluctuating economic cycles, technological and scientific

revolutions, and information flow. Culture is offered as a means to better withstand these

changes and be prepared for the future. The view builds on a belief that we are not

creating society but must adapt to external forces of change. It also builds on a belief in

the future of society, a belief in progress. These ideas reflect a pluralist perspective and

functionalist theory of education:

> Not only children, parents, and employees win from a good preschool. For
> Stockholm it is also an important investment in the future. Today's preschool
> children will one day grow up to build our collective welfare. With a world-class
> preschool, we contribute to future generations of Stockholmers being
> characterized by curiosity and desire to learn, safety and respect for difference
> (Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 3).

This mirrors the curriculum's view on society: "The ability to communicate, to

learn and be able to co-operate are necessary in a society characterized by a huge flow of

information and rapid rate of change. The preschool should provide a foundation so that

children in the future can acquire the knowledge and skills which make up the common

framework that everybody in society needs" (Skolverket, 2011, p. 5).

Investment in educating young children is articulated as an investment in the

collective welfare, a measure to ensure that life as we know it will continue and only

progress to higher stages of harmony. Investment in children appears as the city's

immortality project. Contributing to gender equality is part of the city's vision for

preschool education: "The preschool should actively contribute to *jämställdhet* and take

advantage of the possibilities of diversity. It should also reinforce the child's identity and

self-esteem" (Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 4). In this framework,

gender equality and diversity are articulated within a broad framework of general

commitment to gender and cultural harmony:

> Children at preschools have different backgrounds, thoughts, circumstances, and
> experiences. The preschool's task is to provide an opportunity for stimulating
> encounters. Curiosity and desire in the encounter develop children's empathy.
> Differences are an asset in the pedagogic work. Employees' attitudes and
> knowledge of an intercultural approach is important for preschools to contribute

to supporting children with a foreign background to develop a multicultural belonging (Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 11).

In similar terms as the curriculum, Stockholm city's preschool plan also articulates cultural belonging as natural for Swedish children while children with a foreign background should develop a multicultural belonging. The preschool's mission to ensure that children become involved in the cultural heritage reinforces this idea (Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 8).

Contributing to gender equality is part of a systematic work on quality: "girls and boys should have the same opportunities to try and develop their abilities and interests … The design of the environment requires planning and consideration in order to avoid a limiting gender role mindset" (Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 11).

The work is part of a system of performance evaluation and management by objectives. One aspect is the equal treatment plan, which all preschools must actively work in accordance with. It is part of managing by objectives, which holds preschool employees accountable for meeting institutional and official goals:

> In an organization managed by objectives, heads of preschools in cooperation with preschool teachers decide how goals should be achieved. A qualitative development of the preschool requires a pedagogic leadership, which creates conditions for the pedagogic activities to work toward proclaimed goals and create conditions for a systematic work on quality. Pedagogic leadership refers to both heads of preschools and teachers (Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 12).

Managing by objectives is part of ensuring quality in preschools and requires that all employees are familiar with results and that performance is measured in comparison with set standards:

> The quality system for the pedagogic activities includes reporting, inspection, user surveys, and the institution's self-evaluation. In the annual quality report for the

preschool, results, analysis of results, conclusions, and areas of development are reported. The district compiles these reports with suggestions of new areas of development for the preschool. The municipal board of education prepares the city's quality report for all school forms on behalf of the city council (Utbildningsförvaltningen, Stockholm Stad, 2009, p. 15).

Below, I discuss how Södermalm district responded to Skolinspektionen's conclusion that preschools did not meet the set standards for working with counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

5.3.2 Södermalm's Plan

During 2011, Skolinspektionen inspected preschool activities within the Södermalm district. Skolinspektionen concluded among other things "Preschools are not working sufficiently consciously to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles" (Södermalms stadsdelsförvaltning, 2012, p. 4). The inspection noted that it needed more concrete knowledge about what will be promoted in the district, and how work will be carried out, in order to make a better assessment. To this, the district answered:

> At the preschool Egalia, gender pedagogy is the foundation for all pedagogic activities. Gender and *jämställdhet* permeates pedagogic activities, from interior, materials, choice of toys and literature, to the treatment of children and adults is thought from a gender and *jämställdhet*s perspective. At the preschool employees work to avoid cementing gender stereotypes and have a norm critical approach. The knowledge and experience available at the preschool Egalia will be presented to heads of preschools at a management meeting.
>
> In order to share good practices with employees within Södermalm's preschools the district will arrange pedagogic training weeks. During these weeks, employees from different preschools will present practices and good examples from their institutions that employees from other preschools can use at their preschools. Employees from the preschool Egalia will participate in the pedagogic week this spring.
>
> This autumn, the district will organize a collective lecture on gender for all preschool employees about the preschool's mission as stated in the curriculum and what this mission means for the preschool.
> Three of our preschool units have college educated gender pedagogues. We have been considering that they may form a network so as to disseminate their knowledge.

In most preschool units, employees have received training about rainbow families and their treatment. The issues about gender and *jämställdhet* must of course always be kept alive among employees. The investment the district makes should be a support to employees in their ongoing discussions and actions (Södermalms stadsdelsförvaltning, 2012, pp. 4-5).

The district explains that gender pedagogues are currently associated with specific preschools and that they are considered as a resource for the district. This conflicts with the official policy on gender pedagogues in the national government and Skolverket.

Besides recognizing the expertise that educated gender pedagogues have, which they would be able to share with employees at different preschools, the preschool Egalia is also considered as a resource and source of inspiration for other preschools in the district. What the response suggests is awareness that the problem raised by implementation is primarily rooted in a lack of knowledge and experience about gender and gender equality at many preschools, not in a lack of directives from above or systematic evaluation, as the Delegation concluded. It appears that preschool employees need help in their work with gender and in interpreting the preschool's mission as stated in the curriculum and what this mission means for the preschool.

5.4 Chapter Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze official policy, rules, and guidelines for values and goals that relate to gender and preschool education, and how they are implemented. With regard to content, my analysis suggests that:

- The Delegation concluded in 2006 that preschools need more knowledge to better reach national goals, not further rules or regulations. While my findings support

this conclusion, I also find that central concepts in official policy could be defined more clearly.

- The Education Act frames democratic socialization as a central objective of the education system. Gender equality, the equal value of all people, and solidarity between humans are framed in the context of democracy and human rights values.

- The Education Act defines democratic values and human rights values as freedom from certain evils such as violation of life, discrimination, harassment, and social conflict.

- The Education Act leaves it to the curriculum to interpret the intent of the Act and to specify values, mission, goals, and guidelines.

- The curriculum rearticulates the Education Act regarding democracy and human rights values in preschools. The curriculum defines these in terms of democratic socialization, gender socialization, and cultural socialization.

- The curriculum does not provide a complete definition of gender, gender roles, and gender patterns, or what it means to counteract traditional expressions of these.

- The Equality Ombudsman (DO) translates democracy and human rights values into equal treatment work.

- The center-right coalition government frames gender equality as power and opportunity to influence society and your own situation in life. The government also views gender equality as beneficial to economic growth.

- The government prioritizes gender equality in preschools via gender mainstreaming.

- Stockholm city's plan reiterates the curriculum's goals and values.

  With regard to implementation, I found that:

- The Education Act clarified accountability, performance requirements, and responsibilities of municipalities, heads of preschools, and preschool teachers.

- The curriculum rearticulates the Education Act regarding heads of preschools' and preschool teachers' responsibilities.

- The Discrimination Act provides a legal and ideological basis for working goal oriented to promote equal rights and opportunities in the education system.

- DO explains norms and norm critical thinking in a way that has potential to give a more comprehensive understanding of social categories and how we come to see culturally specific definitions and meanings as normal and valuable.

- DO encourages observation and participation in religious holidays.

- The government supports implementation of the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns via the ordinary degree requirements for the preschool teacher program.

- The government indirectly advocates *jämställdhets* pedagogy over gender pedagogy.

- The government stopped investing in educating gender pedagogues to educate preschool employees about gender. It means that a resource for further knowledge and development of coherent approaches may have been lost.

- Skolverket supports implementation via its official guidelines. These guidelines rearticulate the curriculum.

- Skolverket addresses preschool work teams in official guidelines, informing them to critically examine their own values, norms, and attitudes.

- Stockholm city instills a performance management and management by objectives system for implementation of the mandate.

- Södermalm district administration explains that problems raised by implementation are related to a lack of knowledge and possibly support for preschools.

- Södermalm elevates Egalia as a model for implementation.

- Södermalm considers gender pedagogues a resource for educating preschool employees within the district.

I assume that the issues that I have discussed in this chapter do not exist in a vacuum, but receive support and opposition from the political and the social environment. In the next chapter will therefore discuss how official policy is constructed and received in a larger political and social context.

Chapter 6: Social and Political Environment

In this chapter, I address the sub question:

4. How is official policy constructed and received in a wider political and social context?

More specifically, I ask how the preschool policy goal to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns (as well as the more general notion of preschools as institutions for gender equality) is constructed and received in a wider political and social context. This involves examining the political and social environment in which policy is created, interpreted, and implemented.

Political scientists argue that organizations need support from so-called mass publics and especially from attentive publics (Rainey, 2009, p. 112). I assume that preschool education holds a central place in society and captures the attention of the general public. I also assume that policy on gender in preschools will garner much attention in the public because the topic of children's gender identities can give rise to strong feelings in society, particularly among parents. Rainey argues that the media influences the tenor of reforms and the public's views on governance, albeit in a diffuse way.

Alford and Friedland find that the public definitions of issues by the mass media are almost exclusively based on pluralist or managerial perspectives. It means that problems are presented and discussed in ways that stress either liberal and/or conservative market solutions, such as increasing information, public choice, or changing

incentives. Or they are presented in a way that stresses bureaucratic solutions such as establishing new agencies, increasing coordination, or overlooking operations (Alford & Friedland, 1985, p. 403). Alford and Friedland also argue that "the dominance of language associated with the pluralist and managerial perspectives is an excellent example of ideological hegemony" (ibid.). Fraser suggests that "We can no longer assume that the bourgeois conception of a public sphere was simply an unrealized utopian ideal; it was also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule. … The official bourgeois public sphere is the institutional vehicle for a major historical transformation in the nature of political domination. This is the shift from the repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one" (Fraser, Rethinking hte Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy, 1990). Furthermore, "discursive interaction within the bourgeois public sphere was governed by protocols of style and decorum that were themselves correlates and markers of status and inequality" (ibid., p. 63). I will therefore assume that discursive struggle is part of the basic structure of the political and social environment and conduct my analysis from the perspective of discourse.

In this chapter, I analyze the political and social environment of public policy formation and implementation, by taking into account public and political perceptions about the policy stating that preschools must counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. I also analyze which discourses these perceptions draw on. I take into account how language is used to define the problem of gender inequality and the preschool's mission and performance in being a solution to this problem. I begin from the perspective of politics and proceed to public debate in the written mass media.

6.1 Political Environment

In this section, I discuss policies and political platforms regarding views on gender, *jämställdhet*, and preschool education among political parties represented in the Swedish Riksdag. Data were located on each party's respective website.

To get an idea of the resonance that each party had with the Swedish voters after the latest national election in 2010, I present the political parties on a traditional left to right scale below in figure 6.1, which also provides information on the number of mandates each party holds in the 349-seat unicameral national parliament, Sveriges Riksdag.

Figure 6.1 Political parties in Sveriges Riksdag
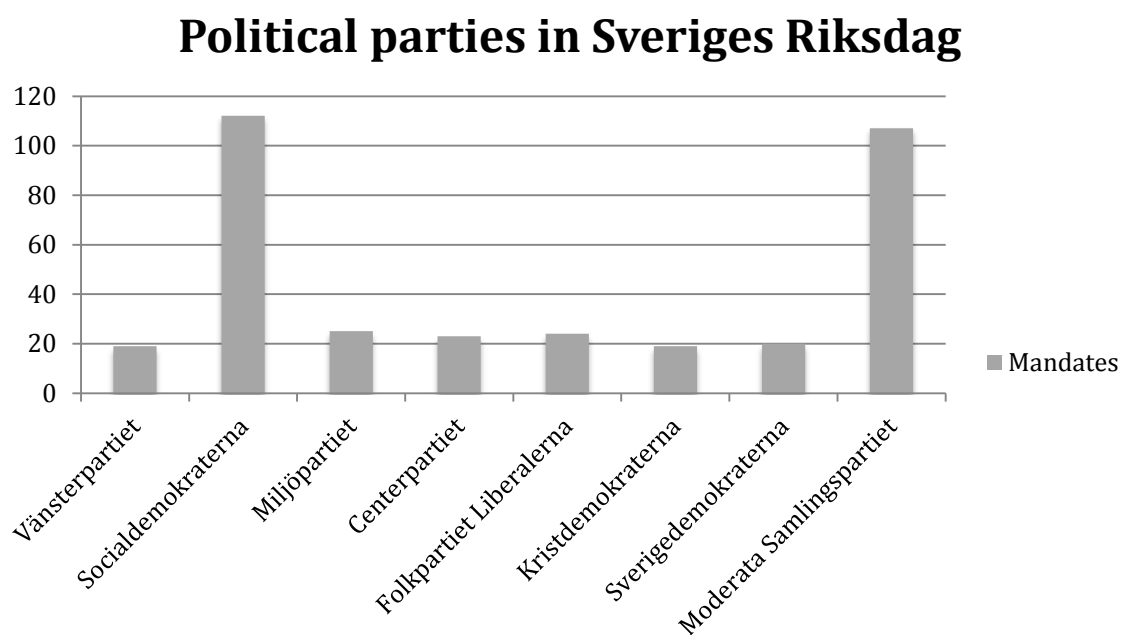
Source: Sveriges Riksdag, 2014.

6.1.1 Center-Right Discourses

As mentioned in chapter five, the current government is a minority center-right coalition consisting of the four parties: Moderata Samlingspartiet,[28] Folkpartiet Liberalerna,[29] Kristdemokraterna,[30] and Centerpartiet.[31] Sverigedemokraterna has a unique status in the political environment: its platform includes both extreme right views and socialist views, and can therefore not be considered as an opposition party; and it is not part of the governmental coalition. Below, I discuss elements of center-right perspectives on gender, *jämställdhet*, and preschool education.

Moderata Samlingspartiet. Moderata Samlingspartiet (Moderaterna) is the second largest party in the Riksdag with 107 mandates and is the basis for the coalition government. The government was formed in 2006 under Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of Moderata Samlingspartiet, and is currently serving a second term. The government has significant situational and agenda-setting power in the policy formation and implementation processes. Furthermore as an ideological force in politics and governance in Swedish society, the party's liberal-democratic politics have significant influence on the public and preschools.

The liberal-democratic discourse allows Moderaterna to articulate values of freedom equality, and diversity in preschools, the successful implementation of which can be ensured by a market solution: public choice and changing the incentives to modify preschool's behavior, as well as a bureaucratic solution of oversight, inspection, and evaluation: "No pedagogy, however good, suits all children. Children are different and acquire knowledge in different ways. We would therefore like to see diversity, flexibility,

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[28] The Moderate Coalition Party.
[29] The Liberal People's Party.
[30] The Christian Democrats.
[31] The Centre Party.

and free choice in childcare. Of course, all preschools must be inspected and evaluated so

that we can ensure that quality is maintained" (Nya Moderaterna, 2012). Moderaterna

take a pluralist and functionalist perspective on society, contributing to a discursive

construction of Sweden as equal, democratic, and progressive:

> Moderaterna want to keep building on the values that many recognize as typically
> Swedish. Sweden should be modern, open, and coherent. Here we want to
> welcome new technology, be tolerant, and utilize talents. … People should be
> evaluated on the basis on what they can do and what they are ready to contribute,
> not based on which god they do or do not believe in, which ethnicity or
> background they have, who they love, or which gender they have (Moderata
> Samlingspartiet, 2011, p. 17).

Swedish culture is something unique, but which can also be acquired through

work and own effort to assimilate values:

> A society that encourages diversity must be clear about what is shared.
> Swedishness is an identity that can be acquired through living and working here.
> … Ultimately, it is through own effort that humans become part of their new
> country and acquire knowledge about language and culture. In Sweden, men have
> the same rights as women, believers the same rights as non-believers,
> homosexuals and heterosexuals the same rights as bisexuals, with these and other
> equity values, we make no compromises (ibid., p. 18).

Equality and diversity benefit the market, which in the end is perceived to

contribute to the well-being of society and the general public because "heterogeneous and

open-minded societies are more competitive than homogenous and exclusive societies"

(ibid., p. 17), and "*jämställdhet*, tolerance, and openness have proved to not only be the

right thing, but also important factors for economic growth" (ibid., p. 23). Since

Moderaterna view Sweden as an open, tolerant, and embracing society, evils must be of

subjective nature, anomalies that can be countered through legislation to counteract

discrimination or more individual freedom, which will create optimal conditions for

competition in the global market (ibid., p.18). Structural oppression exists outside the Swedish borders: "Sweden must take on a specific responsibility for *jämställdhet* and rights of minorities in the world. Patriarchal oppression is strong in many countries and it threatens women's health, children's well-being, and the development of society" (ibid. p. 22).

As a consequence for policy on gender, *jämställdhet*, and preschool education, Moderaterna's framework suggests a commitment to gender equality and working with gender issues in preschools. But in practice, opening the public preschool area to competition for childcare vouchers removes resources from the public preschools and is likely to make it more complicated to apply a uniform approach to gender pedagogy across preschools. Furthermore, leaving it to the public to select preschools -- or in public choice terminology to "vote with their feet" about preschools -- assumes that people have the necessary resources to make informed decisions about the quality and pedagogy in preschools. Gender pedagogy may drown in other important considerations about the quality of the preschool. Lastly, privatization is likely to weaken democratic control over preschools and is likely to lead to more bureaucratic solutions to problems raised by policy implementation, such as performance management or pay-for-performance - - which is known to create hostile work environments. Considering that the majority (about 97 percent) of preschool employees are women, these measures target a group of workers that is already suffering from stark inequalities in the labor market.

Folkpartiet Liberalerna. Folkpartiet Liberalerna currently holds 24 mandates in the Riksdag. Folkpartiet Liberalerna shares Moderaterna's liberal approach to solving gender inequality in society and mandating preschools to achieve this goal: "More and

more people work at odd hours. It is important that municipalities also facilitate finding childcare for these families. Solutions may vary, and the new childcare vouchers will make it easier to arrange childcare at inconvenient hours" (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2014). Folkpartiet Liberalerna finds that preschools have been crucial to women entering the labor market which has resulted in women's autonomy and opportunity to support themselves. According to Folkpartiet Liberalerna, the childcare voucher system will give parents much greater choice in finding preschools that suit their work schedules and childcare needs (Folkpartiet, 2009, p. 20).

Childcare vouchers are seen as part of a solution to one important obstacle to gender equality in society - - lack of childcare opportunities to people that work evenings, nights, and holidays. The market will be able to provide this solution if people are given free choice. Hence, liberal politics are able to address and solve structural problems:

> To regard the subordination of women in society as a result of women's own lack of resources rather than a question of democracy, distribution of powers and governance, leads to the conclusion that women's subordination depends on women themselves rather than on structural problems in society. This is a rhetoric often heard from the right wing. The left on the other hand sees structural problems as an explanation for women's general subordination but want to use structural methods as a solution, which in practice means that more power should go to the politicians and the state rather than giving more power to the women themselves. Liberals see structural problems but believe that solutions must be solved at an individual level. That every woman should be given the right to decide what she wants to do" (Folkpartiet, 2009, p. 20)

In this way, Folkpartiet Liberalerna view preschools as institutions for gender equality. But also a more equal representation of men and women in preschools will increase gender equality by easing children's socialization into more equal normative gender roles:

> The foundation for a gender equal society is laid at a young age. To give boys and girls an upbringing that forms a safe foundation for their respective male and female identities, it is important that both men and women are part of their everyday surroundings. Not least within preschools and schools it is important to have both male and female role models (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2009, p. 16).

Kristdemokraterna. Kristdemokraterna is a democratic party characterized by Christian values. The conditions of children growing up in Sweden, the centrality of family life, the role of civil society, and the limitations of politics are emphasized in all of the party's policies (Kristdemokraterna, 2001). The party holds 19 mandates in the parliament and is part of the governmental coalition. Like Folkpartiet Liberalerna, Kristdemokraterna view the complementarity of masculinity and femininity as important to the development of the child:

> Equality begins at home. Children learn early by observing their parents' sex roles. In order for equality to be achieved it is vital that both male and female roles change and that both sexes share the responsibility and the practical work at home, in the family and in the community. Equality is good for the children. Parents have the same responsibility for the wellbeing of their offspring and both parents have the right and a duty to participate in their care and fostering. The impact of both male and female models during childhood must not be underestimated (Kristdemokraterna, 2001, p. 40).

Members of Kristdemokraterna do not define themselves as feminists, because "feminism is not a coherent ideology in itself" (Kristdemokraterna, 2013a). But like most parties in the Riksdag, Kristdemokraterna appropriate the concept of *jämställdhet*, which they believe "should never be something that is added "on top of" something else but should exist as a fundamental principle in all policy areas" (ibid.). Kristdemokraterna support the official government policy on gender mainstreaming that incorporates gender equality into all policy areas. The party also views preschools as institutions for gender equality by increasing access to childcare and opportunities for women to enter the labor

market (Kristdemokraterna, 2001, p. 40). Kristdemokraterna believe in liberal policy

regarding free choice, although Kristdemokraterna express a preference for more

conservative family based nursery solutions, which, in the spirit of Fröbel, foster the

development of the individual child:

> Families must have solid chances to choose if and for how long their children should participate in pre-school activities. They must be able to choose between various types of care. It is vital for municipalities to support alternatives such as family nurseries and open pre-school facilities. Good parental choice presupposes a varied supply. Pre-schools shall be flexible in nature and meet the needs of the individual child (Kristdemokraterna, 2001, p. 36).

Kristdemokraterna are for gender pedagogy: "Working with gender equality is

important in the entire education system, especially around the earlier ages. Preschool

teachers and teachers need competences on *jämställdhet*. We want this to be part of the

teacher training and other degrees with pedagogic elements. We are therefore not against

gender pedagogues, as it has sometimes been presented in debates" (Kristdemokraterna,

2013b). Kristdemokraterna support official policy that seeks to incorporate *jämställdhet*

in teacher training programs.

Centerpartiet. Centerpartiet the fourth member of the coalition, is represented in

the Riksdag with 23 mandates. Like Folkpartiet Liberalerna, Centerpartiet finds that

"there is no contradiction in that a liberal party fights oppressive structures in society. On

the contrary, it is necessary to ensure that all individuals are treated with respect and that

everyone has the same right to freedom" (Centerpartiet, 2013c). The party believes that

> There are not only biological differences between men and women, there are also differences between men and women that we have created. Gender refers to society's values, attitudes, and experiences regarding men and women. … It is us together that maintain an unequal society through gender roles and the gender-power structure, and we must take shared responsibility for breaking these. The

solution is to change attitudes and see every single human for who they are, regardless of gender (Centerpartiet, 2013b).

Centerpartiet's policy on gender and *jämställdhet* is one that reproduces notions of biological gender differences and social gender differences, which we are individually responsible for changing. Inequality is framed as a problem created by subjective behaviors, which can be modified by changing incentive structures.

Centerpartiet also shares the belief that private preschools should be allowed to compete with public preschools in the education market. Like the other government parties, Centerpartiet prefers variety and choice: "In cooperation with the coalition, Centerpartiet introduced childcare vouchers in 2009. These accompany children to the option that parents choose. This will allow for a variety of solutions such as private family based daycare, private solutions between multiple families, and traditional preschools" (Centerpartiet, 2013a).

Sverigedemokraterna. Sverigedemokraterna is a social conservative party with a nationalist outlook that holds 19 mandates in the Riksdag and is not part of the governmental coalition. The party seeks to combine the best elements from the traditional left and right ideologies (Sverigedemokraterna, 2011) but expresses primarily nationalist and conservative values, particularly on the topic of gender:

> Sverigedemokraterna believe that innate differences exist between most men and most women that go beyond what can be observed with the naked eye. We also believe that male and female properties in many cases complement each other and partly for this reason we believe that all children should have a right to both a mother and a father in their lives (Sverigedemokraterna, 2014)

This policy of difference and complementarity between the genders infuses other areas such as gender equality in the labor market. Men and women complement each

other and should be equally represented, also in preschools: "the premise that there are differences that mean that men and women sometimes see things from different perspectives and do things differently reinforces rather than weakens the importance of representation of both sexes in all positions in society" (ibid.). As I discuss in the following chapters, this conservative view on differences between men and women also surface in my interviews with preschool employees, and can be seen as reproducing a patriarchal gender order.

6.1.2 Center-Left Discourses

The national opposition to the center-right coalition government in power is from left to right: Vänsterpartiet,[32] Socialdemokraterna,[33] and Miljöpartiet.[34] Socialdemokraterna is the largest party in the Swedish Riksdag, holding 112 mandates (Sveriges Riksdag, 2012b), and dominated Swedish politics for most of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, up until 2006. Miljöpartiet is an environmentalist and feminist party that holds 25 mandates in the Riksdag, making it the third largest party in Riksdagen (Sveriges Riksdag, 2012b). Vänsterpartiet is Sweden's Marxist and feminist party, with 19 mandates in the parliament.

Socialdemokraterna. Socialdemokraterna apply Marxist historical materialism to analyzing inequality in society, viewing the means of production and relations of production as the basis for society and human's living conditions. But they also find that this dimension does not explain everything:

> The role that reproduction plays is also significant. Reproduction refers to family life, food, rest, and recreation but it also refers to all the other things that are conditions for our contributions to the labor market: care, education, and

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[32] The Left Party
[33] The Social Democrats
[34] The Green Party

development of our social skills. ... Traditionally, the responsibility for the home and the family has been a women's concern and it has largely been carried out as unpaid labor (Socialdemokraterna, 2013a).

In Socialdemokraterna's vision for *jämställdhet*, preschools are viewed as

institutions for gender equality in society:

When men and women share the responsibility for work and family, the economic growth and human quality of life are improved. Many women involuntarily work part time and we want everyone to have a right to full time work. We also want to stop perpetual temporary employment, improve women's work environment and invest in childcare on evenings, nights, and holidays (Socialdemokraterna, 2013c).

Preschools can also contribute to counteracting prevailing gender norms: "It is

important to break gender norms early. Therefore, we want to actively work for more

men in the preschool and early primary education. Incorporating *jämställdhet* in everyday

activities will be a challenge for schools" (Socialdemokraterna, 2014b).

Socialdemokraterna finds that increased gender equality is associated with higher rates of

employment. *Jämställdhet* is a human rights issue and "Sweden should work against

discrimination and for women's rights to education, economic independence, legal rights

and opportunities to work politically. Strengthening women's rights and working for

greater *jämställdhet* has long been a cornerstone of social democratic politics, both

domestically and internationally" (Socialdemokraterna, 2014a). According to

Socialdemokraterna, respect for human rights is a fundamental social democratic value

and a prerequisite for democracy (ibid.). In a global context, Socialdemokraterna believes

that Sweden is a good country, but the government in power is sending Sweden on a path

to losing its leading position on gender equality (Socialdemokraterna, 2014b). Childcare

is a central part of this problem, not only because childcare is rarely available for parents

who work odd hours but also because the "bourgeois government's municipal parental allowance and childcare vouchers" extract resources from the public preschools (Socialdemokraterna, 2013b).

      Miljöpartiet. Miljöpartiet is critical of dominant values and politics in Swedish society, proclaiming, "We value love and life above materialism and money. This is seen as provocative to a world in which more masculine values have characterized the development of society and politics" (Miljöpartiet, 2009, p. 4). Miljöpartiet has an explicit feminist agenda, aiming at patriarchy and capitalism, and expressing an understanding that gender inequality intersects with ethnicity, class, physical and psychological impairment as well as social background. According to Miljöpartiet's perspective on *jämställdhet*, the so-called gender-power structure "does not suffice to explain how inequality emerges. The intersectional perspective helps us illuminate how different power structures intersect and how they can change under different conditions" (Miljöpartiet, 2009). According to Miljöpartiet, Sweden's social structure takes the male as the norm, and in the current social structure, women face significant discrimination and harassment in all areas of life. Children and adults face sanctioning gender norms that restrict our individual freedom (Miljöpartiet, 2010, p. 2). These norms are considered particularly prevalent in schools, where gender stereotypical expectations influence classroom behavior as well as the educational interests and choices made by children. Today, preschools and schools do not work sufficiently with *jämställdhet* to break the gender order in society (Miljöpartiet, 2009, p. 20). Miljöpartiet also believes that "children are active co-creators of society and should not be seen as passive recipients of the society that adults create for them" (Miljöpartiet, 2013, p. 6).

Miljöpartiet argues that the education system, from preschool to university, has a responsibility to practice a pedagogy that encourages non-traditional and gender stereotypical educational paths, and is responsible for educating on conflict management, sex, and living together in intimate relationships from an equality- and queerperspective (Miljöpartiet, 2010, p. 7). All employees should have passed a gender pedagogic training, and it is also important that pedagogues have a norm critical approach so that the heterosexual norm is not maintained in schools (ibid.). For example, "many girls hear from adults the explanation, "he is only teasing you because he thinks you are cute" when they have been subject to negative treatment from a boy. Here, we can do important preventative work including a greater focus on gender pedagogy in preschools" (Miljöpartiet, 2009, p. 24). Further, "all preschools should apply a gender conscious pedagogy so that children have the opportunity to be who they are and not be forced into society's narrow gender patterns. All children should have equal opportunities to develop and live their lives without being inhibited by prevailing gender roles" (Miljöpartiet, 2013, p. 8).

Miljöpartiet believes that an additional step in reaching a *jämställd* preschool is to work to *gender-safeguard* preschools. This is described as "analyzing pedagogic teaching aids, approaches, and the pedagogue's educational training" or as deciding "whether to engage in compensatory pedagogy (particularly targeted activities that counteract traditional gender patterns)" (Miljöpartiet, 2009, p. 21). These are described as effective ways for preschools to define concrete goals and to gender-safeguard the preschool (ibid.).

According to Miljöpartiet, working for equal rights and against discrimination must be integrated into all sectors of society (Miljöpartiet, 2013, p. 10). Legislation should make gender mainstreaming mandatory in every political area, from urban planning to work environment and job conditions, to financial opportunities and education in order to get to the structural inequality in society. Also, with inspiration from Norway and Finland, the Green party proposes legislation to enforce quotas of at least 40 percent of each sex on board of private as well as public organizations (Miljöpartiet, 2010, pp. 2-4). According to Miljöpartiet, the merger of the four ombudsmen for equality in 2009, made active promotion of equality practically nonexistent, since today, the ombudsman primarily has a reactive role responding to claims of discrimination. In order to strengthen prevention of discrimination through equality- and diversity work, Miljöpartiet is working on a revision to reinforce this function. Lastly, in the most recent party platform from 2013, Miljöpartiet consistently utilizes the pronoun *hen* throughout the publication, which is a sign that Miljöpartiet is willing to address gender inequality in the symbolic realm of language.

Vänsterpartiet. Vänsterpartiet was founded in 1917 with the mission to organize people who want to work for a radical socialist and feminist politics (Vänsterpartiet, 2012, p. 21). Like Socialdemokraterna, Vänsterpartiet applies Marxist historical materialism to analyzing inequality in society. According to Vänsterpartiet, "the classed society and the patriarchy are different power structures with different material foundations. Hence they must be analyzed separately. Our politics must be built on the recognition that issues of class and issues of gender cannot be given precedence over one another or be subordinated to one another" (Vänsterpartiet, 2014b). Patriarchy and capitalism form a

coalition that serves to legitimize and mask the systematic exploitation that is taking place in society. Vänsterpartiet recognizes this situation: "It is primarily in the female dominated occupations in healthcare and the private service sector part time positions are the only option available, often in the form of precarious work like substituting or on-call positions. This is one of the fundamental causes of the immense income inequality between men and women" (Vänsterpartiet, 2014b).

Vänsterpartiet argues that it is important to work on an ideological level in order to analyze and reveal how shared interests are created and changed in society: "strong interests seek to conceal class society. The working class is said to have vanished and class differences are redefined to individual social problems. This counteracts the working class' organization and cement the current social order" (Vänsterpartiet, 2012, p. 3). The same can be said for gender inequality. According to Vänsterpartiet, "the patriarchy is no byproduct of capitalism but a separate aspect of power in society. The patriarchy has a material base in reproduction, the social activity in which humans give birth to and bring up new generations. Men as a group practice power through control of women's sexuality and labor in the family and society" (Vänsterpartiet, 2012, p. 3).

Vänsterpartiet agrees with the liberal and progressive notion held by most of the established parties in the Swedish Riksdag that preschools "exist to stimulate children's development [and] is necessary to give women the same opportunity as men to participate in the labor market" (Vänsterpartiet, 2014a). But the party is critical of the liberalization that preschool education is undergoing under the current government's watch:

> As long as you adhere to a certain set of rules, anyone may open a preschool anywhere and demand to get funding from the municipality to run it. This is

referred to as right of establishment. We think this is wrong. We find that the municipality is better at planning where preschools should be located to guarantee that all children have the same right to a good preschool. It should be prohibited that tax money provided as grants to private preschools is used to pay out profits to the owners. It should go to the pedagogic activities at the preschools (Vänsterpartiet, 2014a).

Vänsterpartiet is also critical of the lack of attention that the government and Skolverket give to training employees in gender pedagogy. Referring to the Delegation's recommendation that by 2012, at least one gender pedagogue should be available per 25 employees in municipalities across the country, Vänsterpartiet notes that no national statistics exist in either the department of education, Skolverket, or the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, on gender pedagogues' work in municipalities (Sveriges Riksdag, 2012a). Vänsterpartiet concludes that the goal has not been reached, which is also supported by my analysis in the previous chapter. Training and utilizing gender pedagogues are not of high priority in the government or Skolverket.

Vänsterpartiet argues that the government should assign Skolverket with the task to draw up advice and guidelines for how gender pedagogues should work with questions of *jämställdhet*, in order to utilize their skills in an optimal way, and the task to establish national statistics on gender pedagogues. Furthermore, since *jämställdhet* is a field of knowledge in development, it is important that gender pedagogues also have access and opportunity to receive further training and develop their knowledge (Sveriges Riksdag, 2012a).

6.1.3 Feminist Discourse

Currently, the most acute debate on feminism in Sweden takes place between Vänsterpartiet and the feminist party, Feministisk initiativ[35], which is currently not represented in the parliament. Feministisk initiativ is critical of the feminist policies of the established parties, arguing that patriarchy is infused into all of the established parties. Gudrun Schyman of Feministisk initiativ argues that there are feminists in almost all the mainstream parties because "the crudest manifestations of the view that women have less value and are inferior in power to men – wage discrimination and violence against women – are found in all social classes" (Schyman, 2013). Schyman argues that although class analysis is important, the so-called gender code strikes out the class code. But above all, Schyman finds that power structures interact, and misogyny, racism, and homophobia are inextricably connected. To a feminist politics it means that "this knowledge, about how different power structures interact and reinforce each other, must be the starting point when we transform and modernize society. We will achieve *jämställdhet* and freedom from discrimination when we dare to illuminate the resistance, also in our own organizations" (Schyman, 2013).

Feministisk initiativ has a formal structure that allows it to serve as an organized opposition to the parties represented in the Riksdag, and also to run for national election based on an ideological program. According to Feministisk initiativ, the party's role in Swedish national politics is the following:

> We challenge the national self-image of Sweden as an equal and open country that respects human rights. The same image also portrays anyone who is Swedish as equal, open and tolerant. We show until another image - built on facts, research and knowledge - where Sweden and the Swedes far from always stands for equality, transparency and respect for human rights. We challenge the established

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[35] Feminist Initiative

parties when they claim that they have a sufficient policy. Minor adjustments here and there are not enough. We need radical changes. Feminist Initiative is an innovative party in an ancient patriarchal political landscape. When other parties use feminism as a spice to an already formulated a starting point, we choose instead to let feminism constitute the starting point (Feministisk initiativ, 2014).

Feministisk initiativ "wants all municipalities to report separately how they have worked with the articulations of *jämställdhet* in the curriculum for preschools. Skolverket should also have increased options to sanction against municipalities that cannot account for goal achievement and development efforts" (Feministiskt initiativ, 2013, p. 16). Furthermore, Feministisk initiativ "wants education in preschools … to have a mandatory gender-power-, disability-, LGBTQ-, and anti-racist perspective in addition to a norm critical pedagogy" (Feministiskt initiativ, 2013, p. 16)

6.2 Social Environment

In this section, I analyze a different aspect of the policy formation and implementation environment, the social environment. Due to time constraints, I unfortunately had to delimit my focus. I decided to concentrate on debates, opinion pieces, editorials, and articles published in the four largest national newspapers in Sweden, all of which are based in Stockholm. Furthermore, I analyze articles from a local Södermalm newspaper.

I made this choice because the news media generally has a broad outreach and because it can be seen as an arena for public opinion debates across the political spectrum. I could have included data from organized interests such as the national Teachers' Union (Lärarförbundet) or Sweden's central organization for academics (SACO[36]). I could also

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[36] SACO is Sweden's central trade union confederation of professional associations.

have included data from Jämställd.se, which is an educational organization offering

education in *jämställdhet* to municipalities, institutions, work teams, and other groups

interested in learning about working with gender and gender equality. However,

Jämställd.se is indirectly represented via newspaper articles. I suggest that future studies

sample more broadly from the social environment.

The basis for this section are 55 newspaper articles from the two largest

Stockholm based morning newspapers, *Dagens Nyhetar* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, the two

largest Stockholm based evening newspapers, *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*, as well as the

local newspaper, *Södermalmsnytt*. Articles were published between September 2002 and

January 2014 (See appendices for a list of articles).

Table 6.1 shows the distribution of articles included in my analysis by newspaper

title and by the light in which the topic was presented. Many different topics surfaced in

the articles but were all related to the overall theme of preschools, gender, and gender

equality in Sweden.

