DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 426 047 SO 029 528

AUTHOR Berg, Britt-Marie
TITLE The Maternal Nurturance Trap: Discursive Practices of "Social Justice" in Gender Equity Pedagogy in a Swedish Compulsory School.
PUB DATE 1998-04-00
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Diego, CA, April 13-17, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment; *Cultural Context; Discourse Analysis; *Educational Practices; Elementary Education; Foreign Countries; *Rhetoric; School Policy; *Sex Fairness
IDENTIFIERS Discourse Communities; Feminist Pedagogy; *Gender Issues; Rhetorical Stance; Social Justice; *Sweden

ABSTRACT

In this paper the archeology of social justice is described as discourses of practices concerning Swedish ways of dealing with gender equality in compulsory school. The paper begins with some recent developments in Sweden that are important for the theme; it continues with the rhetoric in some relevant acts, government bills, and national curricula, concluding with concrete examples from classroom practices where teachers are working with gender equality pedagogy. Empirically, it provides the story of an attempt to change the pedagogical practice of nine compulsory school teachers and their pupils in a school in the northern part of Sweden. The paper takes on Foucauldian concerns of how normalizing and regulative aspects of dominant discourses operate to subvert spearheading equity pedagogy. It especially focuses on the archeological form of "the maternal nurturance trap" in classroom "gender equity" practices. The paper aims to illuminate not only the expected difficulties but also the potential possibilities in trying to change gendered classroom practices by analyzing girls, boys, female teachers, male teachers, and the female researcher as constituted by the discourse not discursively determined by it. (Contains 12 notes and 36 references.) (Author/BT)

The Maternal Nurturance Trap: Discursive Practices of "Social Justice" in Gender Equity Pedagogy in a Swedish Compulsory School.

by Britt-Marie Berg

Published: 1998-04

Paper presented to AERA 1998 Annual Meeting
April 13-17, 1998, San Diego
The Archaeology of Social Justice
Symposium

The maternal nurturance trap:
Discursive practices of "social justice" in gender equity pedagogy in a Swedish compulsory school

Britt-Marie Berge
PhD,Ass. professor
Department of Education, Umeå University, S-901 87 Umeå, Sweden
Email:Britt-Marie.Berge@pedag.umu.se

Abstract:
In this paper the archeology of social justice is described as discourses of practices concerning Swedish ways of dealing with gender equality in compulsory school. The paper starts with some recent developments in Sweden that are important for the theme, it continues with the rhetoric in some relevant Acts, Government Bills and National Curricula concluding with concrete examples from classroom practices where teachers are working with gender equality pedagogy. Empirically, it provides the story of an attempt to change the pedagogical practice of nine compulsory school teachers and their pupils in a school in the northern part of Sweden. The paper takes on Foucauldian concerns of how normalizing and regulative aspects of dominant discourses operate to subvert spearheading equity pedagogy. The paper especially focuses on the archeological form of "the maternal nurturance trap" in classroom "gender equity" practices. I want to illuminate not only the expected difficulties but also the potential possibilities in trying to change gendered classroom practices by analysing girls, boys, female teachers, male teachers and the female researcher as constituted by the discourse but not discursively determined by it.

"I want the girls to learn how to limit their caring duties. They have to learn how to flatly refuse. To say when it is enough." A female compulsory school teacher explains her view of how to achieve the goal of gender equality to her colleagues. These are the attitudes she wants the girls to incorporate: *"To avoid taking on women's roles. To dare to be spontaneous. To dare to be different. To dare to show others what you are clever at. To dare to express your own opinions. Girls who dare to express their independence towards men have a lot of self-confidence. To dare to say no, to set out your limits. They must dare to challenge teachers, if they have another opinion.* She exemplifies her way of working to achieve these aims: *"I've trained the girls at football. The most difficult pedagogical nut to crack is to get girls really interested in boys' games and not just politely interested. To start with the boys were superior, but now the girls are coming on. Now they really grab the initiative."*

In Swedish school politics "gender equality" is one important aspect of social justice. Social justice concerns the degree to which a society contains and supports the institutional conditions necessary for the realization of the values that constitute what is expressed as the good life (Young 1990:37).[1] In this paper the archeology of social justice is described as discourses of practices concerning Swedish ways of dealing with gender equality in compulsory school. The paper starts with some recent developments in Sweden that are important for the theme, it continues with the rhetoric contained in some relevant Acts, Government Bills and National Curricula concluding with concrete examples from classroom practices where teachers are working with gender equality pedagogy.

The Swedish context - structural gender

'Deregulation', 'privatisation', 'decentralisation' and 'the extremely wasteful public sector' are key-words in recent Swedish political rhetoric. These words are used by non-socialists but also by Social Democrats in administrating a process of change towards more steering by market forces and less state regulation. This so-called system shift started at the end of the 1970s and is justified by the need to counteract the increasing recession in Sweden. During this period Sweden entered the European Union and the government reorganized the economy according to EU demands, which implied a reduction in state subsidies. Benefits slowly decline as a result of teriorates because of cuts in state subsidies to the welfare state. The public sector, that both promotes family services and employment opportunities especially for women, is shrinking more and more.

