Research Projects at the Department of Child Studies

1997:1

WORKING PAPERS ON CHILDHOOD AND THE STUDY OF CHILDREN
The Tema Institute – part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The Tema Institute is part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and is responsible for a substantial amount of the faculty's undergraduate education, research, and post-graduate training. A large proportion of the research and PhD training at the Tema Institute is undertaken within interdisciplinary thematic issues - Temas, but research is also conducted at the disciplinary departments that are responsible for the institute's undergraduate courses and programmes. Within the Temas, social scientists, students of the humanities, natural scientists, and technicians work together.

There are at present five Temas: the Department of Child Studies, the Department of Health and Society, the Department of Communication Studies, the Department of Technology and Social Change, and the Department of Water and Environmental Studies. Two new Temas are expected to be established in 1998; these are the Department of Gender Studies, and the Department of Ethnic Studies.

Research and post-graduate training is also conducted at the Centre for Disability Research, and within the Nature–Technique–Society programme, which is a joint research programme organised by the Departments of Technology and Social Change, and of Water and Environmental Studies.

The Tema Institute represents an innovative way of organising research and post-graduate training, and constitutes a complement to traditional, disciplinary-based research and training. PhD students are recruited to the Tema Institute from all parts of Sweden, and some come from abroad.

Within the institute two new graduate schools are under preparation; one of them – CIVITAS – will soon be initiated. The other graduate school is preparing for PhD training in cultural studies and the humanities.

Research and post-graduate training at the faculty also takes place within the context of a number of traditional disciplines such as economics and pedagogics. At present the Tema Institute has about 380 employees, including doctoral students, and an economic turnover of about 110 million SEK.

Undergraduate education at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is organised in programmes and individual courses. About 5300 students participate in courses and programmes in the humanities and social sciences, and about 2200 attend teachers training courses.

Undergraduate education

Undergraduate courses at the Tema Institute are provided in the following subjects: the History of Art and Visual Communication, Literature, Philosophy, Ethics, History, Geography, Teology and Studies of Religion, Social Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science. A considerable number of courses and programmes are also organised jointly by two or more disciplines; some of these courses are traditionally disciplinary, while others adopt an interdisciplinary perspective and approach a specific problem area from different disciplinary perspectives. Most subjects can be studied from first-year level to Master level, and some of the courses are given completely in English. The Tema Institute also strives to develop new programmes and to broaden the curriculum by introducing new courses such as the History of Philosophy and Archaeology.
Masters courses

The Tema Institute offers students the choice of either traditional Masters courses in which two years of the four-year study period are spent studying advanced courses in a traditional discipline, or interdisciplinary Masters courses that are affiliated to the interdisciplinary research conducted at the institute. After completion of a Bachelor's degree in a traditional subject relevant for the course, interdisciplinary Masters courses offer the student the chance of one year's study focused on a specific problem area. The aim of interdisciplinary courses is to provide the student with in-depth knowledge of the chosen area, and, through personal choice of subject and completion of a Masters' thesis, to enable the student to develop an individual study profile.

Doctoral training at the institute

Linköping University's PhD training programme at the Tema Institute constitutes a pioneering and alternative form of post-graduate education that complements traditional, disciplinary-based doctoral training. The creative interaction between traditional disciplines is exploited in broad interdisciplinary and thematic areas of study called Tema.

Since the creation of the Tema Institute in 1980, all doctoral students have been fully supported financially, and have been expected to devote themselves to their studies and thesis preparation on a full-time basis. Competition for the position of doctoral student at the Tema Institute is hard, and students are admitted to the different departments at the institute only every second year; for example, the departments of Technology and Social Change, and of Water and Environmental Studies will admit PhD students in 1997, and in the spring of 1998, the departments of Child Studies, of Health and Society, of Communication Studies, and two new temas – the Department of Ethnic Studies and the Department of Gender Studies – plan to recruit doctoral students.

During recent years, co-operation between the different thematic departments, and between thematic departments and disciplinary departments, has increased, and in 1996 PhD students were admitted for the first time to a new research programme - Nature – technique – society (NTS), to the Centre for Disability Research, and to Forum Scientum. The latter is a post-graduate school organised by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Faculty of Technology, and the Faculty of Health Sciences.

In 1997, the first PhD students will be recruited to an interdisciplinary post-graduate School of Energy Systems. The school is a national project in which, among others, Tema and the Department of Mechanical Engineering will co-operate. A new post-graduate school, Civitas, will organise research and PhD training in the fields of philosophy, history and sociology in co-operation with the Department of Health and Society. Within the liberal arts and humanities, post-graduate training in cultural studies is being planned.

Information on entrance requirements and entrance procedures can be obtained from the Tema Institute, or from the university's student counsellors.
The Department of Child Studies

The Department of Child Studies was founded in 1988 to provide a research and learning environment geared toward the theoretical and empirical study of both children and the social and cultural discourses that define what children are and endow them with specific capacities, problems, and subjectivities. A specific target of research is the processes through which understandings of 'normal' children and a 'normal' childhood are constituted, and the roles that children and others play in reinforcing or contesting those understandings. The various research projects carried out at the department focus on understanding the ways in which children interpret their lives, how they communicate with others, and how they produce and/or understand literature, language, mass media and art. Research also documents and analyses the historical processes and patterns of socialization that structure the ways in which childhood and children can be conceived and enacted in various times, places and contexts.

The Department of Child Studies offers a one year Masters program, and a four year PhD program. Admission to the PhD program occurs every second year, at which time the department admits approximately six new students, all of whom are guaranteed full funding for the duration of the program. Both the Masters and the PhD programs stress interdisciplinary competence, and classroom instruction covers historical, psychological, developmental and anthropological dimensions of children and childhood. Against this interdisciplinary background, students in the PhD program are expected to specialize in their chosen academic field (history, social psychology, anthropology, etc.). The PhD program consists of 2-3 semesters of classroom instruction, followed by a 5-6 semesters of supervised work on a PhD thesis, which include a semester or more of supervised reading courses, or external courses, specially designed to fit the individual student's area of specialization.

Curriculum – Postgraduate studies at the Department of Child Studies

Year 1. Course A. (5 points)

Children's Worlds. An introduction to research on children. The emphasis is on central themes and problem areas in child research and on different research approaches.

Course B. (10 points)

Children in time and space. Historical, sociological and anthropological research on children and childhood. An introduction to theories and methods of history and social science.

Course C. (10 points)

Children's symbol systems. On children's communicative development, self-image and identity in different social contexts. Social perspectives on language, play and art.

Course D. (5 points)

Methods. On the role of the researcher, reflexivity, method and data collection techniques, etc. This course is based on the methods and theories found in the different disciplines at the Department of Child Studies.
Course E. (10 points)

**Mini project.** The mini project consists of both required reading (5 points) and a pilot study in the subject area of a thesis (5 points).