I categorized articles under *positive presentation* if the author or newspaper

presented the specific topic at hand in a seemingly positive light. I also put articles in this

category if the article gave me the idea that the author or newspaper was sympathetic

with gender pedagogy and gender preschools, gender pedagogues, and/or preschools

utilizing the personal pronoun *hen*. This showed for example when authors or newspapers

gave an uncritical voice to proponents of these ideas and concepts or when the author

referred to proponents' views or statements to build an argument.

Conversely, I categorized articles under *negative presentation* if the author or

newspaper presented the specific topic at hand in a seemingly negative light. I also put

articles in this category if the article gave me the idea that the author or newspaper was critical of gender pedagogy and gender preschools, gender pedagogues, and/or preschools utilizing the personal pronoun *hen*. This showed for example when authors or newspapers gave an uncritical voice to opponents of these ideas and concepts or when the author referred to opponents' views or statements to build an argument.

Lastly, I categorized articles under neutral presentation if the author or newspaper presented the specific topic at hand in a seemingly neutral light. I also put articles in this category when authors or newspapers gave voice to both proponents and opponents or when the author referred to both proponents' and opponents' views and statements to build an argument. Some articles in this category were also transcripts of chats in which the public could ask questions to a proponent or opponent of for examples utilizing the pronoun *hen* via an online chat.

Table 6.1 Distribution of articles by newspaper title and light of presentation

Newspaper	Positive presentation	Negative presentation	Neutral presentation	Total
Dagens Nyhetar	6	2	0	8
Svenska Dagbladet	13	7	6	26
Expressen	9	1	1	11
Aftonbladet	3	2	0	5
Södermalmsnytt	5	0	0	5
Total	36	12	7	55

An introductory classification of the article content shows that some of the actors mentioned or represented in the articles are:

- Gender studies scholars;

- Experts on gender, pedagogy, toys, and/or child development;

- Gender pedagogues;

- Heads of gender preschools;

- Preschool teachers;

- Politicians;

- Participants in public discussion;

- And parents.

These actors are usually associated with either positive or negative views on the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, the idea of gender pedagogy and gender preschools, gender pedagogues, and/or preschools utilizing the personal pronoun *hen*.

Some of the institutions, entities, and concepts mentioned in the articles are:

- The Södermalm district, Stockholm city, and Sweden,

- The state,

- Municipalities,

- Skolverket,

- An international comparison: Italy,

- Gender preschools: Egalia, Nicolaigården, Tittmyran, Trödje, and I-or and another unnamed parent cooperative,

- The Delegation for gender equality in preschools,

- Political parties: Vänsterpartiet, Miljöpartiet, Kristdemokraterna, Centerpartiet, Moderaterna, Folkpartiet Liberalerna,

- The current governmental coalition and the previous Social Democratic government,

- And RFSL (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights[37]).

I begin below by presenting views on the overall debate on gender and preschool education. This involves an analysis of conservative, liberal, and more radical, critical, or socialist perspectives, and a discussion of views on gender and gender equality. I then present more specific views on the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. From there, I move on to the issue of implementation. This includes views on successes and obstacles to implementation and the idea of gender pedagogues and gender pedagogy. Lastly, I present views on Egalia and the idea of utilizing the pronoun *hen* in preschools.

6.2.1 Views on the Overall Debate about Gender and Preschool Education

The general debate on gender and preschool education is sometimes referred to as an elite or left wing project that is being imposed on the masses by a central state. This perspective is put forward as conservative and liberal politics.

Liberal-Conservative Views. One article features a critique of one of Miljöpartiet's elected politician, Gustav Fridolin's ideas. According to the article Fridolin "wants all preschools to have a gender pedagogue. Gender pedagogy is supposed to "break prevalent gender norms". … It seems to make sense. But does that mean that all parents need to be monitored by a municipally employed social engineer?" The author continues:

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[37] According to RFSL's website, "RFLS is a non-profit organization that works with and for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT). It is non-partisan and not affiliated with any religious organization. … RFSL's objective is that the same rights, and obligations will be applicable for LGBT people as they are for everyone else in society" (see www.rfsl.se).

I wonder whether Fridolin wants to see more clarity about the parental work and gender equality in the home. Perhaps he wants to send a time studies man to each home to record the exact amount of time mothers spend comforting sad children, cooking and washing, and how much time the fathers spend cleaning dishes, washing the car, and changing the fuse – or however the idea of unequal conditions looks (Article code: 52)

Similarly, an editorial critical of Miljöpartiet and Vänsterpartiet's politics on gender makes a parody on gender preschools and state domination. According to the newspaper, since the state controls children for eight hours per day in gender preschools, Miljöpartiet and Vänsterpartiet are concerned about the remaining hours of the day:

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, perhaps it is unfair to budget for a gender pedagogue in each home, but an attainable goal should in any case be a gender pedagogue in each apartment building. … Whenever you see ideological deviations from the state-sanctioned view on gender you can call on the doorman for help. …[But] when the state controls children for eight hours per day in gender preschools and eight hours through gender doormen, this still leaves eight hours. And who dares to think about what children are dreaming about when they are not under supervision? (Article code: 10).

The editorial continues: "The Alliance [the governmental coalition] is standing in the way of a wonderful new world. Södermalm's hipster voters cannot be mistaken. Miljöpartiet in Stockholm points to the future and it begins at your preschool" (Article code: 10).

Some fear that the state and its institutions will have too much control over individuals in society:

Our son does not have a single toy car. Everyone seems to have forgotten that he should have received one for his first birthday and instead he only got those gender-neutral things like blocks, puzzles, and books. The closest thing you can get to something with a motor is a picture book containing an entire spread with pictures of motorized vehicles. … How can you be such a traditional boy without one single role model around you? But this is no longer the way it should be. The specially trained gender pedagogues who are increasing in numbers want to change this. In Stockholm only, a dozen so-called gender pedagogues have been

unleashed with the mission to free children from learned gender roles. … I am happy that my boy still in the peace of his home can remain unaware that his interest in excavators is evil and something that should quickly be eliminated by a municipal gender expert (Article code: 51).

It appears that participants in public discussion try to mobilize support from parents. Paulina Neuding, attorney and editor in chief of the center-right bourgeois magazine Neo, explains that gender pedagogy is not taken seriously in the scientific community, only among politicians. Furthermore, the gender project is an audacious experiment: "There are parents who are skeptical of such experiments. This alarmed the SOU about gender pedagogy [the Delegation for gender equality in preschools] that Göran Persson's [the former Social Democratic prime minister's] government commissioned. … We now hear something similar from Miljöpartiet. The gender ideas should characterize every preschool, parents should no longer be able to opt out."

Conservative participants in public debate portray the so-called gender project as absurd and dangerous: For example, Tanja Bergkvist, an opponent of "the state-sanctioned and in all authorities institutionalized and from the top inflicted body of thought called gender madness" (Bergkvist, 2014) and blogger in the "fight against the stultification industry, with a focus on gender madness" (Bergkvist, 2009). Bergkvist objects to gender studies as an elite project "No one is competent enough, only the gender scholars have been granted true insight, which they regularly and in a compulsive manner must impose on all of us in all social institutions" (Article code: 7). She fears that gender studies research and gender pedagogy are damaging to the population: "I suspect that this research will be continued ad absurdum. But dear gender scholar: Keep your findings to

yourself and not trumpet them in the media. They only create confusion among parents and children" (Ibid.).

Elise Claeson, a conservative social worker and feminist critic, is cited for saying: "To discover your sex is a natural step on the way to adulthood. But because gender pedagogues believe that there are not biological differences, they deny this, it is only something stupid parents have made up" (Article code: 1). In a different article, Elise Claeson answers reader's questions about the pronoun *hen*. Here she notes among other things:

> The entire gender debate and gender studies are an elitist project, which occurs over people's heads. Journalists who want to feel like they belong to "the initiated" who know about "everything" are naturally included in this elite. The entire *hen* debate is actually a nonsense-debate, but unsuspecting journalists who run the gender elite's errands have boosted it. In turn people ignore this and do as they have always done. … We are many who wonder why our genders are considered a political problem that must be addressed with a new word? Most of us do not want to hide that we are man or woman (Article code: 29)

The proponent of *hen*, Nanna Salemark, replies:

> Journalists' role is to be responsive to the public debate and particularly on the question of *hen*, I think the journalists have done an excellent job. It is precisely *hen* that people talked about in recent weeks in the coffee room, the preschool, in the classroom, and during at parties. Who started the debate is difficult to sort out, but if it was not maintained by thinking people who are not journalists, the media had probably not continued it (ibid.)

It is interesting to note that Claeson draws on a managerial discourse, in which journalists are in the hands of a power elite. In contrast, Salemark draws on a pluralist perspective in which there is no such power center, but rather journalists are part of the democratic system that secures that all perspectives are heard. A concerned reader takes a step further and articulates gender scholars and gender pedagogues as violent extremists:

"How can these makers of madness (the Gender Taliban) be so powerful? Can't you stop them in any way? Do they have the media on their side?" (Article code: 2)

The gender debate in the media appears political and characterized by both pluralist liberal-democratic and managerial conflict perspectives. Miljöpartiet is presented as the main advocate for gender pedagogues and gender pedagogy: "Miljöpartiet wants all preschools to become HBT-certified. Not least to reduce the exposure of the city's gender preschools that have repeatedly been threatened by unidentified subjects. But neither Moderaterna nor Socialdemokraterna want gender pedagogy to be more than a question of profiling for single preschools." (Article code: 32). There appears to be an alliance between center-right parties, liberal-conservative

Social analyst Paul Alarcón is cited in the local newspaper Södermalmsnytt for saying:

> Gender preschools are a typical right-left issue. At Södermalm where half of the voters voted red-green in 2010 they are significantly more positive toward HBT-certified preschools than at the deep-blue Östermalm… It is the values at Södermalm that created the foundation for the first "gender preschool". It becomes a self-fulfilling spiral in which people who sympathize with the preschools foundational values prefer to reside nearby, which in turn establish a stronger ground for more gender preschools, says Paul Alarcón (Article code: 14)

However open to gender preschools Södermalm may be, the idea of gender preschools did not originate in Södermalm. It is the home of a certain variant of the gender preschool, the gender-neutralizing and HBT-certified kind that the preschool Egalia embodies. But compensatory pedagogy has been practiced at gender preschools in Scandinavia since the 1980s and 1990s, which I will discuss further below and in the following chapters.

Kajsa Wahlström, gender pedagogue, *jämställdhets* consultant, and head of the preschool Tittmyran, which was the first Swedish preschool to adopt compensatory gender pedagogy in the 1990s, confronts Kristdemokraterna's Göran Hägglund: "I have taken note of your attacks of "the radical elite" and "the culture left" lately. You have not really wanted to inform what these refer to, but since you often mention gender pedagogues makes me think that you are talking to me." (Article code: 55). She continues by referring to the democratic demand for gender pedagogy in the population:

> Real people turned out to be very thankful for our work … At Tittmyran we had numerous of calls from parents who wanted to enroll their children with us or who asked us to open a preschool in their district. This is why I am a little confused when you are talking about gender pedagogues as some kind of power elite, Göran. In most municipalities today parents are allowed to choose which in preschool they want to enroll their children. You are not disapproving of the decisions they have made at home at their kitchen tables, are you? (ibid.).

Left wing, radical, and critical voices. Some left wing, radical, and critical voices are represented in the newspaper data. For example, expert in *jämställdhet,* Ingemar Gens argues with support from a preschool teacher at Trödje preschool, which he advised during a longer gender project, that free play is not so free:

> For a long time, the preschool has worked in accordance with the curriculum's statement that "At preschool, girls and boys should have the same opportunities to try and develop skills and interests without limitation from stereotypical gender roles" and in this process they have abandoned free play, tells Pär Eriksson, preschool teacher. Just like Ingemar Gens he questions for whom free play is free (Article code: 8).

According to Gens, free play is not necessarily free for the children, but rather freedom for the preschool employees to not engage in organized pedagogic activities. He also questions the naturalness of roles and storylines played out during free play and links these to the ideology of capitalism. He is cited for arguing:

> [Free play] is limited by traditions and unwritten rules in society. … Arguing that two girls playing with dolls in a doll corner is free play is ridiculous. Children imitate society and force themselves into different roles, which they then practice. …And boy's free play is traditionally characterized by oppression, pecking order and competition, which are built into male structures. Embarrassingly, we have an incentive to train our boys in this way; it is like the king of the hill, which is also true in business. Survival of the fittest. Perhaps this is why we let this go on? (Article code: 8).

In an interview for a newspaper article, Krister Svensson, director of the Nordic center for research on toys and pedagogic mediums (NCFL) is cited for arguing that capitalism and gender are intertwined: "That we live in a world that idealizes consumption is obvious if you look at the supply of toys. Just like there are still big differences between what is seen as male and what is seen as female. During the 1970s we had a break in what was perceived appropriate for boys and for girls, but after the 70s we have returned to the gender segregated toy market" (Article code: 23). He continues:

> If you enter a toy store today you hardly need to hesitate about what toys are for boys and what toys are for girls. Boys certainly have more dolls than girls today, Krister Svensson points out, but boys' dolls are called figures and their appearance differs markedly from doll for girls. While girls' dolls are dressed in pastels, can tilt their heads, have large, communicative eyes and could not possibly stand up on their own, boys' figures often have masked eyes, are able to stand on their own and are dressed in sharp, clearly delimited colors. This is not without importance, Krister Svensson believes. The dolls reflect ideals in society and adults' ideas about boys' and girls' interests (Article code: 23).

This makes the concepts of and connection between gender and capitalism a political problem: "If we think that children have too much stuff or that the toys give the wrong signals regarding gender roles then it is we adults who must assume our responsibility. It involves, in political terms, pondering about what kind of society we want for our children" (Article code: 23).

Vänsterpartiet agrees that gender is a political concern. In an opinion piece, Johan Svensson of Vänsterpartiet voices a critical view about liberalization of the preschool area. Privatization of preschools is presented as an obstacle to gender pedagogy and gender equality:

> Vänsterpartiet has long worked against the Folkpartiet Liberalerna and the other alliance parties' eager attempts to undermine the prospects for the local preschools by opposing that substandard actors are now establishing preschools with profit-making as the sole motivation. … In Vänsterpartiet's Goteborg we operate a *jämställd* preschool where young boys do not automatically play with cars and little girls princesses. To accomplish this, next year we focus especially on hiring gender pedagogues. This requires increased resources and trained personnel, something that the Folkpartiet's private cash cows are unable produce (Article code: 42)

Gender scholar Anette Hellman is interviewed for an article and is cited for claiming that the environment perpetuates gender stereotypical images: "The power of the environment and images are great. Stereotypical messages are hard to avoid but at home and at the preschool, it is important to think about what you put on the walls, thinks Anette Hellman" (Article code: 42). Expert consultant in *jämställdhet*, Kristina Henkel, agrees: "Through advertising, clothing, and toys children are exposed to an extremely strong pressure to be in a certain way as a boy and a girl respectively" (Article code: 11). Both of these perspectives are critical, but there is no suggestion for what can be done to change this. Rather, the pressures of the market and advertising are portrayed as something that is out of our control. The idea that capitalism exploits gender difference is mentioned as a footnote. Meanwhile, the main message is that parents and preschools are responsible for providing the best conditions for children despite this environmental influence. The head of preschool and gender pedagogue Lotta Rajalin supports this view: "Heteronormative books about family life are everywhere. It may seem exaggerated but

we must be a continuous counterbalance to a gender segregated and conservative society"

(Article code: 17).

The concept of gender. Definitions of the concept of gender surfaced here and

there throughout the newspaper. Many articles portrayed conservative views on gender

and gender difference, but some more pragmatic and social constructionist views could

also be found. It appears that definitions of gender are also associated with the political

orientation of the author or speaker.

Claeson sets the tone for the conservative views on gender: "We are meant to be

men and women. If you deny this you are an anti-humanist and in the long run you make

the world less romantic" (Article code: 1). In a different article, Claeson argues:

> Research has shown that children are not strongly influenced by the brainwashing
> upbringing – they are very much controlled by biology. … Today there is a
> superstition that gender roles are socially constructed, which means that we think
> that *hen* should have some meaning. Children can become confused but will
> continue to see both genders as natural. It is difficult to brainwash children!
> (Article code: 29)

Paulina Neuding supports the claim that gender scholars deny nature or biology's

determination of gender differences: "But this is how the so-called gender studies works.

Every society has its social gender norms. However, this is the only field of research

where humans are still assumed to be born as a blank slate, the only species that is

unaffected by its nature." (Article code: 20). A reader chimes in: "The most attractive

thing is a feminine woman or a masculine man. These roles are natural and can be

practiced with dignity and without the risk that sex is suppressed. The Gender Taliban is

against life's most beautiful flowers" (Article code: 2).

Kristdemokraterna also share conservative views about gender in the media: "I would never put my kids in a gender preschool. Women and men are different on the outside, and I am convinced that it goes for the inside too. If you smooth out gender differences too much, you risk that the whole society eventually capsizes, says Anders Sellström, local politician for Kristdemokraterna" (Article code: 4).

More pragmatic views on the concept of gender. One article portrays the view that it is difficult to know whether gender is a biological or a social construct: "The vast majority of scientists believe in a combination of biology and environment but what do environmental factors really mean?" (Article code: 46). The article therefore discusses the social environment and factors that we can influence. Another article confronts the conservative blogger and author Pär Ström about his latest book "Six feminist myths": "Pär Ström tries to show that there is a genetic explanation for the division of responsibilities in society. But that girl and boy are not social construction is not an argument for limiting individuals' opportunities because of their gender." (Article code: 48).

Isobel Hadley-Kamptz argues that it is a problem that we treat children differently, not least for boys. She disagrees with Claeson that gender roles are natural: "When I interviewed the conservative feminism critic Elise Claesson last spring, she honestly believed that boys and girls would be deeply unhappy if you tried to counter their traditionally gendered roles." (Article code: 47)

In a chat about gender and *jämställdhet*, gender scholar Janne Bromseth explains that *hen* illuminates the binary gender norm. She finds that gender is an important analytical categorization but so is socioeconomic status:

It is remarkable how we always focus on categorical differences between the group of girls and boys, but not in terms of social background and income, which are much more significant. On the other hand, it is also important that there is no guarantee that gender power relations are erased by more pronouns; in terms of income, who performs unpaid work in heterosexual relationships in the home, who are victims of rape (Article code: 26).

This leads to the discussion of gender equality. Regardless of whether gender is a biological and psychological or a social construct, equality between genders is a stated goal in Swedish policy making. And regardless of whether people believe in naturalness of gender differences, gender equality is a proclaimed goal in policy documents for preschools.

Gender equality. In the same chat session, Bromseth presents her view on contemporary issues of gender equality:

If in the 70s it was about concrete increases in rights for women such as the right to abortion and day care centers for all, today's political issues are less centered on structural rights and more on the more subtle forms of injustice and norm-construction that create different conditions and circumstances, and more complex intersections between gender, class, sexuality, and other dimensions of power (Article code: 26).

Based on interviews with Wahlström and Henkel, one article refers to the history of idea of preschools as institutions for gender equality:

That the preschool shows up in the jämställdhets debate is nothing new. Under the slogan "The cries resound, preschools for all" the expansion of preschool education as a *jämställdhets* project began already in the 1970s. In order for women to enter the labor market, someone had to take care of the children. … Today, preschools have again appeared on the agenda – although on a different ground. *Jämställdhet* is no longer a liberation project that occurs outside the preschool, but something that knocks on the door and wants to enter the childcare institution (Article code: 24).

Some articles present views on gender equality that focus on the liberation of women. In these articles, gender equality is articulated in terms of democracy and freedom. Journalist Jenny Strömstedt argues: "Gender roles have a cost. In terms of divorces, money, and sudden deaths. It is not an unfounded assumption that gender equality makes for happier relations, better parents, fewer damaged children, and less violent adults. *Jämställdhet* is nothing but freedom" (Article code: 49)

Former Social Democratic justice minister, Jens Orback explains the former government's investment in gender equality and gender pedagogues in terms of freedom and liberation:

> As a group, women are subordinated to men. … Perhaps it is hard to see structures when you live in the middle of them if they are not touching your own skin. … To the government, striving for gender equality is to strive for freedom. Politics on gender equality are carried on a freedom idea. … Liberation from subordination. Liberation from discrimination. Liberation from violence. This liberation counts for girls and boys, women and men. Liberation from stereotypical gender roles and limiting expectations. Liberation that builds on equal conditions. … This is why we are investing in gender equality at preschools and on the gender pedagogues in schools that Idergard is rallying about (Article code: 50).

One article makes an international comparison to stress the progress that Sweden has made in terms of gender equality:

> How far the politicians should reach into the private sphere of families and operation of business is always up for discussion. But the result of Swedish politics of gender equality the last four decades is generally good. Women's power in the labor market has increased and men have taken a bigger part in bringing up children. Feel free to make an international comparison. There is a reason that few children are being born in Italy. And it is not that Berlusconi has funded a gender-industrial complex, which has obliterated gender differences (Article code: 48).

Although some paint a picture of Sweden as a progressive and equal country,

others argue that Stockholm and particularly the Södermalm District are more egalitarian

and open than other parts the country. In 2005, one article refers to the parent-cooperative

I-or as one of the first private preschools to start observing employees to see how they

treat girls and boys:

> Many preschools have begun a discussion about gender issues and there is a
> strong engagement. But I have not seen any preschool here in Stockholm that
> have taken the final step and integrated the *jämställdhets* work into the everyday
> activities, says preschool inspector Lisbeth Sundström. … Parents have been very
> positive about the project and this is typical for parents in Stockholm. While
> preschools in other municipalities are met with skeptical parents it is the opposite
> situation in Stockholm. – It is often the parents who ask for and initiate the gender
> work. I have talked with parents who wonder what kind of demands they can
> make on the employees. I cite the curriculum, says Lisbeth Sundström (Article
> code: 28).

The local newspaper Södermalmsnytt writes: "Almost one half of Södermalm's

residents think that the city should invest more in gender profiled and HBT-certified

preschools. On this topic they depart markedly from the remaining parts of the inner city"

(Article code: 14). The same newspaper features an interview with Henkel who is cited

for saying: "How much knowledge preschool employees have about questions about

HBT and *jämställdhet* varies greatly, but Södermalm's preschools are in the lead, thinks

Kristina Henkel, *jämställdhets* consultant." (Article code: 15)

A couple of Södermalm residents were interviewed for a recent article in which

Södermalm is emphasized as a particularly friendly neighborhood for LGBT persons and

families, but that this situation is vulnerable:

> HBT-preschool, HBT-prenatal care and a big openness among the residents.
> Pernilla and Malin are certain that Södermalm is the best place in Sweden to live
> for them and their three-year-old son Lou. … - It is very important for us to live in
> a place where our way of life is not stigmatized, says Pernilla B Loven. Where

heteronormativity is a bit more loosened up. … - At Egalia there is no norm about family constellations. I am sure there are preschools that are great and are not hbt-certified, but it is just more of a risk to take. In January 2011 employees at Egalia were threatened after an evening newspaper had reported on their pedagogic activities. For Pernilla and Malin this was a reminder that even at Södermalm there are people who are provoked when someone breaks the norm (Article code: 53).

Gender equality today is not simply presented as a women's liberation project, but is viewed by some as particularly important to liberate the boys from limiting gender stereotypes: "The word gender pedagogue is met with ridicule by columnists and pundits. One can comprehend this. But in reality, the established gender patterns are real, tremendous obstacles. This applies particularly to boys. And later men. Because the gender roles of girls and women have slowly widened." (Article code: 47).

Ethnologist Marie Nordberg agrees. She considers heteronormativity the most urgent issue today. And it hits boys most seriously:

> But to expand boys' gender role is not uncontroversial. Their gender crossing behavior often arouses strong emotions - among preschool teachers, parents, and other children. There is an underlying concern that the boys will be bullied - or even homosexual - if they are too "girly". - While the adult world wants boys to change, we become concerned if they change too much. Partly is it related to the subordination of the feminine to the male in our society … -That the word 'gay' is often used to penalize boys' gender-crossing behavior reflects the subordination of homosexuality to heterosexuality. … But whether a boy who crosses the boundary for maleness is condemned depends on his status in the child group (Article code: 11).

Kristina Henkel supports this position: "But *jämställdhet* is a complex issue and even preschools that apply gender pedagogy can need to change the heteronorm. Equal rights for men and women are not enough, thinks Kristina Henkel." (Article code: 36). Also Paul Alarcón is cited for agreeing: "-Homophobia is still a big problem and one of the most common curse words at schools is still "gay". While it has become acceptable

for girls to dress in boys' clothing the same acceptance does not exist toward a 10-year-old boy who wants to play with My Little Pony" (Article code: 14). Heteronormativity is often presented as a problem that affects boys and men.

Views on official policy. Claeson expresses the most critical view on the curriculum in my newspaper data: "You can question whether gender roles are really a mission for the preschools and I have a certain respect for the preschools that do not adhere to the curriculum" (Article code: 1). This sets the tone for a political discussion of policy making and how policy is constructed in a social and political environment. But although some are critical of the curriculum and the political focus on gender, others use the curriculum as a basis for arguing for inconsistencies in official policy. In her opinion piece, Bergkvist argues that preschools are going against parts of the curriculum by practicing a version of gender pedagogy that she has observed at her child's preschool. According to Bergkvist, "all dolls have been removed and hero tales have been banned. Further, during gym class, pink leotards with a little frill that reinforce gender roles are not allowed. The message is clear: all girls have to all dress in shorts and T-shirt" (Article code: 7). Bergkvist objects to this on the basis of the curriculum:

> First of all, schools and preschools must, according to law affirm and respect children's differences. In the curriculum for preschools (Lpfö 98) it says: "Preschool should aim to develop the child's sense of empathy and concern for others, as well as an openness and respect for differences in people's views and ways of life. … The preschool should be open to different ideas and encourage their expression. Each child should have the opportunity of forming their own opinion and making choices in the light of their personal circumstances. … All parents should be able to send their children to the preschool, fully confident that their children will not be prejudiced in favor of any particular view. Secondly, … I wonder: Why did they not decide that the boys have to wear the pink leotard instead? (ibid.).

Bergkvist argues that when girls are forced to wear shorts to make everyone will look the same a traditionally male dress becomes normative. Another article refers to Bergkvist's points to argue, "gender roles are not problematic" (Article code: 3). The article agrees that removing dolls and hero tales from the preschool and prohibiting pink leotards is against the curriculum's instruction that preschools must affirm and respect children's differences. The author also agrees that if girls are forced to wear shorts and t-shirts they are forced into traditionally male garments.

In her opinion piece, Bergkvist also uses gender scholar, Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér's research to establish the case for gender madness in Sweden. Ärlemalm-Hagsér responds to this criticism in an opinion piece by also referring to the curriculum:

> According to the curriculum, preschools must counteract stereotypical gender roles and gender patterns. It is therefore interesting to study in what ways and whether stereotypical roles and patterns surface among children when playing in the woods and in the playground. How the playground looks and what equipment is there sends clear signals to children about which kinds of play are allowed and possible. The environment mirrors the pedagogic philosophy and how the preschool wants play to look (Article code: 35).

Rajalin also defends gender pedagogy by referring to the curriculum: "Some people believe that we do not let children be who they are, but that is exactly what we are striving towards. And it is not something we have made up here, it has been stated in the curriculum since 98 that we have to work with a gender perspective, says Lotta Rajalin." (Article code: 12). And when asked whether she knows of plans to open more preschools like Egalia in Stockholm, Rajalin is cited for answering: "Not that I know of, but I think that what we are doing here will have a ripple effect. But as I said, we are actually only doing what it says in our policy documents – to give girls and boys equal opportunities." (Article code: 13)

Other articles note that in addition to the curriculum's requirements regarding

working for *jämställdhets*, a requirement about gender pedagogues was introduced in

2004. These articles claim that municipalities are not fulfilling the official policy

requirements about gender in preschool education:

> The requirement regarding gender pedagogues was introduced last year with the purpose of creating equal conditions for girls and boys. … The government invested 7 million kronor for free education for the municipalities. Not even half of the municipalities have sent teachers away on *jämställdhets* training (Article code: 18 & 19)

Furthermore, "Skolverket has not cared to examine whether municipalities

implement *jämställdhets* requirements in the curriculum. –We have not yet captured this

in our general mission, says Skolverket's head of inspections Leif Danielsson" (ibid.)

Considering that Skolverket was cited for saying this in 2005, Skolverket had 7

years to evaluate implementation of at least one aspect of the official policy. It appears

that the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is portrayed in

the media as holding a priority for Skolverket.

Today, the governmental coalition, including Kristdemokraterna, wants gender

pedagogy to be something that preschools can use to establish a unique profile in the

preschool market. Strömstedt objects to this:

> Gender pedagogy is not something you can opt out of. It is a democratic knowledge that frees every child from expectations that are based on their sex. If you invert Kristdemokraterna's argumentation they are really saying that it is just fine to choose a preschool that effectively obstruct boys' opportunity to express themselves and girls' opportunity to engage in physical exercise. Because we are treated unequally (Article code: 49).

Counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Participants in

public debate also discuss what traditional gender roles and gender patterns are and what

it means to counteract these. Hadley-Kamptz argues, "Countless studies, most recently

compiled by the Delegation for gender equality in preschools, show that we nowhere treat

little boys and little girls equally. On the contrary, those who work in

preschool strengthen existing gender roles and reduce the room for both girls and boys to

develop their very own personalities." (Article code: 47).

Anna Ekström is speaker of SACO's and speaker of the Delegation. In an

interview, she points to both physical separation and a structure of advantage. These are

central to traditional gender roles and gender patterns:

> [Ekström] has seen many examples of how children are educated in accordance
> with traditional gender roles. – There is often a room for the boys where there
> they can make trouble and make a mess and a room for the girls where they can
> busy themselves quietly. And when it is time to go outside, the boys are usually
> dressed first so they can get outside quickly and not disrupt the order. – Well
> outside the boys are playing with the most attractive toys. She says that separately
> they are not that serious of a problem but in accumulation they form a pattern
> (Article code: 40).

Hellman has also observed a physical segregation of boys and girls in preschools.

According to one article Hellman "reflected on the lavatories, which are sometimes

separate for girls and boys. … There are also many subconscious patterns in how adults

talk to boys and girls, she says. For example, we speak more gently to girls" (Article

code: 46).

The goals of working with the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and

gender patterns are also discussed. In one article, the author asks "But why is this issue of

gender equality so important already in preschools? Is there not something else that is

more in need of effort and money considering today's growing child groups and lack of

employee resources?" (Article code: 22). To this the head of the gender preschools Egalia

and Nicolaigården answers:

> - No because it is about preparing children for the future. Tomorrow's society will
> be ever more changing and to make our way there we must as individuals be more
> self-aware and have broader competences than were necessary, for example in my
> generation. At the preschool we must therefore give children the opportunity to
> train and develop different sides of themselves and not keep them in limiting
> gender roles (ibid.).

Counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns is portrayed as a

question of the future of children. There is an intention to give children equal

opportunities to develop individually. It is important for some proponents to stress that

gender pedagogy is not about denying children something, but about giving them access

to something that they have traditionally been excluded from on the basis of their gender.

A preschool teacher is cited for saying "The gender work is about creating secure

individuals and equal opportunities for all children – not to take something away from the

children, says preschool teacher Lotta Edvinger Axling" (Article code: 31).

In an interview for an article about gender pedagogy and the preschool

Tittmyran's experiences with video recording employees, Wahlström argues:

> - It is a difficult work for change. As a pedagogue you have to question yourself
> and your actions, which can be quite hard because we carry our own gender roles
> deep inside of us, says Kajsa Wahlström… - We sometimes hear that
> *jämställdhets* pedagogy is something unnecessary or trendy that is forced upon
> already heavily burdened employees. But the gender perspective is important at
> preschools. Otherwise, children do not have the same chances. Gender dictates
> how pedagogues approach children and it means that some are advantaged while
> others become invisible, says Kajsa Wahlström. …At Tittmyran a new world
> opened up when pedagogues began documenting pedagogic activities with a
> video camera. - We knew that there were differences between boys and girls, but
> not that they were so significant. Furthermore, we thought that the differences
> rested only with the children. It was actually a shock to see that us pedagogues
> unconsciously -- but consistently -- reinforces gender roles in the child groups,
> says Kajsa Wahlström." (Article code: 37).

In her response to Kristdemokraterna's Göran Hägglund, Wahlström explains

what it means to work with gender pedagogy:

> It is not about -- as you claimed in Almedalen, Göran -- that play should be gender neutral, but that teachers change their approaches to children. Children are not supposed to change genders. But on the contrary they should have an opportunity to see a bigger world. Girls should be allowed to be helpful and empathic, while also being encouraged to claim space. And boys are not supposed to be praised only when they are strong and fast, but also when they are talking about emotions. Not all children need to be forced into the same mold." (Article code: 55)

The question of how this goal can be implemented also surfaces in the

newspapers.

6.2.2 Views on Implementation

Views on implementation include perspectives on the successes and obstacles to

implementation and the idea of gender pedagogues and gender pedagogy. I discuss these

separately below.

Successes and obstacles to implementation. To implement the mandate to

counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is portrayed as an obligation. One

article cites Henkel:

> One in three preschools across the country does not reach the Education Act's *jämställdhets* goals -- which are to counteract gender stereotypes among children. … How do we get more preschools to reach the Education Act's goal to counteract gender stereotypes among children? – The responsibility rests with the head of the preschool. According to the Discrimination Act, employees must get training in equal treatment each year. And there is a requirement that you have to survey the preschool each year to see what you need to work on, like breaking children's gender segregated play. But what is missing are results and follow-up."

This article elevates the preschool Egalia as a model preschool for fulfilling the

official policy requirements. In an interview for an article published in 2006 about her

work in the Delegation, Ekström evaluates the status of preschools' implementation of

the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns:

> Despite an extended debate and fine declarations there is still much left to do before boys and girls at preschools across the country are able to develop unconditionally. On the paper, all preschools are gender equal. But research shows that there is a distance between words and reality. …There are already so many goals to achieve. For that reason we do not need more rules but better achievement of the ones that exist. Here, knowledge is key, says Anna Ekström." (Article code: 33).

Ekström's colleague from the Delegation is also interviewed for newspaper

articles in relation to the Delegation's 2006 report. He is quoted for saying: "-

Unfortunately, in principle all research shows that preschools rather cement gender roles

than counteract them. The main problem is a lack of knowledge about these issues.

Among other things, we need more gender perspectives in the teacher training programs"

(Article code: 24).

Whereas this article emphasizes the lack of knowledge among preschool teachers,

a different article emphasizes the lack of knowledge in municipalities: "Thomas

Wetterberg in the government's Delegation explains that the municipalities' weak interest

in terms of lack of knowledge. – Many employees who work in municipalities have not

understood how important gender pedagogy is, he says" (Article code: 19).

Ekström explains to another newspaper success in implementation requires more

knowledge, and changes in the environment and the pedagogic activities:

> The Delegation wants more knowledge among employees and little changes can make a big difference. – It can be as simple as combining the doll room with the woodshop so that no one feels limited or forced to choose one. You have to actively encourage children to play with different things, says Anna Ekström. … One goal in the report is that more employees should be educated in gender issues. By 2012 one in 25 employees should be an educated gender pedagogue. – It is better that some of the employees are trained rather than bringing in an expert

from the outside. Both employees and parents have to believe that this is important, says Anna Ekström (Article code: 27).

This article elevates the preschool Tittmyran as a model for achieving the policy goals via compensatory pedagogy:

> In different places across the country they have started to work actively with *jämställdhet* in different ways. It can be to separate children in boy and girl groups and train them in different things; it can be exercises in which boys learn to wait their turn. The preschool Tittmyran in Gävle was one of the first preschools that began working with gender issues. The employees set up cameras and recorded their work and discovered that they treated boys and girls very differently" (ibid.).

Another article explains that after the shocking revelations from video recording pedagogic activities at Tittmyran, "finally [Wahlström] and the pedagogues decided to separate girls and boys during some times of the day. The intention was that the respective genders could practice the skills that they generally had a more difficult time with, so-called compensatory pedagogy." (Article code: 37)

At Maria Gamla Stan's preschool unit, they began observing their pedagogic practices after the preschool curriculum was issued in 1998. An article reports from Nicolaigården. Here, "one of the gender differences found during observations was that the preschool's boys generally had their needs met sooner than the girls" (Article code: 22). The article features an interview with Rajalin. She is quoted for saying: "Most teachers at schools and preschools think that they treat all children as individuals and that they treat boys and girls equally, but if you begin to study the pedagogic activities a little closer you quickly realize the obvious gender patterns." The patterns that Rajalin is referring to are the interactions between employees and children at the preschool.

According to this article,

Today, Nicolaigården looks different than before the work on *jämställdhet* was initiated nine years ago. But Rajalin stresses that nothing has been removed, but instead they have added things. And children are still allowed to play with dolls and cars. … In the doll corner -- which is now called the family corner -- there are also boy-dolls. … An inventory of the preschool's book and song repertoire also showed that boys almost exclusively had the leading role. But rather than throwing away the books and stop singing the well-known songs, the collection has been complemented with new books and songs in which girls have the leading role (ibid.).

The journalist observes that Rajalin is wearing pink shoes and reports on gender crossing behavior in the playground: "- Yay! Goal! A dark-haired girl screams, taking a joyful round across preschool courtyard with her black hockey stick high in the air. … A short distance away some boys play in the sandbox. They help each other line up one nice sand cake after another. Delighted laughter when someone suddenly accidentally sits on a cake" (ibid.). It appears that the success of gender pedagogy is sometimes evaluated on the basis of how children cross gender stereotypical manners. And how well we are able to still hold on to images that are traditionally associated with our genders.