The core of the Swedish state feminist approach to gender equality has been the promotion of a combination of parenting and paid employment for both women and men. The Swedish public day-care system, which dates back to the 1960s, expanded rapidly during the 1970s in parallel with the increasing female participation in the labour force. Public child care has been financed by large government subsidies and only a minor degree by parents' fees and is available for parents who study or have employment for at least 20 hours per week. In the 1980s the day-care field was opened to private and quasi-market solutions. However, the majority of children are still taken care of in public child care institutions. (Oláh 1998)

Sweden has one of the world´s highest employment rates for women. However, the fact that women largely work part time to a higher degree than men hints that women also largely take responsibility for unpaid work and family duties. During the seventies the number of women working long part time (20-35 hours a week) increased and during the eighties full time work (40 hours a week) also increased. During the same period the number of males working full-time decreased and those working part-time increased, but there were still big differences between women and men concerning full-time work.

At the beginning of the nineties unemployment increased for both women and men. In 1995, 80 per cent of women, compared to 85 per cent of men, were in the labour force; 45 per cent of the women worked full time, 25 per cent long part time and 4 per cent short part time. 5 per cent were unemployed. Of the men 71 per cent worked full time, 5 per cent long part time and 2 per cent short part time, 7 per cent were unemployed (Swedish Statistics 1996).

Simultaneously with the employment rate among women being one of the world´s highest, Sweden has one of the most sex-segregated labour markets. Females are more well educated compared with men, but females are educated in low valued and low paid fields as education, nursing, service and administration. The higher salary the more likely a male dominated occupation. Women have higher average salary in only 5 of 98 occupations. One of four Swedish men gets more than SEK 20 000:- salary per month, while only one of ten Swedish women earn the same. (Dagens Nyheter 29/3 1998 referee Swedish Statistics)

A cross national study, by Olin Wright et al (1995), in USA, Canada, The United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Norway and Japan confirmed that Sweden together with Norway has one of the largest gender gaps in workplace authority. The relatively large gender gap in workplace authority in the Social Democratic Scandinavian countries, is explained as being a by-product of the relatively low priority placed on the liberal goals of individual competition and achievement versus more communal benefits. A women´s movement embedded in a Social Democratic political culture, as is the case in Sweden, would be expected to be less concerned with labour market mechanisms and more concerned with state interventions that directly provide services and resources that enhance women´s welfaresuch as parental leave, maternal health care, child care services and child allowances (Olin Wright et al 1995). However, female political representation has increased and became the highest in the world by the mid 1990s. The top levels in politics became, during the nineties, equal regarding the sexes. Fifty per cent of all top officials in ministries and 44 per cent of all Members of Parliamentary Committees are women. (Swedish Statistics 1996)

Insurance protection has not, as in other countries, been limited to the full-time employed only (Oláh 1998 referee Sundström 1991). Sweden has the Western world´s most generous provisions for paid parental leave. The 1995 parental insurance regulation states that one month of the cash benefit must be used by the mother and one month by the father "Dad's month". Payment covers 90 per cent of the parent's current wage. The remaining 390 days, can be used by either parent; for 300 days the benefits is paid at the rate of 80 per cent of the parental wage followed by 90 days with minimum payment. Temporary cash benefit can be transferred from the parents to any other person who stays home from work to care for the child. In 1990 the temporary cash benefit increased to 120 days per child (under 12 years) and year. In 1993 74 per cent of women but only 27 per cent men used the cash benefit. But the temporary cash benefit was used by 41 per cent of men and 59 per cent of women. (Swedish Statistics 1995)

However, in 1996 payments for the "dad's month" were reduced from 90 per cent to 85 per cent of the wage and cash benefits for the remaining 300 days from 80 per cent to 75 per cent. Family allowances were reduced from SEK 750:-. for each child to SEK 640:-. for each child. (Swedish Statistics 1996) The Swedish pension system is also declining. The universal coverage of the whole population, whether they have been in paid or unpaid work, is a flat-rate basic pension called 'the people's pension'. In addition to this pension to ensure a proper living standard for everyone, there has been a national supplementary pension (so-called ATP). ATP has been determined by the 15 best earnings years in a 30-year employment period. Since women more often work part time than men, especially during the period when the family has pre-school children, this system is favourable especially to women. However, according to a new pension programme there should be a more direct connection between life-salaries and pension levels. This new programme favours full time employment and overtime work for a long period; it does not favour those women and men, who spend time shouldering domestic responsibilities in accordance with the core of gender equality in Sweden.

A current debate in Sweden is connected with that question. The debate is about whether or not the state should partly finance salaries for private servants in families. The arguements for such a solution have been borrowed from gender equality rhetoric in paid work. A servant at home gives both females and males an equal chance to compete on the labour market and to take part in political work. This new service area could also solve the problem of the increasing unemployment among women and men, especially since there are cuts in subsidies to the 'extremely wassful public sector' and a lot of people working there are losing their jobs. In an opinion poll 54per cent Swedes (54 per cent males and 53 per cent females) agree with the suggestion of State part funded servants. Non-socialist voters are most affirmative, but 40 per cent social democtrats are affirmative to pay for a servant if the State subsidizes half of the costs (Västerbottens-kuriren 28/3 1998 referee Temo).