Year 2. Course F. (5 points)

**Theory of science.** On epistemology and the basics of scientific theory and formation of concepts.

Course G. (5 points)

**Review.** A critical review and analysis of research concerning the planned subject area of the thesis.

Course F. (5 points)


25 points. Individual required reading. This takes the form of courses at irregular intervals or the student being individually examined.

Discourse Analysis.
Sociology of Childhood.
Popular Culture, Power of the State and Social Change.
Power and Resistance.
Culture and Conceptions of the Surrounding World.
Speech and Therapy.
Children in the Developing World.
Children and Literature.
Children and the Welfare State.
Childhood in the Middle Ages.
Children, School and Normalisation.
Research Projects at the Department of Child Studies

SCHOOL AND CULTURAL DISPOSITIONS

Karin Aronsson
Professor

External financier: The National Agency for Education, project number 6415.

What cultural dispositions do preschool children have for complex texts and pictures? In what way does aesthetic awareness change during the first years at school and to what extent can it be linked to cultural background and schooling?

The aim of the project is to relate cultural dispositions to cultural variation; partly to the degree of formal socialisation and partly to different home and school environments with varying elements of informal aesthetic socialisation. Theoretically, the project is based on research on figurative language (non-literal use of language, literature and visual images).

Various subprojects involve empirical studies of pre-school children (6 years) compared with children in the second grade concerning cultural dispositions and

- pictures (the pictorial process and experiencing pictures)
- fiction and jokes (interpretation of literature, the perspective taking in children's understanding of stories and jokes)
- TV fiction (children's interpretations related to jokes, irony and story structure)
- fiction and bilingualism (storytelling and interpretation of stories related to children's linguistic awareness at different bilingual proficiency levels).

Currently involved in the programme are Professor Karin Aronsson; Ingrid Andersson, Marie Benroth Karlsson and Ingegerd Rydin.


Doctoral dissertations:


Forthcoming:
Karin Aronsson
Professor

Social identity and discourse patterns in multiparty talk

There is often a dialogical dominance in studies concerning adult−child dialogues. In a number of studies, children and young people have been studied in multiparty discourses. The 'voice' of the child, which is discussed in terms of Bakhtin's theory, is placed in relation to other voices present. A number of different types of encounters are involved here: pedagogical receptions, family-therapy dialogues, sharing time sessions in a pre-school environment, etc.

In a microanalytical study of paediatric dialogues, different ways of talking past, through and over the heads of children in multiparty child−adult talk. The dialogue patterns are also related to models for social distance (so-called "politeness theory").

Dialogue patterns in family therapy are studied in a longitudinal study. Twenty families have been video-taped while undergoing family therapy over a long period of time. The dialogues are analysed on the basis of theory formation concerning power and facework. Narrative strategies and different ways of jointly building up stories are also studied.

One study concerns dialogue patterns with families where a child belongs to a risk group as regards contracting an allergy. All the families were video-taped in everyday problem-solving and dialogue situations where the child in question was 18 months old. Parent−child and child−child dialogues are related to both the child's illness (health) and theory formation concerning speech acts and social distance.


Karin Aronsson
Professor

Cultural Comparative Studies of Children's Pictorial Worlds

External financier (partly): The National Agency for Education, project number 6415.

When it comes to symbol processes, language development has been mapped in greater detail than children's drawings and pictorial worlds. In a comparative study, children's drawing development is related to formal and informal socialisation. The theoretical focus in these studies is on how drawings reflect children's value perspectives and social thinking.

One study concerns children's drawings from a contemporary perspective. Six different collections of drawings (from 1920–1990) are analysed with respect to aesthetics and social values. The difference between collections of drawings by boys and by girls is also discussed.
In two related studies, children's drawings in different cultures are analysed. In the first study, drawings by children in rural Ethiopia are compared with drawings by children in an Ethiopian urban elite environment. In the second study, a contrastive analysis is made of children's drawings in three different environments which vary in different cultural respects: Sweden, Tanzania and an ANC camp. All the children have described a classroom situation in pictorial form. In our analyses, we also show how the pupil-teacher ratio, (the relative size-scaling of pupils) varies significantly according to how child-oriented (self-centered) or dispositive (collective-centered) the culture is.

A third study concerns children's cultural dispositions in relation to artistic styles. In this study, pre-school and school children sorted well-known paintings (by matching "parents" and "children" by different artists) and the results indicate that considerably younger children than was previously believed are able to identify different styles when the study is designed in an interesting way. The results are related to Bourdieu's reasoning about familiarity with codes.


Making oneself heard in a second language - social interaction in bilingual settings.

External financier: The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Grant # 1996-0639: 01-02.

Karin Aronsson, Professor.
Lotta Holmgren-Lind: Drama play and second language environments
Jakob Cromdal (see below)

The voice of immigrant girls during analyses and treatment. How adolescents are heard in dialogues and written documents.

External financer: The Council for Social Research, project number 97-0125: 1C; and the National Board of Institutional Care, project number U 97 - 3005 - 1.

Karin Aronsson, Professor.
Karin Oswaldsson (see below).
Ingrid Andersson
Graduate student

Monolingual and Bilingual Children's Narrative Strategies.

External financier: The National Agency for Education.

This study concerns children's narratives in different situations. Children's narratives in different contexts provide information on both formal and functional features of children's language. Special attention is paid to the children's cultural habits in school and at home, and whether narrative is encouraged in different situations. Communicative aspects of narration are encouraged in different situations. Communicative aspects of narration, such as how different "voices" are constructed and analysed, as are linguistic aspects of the narratives, such as vocabulary, narrative coherence and linguistic complexity.

Marie Bendroth Karlsson
Graduate student

Art Education in Preschool Primary Schools. Aesthetic activities and pedagogical dilemmas.

This thesis explores art education at the preschool and primary school levels. My primary concern has been to analyze art practices in different pedagogical settings; the major questions are:
- How are art activities performed; what kind of mental tools do teachers offer and what kind of guidance do they provide?
- How do teachers talk about art and art making in their art activities?
- Is there a "poetic" or aesthetic dimension in preschool and primary school art activities? The analyses are based on micro-analyses of videotapes of all art activities at five preschools, five primary schools (second grade) and five art-galleries; all settings were videotaped during one entire week. A basic premise is that classroom discourse provides children with tools for thought (Vygotsky, 1962). Thus the primary focus has not been on the art products, but rather on the teaching and learning processes revealed in teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil dialogues. Most of the data consists of nonverbal and verbal discourse. All the art activities have been classified into "art projects" and "other projects" in terms of two criteria: (i) pupil's participation, and (ii) artistic tools (mental and/or technical tools) offered. The analyses show that art activities are often made subordinate to goals other than artistic learning, such as diagnosis, decoration/entertainment, concept-training, etc. Thus in institutional settings, aesthetic goals are often pressed into verbal intellectual or other academic forms. The empirical chapters present a series of pedagogical dilemmas showing how ambitious teachers try to accomplish two or more things at the same time, integrating art activities with something more "useful". In this process, the art activity often loses its aesthetic dimension. It is suggested that pedagogical dilemmas are caused by our implicit theories about child development and aesthetics.
Ann-Christin Cederborg
Assistant Professor

Sexual abuse of children. Analysis of police interrogations with children suspected of having been sexually abused and a review of court documents.