The concepts of gender pedagogues and gender pedagogy. The obstacles to implementation that are presented in the media center on lack of knowledge, as mentioned above. Others focus on the different styles of gender pedagogy. For example, some gender pedagogues explain that compensatory pedagogy is wrong. Gender scholar Christian Eidevald explains:

We think that we approach each child individually, but instead we make big modifications based on expectations associated with the group girls and the group boys, Christian Eidevald says, who is also critical of some *jämställdhets* projects. – Even in those cases boys are often lumped together and trained for example in massaging, and girls are to play hockey, but it is perhaps only some of the boys who need to train their softer sides (Article code: 25).

Ärlemalm-Hagsér agrees:

> Sometimes there is an idea that you have to separate children in boy and girl groups so that boys can "train" competences that girls are assumed to have and girls can "train" competences that boys have. I find this problematic, there is a risk that you instead cement stereotypical gender roles and not depart from individuality and diversity. Rather, it is about preschool employees being conscious and on the basis hereof offer children more opportunities (Article code: 35).

One gender pedagogue refers to her work as norm critical gender pedagogy. In an interview for an article Aisha Lundgren says, "I like to call myself intersectional gender pedagogue to stress that I am not only working with gender but with all of the discrimination causes" (Article code: 38). At her preschool they no longer practice compensatory pedagogy: "Instead with the help of a "norm critical checklist" they have examined the preschool's materials and environment. Simply by moving things around in the environment, children's play is influenced" (ibid.). According to the article, the goal is to get boys and girls to play more together. The philosophy behind norm critical pedagogy is that the meanings associated with traditionally gendered toys like dolls or cars can be deconstructed and reinvented: "– We have sometimes thought that the home is one world and the preschool is a different world. This is something we question within the norm-critique. Everything in a child's world is the child's world. Within norm-critique you generally do not remove things but mix and blend things in a new way. You should not deny or delimit, but challenge" (Article code: 38). The article evaluates the success of gender pedagogy on the basis of asking children what they want to be when they grow up. In this, the article appears to reproduce an adult ideology but also a class ideology in which your identity is based on your profession. It seems that our future position in society is something we should be thinking about and working toward from the time we are able to crawl.

In an article featuring an interview with Klara Dolk about her dissertation: "Unruly children - Power, norms and participation in preschool", Dolk challenges traditional gender pedagogy -- if something so relatively new can be referred to as traditional -- and suggests a new perspective that involves children's participation: "– The question of children's participation has not been discussed much within gender pedagogy. It has been based on a traditional view on knowledge in which good adults transmit the good and right norms to the children" (Article code: 30).

According to the article, one example from Dolk's dissertation includes an observation of a child being interviewed by a preschool teacher. This illustrates the arbitrariness of judging a gender pedagogic project on the basis of how a child answers a question about their future. It also illustrates how a child can show resistance to adult ideology:

> Pedagogue: What do you want to be when you grow up?
> Child: Daycare lady.
> Pedagogue: Uh huh… Is there something else you would like to be?
> Child: Yes, firefighter.
> Pedagogue: Uh huh!
> Child: No, I'm only joking, only boys can become firefighters.
> Pedagogue: …
> Child: I'm only joking, you can be what you want!
> In her research, Klara Dolk, was able to conclude that children kept quite good track of existing norms and values and what the adults wanted to hear (ibid.).

The article explains that Dolk is critical of the approaches to gender pedagogy that is practiced in Swedish preschools:

> … In the gender pedagogic work in Swedish preschools, there has been two strategies -- gender neutrality and compensatory pedagogy. … In her observations, Klara Dolk has seen children maintain norms, dissolve norms, create new norms, and resist adults' norms. … She thinks that gender pedagogy should be changed to include a more explorative approach to what children do in their games, but also how they react to adults' pedagogic methods (ibid.).

Based on this article's presentation of Dolk's dissertation, it seems that she draws

on ideas put forward by Thorne and Davies in her vision of a new type of gender

pedagogy.

According to the article, Dolk is also critical of the double standards that adults,

particularly parents show when it comes to gender pedagogy:

> One example from the dissertation is a concerned parent who wants to see more gender pedagogy at the preschool and is frustrated that her son is allowed to play Batman in the bushes with his best friend all day. She thinks that there is too much free play and want the pedagogues to control it more. – In any case, this parent visually expressed her gender in a quite traditional way with make-up and high heels. But she was worried when her son did the same (ibid.).

In an article featuring readers' and parents' responses to the focus on gender

pedagogy and *jämställdhet* in preschools some point to the necessary education that

teachers must go through in order to implement the pedagogy in a way that doesn't have

unintended consequences:

> Of course, it is very important to invest time, effort, and money on gender equality at the preschool. … The hard part is that finding the right employees who want to work that way and that have sufficient insight to understand that it is not about whether girls should wear pink or not. It's about not routinely reinforcing certain qualities of either gender at the expense of other qualities that also exist. We are not primarily men and women. We are primarily humans and this also have children the right to be (Article code: 5).

> As a mother to a four-year-old year old boy, I fully support the preschool's gender work but I want to illustrate how despite all the good intentions, it can still fail. What happened at my son's preschool was this: To teach boys to wait their turn and get the girls to dare, they labeled the bikes in girl and boy bikes. ... The consequence was that my son, who thinks a lot for himself, began to investigate what were girl things and what were boy things. As a boy, he did not use the girl's bikes and then he made the connection that he absolutely could not use girl things. He asked whether all sorts of things were girl things. He did not regard our argument that things are for both boys and girls. The gender work led him to close

off to female activities rather to grow. The learning continues and he gets will probably eventually dare to wear a princess dress, but so far, the gender work was a severe setback despite good intentions (ibid.).

Based on my sample of newspaper articles, the debate about gender pedagogy and gender pedagogues in the written media seems split. Some argue that the idea of gender pedagogy is important and directly connected to achieving the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Others argue that the focus on gender in preschools is unnecessary and a sign of "gender madness" in Sweden. Still others argue that the specific implementation of the mandate and the practices of gender pedagogy are problematic.

Some refer to the debate as polarized, and place the responsibility for the confusion on some gender pedagogues, who are getting it all wrong:

> Neuding and company are right that there … are fools who exaggerate and center on theories detached from reality. We must keep those who want to snatch the toy car out of a little boy's hands in check. But the few extremists who advocate these stupidities have very little to do with the idea of not to force children into roles. They do not represent gender pedagogy at Swedish preschools (Article code: 54).

Wahlström argues: "I have to admit, though, that gender pedagogues are also partly to blame for the polarized debate. In our work at Tittmyran we were careful not to place blame. But in some places in this country working with gender equality has unfortunately centered more on pointing out scapegoats than seeing what improvements we can make." (Article code: 55). In gender pedagogue Sakine Madon's reaction to Tanja Bergkvist's opinion piece, she refers to the presentation of gender pedagogy in the media as the main problem. She tries to explain what she thinks gender pedagogues actually do:

> A common gender pedagogue does totally different things than prohibit dolls: for example, they film the pedagogic activities during a day and then watch it

together with the employees. Often it becomes clear how differently we work with children based on their gender. …Working with gender is primarily about employees discussing: Why do we treat children differently? What can we change? Why is it important that we change this? (Article code: 34).

In the next section, I present some views on the preschool Egalia. Egalia is an example of a preschool practicing a more gender-neutral preschool, which has been getting some attention in the written media. The attention also manifests in my sample of newspaper articles.

6.2.3 Views on Egalia

After the preschool Egalia opened in 2010, it has received attention in local and national newspapers. The local newspaper Södermalmsnytt has reported on the preschool and the threats that employees have received after an article was brought in a national evening newspaper:

> Running a gender pedagogic preschool in 2011 is obviously controversial. After an article in an evening newspaper, employees at Egalia have been threatened and called mad gender priests and extremists. The article, which was published on Aftonbladet's website on January 29 got more than 1300 comments in two days. Many of them are outraged and compare the preschool's work methods to communism, sectarianism, and brainwash (Article code: 13).

According to the reporter from the local newspaper, Egalia is unique in its approach: "As opposed to other preschools that work with gender and *jämställdhet*, Egalia has gender pedagogy as a foundation for the pedagogic activities. Furthermore, all employees are educated on the topic or years of experience with working on it." (Article code: 12). According to the article in Aftonbladet that ignited the debate about Egalia, "– The difference is that here gender and *jämställdhet* is our basic pedagogy, precisely like some preschools are founded in Montessori pedagogy. It is not simply a theme, says a

[preschool teacher]" (Article code: 17). In this article, Rajalin and preschool teachers explain that they are only working to give everyone the same opportunities:

> – We don't want to deny the biological sex. It is the social sex we are working with, says Lotta Rajalin. And the most important part is how adults relate to the children. Research shows that gender determines how children are approached - - already as a crying baby. – We think we are free, but whenever we make suggestions it is almost always something within the gender category. And most people abide to the gender roles they have been assigned. But there are some that can't. And no one is worse off to have all opportunities, says Gabriella Martinson. This is why language is so important (ibid.).

In an interview for the local newspaper, Rajalin is quoted for saying "We believe that everyone should grow up to be as they want. And if you ask a parent 'would you like your child to have all or only half of the opportunities in life,' they answer that they want to give their children all opportunities, says Lotta Rajalin" (Article code: 13). The reporter also interviewed a preschool teacher, who explains Egalia's approach to parents and children: "– Some wonder whether we have expectations to them and the children. 'Is my daughter allowed to wear a pink dress?' they might ask. But we do not interfere with how parents dress their children, says preschool teacher Malin Jägstrand, and adds that she as a pedagogue consider the signals she sends to the children through her own body language and choice of clothing" (Article code: 12).

In my sample of newspaper coverage of gender preschools and gender pedagogy, appearance seems to be an important topic. As mentioned above, gender pedagogues are for example sometimes blamed for wanting to ban all things pink. Or celebrated when they are wearing pink shoes. People writing or being interviewed for newspaper articles relate to this concern and contribute to reproducing the importance of this concern.

Another aspect of Egalia's practice is HTB-certification. I mentioned above an article about a couple that particularly chose Egalia for this reason. According to one article, the preschools Egalia and Nicolaigården, who are in the same preschool unit in Södermalm, are unique on this point.

> Since Egalia and Nicolaigården as the first preschools in Sweden became HBT-certified last spring, only one additional preschool in the country has taken the same path. – It is difficult to reach the preschools. Many believe that LGBT equals sex, says Karol Vieker at the National Association for sexual equality, RFSL. … – When we talk about the nuclear family we do not think about this as "being about sexual orientation". But when we talk about families in which parents are bi- or homosexual people think that the focus is on sex. This is not at all correct (Article code: 15).

The concept of gender-neutral language seems to separate Egalia from other preschools practicing gender pedagogy. I discuss this further below.

Preschools utilizing the concept of *hen*. According to one article Egalia's gender-neutral language has made the preschool subject to public outrage:

> At the preschool Egalia in Stockholm they work actively with gender equality. Words like boy or girl are not used. – We approach children as individuals rather than on the basis of their gender, says Lotta Rajalin. … But gender pedagogy has spurred emotions -- and particularly the gender-neutral language. Employees have been threatened via email and someone once sent a parcel with a boy and a girl doll (Article code: 36).

But according to newspaper articles, many gender scholars believe that gender-neutral language is important for gender equality and for implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Henkel, for example is cited for supporting Egalia's use of *hen*: "Kristina Henkel also find language the key to change and in this case "*hen*" is very important. For example, there may be children who like to dress in gender crossing clothing" (ibid.). According to an interview with Rajalin:

"Utilizing the personal pronoun *hen* is important because the male pronoun is the norm. And when something has normative status, something else is deviant" (Article code: 17).

Support for preschools utilizing the personal pronoun *hen* may be a political divide as well. For example, the former leader of Centerpartiet, Maud Olofsson, is cited for fearing that *hen* will have negative consequences for children:

> Olofsson also sees dangers in replacing she and he with the gender-neutral pronoun *hen*. You "risk creating children who cannot feel secure in their identity since even your own parents do not acknowledge what you actually are, namely, a boy or girl." She believes that the intentions are good but thinks that it all resembles the 1970s when children were to be educated without rules. "Freedom from rules were supposed to foster free children [but instead] children became unsure of what adults thought when they set no clear boundaries." (Article code: 6).

According to Claeson, "to step in and say that you have to be neutral, a '*hen*' is no good. It makes children confused" (Article code: 1).

One journalist finds it surprising how one little word can cause so much debate:

> Last spring I and photographer Lotte did a story from a gender preschool. Staff and parents told about the ideas behind their pedagogy, to not always assume that a girl likes pink and boy blue. Nothing strange, really. But one thing got readers to go completely bananas, they had replaced a "he" with a "*hen*" in the song "A confectioner" when they celebrated Lucia. What an explosive force that can be found in a letter (Article code: 41).

This concludes my analysis of the social environment. Below, I conclude on this chapter's findings.

6.3 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the question of how official policy is constructed and received in a wider political and social context. This involved examining the political and

social environment in which policy is created, interpreted, and implemented. My analysis suggests that:

- The right wing party Moderata Samlingspartiet seems to be an ideological force in the center right governmental coalition and for liberal politics on gender and preschool education in Sweden. The party has wide support in the national elections and can be assumed to have an influence on debates in the social environment, the public in general, and on preschool employees.

- Center-right parties and participants to debates in the social environment express commitment to *jämställdhet*, but also express that gender differences are biologically or psychologically determined. To some extent, traditional gender roles and gender patterns are viewed as natural by dominant actors in the political and social environment.

- Center-right parties express that childcare vouchers are solutions to inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the preschool area. Preschools should decide whether or not to practice gender pedagogy as a way to profile the institution in the preschool market.

- Vänsterpartiet, Miljöpartiet, and feminists in the Delegation and the public debate disagree with these ideas. Left-wing parties and feminists most likely view childcare vouchers as a setback for implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

- Center-right parties share a commitment to liberal-democratic politics in a functionalist and pluralist framework. These politics suggest that the mandate is best implemented by changing incentive structures for individuals and

organizations in combination with accountability measures and managerial oversight.

- Center-left parties, Feministisk initiativ, and feminists in the social environment believe that gender pedagogues are one solution to issues raised by implementation because they can bring in the needed knowledge about gender and gender pedagogy.

- The most acute feminist debate within established political parties takes place between Vänsterpartiet and Feministisk initiativ. Analysis of newspaper articles suggests that Miljöpartiet is actively engaged in feminist issues and may be the strongest advocate for gender pedagogues in the social and political environment.

- Radical socialist and feminist perspectives surface primarily in the established political parties, but also in some newspaper articles.

- Gender scholars and pedagogues participating in public debate seem to recognize that the market and environment strongly influence children. But they also express that parents and preschools can alleviate the damaging effects of the capitalist and patriarchal structure and establish equal opportunities for all children.

- The social environment is characterized by a debate in which reporting and opinion pieces about gender preschools, gender pedagogues, and preschools utilizing the personal pronoun *hen* are met with responses from liberal-conservative discussants. These often focus on the idea of preschools as institutions for gender equality being part of an overall elite gender project.

- Left wing critique that ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy manifest in traditional toys and gender roles is met with strong critique and name-calling in the written media, for example: gender madness, absurdities, Gender Taliban, extremism, typical left-wing logic, etc.

- The claim that gender pedagogy in preschool education is part of an elite project and state domination suggests that opponents position themselves as 'non-elitist' or as part of a group of 'ordinary people' who do not need their private lives to be politicized or controlled by a central state.

- The claim of an elite gender project in Sweden also indicates that opponents view gender pedagogues as members of a state elite that penetrates all institutions in order to dominate the population.

- Proponents of gender pedagogy in the public debate tend to argue from a liberal-democratic perspective that there is no such domination. Rather gender equality is about freedom and equal rights and opportunities in life.

- Considering the format for participating in political and social debates in national newspapers, as well as Fraser's perspective on the public sphere, it seems fair to assume that both proponents and opponents represented in the data have the necessary resources, that is, economic, cultural, and social capital to participate in public debate.

- Proponents refer to the curriculum for legitimacy for gender pedagogic practices. Meanwhile opponents question the consistency and relevance of the curriculum.

- Gender equality appears to be articulated as a democratic project, which liberates people. Sweden, Stockholm, and Södermalm are each presented as particularly

open and forward thinking in the political and social environment. These ideas add to a construction of a positive and self-affirming Swedish self-image.

- With a few exceptions, it seems that debates in my sample of newspaper articles are characterized by pluralist and managerial perspectives, as Alford and Friedland predicted.

- Debates in newspapers suggest that gender neutral and compensatory pedagogies have a somewhat established status within the preschool area. But norm critical and child-participatory pedagogies challenge these traditions.

- Norm critical and child-participatory pedagogies are loosely defined in the newspaper data.

- Proponents of all gender pedagogic practices seem to agree that gender pedagogy does not entail removing traditional toys or pedagogic activities but instead adding new ones.

- Views on the preschool Egalia are presented in the social environment, not directly in the political environment. This makes sense since political policy must be more generally articulated and usually does not single out individuals or organizations. Opposition to Egalia in my sample of newspaper articles tended to focus on Egalia's gender-neutral language, particularly the pronoun *hen*. Supporters of Egalia often focused on *hen*, but also on Egalia's HBT-certification and educated gender pedagogues.

In the beginning of this chapter, I noted that I assume that policy and implementation takes place in a wider political and social context. I assume that the

political and social environment contribute to public discourse and influence preschools

and preschool employees in ways that may be diffuse but strong. In the next chapter I

discuss how official policy on preschool education and gender is interpreted at the

preschool level.

Chapter 7: Preschool Perceptions of Official Policy

In this chapter, I address the sub question:

5. How is official policy on gender and preschool education interpreted by preschools?

I further investigate the problems related to implementation by focusing on how official policy on gender and preschool education is interpreted by preschools. The previous chapter analyzed general debates in the political and social environment to official policy on gender and preschool education. I also presented some perceptions about Egalia's gender pedagogy found in the social environment. The analysis suggested that the idea of preschools as instruments for gender equality and the practice of gender pedagogy in preschools are contested in Swedish societies although commitment to *jämställdhet* is a unified commitment. This suggests that official policy is articulated and implemented in a field of discursive struggle for definitions of gender, *jämställdhet*, and what it means to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns in preschool education. Since official policy on gender and preschool education provides institutions with a significant level of discretion to interpret and implement their mandate, how gender and *jämställdhet* is perceived matters, and is likely to vary at a preschool level. In this chapter, I analyze preschool level data to examine how gender and *jämställdhet* is perceived at the preschool level.

I developed this and the following chapter from readings of two different sources of data: interviews and written organizational data. Written documents were located on

preschool units' websites, emailed to me, or handed to me at the time of a verbal interview. Eight employees from three preschool units participated in interviews: two heads of preschool units, five preschool teachers, and one head of pedagogic development to a preschool unit. Whenever I quote from the interviews, I present the participant with a pseudonym and a code to the transcribed interview. My participants are: Alexis and Evin: heads of preschools, Jona: head of pedagogic development, Loe, Jian, Farah, Yael, and Hadi: Preschool teachers.

The data presented in this and the following chapter should not be considered a representative sample of the entire population of preschools and employees in the Södermalm district and the perceptions expressed do not represent the totality of perceptions in the population or even the totality of one person's thoughts and experiences. Interviews are specific to a particular time and place, and, as Davies notes, what we humans do with words "is to make an event or an experience understandable, something that can be told, something that draws on known concepts to order the myriad of events around [us]. This involves, for example, removing the contradictory elements of experience, choosing a focus that allows a clear and consistent storyline to emerge" (Davies, 2003, p. 28). Testimonies are unique and should be treated as such in a discourse analysis. Discourses are collective and when we draw on certain discourses, we engage in a collective discursive construction. In this way, unique verbal and written testimonies can provide an interesting look into the functioning of discursive structures and our understanding of the boundaries that these set within a certain field.

7.1 Perceptions about Gender and *Jämställdhet*

Official preschool policy requires preschools to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. In the introductory chapter to this dissertation, I offered a tentative definition of the concept *gender*, but I also noted that gender is a contested concept. In the previous chapter, I found that perceptions about gender in public debates taking place in major national newspapers, illustrate the contested nature. Views on gender often focus on biological or psychological differences or the social construction of gender. I use this section to analyze the perceptions of gender among the participants in my study because these are likely to contribute to specific implementation of policy. In my analytical work, I looked for the explicitly or implicitly conveyed views on gender expressed in the data. These views on gender provide me with a clearer and more nuanced understanding of gender and *jämställdhet* at preschools in the Södermalm district.

7.1.1 Gender and the Problem of Difference

Participants' views on gender suggested an appreciation of the distinction between what we understand as biological sex, and what we understand as social gender and the roles attached to the male or female body. Participants made references to social behaviors reflecting biological differences in children but they also expressed that gender identifications and adult role models influence social behaviors, which adds complexity to the concept of gender difference.

Some participants view normative gender categories as real and natural. But they also explain that the social behaviors resulting from an either male or female nature can be modified by example and that differences should be treated with equal worth. Loe and Jian explain:

Loe: I think partly it is something we have inherited from the Stone Age, which we can't get rid of. That us women sort of have more of this; we are the ones who give birth to children and we have to care for the family and the man has to go knock out a dinosaur so we can eat, and it feels like that with the children, it begins when they are around 5 or 6, it becomes important to be strong. And it is important that we are present at this time to very clearly show that there is no difference between boys and girls. But at the same time, in some way, they must also be allowed to be boys and girls because that is what they are.
… It is not like we force all dogs and cats to become horses, we don't do that; you have to be allowed to be who you are. But the point is to reinforce the children's self-esteem so they actually believe … and feel that they can do anything, that it has nothing to do with your gender, with your religion, or with what country you come from, or which color, that is, I can do anything.

Jian: If you try.

Loe: Yes.

Jian: That is why it is about equal opportunities, for boys and girls to dare to try everything, know that they are allowed to do everything despite gender.
(Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 88/90/92/94-97).

The idea that children develop naturally into normative gender categories, reflecting their inner truth, seems to be sanctioned by the dominant liberal ideology and the functionalist socialization theory. Natural instincts may be at the bottom of gender difference but on top of these are learned behaviors and it is a preschool teacher's responsibility to demonstrate to the children that there is no difference between boys and girls. Thus explains Farah:

Farah: I also think that it is very obvious when children are 3 to 4 years old that they [separate according to gender], and then I also think that we should let them do that. Because it doesn't happen when they are 2 years old, they don't see gender at all. But when they see their gender, I think that you should also be allowed to see your gender and identify with other boys if you are a boy and other girls if you are a girl. We should not counteract this because I think that on a purely biological level, a human level if you will, it is important to do this after all.
(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 97).

When children begin to look for their gender in others and identify with other people's expression of that gender, they are engaging in a social construction of gender

based on a perception of their own biological body. The idea builds on an understanding

that gender identifications relate back to the physical body of the child, to an innate male

or female core. In this view, children's biological sex and physical instincts contribute to

social divisions and social behavior. But gender is also shaped by existing social

categories since gender as a collective social construct precedes the individual being born

into a male or a female body. And gender is also something that children should be

allowed to experiment with:

> We have always been allowing with the boys that dress up in costumes. There
> may be some that think that he is probably transsexual, but ah I don't think so...
> But I think it is important that they also are allowed to try how it is to be a girl and
> they do this very much at age 3 or 4. It then lessens again when they turn 5 or 6.
> They slow down the gender identification process and are able to play much more
> mixed. Since we see this, I don't think that there is a contradiction or danger in
> letting boys be around boys. But then at the same time trying to bring them
> together in both soccer and in playing baking or serving coffee or whatever
> traditional roles.
> (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 97/99)

Participants tended to agree that young children do not seem to have any

awareness or expression of gender, and that the process of gender identification begins

when children reach the age of three or four:

Anna: When do you believe that the children become aware of gender? Do they start
       here aware of their own gender?
Loe: No I don't think so
Jian: Not when they start here when they are young
Loe: No
Anna: No
Jian: Probably not until they are about 3. They begin to talk about themselves as either
       girls or boys, of course there is some variation, but I don't think that when they
       start here as 1 or 2 year-olds, they seem, that they express it at least.
       (Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 76-81).

At this age children begin to see their own gender as well as look for their gender in others. When gendered differences in children's behavior occur and children start to create distance to the opposite sex, this behavior is explained as natural, reflecting truths about what children are deep down.

Swedish preschool pedagogy is traditionally inspired by Fröbel's pedagogy, founded on an "essentialist definition of women's biologically determined nature and role in society" (Beatty, 1995, p. 48), which links motherhood and children's welfare. Hence, it may not be surprising to find remnants of these views among preschool teachers. Also, according to official policy, preschools function to give everyone, regardless of gender, a fair chance to compete in the education system and society. Meanwhile, the liberal functionalist perspective also assigns individual responsibility for succeeding, since equality in opportunity does not necessarily mean that individuals will receive equal rewards. But within our given equal opportunities, we have an obligation to try and to work hard as one participant also notes above.

The preschools I studied consider the presence of adults as important. Adults should be positive role models in all environments at the preschool and should support children during social interactions. As Yael and Hadi note, "it is the adult's role to present the good example (Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 3b). Adults can design an environment that facilitates learning and socialization. Usually, children assume gendered positions in the preschool and play together across genders at the preschool: "By removing many of the traditional gender coded toys and instead offering plenty of different construction materials, a big selection of costumes, and many types of creative materials, varied literature, with both girls and boys in different roles, we see that

children utilize all of the preschool's pedagogic activities" (ibid.). But according to other

participants, sometimes adults have to step in and assist in the socialization:

Loe: When I worked with the children at this age I didn't find that the boys sit here and
        the girls sit there. They sort of move around, it can be both girls and boys building
        Lego as well as two boys and a girl sitting and drawing, it really is like that
Anna: Yes
Jian: I find that too, we are farthest away with the youngest children. I think that the
        girls and boys play just the same in the different spaces, the girls play with the
        train and play home just as much as the boys
Loe: Yes and ... especially with the middle group, because the young children don't
have this divide much
Anna: No
Loe: But these children, returning after the summer will say 'no I don't play with girls
        anymore' a boy said, and it feels like they have unlearned again. And if you see a
        girl standing there looking at the computer and really wants to play but doesn't
        dare to, we have to take hold of that, that is where we step in
Anna   Yes
Loe   When things like that happen you have to speak to the child about this. This is our
        responsibility
Jian   Absolutely
Loe: That is what we are here for.
        (Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 151-160).

Regardless of our biological differences and a social structure that requires

humans to fit into two categories, we are all humans and we must be taught that we have

the same opportunities, rights, and responsibilities in a democratic society. As one

preschool unit explains, gender is a social construct that the preschool takes an active part

in creating:

> Gender reflects the values, attitudes, and experiences of women and men in
> society ... We create gender constantly, every day, every minute. Division into
> feminine and masculine is a very strong categorization, which we all practice,
> usually without being aware of it. We can therefore assume that gender is created
> in preschools and schools, the question then becomes whether it results in an
> unequal or equal pedagogic activity. Since children, students, and teachers
> continuously create gender together, we can obviously create gender that leads to
> gender equality.
> (Reimersholmes Förskolor, 2013/2014, pp. 4-5).

> Gender originates in the English word gender and refers to the social and cultural sex. This means the perceptions and ideas in society about what is womanly and what is manly. Gender is created all the time; it is created based on our values, attitudes, and experiences. It is in continuous change and looks different in different environments, epochs, and different parts of the world.
> (ibid., p. 12)

At this particular preschool unit, working with gender focuses on creating equal pedagogic activities: "To be gender conscious means to be aware of your own and your institution's ideas about what is womanly and manly and to see how this affects pedagogic activities" (ibid.). A preschool in this unit's Equal Treatment Plan states:

> To become aware of discriminatory patterns in our own practices is a precondition for succeeding in *jämställdhet* and equal treatment work. To become conscious is to acquire a gender perspective, to learn to see own practices with new eyes. That is why we, during the spring term will do a survey with the aim of illuminating gender patterns we all practice and create.
> (Samariten Equal Treatment Plan, p. 4)

Gender is understood as a social construct, linked to men's and women's particular values, attitudes, and experiences, which also constructed in preschools. Individual gender relates to the construction of gender in society, but there is no sign of structural constraints in the assessment of normative gender categories and the prospect for change. Constructing gender that leads to gender equality is seemingly uncomplicated and a product of individual determination.

Other participants also view gender as a social construction. Jona for example questions that adults view children differently based on their gender: "We have talked a lot about our reasoning about boys and girls, well the boys have so much energy in their legs for example that they need to go outside and move around and I am thinking, why does it have to be like that?" (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 263). But

gender also intersects with other dimensions in society. This has an influence on how

preschools in the unit can work with gender and equal treatment:

> We are not "just" girls and boys, women and men; reality is more complex than that. Gender interacts with other categories such as ethnicity, sexuality, disability and social class in the creation of gender … Seeing and understanding how gender is created in conjunction with other categories in the child group or the classroom, help us to counteract stereotypical roles and instead create an inclusive and confirming environment. This increases the opportunities for children and students to venture beyond traditional patterns, which is beneficial for their learning.
> (Reimersholmes Förskolor, 2013/2014, pp. 7, 9).

> It is also important to be aware that not all girls and boys can be found in traditional patterns. Differences between girls in the group of girls can be larger than between than group of girls and boys. The compensatory work must therefore always have the individual in focus at the same time that observed traditional patterns should be counteracted.
> (ibid., p. 33).

This preschool unit recognizes intersectionality and incorporates this concern into

its work to counteract stereotypical and traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

Participants spoke of gender and difference in terms of binary categorical

differences. But preschools also talk about gender in terms of individuality and

intersection of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socio-economic status, etc., which make

social stratification a complex problem. One preschool writes: "We are attentive to and

encourage everyone's differences. All humans have a unique background that has shaped

who we are. We want to develop these and discover the diversity and approaches we have

as a group" (Söderförskolor Equal Treatment Plan, p. 3).

It means that the concept of human rights can be viewed as helpful to teachers

when it comes to treating children equally: "A basic human right is the right to equal

treatment. All children in preschool should have the same rights - - girls as well as boys

and regardless of ethnic belonging, religion or other belief system, disability, sexual orientation, gender crossing identity or expression, and age" (ibid., p. 1). This is in line with official policy, particularly with the Equality ombudsman's guidelines.

Farah explains an approach to gender pedagogy that takes into account individual difference and human rights:

Farah: We treat humans as humans, whether it is boys or girls, is unimportant. We see them as they are and they are very different but they are not different because they are boys or girls but because they are Knud and Lena and Lisa and Peter and all different in a way.
(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 107).

7.2 Gender in a Democratic Framework

As part of a democratic framework, the concept of *jämställdhet*, personal values, and relationships with other people are perceived to be central to gender equality. Perceptions about the concept and value of diversity among children, parents, and employees pointed to the existence of gender egalitarian values, as did discussions about the status of gender equality in society.

Gender equality was commonly articulated as part of a democratic agenda in written organizational testimonies: "Both the Education Act and the curricula state the mission to respect other people's value and to counteract degrading treatment of individuals and groups. The Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of ethnic belonging, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or sex" (Reimersholmes Förskolor, 2013/2014, p. 8). The same document states: "Human rights refer to all human's equal value and rights to not be treated worse on a basis of skin color, gender or other things. Hence, *jämställdhet* is a question of democracy and rights" (ibid., p. 2). Reimersholmes preschool unit's Plan of Pedagogic Activities, 2013, also states: "To

increase children's basic democratic values we need to develop … work to give all girls and boys equal opportunities for development through conscious gender work (p. 9).

Preschools express the view that gender equality is about democracy and human rights on their websites, in Equal Treatment Plans, and in other documents, and refer directly to the curriculum for preschools on this topic. One preschool's Equal Treatment Plan says: "The preschool's pedagogic activities are founded in a democratic mission. We see a value in our differences and see differences as an approach. All planning, activities, and evaluation are carried out in a way characterized by respect for all people's equal value" (Samariten Equal Treatment Plan, p. 1). Similarly, another preschool unit stresses societal values: "We work consciously with society's foundational values such as respect, empathy, responsibility, and respect for differences" (Söderförskolor Plan of Pedagogic Activities, p. 2).

Participants agree with the official articulation of preschools' democratic role in society: "[gender and democracy] is about your values, how you value humans and that all humans have equal worth" (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 152). Evin notes that the preschool works to create results, to socialize, to teach children how to be a good friend, and teach democracy and equal treatment. Evin also told me that democracy and equal treatment go hand in hand, and are central in working with gender equality (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 112-114). Human rights and democracy are central to preschools' work with teaching children about all people's equal worth, developing empathy, encouraging participation in decision-making, and supporting children's confidence in their own abilities (Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 2a).

The concept of *jämställdhet*, frames gender equality as part of a democratic agenda. At the time of our interview, one of my participants handed me a document called "What is *jämställdhet*" which specifies how the preschool unit intends to work with gender equality and equal treatment in 2013-2014. According to this document,

> *Jämställdhet* has a quantitative as well as a qualitative dimension. The quantitative dimension refers to a quest for gender parity, that is, an equal number of men and women. The qualitative dimension is about equal opportunities for women and men. This is the dimension referred to in the policy documents for preschools and schools. The task is to establish equal conditions for girls and boys. Much of it is about teachers' approaches and attitudes.
> (Reimersholmes Förskolor, 2013/2014, pp. 1-2).

Because gender equality is about our values, how we value humans and believing that all humans have equal worth "regardless of whether you are tall or short or light or dark or what it could be" (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 152) it is part of an overall democratic socialization. "*Jämställdhet* is about a human right to be able to influence both on our own lives and society, without limitations due to gender, such as society's different expectations to what girls and boys should be and do" (Reimersholmes Förskolor, 2013/2014, p. 2). It is therefore a question of democracy and our collective and personal values as well as our relationships with other people within society. This issue surfaced in relation to preschool's immediate environment and the parent group:

Jona: We also work in a district that when it comes to gender has many constellations of families that do not look like the traditional nuclear family … we must receive them in the same way as we do with any other family. And we have to learn to work on not believing in the back of our heads that this is different, we have to see this as normal. And that is the challenge if you have an entirely different baggage with you, and then you must have the courage to take a good look at yourself and your prejudices: what are my prejudices that I don't believe I have, but that I actually do have.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 64/66/68/70).

Alexis: … You know that we work with children that may have been born by a woman and who have another woman as a mom also and no dad exists. And … the child must have a sense of this being right; that there is nothing wrong with that. And then you have to believe in that; you have to think so too. It does not suffice to say that you believe this. You have to believe. Truly. It has to enter you as a feeling … I think that it is very important to have actual encounters because that is when emotional change occurs, you also change intellectually, your knowledge, but even if you read a lot about power structures and structures and so on, every day you find yourself out there acting on emotions. We are just very emotional beings.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 92/94/96/98/102.).

Farah: I think we think we are very aware all the time, thinking that we are doing well. But then we may discover that we are actually not doing so well. One thing that we did at the other preschool, that we talked about but that we also practiced, was how we talked with the parents. Because there was a guy who said that now we are doing really well in relation to the children but I do hear that we say to the parents 'how is it going Bosse, did you see the match yesterday, oh damn, 3-3, cool, good luck tonight' and then 'hi are you doing well? How lovely' this kind of talk. We had not thought about that. So we also started that we even have to treat the parents neutrally or on equal terms at least, perhaps there are fathers who hate soccer or who do not at all wish to engage in this jargon.
(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 21).

Gender equality is described as both urgent and as an ongoing project with many different aspects to consider and changes to be made along the way. Alexis explains their approach to the pronoun *hen*: "We have had much discussion, and we will continue to because there are many things to consider and we may change something" (Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 120). Farah describes that gender equality is a long-term project:

In the long run we hope that in 20 years these children will in no way find that they have had an advantage or a disadvantage from their sex, these should no longer be there and we are hoping that if not in 20 years then in 50 years it is a very slow process. … Even here there is a lot left, with teachers as well as with parents, still. There is much about how parents talk with their children in an, in my opinion, kind of crazy way… and there were some teachers that thought it was pretty strange that a girl had associated blocks to a train, because that is not how it works. Ah, we live in 2005! But no, she didn't think that girls play with trains and

she was even a teacher! Have you not read a paper in 30 years?! … When you open the books, like I said, we think that we have come far, but then discover that we have a way to go before we are at the goal (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 17/31/33/39).

Employees at preschools recognize that the value attached to different categorizations is a social construction and that the preschool must approach difference as a value in itself. Preschools thus write about elevating the similarities and differences between humans and about children having different interests, ways of playing, and personalities, which must be reflected at the preschool:

> We continuously work with discovering and counteracting traditional gender patterns in us and among us. We have for example conducted an inventory of the preschool's books and songs to make sure that they elevate children of both sexes with different personalities.
> (Östra Söder Förskolor website data).

> Our pedagogues are receptive to each individual's specific abilities and wishes for self-expression and create forums that suit each individual child. For example during meals, gatherings, child councils, small groups, and child interviews. All children are given the same opportunities based on their individual preconditions. We work consciously with a gender perspective and participate in new knowledge within gender studies and early childhood development (Östra Söder Förskolor Plan of Pedagogic Activities, p. 10)

> We work actively with diversity, difference and gender issues, and we illuminate differences regarding family images, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Discussions take place on a continuous basis about approaches child-child, child-adult, adult-adult. We keep each other attentive in the work group / the preschool to not get stuck in stereotypical gender role patterns.
> (Söderförskolor Plan of Pedagogic Activities, p. 8)

The mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is interpreted as both an obligation to discover where traditional ideas surface and to counteract these through more diverse pedagogic practices. Regular discussions among children and adults about questions of gender equality and all humans' equal worth and about norms and values are central elements in working to create an inclusive

environment. One preschool stresses, "We respect and confirm the child's feelings and hereby we increase understanding and care about each other. We encourage children to show consideration and collaborate. By recognizing each other's differences as an approach, we strengthen our compassion" (ibid., p. 2).

Yael and Hadi write: "We want to give all children a wide array of knowledge, where we work actively with empathy, all people's equal value, participation, and confidence in own abilities" (Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 2a).