For schools the change started during the seventies and ended in the nineties. During this period school policies shifted from a system with centralized steering, including regulated national curricula towards decentralization including goal oriented national curricula. The most important aim of the previous extensive regulation of the educational system, for which the state was economically responsible, was to guarantee an equal educational standard throughout the country. The arguments for the shift have focused on how to overcome the negative aspects regarding practical pedagogy, of too much state intervention with its dependence on bureaucratization and on how to delegate more professional power to the teachers. The debate has also focused on how to make schools more effective in reaching the aims of compulsory school and on how to "measure" progress of efficiency. National steering and control of compulsory schools presupposes that the aim-goverened schools will perform different kinds of evaluations and follow-ups.(Berge 1997:7) [2] Key-words such as "choice, diversity and parental choice" are often expressed in what Nilsson (1998 referee Kallos &Nilsson 1995) in her paper calls a New Liberal rhetoric, and Ve (1998) highlights in her paper the

liberalism's image of the "free and autonomous individual".

Teaching has become increasingly dominated by woman. Of all the teachers in compulsory school during the school year 1996/97 only 28 per cent were male. The corresponding figure in 1985/86 was 32 per cent. However, most significant increase in women can be seen among the head teachers. During the last ten years the proportion of female head teachers has increased from 10 per cent to 55 per cent (Swedish Statistics 1997). However, female head teachers increase during a period of less special education, less teachers, less money in the schools and less money in the families especially in single parent (mainly mothers) families (Nilsson 1998). The female head teachers are administrating a decline of compulsory schools. According to Holmberg (1998) female heads administrating the declining welfare state is a common strain in the public sector today.

The rhetoric of gender equality

Jämställdhet - the Swedish word for gender equality
The Swedish word for equality -"jämlikhet"- refers to equitable relations between all individuals and groups in society and is based on the notion that all people are of equal value, regardless of sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, or social class. However, when the Swedish state feminists during the sixties wanted to change unequal power relations between the sexes, they found that the word "jämlikhet" was a political embarrassment and a handicap to them. "Likhet" is a part of the word and "likhet" is too much closely to the underlying notion of "the same nature/looking alike" and the feminists feared that the word could have too many sexual undertones to be generally accepted in Sweden.

According to Florin & Nilsson (1997:2) the feminists wanted to find a word as functional as the one used to describe the concept of the Swedish welfare state - "folkhemmet"-, which literally means "people's home". "Folkhemmet" has no sexual undertones; it bridges class distinctions, sounds moderately harmless and disguises underlying conflicts so that they can be dealt with. The state feminists chose the word "jämställdhet", which is impossible to translate into English. Its meaning of is that "women and men stand side by side in life". The quantitative aspect of "jämställdhet" implies an equitable distribution of women and men in all areas and at all levels of society. If there are more than 60 per cent of one of the sexes there is no "jämställdhet". The qualitative aspect implies that the different knowledge, experiences, and values of both women and men are used to enrich and direct all social areas and endeavours. During the seventies the concept was introduced into politics by the Social Democrats and a State Delegation for Gender Equality was founded.

The rhetoric in some policy documents
The rhetoric concerning gender equality aims changes in Swedish Government Bills

during the nineties. During the eighties gender equality meant that women and men should have equal rights but also equal responsibilities and opportunities in paid work; unpaid caring work and domestic work; and participation in politics, unions, and other social activities. (Proposition 1887/88:105:3) In order to fulfill these aims in the three different areas and inaccordance with the statistics on gender structure in Sweden at that time, men needen to change and participate more in unpaid work and women needed to change and participate more in paid work and politics. The Government Bill (Proposition 1993/94:147:15) stresses equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities between the sexes in all areas. The change in rhetoric towards the more common word "all" is simultaneously a reinforcement and a weakening of the aims of gender equality, since it means everything but does not stress anything.

The Acts that are currently in force

During the nineties neither the Gender Equality Act (SFS 1994:292) nor the Education Act (UFB 1996/97:2) had paragraphs covering all three areas. Only paid work is regulated in the Gender Equality Act, meaning that there are no regulations regarding the sexes and unpaid work. However, according to paragraph five, the employer shall facilitate the combination of paid work and parenthood for both female and male employees. According to the Education Act: "All children and youth shall, independent of sex, geographical domicile and social and economical conditions, have equal access to public education for children and youth." (Ibid.:15)[3] The word "jämställdhet" appears in the Education Act in the middle of the nineties. "Those who work at school should promote equality between the sexes." (Ibid) Examining the rhetoric in the Swedish Government Bill (Proposition 1994/95:164) there are no explicit discussions concerning boys and their knowledge of care work and domestic work, though paid work and higher education, especially the need to get girls interested in natural sciences and technology including data communication with computers, are highlighted.

The National Curricula for compulsory school

The first two National Curricula for the nine-year compulsory school (Läroplan 1962, 1969) after the second world war were implemented under Social Democrat governments. In accordance with the gender equality aims the curricula rhetoric explicitly stresses the idea that old gender patterns should be challenged in compulsory education regarding both paid and unpaid work. Not only should girls and women change and enter male dominated areas but boys and men should also change and take more responsibility for unpaid care work and domestic work. In the same year that the first National Curriculum became valid, Home Economics became compulsory subject for both girls and boys and a new subject - the Study of Children and Childhood- was introduced. In 1969 the two subjects Textile Craft and Wood&Metalwork were combined into one subject -Craft- for both girls and boys. (Berge 1992)

However, simultaneously with the introduction into the rhetoric of the concept "jämställdhet" school policies changed. Subsequent National Curricula have been goal oriented. The first was implemented by a non-socialist government, but the shift was

continued and completed by the following Social Democrat governments.[4] The paradox during this period was, that just as the word "jämställdhet" entered the goal oriented rhetoric to highlight gender equality, explicit demands regarding men's responsibilities in unpaid domestic work disappeared, while the necessity to encourage girls to enter into higher education and into paid work - especially in traditional male areas- was stressed.