The aim of this project is to map and analyse discourse patterns in police interrogations with children who are suspected of being victims of domestic sexual abuse in order to understand how the child and the police officer co-produce the narrative of the supposed criminal act. Following the legal process after the police interrogation and mapping and analysing the criminal files in the district court will make it possible to understand which narratives by children are considered credible. The criminal files dealing with cases involving the children will also be mapped and analysed in order to understand what stories the courts consider to be credible. In the analysis, the cases which have been prosecuted after police interrogation will be compared with cases where prosecution was withdrawn. The review of police interrogations and court files will also generate knowledge of different background variables in the child's domestic situation.

In the case of traumatic experiences, such as sexual abuse, the opportunity of being able to talk about them is particularly important in order to be able to understand what has happened and why the event took place. Several researchers have also pointed out that it is important for children's mental health and social adjustment to feel at an early stage that they are believed when they talk about events in their lives (e.g. R.C. Summit, 1983). Consequently, another aim of the project is to study the clinical criteria of credible narratives. What degree of agreement is there between the clinical and the legal assessments of what is to be regarded as credible narratives about sexual abuse?

Specific questions for the project are: What makes a narrative about sexual abuse credible? What control and turn-taking strategies does the interrogator use? How does the child react? What sort of questions is the child expected to answer? How is the child's perspective monitored during the interrogation? What do the children say about their experiences of sexual abuse? How are the children's narratives described and interpreted in the court files? What emerges about the children's family background and relationships, etc.?

The project began in the autumn of 1995 and the collection of data has just been completed.

Jakob Cromdal
Graduate student

Making oneself heard in a second language – social interaction in bilingual environments.

External financier: The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Grant # 1996-0639: 01-02

Linguistic competence is not merely a matter of having a rich vocabulary and knowing the correct grammar, but also of understanding finer nuances of expressions and being able to choose the 'right' ways of speaking to fit the situation at hand. Children's pragmatic competence, i.e. the ability to choose the right expression in a given context, presents a largely overlooked field of inquiry, particularly in second-language research. With
increasing age and experience, the use of language in everyday social encounters involves an increasingly large repertoire of conversational styles. How can second language learners make themselves heard in play and other frequently occurring activities? What is the role of non-verbal and other communicative strategies?

Different aspects of bilingual 5-8 year old children’s communicative strategies will be investigated in two subprojects. Jakob Cromdal’s part aims at investigating various discourses among children in a number of settings (work in class, play et c.) in order to see how they make use, i.e. at the pragmatic level, of different language forms across various contexts. Taking current research on discourse processes as well as on bilingualism as point of departure, we hope to gain new insights into young bilinguals’ knowledge of communicative conventions and how this knowledge affects their personal communicative style.

Karin Osvaldsson
Graduate student

The voice of immigrant girls during analyses and treatment. How adolescents are heard in dialogues and written documents.

External financier: The Council for Social Research, project number 97-0125: 1C; and the National Board of Institutional Care, project number U 97 - 3005 - 1

The overall aim of the project is to follow a number of girls through introductory interviews in special juvenile institutions, so called borstals. In an attempt to obtain a clearer picture of their situations, documents from official reports will be used and interviews with the girls themselves will be conducted. One third of the girls will have an immigrant background. Adolescents are often the subject of a number of written reports in connection with placement in a juvenile institution. International research in this field has shown that women sometimes use a so-called powerless speech-style and that, as a result they are often considered less credible (O'Barr, 1982; Conley & O'Barr, 1990.) How do these girls understand institutional interviews and conversations? How do they make themselves heard in such situations? What instances of miscommunication can occur? How do they arise and what causes them? What is the role of ethnic background in this context?

Ingegerd Rydin
Graduate student

Making sense of TV narratives. Children's readings of a fairy-tale.

The present study deals with young children’s reading and reception of television fiction. Theoretically, the study is inter-disciplinary, combining text-reader oriented approaches within literature theory and sociocultural approaches within psychology and sociology. A television program within the genre of fairy tales is analyzed by using both narratological and psychological theoretical frameworks. Issues of intertextuality, dialogism, narrative codes, cinematic and literary conventions are considered in the analysis. Empirically, the study takes a qualitative approach and the process of reception is studied by means of in-depth interviews of 86 six and eight year-old children. The interview is regarded as a social practice or meeting-place between interviewer and informant. This approach has its roots in Piaget's early work, in which he employed and developed the méthode clinique as well as in Vygotsky's sociocultural psychology. Sociocultural variation is primarily studied by focusing on gender and age.
One analysis concerns narrative coherence and how the children "hatched the plot". It appeared as if many of the younger children had difficulties in producing a coherent narrative of the program, whereas most of the older children did not. The younger children often focused on a particular scene or episode. Apart from age, schooling experience is assumed to explain these differences. Another analysis focuses on how children master the narrative codes of the story and the process of identification. The girls seemed to be more emotionally involved in the story and believed it was "real" to a greater degree than the boys. The analysis shows how emotional involvement and identification play a role in the interpretative processes, i.e. how emotion and cognition are interrelated in media reception.

Methodological issues are addressed, for example, how drawings can be used in the study of media reception. The children were asked to make drawings in relation to the program, which can be seen as a "different" reading in which children project what is of subjective importance to them.

Cultural dispositions represent another type of sociocultural variation. The older children's literary repertoires and other cultural dispositions were studied in relation to their reconstructions of the television narrative.

The dissertation challenges such notions as "children's understanding of television" as a unitary concept and points to a variety of readings. Finally, the dissertation has implications for media literacy and media education.

Mia Thorell
Graduate student

Play arenas and social interaction. Politics and alignments in children's play discourse.

In the work on my thesis I am trying to shed light on the following main questions: How do 6-8-year olds perceive the adult world? What do children participating in pre-school engage in during the period called 'free play'. Children engaged in play scenarios, i.e. a doctor-patient scene and a family-life scene respectively, were audiorecorded. The scenarios were set up in order to elicit children's ideas about institutional hierarchies between children and adults and family life argumentation, respectively. Furthermore, I have videorecorded children engaged in playing and other self-chosen activities during free play in two institutional settings, i.e. pre-schools. The focus of my interest is children's arguing, the spatial division between girls and boys, and children's intimate relationships such as friendship and 'love'.
CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN'S NEEDS FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Gunilla Halldén
Associate Professor

A starting-point for the research programme sketched here is an interest in the ways people explain their actions and the impact of different discourses as a result of their providing people with explanations of why they do what they do. In the research on the sociology of families, the risk of dichotomising the private/public and the macro/micro level is emphasised. Parenthood also involves mediation between private and public and can be seen as an expression of a political activity practised at a micro level, but which is also of importance to the macro level. If we dissolve the conflict between micro and macro and view structures in small-scale interaction and actions in large-scale contexts, we may be able to study the phenomenon of, for example, power in a new way. Power is not always something that is practised against somebody, it can also be studied as a creative and liberating force which, in the long term, results in a change in power relations.