Empathy training is an element that is commonly stressed when it comes to creating understanding and acceptance and counteracting stereotypical roles. This is written into Equal Treatment Plans: "We work with empathy training and have discussions with children about questions of norms and values, for example talking about how we express ourselves toward others, we choose group strengthening games, etc." (Söderförskolor Equal Treatment Plan, p.3).

7.2.1 Men and Women at Preschools

Participants seemed to agree that men and women are different and can see things from different perspective, which is considered valuable for the preschool environment. In the previous chapters, I discussed how *jämställdhet* is a proclaimed value in political parties in the Swedish parliament, but that gender and gender difference are articulated in different ways among political parties.

Since the 1970s, the Swedish government has been encouraging of men entering the preschool profession by for example establishing a "free quota" of 15 percent for men entering the colleges for nursery school teacher training (Austin, 1976, p. 160). In 2013, the Swedish government started an initiative to increase the share of male employees in public preschools, which is part of an overall investment in gender equality in the

education system. It includes information campaigns about the preschool profession specifically aimed at attracting men, and four scheduled conferences on experiences with raising the share of men studying to become preschool employees (Regeringskansliet, 2013d). Increasing the share of men at preschools is framed as part of a diversity and equality project by the government, and participants agree that having both men and women teachers at the preschool can be an opportunity to show children that men and women are different but equal. Yael and Hadi explain that with both men and women at the preschool children "can experience that both men and women can do the same". In the words of Jona:

Jona: I absolutely believe that we [adults] are models for the children; I don't think it is always positive, but that is my personal opinion. I think we have to reflect on how we are and believe that we are all human beings. But today we do have many children whose parents are divorced. Most children have a mother but many perhaps don't have a father, have no man in their life, and then clearly it matters that the child sees that men who work in preschools actually exist. Nevertheless, I think it is more important that we are not supposed to be the same, we have discussed this in the gender group, I am a woman, I want to be a woman, and I think that I should be allowed to, but I have to pay attention to human rights; that we all have the same rights regardless of whether we are men or women, and it is not like we have to blend and become something neutral.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 325/327).

The concept of difference was elaborated when discussing the topic of men and women as colleagues and adult role models in the preschool. Evin expressed a generally positive view on aspiring to an equal representation of male and female employees at the preschool, which other participants tended to agree with (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 121/122). Others shared similar positive views on the topic. Yael and Hadi note: "Male and female employees at the preschool can serve as different role models for the children in that they can see that men and women can do the same things"

(Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 3g). Similarly, Jona finds that "I think it is important that we reflect on how we act in relation to the child, and remember that it is about human rights, but I think that it is also important that we have a balance, because it also affects the balance in a work team that there are men and women, different discussions, different points of views. Because we are different" (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 327/329). Loe agrees: "I think it can be good, I work with a man and I have never had that experience before. I think it is good that we have men here because it brings about different discussions in the team" (Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 113), and so does Jian: "I have a man in my team, and I also find that we have different discussions. It feels like he views things in a different way than us women do so that is an approach" (Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 114).

The perception that children benefit from having male and female role models at the preschool and that men and women have different viewpoints suggests a conservative discourse on gender. Also, it might suggest a prevalence of the norm of the heterosexual nuclear family in society. Assuming that men and women are different and complementary and that femininity and masculinity are two sides to a whole means that a child needs a male and a female primary role model in their life in order to develop into a whole human being. When children can no longer be assumed to grow up in traditional nuclear families this must be experienced as a threat to society within the discourse of gender difference and must be addressed by the education system. This view surfaced in center-right political discourse, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Some participants may be influenced by these views.

7.2.2 Traditional Gender Roles and Gender Patterns

Jian and Loe explain that traditional gender roles in the preschool involve men

acting tough and playing soccer while women clear the tables and clean the dishes.

According to participants, it is important that both men and women engage in all of these

activities so that children do not experience a traditional pattern in male and female

activities at the preschool:

Jian: I also think that we have to be careful that it is not only the man who plays ball
with the children
Loe: No we can't have that
Jian It is important that we also step in, because it is also about showing that girls also
are capable of playing soccer and things like that
Anna: Yes
Jian: That it doesn't come to be, because it is easy to find quite traditional roles when a
man enters a preschool
Anna: Yes it easily
Jian: He gets the role to be tough and play soccer and things like that and of course he
also has to do these things but we have to show that we can also do that
Loe: We also have to hang...
Jian: We also have to be able to do everything
Loe: And the men also have to clear the table and clean the dishes
Jian: Yes they do
Anna: Yes
Loe: That is very important and that is also how it is so that is good
Anna: Yes
Loe: But I believe that in a way we see different things, I do actually believe that, and I
think that is good.
(Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 114-128).

This is one central element of changing gender constructs in society, which may

also contribute to more equality in society if children learn to take responsibility for the

household. But there is another dimension that some participants mentioned, which

influences men and women's roles at the preschool. Jona explains:

Jona: It has been difficult to get men to work at the preschool and you know, it was
probably like this also in Denmark, there has been a lot of discussion about the
concept of pedophiles in the preschools
Anna: Yes

Jona: That is, many don't want to change diapers, they don't want to change the children's diapers because someone might think that they, and that it completely sick

Anna: Yes

Jona: You just become, I just become so angry when I think about this

Anna: Yes

Jona: Because it is completely preposterous, and we have seen this too that you can experience that you don't want to be alone with a child in a room, and that is completely sick because there is presumably a larger risk that women that children considering how many are working

Anna: Yes

Jona: That is somewhere it must be but it is the men we have heard about and that is what is so tragic, I think, because we need them in our operations, we need men to work at the preschool, their competences
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 337-345).

Evin also expressed a concern among the parents about pedophilia, it is a problem, and men are questioned. She believes that this may influence men's desire to work at a preschool (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 123/124). Alexis points out that despite changes and increased openness in society, preschools and society are still gender stereotypical:

I hear through the teachers, and I believe that there is much that is still gender stereotypical, but there is also much that crosses the gender boundaries. Very much since the 1980s. I think that it was much better in the beginning of the 2000s than it is now, in relation to boys who were interested in costumes or so that is was even more common at that time. At the present, in society it seems that it is a little more, what to call it, there is an openness here, we have many rainbow families here with us, and that is very positive and that has done a lot ... but even here we find gender stereotyping that does not just disappear because you have two moms or two dads, but it exists everywhere.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 84)

Recognizing that masculinity is usually associated with aggressiveness and competitive games, a solution suggested by liberals includes guaranteeing women and girls equal access, participation, and training in these games. Simultaneously, men and

boys are implored to take part in so-called reproductive or unproductive activities. Farah

explains how children and adults can cross traditional gender roles and patterns:

Farah: 'Come, we are going to bake a cake do you want to join? Yes but you have to
       join.' … Today there were boys and girls serving me coffee and sandwiches, and
       today I played soccer with both boys and girls, even if there are more boys
       playing soccer and more girls at the dollhouse and serving coffee.
Anna: But they are mixed?
Farah: Yes they are mixed and I think it happens more if you are aware of it all the time
       and think about it in some way.
Anna: And invite the children to participate?
Farah: Yes exactly.
       (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 107).

Farah finds that it is important that preschool teachers counteract traditional

gender roles by working on the interest that children have in activities that are not

traditionally associated with their respective genders, while still allowing children to

enjoy traditional activities or signifiers:

> We have to practice the interest so that boys can find dolls interesting and girls
> can find soccer interesting. … And then I have to say that in our way of working
> we always said that we do not remove anything. Remove pink, remove princesses,
> remove superheroes, but add something new, that superheroes can have children
> and kittens and princesses can fight against dragons. That is, you can be a princess
> and be proud to be a princess and pink and think that that is fine. There is no
> contradiction, if you are a very girly girl you are allowed to be just that but it
> doesn't mean that you cannot build a house or that you cannot be a mason,
> everyone can, if you only want to you can endeavor into it.
> (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 47/59/61).

But it is unclear whether counteracting traditional gender roles by "crossing"

traditional roles fosters solidarity between humans and whether this method addresses the

underlying connection between normative gender constructs to capitalism and class

relations. For example, the value and importance of ritual competitive games such as

soccer or hockey as part of preschool pedagogic activities is not questioned. In a folder

about gender and gender equality, one preschool unit presents an example of how

compensatory pedagogy can help girls access a traditionally male competitive game on

the same terms as the boys:

> When the preschool class gathered in the beginning of the fall term, games with hockey sticks became popular in the courtyard among many boys and girls. But when pedagogues studied their games, they noticed that girls had an inferior role in the games. They remained on the periphery, passed on the ball, and when they got it, they rarely scored a goal. But the interest for the ballgame was intact and the pedagogues decided to improve girls' ballgame (Reimersholmes Förskolor, 2013/2014, p. 53).

On the basis of this example, the preschool unit recommends some goals for

working with this competitive ball game: "Goals for the ballgame: That girls can play

ball with a stick, that girls and boys play together on equal terms, that boys promenade

without competing about positions" (ibid.).

Another sign that "crossing" traditional gender roles may not change social

patterns or increase solidarity between humans is that men at the preschool tend to be

highly estimated and acclaimed by the parents. Participants experience this tendency as

strange because it seems that the value of men originates in their masculinity and not in

their professional credentials:

Jian: [Men] contribute a lot but we have also talk about this, I don't think that a person is good just because he is a man
Loe: No
Jian: A woman can be just as good and can possibly have completed much education and often, among the parents, we can sometimes feel that the men here at our preschool are so highly estimated and acclaimed just because they are men
Loe: Yes
Jian: That is also very strange, that is how it feels
Anna: Yes
Jian: And that is our opinion and theirs that they want to be estimated for their good work
Loe: But they are estimated because they are men
Jian: Yes

(Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 135-143).

Farah explains the societal value attached to males, masculinity, and aggression at the preschool, and the complex position that male teachers hold:

Farah: Many find that it is good for the boys to have a man as a role model, yes it is good, but I hope that first of all I am a good teacher. I am not here to play rough with the boys, I am here to work pedagogically with our goals and in that case I am just as much a role model for the girls.
… Parents point out that it is good that there are guys working here… It may be good that we are guys, but even then it is important to emphasize that it should not be that all preschools must have a guy as some kind of symbol, that we work just as everyone else. If you are the only one, and I have been the only one at many preschools, it becomes so different if they don't see me as a person. Of course they see me as a person, but now when we are more guys it is much easier because we are also different and this guy works in this way, exactly like the girls work in very different ways. So it has been nice to be more than one
(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 87 and 91/93/95).

Farah's testimony suggests that for men, a more equal representation of men in the preschool alleviates the pressure of having a status as a symbol and as *the other* and can show the children that individual differences exist within the categories of male and female. As a male in a predominantly female field, Farah experiences stereotyping on at least two levels: 1. An experience of being highly estimated because parents assume that males are masculine, and masculinity is highly valued in society disregards his personal qualifications as a teacher and implores him to fulfill their expectations for him to act in stereotypical masculine ways. 2. An experience of being a symbol of masculinity in the preschool, which should provide legitimacy to the institution, paradoxically excludes him from being evaluated on equal terms with his colleagues and brings him a feeling of being depersonalized.

7.2.3 The Home and the Preschool
Participants view the parent group in Södermalm as very well read, highly

educated, knowledgeable about gender issues, and able to assert an influence on the

preschool. Preschool children's parents are surveyed each year in Stockholm city, and

participants appreciate their views as a resource for the preschool:

> For about 5-6 years now, Stockholm has been surveying once parents a year. Their answers to 30 questions are used for development of the preschools. Evin has been conducting her own survey of parent's satisfaction since 1992, a tool to access the parents' thoughts and wishes. The parents have always played a central role in the preschools Evin has directed. Since the parents of children in Södermalm are generally well educated and informed, the preschool has a strong parent constituency that is able to influence the institution in the direction it wishes.
> (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 90-96/106-110)

Loe: What we have are extremely open, knowledgeable and well-read parents
Anna: yes
Loe: Like 'what are you doing about gender' 'what are you doing about this, what are you doing about that?
Jian: Gender is very important for the parents here at Södermalm …
Loe: It is at least almost like that
Jian: The parents find it very important how we are working with gender in particular, that is something we are often asked about we also have open houses for parents who are deciding which preschool they want their children to attend, and they are often asking about gender, how we work with that and what our thoughts are on the subject
Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 47-52;.

> Jona notes that parents' views are important inputs to the preschool:
>
> This year we are considering a dialogue meeting, my manager, during September, with all the parents, and we are considering connecting this to the user survey and ask them why they answered in the ways they did for example, and we are thinking of possibly also bringing up the equal treatment plan and have them look at it.
> (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 161)

Preschools also formally express that diversity in the parent group is valuable for

the preschool. One aspect of this regards so-called rainbow families, which is a

knowledge area that preschools seek to work more actively with through lectures and

material. Incorporating an understanding of diverse perspectives can be a tool in working

with equal treatment (Söderförskolor Equal Treatment Plan). Participants agree:

Yael and
Hadi: We want to take advantage of parents' different competences and interests and
        utilize these in order for them to feel involved and important in their child's
        preschool … we relate to and incorporate parent's norms and values about gender
        in recurring discussions in everyday activities and at parent meetings, dinners, and
        the Friday café. Teachers then discuss and follow up on questions and problems at
        employee meetings and planning days.
        (Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 2a/6b).

In Sweden, parental involvement in the preschool has traditionally been central

because preschools are seen as an upward extension of the home (Austin, 1976, pp. 173-

174). Farah notes that parents are interested and involved in the work with gender:

There were many that sought in knowingly because they knew that here we are
working with gender ... [they might say] 'now we don't think that you have
worked so actively, you surely have a good dialogue but we want to see more in
the practical work what can we have children do that contributes to better gender
roles, less stereotypical gender roles.' So we have a really good dialogue at
meetings with the parents (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 25/27)

Today, however, preschools are increasingly seen as a downward extension of the

compulsory school, which may place the preschool in a tension between demands from

the home and the official policies of the state and the education system: As Jona explains:

We have talked a lot about preschools in Sweden today not being a second home
it has to function under a kind of workshop model where you can explore and
discover things that you find interesting that we don't have things like curtains a
lot of flowers, rather we need visuals that challenge us to explore further and I am
thinking that all of this material is not gender coded it is neutral in a way.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 287)

Participants believe that parents are the most important people in their children's

lives: "Parents have the main responsibility and the greatest knowledge of their children.

Together we create the best conditions for learning play and development" (Written data

from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 6b). But preschools are also committed to the

values of the curriculum for preschools, which states that the preschools' task is to

complement the home, not to compensate the home. On very basic level, social values

have to be developed at home:

Jona: Absolutely, there has to be a balance between care and learning
Anna: Yes
Jona: That is also our mission, and it depends on which age group you are working with,
          that is, if you are working with children ages 1-3, with the youngest children it is
          clear that it is the care aspect. We are inducting a lot of 1 year-olds and they are
          almost babies
Anna: Yes
Jona: And I mean ... the social safety and reassurance is important ... and it also says in
          our curriculum that our task is to complement the home
Anna: Okay
Jona: Not to compensate the home
Anna: Okay
Jona: For what the home does not offer, no. And it is important that we are clear about
          that with the parents, that it is not our task to raise their children
Anna: Yes
Jona: We exist as a safe place for them to be during the day, and we have a mission to
          fulfill, but I believe that on a very basic level, the social values and these things
          have to come from the home, in a way, and then we complement that
Anna: Yes
Jona: When the children are here. And many children stay at the preschool for quite a
          long time. Clearly if the parents are working between 8 and 4:30, it is clear that
          the children are here for a long time
Anna: Yes
Jona: That is how it is, and sometimes the expectations may not be fulfilled, I
          sometimes experience that the parents perhaps have very very high expectations
          (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 303-317).

One participant explained that depending on where you live in Stockholm, your

home, your primary source of socialization and values, provides you with a different

knowledge competence (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 106-110). This

perspective points to an understanding that children in preschools enter the school with

different forms of capital, meaning that children's socioeconomic position and status has

an influence on how they are educated and learn, and potentially also on their perceptions

about gender and normative categorizations in society.

If the parent group is truly diverse in terms of socioeconomic status, political

views and power, gender identities, family constellations, belief systems, etc. preschools

must experience that parents do not always share the same egalitarian values that

preschools hold. In these cases, parents' values and influence on the preschool could be

obstacles to working with gender equality.

Alexis: …we have held lectures for the parents regarding [a report called] 'Boys and girls
in the preschool, does it matter?' ... and we have talked about how we want the
children to choose, we want them to be introduced to toys that they may not
usually pick … but that caused an uproar among the parents. A parent who was
part of an investigation that was done in Sweden, she did a lecture at a parent
meeting for the rest of the parents in her son's department. And it was completely
absurd because one dad had the experience, even though she emphasized that they
had come to the conclusion that boys and girls should try the same things, the
only thing he heard was that they were trying to make a girl out of his boy, they
were attempting to make his boy homosexual.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 144).

Jona: … We do meet parents that don't want their boys to dress up in costumes. They
don't want them to wear a princess' dress, they can't where a necklace… [But]
our position is unity; we have to offer all children the same opportunities to
explore the material we have at the preschool. So what do we do when a dad or a
mom tells us I don't want my girl to play with cars? We can't remove the cars,
just as we can't remove costumes. Our reasoning is that we have a variety of
costumes, not only princess dresses and on the other hand not only firefighter or
police or things like that … We do stand firm on our position that we offer the
same material to all children because that is part of our mission according to the
curriculum and we have an assignment to counteract stereotypical sex roles and
we can't prevent children from exploring things that just doesn't pass.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 271/273/275).

The tendency for parents to object to gender pedagogy in preschools has been

demonstrated in research studies and by the Delegation alike. Conservative discourses in

the social and political environment pose as strong contestant to defining what gender is and what gender equality means. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, participants in public debate drawing on conservative discourse refer to preschools' mission to counteract gender stereotypes and gender patterns in society as an elite project and *gender madness*. They also sometimes mobilize parents and use homophobia as a discursive tool. From an analytical perspective, homosexuality is a threat to the binary gender system and heteronormativity.

Preschools mission to counteract traditional gender-roles may threaten the worldview of parents who draw on conservative discourse in their own subject positioning and thus threaten them on an existential level. This can explain why preschool employees perceive that parents react aggressively toward preschools in these situations. In cases of conflicting values between the preschool and the parent group, a participant explained that the solution must be to refer to the gender egalitarian values expressed in the curriculum, and the preschools' commitment to these values, which reinforces the position of the preschool as part of a public education system and not simply an extension of the home.

7.3 Gender in Social Structures

A feminist perspective surfaced as Jona and Alexis both spoke about their perceptions about men and women's positions inside a social structure. It is this structure of inequality that preschools must aim at changing when working with gender:

Alexis: It is very easy to see in a societal structure what the power structure looks like, you only have to look at which professions are valued the most. Where are the men and where are the women? What happens when women, like when women took over the teaching profession, what happens to the wages? The wages follow the men. I know that when my daughters were kids, they are both born in the mid-

eighties and when they were young, I had thought and contemplated and I lived in a very equal, respectful marriage, I remember when they were at the age when they needed to play much with other children that they had activities in the afternoon or something, that there were a lot of feelings about whether they were playing soccer or dancing. Those values persist. The masculine is worth more; it is a tad better if girls play soccer than those who dance ballet. It is a tad better if you study math or engineering. And it exists; we are constantly influenced in this way in society.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 170/178/182/184).

Jona: We are part of a system that we can't deny. Even if we believe we do a lot. It is not about pink or blue, if the girls want pink they can have pink and the boys blue that is not what we are talking about, we are talking about human rights for men and women and how different it looks in our society, headlines, how we write. The classic example is writing a 22-year-old and a 22-year-old woman. It could have said two 22-year-olds because it could also have been a 22-year-old [human] and a 22-year-old monkey, if you understand. And that is what the society pumps into us, that we understand that a man, it is obviously that it is a man, but you have to specify if it is a woman.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 132/136/138).

When it comes to defining gender and trying to grasp gender differences in children and adults within the preschool, the testimonies suggest that employees draw on conservative discourse combined with liberal-democratic feminist discourses. Both of these discourses have their origins in a functionalist-pluralist perspective on the state and sociology of education that focus on the individual and socialization in shared values. Despite a dominant liberal-democratic discourse, views on more radical feminist practices also surfaced in the interviews. For example, preschool employees discussed ideas about gender-neutral language such as *hen* in the preschool. As I have discussed in previous chapters, radical feminist have found the personal pronoun *hen* valuable when it comes to avoiding traditional gender categorizations. Within the conservative and liberal-democratic discourse on gender and difference, gender is something that is either

feminine or masculine, and children experiencing different gender identifications will eventually have to decide on one or the other category.

People with so-called unsure gender identities, meaning people who do not fit neatly into the normative categories of male and female, were considered in the interviews but the topic was usually associated with personal choice. For example, a person can make a decision on whether to express masculine or feminine gender and be recognized as either male or female. This recognition and acceptance is based on formal requirements such as changing your name, your personal identification number, etc.[38] Gender neutral language was discussed in this context.

Alexis: We find that *hen* can be useful when you do not know whether to use he or she or if something has to be presented gender neutrally. However, when we have to do with boys we say he. But we had a girl who wanted to be a boy at one point, but then she changed her name and became a he. So we connect it in that way, that there are differences, that you are a he or a she, you are not a *hen*, that is what we think.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 116/118).

Loe: I know quite a few people who are *hen*. Who have one gender but have decided to live as another but have not carried it out. And they must be *hen* then? I think that if you are a woman and you decide that you want to be a man, and then you become a man, meaning, you get a new personal identification number and things like that, but you don't want to go through a sex change operation, you must be a *hen* I think. And then it is fine, but to jump to calling these [children] here *hen*, no.
(Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 191/193).

Names can be racialized, gendered, and classed and serve a function in society's and our self-assignment to categories. Through this understanding, the strict binary construction of gender can be maintained in these discussions about whether or not preschools should utilize *hen*. Participants note that gendered pronouns do not exist in the

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[38] In Sweden, all new members of society are assigned a personal identification number consisting of ten digits: YYMMDD-NNNC. The initial 6 digits signify a person's birthdate, and the following three are serial numbers whereof the third signify a person's sex. Even numbers are assigned to females and odd numbers to males. The final digit is a control number.

Finnish language: "As far as I have heard, they talk about this on the radio, and in Finland they only use hen. When it is difficult to write he or she, you can write *hen* instead" (Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 196). Farah finds that much inequality persists in Finnish society and holds on to the binary idea of gender: "I believe that boys are boys and girls are girls. There is this word *hen* that has been talked a lot about. I am against this and it is obvious that in the countries where they have a neutral word it can be very unequal all the same. It has not helped. In Finland for example, only *hen* exists, but Finland is not a very equal place. So that doesn't help" (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 115-117).

The idea that a person can decide to change their gender identity conflicts with the conservative view that social gender is a direct consequence of biological sex and serves as a challenge to the discourses of gender difference, even if this conflict is not explicitly addressed. The concept of transgender could displace gender considering that if a man is able to perform femininity better than a woman, for example, the foundation of the classification is obscured. Farah's experiences with a coworker relate to the idea that gender is flexible and practiced by bodies:

Farah: There is one girl, who unfortunately works in a school now, I mean that is great, but I miss her, because she worked very well and complementary to me. Because she was not a particularly classical female woman and I am not a particularly classical male man, so the two of us were quite neutral, quite equal actually (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 107).

It is noteworthy that in this context, neutrality is taken to mean equality. Neutrality as equality aligns with liberal-democratic understandings of equality as a balance within a system of difference and the conservative view on gender as complementary.

To radical feminists *hen* is a discursive means to challenge that symbolic order and thus go beyond subjective explanations of inequality. But because femininity and masculinity are articulated as equal in the dominant discourse, *hen* is seen as unnecessary to identity politics and the politics of gender difference. *Hen* is not compatible with the liberal goals of equal opportunities, human rights, and responsibilities within difference. Again, Farah illustrates this point:

Farah: I think that it is true that boys are boys, girls are girls, or the ones that we don't completely know, and they should be allowed to be boys and they should be allowed to be girls but they can all the same be *jämställdte*, have equal pay, equal possibilities, equal rights, so for me it is not important to take away the gender in daily speech, for me it is important to accentuate gender and that you have equal possibilities and rights
(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 117).

7.3.1 Countering Subjective Ideological Violence

Gender egalitarian values come from a place of true desire for equality. We must individually adopt egalitarian values on an emotional and normative level. Alexis explains that we often experience having an understanding and ability, but that we do not live in accordance with our understanding and knowledge. Our understanding is not entirely anchored in our emotions and our actions, and on a societal level, we unwillingly engage in reproducing a structure of inequality:

Alexis: I think that what happens to a lot of women, particularly of my generation, even if we have been activists or something, is that when you had children or when you moved out of the city in the summer, then the gender stereotypes moved in. Then you felt that there was a lot of cooking and very much of 'I will stay at home with the children' 'I will work shorter hours' 'I will take a pay decrease' and that there is not much free choice.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 58).

Alexis' testimony suggests that by participating in a discourse that defines gender egalitarianism on a subjective level, we also participate in sustaining other kinds of

inequalities that take more structural dimension. We find that despite our egalitarian convictions, we somehow end up living in ways that reproduce inequality. What is interesting in this testimony and in liberal discourse in general, is that the basic "objective" structure that determines social reality, capital, is generally ignored (Žižek, Violence, 2008, pp. 12-13). Alexis indeed mentions the capitalist dimension: women staying at home with the children, taking a pay decrease, working shorter hours, and engaging in re-productive activities that sustain capitalism, but she takes on individual responsibility for the lack of free choice.

7.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter examined how official policy on gender and preschool education is interpreted by preschools. My analysis suggests that:

- Participants expressed a commitment to the binary gender system, even while recognizing its failure to explain all of our gender identities, and its failure to articulate gender that brings about equality between humans. Furthermore, participants expressed a commitment to maintaining gender in the symbolic, that is, our gendered language system.

- Participants expressed a belief that humans must be allowed to engage in gender identifications and gendered practices because humans *are* gendered beings. Gender and gender difference is articulated as individual difference and uniqueness that must be protected as a human right in democratic society. This view renders structural power invisible but converges with dominant and liberal-democratic politics and a pluralist analysis of inequality.

- Preschools interpret the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns as creating gender and pedagogic activities that lead to gender equality.

- Preschools interpret the mandate to include issues of gender differences, different treatment of children on the basis of gender, but also issues of intersectionality. Understanding intersectionality means to consider complex individual differences, rather than simply considering categorical difference. Also issues of ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and social class manifest in preschools and should be considered when working with the mandate.

- Preschools utilize a democratic and human rights framework, which appears to converge with official policy and discourse in the political and social environment.

- Difference and diversity are viewed as values. The mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is interpreted as an obligation to discover where traditional ideas and practices of gender surface. These should be counteracted with more diverse pedagogic activities that allow children and adults to be diverse.

- Traditional gender roles and gender patterns can be more readily counteracted with more male employees in preschools. When men and women employees "cross" traditional gender roles and gender patterns inside the preschool, they are able to be good role models for the children and show that there is no difference between what men and women can do.

- Participants find that it is important to internalize gender egalitarian values in order to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

- Parents are viewed as part of the preschool's social environment. Parents are viewed as both a resource and an obstacle to preschools implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

- The ideology associated with competitive games, such as soccer, which is particularly widespread in European countries and hockey, which is popular in Sweden, is rarely challenged. These sports encourage nationalism, patriotism, competition, aggression, and financial risk-taking (investments, gambling, and sports betting). The ideology is likely to keep us unconscious of our participation in reproducing a certain [capitalist] social reality and has a status of cultural fiction – we find that participating in this activity is of universal value.

- As I have discussed, preschools have been articulated as institutions for gender equality, national cohesion, and economic growth in Swedish official policy and political rhetoric. It seems that modern class society needs children to be trained in competitive games to prepare them for a competitive economy and in this case, preschools contribute to a reproduction of dominant social relations and normative gender constructs.

In this chapter I discussed preschools interpretation of the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns by looking at how preschool understand what these terms mean and what it means to counteract these. In the next chapter, I discuss more specifically how implementation of the mandate is perceived at preschools.

Chapter 8: Implementing Gender Pedagogy

In this chapter, I address the final sub question:

6. How do preschool employees perceive implementation of the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns and the concept of gender pedagogy?

I discuss perceptions about the role of preschools when it comes to working with gender equality in society and how this work can be carried out in practice. Commitment to working with gender in preschools is articulated in written organizational testimonies. These testimonies emphasize goals stated in the curriculum, involving preschools' active work to counteract stereotypical gender patterns and gender roles as well as to eliminate discrimination of any kind.

In chapter five, I mentioned that the Delegation distinguishes between *jämställdhet*s pedagogy and gender pedagogy. The former denotes a quantitative way of thinking about equality, equal opportunities, rights, and obligations, or equal access to something. The latter implies an understanding of how we perform gender in individual and collective actions, as well as in our social and material structure. According to the Delegation, gender pedagogy means a consciousness of gender patterns and intersectionality, and a gender conscious approach requires employees to have knowledge about gender in order to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006, pp. 166-167). I also mentioned that the government seems to prefer *jämställdhets* pedagogy rather than gender pedagogy, which

may explain the change in the role of the gender pedagogue in the Swedish education system.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the perceptions of employees at three preschool units in Södermalm about gender and *jämställdhet.* These perceptions reflect among other things an interpretation of the official mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. My analysis suggested that perceptions about gender and *jämställdhet* are varied, and that they tend to draw on an overall liberal-democratic discourse. But this discourse is to some extent modified by conservative elements about biological differences between men and women, boys and girls. In chapter six, I argued that the concept of *jämställdhet* has been adopted by most of the political parties represented in the Swedish Riksdag. Also in my sample of public debate, *jämställdhet* seemed to be a commitment across political ideologies. But perceptions about what *jämställdhet* means and what gender is in a context of gender equality can vary.

In the introduction I mentioned that gender equality in Sweden is complicated. In my analyses in previous chapters I found different definitions of the concept of gender and that conservative and essentialist views on gender difference are alive in the social and political environments as well as at the preschools I visited in Södermalm. This appears to be the result of the contested nature of the concept of gender. Further, ambiguities about gender equality arise as a consequence of the coexistence of different definitions of gender. Gender equality and gender pedagogy can take different shapes and these may sometimes be contradictory. There seems to be a deep contradiction between the commitments to gender equality as well as the role that gender equality plays in the construction of a Swedish self-image and the finding that conservative beliefs about

gender and essential gender difference are present in the political and social environments as well as in preschools. The ambiguity of the concepts of gender and gender equality is ignored in official policy, rules, and guidelines for implementation and in research about gender equality in Sweden. But the tendency for policy documents to prefer versions of gender equality and gender pedagogy that seem more quantitative could be an expression of the coexistence of and contradictions between different ideas about gender and gender equality; whether gender is a biological and psychological construct or a social construct and whether gender equality refers to securing equal opportunities, rights and obligations or a more radical rethinking of how we perform gender and how gender is related to social and material structures in society.

I noted earlier that the coexistence of different types of gender pedagogy and the absence of any clear guidelines on what gender pedagogy best implements the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles could express a contradiction in the commitment to gender equality. It seems that gender equality is central to Swedish state policy making and Swedish self-identity but that this commitment coexists with a tendency to not challenge essentialist definitions of gender in society and to allow more quantitative definitions of gender equality and gender pedagogy to take the stage.

As I also mentioned, liberal-democratic discourse seems to have hegemonic status in the Swedish government and education system, which may make this discourse a straightforward option for preschool employees. Furthermore, the liberal democratic discourse is tied into the municipal and national performance management system that preschools are subject to. It means that preschool employees are implored to internalize and realize a certain perspective on working with gender and *jämställdhet* in preschools.

To further investigate how preschool employees perceive the implementation part of their mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, I analyze views on the practical dimension of pedagogy. I include written data from the preschool Egalia at the end of the chapter because Egalia was brought up by several of my participants during interviews. I also add testimonies from Egalia because the Södermalm district views Egalia as a model preschool for achieving the policy goal of counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

For the purposes of my analysis in this chapter, I define *gender pedagogy* in a broader way to involve aspects of the pedagogic work with gender in preschools. Gender pedagogy can have qualitative as well as quantitative aspects. Gender pedagogy can, among other things, be a specific approach to pedagogy that is sensitive to gender as a category or an encompassing organizational philosophy, explicitly based in feminist thought. I discuss two main themes of gender pedagogy separately below: Institutionalization of gender pedagogy and approaches to gender pedagogy.

8.1 Institutionalization of Gender Pedagogy

To the extent that gender pedagogy implies an educational philosophy carried out in an institution, I want to discuss how working with gender can become institutionalized. I address topics such as how employees perceive the curriculum's instructions about how to work with gender; how employees are trained and supported in working with gender; and how working with gender is evaluated and followed up in the education system.

I want to begin by noting that participants expressed a commitment to working with gender and gender equality. Some mentioned that gender pedagogy was important to them even prior to it being a concern in the curriculum:

Alexis: At some point in the 1990s we had, it was in cooperation with Westerberg ... he started a gender track at the university, did you know?

Anna: No

Alexis: Bengt Westerberg, a politician. I do not remember, but there was a training course exactly on the topic of gender. I don't know what it was called but a colleague of mine attended it. … After she had attended, a different colleague and I engaged her for a process oriented [training course] ... during the evenings. At that time I didn't have 6 preschools I only had one preschool

Anna: Okay

Alexis: And then everyone attended this … and that was very rewarding. Because prior to that we had talked much about gender and we had had projects and applied for funding. And we had received project funding and we had worked with this. We purchased materials and presented them to gender-segregated groups to see how they worked and to let each group get to know the material in their own way and things like that. … The woman who held this training course, she made many people think a little deeper about how, because often we experience that we have an understanding and an ability, but we do not live according to this understanding and this knowledge so it is not entirely anchored (Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 52-56)

Evin said that "gender has been important from the beginning, even prior to the curriculum for preschools". One of the first things Evin told me was that "at her preschool unit consisting of five preschools, they are very interested in learning from other schools and in visiting schools and educational/cultural institutions in the world" Already in 1996, Evin went to Iceland to visit the preschool *Hjalli*. Evin told me that "Hjalli became well known for practicing compensatory gender pedagogy, in which boys and girls are separated and each instructed in ways and manners common to the opposite sex" (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 74-75, 23-26, 30-33,).

Alexis referred to working with gender as one of the three pillars that pedagogic activities must be founded on, the other two being the environment/sustainable development and pedagogic development: "For me, gender has always been one of the areas of development that we must always keep in mind. For me it is the environment and sustainable development, gender and equal treatment, … those together with pedagogic

development are the three pillars that I believe that our operations must be founded on"

(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 60).

8.1.1 The Curriculum for Preschools

Heads of preschools at public preschools cannot freely decide whether or not they

want to work with gender and *jämställdhet* because it is clearly stated in the curriculum

for preschools that they must do so. The curriculum mandates all activities at preschools

and is an important concern to employees in the everyday life at the preschool and the

organization of pedagogic responsibilities. Organizational documents and information

posted on websites clearly address the importance of working with gender as well as a

commitment to working with the goals stated in the curriculum and in legislation

governing the area.

Participants also shared positive views about the curriculum. Yael and Hadi

write, "the Swedish curriculum for preschools is very clear and thorough. We have also

been involved in the process of creating the curriculum from the beginning" (Written data

from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 6d). Preschool teachers, however, must not only

work to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. They must also take the

full curriculum into consideration when planning pedagogic activities and projects with

the children, despite shifting trends in society and varying messages from above. Jona

notes: "It is hard to stick to gender [in our conversation] because we also work with so

many other aspects that in a way overlap in the everyday work" (Verbal interview with

Jona. Transcript code: 356/358). Jian and Loe also explain:

Jian: It is something that we think about continuously, the curriculum specifies goals
        and we are constantly thinking about how to incorporate learning every day as a
        significant part
Loe: Our plan of pedagogic activities and all of our projects, everything we do with the
        children is based on the curriculum and we have a goal that we must accomplish.

Every year we get the message from above that now we have to focus on this, but we have to take the curriculum in its entirety into consideration

Anna: What are some of the particular goals that you receive from above these days?

Loe: Right now there is a focus on the natural sciences and engineering, a few years ago math was very important. But that was among the new things to be introduced, natural science and engineering are also quite new

Jian: This was strengthened in the revised curriculum, the curriculum was revised in 2010, and at that time they reinforced exactly the natural sciences and engineering. We had to focus more on that these we had done previously

Loe: Yes exactly. And that we should use those terms much more. Because we had not really been doing that before in preschools

Anna: No

Loe: But we had referred to it as calculating or going to the woods and so on. But now we just had to use the same terms that are used in the school. And then it is also always, what is important is children's language development and cooperation with the parents

Jian: And children's influence

(Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 23-31).

According to participants, the concept of instruction was introduced in preschool education in 1998 and was strengthened in the revised curriculum. Instruction in the fields of natural science and engineering became increasingly important. At the same time, preschools' activities were named to align preschools with schools. In my interview with Evin I learned that:

> The 1998 curriculum for preschools and the 2010 Education Act resulted in a shift from the more social aspect of childcare to a more educational focus in preschools. This meant that education and instruction became a formal concern and that new methods and self-reflection became instituted. Self-reflection entails a critical view on your own behavior and 'my own knowledge and competences' as well as a reflection on which methods can be used to engage. Evin expressed that the preschool teachers have received no special training in the new curriculum, besides from some lectures in the district, and sees that there are different areas of development in different preschools.
> (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 77-84).