It could be argued that need to change men's gender patterns is implicit in the core of the "jämställdhet" concept. However, practices in school policies are inconsistent with that argument, since subjects connected with domestic knowledge have lost ground. In 1994 the subject Study of Children and Childhood disappeared as a specific subject and the time given to compulsory Home Economics was reduced. The only subject that has not lost ground is Craft, a combined unit of male and female subjects. In arguing for the importance of Craft, its connections to Technology, Art and Design have been highlighted, while its connections to Home Economics are few (Berge 1992).

One may, of course, argue that there are possibilities in the goal oriented curricula and school popolicies for individual schools to create their own profile, stressing for example the importance of unpaid work specially focused on the need for boys to achieve such competence. But part from some efforts in that direction in the project presented in the next part of this paper, I know of no such school profiles in Sweden. The most common trends have been towards profiles highlighting Technology and Data Communicationoften referring to the explicit rhetoric about gender equality and girls' needs in the latest National Curricula.

Gender in relational actions in classroom practices

What happens in classrooms when teachers try to develop a pedagogy aimed at changing power relations between the sexes according to the Swedish concept of gender equality? For three years I have been associated as a researcher with five female and four male compulsory-school teachers who wanted to work for gender equality in their classrooms.[5] My role was to be a link between teachers and pupils in discussions about various educational topics. The pupils made their voices heard in a number of interviews and in various written documents which I developed in cooperation with the teachers. I also documented the pupils' and teachers' actions by making classroom observations. These documents and our interpretations of them were meant to shed light on the prevalent power relations in the classrooms, thus forming a basis for the teachers' development of various educational issues.

Developing a pedagogy aimed at promoting gender equality is like walking a tightrope. Teachers have to be able to break unequal power relations without causing chaos in the classrooms. On the one hand, there is the risk that teachers who are too anxious to manifest unequal differences between the sexes may meet with too much counteraction.

This would result in the existing gender power relations gaining an even stronger foothold in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers who are too unfocussed in their attempts to bring about change risk maintaining the status quo. Over time the balancing act thus includes moments of equality as well as moments of normalisation.

Moments of equality is the phrase used here to describe the various attempts to challenge the obstacles to gender equality in the classrooms. It also refers to pedagogical efforts to promote the long-term gender-equality goals in Swedish society. *Moments of normalisation*[6] is used here to characterize explicit or implicit resistance to such challenges and to adjustments to current gender discourses. Moments of resistance and normalisation make visible the contextual and discursive boundaries between the sexes.

The concept of *discourse* refers here to the continuous interplay between people in the classrooms and to the choreography (Berge 1992:24,177. Hirdman 1988:51) which defines the figures and steps these people do accept and do not accept. This means that the teachers who participated in the project tried to change a discourse which they themselves had helped to create. They tried to control the construction of gender, moving it towards moments of equality within a context where discursive gender practices already control their own as well as their pupils´ bodies and minds.

In this paper I will give some examples of moments of normalisation in the classrooms, since they make visible the contextual and discursive boundaries between the sexes. The moments are presented under three headings focusing on different aspects of the gender discourse. People who want to change gender practices have to become aware of how they themselves are contextually constituted by them in order to combat be determined by them.[7] But first a short presentation of the context in which these teachers and pupils have been working:

The school is located in a town with approximately 8,500 inhabitants. Ten kilometres away there is a town with a university. Roughly 80 per cent of the school's pupils lived in private houses, only two per cent of them with a single parent. The average age in the area was fairly low and the level of educational attainment of both mothers and fathers was quite high[8]. In the project classes there were two pupils with dark skins but only one of them had parents of foreign extraction. The majority of the teachers participating in the project both lived and worked in this town. Thus, the actors in the project can be said to represent a white, fairly well-educated middle class living in nuclear families.

Moments when girls and women fall in the caring trap

In order to avoid misunderstanding I want to point out that the concept of the caring trap should not be taken to mean that caring for other people is to be avoided. What should be avoided is that only girls and women are expected to take on this responsibility.[9] According to the gender-equality goals this responsibility should be shared by both women and men. However, we found that there were moments when even the adults in the project did not realise how their own actions contributed to female teachers´ and

girls´ falling into the caring trap. I myself was no exception.

The first time I made classroom observations in a class at the intermediate level where the dominance of boys was said to be non-existent, my interpretation was that the girls outmanoeuvred the boys completely and that the male teacher adjusted totally to the needs of the girls. The girls were seen and heard, they gesticulated and took up a great deal of space. They did not give in but made renewed efforts if they met with opposition and they argued strongly in favour of their case. They were well-informed and seemed to have an answer for everything. It was as if there were no boys at all in the classroom. I felt uneasy and I wrote in the margin of my observation notes that the girls behaved like dominant boys. It was not until later when I read my notes from three observations in this class, that I realised that my reactions had been exaggerated. Instead of regarding these events as moments of equality, when "normal" gender discourses in this school were being transgressed, I was in fact caring for the boys´ needs. When I was no longer in the centre of these events I realised that I had fallen into the caring trap. My notes from three different observations revealed that the content and the teaching methods, in contrast to my experiences of them, were just as often directed towards the needs of the boys in this particular classroom. Let us remain in this classroom and look at this type of event during a co-ed lesson in Swedish.