The way in which childhood is given shape and the ideals associated with it differ in different times and in different cultures. In the current research involving parenthood and the conditions governing childhood, we can distinguish two approaches. One approach concentrates on the sociology of childrearing. Parenthood is studied as a question of how parents, most often mothers, organise their life and try to create favourable conditions for themselves and their children. Studies of the ways in which parents view questions involving upbringing are connected to this area of research which encompasses studies of everyday psychology and parental ideas. The other approach is in the newly established field of sociology of childhood where children are studied as knowers and actors. This means taking the children’s standpoint and questioning the concept of childhood as something biological/natural and something best explained within developmental psychology. It also involves drawing attention to how conceptions of children and childhood are given a metaphorical significance in our society as well as the study of how the identity and self-image of children are created. In this research programme, these two approaches are combined.

Gunilla Halldén
Associate Professor

Children's conceptions of the phenomena family, upbringing and parenthood


The aim of the project is to study ways in which children regard family life and the possible roles of family members. During a period of two months, children in a junior-level class (14 boys and 18 girls) wrote narratives about their future families. In these narratives, they portrayed the family members and described how the family lived. The children wrote these narratives as part of their normal schoolwork. The narratives can be viewed as a version of reality, narrated by a child on the basis of his/her understanding, wishes, dreams and feelings as regards family life.

The narratives have been analysed from a gender and generational perspective, which means that the ways in which the boys and the girls formulate their positions in relation to children, parents and the opposite sex have been brought out.

The analysis shows that in their narratives, girls portray a family life with interaction between the family members. In these families, conflicts are more frequent than in the
boys' families. The person who makes decisions and decides in disputes is the principal character, i.e. the adult woman.

In the boys' narratives, not all the families are portrayed with interaction between the family members, nor are there conflicts to the same extent as in the girls' families. The boys less often give themselves the role of the adult who makes the decisions.

The girls depict their main characters as adults who possess power and in whose hands the responsibility for the care of the family rests, whereas the boys often as not fail to identify with the adult in their narratives. In the girls' narratives, we find a strong female role emphasised by the main character. In the boys' narratives, there is no strong and controlling adult. The mother is an important figure for both boys and girls. The girls choose to explore her nature whereas the boys choose to avoid confronting her altogether.


Gunilla Halldén
Associate Professor

"Who am I?" - 14-year olds' drawings of and essays on the family studied as an expression of dreams and thoughts about their own identities.

External financier: The Council for Social Research, project number 91-0239:2C.

The aim of the project is, with the ways in which a number of teenagers portray future scenarios as the starting-point, to analyse how they handle the question "Who am I?" and how the way in which they view the formation of a family and the relationship with the opposite sex emerges in the content and composition of these drawings and narratives.

The theoretical starting-point is that identity and self-image are constructed in a culture and under the influence of the positions given the person in different systems. Development is seen as being influenced by social directives, but also by the possibilities the individual sees in different contexts. Children and young people are in a family system where they are dependent on decisions and control by adults, but where they can also create spaces for themselves by means of games, fantasy and other activities of their own that they engage in. These activities acquire their form in a culture with the language and symbols provided by that specific culture. At the same time, each activity of this type also exerts an influence on the culture.
The data was collected through a writing project started up in collaboration with Swedish teachers of 7th grade classes in two towns. The children wrote essays and drew pictures of houses, rooms and families during a two-month period as part of their normal schoolwork. The project was designed in the same way as the project *Children’s conceptions of the phenomena family, upbringing and parenthood.*

A total of 142 pupils, 74 girls and 68 boys, from six different classes participated, three classes from each school in the two towns. Drawings and narratives were analysed with a special focus on gender. Conceptions of family are not of primary interest in this project; instead, the narratives are being studied as a framework for experimenting with self-presentations.


Gisela Eckert
Graduate student

**The child perspective and parent perspective of childhood and children’s need of protection, free space and responsibility.**

Conceptions of what children and childhood are are one part of a culture and thus change over time and in space. The starting-point for the project is an interest in these conceptions as they are expressed in people’s ways of reasoning and explaining their actions. In this project, interest will be focused on conceptions of children’s need of protection, free space and own responsibility as they are formulated by children and parents in reasoning about children watching TV and play activities. The ways in which parents reason about children’s abilities and needs will be studied in relation to children’s ways of reasoning about the same questions. Interest is focused on everyday psychological reasoning about what children need to be protected from and have access to, respectively. The empirical material that is going to be used are interviews with children and parents on two everyday phenomena, namely children’s TV-habits and play. These phenomena is assumed to have the potential to elicit involvement and initiate talk about children’s need of protection as well as free space and responsibility. The study adopts a player perspective and directs attention towards children and parents as informants. A basic prerequisite of being able to hold constructive discussions about the life situation of children is, namely, that we understand how the parties involved, principally the children but also their parents, view children, childhood and children’s needs.

**Reports from the project:** "TV – ally or enemy? Children, parents and watching television." Gustafsson, Inga, Filipson, Leni, and Eckert, Gisela. *Välösskildringsrådets skriftserie no. 12.*
Karin Zetterqvist Nelson
Graduate student

Children with learning difficulties; an attempt to adopt a child perspective. A pilot study.

When children are to be allocated extra resources in school in the form of extra personnel and/or a substantial amount of remedial teaching, the school authorities more and more frequently demand an expert's report in which a "diagnosis" of e.g. dyslexia, DAMP or speech impairments confirms the child's learning difficulties. In this way, a diagnostic approach with a medical orientation is assuming increasing importance in pedagogical contexts. Learning difficulties are regarded as a symptom of a dysfunction in a child's biological constitution rather than a manifestation of the child's situation at school.

The question I ask myself is what it means to the child to be diagnosed and defined as e.g. a "child with dyslexia". To what degree is the child stigmatised and how does the child itself react?

In the pilot study, I have interviewed four children who have been diagnosed for various reasons as having learning difficulties. All four children have been allocated an assistant and/or are being given a substantial amount of remedial teaching at school. In semi-structured interviews, the children talk about what they think of school, remedial teaching, homework, friends, leisure time and other questions affecting their everyday life. The pilot study should be seen as a preliminary attempt to uncover, via qualitative interpretations of the interview material, the children's conceptions, opinions and/or "silences" concerning the adult world's ways of judging and defining them. For example, do the children appear to accept the descriptions given by adults or do they disagree? I have also interviewed the children's parents in order to obtain an insight into how parents discuss and talk about their children's so-called learning difficulties. Here, my starting-point is that, for the child, "parent narratives" are important discourses.
CHILDREN AND COMMUNICATION HANDICAPS

Ulrika Nettelbladt
Associate Professor

Research on children with communication handicaps

In this research, several different types of communication handicaps are studied. One group consists of children with specific language impairments, where the linguistic handicap is the principal problem. Children with other types of communication handicaps are also studied, e.g. children who stutter, children with symptoms similar to autism and children who are seriously communicatively disabled. In the research, both an intraindividual and an interindividual perspective is applied, i.e. we study both the functional disability in itself, but also how children with communication handicaps interact with their surroundings.