Furthermore, with the new curriculum came increases in requirements for documentation, and more clearly formulated areas of responsibility. But in practice, it

may be more complex to fulfill the curriculum's goals and the requirements for

documentation and evaluation of performance and goal achievement:

> Well, I think that everyone has become more attentive to meeting the goals of the curriculum. I think. But then it is very different how far you have come. Because … even if you are educated, whether you are preschool teacher or a child minder, you can have different abilities. There are pretty high requirements today about documentation for example. Not everyone has, not everyone is able to, but perhaps you are good at something else. It is about finding, in a way doing an inventory of teachers' knowledge, what they are good at and not good at. I will get to do what I am good at and you will get to do what you are good at and hopefully we will create a good result together.
> (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 197)

Alexis found that teachers have met the concept of instruction at the preschool

level with some concern but that it is important to remember that instruction at the

preschools takes place through play, which the curriculum also emphasizes. Furthermore,

Alexis explained that the concept of instruction strengthens the understanding of what

you do and how you think:

Alexis: I will assert that since we got the curriculum it has become more obvious that we talk about teaching in the preschool. But with the revised curriculum they introduced the concept of instruction
Anna: Yes
Alexis: And that is something that preschool teachers are rejecting because instruction takes place in the school. But now I find that the idea of instruction is landing a little. I am thinking that it will rather be that our way of instructing is through play
Anna: Yes
Alexis: But it is a conscious way of thinking about what we present and in that way it is instruction. And I find that it strengthens, … it somehow strengthens the understanding of what you do, how you think. So I think that it has changed, I think so.
Anna: Yes. You think that this is a positive development or?
Alexis: Yes so far I don't think there is anything strange… It is okay because it is so anchored in play ... but I don't think that it feels like [we lose the play] since there is a deep anchoring with the preschool teachers. It is through play and the joyful that we work
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 34-40).

Instruction through play can be traced back to Fröbel's pedagogy, which suggested play as a teaching medium with games and songs designed to inculcate attitudes of cooperation and voluntary self-control. Focusing on play in preschools also indicates that teaching aids such as toys and storytelling become important part of the education and possibly also gender pedagogy.

8.1.2 Performance Management

Sweden's education system was decentralized in the 1990s and the responsibility for provision of education was delegated to municipalities. Mechanisms for managing and overseeing performance in preschools were thus established. In the 1980s, the Swedish national government and Stockholm City began incorporating performance management ideas into the administration, including clear lines of authority and accountability, measurement, and evaluation of quality at individual preschools and preschool units. Parent user surveys and employee surveys serve as instruments in this process. The parent survey distributed to parents to children at preschools by Stockholm City includes one question related to gender equality: "Girls and boys get the same opportunities for development" (stockholm.se). This question is related to norms and values in the curriculum. Further, a yearly report referred to as GUF[39] is based on preschool employees observing and documenting pedagogy. For each child in the institution, preschool employees document whether goals set by the municipal board of education have been reached. This creates an overall image of the preschool's goal achievement. Preschools also utilize material from outside sources such as jämställdskola.se. One preschool unit shared an observation sheet for evaluating the degree of space and attention girls and boys respectively receive from adults during

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[39] Gemensam Utveckling av de Kommunala Förskolorna [Joint Development of the Municipal Preschools]

gatherings, meals, in the hall, and during other activities. Employees note how often girls and boys hear their own name, are spoken to by the teacher, are asked questions by the teacher, are reprimanded by the teacher, speak spontaneously, and interrupts someone else speaking (Jämställd förskola och skola, 2007).

Equal Treatment Plans and Plans of Pedagogic Activities specify preschools' commitment to working with gender and democracy. In the Equal Treatment Plan, indicators of gender equality are related to creating a vision and an action plan for combating discrimination and degrading treatment at the preschool. It forms the foundation for working with fundamental values stated in the curriculum, which states that equal treatment is a human right. The content of the Equal Treatment Plan is evaluated in inspections of preschools. It appears that evaluation of how preschools implement the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is based on measures that relate to countering discrimination and degrading treatment. Since the passing of the 2010 Education Act and the revised curriculum, the responsibilities of the head of the preschool, the individual preschool teacher and the work team are carefully listed and it is implied that these groups are held responsible for fulfilling the goals of the curriculum. Further they are responsible for documenting goal achievement through the city's performance and quality evaluation system. As I mentioned in chapter five, the Equal Treatment Plan is also a key element in the Equality Ombudsman's advice to preschools on working with gender and *jämställdhet* and against all forms of discrimination.

Part of the performance management and evaluation of preschool education involves preschools developing and following up on Equal Treatment Plans and Plans of

Pedagogic Activities on a yearly basis. At a city level, the commitments of the curriculum

are incorporated into the GUF, which is presented as an opportunity to use indicators and

self-evaluation to document pedagogy at the preschool. Jona explains the system of

documenting and evaluating pedagogy through the GUF:

Jona: Each unit is a separate performance unit and the heads of preschools decide how
        to work. But we have much material at Södermalm that we have to apply. We also
        have an indicator in Stockholm city, and everyone has to work on that for
        example. Here you include the quality at the institution. At Södermalm we work
        with a thing called GUF, *Gemensam Utveckling av Förskolorna*, I don't know if
        you have heard about that somewhere else
Anna: I read about in the plan of pedagogic activities
Jona: Those are the goals of the curriculum, actually, that we meet. We complete that
        once a year, we have completed it every 6 months here, but once a year. That
        should also be included in the management by objectives. … This is our GUF for
        example
Anna: Okay
        ...
Jona: This is about… for example here: Language and communication. You enter which
        group of children you have, and you have to think, child number one, that is Kalle,
        'child develops their spoken language.' Yes he does, and then I write a yes. 'The
        child communicates.' Yes. 'The child expresses themselves.' Yes. 'The child
        shows an interest in symbols.' No, perhaps he doesn't. And then I fill in all of
        these and then we end up with numbers on this. What is important about this,
        what is important is not what the child does, the important thing is that if I see that
        I have 22 children here that I wrote down no to, I must think 'okay do I have any
        symbols at all? When we work, do I introduce symbols to the children, have I
        worked with this?' Because it is not the child's fault that they don't, we have to
        change our pedagogic activities
Anna: Yes okay
Jona: So this is actually, this is a tool. If no children construct perhaps there is nothing
        to construct from
        (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 108-116)

These indicators are part of the yearly Plan of Pedagogic Activities and published

internally and externally. Jona explains:

Jona: This is the evaluation of goals and criteria, the goals that we have had. These are
        the goals set each year by the city council. We build or plan of pedagogic
        activities on those, so this is an evaluation of our pedagogical work ... Here is the

plan of pedagogic activities and this for work purposes. The documents that look like this with only pencils are intended for the parents

Anna: Okay

Jona: The dotted ones are the ones we work on with our teachers, because this one has parts that include for example finances that the parents are not to see

Anna: Yes because the one I found on the Internet just had the pencils

Jona: Exactly, it looks like this. And that is the reason that we made them look different…

Anna: Yes

Jona: But here we describe how we are going to work, in our pedagogic activities. How we intend to work, that is, the commitments are the goals that are set by the city council and we can't do anything, we can't just change them

Anna: No

Jona: The commitment that each child encounters a varied cultural exchange, we must describe our approach, how we plan to do this, which resources to use to reach this

Anna: Okay

Jona: Yes. 'The child shows basic democratic values,' for example. Yes, how do we plan to do this and this is clearly also connected to our curriculum
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 169-179)

In the plan of pedagogic activities, preschools also describe how they intend to work in relation to the commitments of the curriculum, their approach, and the resources they need to utilize to reach these goals. In the Equal Treatment Plan, preschools evaluate the previous year's work with equal treatment and present a plan for the forthcoming year. Equal Treatment Plans contain the same basic elements, specifying among other things laws governing the area, which are the Education Act of 2010, the Discrimination Act, the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Curriculum for Preschools, definitions of discrimination, and division of responsibilities. The Equal Treatment Plan is therefore fairly standardized.

The Equal Treatment Plan can be seen as a formal measure to institutionalize work on countering traditional gender roles and gender patterns as well as countering discrimination. The Equal Treatment Plan has a legal binding force as well as a symbolic

value. As a legal-administrative document it binds all employees and children in

preschools and offers a plan of action. As a symbolic document it signals a commitment

to equal treatment. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Equal Treatment Plans often

describe working with equal treatment as closely related to democracy and gender

equality. Work on equal treatment takes place on an individual level, a preschool level, as

well as a unit level. In addition to the basic democratic values and tasks of the preschool

specified in the Education Act and the curriculum, the Convention on the Rights of the

Child is the foundation for working with children's awareness of their rights (Östra Söder

Förskolor Equal Treatment Plan, p. 2). Also, working with the environment at the

preschool can be a way to implement a philosophy of diversity and tolerance:

> The environment is constructed so that it is accessible, allowing and conducive to
> play in new constellations. Materials and environments are placed and planned so
> that they encourage all children to try different things and roles in the play. We
> elevate good role models and good examples. We work with training in empathy
> and discuss norms and values with the children … An inventory of environments,
> materials (toys, books, etc.), our selection of songs and structured activities is
> continuously conducted to ensure that plurality and tolerance characterize
> pedagogic activities at the preschool.
> (Söderförskolor Equal Treatment Plan, p. 3, 4.)

8.1.3 Self-reflection

The revised preschool curriculum explicitly states that the head of the preschool

holds the pedagogic responsibility, and that the team at each preschool assists in fulfilling

this responsibility. Jona explains:

> Prior to [the passing of the first curriculum in 1998] it was called the pedagogic
> program I believe. And it was not nearly as specified about what kind of tasks you
> have as a preschool teacher for example. The current curriculum explicitly states
> that the preschool directors hold the pedagogic responsibility but that the team
> assists in working with this. But when it comes down to it, the preschool teachers
> must be held accountable for not meeting the goals of the curriculum.
> (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 191/193)

Hence, employees are encouraged to engage in self-reflection and consciousness, as Evin

explained. This is also mentioned in organizational documents: "In conversations and

discussions we must reflect on our own approaches toward the children and each other"

(Reimersholme Equal Treatment Plan p. 2).

> We employees must continuously reflect on our own approaches toward the
> children and toward each other … both individually and collectively… all
> children at our unit will meet adults who elevate differences as an approach in
> pedagogic activities [and] who have a norm critical mindset.
> (Östra Söder Förskolor Equal Treatment Plan p. 5, 7, 3).

Self-evaluation and reflection is used in relation to fulfilling the mandate given to

preschools:

> We evaluate our commitments on a yearly basis via checklists to ensure that all
> children have participated. Self-evaluation helps us evaluate, discuss, and reflect
> on how well our work processes correspond to the curriculum's intentions. … By
> learning from each other in the unit, we have an opportunity for all employees to
> develop new methods and to reflect on own activities.
> (Söderförskolor Equal Treatment Plan p. 6, 18)

Jona also explains how self-reflection relates to the formal requirements that

preschools must fulfill:

Jona: I often try to help teachers sort out what they are actually doing, rather than
        saying you should have done this or that, because it is not that I have the answers.
        Most often they have the answers themselves… But we do have a curriculum, and
        we have an Equal Treatment Plan that we work according to. And there is the
        Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Education Act, all of these parts, and
        my job very much consists of letting the teachers know that many of the things
        that we are working with are not voluntary. There is no choice in whether to work
        according to the curriculum, if you work at a Swedish preschool you must comply
        with the goals set in the curriculum. So if I enter a group and see that they are not
        at all working with, for example gender or language, then I must ask the teachers
        how they were thinking about this, what were you thinking?
        (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code 18/20/22/24).

Employees seem to be aware of this responsibility. As I have discussed before, participants expressed that in order for preschools to succeed in working with gender and equality, egalitarian values must enter each person in the institution as true feelings. At the preschool, everyone must think and behave alike and agree to face prejudices individually and collectively:

Loe: It is important to continuously have this discussion because it is very much about how I say things, how I express myself, that is, how is my body language, what are my facial expressions communicating, so everything, you have to very much be on your guard.
(Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 71).

Jian: We have to think about this all the time, how we are aware of the children and to try to look at our own behavior. That is not so easy. But with children of all ages we have to be aware of how we meet and talk with the children, whether there is a difference there when it comes to boys or girls.
(Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 111).

Participants expressed that reflecting on your own behavior is central to working with gender and explained that this can be difficult in everyday life at the preschool. To the extent that each employee must claim moral responsibility for fulfilling the institutional mission, and ultimately for changing the societal problem of inequality, self-reflection can assist in institutionalizing certain values, since it causes each employee to self-direct in a desirable and manageable way, which Goffman has argued is essential for maintaining order in institutions (Goffman, Asylums. Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates, 1961, p. 87).

Video recording. Some participants suggested that video recording could be helpful for individual teachers to see and discuss their own behavior with colleagues. As mentioned in chapter six, newspapers have reported on preschools video recording pedagogic activities as a way to become aware of gender roles and gender patterns. The

Delegation also notes that the method has been adopted at some of the preschools they studied across Sweden (Delegationen för jämställdhet i förskolan, 2006). The method is presented as a valuable tool for discovering and confronting counterproductive behavior in adults at the preschools. Many useful insights about the reproduction of stereotypical gender roles and patterns in preschools have been made through the instrument of video recording and analyzing video data.

The method assumes that adults and preschool employees are unaware of traditional gender roles and gender patterns and how we communicate them to children (which we may very well be) and that we will be able to change these patterns if only we become aware. The method therefore also assumes that individual behavior is the key factor determining reproduction of traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

Participants shared views about video recording with me:

Jona: I think, we have looked at how you, and they noticed this after video recording themselves, that if a girl does something you often squat down and look them in the eye and tell them you must understand that you can't do this, but if a boy does something or if a group of boys are a little loud, you often raise your voice and say 'listen boys can you keep it down a bit?' you don't step forward in the same way and that is preposterous.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 267/269).

Jona: … this fall [the teachers'] task is to keep track of each other in a way. And perhaps in a gathering we may have someone actually observe and perhaps video record [us] to see how we act, to look at each other and see if there are some things we could change, how did I express myself, and so on. So that at our planning day at the end of October/November we perhaps take a half-day to tie this work together and evaluate how far we have come.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 156).

Farah: I try to do a little more, listen all the time, I would like that we also video recorded each other, I think that we can film each other here, at the former preschool they were very negative toward the idea of filming, they were scared … I would like someone to film me because perhaps I will see other things that I have no idea about, the things that we do not think about. There are always sides that are not considered.

(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 17/19/23).

Suggesting that employees are video recorded in order to discover undesired behavior clearly states that employees are individually responsible for fulfilling the urgent institutional and social mission of gender equality and elimination of discrimination.

8.1.4 Gender Networks

In order to fulfill the mission of preschools in Swedish society, employees at preschools must share a similar approach. Getting to this point involves not only education and training but also challenging your own preconceptions and sharing your experiences with your colleagues. Preschool units often have a gender network in which the work on gender is concentrated. In the gender network employees work on interpreting the goals, missions, and values in the curriculum, and discuss what it actually means that preschools must counteract stereotypical gender roles and gender patterns, which, participants explain, is not so straightforward. As a legal document, the curriculum is open for interpretation, and heads of preschools may interpret values differently. For example, one preschool unit has come to the conclusion that:

> Giving children opportunities without restrictions based on gender stereotypes, means to expand the roles of the children and not to see girls and boys as opposites. The mission is clearly and thought provokingly articulated in the sentence 'the school should counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles.' The central question for the preschool then becomes: What traditional gender patterns are there in our preschool and how can we counteract them? (Reimersholmes Förskolor, 2013/2014, p. 11).

Delegating responsibility to a gender network to discuss interpretations of gender in the curriculum may serve at least three functions: 1. Building institutional consensus on the commitment to working with gender at the preschool; 2. Defining what this

actually means; and 3. Increasing commitment to working with gender in each

department at each preschool in the unit, thus infusing the gender concern into all

classrooms. The gender network is also immersed in literature on gender and education

and conveys new research to the employees who are not represented in the gender

network. Participants explain:

Jian: We have a gender group,[although] it has not been that active recently, which is a little more immersed in recent research and which has to convey that to the rest of us
Anna: Okay a gender group
Jian: A gender group in the unit, we are 6 preschools in our unit
Anna: Yes
Jian   And we have representatives from each preschool in this gender group
Anna: Okay. Which seeks information and then you have been working with that as a theme?
Jian: Yes we do have an extra focus on that. Gender and the environment are also our specific focus and our discussion groups.
(Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 63-69)

In the gender network we discussed, that is we looked at what the curriculum says, what our mission is, that we must counteract traditional gender roles, and what does that mean? … We have read literature in this group and tried to discuss this and brought it with us into our preschools where we worked further on this at the work teams. I have a bunch of material from when we did exercises in values and problems, and the teachers had to consider different things. You made shifts, you agreed, you stuck to your position that you didn't agree and that was quite interesting.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 48/50/52)

When discussing gender issues in groups, we realize our different views, ideas,

values and norms:

Jona: … We realize that we don't think alike. And that is the foundation in a way; at home everyone is allowed to think exactly what you want to think, but here we have to think alike. We must think alike and practice alike regardless of the values we bring from home. But they do matter; significantly, because you approach things differently, and you cannot be on your own in your approach here … we can't change the private person, because at home you can do whatever you like. If you desire to live in a very traditional way, you are allowed to, but here we have

to develop a way of working and an approach that aligns with the curriculum. We cannot ignore counteracting traditional gender roles, and we must discuss this. (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 54/56/60/62).

Loe: I also bring in my own baggage from when I was growing up, and how it was [back then], and so on. And that is why it is so important that we have this discussion in the team all the time. I think it is very important that we share the wacky things we do with one another, 'you know what I said?' 'I said come on boys' instead of saying 'come on children'… So it is okay if you make a mistake and we are going to talk about it so we can do what is right. (Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 71).

Alexis: We have much discussion about our values … we are so fixed in normative thinking, we don't think we are, but it repeatedly surfaces that we are fixed in this … we have had this idea that we have to say stop or tweet or something if you hear a colleague say something. So we can help each other and discuss things, not to say that you are doing something wrong, but to elevate how it works in reality. (Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 62/68/70).

At the unit level, gender networks or gender groups hold some responsibility for working with gender equality and equal treatment. At one preschool, tasks are clearly mapped out: "In the gender network we work with a three-step method, which entails observing, change, and development from a gender perspective" (Reimersholme Equal Treatment Plan, p. 3). This draws on material from Jämställd.se, which presents a three step-model for working on change: 1. Making norms and unconscious expectations visible, 2. Changing the institution and attitudes to increase human's space to act, and 3. Evaluating the result, which brings about new opportunities for change (Jämställt.se, 2013).

At one preschool unit, the Equal Treatment Plan states specific goals for working in the gender network:

Goal: that our work on gender issues in the unit's gender network and at the individual preschool leads to an increased awareness about *jämställdhet* and equal treatment. That the increased consciousness leads to structural changes that benefit children in their everyday life.

Method: Survey the preschool from a gender perspective to work with how we can change structures we are unconscious of. Gender issues will become a permanent item on the agenda for each meeting in the work team. We will discuss questions of *jämställdhet* and equal treatment at parent meetings and in the unit's network groups. (Reimersholme Equal Treatment Plan, p. 4).

Another preschool unit's goal for working with equal treatment is that all preschools work actively with gender questions. For this purpose, a unit-wide gender group in which "at least one representative from each preschool participates and is responsible for redistributing information to the rest of the work team… Follow up takes place at gender group meetings and at employee meetings (APT), and is later reported at the unit level" (Östra Söder Förskolor Equal Treatment Plan, p. 5).

Gender networks concentrate the work with gender equality at preschools across the district and at individual preschools and preschool units. Gender networks serve a short time political agenda in the sense that the existence of gender networks demonstrates a commitment to implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. For example, in the response to the 2011 inspection, the Södermalm district administration focused on creating gender networks consisting of gender pedagogues to disseminate knowledge about gender at preschools across the district (Södermalms stadsdelsförvaltning, 2012, p. 5). It appears that gender networks to some degree function to provide legitimacy to efforts to implement the mandate. Also, gender networks, as discussed above, function to increase commitment to working with gender equality and are in some cases linked to creating actual change in perceptions and actions. However, there may be long time complications related to changing ideas and behavior. Commitment to creating more consciousness about norms and expectations concerning gender may be an important step toward change that can provide more space

for human activities as the gender pedagogues at jämställd.se propose. Changing ideology and behavior are long term projects that require a commitment beyond establishing short time gender networks or gender projects. Therefore, it seems important that gender networks become part of a permanent commitment to change and that individuals are committed to confronting their ideology and behavior outside of the preschool environment as well. This requires getting children and families involved in the work as well and extending the commitment to gender equality beyond the preschool and into the primary and secondary education institutions. Gender networks may benefit from collaborating across several levels in the education system.

8.1.5 Implementing Gender Pedagogy

Self-reflection and the gender network are two aspects of the institutionalization of gender pedagogy at the preschool unit and at the level of each preschool. Networks have a critical function in which they help streamline approaches within the preschool unit. They also train employees in so-called gender consciousness and methods of self-reflection. Finally, gender networks function to get everyone on the same page when it comes to working with gender at the preschool. The gender network implements and socializes employees about the institutional and societal commitment to gender equality and their urgent individual responsibility in fulfilling this mission.

If teachers are not aware of gender stereotypes or traditional gender roles and gender patterns, it is difficult to counteract them. For example, Farah notes that gender is a traditional and dominant categorization at preschools:

Farah: At some other preschools, there was a reaction to … pink balloons by the girls and blue balloons by the boys [on the shelves at the preschool]. We cannot keep it this way with blue and pink for boys and girls. Then the people who had put up the balloons said 'okay we will change this' and then the girls got yellow and the boys got orange. But we shouldn't divide them up like this! We can have yellow,

blue, red, you cannot make this difference! And that, that is the difficult thing to get teachers to understand; okay we should not think the boys conceptually as one group and the girls as another.
(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 71).

Sadovnik and Semel note that in the case Wheaton College, institutionalization of a gender-equal coeducational philosophy required attention to three factors:

(1) making explicit an institutional philosophy that is committed to gender equity under coeducation; (2) carefully implementing this philosophy and constantly assessing and reevaluating its successes and shortcomings; and (3) maintaining institutional memory with regard to its history as a women's college and creating a process to socialize new students, faculty, and administration about this history (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 72).

My analysis of perceptions and organizational commitments to working with gender at preschools suggests that similar factors are important when it comes to institutionalizing gender pedagogy. Firstly, a commitment to gender equality is explicitly stated in the curriculum for preschools:

The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between the genders, as well as solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the preschool should actively promote in its work with children. … All who work in the preschool should uphold the fundamental values that are set out in the Education Act (2010:800) and in this curriculum, and should clearly dissociate themselves from anything that conflicts with these values. The ways in which adults respond to girls and boys, as well as the demands and expectations imposed on children contribute to their appreciation of gender differences. The preschool should counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles. Girls and boys in the preschool should have the same opportunities to develop and explore their abilities and interests without having limitations imposed by stereotyped gender roles (Skolverket, 2011, pp. 3, 4).

This commitment is reinforced at an institutional level in organizational written testimonies such as organizational mission/vision statements, Equal Treatment Plans, Plans for Pedagogic Activities, etc. For example: "For many years, the preschool has

worked actively with issues of *jämställdhet*. The 'gender perspective' can be found as a

common theme in play and in the daily dialogue between children, parents, and

employees, as well as in the choice of toys, materials, books, costumes, etc." (Östra Söder

Förskolor website data). And:

> We work on the basis of the curriculum for preschools, Lpfö98. Herein we find comprehensive goals, which we work toward in our everyday activities: Norms and values, development and learning, children's influence, the preschool and the home, cooperation with preschool class, school, and afterschool program, follow up, evaluation, and development, and the head of the preschool's responsibilities. … We work actively on the theme *Difference as an approach*. We think it is important to affirm the similarities and differences that are in all of us. [The curriculum states:]
> "No child in the preschool should be subjected to discrimination due to gender, ethnic group, religion or other faith, sexual orientation of a family member or functional impairment, or be subjected to other degrading treatment. Preschool should aim to develop the child's sense of empathy and concern for others, as well as an openness and respect for differences in people's views and ways of life." Lpfö 98/10.
> When the child begins at the preschool we introduce the concept of 'doing forgiveness,' which entails an active and reflective way of supporting the child's empathic development. The words 'I'm sorry' risk becoming empty words, we encourage children to reflect on what happened and how you can make amends; what happened? How do you think that felt to your friend? What could you have done instead? Ask how you can make it good again! (Östra Söder Förskolor website data).

> Gender equality is about the expectations that we adults and teachers have about children and how we value their actions. We are often completely unaware about the different ways that we approach and expect things from girls and boys. The goal about *jämställdhet* is to widen all children's roles and hereby their space for development. All children have a right to try different games, costumes, roles, activities, etc. Our mission is to support them in their differences. We work actively to offer children new norms of gender equality and an approach in which we do not limit them based on old stereotypical gender roles. We utilize observations, conversation, and inventory our pedagogic materials such as books. (Söderförskolor website data).

Secondly, the commitment to gender equality is sought implemented through

performance and quality evaluation, a system in which heads of preschools and preschool

teachers are held accountable for implementing goals as I have explained above.

Elements to support the implementation include educating employees in gender issues.

For example study visits, training, lectures, and workshops with gender pedagogues:

"Employees from all preschools participate in a development group about *jämställdhet* in

preschools that is led by the unit's head of pedagogic development. We have an Equal

Treatment Plan, which is revised each year by employees, parents and children"

(Reimersholmes Plan of Pedagogic Activities, p. 8).

> Jona explains some of the support initiatives:

> We had a network all throughout the spring, a gender network, we met about once
> a month with representatives from each of the preschools … We have been
> working with gender in the network, this is an old protocol where we had
> observed and had planning days with the gender pedagogue. We discussed which
> expressions to use, and we also had … a lecture at our planning day on June 14.
> (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 46, 120).

> According to Evin, the district once held a lecture on gender and within Evin's

unit, they had had a lecture as well for everyone at the unit (Verbal interview with Evin.

Interview notes line 73-74). One preschool unit was part of an EU project called the

Commenius project:

> At the time that the preschool was awarded Stockholm city's award price for
> quality in 1998, part of that money went to a study trip to Barcelona. During our
> visit in Spain we came in contact with Escola Bressol Albi who was looking for a
> third participant in the Commenius project. During the first year, we worked on
> projects under the theme environment. During the second year, we worked on
> gender roles. We shared material that describes how we work with boys/girls.
> Parents have been involved in a survey which was sent out to parents from each
> country.
> (Söderförskolor website data).

Preschool units have instituted unit-wide gender networks with that ties academia and new research into the preschool. Literature is an important element in learning to work with gender: "We get good literature that we continually have to read, about gender, new research that is published and lectures and the like. … You can also turn to the papers and the literature and television and see that we constantly find new and interesting programs and articles" (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 35/37/109). Participants explained that they are part of shaping the development of the preschool: "By following and being up to date on society's development. By being in touch with academia, reading current literature, etc., and having an open and responsible approach" (Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 2e).

Furthermore, preschool units and the district and city administrations evaluate the work with gender through the GUF and the plan of pedagogic activities as we all a yearly quality report and surveys of parent and employee perceptions. Also, weekly plans of pedagogic activities that specifically list the skills that these activities foster and their connection to the curriculum, and tools such as video-recording and self-reflection aim at creating an everyday commitment to and understanding of individual responsibility for working with gender and the goals of the curriculum. For example: "We utilize documentation through video and photo and audio recording as a basis for reflection … The unit has a gender network with a representative from each department, which reflects on and develop the work from a gender perspective" (Östra Söder Förskolor plan of pedagogic activities, 2012, p. 7-8)..

Thirdly, preschools seek to maintain institutional memory by documenting pedagogy (scrapbooks, photos, newsletters, etc.):

Our work on values and how children are developing their social skills are documented on a continuous basis in images and text. The documentation is used to meet parents' thoughts and wishes about their children's needs and to give them an opportunity to take part in their child's everyday life. It also fills a function for children to see their own learning and is also used as a tool for the pedagogues to develop and assure the quality of their work (Reimersholmes Plan of Pedagogic Activities, 2013, p. 8).

Jona: We have worked very much with documenting our pedagogy. Perhaps the [parent] survey concludes that they don't know what that means or they do not see their children's documentation. Then we think about how it can be that they do not see this. Because we have worked very intensely with this and then there must be a failure in the communication somewhere, that we do not talk about this sufficiently enough

Anna: So the documentation of pedagogy includes the monthly newsletter for example, the intranet?

Jona: Absolutely, precisely, and also the documentation on the walls, where the groups stay and the children's portfolio folders where we keep documentation.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 44-46).

Preschools socialize employees and children into a philosophy of gender equality and democracy. The gender network is part of this socialization and so is training courses, lectures, and further education about gender.

8.2 Approaches to Gender Pedagogy

Preschools are not isolated from society. Preschool employees receive much information from the academy and public discourse. Preschools, and particularly heads of preschools, are in direct contact with the political and administrative system as well as the academy and other preschools in Sweden and abroad. Since preschools came to function under the curriculum, their tasks have been articulated much more explicitly, and the attention to practices in preschools has been heightened in the Swedish government as well as in the general public. Heads of preschools look to other preschools and cooperate with many different actors in developing gender pedagogy, and the

perceptions of employees inside preschools are complex. Gender pedagogy can be seen as an approach to pedagogic activities; their organization and pedagogic processes.

The purpose of gender pedagogy as stated in organizational written testimonies is to ensure gender equality. This can be reached through democratic processes such as allowing everyone, children as well as adults, equal influence on life at the preschool and access to decision-making, in addition to democratic institutions such as the Equal Treatment Plan. Gender pedagogy tends to be viewed through a liberal-progressive lens, which brings forth the importance of counteracting traditional sex-role stereotypes and gender patterns. It is important to encourage participation by all children; to allow children equal time to talk and be heard; to reinforce children's beliefs in their own abilities; and to mix boys and girls together in smaller groups to conduct theme projects and experiments. It is also important to gather all children together in assembly during which the same democratic principles are encouraged. Jian and Loe discuss how they work with gender:

Jian: Yes when we divide up the children into groups we never divide them into boys alone and girls alone

Loe: No

Jian: It is always mixed and we always encourage them to play, but the age group that I am working with [1-3 year-olds] they play together

Loe: For us it important to make sure that all children have equal time to talk. ... I work a little with film and storytelling with these children and it is very important to bring forth everyone. That everyone shares insights about the topic... but at the same time is also very much about my behavior

Jian: Yes.
(Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 107-111).

Based on Loe and Jian's explanation, it seems that they do not work with compensatory gender pedagogy at the preschool. Loe and Jian explain that they do not consciously separate girls and boys in separate groups for some or all of the day. Rather,

they encourage children to mix across genders in play. Still, as Farah explains, during

free play there may still be strong gender divides:

> Honestly, I find that it is much divided. I hardly know what the girls are playing
> because somehow it has come to be that the boys have claimed me. And I try, I
> have to be with them also, but I try to also reach the girls. ... But I also want to get
> in there with a good theme project, cool research where we experiment together.
> Because I think it becomes more gender neutral if you, what should we say, what
> happens if you mix salt and sugar, that is cool. Because the traditional games may
> seem boring, they chose the simplest divisions available. But I want to establish
> that we work with some good themes, some good projects that we will be working
> with this fall, in smaller groups of both girls and boys. It can be baking or
> anything, but we do it together, so now you get to pour something and you can do
> this and we are a team now. It is us at Monsuun, the group is called. … I believe
> we find that the gender feelings are loosened up and the focus shifts to the
> interesting in the work. Not 'where is Lisa playing at? I will also go there.' With
> Lisa it is safe and nice, but no, today we will continue with feathers or whatever,
> 'oh how fun.' It is much more inspiring for all children and I believe that the
> immigrant-Swedish or the gender divide then seizes to exist because there is a
> focus on what is happening on the table or in the studio or wherever it is.
> (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 75/81/83)

According to Farah, planned activities can counteract that children divide on the

basis of gender and friendship barriers. Yael and Hadi also write that theme projects

facilitate pedagogy well:

> Our mission requires different kinds of work with the children. … Projects that
> run over a long time and include a number of different elements within the same
> theme are very fun and a good way to learn. … We strive for a balance between
> planned activities and free play. In free play, children decide what and who they
> want to play with. In the structured pedagogic activities, we adults form groups.
> In deciding on groups we consider things such as which children can be positive
> for each other, are there any children who need a more prominent role or on the
> contrary many children who are leaders and need to learn to listen, etc.
> (Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 5d/5e)

Evin explains, "The purpose of a preschool in society is to create results, to teach

children how to be a good friend, and to teach democracy and equal treatment. In this

perspective, democracy and equal treatment go hand in hand and are both central to

working with gender in practice" (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 112-119). In this process, Evin expresses that "the conditions you provide for children are of high importance. Constructing and theme projects are open to all and facilitate gender pedagogy well. The foundation for gender pedagogy becomes "a bottom up perspective, listening, being attentive, and in close proximity to the thoughts and ideas of children and employees" (ibid.). This perspective seems similar to feminist pedagogy at Wheaton College. At Wheaton College classrooms become an arena where knowledge can come from the teachers as well as the students (Maher & Tetreault, 2001, pp. 41-42).

8.2.1 Gender Preschools: Coeducation and Single Sex Classrooms

A concept that has been central in developing approaches to gender pedagogy is that of the gender preschool. Participants shared different perspectives on what they understood as gender preschools in Sweden and abroad. As I discussed in chapter six, the ideal types of gender pedagogy in Sweden are: compensatory pedagogy and gender-neutral pedagogy. Recently, other views on gender pedagogy have surfaced in the social and political environment such as norm critical gender pedagogy and child-participatory gender pedagogy. The presentation of these various approaches to gender pedagogy may influence preschool employees' views on gender pedagogy and gender preschools.

I have mentioned before the preschool *Hjalli* in Iceland, which practices a specific type of gender pedagogy referred to as the Hjalli model. The Hjalli model is a dedicated compensatory pedagogy. At Hjalli, boys and girls are separated in the preschool, creating a single-sex setting within a coeducational preschool. The Hjalli model was developed by Margrét Pála Ólafsdóttir as a reaction to experiencing the damaging effects of *sex integration* on children in the Icelandic s1chool system. In the 1960s and 1970s, second wave feminist sought formal equality between the sexes in the education system through

advancing coeducation; mixing children of both sexes in all subjects was and still is to a large extent assumed to foster equal rights and equal treatment in schools and in society. The assumption underlying the Hjalli model is that the framework of sex integration does not provide equality and that the philosophy perpetuates a system of inequality in which girls are trained for what is awaiting them; minimal participation in a male dominated society (Ólafsdóttir, 2013a).

Since 1987, the Hjalli model has gained recognition nationally and internationally. Today, the Hjalli model is practiced at seventeen preschools and schools in Iceland. Two participants shared their ideas about Hjalli with me. In 1996, Evin "went to Iceland to visit the preschool Hjalli." (Verbal interview with Evin. Interview notes line 30-31). Evin told me that "the preschool became well known for practicing gender pedagogy in which boys and girls were separated and each being instructed in ways and manners common to the opposite sex" (ibid., line 31-33). Evin "did not particularly agree with the Hjalli pedagogy" (ibid., line 33-34). Still the Hjalli model seems to have made an impression considering that Evin mentioned the Hjalli model to me. Alexis also told me about the Hjalli model after our formal interview was over. According to Alexis, compensatory pedagogy is one way of actively working with gender pedagogy, and the Hjalli model is an ideal type of this category of gender preschools.

Compensatory gender pedagogy: Hjalli's legacy. The Hjalli model is controversial to feminist pedagogy, which traditionally has moved away from favoring single-sex schools to favoring integrating boys and girls in coeducational schools. As I mentioned in the literature review both functionalist and interactionist arguments for

coeducation have surfaced in schools transitioning from single sex education to co-education. Sadovnik and Semel's study illuminates this.

Today, all public preschools in Sweden are coeducational but practicing temporary sex segregation inside a coeducational preschool can be an approach to gender pedagogy. For example, Hjalli's gender pedagogy is based on an observation that girls and boys at preschool age play differently, have different interests, different cultures, and different skills. In the Hjalli model, pedagogic activities take place in single sex settings within an overall coeducational institution. Children are divided according to gender for some of the time but are brought together in a mix setting for the remainder of the time. According to Ólafsdóttir, this provides an opportunity to give both girls and boys experiences they have been denied by virtue of their biological sex. Ólafsdóttir explains that a big part of the girls' gender pedagogy intends to compensate for the lack of so-called 'male' qualities, which girls are usually not allowed to develop while the boys' gender pedagogy allows them to gain experience of so-called 'female' qualities (Ólafsdóttir, 2013a).

Separating the girls and boys thus ensures teachers' full attention to both genders and provides each gender with an opportunity to play and study on their own terms without the other gender interrupting. Ultimately, the goal of creating a single sex setting within an overall coeducational preschool is to ensure coexistence in society. The philosophy is that coeducation teaches children of both sexes to work together in classrooms and in society. This requires a successful mix of the sexes in the preschool, which is also practiced regularly within the Hjalli model (Ólafsdóttir, 2013b). Some Swedish preschools began to practice compensatory pedagogy in ways similar to Hjalli

during the 1990's. As I mentioned in chapter six Kajsa Wahlström adopted compensatory

pedagogy at her preschool Tittmyran, which has received much attention in the social

environment. Participants also mention pedagogic practices that resemble compensatory

pedagogy:

Alexis: We had talked much about gender and we had had projects and applied for funding and we had received project funding and we had worked with this, we purchased materials and presented them to gender-segregated groups to see how they worked and to let each group get to know the material in their own way and things like that.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 56).

The inspiration from the Hjalli model may be found here: working with single-sex

groups can be useful when it comes to counteracting traditional roles and patters in

children's relationship to teaching aids.

Farah: We bought a new toy train set about two years ago. And this was a group of two-year-olds I believe, we let the girls play [alone] for one week because they should have a little dominance over the train set. Then we let in the boys also, and it created a pretty equal, or *jämställd* play. Because there is a risk that the boys just take over the toy train set and then the girls can just do something else. And this counteracted this. Now [the girls] can play in peace and quiet and discover on their own terms that this is a fun thing.
(Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 47).

Farah informed me of a gender preschool, which practices dividing up boys and

girls in different groups for a while to learn soccer, and that it actually works:

Farah: I have utilized this quite often. Here, boys are given points when playing with each other only when they pass the ball to each other. If you score a goal you get no point, you can possibly work with minus points, but when you pass the ball you get a point. So they learn the idea of group play. And the girls who readily pass the ball away to some other boy, they only got a point when they play themselves, the girls, when they score a goal. So they learn to score goals and the boys learn to pass the ball. And then after about 3 to 4 weeks you can merge boys and girls and they play very good together, because then they know soccer in a different way.
(ibid. Transcript code: 51/53).