The pupils had been told to take turns in reading aloud to each other in small groups. The groups were spread out all over the building so that they would not disturb each other. The teacher moved between the groups. It turned out that the girls were superior to the majority of the boys at reading aloud. The girls took the leadership in the groups and the responsibility for both the order in the groups as well as for correcting the boys' reading. They did so even if the teacher had not explicitly asked them to do it. At the same time as the girls took on the leadership in the reading groups they paradoxically fell into the caring trap. It was the boys' need to practise reading aloud in peace and quiet that became the norm for the form, content and methods of the teaching and the girls spontaneously assumed responsibility for these tasks. Later, when we discussed this lesson the teacher found no harm in the "pupils" - i.e. the girls - helping "each other" - i.e. the boys. On this occasion the teacher was also very hesitant about changing his way of teaching and he saw no point in giving the pupils different assignments. He did not seem to be aware of the fact that in reality the girls and boys already had different tasks during this lesson. He also rejected a suggestion that the girls should be given more demanding and challenging assignments during Swedish lessons.

The situation was the reverse in the parallel class where there were a number of clever boys who liked to demonstrate their talents and to rank themselves in relation to their classmates. They therefore tried to create situations in the classroom in which they would be able to compete with each other. These competitions also gave the boys opportunities to ridicule those pupils who were not up to standard. The female home room teacher had decided to try to avoid competition in her teaching because she felt that many pupils, girls as well as some boys, were very upset by all the comments and

remarks. According to this teacher all pupils, and especially these particular boys, needed training in empathy and solidarity. During my observations she, nevertheless, set up some competitions. They occurred in situations where the boys became too demanding and when the teacher almost lost control over the class. In these situations the teacher satisfied the needs of the boys in order to avoid chaos.

During our discussions of these boys and the need to train them in empathy and solidarity, I happened to think of the girls in the parallel class. In the same way as the girls helped the boys with their reading perhaps these boys could occasionally lend girls a helping hand. However, according to the teachers this was unthinkable in spite of the fact that these boys helped younger boys with their schoolwork within the framework of a sponsor system developed by the project teachers. The unthinkable was that clever boys would agree to waste their talents on helping girls.

These examples say something about moments of normalisation. In the first classroom the girls and I fell into the caring trap, in the parallel class it happened to the female teacher. The norm was caring for the needs of the boys. The teachers resisted when caring for the needs of girls was suggested, especially if boys were to be responsible for the caring. The outline of a discourse was emerging.

Moments of resistance to demanding girls

Within the same discourse there is resistance to girls avoiding the caring trap and demanding space for themselves. The following two examples illustrate this resistance.

One of the teachers at the junior level said that the boys reminded her of her younger brothers when they were small - charming but helpless, confused and immature. As the big sister she was raised to take responsibility for her younger brothers. The teacher attached great value to her upbringing and she had assumed the responsibility for teaching both girls and boys in three parallel classes at the junior level in Caring with a special focus on the home and family. In spite of the fact that she trained specifically the boys to take care of themselves in sex-segregated groups, she occasionally fell into 'big sister behaviour' towards them during co-ed lessons. There were moments when she met the boys', but not the girls' needs for her time and attention. "Try yourself", she often said to the girls who demanded space for themselves. "She's a nuisance", was her comment on a girl who refused to give up. On several occasions the teacher was annoyed with the girls who she thought were too lazy to try to work out their assignments alone and therefore asked for her help. She could also be critical of girls she thought were clever but egocentric and therefore wanted her attention and praise.

In interviews and in written documents a handful of girls in one of the classes at the intermediate level, repeatedly complained that their female home room teacher did not take the gender-equality goal of seriously. According to these girls, the teacher was more tolerant of some boys' needs for extra space and of, their occasionally breaking the

rules in the classroom. The girls felt offended that they were not taken seriously when they demanded greater equality in the classroom. "You should place a hidden camera in our classroom", they said in an interview. The teacher said that she attempted to treat everyone alike, but the girls complained that she did not realise how, in reality, she treated them differently. On these occasions the girls felt that they got more support from their male teachers and that their home room teacher let them down more often. In group interviews with the boys they took up the subject themselves and confirmed some of the girls' statements.

These situations were interpreted differently by the teachers. Whereas the male teachers and the female teacher who was a convinced feminist saw girls who tried to create greater equality in their classrooms, their home room teachers regarded them as manipulative individualists who always wanted to be the centre of attention. The female teachers working for greater justice, but who did not like to call themselves feminists, especially agreed with the home room teachers in these situations[10]. This means that their norm for "normal" girls' behaviour was that they should not be self-assertive and that they should not draw attention to themselves. On the basis of these different views we were able to discuss and problematise the discursive behaviours prescribed for girls.

Moments of resistance to compliant boys

On the reverse side of the same discursive coin lies resistance to compliant boys. A lot of people in this small town are involved in sports activities, especially football. The town even has two competing football teams. "It was practically impossible for me to have a boyfriend from the rival football team", one female teacher who grew up in this town stated. The teachers also considered that the boys, and those girls, who were good at sport, had a certain status in this school. The group of competitive boys belonged to this category. As I have already mentioned the teachers at the intermediate level tried to tone down the competitive side of school work. Instead they tried to focus on solidarity and empathy. At the junior level they taught Caring to both girls and boys. These two approaches to the construction of masculinity sometimes caused problems for the teachers.