One aim of research on children with specific language impairments is to map in great detail different linguistic functions and dysfunctions as regards both language production and understanding. The other aim is to relate linguistic symptoms to underlying neurolinguistic functions. Today, we know that the ability to understand language is more important to a child’s linguistic development than language production. The problem of understanding language can be difficult to detect and may first be observed as pragmatic difficulties similar to autism when talking with the child. This type of difficulty can be attributed to a linguistic problem or to difficulties in adopting the perspective of another person. Children suffering from pragmatic difficulties are often placed in a grey zone between logopedics, child rehabilitation and child psychiatry. Accordingly, our overarching question is how specific a so-called specific language impairment really is.

For several years now, linguistic analyses have been carried out with the help of computer programmes. This has resulted in a revolution when it comes to the large volumes of data that can be analysed today. So far, much of the research on child language has involved children with English as their mother tongue and it is thus probable that theories about language impairments are heavily influenced by the special structure of the English language. Data concerning Swedish children with language impairments show that the prosody of Swedish (stress, pitch accents and intonation) and word order give rise to special problems. Such linguistic aspects should thus be incorporated into theories about children with language impairments. In an international project recently started up, where systematic comparisons are made between children with different mother tongues, these aspects will be tested further.

In the case of the interindividual perspective, interaction studies are being made of children with language impairments. We have, among other things, compared children in dialogues with different partners. The results show that children with a specific language impairment, but also children who stutter, communicate differently depending on whether the person they are talking to is a child of the same age or an adult. In the former case, the child takes greater communicative responsibility.

Another aspect of an interindividual perspective is the study of how different types of communication training are performed. Surprisingly, there has been practically no research on this aspect. We have recently begun studies of speech therapy involving speech therapists and language-impaired children. The results show, among other things, that the same speech therapist behaves differently depending on whether the child has difficulties in understanding language or only has difficulties with language production (articulation and grammar). In another study, different types of speech-training methods are being compared. In the same study, a historical review is being made of how speech therapy has changed over the past four decades.


Ulrika Nettebladt
Associate Professor

Children with language impairments from a historical perspective

A research approach recently initiated concerns children with language impairments from a historical perspective. It can be noted that searches of the literature have so far shown that there are hardly any historical surveys to be found in this field. There are, however, historical surveys of aphasia in adults, of stammering and of children with a cleft palate (harelip). The starting-point of this research will be how programmes for children in Sweden with language impairments (so-called speech care) started and were developed. The research will focus on how different types of professionals have described their activities and their views of children with language impairments. The situation in Sweden will be illustrated with a comparison of the development of speech care in Sweden and in Denmark. The research will focus particularly on a Swedish pioneer, the woman doctor Alfhild Tamm, who was active at the beginning of the century. She wrote a medically oriented textbook on the subject and between 1910 and 1920, took the initiative in establishing a special speech disorder clinic for the schools in Stockholm. Speech care began in Denmark as long ago as at the end of the last century and was initially incorporated in care of the deaf. As far as we can ascertain, the Danes were first in the world with a national association for speech care professionals. The Danish pioneers were male educationalists such as Egil Forchammer who wrote a textbook aimed at parents. In Denmark, different types of language tests and speech training programmes were drawn up at an early stage. For many years, we in Sweden "borrowed" these tests and programmes and translated them. In speech care in Sweden, a medical perspective was adopted at an early stage, while in Denmark, an educational approach was initially applied. These differences continue to characterise speech care in Sweden and Denmark, respectively, both as regards the education of professionals and the organisation of speech care.
THE CENTURY OF THE CHILD - ON THE CHANGED MEANING OF CHILDHOOD IN THE 20TH CENTURY.

Bengt Sandin
Professor

External financiers: The Council for Social Research and project support from the Swedish Council for Planning and Co-ordination of Research (FRN).

During the very first years of the 20th century, Ellen Key wrote the book *The Century of the Child*. The book contained a vision of a better society and expressed the hope that the 20th century would be the century of the child. And childhood did indeed acquire new meanings in the decades to come. The overarching aim of the programme about "The Century of the Child" is to analyse the change in childhood that has taken place in the 20th century. The programme can be described as a critical evaluation of the vision of the 20th century as the century of the child. How and by what social and political forces were children's new realities formed? In this light, we can sketch a number of problem areas. First, it is necessary to clarify in a more overall way children's fundamental social and political living conditions and the changes they underwent during the 20th century. There is also reason to examine the consequences of the professionals' actions both in the professional organizations and in national and local government. Accordingly, it is also obvious that children's relations with institutions of different types are very central as is the relationship between different institutional arrangements school, leisure time, etc.

To be able to understand how the concept of childhood is constructed, it is necessary not only to study how the professions act but also how childhood is depicted in the media and children's literature as well as on film. The emergence of new scientific conceptions of child development in relation to both extra- and inter-scientific changes should also be taken into consideration. The programme will not, however, be devoted to mapping children's conditions in a traditional sense; rather, it will focus on a number of more limited problem areas concerning children and childhood of a multi-scientific nature. Accordingly, within the framework of the project, studies are being made of child labour in the countryside, care of foster-children, children in orphanages, upper secondary school pupils' associations, the development of child adoption, how the foetus is conceptualised, the development of children's summer camps, the growth of child guidance clinics, the development of the care of the mentally deficient and conceptions of childhood as they are presented to children in the mass media. The final report on the project will be submitted in the year 2000.

At present, those engaged in the programme are: Professor Bengt Sandin; Assistant Professor Gena Weiner; Assistant Professor Maria Sundkvist; and graduate students Ulf Jönsson, Mats Sjöberg, Ann-Charlotte Münger, Ingrid Söderlind, Anne-Li Lindgren, Cecilia Lindgren, Judith Areschoug, Thomas Dahl, Roger Klinth and Marianne Wifvesson.


During the second half of the 19th century, the social status of children changed. Legislation relating to foster-children, child welfare boards, etc., resulted in the emergence of new systems for social control but also support for vulnerable children. The State became the guarantor of a good childhood. At the same time, the debate on the legalisation of abortion meant that the State's protection of unborn children was redefined. In the project, a study is made of how the conceptions of the social status of the foetus in the public debate changed after the turn of the century. The change in how the foetus was regarded is placed in relation to how abortion and infanticide were viewed. The abortion debate is related to both the change in the position of women in society around the turn of the century and the general political changes which took place in the 1920s and later. A substudy will take up the question of the attitude towards infanticide and abortion in pre-industrial society.