However, the single sex setting is not the only important aspect to the Hjalli model. As the transition from single-sex education to coeducation at Wheaton College suggests, gender equity must be an explicit commitment and must be incorporated into the processes of education for coeducation to succeed and not be 'chilly' to girls and women (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 62). At Hjalli, like at Wheaton College, coeducation is accompanied by "a philosophy, curriculum, and pedagogy committed to gender equity" (ibid.). From conversations with Alan Sadovnik, it appears that by 2014, Wheaton College has unfortunately lost this commitment and now is like any other coeducational college. According to the Hjalli model, the aim of the pedagogy is that children manage to concentrate on what matters at the preschool, namely their projects, interaction with other children, and developing children's creative thinking.

The Hjalli model ensures these by keeping the preschool environment as aesthetically simple as possible and by only utilizing open materials. In contrast to traditional materials such as dolls and cars, open materials offer many solutions instead of one given. A wooden block, for example, can become a car, a boat, a sheep, a house or a child. And if children want to play a car game and find themselves by a clay station, then they can shape it in clay (Ólafsdóttir, 2013b).

This aspect of the Hjalli philosophy appears to influence participants' views on gender pedagogy and the role of preschools in society. Farah's views on weapon-toys at the preschool, for example, share the philosophy of allowing children to create from open materials rather than providing children with closed ended toys that are full of gender-

codes and preconceived associations. Preschools generally do not have weapon toys like knives, swords or guns. Farah explains:

> But should we have strollers and classically more common that girls play with, should we have weapons? No, we do not have weapons at the preschool, no. But if the boys have a strong need for playing with weapons and perhaps the girls too, when it comes to becoming more neutral, how do we handle this? Because it almost comes to the point that some toys are good and some are bad -- then we are counteracting, we must find a fine balance, very much discussion and very interesting! … But children that wanted to carpenter knifes, swords, guns, they were absolutely allowed to do this, or build in Lego. …But this is constructive, good, play; you can't say that this is bad just because you associate violence and destruction. To them it is a matter of how does this look, it is a very interesting mathematical, technical task, and we cannot hinder this because then we are hindering the interest.
> (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 43/45/47).

8.2.2 Teaching Aids and Interactions between Adults and Children

Gender pedagogy entails awareness of what kind of literature the preschool has and why, how it reflects the gender approach, and awareness about how materials are placed. When parents ask about gender pedagogy, Jian explains to them that "we see it as an approach to the children that we are aware of their individuality and not as genders and that we think of, when we have, what kind of literature we have, how does that reflect our approach, also how do we place materials. That is the foundation" (Verbal interview with Loe and Jian. Transcript code: 61). Approaches also include changing gendered patterns in interactions between children and adults. Thus, participants shared views on teaching aids and their role in practicing gender pedagogy, while keeping in mind the goal of pedagogy, which is to break the traditional gender patterns and gender roles in the preschool. Jona explains:

Jona: I simply think that all material can be used to engage boys and girls equally much, but it completely depends on how you introduce it. It also completely depends on how you provide space for the children, I think. We have talked a lot about our reasoning about boys and girls; well the boys have so much energy in their legs, for example, that they need to go outside and move around. And I am thinking,

why does it have to be like that? And we have talked a lot about this, we have looked at whether we are always helping the boys get dressed first and send them out in the yard, yes, then they are out there first and perhaps they grab the best bikes and take up the space in the yard because they have the space. If instead we do it differently, that we kind of provide the same opportunities for everyone to go outside or stay inside, then the patterns change in how the children play. If you send the girls out first they will surely choose the bikes if they are free. If the bikes are available when they step outside. Because we have always sent out the boys first and then [the girls] don't have a chance.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 261/263/265/267).

Jona refers to the structural patterns involving gender, which have traditionally encouraged children to utilize teaching aids in different ways depending on their sex and how these traditions remain to be confronted. Rather than discussing that children of different sexes show a different interest in certain toys, such as bicycles in the example above, Jona explains how children of different sexes have traditionally experienced different access to toys and physical space in the preschool. In this instance, a pedagogy sensitive to gender and equality centers not only on the teaching aid itself but also on the conditions that children are offered when it comes to the teaching aid.

The question of whether to remove and/or to present teaching aids in a non-traditional way was a concern that most participants expressed. Some expressed that it is not about removing traditionally gender-coded teaching aids but about introducing them in a new way that allows children to imagine gender in a non-traditional way. This includes approaches like the one Jona explains above, and also the idea that "we do not remove anything, remove pink, remove princesses, remove superheroes, but add something new. That superheroes can have children and kittens and that princesses can fight against dragons (Verbal interview with Farah. Transcript code: 59). The pedagogy centers on our associations and prejudices connected to certain interests rather than

evaluating the appropriateness of certain interests. Alexis explains that society tends to

influence us to value traditionally masculine over feminine qualities and interests:

Alexis: This is what we have to work toward at the preschool: not to value. Whether you want to collect feathers or glittery hair ribbons or whether you… They should be able to do this or the other, it has to be interesting, what is interesting about this, what is it you want to do with this, that is what we have to work on; not saying uh, oh, okay, hair ribbons. As Jesper Juul[40] says: be near the child and acknowledge the child, but you do not need to evaluate the child.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 192/194/205).

In the perspective of other participants, teaching aids that conflict with the gender

pedagogy by communicating traditional values and practices should be used with caution

or removed from the preschool. This involves removing teaching aids that are

incompatible with counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns from the

preschool. Hadi and Yael repeat their preschool's view on teaching aids, which is found

on the website as well as in the unit's Equal Treatment Plan:

Yael and
Hadi: By taking away many of the traditional toys that are often experienced as gender coded and replacing them with plenty of different types of materials for constructing, a large selection of different costumes, many types of creative materials, varied literature which features girls and boys in different roles, we find that all children utilize the entire array of pedagogic activities at the preschool.
(Written data from Yael and Hadi. Transcript code: 3g).

Jona explains:

Jona: We have talked a lot about preschools in Sweden today not being a second home. They have to function under a kind of workshop model where you can explore and discover things that you find interesting. We don't have things like curtains or a lot of flowers. Rather, we need visuals that challenge us to explore further. And I am thinking that all of this material is not gender coded. It is neutral in a way, I would say… The issue of literature for example. We received lists of books that are good to read at the preschool and also a list of items that actually are incompatible with the values set forth in our curriculum. And we have printed

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[40] Jesper Juul is a Danish author of books on non-authoritarian parenting, who is known internationally for *Your Competent Child* (1995/2001).

these and brought them to all of our preschools so that you can do an inventory of the kinds of books you have. Because many old books remain that are actually not okay if you view them from the perspective of human rights for example. To actually remove these books and then say that if we decide to read these books, we read them perhaps to pass on traditionally, Swedish traditions, but then we have to explain to the children that long ago we wrote things like this, but we don't talk like this today.
(Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 287/289/291/293).

Approaches to gender pedagogy include sensitivity to teaching aids, access to teaching aids, and awareness of the value structure that society attaches to certain interests and activities. For this reason, it is important that the education system and preschools work actively at institutionalizing gender pedagogy formally through legislation, official guidelines, curriculum, and implementation.

Approaches to gender pedagogy and perceptions about what gender is and what it means in relation to working with gender can vary from one preschool unit or individual preschool to another, even within a system of public preschools that functions under the same formal rules and guidelines. It is noteworthy that none of the participants or the written organizational testimony challenges the hegemonic liberal-progressive discourse, which functions to address gender inequality only on a subjective level. Focusing extensively on legislation, formal rules and guidelines, in addition to a strict performance management system, which encourages individual responsibility for a systemic problem of inequality and discrimination, excludes real discussion of structural and symbolic dimensions of the problem.

8.2.3 Perceptions about Gender Preschools: Egalia

On a final note, I want to mention that the discussion of gender pedagogy centered on the Hjalli model but also on other Swedish gender preschools in the 1980s and now. Based on what participants told me, gender preschools are perceived to include

preschools that practice compensatory gender pedagogy by clearly distinguishing between boys and girls, separating them physically for longer or shorter periods of time, as well as preschools that practice gender pedagogy by downplaying the importance of gender categories and differences by applying gender neutral language and restraining gendered signifiers such as clothing, scents, and physical grooming. These preschools are perceived to practice gender pedagogy by restraining gender signifiers such as wearing perfume, makeup, and colorful clothing. The preschool Egalia can be categorized as a gender-neutral type of gender preschool. Several of my participants brought up Egalia. For example Jian and Loe:

Jian: We actually also have one at [Södermalm] which is very gender focused.
        …
Loe: Over there everyone wears grey clothes and the boys play with dolls and the girls are carving, and things like that; across. There is a lot of discussion because … I always believed, I always thought that was nonsense, because if I am a girl I should also be allowed to play with dolls if I am a girl and if I am a boy I should also be allowed to play with cars, we only have to make sure that it is okay for girls to play with cars. But I cannot force … That is no good either, but it is about giving everyone the same conditions. I think that I have always been conscious of gender but of course, with the new curriculum and the message from above was "Now. Gender, gender, gender. Gender training courses and gender lectures and gender books and gender…" then it becomes more, understand?
        (Verbal interview with Jian & Loe. Transcript code: 177 & 185/187).

The perception seems to be that gender pedagogy at Egalia is practiced by forcing boys and girls to utilize certain types of toys opposite to the traditional gender patterns in free play. The employees at Egalia are believed to wear only grey clothes and restrict traditional gendered play.

The focus on gender seems to be perceived as excessive. I discussed in chapter six that the image of excessiveness, so-called *gender madness*, has been associated with gender pedagogues in public debates. Some gender pedagogues have publicly expressed

particular interest in practicing radical feminist notions of gender neutrality through language and play. The image of the gender pedagogue and the public reaction to this occupational category may influence how employees perceive gender preschools such as Egalia. Also, a personal commitment to a gendered subject position could be threatened by attempts to prohibit gendered signifiers such as clothing, make-up, and perfumes in preschools, which may influence preschool teachers' views on gender pedagogy and approaches to working with gender.

Gender pedagogues also visit preschools and present employees with material on gender pedagogy and how this is practiced at Egalia, for example: "We had a gender pedagogue who works at the University of Goteborg, and she came to give a lecture to us one day… we also got an article from her, [about] … Egalia, is the name of the preschool here at Södermalm. And we had all read that and then we, yes we read the material and then we used the material. This is different material that we talked about and practiced (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 122/128/142).

Egalia is understood as a preschool specifically for HBT families and not for so-called traditional families. HBT refers to the English LGBT, meaning Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. The gender pedagogy at Egalia centers on the practice of gender-neutral language. Participants recognize the controversy surrounding Egalia's gender pedagogy by noting the attention and threats that Egalia has received.

Jona: We have more HBT certified preschools at Södermalm, not in our unit, we don't, but we have two [in Södermalm]. They also had many study visits and things like that. They exclusively have children from HBT families. That is homosexual, bisexual, transsexual… But they have received so many threats that they do not take in visitors or anything anymore, they got so many threats. It was a pain. (Verbal interview with Jona. Transcript code: 88/90).

Alexis: I believe that she has received a lot of attention because she has a preschool where they consistently utilize the concept of *hen*. They use it instead of saying he and she, and we have also had a similar discussion, but we have not landed in the same opinion.
(Verbal interview with Alexis. Transcript code: 114/116).

According to written testimonies, Egalia appears to share many similarities with other preschools in Södermalm. As a public preschool, Egalia functions under the same formal rules and guidelines as all other preschools. Egalia is committed to the goals proclaimed in these documents. It is correct that within Maria Gamla Stan's preschool unit, Egalia and Nicolaigården are HBT-certified. This, however, does not imply that only HBT parents can enroll their children in these preschools.

Many of the same aspects regarding institutionalization and approaches to gender pedagogy that surface in my participant's testimonies and written testimonies from their preschool units can also be found in material on Egalia's gender pedagogy. For example, the statement: "We want to teach and show children that all people, regardless of gender, age, physical and mental ability, or ethnic origin should have the same rights, opportunities, and obligations" (Written testimony on gender equality at Egalia) echoes the official definition and interview participants' definitions of *jämställdhet*. Further, "at Egalia, all toys, books, materials, and treatment of children and adults are thought from a gender equality perspective. Egalia has a norm critical approach and we want to work actively to prevent cementation of gender stereotyping" (ibid.). The attention to teaching aids and the reference to the curriculum's goal to counteract stereotypical gender roles and gender patterns are similar to other preschools' testimonies.

Regarding perceptions about Egalia's focus on physical appearance, the website states that "We do not expect that children and adults behave in certain ways based on

their gender, age, background, or attire." (Egalia, 2013). And in a guide to gender

pedagogy, it is noted, "We do not comment on a child's clothing. However, we do of

course acknowledge a child who proudly shows off a new garment. In that case, we try to

use neutral words nice or warm rather than tough or pretty" (Nicolaigårdens Förskola,

2013).

According to Egalia's website and written testimonies, gender pedagogy is the

foundation for all pedagogic activities. "Gender and gender equality are not scheduled

activities, a theme, or a project at the preschool, but a method and a set of basic values

that permeate the entire pedagogic activity." (Written testimony on gender equality at

Egalia). What seems different about Egalia's gender pedagogy is, firstly, the idea of

utilizing gender-neutral language, which my interview participants generally have

decided against, and secondly, a focus on rights to emotions. Regarding gender-neutral

language, Egalia notes: "We try to use gender neutral words or proper names, thus

reducing the amount of gender expression. In everyday speech, we use kids' names

instead of 'his' and 'her'. We do not say 'come on guys/girls' but prefer to use gender-

neutral words like 'friends'" (ibid.). And "We vary our language in everyday speech, play,

songs, narratives, storytelling, and dramatization. He, she, man, woman, etc. can often be

left out or referred to as it, *hen,* the person, the figure, etc." (Egalia, 2013).

Gender pedagogy is framed within a democratic agenda with a clear focus on

allowing everyone to human emotions:

> All preschools in the unit work with the guide to gender pedagogy
> [*Genuslathunden*], in which we describe seven guidelines to follow so that all
> employees share a common approach. Every week we have life-skill gatherings
> during which we speak with the children about respect, feelings, ethics, and
> morality. We utilize EQ-dolls with different emotional expressions, which teach

children to recognize different feelings, put them into words, and understand what we can do with or of them. (Maria Gamla Stan Plan of Pedagogic Activities 2013).

We like to elevate in different contexts that you can fall in love with anyone, regardless of gender. Just as it is possible to be friends with anyone. We try to avoid any expectations arising from the child's gender. At Egalia, we even avoid saying that the child *is*. Children behave, act, and do. Whatever the child's sex, we have no expectations or perceptions of the child ... We believe that emotions such as joy, curiosity, fear, anger, disappointment, despair, and sadness have no gender. At Egalia, all children have a right to all emotions (Written testimony on gender equality at Egalia).

What these testimonies suggest is an understanding that gender is not real, in that it does not refer back to a truth about who we truly are. Gender is something we become; our self consists of emotions, actions, and behaviors. It is an ongoing project with no stable or predictable locus. The notion of difference as essential or socially constructed is suspended when the self is articulated as a series of acts. Rather than equal access to opportunities within a system on binary gender difference, what is emphasized is equal access and right to an emotional spectrum. This perspective is radical compared to the hegemonic liberal and conservative discourses found in educational policies and perceptions about gender and gender equality.

8.3. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I addressed the question of how preschool employees perceive implementation of their mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns and the concept of gender pedagogy. My analysis suggests that:

- Preschools and participants are committed to gender equality and to implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

- The mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is only one out of many goals that preschools must achieve in order implement official policy and fulfill 'messages from above'

- New requirements in official policy with regard to documentation and evaluation of pedagogy, performance, and goal achievement can be a challenge to some employees.

- Some employees view the performance management system and management by objectives as useful instruments for quality assurance.

- Equal Treatment Plans are key formal measures to institutionalize work to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns and counter discrimination. Hence, they are central instruments to implement official policy on the area.

- Preschools and employees have no choice in whether or not to work in accordance with official policy and key organizational documents.

- Self-reflection and gender consciousness can assist preschool employees in fulfilling pedagogic responsibilities and implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

- Self-reflection can be interpreted as an ideological instrument that seeks to cause employees to self-direct in a manageable way.

- Video recording is viewed as a positive tool to discover and confront counterproductive behavior among adults in the preschool in relation to the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

- o Video recording may be a good way to catch unconscious behavior, traditional roles at the preschool, and traditional patterns in how adults engage with children.

- o Video recording assumes that employees are unaware of traditional gender roles and gender patterns and that they will change if only they become aware. The method therefore assumes that individual behavior is the key factor determining reproduction of traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Employees are individually responsible.

- A participant expressed that some employees at a former preschools were afraid of being video recorded.

- o It suggests that the method when adopted in an everyday organizational context can create a hostile work environment. Being monitored via video recording can be a source of anxiety for teachers, and be perceived as the most extreme of control mechanisms in a workplace.

- o Considering that preschool employees are predominately women, the method of video recording could symbolize the male gaze[41] applied as a means for conformity and as a tool to shift the attention from the structural problem of gender inequality to a problem of subjective (female) misconduct.

- o Considering these perspectives, video recording can circumvent addressing structural dimensions and serve as a reproduction of the patriarchal social order.

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[41] Feminists have argued that the camera is a symbol of the male gaze.

- Gender networks can be a resource for employees and a way to begin to clarify what the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns entails and what central concepts in that mandate mean.

- Gender networks also function to bring everyone to think alike about gender and the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. And it can assist in training employees in gender consciousness.

- In the work teams and gender networks, employees can support each other's development.

- Children often divide according to gender when they are engaged in free play.

- Gender preschools such as Hjalli or Egalia influence preschool employees' views on gender pedagogy. Some highlighted preschools practicing compensatory gender pedagogy, although they did not stress their commitment to this type of gender pedagogy.

- In structured pedagogic activities, employees sometimes separate and sometimes divide children along the lines of gender. Theme projects and constructive materials are viewed as more gender neutral activities.

- As a way to teach children to play soccer or hockey for example, preschools find that compensatory pedagogy can be useful.

- Some find that traditional teaching aids should be removed from the preschool. But others find that these can stay as long as they are introduced in new ways or with some caution.

- The district and gender pedagogues elevate Egalia as a model for gender equality and as a resource for other preschools in the district. But employees at the

preschool units that I talked to do not seem have full knowledge about the gender pedagogy practiced at Egalia.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The way we think and talk about a problem is likely to shape the solutions we find appropriate and available to us. My examination of the problems related to implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns centers on this idea. I wanted to investigate the possible explanations and the possible solutions to Skolinspektionen's findings from 2011. In this context, I also wanted to examine the discourses that dominate the field of policy formation and implementation of policy on gender, gender equality, and preschool education. Furthermore, I wanted to examine the ideological purposes that are served with the use of some discourses over others.

In my analysis, I utilized some insights from critical and poststructural theory to question the natural status of dominant ideology and status quo. I applied discourse analysis to official policy, data from the political and social environment, and preschool level data. Utilizing this method, I investigated ideas about gender, gender equality, and preschool education informing policy formation and implementation. I assumed that ideas gain hegemonic status through reproduction and institutionalization of meaning as well as through construction and maintenance of normative structures.

I assumed that normative structures involve ideas about values and goals of official policy, as well as the proper procedures to achieve these goals. I also assumed that normative structures involve sets of categories, the maintenance of which has a social function to the advantage of a certain social order.

In this concluding chapter, I begin by synthesizing the findings I presented throughout chapter four to eight. I seek to emphasize how my separate analyses suggest findings that contribute to addressing my key research question. I then discuss important limitations of my study, and I finally present suggestions for further research and possible policy implications.

My approach involved several analytical steps in which I answered sub questions to my key research question: *Considering that the political-administrative system perceives it as a problem that preschools in the Södermalm district of Stockholm, Sweden, are not working sufficiently to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns - - which is part of their mandate according to official preschool education policy, rules, and guidelines - - how can this implementation problem be explained? Furthermore, what solutions can emerge?*

Below, I synthesize findings related to my sub questions and proceed to synthesize my findings to address my key research question.

9.1 Addressing Sub Questions

I began my analysis by looking at the historical formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender and gender equality in preschool education has served. My analysis in chapter four of the history of Swedish preschool education suggested that Sweden's political and economic structure and institutions provided conditions for adopting a universal public preschool system. I found that ideologies concerning children and education seem to be connected to structural and institutional developments. It means that care for children emerged as a concern during the 19th century in the context of rising industrialization in Sweden and across Europe. Also, Sweden followed in the emerging

trend of European public education. In this framework education was seen as a condition for modernization, national coherence, and unity. In chapter four I discussed that to the extent that the foundation of preschools in Swedish society is to foster coherence, unity, and voluntary self-control, partly by inspiration from Fröbel's curriculum, preschool policy serves the purposes of modern class society. It does so by socializing children in shared values related to productivity and competition, and to discursively reproduce the natural status of so-called masculine traits that have been associated with the market economy and economic growth. Preschool education is viewed as part of the economic foundation of society. It allows parents equal access to the labor market. And it also prepares children to eventually participate in the economy on an equal basis. The liberal coalition government clearly expresses this perspective in its policies on gender equality and preschool education.

9.1.1 Feminist Activism

My analysis in chapter four suggests that preschool education in Sweden is associated with feminist activism. Women organized in solidarity to take care of children and the elderly via the state. State feminists were central to articulating preschools as a formal structure for *jämställdhet* in the welfare state. In turn, *Skolmyndighetsfeminists* articulated the informal structure of preschools as an institution for gender equality. I found that state feminism made important gains in terms of gender equality in Swedish society by using strategies that did not challenge the dominant class and patriarchal structures in society. Today, preschools are viewed as institutions for gender equality. This includes both the formal structure and the inner organization of preschools.

Regarding the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, this refers to the inner organization of preschools as institutions for gender equality. It

means that it is not enough that preschools by their very existence provide women with equal opportunities to enter the labor market but that preschools must also contribute to changing society's normative gender roles. Skolinspektionen concluded that preschools in the Södermalm district are not fully implementing this mandate.

9.1.2 Changing Ideologies?

Today, ideologies concerning the public preschool education system may be changing. My analysis in chapter four suggested that the current government's liberalization of the preschool area means that public and private preschools today compete for money via childcare vouchers. Up until the mid-1990s, the Swedish state under Social Democratic leadership increased public spending and controlled a large part of the economy. The social democratic government was responsible for the 20th century reform politics that dominated Sweden and was also responsible for the growth of the welfare state that facilitated implementation of the ideology of a universal public system of preschools.

But since 2006 when the center-right coalition government came into power, Sweden has experienced a shift away from reform politics to more liberal politics. The rising domination of liberal politics also affects the public preschool system. The logic of capitalism and the logic of democracy contribute to defining the current government's policy on education and gender equality. In chapter five I found that the center-right coalition government frames gender equality as power and opportunity to influence society and your own situation in life. The government also views gender equality as beneficial to economic growth. In chapter four I argued that preschool policy referring to the formal structure of preschools an institution for gender equality seem to serve to

compensate for the inequalities that are created in the market and in patriarchal social relations.

9.1.3 Gender Equality in a Democratic Framework

A dominant liberal-democratic discourse positions gender equality in a framework of power (participation) and human rights (equal opportunities, rights, and obligations). In chapter five I found that the Education Act frames democratic socialization as a central objective of the education system. Gender equality, the equal value of all people, and solidarity between humans are framed in the context of democracy and human rights values. Furthermore, the Education Act defines democratic values and human rights values as freedom from certain evils such as violation of life, discrimination, harassment, and social conflict and leaves it to the curriculum to interpret the intent of the Act and to specify values, mission, goals, and guidelines for the preschool system. That values of gender equality and preschool education policy emerge within this framework suggests pluralist views on society and the education system.

In light of my analysis of the foundation of preschool education in Swedish society these definitions reproduce dominant discourse that preschool education policy has historically drawn on. In this view, securing democratic values and human rights is a means to establish stability in society, fostering subjective participation through formal democratic channels, and a collective feeling that all individuals have equal power and rights in society. I found that the curriculum rearticulates the Education Act regarding democracy and human rights values in preschools. Furthermore, the curriculum defines these in terms of democratic socialization, gender socialization, and cultural socialization.

In light of the history of preschools and the historical notion of equality and the value herein, it is likely that gender equality was articulated in a human rights and power-

participation framework since it was already established and deeply embedded in Swedish society and contributed to a Swedish self-image that was increasingly important to maintain after the Second World War. Second wave state feminists were able to appropriate this discourse for their own cause without seriously challenging the bourgeois establishment or the male labor unions. The very concept of *jämställdhet* as a particular form of gender equality in state policy making is therefore also closely related with liberal and reform politics and the pluralist and managerial perspectives on the state that these represent.

It is possible that the dominant ideology of *jämställdhet* as a power and human rights issue marginalizes and sanctions radical "wrong" discussions of gender, normativity, and symbolic and material structures. Gender inequality may be maintained in part through definitions of gender equality in a participation and/or human rights discourse. Simultaneously, discursive practices utilizing this framework are likely to contribute to the myth that Sweden is an ideally modern, rational, egalitarian, and solidary society in which gender equality, as a general principle, add to the Swedish self-image as "sensible, rationality-affirming, and modern" (Broman, 2009, p. 77).

This myth also make it harder to argue that class and gender equality persists and that feminism is not an elitist project of white middle class women, as it sometimes surfaces in the media and public opinion. Analysis of policy on gender, *jämställdhet*, and preschool education drawing on functionalist and pluralist discourse suggests that preschool policy serves an ideological purpose that conceals participation in reproducing the social order, the myth of gender equality and a specific Swedish self-image.

However good and internationally accepted efforts to protect human rights and ensure formal participation in democracy are, the discursive commitment to these might also work to positions a society and education system in a certain light. For example, they contribute to a collective and individual social image as modern, rational, and equal, in which problems primarily arise on a subjective level. Subjects, i.e. groups and individuals, who do not agree with the fundamental Swedish values of democracy and human rights, practice discrimination. These subjects act out against deviations from the norm. Therefore, norm critical perspectives can be advocated to implore subjects to realize when and how they might discriminate against others. From a functionalist perspective, the Swedish educational system has been successful in contributing to the creation of a collective conscience that addresses inequalities as matters of subjective violence, i.e. discrimination, harassment, individuals' degrading and physically violent treatment of others.

The overarching symbolic and material structure that produces both the "normal" and the "minority" and the evil outbursts of harassment, discrimination, hate, etc. appears to be disregarded within this discourse. This prevents any real investigation into these concepts and the structures producing them. It means that the myth of gender equality contributes to a lack of understanding of our own culture, our normative categories, and the structural foundation of these. Culture, I argue, is not necessarily positive on the basis of history and traditions.

9.1.4 Ideological Purposes of Education and Gender Policy

My analysis in chapter four of the discursive formations and ideological purposes that policy on gender equality and preschool education has served in the Swedish education system suggests that policy on preschool education and gender equality has

served to reproduce class relations and patriarchal social relations and continuation of exploitation of women's paid and unpaid labor. Today, part time and precarious work keeps women in an on average lower socioeconomic status than men. Class society and patriarchal social relations keep women in an inferior position in society and assigns lesser value to what is constructed as feminine. Women are also subject to persistent subjective physical and psychological violence, which is likely to reflect the structural violence that society exerts. The center-right governmental coalition's official commitment to policy such as gender mainstreaming and protecting liberal rights seems to also serve an ideological purpose to keep the population unconscious of its participation in reproducing this social order.

In chapter five, I discussed liberal ideology in the official preschool policy translating the relationship between the democracy and capitalism into policy in which education should prepare children to adapt to rapidly changing conditions and information flow. This belief is maintained at a municipal level in the preschool education plan. Liberal and conservative politics, both based in functionalist theory and a pluralist perspective on the state, are generally insensitive to structural problems. To the extent that these politics perceive structural problems, the solutions emerging within these politics address structural problems in terms of individual actions and freedoms. I discussed this in chapter six.

9.1.5 Problems Raised by Implementation

In chapter five I analyzed official policy, rules, and guidelines for values and goals that relate to gender and preschool education, and how they are implemented. The Delegation for gender equality in preschools concluded in 2006 that preschools need more knowledge to better reach national goals, not further rules or regulations. While my

findings support this conclusion, I also find that central concepts in official policy could be defined more clearly. From my analysis it appears that the curriculum does not provide a complete definition of gender, gender roles, and gender patterns, or what it means to counteract traditional expressions of these. The Equality Ombudsman (DO) translates democracy and human rights values into equal treatment work. Meanwhile, Stockholm city's plan reiterates the curriculum's goals and values.

The idea of preschools as institutions for gender equality came under pressure as increasing decentralization of government in the 1990s resulted in dissolution of central support structures for working with gender and gender equality in preschools. With regard to implementation, my analysis in chapter five suggests that the Education Act of 2010 clarified accountability, performance requirements, and responsibilities of municipalities, heads of preschools, and preschool teachers. I found that the curriculum rearticulates the Education Act regarding heads of preschools' and preschool teachers' responsibilities.

Previous studies have indicated that regions and municipalities are less committed to working with gender equality in preschools. This is problematic since the Education Act delegates responsibility for preschool education to the municipalities and furthermore Stockholm city delegates responsibility to the local districts such as Södermalm. I found that one way of explaining the problems raised by implementation refers to a need for municipalities to prioritize gender equality, and that they must facilitate knowledge and competence development for preschools and preschool employees. This suggests a solution that focuses on accountability measures, clarification and streamlining of responsibilities at all levels in the education system, and a management system that

evaluates performance. In chapter five I found that the Discrimination Act provides a legal and ideological basis for working goal oriented to promote equal rights and opportunities in the education system. With this symbolic and legal background, Stockholm city has instilled a performance management and management by objectives system for implementation of official policy, including the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. It is institutionalized through an elaborate management system (ILS) in addition to national and municipal inspections. By asking employees to internalize official values and measuring performance in relation to these values, preschools are entreated to reproduce the dominant liberal human rights and participation framework for working with gender. These efforts suggest a managerial approach to solving the problems related to implementation. However, the performance indicators associated with implementation of the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns could be improved. Specifically, clearer measures of traditional gender roles and efforts to counteract these could be developed. Also, measures related to gender could be separated from measures of anti-discrimination and anti-degrading treatment work. When the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is translated into promoting equal treatment and combating discrimination and degrading treatment, the relationship between the mandate and efforts to implement the mandate become obscured and so does evaluation of performance and goal achievement at individual preschools. Public administration research on performance measurement could contribute to clarification of definitions and goals as well as development of indicators that can better capture performance related to countering traditional gender roles and gender patterns. This requires, however, that the Ministry of Education and

Skolverket clarify what central concepts in the mandate mean, specifically what gender and gender roles refer to, and what the desired outcome of countering traditional expressions of these would be.

But it appears from my analysis that the national government also lacks commitment. For example, my analysis in chapter five suggests that the government supports implementation of the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns via the ordinary degree requirements for the preschool teacher program. The government stopped investing in educating gender pedagogues to educate preschool employees about gender. It means that a resource for further knowledge and development of coherent approaches may have been lost.

Skolverket supports implementation via its official guidelines, which appear to only rearticulate the curriculum. Skolverket addresses preschool work teams in official guidelines, informing them to critically examine their own values, norms, and attitudes. Considering Skolverket as a government agency it serves the interests and goals of the current government while taking into account applicable laws and regulations. As my participants from Skolverket informed me, they work to facilitate implementation of official policy. Since the government does not prioritize educating gender pedagogues, Skolverket also does not express priority of this idea.

DO explains norms and norm critical thinking in a way that has potential to give a more comprehensive understanding of social categories and how we come to see culturally specific definitions and meanings as normal and valuable. But DO also encourages observation and participation in religious holidays. In this context, I argued in chapter five that to the extent that gender intersects with other dimensions such as

cultural and ethnic belonging, it is problematic to assume that cultural diversity and participation in religious and cultural practices are positive per se. Not unless we inspect the position of gender within our own cultural existence, as well as the cultures of others, and confront how these cultural systems assign meaning and 'cosmic specialness' to certain privileged positions.

9.1.6 The Preschool Level

In chapter five I found that the curriculum reinforces the democratic foundation and objective of preschool education and stresses that preschool employees are central to realizing the preschool's democratic mandate. Preschool employees must personally acquire Swedish society's fundamental values and they must impart these values and norms to the children through pedagogic activities within the preschool. One dimension of the liberal-pluralist ideology about democratic, cultural, and gender socialization is that it downplays the state's role in existing inequalities as well as children's own active role in maintaining and modifying these constructs. It is possible, as my analysis in chapter seven suggests that preschool employees have differing views about what it means to be a gendered human, to be gender-neutral, or to emphasize biological and psychological differences. This may cause confusion about how to be role models to the children in a way that observes values and goals in the curriculum and implement the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

Research suggests that at the municipal level, the district level as well as the preschool level, there is a lack of knowledge, interest, and preparation to working with gender, and preschool employees have expressed low confidence in their own expertise on gender and working with gender in pedagogic activities. These explanations suggest solutions that focus on increasing attention and awareness at these levels in the education

system and increasing theoretical and practical training of employees. My findings in chapter eight suggest that preschools and participants are committed to gender equality and to implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. But the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is only one out of many goals that preschools must achieve in order implement official policy and fulfill 'messages from above.' Furthermore, requirements in official policy with regard to documentation and evaluation of pedagogy, performance, and goal achievement can be a challenge to some employees. But some employees also view the performance management system and management by objectives as useful instruments for quality assurance.

My analysis in chapter seven suggests that preschools interpret the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns as creating gender and pedagogic activities that lead to gender equality. Preschools seem to interpret the mandate to include addressing issues of gender differences, different treatment of children on the basis of gender, but also issues of intersectionality. Understanding intersectionality means to consider complex individual differences, rather than simply considering categorical difference. Also issues of ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and social class manifest in preschools and should be considered when working with the mandate.

Preschools utilize a democratic and human rights framework, which appears to converge with official policy and discourse in the political and social environment. In these frameworks, difference and diversity are viewed as values. Participants expressed a belief that humans must be allowed to engage in gender identifications and gendered practices because humans *are* gendered beings. Gender and gender difference is

articulated as individual difference and uniqueness that must be protected as a human right in democratic society. This view renders structural power invisible but converges with dominant and liberal-democratic politics and a pluralist analysis of inequality.

At preschools, it seems the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is interpreted as an obligation to discover where traditional ideas and practices of gender surface. These should be counteracted with more diverse pedagogic activities that allow children and adults to be diverse. It seems that preschools find that traditional gender roles and gender patterns can be counteracted with more male employees in preschools. When men and women employees "cross" traditional gender roles and gender patterns inside the preschool, they are able to be good role models for the children and show that there is no difference between what men and women can do.

Participants find that it is important to internalize gender egalitarian values in order to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Methods such as self-reflection and gender consciousness can assist preschool employees in fulfilling pedagogic responsibilities and implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Self-reflection can be interpreted as an ideological instrument that seeks to cause employees to self-direct in a manageable way.

In both the social environment and at the preschools I studied in this dissertation Video recording is generally viewed as a positive tool to discover and confront counterproductive behavior among adults in the preschool in relation to the mandate counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. Video recording is presented as way to catch unconscious behavior, traditional roles at the preschool, and traditional patterns in how adults engage with children. I noted that video recording assumes that

employees are unaware of traditional gender roles and gender patterns and that they will change if only they become aware. The method therefore assumes that individual behavior is the key factor determining reproduction of traditional gender roles and gender patterns. This reinforces the idea that employees are individually responsible for implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

However, I also found that a participant said that some employees at a former preschools were afraid of being video recorded. This suggests that the method, when adopted in an everyday organizational context, can create a hostile work environment. Monitored behavior via video recording can be a source of anxiety for employees, and the method can be perceived as the most extreme expression of control mechanisms in a workplace.

Another element that preschools have adopted is the idea of gender networks. These can be resources for employees and a way to begin to clarify what the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns entails and what central concepts in that mandate mean. Gender networks also serve the ideological function to bring everyone to think alike about gender and the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. This means that employees are socialized in the dominant discourse on gender equality and preschool education. Furthermore, gender networks can assist in training employees in gender consciousness and self-reflection, hereby teaching methods of voluntary self-direction in line with official policy. In the work teams and gender networks, employees can support each other's development and enforce the normative structure.

My analysis in chapter six, seven, and eight suggests that there are two dominant versions of gender pedagogy in Swedish preschools. Debates in newspapers suggest that gender neutral and compensatory pedagogies have a somewhat established status within the preschool area. But norm critical and child-participatory pedagogies challenge these traditions. Preschools also related to these main types of gender pedagogy, although their approaches seemed less clarified. In general, preschools referred to gender pedagogy through discussions of gender consciousness and self-reflections as well as the gender network. In my sample of public debate, proponents of all gender pedagogic practices seemed to agree that gender pedagogy does not entail removing traditional toys or pedagogic activities but instead adding new ones. At the preschools I studied, however, some find that traditional teaching aids should be removed from the preschool. But others find that these can stay as long as they are introduced in new ways or with some caution.

But preschools seem to have adopted some elements of the compensatory pedagogy. Particularly when it comes to competitive sports and games such as hockey or soccer, preschools expressed the need to train girls and boys separately. The ideology associated with competitive games does not appear to be challenged although these sports encourage nationalism, patriotism, competition, aggression, and financial risk-taking. The ideology is likely to keep us unconscious of our participation in reproducing a certain [capitalist] social reality and has a status of cultural fiction - - we find that participating in this activity is of universal value. As I discussed in chapters four and five, preschools have been articulated as institutions for gender equality, national cohesion, and economic growth in Swedish official policy and political rhetoric. It seems that modern class society needs children to be trained in competitive games to prepare them for a

competitive economy and in this case, preschools contribute to a reproduction of dominant social relations and normative gender constructs.