The male teacher who was the home room teacher in the class where the girls sometimes took on the teacher's responsibilities and where the boys very seldom entered into competition with the girls, was sometimes very worried about the boys in his class. In their sixth school year he felt that these boys were excluded from the companionship of other boys of the same age. Neither the girls in their own class, with whom they used to play and have small romances, nor the girls in the parallel classes thought very much of them.

We invited a female researcher from Denmark who has worked together with teachers to try to change boys' attitudes to each other. She described how the Danish teachers discussed in small groups of boys why these boys who are not very good at or interested

in sport are often ridiculed or belittled. They also discussed why boys who are good at and interested in sports dominate not only sports classes but practically all situations in school (Kruse 1992). Later when we discussed parallels between the Danish project and our own work, the teachers would not accept that the situations were comparable.

The teachers did not, as in the Danish example, really question the transfer of status from good sports performances to other situations. Many teachers were themselves involved in sport and discussions about the negative effects of sport soon turned into enumerations of its positive sides. The teachers explained the freezing out of the boys in terms of the location of the classrooms in the building. They also said that it would have been easier to have two instead of three classes and that the boys had different sports teachers. The most common explanation was, however, that these boys were biologically immature. In other words, the problem was shifted from the boys who excluded these boys to the boys who had been excluded. Defining the problem in terms of biological immaturity meant that they would not have to deal with it. They hoped that the problem would be solved automatically at the upper level of the compulsory comprehensive school, when these "immature" boys would, hopefully, catch up with the rest of the boys.

These arguments are based on the notion that boys, who at the intermediate level are not competitive in relation to girls or other boys, do not fit the norm for a "normal" boy. Thus it follows that the norm for mature masculinity is to compete. Unlike the discussions about the construction of femininity it was much more difficult to problematise the norms for the contextual discursive "normal" boy. It was therefore also easier both to normalise and to make the behaviour of these particular boys "abnormal"[11].

The maternal nurturance trap - who takes on the carework and housework?

In this paper the archeology of social justice has been described as discourses of practices in the Swedish way of dealing with gender equality in compulsory school. Swedish school policies are themselves part of a whole system shift towards more market steering which is underway in Sweden. 'Deregulation, privatisation, decentralisation of the extremely wasteful public sector' as well as 'choice, diversity and parental choice' and 'the free and autonomous individual' are key-words in these efforts. The so-called 'extremely wasteful public sector', financed by government subsidies, has been the core of the Swedish welfare state. The public sector has provided service for family responsibilities as well as employment opportunities, especially for women. The so-called 'extremely wastful public sector' has also made it possible for women, as well as for men, to combine parenting with paid employment according to the aims in the Swedish concept of gender equality. During the seventies the concept "jämställdhet" (gender equality) was introduced by the Social Democrats and a State Delegation for Gender Equality was founded to work towards realization of

the aims of gender equality. The 'extremely wastful sector' has been one important factor in making it possible to regulate and change traditional gender patterns.

The current aims of gender equality ("jämställdhet") support shared rights, responsibilites and opportunities in "all" areas in the rhetoric. However, other practices show that some areas are much more important than others. Family responsibilities have low priority on the market and in all current educational policy documents, while gender equality in paid work and politics have high priority.

There are obviously tensions between the female and male ideal types according to the Swedish concept of gender equality and the female and male ideal types according to the market concept. More steering by market forces presupposes self-confident, independent and competitive individuals with no restraining and regulated obligations. Family responsibilities and housework certainly constitute such restraining obligations and handicap individuals in competitions, since these obligations demand time and energy. (See also Ve 1998) According to the statistics, Swedish women have taken the greatest responsibility for these obligations, mostly using the welfare state allowances and it´s public day-care and elderly care system.

In the present Gender Equality Act only paid work is regulated. Neither the Education Act, nor the latest Government Bills and National Curriculum stress family responsibilities. On the contrary, when arguing for gender equality, the importance of girls increasing their competence in male dominated areas essential for the labour market is stressed. The importance of boys increasing their competence regarding family responsibilities can only be said to be implicit in the word "jämställdhet". However, the fact that those subjects significant for family responsibilities, which were made compulsory for both boys and girls during the sixties, have lost ground in compulsory school, counteracts that statement. On the contrary, these practices demonstrate rather how family responsibilities are not given high priority either for boys or for girls in Swedish compulsory schools. Whatever is hidden in compulsory school cannot hide the fact that such work is everyday work, that has to be done by someone every day.

The teachers presented in this paper used the deregulation of schools to profile their pedagogy towards gender equality. The starting point was an awareness that teachers, pupils and researchers were already constituted by but not completely determined by contextual gender power relations. In order to try to change them all of us had to be aware of how our actions already are contained by discursive gender patterns.
The discursive caring trap for girls and women was made visible, when we scrutinised expressions of resistance and protest. It emerged that girls who refused to fall into it and boys who were not sufficiently far away from it were met with resistance. It was easier for these teachers to work for caring, empathy and solidarity in their teaching but much more difficult to challenge the construction of masculinity associated with sports and competition. It was easier for these teachers to work with argumentation techniques and

negotiations in role plays but much more difficult for some teachers to take seriously the girls' challenge to the construction of femininity associated with caring.