Child labour, schooling and the century of the child

External financier: The Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Being a child today is completely different compared with being a child in the 19th century. Childhood conditions have changed in many respects. Today, children attend school much longer than they did in the 19th century. This means that they spend less time on the street and the age at which they have their first experience of working life is rising. During the 19th century, the school also took over other tasks which had previously been the responsibility of the family and thus became a socio-political institution of great importance to the development of the welfare society in the 20th century. As the school developed, the demand for child labour decreased which, in turn, made it necessary to extend school attendance. The ways in which working-class families provide for their children have often been regarded as problematic by those holding the reins of power in society. This concern about working-class families has also influenced the development of the school system and conceptions of the content of childhood. An ambition to get children into school and away from what was considered to be harmful home and street environments has left its mark on the form of the school system.

The subject of this project is the discussion about children's living conditions, about where and how children should spend their childhood. The project also discusses the legislation relating to child labour introduced in 1881. The aim is to present a political and institutional context in which the authorities' interest in legally regulating child labour can be made comprehensible. Also discussed are the development of the school system and the change in school attendance in relation to the new conceptions of the meaning of childhood that emerged around the turn of the century. Among other things, the project takes up the way in which the school system influenced conceptions of "normal" childhood and how deviations from this were regarded. Also being studied is how the new concept of childhood influences the way in which the family and the sex roles within the family are regarded and how the new concept of childhood is changing conceptions of teenagers.


Today, we no longer talk of feeble-minded children and instead use terms such as learning disability or mental retardation. Not only have the labels that are put on the children changed, but also their definitions. What is meant by learning disability today is not necessarily the same as what was meant by feeble-mindedness fifty or a hundred years ago. It is therefore of interest to study how the definitions and the images of the learning-disabled child have changed. Who was regarded as feeble-minded? Who was selected for education or care in institutions for the feeble-minded? By whom were they selected and for what purpose?

We know that most children in schools and institutions for "the mentally deficient" were working-class children. What was the cause of this and what was believed to be the cause of this. The social background of the children motivates questions about both attitudes towards the children's parents and the parents own attitudes towards the care. Was the special care and education given their child seen as useful or as an infringement on family life?

In 1944, special education for feeble-minded children was transformed from being voluntary to being compulsory. Parents no longer had the right to decide whether their child should be placed in a school for the feeble-minded or not. What implications did this change have for all those involved; children, parents, teachers, staff and the institutions?

The source material consists partly of professional journals and partly of documents from two institutions.

Reports from the project: "From compulsion to voluntariness or from voluntariness to compulsion? The teaching of mentally deficient children in Riksdag debates, 1878-1976." In: K. Bergqvist, K. Petersson & M. Sundkvist (ed.). Cross-roads. An anthology of encounters between young people and institutions before and now.

"Those who, because they are mentally deficient, are unable to profit by the teaching given in elementary school. The placement of children in special classes and institutions for the mentally deficient in Norrköping, 1879-1920. "Working Papers on Childhood and the Study of Children 1996:2, Department of Child Studies, Linköping."
Child guidance clinics were established in different parts of Sweden in the 1930s for several reasons. Partly, child welfare boards and similar authorities wanted to prevent criminality and mental ill-health later in life and partly, the schools were in need of ways of dealing with pupils who in different ways disrupted teaching in the classrooms. The solution of these problems was considered to lie in a combination of psychiatry, psychology and social work, all of which were expanded at these clinics. Their activities were gradually developed into what we know today as mental care of children and young people. A special study is being made of one such child guidance clinic, which was established in 1933 by the child welfare board in Stockholm. In the clinic's first four decades, the children were reported by their own families in a third of the cases while the other two thirds were reported by the schools and other institutions in the city. The clinic devoted a large part of its time to different types of diagnoses – e.g. intelligence tests of children changing classes – and guidance for parents, teachers and others in questions involving upbringing. Some of the children reported to the clinic were placed in institutions or foster homes. In the project, a study is also being made of which children were reported, who reported them and what happened to them in the encounter with clinic's staff. Of particular interest in this context are the different conceptions of what childhood is and should be and what this means in the case of the children reported to the clinic and the ability of these children to make themselves heard in their contacts with the clinic.
"In the best interest of the child". Notions of family, childhood and parenthood related to child adoption practice in Stockholm 1922-1975.

In 1917, the Swedish government passed the first child adoption act. The vast majority of children adopted during the period from 1918, when the act gained legal force, to the late 60's were Swedish, but today all adoptions are so-called intercountry adoptions. To prevent children from being used as commodities, all adoption agencies are controlled by the government and "the child's best interest" must be the primary concern in every adoption case. This is sanctioned nationally by the Swedish legislation, and internationally by UN declarations concerning adoption. It is important, though, to point out that this is not something new. Ever since 1917, the "child's best interest" has been emphasised in the national adoption debate and social workers handling adoption cases have, according to law, been enjoined to decide whether every adoption is favourable to the child or not. An interesting question is what the concept has meant during this period. Decisions once made in the best interest of the child are condemned today, with reference to the very same motto, and earlier periods are described as less child-centred than our own. It is obvious that the ideals have changed - but how?

The overall aim of the project is to study notions of family, childhood and parenthood related to child adoption. For this purpose, a historical analysis of the changing meaning of the concept "the child's best interest" is very useful. Who is a good parent? What kind of childhood should children have? What kind of family is best for a child to grow up in? Do boys and girls have different needs? Public discussions and local decisions on what the child's best interest is can tell us how these questions were answered, thereby shedding light on prevailing norms. The study focuses on the handling of adoption cases at the Municipal Court and the Children's Welfare Board in Stockholm in 1922-1975. Legislation and parliamentary debates will also be analysed where local practices can be related to the public discourse concerning adoption.

Report from the project: "'He lavishes all his love on the boy'. Adoption cases considered at the Stockholm Municipal Court in 1925. "Working Papers on Childhood and the Study of Children 1996:2, Department of Child Studies, Linköping.

"A protected place for these small ones." Stockholm's summer camps for children - An historical retrospect.

External financier: The Swedish Council for Planning and Co-ordination of Research.

Sweden's first summer camp for children was opened in 1884. According to one of the initiators, Professor Magnus Huss, this opened the door to a completely new charitable field of activity. The idea of summer camps for poor elementary-school children came from abroad and was one aspect of the international charitable activities which emerged in the 19th century. Although the elementary school as an institution shouldered a great responsibility for the upbringing of working-class children, the parents' ability to care for their children was still questioned. It was noticed that a way of including the time spent by the children outside school was needed, and this was formulated by philanthropic interests and municipal authorities; summer camps, so-called work cottages and truant homes were organised. For these children, this also changed the meaning of childhood. The city streets were replaced by the world of the summer camp. It is this new childhood world and its meaning that constitute the focus of this study.
The summer camps can be seen as one part of the disciplining and institutionalisation of children and childhood which have been in progress ever since the end of the 19th century. This can be seen most clearly in the organisation of time and space at the summer camps. Both the external and the internal environment as well as time were controlled by means of fixed regulations and norms. Even the debate on "healthy living" and the preventive health care policy adopted by the summer camps can be discussed in terms of disciplining and institutionalisation. The efforts to bring about hygiene reforms were taken directly from the elementary school and it was felt their influence spread beyond the summer camps: the families of children who had been at a summer camp became aware of the importance of good hygiene, a healthy diet, order, etc.