9.1.7 Egalia

In chapter four I found that the preschool Egalia is an example of a preschool that attempts to be an institution for gender equality in both formal structure and inner organization. The Södermalm district administration explains that problems raised by implementation are related to a lack of knowledge and possibly support for preschools. The Södermalm district elevates Egalia as a model for implementation and considers gender pedagogues a resource for educating preschool employees within the district. Both the district and gender pedagogues elevate Egalia as a model for gender equality and as a resource for other preschools in the district. But it appears that employees at the preschool units that I talked in to Södermalm do not seem have full knowledge about the gender pedagogy practiced at Egalia.

Gender preschools such as Hjalli or Egalia seem to influence preschool employees' views on gender pedagogy. Some highlighted preschools practicing compensatory gender pedagogy, although they did not stress their commitment to this type of gender pedagogy. Participants expressed a commitment to the binary gender system, even while recognizing its failure to explain all of our gender identities, and its failure to articulate gender that brings about equality between humans. Furthermore, participants expressed a commitment to maintaining gender in the symbolic, that is, our gendered language system. Utilizing the personal pronoun *hen* contributes to Egalia's special status in the Swedish preschool system, but my participants did not find this appealing.

I found views on the preschool Egalia in my analysis of data from the social environment, i.e. in newspaper articles. However, political parties did not refer to Egalia or any other specific preschool. Opposition to Egalia in my sample of newspaper articles tended also to focus on Egalia's gender-neutral language, particularly the pronoun *hen*. Supporters of Egalia often focused on *hen*, but also on Egalia's HBT-certification and educated gender pedagogues. Heated debates regarding the use of *hen* as a tool for deconstructing gender suggests that gender is an important signifier of identity in Sweden and that the use of personal pronouns maintains a certain social order.

9.1.8 The Political and Social Environment

The right wing party Moderata Samlingspartiet seems to be an ideological force in the center right governmental coalition and for liberal politics on gender and preschool education in Sweden. The party has wide support in the national elections and can be assumed to have an influence on debates in the social environment, the public in general, and on preschool employees. The party also contributes to the discursive construction of Sweden as a modern, rational, and equal country that is free from structural oppression. Moderata Samlingspartiet promotes liberal-democratic politics and ideological legitimacy to market and bureaucratic solutions such as childcare vouchers and performance management to the problems raised by implementation. But in practice, opening the public preschool area to competition for childcare vouchers removes resources from the public preschools and is likely to make it more complicated to apply a uniform approach to gender pedagogy across preschools. Furthermore, leaving it to the public to vote with their feet about preschools assumes that people have the necessary resources to make informed decision about the quality and pedagogy in preschools. And gender pedagogy may drown in other important considerations about the quality of the preschool. Lastly,

privatization is likely to weaken democratic control over preschools and is likely to lead to more bureaucratic solutions to problems related to policy implementation, such as performance management or pay-for-performance, which is known to create hostile work environments. Considering that the majority (about 97 percent) of preschool employees are women, these measures target a group of workers that is already suffering from stark inequalities in the labor market.

Center-right parties and participants to debates in the social environment express commitment to *jämställdhet*, but also express that gender differences are biologically or psychologically determined. To some extent, traditional gender roles and gender patterns are viewed as natural by dominant actors in the political and social environment. What center-right perspectives in the national political environment share are liberal-conservative democratic politics in a pluralist and functionalist framework that suggests an understanding of gender and *jämställdhet* and the preschool policy to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns as best implemented in the manner expressed in official policy: through changing incentive structures for individuals and organizations to combat discrimination and respect human rights, in combination with managerial oversight and accountability measures such as performance management and inspections. Furthermore, increased competition in the preschool market will allow parents to choose freely which preschool solution works best for them. Preschools should decide whether or not to practice gender pedagogy as a way to profile the institution in the preschool market.

This will eventually weed out ineffective and inefficient preschools that are not performing satisfactorily. This will also increase parents' access to childcare on evenings, nights, and holidays, which will lead to more equality between men and women. Equal access to work will bring economic freedom, which is articulated as equivalent to individual freedom. What the pluralist and functionalist framework and the associated liberal and conservative politics, is unable to address, however, is the systemic power sealed into capitalist and patriarchal structures. However free workers are in terms of income equality, this does not shift the workers' relations to production and the market ideology of individualism, competition, public choice, and productive versus unproductive/reproductive labor, which are closely related to patriarchal relations.

What the center-left discourses share is a focus on structural power and reproduction of class relations as well as patriarchal relations. They are critical of privatization and of the government's liberal politics on gender, *jämställdhet*, and preschool education. They share a view on preschools as formal structures for *jämställdhet* and informal organization of preschools as a contributing factor to the preschools' roles as institutions for gender equality in society. They also share skepticism of conservative views on gender and gender difference and view children as active co-creators of gender. Capitalism is also seen as a contributing factor to gender inequality and ideology as concealing gender and class relations.

My analysis in chapter six also suggested that radical socialist and feminist perspectives surface primarily in the established political parties, but also in some newspaper articles. I found that gender scholars and pedagogues participating in public debate seem to recognize that the market and environment strongly influence children.

But they also express that parents and preschools can alleviate the damaging effects of the capitalist and patriarchal structure and establish equal opportunities for all children. In general, the social environment is characterized by a debate in which reporting and opinion pieces about gender preschools, gender pedagogues, and preschools utilizing the personal pronoun *hen* are met with responses from liberal-conservative discussants. These often focus on the idea of preschools as institutions for gender equality being part of an overall elite gender project. They seem to be against a critique of structural inequality, viewing gender inequality as either non-existent or as diminishing and a problem of individual choice.

Left wing critique that ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy manifest in traditional toys and gender roles is met with strong critique and name-calling in the written media, for example: gender madness, absurdities, Gender Taliban, extremism, typical left-wing logic, etc. The claim that gender pedagogy in preschool education is part of an elite project and state domination suggests that opponents position themselves as 'non-elitist' or as part of a group of 'ordinary people' who do not need their private lives to be politicized or controlled by a central state. Liberal-conservative participants in public debates appear to mobilize parents and 'ordinary' people for critique of feminism and left-wing ideology. As I discussed in chapter seven, parents are viewed as part of the preschool's social environment. Parents can pose as both a resource and an obstacle to preschools implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns.

The claim of an elite gender project in Sweden also indicates that opponents view gender pedagogues as members of a state elite that penetrates all institutions in order to

dominate the population. Meanwhile, feminists and social critics in the public debate tend to argue from a liberal-democratic perspective that there is no such domination. Rather gender equality is about freedom and equal rights and opportunities in life. Considering the format for participating in political and social debates in national newspapers, as well as Fraser's perspective on the public sphere, it seems fair to assume that both proponents and opponents represented in the data have the necessary resources, that is, economic, cultural, and social capital to participate in public debate. Although my sample of newspaper articles shows a majority of positive views toward the idea of preschools as institutions for gender equality, both proponents and opponents voice their opinions in national news media. It suggests that both opponents and proponents have 'elite status' in that they are able to utilize formal channels of public opinions. This is also supported by my conclusion that with a few exceptions, it seems that debates in my sample of newspaper articles are characterized by pluralist and managerial perspectives. This suggests that the formal framework for public debate contributes to ideological hegemony.

My analysis suggests that proponents refer to the curriculum for legitimacy for gender pedagogic practices. Meanwhile opponents question the consistency and relevance of the curriculum. Gender equality appears to be articulated as a democratic project which liberates people. Sweden, Stockholm, and Södermalm are each presented as particularly open and forward thinking in the political and social environment. These ideas add to a construction of a positive and self-affirming Swedish self-image.

My findings suggest that explanations of the problems raised by implementation are primarily addressed in terms of pluralist and managerial solutions, but that the

political context in form of the center-left discourses has potential for addressing the structural power and constraints to implementation. It will be interesting to observe the outcome of the 2014 national election and the subsequent developments in terms of official policy on gender, *jämställdhet*, and preschool education, and the desired implementation of these policies.

9.2 Addressing my Key Research Question

In the introduction I initially suggested three potential explanations that assume different solutions to the problems raised by implementation: Preschools fail to comply with their mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns, preschools are incapable of implementing this mandate because they misinterpret the concepts inherent in the goal, and they lack the needed knowledge and resources. I noted that it is likely that a combination of these issues contributes to explaining the problems raised by implementation. My findings support this hypothesis.

I also noted that a fourth explanation might add to these explanations: The mandate to "counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns" may be purposefully vague. The mandate might signify a compromise between major forces in society such as labor market interests, feminists inside and outside the political-administrative system, political parties, and public opinion. Different discourses inform policy formation and implementation. Discourse is used to position subjects, Swedish society, and official education policies in a certain way. At the same time, discourses also provide legitimacy to normative structures, values and practices.

I argued that the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns in preschools does not appear to be clearly defined, and that gender roles and

gender patterns and traditional expressions of these can mean different things. Hence, implementation may be more complicated than it appears. I therefore proposed that perhaps the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns in preschools, rather than providing a real directive to preschools to practice gender pedagogy, contributes to a discursive construction of Swedish society and education system as modern, rational, equal, free, and democratic, - - which only serves to mask and sustain a deeper state of inequality and lack of freedom.

In this case, the initial three explanations lead to solutions such as instilling performance management and management by objectives systems. These solutions may serve an ideological purpose by imploring employees in the preschool education system to internalize official Swedish values of democracy and human rights in their practical work with the counteracting traditional gender roles and gender patterns. By not encouraging employees to think about the underlying causes of inequality, official policy and implementation contribute to reproducing the dominant social order. I summarize each set of explanations and solutions below.

9.2.1 Explanation 1

This section examines the first possible explanation: Preschools fail to comply. These data support this explanation:

- Previous studies have showed a lower commitment to *jämställdhet* in regional and municipal governments.

- These are responsible for preschool education and to some extent responsible for a failure to comply.

Based on this explanation, a number of possible solutions emerge:

- Increase accountability awareness and performance at the municipal and preschool level.

- Establish clear lines of authority and responsibility.

- Adopt a performance management system.

- Combine performance management with a management by objectives strategy.

- Liberalize and open preschool education to competition.

- Introduce childcare vouchers so parents have more free choice.

These explanations and solutions may utilize and reproduce these discursive formations:

- Explanations suggest solutions that draw on functionalist and managerial conflict theories in combination with pluralist and managerial perspectives on the state and society. Liberal, conservative, and reform politics.

From this perspective, some ideological purposes that official policy serves may be:

- Official policy and implementation measures implore preschool employees to not think about the underlying causes of inequality.

- Instead employees should internalize official Swedish values of democracy and human rights.

- This contributes to reproducing class and patriarchal social relations.

9.2.2 Explanation 2

This section examines the second possible explanation: Preschools misinterpret the concepts inherent in the goal. These data support this explanation:

- Findings suggest that preschools are not clear about what traditional gender roles and gender patterns refer to.

- Official policy appears to only utilize liberal discourse.

- Meanwhile, my findings suggest preschool employees utilize both liberal and conservative discourse about gender, gender difference, and gender equality.

- Social and political environment may influence preschool employees.

Based on this explanation, a number of possible solutions emerge:

- Hold informational lectures on gender.

- Clarify policy goals and concepts.

- Clarify desired implementation.

- Clarify performance measures.

These explanations and solutions may utilize and reproduce these discursive formations:

- Like the explanation above, explanations suggest solutions that draw on functionalist and managerial conflict theories in combination with pluralist and managerial perspectives on the state and society.

- Liberal, conservative, and reform politics.

From this perspective, some ideological purposes that official policy serves may be:

- Official policy and implementation measures are based on unclear definition of goals and central concepts. This purposively complicates implementation.

- Official policy documents reiterate each other and liberal discourse.

- Implementation advice and guidelines focus on equal treatment work and norm critical perspectives rather than gender pedagogy.

9.2.3 Explanation 3

This section examines the third possible explanation: Preschools lack the needed knowledge and resources. These data support this explanation:

- Findings suggest conservative and liberal notions of gender difference and individualized difference inform public opinion and preschool employees.

- Gender pedagogy appears to only be a competence requirement in preschool teacher training degree requirements.

- The current government and Skolverket do not seem to prioritize educating gender pedagogues.

- Preschool employees express they have to consider this mandate among many other mandates in official policy, most significantly instruction in natural sciences and engineering.

Based on this explanation, a number of possible solutions emerge:

- Invest in teacher education and include gender as a knowledge requirement, not only a competence requirement.

- Invest in further training via Skolverket.

- Follow up on the Delegation's recommendations regarding educating gender pedagogues.

- Invest in central support structures.

- Establish and expand gender networks.

- Allocate study time during regular work hours.

- Utilize already educated gender pedagogues.

These explanations and solutions may utilize and reproduce these discursive formations:

- Like explanation 1 and 2, explanations suggest solutions that draw on functionalist and managerial conflict theories in combination with pluralist and managerial perspectives on the state and society.

- Liberal, conservative, and reform politics.

From this perspective, some ideological purposes that official policy serves may be:

- Problems can be solved without challenging the social order.

- Solutions are already available in the education system, they only need to be utilized or modified.

- Increased education, resources and administrative measures maintain can increase effectiveness without changing official discourse or the social structure.

9.2.4 Explanation 4

This section examines the fourth possible explanation: The mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns is vague and does not provide a real directive to preschools to practice gender pedagogy. These data support this explanation:

- Official policy appears to only vaguely define central concepts utilizing liberal discourse.

- Official policy frames gender equality in terms of democracy.

- Democracy is defined in terms of power (participation) and human rights (equal opportunities, rights, and obligations).

- Official policy appears to frame gender equality in terms of diversity. This also includes cultural and religious diversity.

- Policy advice appears to center on equal treatment work and preschool quality. Focus seems to be on countering subjective violence.

- Official policy seems to disregard the Delegation for gender equality in preschools' recommendations on educating and utilizing gender pedagogues.

- Official policy seems to contribute to a Swedish self-image as modern, rational, and equal, free, and democratic.

- Social environment does not significantly challenge dominant discourse.

Based on this final explanation, a number of possible solutions or policy implications emerge:

- Examine the construction of the Swedish self-image and whether official policy reproduces this image and the myth of gender equality.

- Apply a feminist class perspective to examine official policy, rules, and guidelines and definitions of central concepts.

- Add a radical feminist and class perspective to definitions of central concepts and goals.

- Define gender pedagogy to include:
    o Eliminating traditionally gendered and oppressive songs, stories, toys, and sports.
    o Eliminating songs, stories, toys, and sports that inculcate capitalist ideology.

- o Eliminating preschool participation in oppressive religious and cultural practices.
- o Encouraging critical thinking and add structural violence to the list of issues to discuss with children rather than focusing only on subjective violence.
- o Downplaying the importance of difference and individuality.
- o Utilizing the personal pronoun *hen*.

These explanations and solutions may utilize and reproduce these discursive formations:

- Explanation suggests solutions that draw on managerial and class conflict theories in combination with radical feminist theory.
- Feminist class and managerial perspectives on the state and society.
- Reform and socialist politics.

From this perspective, some ideological purposes that official policy serves may be:

- Official policy contributes to a discursive construction of Swedish society and education system as modern, rational, equal, free, and democratic, - - which only serves to mask and sustain a deeper state of inequality and lack of freedom.
- Preschool education reproduces and legitimates inequalities, making them appear apolitical and not ideological.
- Framework of democracy and human rights and imploring individuals to not discriminate or harass others avoids addressing the underlying structure that creates inequalities and subjective violence.

9.3 The Feminist Preschool?

Finally, I want to address the question that my title poses: Does the feminist preschool exist? My analysis suggests an affirming and a disaffirming answer.

The feminist preschool exists in the sense that preschools were established as part of a feminist project as a solution to formal inequality. State feminists contributed to this and women united in solidarity to secure each other's access to the labor market and to take care of each other's children. But the preschool exists today as a clear indication of perpetual gender inequality: Today, it is still women who in solidarity care for each other's children. Fewer than three percent of preschool employees are male.

The feminist preschool is a myth to the extent that preschools are founded in an ideology which fosters unity, coherence and voluntary self-control, socializing children in culturally glorified values of productivity and competition, which are associated with so-called masculine traits and linked to economic growth and the market economy. Gender equality is articulated in terms equal access to the labor market and in terms of economic growth.

With regard to the inner organization of preschools as an institution for gender equality, the image of the feminist preschool is rather complex. Because the concept of gender is contested and several variants of feminism exist, the image of the ideal type feminist preschool is difficult to flesh out. But rough sketches of the feminist preschool show two forms: Egalia as an image of a gender-neutral feminist preschool and Hjalli and Tittmyran as images of the compensatory feminist preschool. Feminists stand behind

these 'model feminist preschools,' but they view the path and goals of feminist practice in preschools differently.

When we look to the preschools in my sample, the idea of the feminist preschool becomes further obscured. My participants indeed expressed commitment to feminism and implementing the mandate to counteract traditional gender roles and gender patterns. But at the same time, ideas about gender, gender equality, and gender pedagogies are inconsistent, suggesting influence from different sources in the social and political environment in combination with personal experiences and experiences and presentations of the 'model feminist preschools.' And preschools tend to utilize the dominant liberal-conservative and pluralist-functionalist democratic discourses to define gender and gender equality, which contributes to reproducing status quo.

To the extent that the feminist preschool is more than a myth, it is under stark pressure from dominant liberal ideologies, increasing liberalization, and increasing control mechanisms without clear support structures. Furthermore, the myth of gender equality challenges the legitimacy of the feminist preschool. The myth of gender equality is based not only on the formal definition of gender equality as a power (participation) and human rights issue, but also on perpetual reproduction of a national self-image of Sweden as rational, modern, progressive, and equal. This image is maintained in collective and individual discursive practices that position Sweden and Swedes in a favorable light, but which indirectly counteracts gender equality.

9.4 Limitations

This study suffers from several limitations. Time and resources were significant constraints on my analysis. With more time and resources, I could have traveled to

Sweden more than once to conduct interviews and gather data. There is a chance that I have missed important data since I had to do most of the data collection from afar. More time would also have allowed me to go deeper into the analysis of each chapter and to take steps back to reevaluate findings and conclusions.

As I discussed in chapter three, some limitations have to do with the nature of my data. My interview data make for a small sample of the viewpoints found in the population of preschool employees in Sweden and in the Södermalm district of Stockholm. My small sample is a result of both time and resource constraints but also a result of events out of my control. For example, Egalia's ultimate rejection of participation probably has more to do with the negative attention and threats that Egalia has been subject to. But regardless of the explanations for my small sample, it limits my ability to say anything generalizing about my findings. Rather, my findings are suggestive.

Some of my interview data was also submitted to me in writing. When participants submitted their answers in writing, I was not able to establish rapport, to clarify, or to adjust the questions to the specific situation and the participant's answers to other questions. It means that some questions were not addressed in an optimal way because I was not present at the time to prevented missing data by reformulating questions and probing for answers

Furthermore considering that this is a purely qualitative study and I conducted the analyses single handedly, my findings suffer from reliability issues. A work team of researchers could have secured inter-rater reliability. It means that if several researches interpret the data in the same way, findings are more likely to have a stronger reliability.

However, as I mentioned in chapter three, the majority of my data are written or spoken in Swedish. The research team would have to be bilingual or trilingual like I am in order to contribute to the data analysis. Even in my case, language served as constraint on my data since the linguistic nuances of a native language are difficult to capture and transfer to another language. I hold the responsibility for the conclusions I make from this dissertation research.

An indirect limitation of my study relates to the national elections for the Swedish Riksdag, which is planned to take place in September 2014. It is likely that political parties are getting ready for the election in 2014, and may decide to change their position on some areas. The possibility of a new center-left government may again change the prospective for gender pedagogy and gender pedagogues in preschools.

Lastly, Södermalm is an affluent district, which has undergone extensive gentrification in recent decades. Södermalm is different from other districts of Stockholm as well as from other and perhaps particularly more rural areas, and perceptions held by preschool employees is likely to vary across geographical and socio-economic differences. I therefore consider it a limitation which further constricts my ability to say anything generalizing about my findings that my preschool sample is based only in Södermalm.

9.5 Policy Implications and Future Research

My findings suggest policy implications that can be in favor of social change for gender equality. These relate to on a larger scale considering official policy as part of social change both ideologically and formally.

- Address capitalism and patriarchy's exploitation of gender difference.

Gender equality is maintained in the structures of social relations and without addressing these, it is unlikely that solutions that focus on individual behavior will lead to social change.

- Stop liberalization and privatization of preschools.

Liberalization and privatization undermine the welfare state and equal access to quality preschools. Furthermore, liberalization and privatization undermine democratic ownership and control of education. Also the ability of implementing official policy can be undermined. Gender equality should not be a question of resources, but in private preschools working for profit, investment in educated gender pedagogues and further training may not be of high priority.

My findings suggest areas for future research.

- First of all, future research should address the limitations that my research suffered from:
  - First, the reliability issue, which involves working together with a team of researchers to address the findings that this research suggested. Possibly this team of researchers could be assembled from universities in both Sweden and internationally.
  - Second, it involves expanding the sample of interview data, particularly interviews with preschool employees. But also interviews with persons in the political administrative system could significantly benefit a future study.

o Expanding the sample could also take geographical and socio-economic status into consideration. Sampling from a broader geographical region, including both inner city preschools as well as more rural preschools could make for interesting comparisons, or at a minimum address the limitation that sampling from one highly affluent inner city district posed to the conclusions I am able to make from this dissertation research.

- I also suggest that future research could address a gap in this research, which seems to exist in the overall literature on gender and preschool education as well, by considering parents an important part of the social environment of preschools as well as members of the preschool organization. Research tends to address parents' influence on policy formation and/or implementation through other agents' perceptions. My study, for one, addressed parents' views on a rather superficial level via my interviewees' perceptions of this group. Other research seems to have focused on what goes on inside the preschool and perceptions about parents. Future research could expand the definition of members of the preschool and/or its social environment to include parents and their part in discursive contestations about policy formation and implementation. It may be that parents have a dual role as both external and internal to the preschool, and this perspective can be expanded on in future research.

- Related to including the role of parents in future research, a perspective regarding change and forces external to the preschool could be developed further. I mentioned in chapter eight the role of gender networks and discussed their short

term and long term role. Considering that change for increased gender equality in society requires long term commitment and work, taking into considering the role of the family as important to children's gender socialization and to children's development of ideas about gender and gender equality could provide an interesting perspective on the abilities and limitations of preschools as institutions for gender equality. Also, as I discussed in chapter eight, a long term commitment to gender equality and working to implement the mandate is necessary beyond establishing short term gender networks or gender projects. Considering the preschool as part of the education system and investigating what happens in the transitions between and collaboration across different levels of education, such as preschool, primary, and secondary education institutions could provide further understanding of where and how working for gender equality can be strengthened and improved to ensure long term change. Future research could sample interview participants from families and from heads of preschools as well as principals of primary and secondary schools. Further additional participants from the political-administrative system who facilitate collaboration across different levels of education could be recruited.

- In chapter five I suggested that the construction of an egalitarian and progressive political image is under constant development, and a new government is likely to rhetorically add more on top on the previous government's commitment to gender equality. For example, I found that when one government invested in educating key resource persons in gender pedagogy, the following government positioned itself as even more progressive by committing to educating everyone to become

gender pedagogues. The practical implications of these kinds of policy shifts, not only for the discursive construction of a Swedish national self-image, but also for knowledge about gender and gender pedagogy in preschools could be an interesting topic for further research.

- This perspective could also account for the limitation on my research which is based in the consideration that political parties are preparing for the national elections in the fall of 2014. Further research could consider policy and rhetoric or discursive shifts over time and the impact that these have on the environment of policy formation and implementation.

- This dissertation focuses on gender inequality in capitalist society and how reproduction of certain gender roles contributes to reproducing a certain social order. Unfortunately, most societies regardless of economic system are characterized by gender inequality. Considering that Sweden is a capitalist society, my analysis concentrates on the dynamics of patriarchy and capitalism. Future research should provide comparative research on non-capitalist societies. Future research could for example focus on the ambiguities of commitment to gender equality in official party and government policy and the forces that are working against this in society.

- A topic for further theoretical and empirical exploration could be the convergence and dissonance between how discourse analysis and institutional theory (in the sociology of education) explain the spread of ideologies concerning gender pedagogy in preschools. I suggest this further research on the basis of my study's suggestion that the social and political environment of policy formation and

implementation can influence how policy is perceived and implemented on an organizational and individual level. Institutional theory's concept of isomorphism provides compelling explanatory power regarding the spread of values and ideas. But discourse analysis may be able to provide a critical and post-structural explanation for how these values and ideas emerge and are reproduced.

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Appendices

Rutgers University Human Subjects Compliance Program Certification

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Services Building III ◆ Cook Campus
3 Rutgers Way ◆ New Brunswick ◆ New Jersey 08901
848/932-0150 ◆ fax : 732/932-0163 ◆ web: http://orsp.rutgers.edu

02/14/2012

Dear Anna Lind-Valdan

I am pleased to inform you that you have successfully completed the Rutgers University Human Subjects Compliance Program. This educational program includes information on the regulations, history, policies, procedures and ethical practices pertaining to research involving human subjects, which will be helpful to you as you conduct your research.

Your approval date is 02/14/2012. Duration of approval will be based on federal requirements which are not yet determined. Well in advance of the expiration date of your approval period, you will be notified so that you may continue your education regarding the protection of human subjects.

Additional information will also be provided on the IRB list-serve and posted on the human subjects website: <http://orsp.rutgers.edu/humans/>

Please retain this letter of certification. It will be required for submitting human subjects protocols, and continuing review forms. When submitting a funding request to NIH, the certification date will be required for inclusion on a different certification letter, which may be requested by contacting the IRB Administrator, by email at <humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu> or by phone at (848) 932-0150. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sheryl N. Goldberg
Director
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Permission Letter from Södermalm District Administration

To:
Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
USA

Regarding Project Title: Gender madness? An analysis of gender egalitarian values and practices in the Swedish public preschool education system

This letter is to confirm that I am aware of and support Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan's intentions to conduct dissertation research in the Södermalm school district.

As the responsible administrator for the preschool area in Södermalm I am granting Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan permission to carry out her research with preschool directors and/or preschool teachers at the 59 public preschools in the school district.

I am aware that participation is voluntary, and grant Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan permission to contact preschool directors in the Södermalm school district to invite them and teachers at their preschools to participate in verbal interviews that involve non-invasive questions about their work and perceptions.

Signed,

Print name: *Marianne Nateus*

Work title: *Manager for department for preeschools*

Work address: *Södermalms stadsdels förvaltning Box 4270*

Work phone: *+46 8 508 13147*

Work email: *marianne.nateus@stockholm.se*

Signature: *Marianne Nateus*   Date: *130826*

Page 1 of 1

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board Approval of Initial & Amended Protocols

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
ASB III, 3 Rutgers Plaza, Cook Campus
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

July 16, 2013

P.I. Name: Lind-Valdan
Protocol #: 13-839M

Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan
School of Public Affairs and Administration
111 Washington Street, Newark Campus

Dear Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan:

√

(Initial / Amendment / Continuation / Continuation w/ Amendment)

Protocol Title: "Gender Madness? An Analysis of Gender Egalitarian Values and Practices in the Swedish Public Preschool Education system"

This is to advise you that the above-referenced study has been presented to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, and the following action was taken subject to the conditions and explanations provided below:

Approval Date: 7/1/2013   **Expiration Date:** 6/30/2014
Expedited Category(s): 6,7   **Approved # of Subject(s):** 25

This approval is based on the assumption that the materials you submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) contain a complete and accurate description of the ways in which human subjects are involved in your research. The following conditions apply:

- **This Approval**-The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted. **This approval is valid ONLY for the dates listed above;**
- **Reporting**-ORSP must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- **Modifications**-Any proposed changes MUST be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- **Consent Form(s)**-Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;
- **Continuing Review**-You should receive a courtesy e-mail renewal notice for a Request for Continuing Review before the expiration of this project's approval. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that an application for continuing review has been submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the expiration date to extend the approval period;

Additional Notes: Expedited Approval per 45 CFR 46.110

Addition Conditions: **Authorization from the Following Research Site Must Be Forwarded to the IRB Prior to Commencement of Study Procedures From: the Signatory Authorization of All Specified Sodermalm's Preschools in Sweden. No Research Related Activities Can Occur At Sites Until This Authorization Has Been Received by the Rutgers IRB;**

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.
Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00003913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Beverly Tepper, Ph.D.
Professor
Chair, Rutgers University Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Alan R. Sadovnik

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
ASB III, 3 Rutgers Plaza, Cook Campus
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

November 20, 2013

P.I. Name: Lind-Valdan
Protocol #: 13-839M

Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan
School of Public Affairs and Administration
111 Washington Street, Newark Campus

Dear Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan:

√

(Initial / **Amendment** / Continuation / Continuation w/ Amendment)

Protocol Title: "Gender Madness? An Analysis of Gender Egalitarian Values and Practices in the Swedish Public Preschool Education system"

This is to advise you that the above-referenced study has been presented to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, and the following action was taken subject to the conditions and explanations provided below:

Amendment to Approval Date: 11/19/2013 **Expiration Date:** 6/30/2014 **Expedited Category(s):** 6,7

This approval is based on the assumption that the materials you submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) contain a complete and accurate description of the ways in which human subjects are involved in your research. The following conditions apply:

- **This Approval-**The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted. **This approval is valid ONLY for the dates listed above;**
- **Reporting-**ORSP must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- **Modifications-**Any proposed changes MUST be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- **Consent Form(s)-**Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;
- **Continuing Review-**You should receive a courtesy e-mail renewal notice for a Request for Continuing Review before the expiration of this project's approval. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that an application for continuing review has been submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the expiration date to extend the approval period;

Additional Notes: Administratively Expedited Amendment Approval per 45 CFR 46.110(b)(2) on 11/19/2013 for Revised Protocol to Interview Elected or Appointed Officals; Includes E-mail Invitation (English and Swedish Versions); Includes Revised English and Swedish Informed Consent Forms; Allows Subjects to go on Record with Interviews;

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.
Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00003913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Respectfully yours,

Acting For--
Dr. Beverly Tepper, Ph.D.
Professor
Chair, Rutgers University Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Alan R. Sadovnik

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
ASB III, 3 Rutgers Plaza, Cook Campus
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

January 16, 2014

P.I. Name: Lind-Valdan
Protocol #: 13-839M

Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan
School of Public Affairs and Administration
111 Washington Street
Newark Campus

Dear Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan:

(Initial / **Amendment** / Continuation / Continuation w/ Amendment)

Protocol Title: "Gender Madness? An Analysis of Gender Egalitarian Values and Practices in the Swedish Public Preschool Education system"

This is to advise you that the above-referenced study has been presented to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, and the following action was taken subject to the conditions and explanations provided below:

Amendment Approval Date: 1/15/2014   **Expiration Date:**   6/30/2014   **Expedited Category(s):** 6 , 7

This approval is based on the assumption that the materials you submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) contain a complete and accurate description of the ways in which human subjects are involved in your research. The following conditions apply:

- **This Approval**-The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted. **This approval is valid ONLY for the dates listed above;**
- **Reporting**-ORSP must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- **Modifications**-Any proposed changes MUST be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- **Consent Form(s)**-Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;
- **Continuing Review**-You should receive a courtesy e-mail renewal notice for a Request for Continuing Review before the expiration of this project's approval. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that an application for continuing review has been submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the expiration date to extend the approval period;

Additional Notes: **Administratively Expedited Amendment Approval per 45 CFR 46.110(b)(2) on 1/15/2014 for addition of research site with authorization letter: Sodermalm preschools.**

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.
Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00003913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Respectfully yours,

Acting For,
Dr. Beverly Tepper, Ph.D.
Professor
Chair, Rutgers University Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Alan R. Sadovnik

Informed Consent Forms

Attachment 4: Informed consent form
English

Project Title: Gender madness? An analysis of gender egalitarian values and practices in the Swedish public preschool education system.

Principal Investigator:	Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan
	Doctoral student
	School of Public Affairs and Administration
	Rutgers University-Newark
	111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA
	email: annalin@pegasus.rutgers.edu
	phone: +1 973-820-8929
Faculty advisor:	Alan Sadovnik
	Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor
	School of Public Affairs and Administration
	Rutgers University-Newark
	111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA
	email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu
	phone: 973-353-3882

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate in this study, you should know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, ask the investigator. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

Background/purpose

This purpose of this research study is twofold: firstly, the research is an educational process and experience for the doctoral student leading to the completion of a doctoral dissertation, and secondly, the purpose is to produce knowledge on the research topic. The research explores how gender egalitarian values and practices are constituted, reproduced and challenged in the Swedish public education system of preschools, at the level of society, politics, and institutional practice. Approximately twenty-five (25) people will be interviewed for this study.

Information

Your participation involves a verbal semi-structured interview. The total duration of your participation will be an interview of approximately one hour in length. If you consent, the principal investigator will make an audiotape of the interview for the purposes of preparing a transcription for analysis. This tape will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

Risks

There are no known risks to your participation in this project.

Page 1   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

JUL 0 1 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Benefits

Participation in this study may not benefit you directly. You will not be compensated for your participation. However, the knowledge that we obtain from your participation, and the participation of other volunteers, may help us to better understand gender equality as a value and practice in preschools in the Swedish education system.

Confidentiality

This research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your name, gender, and age. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated, and pseudonyms will be used in all reporting on this project. The research team and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews research studies in order to protect research participants) at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. Electronic data, such as audio-recordings and typed notes or interview records, will be stored by the investigator in a safe location, which requires a password to access. All study data will be kept for at least three years after which all records will be shredded and any tapes destroyed.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the research or the procedures, you may contact the faculty advisor, Alan Sadovnik, at School of Public Affairs and Administration, 111 Washington Street, Rutgers University, Newark NJ 07102, USA, email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu **or** +1 973-353-3882. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
USA
Tel: (848) 932-0150
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate at any time without penalty to you. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be removed from the data set and destroyed.

Page 2   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

JUL 0 1 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Subject's signature _____ **Date** _____

Principal Investigator's signature _____ **Date** _____

Contact information:

Mailing address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Audio/Videotape Addendum to Consent form
You have already agreed to participate in a research study entitled: Gender madness? An analysis of gender egalitarian values and practices in the Swedish public preschool education system conducted by Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape this interview as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for analysis by the research team.
The recording(s) will include your name, gender, and age.

The recording(s) will be stored in a locked by the investigator in a safe location, which requires a password to access, in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. All study data will be kept for at least three years after which all records will be shredded and any tapes destroyed.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Page 3   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

JUL 0 1 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Subject's name (print) _____

Subject's signature   _____   Date   _____

Principal Investigator's signature   _____   Date   _____

APPROVED

JUL 0 1 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Attachment 4: Samtycke blankett
Svenska

Projekt Titel:	Genusvansinne? En analys av genus värderingar och praktik i den svenska förskolan.
Ansvarig forskar:	Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan
	Doctoral student
	School of Public Affairs and Administration
	Rutgers University-Newark
	111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA
	email: annalin@pegasus.rutgers.edu
	phone: +1 973-820-8929
Ansvarig rådgivare:	Alan Sadovnik
	Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor
	School of Public Affairs and Administration
	Rutgers University-Newark
	111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA
	email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu
	phone: 973-353-3882

Introduktion

Du är inbjuden att delta i ett forskningsprojekt. Innan du accepterar att delta i detta projekt bör du ha tillräcklig information för att fatta ett välgrundat beslut. Om du har några frågor, vänligen fråga forskaren. Du bör känna att dina frågor är tillfredsställande och besvarade innan du ger ditt samtycke till att delta i forskningsprojektet.

Bakgrund/Syfte

Det finns två syften med denna forskningen: Först är det en del av en lärande process och erfarenhetsbas för den studerande, som kulminerar i en doktorsavhandling, och för det andra är syftet med forskningsprojektet att utveckla kunskap inom forskningsområdet.
Forskningsprojektet undersöker hur genus värderingar och praktiken utgörs, reproduceras och utmanas i det svenska systemet för förskolan och på social, politisk och institutionell nivå. Cirka tjugofem (25) personer kommer att intervjuas under forskningsprojektet.

Information

Din medverkan involverar ett delvis-strukturerat intervju. Din medverkan i intervjun kommer att ta ungefär en timme. Om du ger ditt samtycke kommer forskaren att spela in intervjun på band med syftet att göra en utskrift av intervjun för analys. Denna ljudinspelning kommer att förstöras efter att forskningsprojektet har avslutats.

Risker

Det finns inga kända risker i samband med din medverkan i detta forskningsprojekt.

Page 5   Subject Initials: _____

Fördelar

Ditt deltagande i detta projekt kanske inte att gynna dig personligen. Du kommer inte att kompenseras för din medverkan. Men den kunskap som vi kommer att uppnå som ett resultat av din och andras medverkan kan bidra till en djupare förståelse för de värderingar och den praktik som rör jämställdhet i förskolan i det svenska utbildningssystemet.

Sekretess

Denna studie er konfidentiell. Konfidentiella innebär att protokollen kommer att innehålla en viss information om dig och denna information kommer att lagras på ett sådant sätt att det finns någon koppling mellan din identitet och responsen i rapporten. En del av den information som samlas in om dig inkluderar, namn, kön och ålder. Vänligen observera att vi kommer att hålla denna information konfidentiell genom att begränsa personers tillgång till forskningsdata och hålla den på en säker plats. I händelse av att en rapport kommer att publiceras i samband med detta forskningsprojekt eller resultaten av projektet kommer att presenteras vid en professionell konferens, kommer forskaren att presenterar endast de sammanställda resultaten och pseudonymer kommer att användas i alla typer av rapporter av projektet. Endast forskargruppen eller Rutgers University Institutional Review Board kommer att ha tillgång till dina data, såvida vad som kan krävas enligt lag. Den primära forskare kommer att hålla elektroniska data, exempelvis ljudinspelningar och maskinskrivna anteckningar eller intervju protokollen, konfidentiell på en säker plats vilket kräver ett lösenord för att komma åt. Alla studiedata kommer att bevaras i minst tre år, varefter alla poster kommer att strimlas och eventuella band förstörts.