These expressions of a gender discourse are here created by the teachers and children in this particular context. We cannot automatically assume that they manifest themselves in the same way in other contexts where other pupils and teachers act together. However, the balance act between moments of equity and moments of normalisation is present in all contexts where there is a pedagogy aimed at changing power relations. In order to be able to accomplish real change and contravention of established views each and every one has to try to bring to light their own invisible and ingrained routines. The teacher has a special responsibility in this work. If the teacher continues in the same old way, so will the pupils. An important observation is that a pedagogy aimed at gender equality must be constantly renewed as long as the relations of the gender structures and gender symbolism are permeated with segregation and hierarchy. Old orders will easily emerge again in new forms since the discourse has already infiltrated our bodies and minds.

Since I know of no other such efforts, as those presented above where teachers take the concept of gender equality seriously in their teaching, one must ask who will learn to take on family responsibilities. One must also ask, if both girls/women and boys/men adapt themselves to the demands of the market and refuse to fall into the maternal nurturance trap, who will take on family responsibilities.

If partial state funding servants become the new postmodern solution to family responsibilities, the present concept of gender equality will have to be deconstructed and reconstructed, since class and race issues will become even more visible. Who are the females and males who can afford to pay a reasonable salary to such servants? Who are the females and males who, in spite of partial state funding, are unable to pay a salary for a servant? Who are the females and males who will start their own private business in this field? Who are the females and males who will be employed as servants? Who are the unemployed females and males who are supposed to become the new servants working with family responsibilities and maternal nurturance? These questions must be analyzed and answered from a gender, class and race perspective. These issues have to be taken seriously when working with gender equality pedagogy in classroom practices.[12]

Deregulation, decentralisation and privatisation are opening up the possibilities for different profiles -for example different school profiles- simultaneously deregulation are giving more space for the forces of symbolic violence rooted in traditional gender, class and race power relations. Even in classrooms where teachers try to counteract these discursive practices, they are constantly present since people are not determined but constituted by them.

It will take more than good will in laws, curricula and individual educational work in

the classrooms if goals of gender equity are to be realized. Hoping that school education alone will be able to eliminate unequal power relations is to underestimate the forces involved in relational actions. On the other hand, school and education can make the exercising of power visible and thus help women and men and girls and boys to question it. In such situations people can go beyond ingrained gender discourses and begin to create other practices, symbols and structures within their various spheres of activities.

References

Berge, Britt-Marie (1992) *Gå I lära till lärare - en grupp kvinnors och en grupp mäns inskolning I slöjdläraryrket* / Craft teachers as spearheads for an equal society? A study of female and male future craft teachers and of the school subject craft in Swedish compulsory school/. Doctoral thesis. Umeå University Department of Education.

Berge, Britt-Marie (1997) Steering of teachers' work - lessons from an action research project in Sweden. In *Teacher Education and Research in Umeå. Theme: Steering of teacher work. No2/1997:*7-22

Berge, Britt-Marie (1998) *Action research for gender* equity. London:Open University Press. (Forthcoming)

Bordo, Susan (1990) Reading the slender body, In Jacobus et al (ed) 1990, *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science,* New York: Routledge.

Dagens Nyheter 29/3 1998 /Daily News/ referee Swedish Statistics.

Epstein, Debbie 1997, Boyz' Own Stories: masculinities and sexualities in school. *Gender and Education, Vol 9, No1/1997.* s 105-115.

Florin, Christina & Nilsson, Bengt (1997) "Something in the nature of a bloodless revolution"- How new gender relations became "equal status policy" in Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s. Paper presented to SCASS on the 28th of May 1997, Uppsala University Sweden.

Hirdman, Yvonne 1988, Genussystemet, reflexioner kring kvinnors sociala underordning, *Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift, nr 3 1988:*49-63.

Holmberg, Carin (1998) "Den ömma bödeln"/The caring executioner/. Lecture at Women's Studies, Umeå University, Sweden 1998-03-10.

Johansson, Ulla (1998) "Accessible to each and everyone? Meritocrazy and social justice in Swedish education 1800-1960. Paper presented to AERA Annual Meeting April 13-17 1998, San Diego.

Kallos, Daniel & Nilsson, Ingrid (1995) Defining and Re-defining the Role of the Teacher in the Swedish Comprehensive School. *Educational Rewiew 47/2:*173-188

Kenway, Jane with Willis, Sue, Blackmore, Jill, Rennie, Leonie 1993, Learning from girls: What can girls teach feminist teachers? I Yates (ed) 1993, *Feminism and Education.* Melbourne: Studies in Education La Trobe University. s 63-77.

Kruse, Anne-Mette 1992, "...We have learnt not to sit back, twiddle our thumbs and let them take over." Single-sex settings and the development of a pedagogy for girls and a pedagogy for boys in Danish schools, *Gender and Education, Vol.4, No.1-2/1992.*