Gunilla Pettersson, Assistant Professor, and Maria Sundkvist, Assistant Professor

"I am a lyric poet" – Student clubs in upper secondary schools as a social practice


The project focuses on different pupil-organised leisure-time activities in connection with school such as student clubs at upper secondary school and school students' unions. The overall aim is to study what functions these activities serve in the everyday life of young people. The upper secondary school is only of interest as an adjunct to this question, and then only as regards how the form of the upper secondary school influences the pupils' activities and how their actions, in turn, influence the upper secondary school. Among other things, we want to investigate whether and how these activities contribute to the creation of a social stratification, i.e. to what extent do they function as social practices that create distinctions. What social and cultural competences do the young people acquire? What is the culture these young people pass on through their activities to the culture of the old school forms and to different social practices? In the study, comparisons are made between two towns, Kalmar and Östersund and it is the upper secondary schools in these two towns that provide the basic data for this study. However, the results cannot be generalised to apply to all upper secondary school pupils. The aim of the comparisons is to shed light on the ways in which the integration of the upper secondary school's different course programmes influence the pupils' activities in the form of social clubs at upper secondary school and other spare-time activities organised by pupils.

Reports from the project: "I am a lyric poet" – Student clubs in upper secondary schools as a social practice.
Subreport 1. A study of young people's attitudes towards education, recreation and the future.

Ingegerd Rydin
Assistant Professor

Children and childhood in the broadcasting media in the 20th century

External financier: The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation.

A project focusing particularly on children's programmes has been initiated within the framework of the project The History of the Broadcasting Media. The aims of this project include studying the messages and values mediated in children's programmes. The overarching question is how children and young people have been depicted on radio and television during the last 75 years.

Programmes especially intended for children have been part of the output in the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation's programming ever since it was founded in 1925. Sweden,
together with a few other countries, is unique when it comes to investing resources in children’s culture and the editorial staffs in charge of programmes for children and young people at the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation have very much contributed to this. It can be justifiably claimed that radio and TV are largely responsible for the national children’s culture in Sweden. Due to the fact that there was a monopoly in the broadcasting media for some 50 years, many generations of children have been exposed to more or less the same broadcasting media culture. The media are often accused of breaking down national cultures, but this might not have been the case in Sweden. There is reason to believe that a common cultural heritage has been passed on via radio and TV, a culture which is managed and developed in talk within and between generations. The project is based on documents such as archived programmes, annual reports and manuscripts as well as interviews with people responsible for programmes, etc.

Mats Sjöberg
Graduate student

Assuring Future Harvests. A Picture of Childhood, School and Work in an Agricultural Environment

This study deals with the interpretation and explanation of organized resistance to prolonged compulsory schooling in agrarian settings in Sweden at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The area of investigation is the four parishes of Bolstad in Western Sweden. Bolstad was an agricultural district dominated by family farming. Here, the protests were both loud and vigorous, although not limited to Bolstad. In the 1920s, the Swedish compulsory school system had to fight a battle which has been described as "one of the most fiery that the school had ever gone through". The focus of this battle was the system of half-time schooling. This conflict has been interpreted in mainly three ways. Firstly, by focusing on a growing conflict between the state and the municipalities - the centralization theory; secondly, by focusing on the revised national curriculum of 1919, where education in religion was radically changed and reduced - the secularization theory; and thirdly, by focusing on the political conflict. The protests from rural areas against the new school reforms has been seen as an organized conservative strategy aimed at preserving an undemocratic society - the modernization theory. In this study, the conflict is analyzed from another perspective - the childhood theory. The conflict was about differing notions about what constituted a proper childhood in rural areas. Children in the type of family-farming economy predominant in Bolstad played a fundamental role. They were active members of the family. The families were dependent on their children working and the conditions in family farming created a positive attitude towards child labour. This positive attitude also found support in the strong Lutheran tradition in Bolstad. There was no hostile attitude towards schooling per se among the population in Bolstad. But the school should be adjusted to local conditions. The half-time schooling system in Bolstad was thus a system which gave families and children time for both work and schooling. This is why the resistance against full-time schooling was so fiery.

Ingrid Söderlind
Graduate student

Orphanages, Gender and Children’s Worth.

During the second half of the 19th century, many orphanages were opened in Sweden. There was at least one children’s home in every town and large community and even if orphanages were an urban phenomenon, they did not exist only in the cities. Some
orphanages accepted both boys and girls, while others were intended for either boys or girls and of these, unusually many were for girls.

The project *Orphanages, Gender and Children's Worth* takes as its starting-point five orphanages for girls in Stockholm at the turn of the century. One of the principal questions posed here is why just girls were considered to be suitable for an institutional upbringing and this question will be discussed and illustrated in different ways.

A central part of the study deals with the everyday life of the girls and their upbringing in the orphanages, where they often stayed many years, from the age of 6–7 until they were 15–16 years old, and what type of childhood these institutions created. The parents' relationship to and attitude towards the orphanages will also be analysed. The girls were not committed to these homes, even if many of the parents were more or less forced to hand over their children due to circumstances over which they had no control such as death, poverty, unemployment, etc.

Some of the parents requested that their children be placed in an orphanage instead of a foster home. Consequently, another question is what advantages might they have considered an orphanage to have compared with a foster home.


Gena Weiner
Assistant Professor


It has always been the lot of many children to spend part or all of their childhood with persons other than their biological parents. These children are often called foster-children. The reasons for children growing up with relatives or persons to whom they are unrelated and their number have probably varied over time. At the end of the 19th century, the situation of foster-children in Sweden became the subject of public debate. There was talk of a foster-child industry and baby farming and a commission was appointed to study the situation of foster-children and propose measures. This resulted in the Foster Child Act in 1902 which is one of the starting-points of this study.

We know that the number of foster-children in Sweden has diminished during the 20th century from perhaps 40,000 at the beginning of the century to about 9,000 in 1990. The circumstances surrounding placements in foster homes and their scale will reveal the attitudes of the time in question as regards children and childhood and are thus of great interest. Social, political and economic changes have probably made it easier for people to become and remain parents, and this is particularly true in the case of unwed mothers. However, we do not know much about the details. The aim of the study is thus to study foster-children with an emphasis on the actions and conflicting interests of the biological parents, the foster-parents, the authorities and, not least, the children in connection with placement in a foster home. The study comprises both a national survey and a study at the local level where the actions of the different families are examined. The study covers the period 1910–1990.
The child in the world of films.

The world of fiction is full of children. They are obviously a category that appeals to authors, artists and film-makers. There is reason to believe that the child as depicted in fiction has very little in common with children in real life. Rather, it is a question of people's conceptions of how children are and what they do. But the figure of the child represents something more than just itself; it is in other words a sign. The child also represents innocence, goodness, vulnerability and the future.