Kontakt

Om du vid något tillfälle har frågor om forskningsprojektet eller procedurer vänligen kontakta ansvarig forskar Alan Sadovnik, at School of Public Affairs and Administration, 111 Washington Street, Rutgers University, Newark NJ 07102, USA email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu **eller** +1 973-353-3882.. Om du har frågor om dina rättigheter som forskningsobjekt, är du välkommen att kontakta Rutgers University Institutional Review Boards administratör på:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
USA
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Deltagelse

Du deltar frivilligt i detta forskningsprojekt och kan vägra att delta när som helst utan påföljd. Om du väljer att delta, kan du dra tillbaka din medverkan när som helst utan påföljd eller förlust av förmåner som du annars skulle få i samband med projektet. Om du väljer att dra tillbaka din

Page 6   Subject Initials: _____

medverkan i projektet innan datainsamlingen är avslutad kommer dina data att tas bort från datamängden och förstöras.

Signera nedan om du ger ditt samtycke till att delta i detta forskningsprojekt. Du kommer erhålla ett exemplar av detta dokument.

Deltagarens underskrift _____ **Datum**_____

Ansvarig forskares underskrift _____**Datum**_____

Kontakt information:

Adress: _____

_____

_____

Telefon: _____

Email adress: _____

Samtycke för ljudinspelning
Du har redan accepterat att delta i en forskningsstudie med titeln: Genusvansinne? En analys av genus värderingar och praktik i den svenska förskolan av Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan. Vi ber om din samtycka till denna intervju kommer att spelas in på band som en del av denna studie. Om du inte samtycker till at intervjun kommer att spelas in på band, kommer du fortfarande att kunna delta i studien.

Ljudinspelningen kommer att användas för analys av forskargruppen.

Protokollen kommer att inkludera ditt namn, kön och ålder.

Protokollen kommer att lagras på en säker plats vilket kräver ett lösenord för att komma åt, på ett sådant sätt att det finns någon koppling mellan din identitet och responsen i rapporten. Alla studiedata kommer att bevaras i minst tre år, varefter alla poster kommer att strimlas och eventuella band förstörts.

Din underskrift på denna blankett ger forskaren tillåtelse att spela in dig som beskrivits ovan under din medverkan i den ovan refererade studien. Forskaren ska inte använda inspelningen av någon annan anledning än de som anges i samtycka blanketten utan ditt skriftliga medgivande.

Page 7   Subject Initials: _____

Deltagarens namn (print) _____

Deltagarens underskrift _____ Datum_____

Ansvarig forskares underskrift _____ Datum_____

Subject Initials: _____

Informed consent forms, amended protocol

Attachment 4: Informed consent form
English

Project Title: Gender madness? An analysis of gender egalitarian values and practices in the Swedish public preschool education system.

Principal Investigator:	Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan Doctoral student School of Public Affairs and Administration Rutgers University-Newark 111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA email: annalin@pegasus.rutgers.edu phone: +1 973-820-8929
Faculty advisor:	Alan Sadovnik Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor School of Public Affairs and Administration Rutgers University-Newark 111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu phone: 973-353-3882

Introduction
You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate in this study, you should know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, ask the investigator. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

Background/purpose
This purpose of this research study is twofold: firstly, the research is an educational process and experience for the doctoral student leading to the completion of a doctoral dissertation, and secondly, the purpose is to produce knowledge on the research topic. The research explores how gender egalitarian values and practices are constituted, reproduced and challenged in the Swedish public education system of preschools, at the level of society, politics, and institutional practice. Approximately twenty (20) people will be interviewed for this study.

Information
Your participation involves a verbal semi-structured interview. The total duration of your participation will be an interview of approximately one hour in length. If you consent, the principal investigator will make an audiotape of the interview for the purposes of preparing a transcription for analysis. This tape will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

Risks
There are no known risks to your participation in this project.

Page 1   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

NOV 1 9 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Benefits

Participation in this study may not benefit you directly. You will not be compensated for your participation. However, the knowledge that we obtain from your participation, and the participation of other volunteers, may help us to better understand gender equality as a value and practice in preschools in the Swedish education system.

Confidentiality

The research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your position, name, gender, and age. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference group results will be stated as will your name and position. However, if you request confidentiality, you will be identified in such a way to protect your identity. If you request confidentiality for anything you say in the interview, it will be granted. The research team and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews research studies in order to protect research participants) at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. Electronic data, such as audio-recordings and typed notes or interview records, will be stored by the investigator in a safe location, which requires a password to access. All study data will be kept for at least three years after which all records will be shredded and any tapes destroyed.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the research or the procedures, you may contact the faculty advisor, Alan Sadovnik, at School of Public Affairs and Administration, 111 Washington Street, Rutgers University, Newark NJ 07102, USA, email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu **or** +1 973-353-3882. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
USA
Tel: (848) 932-0150
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate at any time without penalty to you. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw

Page 2   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

NOV 1 0 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

from the study before data collection is completed your data will be removed from the data set and destroyed.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Subject's signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Contact information:

Mailing address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Audio/Videotape Addendum to Consent form

You have already agreed to participate in a research study entitled: Gender madness? An analysis of gender egalitarian values and practices in the Swedish public preschool education system conducted by Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape this interview as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for analysis by the research team.
The recording(s) will include your name, gender, and age.

The recording(s) will be stored in a locked by the investigator in a safe location, which requires a password to access, in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. All study data will be kept for at least three years after which all records will be shredded and any tapes destroyed.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

APPROVED   EXPIRES

Page 3   Subject Initials: _____   NOV 1 9 2013   JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the   Approved by the
Rutgers IRB   Rutgers IRB

Subject's name (print) _____

Subject's signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

NOV 1 9 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Attachment 4: Samtycke blankett
Svenska

Projekt Titel:	Genusvansinne? En analys av genus värderingar och praktik i den svenska förskolan.
Ansvarig forskar:	Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan Doctoral student School of Public Affairs and Administration Rutgers University-Newark 111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA email: annalin@pegasus.rutgers.edu phone: +1 973-820-8929
Ansvarig rådgivare:	Alan Sadovnik Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor School of Public Affairs and Administration Rutgers University-Newark 111 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102, USA email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu phone: 973-353-3882

Introduktion

Du är inbjuden att delta i ett forskningsprojekt. Innan du accepterar att delta i detta projekt bör du ha tillräcklig information för att fatta ett välgrundat beslut. Om du har några frågor, vänligen fråga forskaren. Du bör känna att dina frågor är tillfredsställande och besvarade innan du ger ditt samtycke till att delta i forskningsprojektet.

Bakgrund/Syfte

Det finns två syften med denna forskningen: Först är det en del av en lärande process och erfarenhetsbas för den studerande, som kulminerar i en doktorsavhandling, och för det andra är syftet med forskningsprojektet att utveckla kunskap inom forskningsområdet.
Forskningsprojektet undersöker hur genus värderingar och praktiken utgörs, reproduceras och utmanas i det svenska systemet för förskolan och på social, politisk och institutionell nivå. Cirka tjugo (20) personer kommer att intervjuas under forskningsprojektet.

Information

Din medverkan involverar ett delvis-strukturerat intervju. Din medverkan i intervjun kommer att ta ungefär en timme. Om du ger ditt samtycke kommer forskaren att spela in intervjun på band med syftet att göra en utskrift av intervjun för analys. Denna ljudinspelning kommer att förstöras efter att forskningsprojektet har avslutats.

Page 5   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

NOV 1 9 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Risker

Det finns inga kända risker i samband med din medverkan i detta forskningsprojekt.

Fördelar

Ditt deltagande i detta projekt kanske inte att gynna dig personligen. Du kommer inte att kompenseras för din medverkan. Men den kunskap som vi kommer att uppnå som ett resultat av din och andras medverkan kan bidra till en djupare förståelse för de värderingar och den praktik som rör jämställdhet i förskolan i det svenska utbildningssystemet.

Sekretess

Protokollen kommer att innehålla en viss information om dig och denna information kommer att lagras på ett sådant sätt att det finns koppling mellan din identitet och responsen i rapporten. En del av den information som samlas in om dig inkluderar, ställning, namn, kön och ålder. Vänligen observera att vi kommer att hålla denna information konfidentiell genom att begränsa personers tillgång till forskningsdata och hålla den på en säker plats. I händelse av att en rapport kommer att publiceras i samband med detta forskningsprojekt eller resultaten av projektet kommer att presenteras vid en professionell konferens, kommer forskaren att presenterar de sammanställda resultaten och ditt namn och din ställning. Men om du begära sekretess, kommer du att identifieras på ett sådant sätt att din identitet skyddas. Om du begära sekretess för något som du säger i intervjun, kommer det att beviljas. Endast forskargruppen eller Rutgers University Institutional Review Board kommer att ha tillgång till dina data, såvida vad som kan krävas enligt lag. Den primära forskare kommer att hålla elektroniska data, exempelvis ljudinspelningar och maskinskrivna anteckningar eller intervju protokollen, konfidentiell på en säker plats vilket kräver ett lösenord för att komma åt. Alla studiedata kommer att bevaras i minst tre år, varefter alla poster kommer att strimlas och eventuella band förstörts.

Kontakt

Om du vid något tillfälle har frågor om forskningsprojektet eller procedurer vänligen kontakta ansvarig forskar Alan Sadovnik, at School of Public Affairs and Administration, 111 Washington Street, Rutgers University, Newark NJ 07102, USA email: sadovnik@andromeda.rutgers.edu **eller** +1 973-353-3882.. Om du har frågor om dina rättigheter som forskningsobjekt, är du välkommen att kontakta Rutgers University Institutional Review Boards administratör på:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
USA
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Deltagelse

Page 6   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

NOV 1 9 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Du deltar frivilligt i detta forskningsprojekt och kan vägra att delta när som helst utan påföljd. Om du väljer att delta, kan du dra tillbaka din medverkan när som helst utan påföljd eller förlust av förmåner som du annars skulle få i samband med projektet. Om du väljer att dra tillbaka din medverkan i projektet innan datainsamlingen är avslutad kommer dina data att tas bort från datamängden och förstöras.

Signera nedan om du ger ditt samtycke till att delta i detta forskningsprojekt. Du kommer erhålla ett exemplar av detta dokument.

Deltagarens underskrift _____ Datum_____

Ansvarig forskares underskrift _____Datum_____

Kontakt information:

Adress: _____

_____

_____

Telefon: _____

Email adress: _____

Samtycke för ljudinspelning
Du har redan accepterat att delta i en forskningsstudie med titeln: Genusvansinne? En analys av genus värderingar och praktik i den svenska förskolan av Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan. Vi ber om din samtycka till denna intervju kommer att spelas in på band som en del av denna studie. Om du inte samtycker till at intervjun kommer att spelas in på band, kommer du fortfarande att kunna delta i studien.

Ljudinspelningen kommer att användas för analys av forskargruppen.

Protokollen kommer att inkludera ditt namn, kön och ålder.

Protokollen kommer att lagras på en säker plats vilket kräver ett lösenord för att komma åt, på ett sådant sätt att det finns någon koppling mellan din identitet och responsen i rapporten. Alla studiedata kommer att bevaras i minst tre år, varefter alla poster kommer att strimlas och eventuella band förstörts.

APPROVED   EXPIRES

NOV 1 9 2013   JUN 3 0 2014

Page 7   Subject Initials: _____   Approved by the   Approved by the
                                                   Rutgers IRB   Rutgers IRB

Din underskrift på denna blankett ger forskaren tillåtelse att spela in dig som beskrivits ovan under din medverkan i den ovan refererade studien. Forskaren ska inte använda inspelningen av någon annan anledning än de som anges i samtycka blanketten utan ditt skriftliga medgivande.

Deltagarens namn (print) _____

Deltagarens underskrift _____ **Datum**_____

Ansvarig forskares underskrift _____ **Datum**_____

Page 8   Subject Initials: _____

APPROVED

NOV 1 9 2013

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

EXPIRES

JUN 3 0 2014

Approved by the
Rutgers IRB

Attachment 7: Verbal interview protocol
English

Title of Project: Gender madness? An analysis of gender egalitarian values and practices in the Swedish public preschool system.
Principal investigator: Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan

Introduction

I would like to first take a moment to thank you for participating in this interview with me today. I have invited you to have this conversation with me, because I am interested in your insights, experiences, and opinions from working in a preschool. I am interested in your views on and experiences with gender and pedagogy in early childhood education, and in learning from your understanding and experiences.

If at any time you wish to stop the interview or return to a topic that you would like to elaborate on, please feel free to do so. After the interview we will take a moment to reflect on the interview, and at that time you will have an extra opportunity to elaborate on points that you feel are important to our conversation.
Lastly, I want to inform you that what we will be talking about today will be used for research purposes only and that your identity will remain completely confidential throughout all of the process.
Do you have any questions before we begin?

Verbal interview protocol
1. **Background:**
What is your name?
What is the name of the preschool you work at?
What year did you begin working in this institution?
What is your role within the institution?

2. **Goals/purposes of the institution**
What do you consider to be the role of preschools in society?
Can you tell me about the mission and goals/purposes that you work toward in your institution?
What do you consider to be important conditions to reach these goals?
      e.g. structure/order/physical environment/teaching aids/free play?
Do you find yourself in agreement with the institutional goals?
What is your role in deciding the direction that your institution takes in the future?

3. **Gender and pedagogy:**
How does your institution work with categories such as age and gender?
Do you consider that gender is an important focus in the everyday life in your institution?
Do you find that children divide according to certain categories such as age, gender, or ethnicity when engaged in free play?
Do you find that some kinds or teaching aids are particularly useful when it comes to engaging both boys and girls?

Do you feel that you engage or intervene in children's games differently depending on the group of children involved?

Does you institution aspire to an equal representation of male as female teachers?

Do you think that male and female teachers serve as different types of role models to the children?

4. **Structure**

Some preschools organize their physical space into functional play spaces, according to themes or needs. Can you tell me about how the physical space is organized in your institution?

      e.g. tumble rooms, kitchen, costumes, dolls

Do you see patterns with regard to how children utilize different play spaces?

How important are things such as order, cleanliness, and obedience in your daily work with young children?

What teaching aids do you particularly like to include in your teaching?

Do you find that certain types of language or words are useful for creating an atmosphere of inclusion?

5. **Routines and everyday practices:**

Can you tell me about some of the routines that make a day in the institution run smoothly?

Are children allowed to bring personal possessions into the institution?

      If yes, under which circumstances?

What is the rationale behind this policy?

What are some of the activities you think work well with the children in your everyday work?

How does your institution work with free play in relation to structured play/activities?

What are some of the central guidelines that you refer to when intervening in children's free play?

6. **Environment:**

What role do parents play in the institution?

How does the preschool you work at relate to or incorporate the norms and values regarding gender expressed by parents?

How does your institution work with the rules and guidelines introduced in the national curriculum?

Do you feel a correspondence between social norms and values, your professional knowledge of what is good for children, and your personal views/experiences?

Closing comments

Before we finish, I would like to ask you if you feel that there is something we have missed and that you would like to elaborate on?

I want to thank you very much for the insights you have provided today. I found our conversation very interesting and I am very grateful that you took the time to have this conversation with me today. I will be in contact with you in a few days to check up on

our conversation. If at that time, you have something to add to the conversation, I will be happy to include these comments in my research.

Danish/Swedish

Projekt titel: Genusvansinne? En analys av genus värderingar och praktik i den svenska förskolan.
Ansvarig forskar: Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan

Introduktion

Först, tackar jag för din medverkan i denna intervju. Jag har bjudit in dig att prata med mig i dag eftersom jag är intresserad av dina insikter, erfarenheter och åsikter från ditt arbete i en förskola. Jag är också intresserad av dina idéer och erfarenheter med kön och utbildning inom utbildning av barn, och att lära av din förståelse och erfarenhet.

Om du vid något tillfälle vill stoppa intervjun eller återgå till ett ämne som du känner att vi bör fördjupa, vänligen berätta. Efter intervjun tar vi tid att reflektera över vårt samtal och du kommer här med att ha en extra möjlighet att fördjupa ämnen som du tycker är viktiga för vårt samtal. Slutligen vill jag meddela att vårt samtal kommer att användas för forskningsändamål och din identitet kommer att förbli konfidentiella under hela forskningsprocessen.

Har du några frågor innan vi börjar?

Intervju guide

1. **Bakgrund:**

Vad heter du?
Vad är namnet på din förskola?
Vilket år började du arbeta på förskolan?
Vad är din roll på förskolan?

2. **Mål/syfte i institutionen**

Vad tycker du att förskolans roll är i samhället?
Kan du berätta om ditt uppdrag och mål/syften på förskolan i allmänhet?
Vad tycker du är viktiga verktyg för att uppnå dessa mål?
till exempel struktur, ordning, fysisk miljö, undervisningsmaterial, fri lek
Håller du med din förskolas mål?
Vilken är din roll i att fastställa förskolans framtida utveckling?

3. **Genus och pedagogik:**

Hur arbetar din institution med sociala kategorier såsom ålder och genus?
Anser du genus som en viktig del i det dagliga livet på din institution?
När barnen i din skola leker fritt, ser ni barnen dela upp sig av särskilda kategorier såsom ålder, genus eller etnisk tillhörighet?
Finns det något läromedel som du tycker är särskilt användbart när det gäller att engagera både flickor och pojkar?
Upplever du att du ingriper i barnens lek på olika sätt beroende på vilken grupp av barn som deltar?
Strävar din institution för att få en balanserad representation av manliga och kvinnliga medarbetare?

Tycker du att manliga och kvinnliga medarbetare är olika när det gäller att vara förebilder för barnen?

4. **Struktur**

Vissa förskolor organisera den fysiska miljön i funktionellt lekrum, som möter olika teman eller behov. Kan du berätta hur den fysiska miljön är organiserad i din institution?

Till exempel kök, kostymer, dockrum

Ser du ett mönster i hur barn använder olika lekrum?

Hur viktigt tycker du att saker som ordning, renlighet, och lydnad är i ditt dagliga arbete med barn?

Vilket läromedel tycker du särskilt om att använda i ditt arbete?

Finns där vissa typer av språk eller ord som du tycker är bra för att skapa en inkluderande atmosfär?

5. **Rutiner och daglig praktik:**

Kan du berätta om de rutiner som får livet i din institution att fungera?

Tillåts barnen ta personliga ägodelar med på institutionen?

Om ja, under vilka omständigheter?

Vad är tanken bakom din institutions politik på detta område?

Vilka aktiviteter tycker du är särskilt effektiv i ditt dagliga arbete med barnen i din institution?

Hur arbetar din institution med fri lek jämfört med strukturerad lek och aktiviteter?

Vilka centrala riktlinjer hänvisa du till om du upptäcker att du behöver ingripa i barns fria lek?

6. **Miljön:**

Vad är föräldrarnas roll i din institution?

Hur arbetar din förskola med föräldrarnas normer och värderingar kring genus?

Hur arbetar din institution med de regler och riktlinjer som anges i den nationella läroplanen?

Känner du att det finns ett samband mellan sociala normer och värderingar, din professionella kunskap om vad som är bra för barn, och dina personliga åsikter och erfarenheter?

Avslutande kommentarer

Innan vi avslutar vill jag fråga er om det är något du vill prata om? Någonting som vi behöver fördjupa?

Jag vill tacka dig för den insikt du har delat med mig idag. Vårt samtal var mycket intressant och jag uppskattar att du tog dig tid att prata med mig i dag.

Jag kommer att kontakta dig inom ett par dagar för att följa upp vårt samtal.

Om du känner att du har något mer att bidra till vårt samtal, kommer jag gärna lägga detta till min forskning. Om några veckor kommer jag också skicka en utskrift av intervjun som du kan se igenom.

Interview Protocols, Amended Protocol

Verbal interview protocol: English
Title of Project: Gender madness? An analysis of gender egalitarian values and practices in the Swedish public preschool system.
Principal investigator: Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan

Introduction
I would like to first take a moment to thank you for participating in this interview. I have invited you to have this conversation with me, because I am interested in your insights, experiences, and opinions.
If at any time you wish to stop the interview or return to a topic that you would like to elaborate on, please feel free to do so.
I want to inform you that what we will be talking about today will be used for research purposes only and that your identity will remain completely confidential throughout all of the process.

Verbal interview protocol

1. **Background:**
What is your name?
What is your position?
What year did you begin working in this position?
What are your responsibilities in this position?

2. **Goals/purposes of preschools**
What do you consider to be the role of preschools in society?
Can you tell me about missions and goals/purposes at preschools in Sweden in general?
What do you consider to be important conditions for reaching these goals?
There has been some debate in the public on preschool's supposedly conflicting mission to 'counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles' while 'also passing on a cultural heritage – its values, traditions and history, language and knowledge – from one generation to the next.'
What do you think about these responsibilities?
       And the debate on this matter?
What is your role in deciding the direction that *jämställdhet* and preschool education takes in the future?

3. **Gender and pedagogy:**
What does gender equality mean to you?
What do you think about the Swedish focus on gender equality and gender pedagogy in preschools?
What is the role of the gender pedagogue in a preschool?
What does gender/*jämställdhets* integration mean to you? Has it changed the role of the gender pedagogue?

What do you think about teachers using the personal pronoun *hen* in preschools?
What tools are available to help preschool teachers in their mission to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles?
How do preschools teachers account for their pedagogical work?
What tools are available for evaluating the progress that preschools are making in working with the national curriculum?
Why should preschools aspire to an equal representation of male as female teachers?
Do you think that male and female teachers serve as different types of role models to the children?

4. Environment:
What role do you think that parents play in preschools and in preschools' mission to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles?
What role does the research community play in developing how gender equality is understood and incorporated in Swedish preschool education?

Closing comments
Before we finish, I would like to ask you if you feel that there is something we have missed and that you would like to elaborate on?
I want to thank you very much for the insights you have provided today. I am very grateful that you took the time to contribute to my research project. If at a later time, you have something to add to the conversation, I will be happy to include these comments in my research.

Danish/Swedish
Projekt titel: Genusvansinne? En analys av genus värderingar och praktik i den svenska förskolan.
Ansvarig forskar: Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan

Introduktion
Först, tackar jag för din medverkan i denna intervju. Jag har bjudit in dig att prata med mig i dag eftersom jag är intresserad av dina insikter, erfarenheter och åsikter.
Om du vid något tillfälle vill stoppa intervjun eller återgå till ett ämne som du känner att vi bör fördjupa, vänligen berätta.
Slutligen vill jag meddela att vårt samtal kommer att användas för forskningsändamål och din identitet kommer att förbli konfidentiella under hela forskningsprocessen.

Intervju guide
Bakgrund:
Vad heter du?
Vad är ditt jobb?
Vilket år började du detta jobb?
Vad är din roll med detta jobb?

1. Mål/syfte i förskolor

Vad tycker du att förskolans roll är i samhället?

Kan du berätta om uppdrag och mål/syften på Stockholms/Sveriges förskolor i allmänhet?

Vad tycker du är viktiga verktyg för att uppnå dessa mål?

Det har förekommit diskussioner om förskolans förment motstridiga uppdrag

att 'förskolan ska motverka traditionella könsmönster och könsroller' såväl som

att 'överföra ett kulturarv – värden, traditioner och historia, språk och kunskaper – från en generation till nästa.'

Vad tycker du om dessa uppdrag?

> Och debatten om denna fråga?

Vilken är din roll i att fastställa utvecklingen i jämställdhet samt den svenska förskolans framtida utveckling?

2. Genus och pedagogik:

Vad betyder jämställdhet för dig?

Vad tycker du om den svenska fokus på jämställdhet och pedagogik i förskolan?

Vad är en genuspedagogs roll?

Vad betyder genus/jämställdhets integration för dig? Har det förändrat genuspedagogens roll?

Vad tycker du om att pedagoger använder personliga pronomen *hen* i förskolan?

Vilka verktyg finns tillgängliga för förskollärare att hjälpa dem i uppdraget att motverka traditionella könsmönster och könsroller?

Hur redovisa pedagoger sitt pedagogiska arbete?

Vilka verktyg finns tillgängliga för att utvärdera de framsteg som förskolor gör i arbetet med förskolans läroplan?

Varför bör förskolor sträva för att få en balanserad representation av manliga och kvinnliga medarbetare?

Tycker du att manliga och kvinnliga medarbetare är olika när det gäller att vara förebilder för barnen?

3. Miljön:

Vilken roll tror du att föräldrar spelar i förskolan och i förskolans uppdrag att motverka traditionella könsmönster och könsroller?

Vilken roll spelar forskarvärlden i att utveckla hur jämställdhet förstås och integreras i den svenska förskolan?

Avslutande kommentarer

Innan vi avslutar vill jag fråga er om det är något du vill prata om?

Jag vill tacka dig för den insikt du har delat med mig idag. Jag uppskattar att du tog dig tid att prata med mig i dag. Om du känner att du har något mer att bidra till vårt samtal, kommer jag gärna lägga detta till min forskning.

List of Newspaper Articles

#	Newspaper	Date	Author	Title	URL	Presentation
1	Dagens Nyheter	2012 February 14	Lagerwall, Katarina	Kritiker: "Hen gör barn förvirrade"	http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/kritiker-hen-gor-barn-forvirrade?rm=print	Negative
2	Svenska Dagbladet	2008 December 19	Johannisson, Emma	Läsarna: "En skrämmande utveckling"	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/lasarna-en-skrammande-utveckling_2227807.svd	Negative
3	Aftonbladet	2011 December 19	Gårdsäter, Emma	"Könsrollerna är inte problematiska"	http://www.aftonbladet.se/wendela/article11597967.ab?	Negative
4	Svenska Dagbladet	2007, September 17		Genusdagis inget för kd-politiker	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/manligt-och-kvinnligt/genusdagis-inget-for-kd-politiker_21438.svd	Negative
5	Svenska Dagbladet	2007 September 20		"Barn blir försöksdjur trots all god vilja"	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/manligt-och-kvinnligt/barn-blir-forsoksdjur-trots-all-god-vilja_35795.svd	Neutral
6	Svenska Dagbaldet	2012 March 7	Olsson, Lova	Hen kan skapa otrygga barn, anser Maud Olofsson	http://blog.svd.se/politikdirekt/2012/03/hen-kan-skapa-otrygga-barn-anser-maud-olofsson/	Negative
7	Svenska Dagbladet	2008 December 19	Bergkvist, Tanja	Genusvetare förvirrar barnen	http://www.svd.se/opinion/brannpunkt/1899306.svd	Negative
8	Svenska Dagbladet	2011 May 16	Rappe, Tinni Ernsjöö	"Den fria leken är nästan fånigt hyllad"	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/barn-och-unga/den-fria-leken-ar-nastan-fanigt-hyllad_6163559.svd	Neutral
9	Svenska Dagbladet	2011 May 18	Rosencrantz, Jessica (Moderaterna)	Typisk vänsterlogik kring fri lek	http://www.svd.se/opinion/brannpunkt/typisk-vansterlogik-	Negative

					kring-fri-lek_6174915.svd	
10	Svenska Dagbladet	2011 March 7	Gudmundson, Per	MP Sthlm: alla dagis ska vara genusdagis	http://blog.svd.se/ledarbloggen/2011/03/07/mp-sthlm-alla-dagis-ska-vara-genusdagis/	Negative
11	Svenska Dagbladet	2007 September 18	Lagerblad, Anna	"Men tänk om han blir bög"	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/manligt-och-kvinnligt/men-tank-om-han-blir-bog_21912.svd	Positive
12	Södermalms nytt	2011 February 3	Sjögren, Anna	Här ska ingen sorteras efter sitt kön	http://www.direktpress.se/sodermalmsnytt/Arkiv/Artiklar/2011/02/Har-ska-ingen-sorteras-efter-sitt-kon/	Positive
13	Södermalms nytt	2011 February 3	Sjögren, Anna	Hot mot förskola på Södermalm	http://www.direktpress.se/sodermalmsnytt/Arkiv/Artiklar/2011/02/Hot-mot-forskola-pa-SodermalmHot-mot-forskola-pa-Sodermalm/	Positive
14	Södermalms nytt	2011 August 5	Pozar, Tomasz	Söderborna mest positiva till genusförskolor	http://www.direktpress.se/sodermalmsnytt/Arkiv/Artiklar/2011/08/Soderborna-mest-positiva-till-genusforskolor/	Positive
15	Södermalms nytt	2012 June 1	Lundberg, Elina	"De tror att hbt är lika med sex"	http://www.direktpress.se/sodermalmsnytt/Arkiv/Artiklar/2012/06/De-tror-att-hbt-ar-lika-med-sex/	Positive
16	Svenska Dagbladet	2011 July 5	Lagerblad, Anna	Den "typiske" pojken ovanligare än vi tror	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/manligt-och-kvinnligt/den-typiske-pojken-ovanligare-an-vi-tror_6293872.svd	Neutral
17	Aftonbladet	2011 January 29	Utter, Helena	Förskola – utan flickor och	http://www.aftonbladet.se/wendel	Positive

				pojkar	a/article1253112 4.ab?	
18	Svenska Dagbladet	2005 May 10		Stor organbrist till svårt sjuka Kommuner saknar jämställd pedagogik	http://www.svd.s e/nyheter/inrikes/ 1360160.svd	Positive
19	Svenska Dagbladet	2005 May 9		Kommuner struntar i läroplanen	http://www.svd.s e/nyheter/inrikes/ 1360092.svd	Positive
20	Svenska Dagbladet	2013 October 11	Neuding, Paulina	Genusförskola är inte jämställdhet	http://www.svd.s e/opinion/ledarsi dan/ingen-far-valja-bort-genusprojektet-om-mp-far-bestamma_8609 364.svd	Negative
21	Svenska Dagbladet	2007 September 17	Lagerblad, Anna	”Ingen hjärntvätt”	http://www.svd.s e/nyheter/idagsid an/manligt-och-kvinnligt/ingen-hjarntvatt_21269 .svd	Positive
22	Svenska Dagbladet	2007 September 12	Lagerblad, Anna	”Förut fick flickorna vänta”	http://www.svd.s e/nyheter/idagsid an/manligt-och-kvinnligt/forut-fick-flickorna-vanta_18974.svd	Positive
23	Svenska Dagbladet	2002 September 24	Hultén, Eva-Lotta (Freelance journalist)	Att ge bort en leksak är ingen oskyldig gåva	http://www.svd.s e/nyheter/idagsid an/att-ge-bort-en-leksak-ar-ingen-oskyldig-gava_65915.svd	Positive
24	Svenska Dagbladet	2007 September 12	Lagerblad, Anna	”Förskolan förstärker könsrollerna”	http://www.svd.s e/nyheter/idagsid an/manligt-och-kvinnligt/forskol an-forstarker-konsrollerna_189 73.svd	Positive
25	Svenska Dagbladet	2009 September 18	Sjöström, Mia	Visst kan Törnrosa också sparka boll	http://www.svd.s e/nyheter/idagsid an/barn-och-unga/visst-kan-tornrosa-ocksa-sparka-boll_3540389.sv d	Neutral
26	Dagens Nyheter	2012 February 17	Bromseth Janne and Dagens Nyheter's	Chatt om genus och jämställdhet	http://www.dn.se /nyheter/sverige/ chatt-om-genus-och-jamstalldhet/	Positive

				moderator		
27	Aftonbladet	2006 July 27	Abrahamsson, Karin	"Förskolan tvingar in barn i gamla könsroller"	http://www.aftonbladet.se/wendela/familj/article10865938.ab	Positive
28	Svenska Dagbladet	2005 October 6	Nilsson, Sofia	Dagis missar jämställdhetsmål	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/dagis-missar-jamstalldhetsmal_464031.svd	Positive
29	Svenska Dagbladet	2012 March 8	Claesen, Elise; Salemark, Nanna and Svenska Dagbladet's Webmaster	Chatt om ordet hen	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/chatt-hen_6909445.svd	Neutral
30	Svenska Dagbladet	2014 January 8	Asker, Anna	Bångstyriga barn utmanar genuspedagogik	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/bangstyriga-barn-utmanar-genuspedagogik_8873436.svd	Neutral
31	Dagens Nyhetar	2008 October 27	Jällhage, Lenita	Skogslek gör barn jämlika	http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/skogslek-gor-barn-jamlika/	Positive
32	Södermalms nytt	2012 May 25	Lundberg, Elina	Genus - varför så provocerande?	http://www.direktpress.se/sodermalmsnytt/Arkiv/Artiklar/2012/05/Genus---varfor-sa-provocerande/	Positive
33	Svenska Dagbladet	2006 July 27		Förskolan främjar gamla könsroller	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/forskolan-framjar-gamla-konsroller_339228.svd	Positive
34	Aftonbladet	2008 December 19	Eriksson, Terra Herrera	Jo, genuspedagoger behövs	http://www.aftonbladet.se/wendela/familj/article11597969.ab	Positive
35	Svenska Dagbladet	2008 December 30	Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Eva	Stereotypa könsroller måste utmanas	http://www.svd.se/opinion/brannpunkt/stereotypa-konsroller-maste-utmanas_2257835.svd	Positive
36	Dagens Nyhetar	2012 February 14	Lagerwall, Katarina	På Egalia tas fokus bort från könet	http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/pa-egalia-tas-fokus-bort-fran-konet/	Positive
37	Svenska	2007		Film på	http://www.svd.s	Positive

	Dagbladet	September 13		förskola blev genuschock	e/nyheter/idagsidan/manligt-och-kvinnligt/film-pa-forskola-blev-genuschock_19752.svd	
38	Svenska Dagbladet	2014 January 7	Asker, Anna	Barbie får nytt liv när normer utmanas	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/barbie-far-nytt-liv-nar-normer-utmanas_8871704.svd	Positive
39	Svenska Dagbladet	2007 September 19	Lagerblad, Anna	Män kan mer än att snickra	http://www.svd.se/nyheter/idagsidan/manligt-och-kvinnligt/man-kan-mer-an-att-snickra_24416.svd	Positive
40	Expressen	2006 July 27		"Förskolepersonalen måste arbeta mer jämställt"	http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/forskolepersonalen-maste-arbeta-mer-jamstallt/	Positive
41	Expressen	2011 November 24	Utter, Helene	"Heterosexuella tror att de äger hela världen"	http://www.aftonbladet.se/ipadoriginal/article13979273.ab?	Positive
42	Expressen	2011 August 2	Svensson Johan (V)	Debatt: Skattepengar ska gå till barnen	http://www.expressen.se/gt/ledare/debatt-skattepengar-ska-ga-till-barnen/	Positive
43	Expressen	2010 November 19	Editorial	Efterlyses: Fler genuspedagoger	http://www.expressen.se/ledare/efterlyses-fler-genuspedagoger/	Positive
44	Dagens Nyhetar	2014 January 10	Helmerson, Erik	Förskolegenus: Normkritik får också kritiseras	http://www.dn.se/ledare/signerat/forskolegenus-normkritik-far-ocksa-kritiseras?	Negative
45	Expressen	2007 June 19	TT	Genusdagis i Umeå	http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/genusdagis-i-umea/	Neutral
46	Dagens Nyhetar	2009 April 22	Froster, Anna	Hur skapas könsidentiteten?	http://www.dn.se/insidan/hur-skapas-konsidentiteten	Positive
47	Expressen	2006 July 28	Hadley-Kamptz, Isobel	Isobel Hadley-Kamptz: Pojkarna	http://www.expressen.se/ledare/isobel-hadley-	Positive

				förlorar	kamptz-pojkarna-forlorar	
48	Dagens Nyhetar	2011 May 26	Birgersson, Petter	Jämställdhet: Individen före könet	http://www.dn.se /ledare/signerat/j amstalldhet-individen-fore-konet?	Positive
49	Expressen	2012 February 25	Strömstedt, Jenny	Jenny Strömstedt: Genus folket - som något ur Tolkien	http://www.expr essen.se/kronikor er/jenny-stromstedt/jenny-stromstedt-genusfolket---som-nagot-ur-tolkien	Positive
50	Expressen	2006 May 22	Orback, Jens	Jens Orback: Männen måste ta makt som pappor	http://www.expr essen.se/debatt/je ns-orback-mannen-maste-ta-makt-som-pappor	Positive
51	Expressen	2005 October 12	Söderqvist, Marie	Marie Söderqvist: Varning för genuspedagoger na	http://www.expr essen.se/kronikor er/marie-soderqvist/marie-soderqvist-varning-forgenuspedagog erna	Negative
52	Aftonbladet	2012 February 16	Uvell, Rebecca Weidmo	Pappa Staten ska inte uppfostra mina söner	http://www.afton bladet.se/debatt/a rticle14382507.a b	Negative
53	Dagens Nyhetar	2013 July 31	Mendel-Enk, Stephan	"Söder är bästa hbt-stället att bo på"	http://www.dn.se /sthlm/soder-ar-basta-hbt-stallet-att-bo-pa?	Positive
54	Expressen	2013 October 26	Madon, Sakine	Var inte rädda för genuspedagogik	http://www.expr essen.se/ledare/s akine-madon/var-inte-radda-for-genuspedagogik	Positive
55	Expressen	2009 September 28	Wahlström, Kajsa	Verklighetens folk gillar genusdagis	http://www.expr essen.se/debatt/v erklighetens-folk-gillar-genusdagis	Positive

Anna Bolette Lind-Valdan
Curriculum vitae

Date and place of birth   March 18 1983, Copenhagen, Denmark

Education

Ph.D. in Public Administration, School of Public Affairs   Newark, New Jersey, USA
and Administration, Rutgers University   2014

MA in Political Science, University of Copenhagen   Copenhagen, Denmark
                                                                                               2010

BA in Political Science, University of Copenhagen   Copenhagen, Denmark
                                                                                               2007

Principal Occupations

Dissertation Fellow, Graduate School Newark, Rutgers   Newark, New Jersey, USA
University   2013-2014

Teaching/Graduate Assistant, School of Public Affairs and   Newark, New Jersey, USA
Administration, Rutgers University   2010-2013

Student Position, Job Market Department, Gladsaxe City   Gladsaxe, Denmark
Hall   2008, 2009-2010