s 81-103.
Läroplan för grundskolan (1962)/Swedish National Curriculum/ Skolöverstyrelsen.
Läroplan för grundskolan (1969)/Swedish National Curriculum/ Stockholm:Liber
Läroplan för grundskolan (1980) Allmän del/Swedish National Curriculum/ Stockholm:Liber
Nayak, Anoop & Keihly, Mary Jane 1997, Masculinities and schooling: why are young men so homophobic? I Steinberg, Epstein, Johnson (eds) 1997, *Border Patrols: policing the boundaries of heterosexuality*, London: Cassel.
Nilsson, Ingrid "Social justice and welfare state in decline". Paper presented to AERA Annual Meeting April 13-17 1998, San Diego.
Oláh, Livia Sz. 'Sweden, the Middle Way'. A Feminist Approach. In *The European Journal of Women's Studies Vol.5, 1998*:47-67.
Olin, Wright Erik, Baxter, Janeen, Birkelund, Gunn Elisabeth (1995) The Gender Gap in Workplace Authority: A cross national study. *American Sociological Review, 1995, Vol 60* (june:407-435).
Proposition 1987/88:105 Om jämställdhetspolitik inför 90-talet. /About gender equity politics approaching the 90s. Government Bill/.
Proposition 1993/94:147 Delad makt delat ansvar. /Shared power shared responsibility. Government Bill/.
Proposition 1994/95:164 Jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män inom utbildningsområdet. /Equality between men and women within education. Government Bill/.
Rawls, John (1971;1976) *A Theory of Justice.* Oxford:Oxford University Press.
SFS 1994:292 Jämställdhetslagen /Gender Equality Act/
Sundström, Marianne (1991) Part-Time Work in Sweden: Trends and Equality Effects, *Journal of Economic Issues 30 (1)*:167-178.
Swedish Statistics (1996) *Women and Men in Sweden -Equality of the sexes.*
Swedish Statistics (1997) *Women and Men in Sweden -Equality of the sexes.*
UFB 1996/97:2 Skollag och skolförordningar. /Education Act/
Walkerdine, Valerie (1986), Progressive Pedagogy and Political Struggle. I Luke&Gore (eds) 1992, *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy,* London: Routledge. s 15-24.
Weiner, Gaby (1994) *Feminisms in Education - an introduction.* Buckingham: Open University Press.
Weiner, Gaby (1998) "Educational reform, gender and class in Britain: understanding shifts in discourses of social justice." Paper presented to AERA Annual Meeting April 13-17 1998. San Diego.
Ve, Hildur 1992, Aktionsforskning och jämställdhetsarbete i skolan, *Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift nr 3/1992.* s 64-74.
Ve, Hildur "Education, social justice, individualization and citizenship rights: A feminist perspective." Paper presented to AERA Annual Meeting April 13-17 1998, San Diego.
Västerbottens-kuriren 28/3 1998 /Västerbotten´s Courier/ referee Temo-opinion poll.
Young, Iris Marion (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference,* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press

1.Gaby Weiner (1998) describe in her paper Young´s re-framing of the concept of social justice away from Rawl´s (1971) concept of so-called distributive justice.

2. In their paper for this symposium Nilsson (1998) and Ve (1998) describes similar trends in the new segregating differences between schools and between local municipalities in Sweden and Norway.

3.Ingrid Nilsson (1998) means in her paper, that this way of expressing social justice comes close to Rawl´s (1971:11) "distributive fairness". Nilsson agree with Young (1990:15) that "distribution" is a rather reductionist perspective of social justice.

4. Agreements between social democrats and non-socialist parties are visible in UK (Weiner 1998) as well as in Noeway (Ve 1998).

5. Hildur Ve, Professor of Sociology, has also participated in the project as a consultant. She has carried out a similar research project with teachers in Norway. V. 1992. At the planning stage of the project we were inspired by the form of action research aimed at emancipation. The British educationalist Gaby Weiner calls this approach "critical praxis" which, because its emancipation aim, differs from the research approaches called "teacher as researcher" and "reflective practitioner". Gaby Weiner, 1994 p. 124.

6.Valerie Walkerdine 1986 uses this significance of normalisation" in her studies of classroom situations. Susan Bordo 1990 uses the concept of "self-normalisation" in her analyses of young girls' slimming and anorexia.

7.The work of overcoming those discursive gender practices that already control teachers´ and pupils´ bodies and minds are presented in Berge 1998 (forthcoming).

8.Thé average age in this area was 35-36; 82 per cent of the women and 79 per cent of the men had a post-secondary or an upper secondary education. Approximately 6 per cent of all inhabitants in this area were born abroad or were foreign citizens. The data on the recruitment area were collected by the municipal authorities at the request of the female principal of this school.

9. The deep roots of the discursive practices of female´s responsibilities for care work and housework are described on this symposium in Johansson's (1998) historical approach to social justice and education.

10.Jane Kenway et al 1993 p. 72 describes similar tensions between convinced feminist teachers and other female teachers in Australian schools.

11.See Debbie Epstein 1997, Anoop Nayak & Mary Jane Kehily 1997 and their analysis of how hegemonic and competitive masculinity is closely associated with heterosexuality and how discursive practices in school favour the construction of male hegemony and fear other forms of masculinity.

12. These questions come close to Young´s (1990) five faces of injustice/oppression as a framework for evaluating discourses of social justice used by Gaby Weiner (1998) in her paper.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: The maternal nurturance trap: Discursive practices of "social justice" in gender equity pedagogy in Swedish compulsory school

Author(s): Britt-Marie Berge PhD, Ass professor

Corporate Source: Department of Education, Umeå university Sweden

Publication Date: 13 April 1998

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 1	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2A	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2B
Level 1 ↑ [X]	Level 2A ↑ [ ]	Level 2B ↑ [ ]
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Britt-Marie Berge	Printed Name/Position/Title: Britt-Marie Berge PhD Assprofessor
Organization/Address: Department of Education Umeå University, S-90187 Umeå, Sweden	Telephone: +4690786621 FAX: +4690786700
	E-Mail Address: Britt-Marie.Berge@pedag.umu.se Date: 16 April 1998

(over)