In the world of films, now celebrating its centenary and the most prominent of the new media in the 20th century, there is no shortage of children. In his mind's eye, the normal filmgoer can in all likelihood see a number of children in action and can also distinguish a number of common stereotypes. However, no exhaustive study of children in the film world has been made to date. The aim of this project is to problematise the ways in which children have been depicted in Swedish feature films.

Firstly, the occurrence of children in Swedish films is being mapped. When, i.e. in what decade, and in what film genres are there child roles? Is it a question of minor roles or leading roles? A categorisation of the depiction of children in different types of roles forms the basis of an analysis of the different character stereotypes. Children's appearance, the clothes they wear and what they say and do will be analysed. Class affiliation, sex, age and whether the child was born inside or outside wedlock are important variables. The ambition is to limit the number of stereotypes for the sake of clarity. In what environments do children appear? What is their relationship with their parents? Does the child develop as the film progresses? An interpretation of the above-mentioned symbolic function of the child constitutes a central part of the analysis. Finally, the child as it is depicted on film is placed in a broader historical and ideological perspective. One hypothesis is that the film's reflection of social and political processes can be brought out in this way. The results of the project will be presented both in writing and on video with excerpts from films illustrating the ways in which children have been depicted on film.
ANTHROPOLOGY AND CHILDHOOD

Mikael Metz
Graduate student

Culture and handicap: An ethnographic study of intellectually disabled children and adolescents in Japan.

Extern finansiär: The Swedish Council for Planning and Co-ordination of Research.

This project is a year-long, in-depth, ethnographic study of intellectually disabled children and adolescents in Japan. The focus of the study will be on cultural and social aspects of disability rather than on psychological/developmental ones. There are three main aims. First, to provide information on the situation and social conditions of intellectually disabled children and adolescents in Japan. Second, to use a focus on disability as a lens through which to examine Japanese conceptions of childhood, adulthood, personhood, development and normality. Third, to use the Japanese case as a means through which to urge reflection on our own culturally grounded ideas about and practices relating to disability. The project will be conducted using the ethnographic method of participant observation in schools, homes and other settings. This method will be enriched by means of audio- and video-recordings and subsequent close analysis of teacher-pupil interactions; of reviews of written sources, policy documents and media material on disability; and of detailed interviews with persons with disabilities, parents and professionals, in order to document the range of different attitudes and ideas surrounding issues of disability in Japanese society.

Camilla Rinstedt
Graduate student

Socializing Ethnicity: Language and culture in an indigenous community in Ecuador

Recent years have seen a dramatic revitalization of indigenous "Indian" identity in the Latin American country Ecuador. Indigenous rights organizations have become increasingly insistent that the government recognize their rights to their languages and traditions. The focus of the study is on this revitalized sense of Indian identity in Ecuador. The basic question to be explored is: How is this ethnic identity evoked, negotiated, and socialized in everyday life? The study focuses on one rural community in order to analyze the practices through which people in this community negotiate the identities and the hierarchically ordered value systems of Indian/White inhabitants. The study draws on recent semiotic and anthropological theorizing that problematizes the ways in which language is used by speaking subjects to negotiate, create, and transgress boundaries between different dimensions of self - especially those dimensions that have ethnic resonance.
Embodying Gender: Girls' Socialization in Transitional Viet Nam.

The purpose of the research project is to explore the gender socialization of Vietnamese girls (i.e. below the age of 13). This was carried out by conducting one year of fieldwork in the rural Ha Tay province located in the Red River Delta in Northern Viet Nam. The project addresses directly weaknesses in contemporary socialization theory, and highlights a lacuna in the knowledge about gender, namely, the specific interactional practices that obtain as girls and boys throughout infancy and childhood, are socialized into the gender-specific roles that dominate their lives and societies. The project draws on the theoretical framework developed by Pierre Bourdieu and others working within what has come to be known as practice-based social anthropology. Considering the theoretical work of Bourdieu, the research project will contribute to an understanding of how the girl embodies a gendered habitus and acquires knowledge about the practical mastering of contextual situations in accordance with the prescriptions of the Vietnamese culture. Qualitative ethnographic data are provided by examining pregnancy, birth and the newborn infant, performance of rituals, upbringing of the girl, the girl in peer groups, and the girl in space and time.

Furthermore, because Viet Nam is presently undergoing a rapid and far-reaching socio-economic and political development, the project will lead to an understanding of the ways in which societal changes influence and are influenced by ideas and practices bound up with the reproduction of gender.

Reports from the project: "Sidder det i kroppen - En bourdieusk indgang til studiet af piger i Viet Nam", I: Jordens Folk - Bourdieu i Antropologien, nr 2, 1993, Dansk Etnografisk Forening & Institut for Antropologi, København.

"Pligternes glæder og sorger", Viet Nam a jour Dansk Vietnamesisk Forening, nr 1. 1996.


AIDS orphans in Uganda: Children, health, socialization and new family structures in the wake of the AIDS crisis.

This project will study the connection between the AIDS crisis, the composition of households and the socialization of children and how these affect the children's health in a rural area in Uganda. The socialization within families that reproduce the social system has crumbled. In the wake of the AIDS crisis new forms of households have arisen that consist of orphans without adults, where children reorganize their own daily lives to be able to survive. This anthropological study will be conducted by means of fieldwork with participant observation, interviews and qualitatively nutritional methods. By studying
how children reorganize food, customs and practices, it is possible to understand how social changes influence their health. Since part of the socialization takes place via food customs and practices, it is reasonable to expect that those who grow up without adults to transmit this knowledge will be exposed to increased risk of health problems due to poor diet. This study can provide much needed information about children's conditions needed for health programs in low-income countries.
The Department of Child Studies

Linköping University hosts an interdisciplinary Institute of Advanced Study known as the Institute of Tema Research. The Institute of Tema Research is divided into five separate departments, each of which administers its own graduate program, and each of which conducts interdisciplinary research on specific, though broadly defined, problem areas, or "themes" (tema in Swedish, hence the name of the Institute). The five departments which compose the Institute of Tema Research are: the Department of Child Studies (Tema B), the Department of Health and Society (Tema H), the Department of Communication Studies (Tema K), the Department of Technology and Social Change (Tema T), and the Department of Water and Environmental Studies (Tema V).

The Department of Child Studies was founded in 1988 to provide a research and learning environment geared toward the theoretical and empirical study of both children and the social and cultural discourses that define what children are and endow them with specific capacities, problems, and subjectivities. A specific target of research is the processes through which understandings of 'normal' children and a 'normal' childhood are constituted, and the roles that children and others play in reinforcing or contesting those understandings. The various research projects carried out at the department focus on understanding the ways in which children interpret their lives, how they communicate with others, and how they produce and/or understand literature, language, mass media and art. Research also documents and analyses the historical processes and patterns of socialization that structure the ways in which childhood and children can be conceived and enacted in various times, places and contexts.

Department of Child Studies
Linköping University
581 83 LINKÖPING
SWEDEN
Tel: +46 13 28 10 00
Fax: +46 13 28 29 00