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REPORTS ON THE CENTURY OF THE CHILD

WORKING PAPERS ON CHILDHOOD AND THE STUDY OF CHILDREN
Introduction

If a pupil from the Swedish upper secondary school tells you that she/he is a member of a school youth club, you would actually receive a lot more information about this young man or woman. For example, you will be able to predict the orientation of her studies, her spare time activities, her plans for the future and, maybe most crucial of all, her parents' social position. By knowing her youth club membership you will know that she belongs to a small exclusive group among her peers. She might be envied by some and disregarded by others, but her membership is the symbolic distinction confirming that she is popular and successful.

This differentiation among upper secondary school pupils and their association in clubs may not seem that strange in an international perspective. Perhaps these youth clubs have their analogies in other countries, for instance, in the sororities and fraternities in the United States. Although, considering the fact that the educational policy in Sweden in the last thirty years, has been aimed at eliminating differences and creating an upper secondary school for one and all, the youth clubs are an anomaly. They belong to an older form of schooling, in which they in fact were founded – the oldest and thus most prominent of these clubs have their origin in the late 19th century. So, why have these, apparently anachronistic societies, survived through all the political reforms of the educational system, and how do they shape, and in turn are shaped by, today's upper secondary school? These are some of the questions the following paper will try to answer.

The paper is based on a study of upper secondary school pupils and their spare time activities in connection with the school, and the youth clubs are just one of the activities studied. Our study has both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective and it focuses on
the upper secondary schools in two medium-sized Swedish towns with a population of around 60 000. In this paper, however, we will deal with the youth clubs exclusively and try to analyse their social significance by focusing on one particular club. This youth club, which has survived the reorganisation of pre-college education, is called the Lyre and comparisons between today, the 1950s and late 19th century will be made. Data have been collected by interviewing present members and from the Lyre's archive.

To understand the significance of these clubs you will have to know something about the educational system in Sweden. The network of secondary schools preparing students for entry to higher education in Sweden was established 350 years ago. Although until the late 1960s, Sweden had two parallel school systems. On the one hand there were grammar schools which led to academic studies, and on the other there were schools for vocational training. Then in the late sixties, both the vocational training and grammar school education were merged in the same organisation. The aim of the current educational policy is to offer all adults, but most of all the new generation entering the labour market, the opportunity of obtaining a minimum of 12 years of education and the possibility to attend higher education. This, in addition to a comprehensive school system, has led to a situation in which an ever-growing proportion of the relevant age group attend upper secondary school. Today, almost everyone between the ages of 16 and 19 complete upper secondary schooling. However, this must be regarded in the light of the current high level of unemployment among young people who, by virtue of their age, are excluded from most of the welfare schemes and social services that are available to adults. Thus, for the local authorities upper secondary school education has become a solution to the problems of occupying and supporting young people. But, on the other hand, there is no doubt that for young people in Sweden education represents the principal way of acquiring a profession and advancing their social position.

So, what do we know about this school which almost everyone attends? The upper secondary school has at the same time a very long history as there have been a lot of changes through the years. Today, it is easy to find two different kinds of cultures, one from the time when the upper secondary school was for a small, male elite and the other one from the vocational training. These two kinds of schools were merged into one as a result of the school reform of 1971. The pupils could choose between different programs some of which opened the way to the universities, other to blue-collar work. The pupil who wanted to pursue a higher education had to spend three or four years in upper secondary school and pupils wanting a job had to stay there for two years. In 1991, a new reform was introduced which attempted to integrate the different education programs even more than before. One of its main goals was to eliminate the differences. Today all
pupils have to spend three years at school and the idea is that they will have the opportunity to go to university afterwards. (Sjögren, 1994).

The Lyre – A Youth Club in Upper Secondary School

The Lyre was established in 1864. The purpose was to unite the members in true brotherhood. The members should be involved in discussions, give talks, write poems, play music and do other things for both their own enjoyment and for educational purposes. In 1867, they started a hand-written magazine called Heimdall. Heimdall was also the name of a cultural magazine in Stockholm, published between 1828-32. It is very possible that the boys had this magazine in mind. No one else had the right to read Heimdall and all the material was created by the boys themselves. A first glance shows that most of the texts fell into four broad categories. One is about love and women (i.e. "Love", the friends of Amour) another is about the difficulties for upper secondary school pupils, the third one is about the eternal questions (i.e. culture and man in our time) or existential elements (Thoughts from my Diary; Nightly Thoughts, Life, a Poem to the Old and Weary, Youthful Sighs). The fourth category is lyrical poetry (A Morning in Springtime, The Rill in Springtime.)

The discussions were of the same kind. In 1874, the club discussed these subjects: Which profession is most important to society: clergymen or elementary school teachers? Is dancing in any way a good thing to do? Is the 19th century better than the 18th century? Does Carl XII deserve to be loved by the Swedes in the same way as Gustaf I?

There were about 25 members active at the same time. Every year, about five to ten new members were elected. Who could be a member of the Lyre? You had to be a pupil at the upper secondary school but this was not enough. The members never discussed the selection but it is easy to see, especially today, that there was a code you had to follow if you were to have chance of becoming a member.

Today, the club has had more than 1500 members, most of them are of course dead now. It is easy to find members who belonged to the élite of Sweden. When they grew up they became university professors, famous artists and writers, one became Prime Minister and another one a member of the Swedish Academy and so on.

In the first few years, almost all pupils in the school were elected to the Lyre because such a small group attended the upper secondary school. After 1927, girls had the right to study, but they were not allowed to be members of the club. (Some of the girls started their own club, Circulo Alegre, instead.) The number of girls and boys increased and
today, as mentioned above, almost everyone attends the upper secondary school. This means that the Lyre has more pupils to choose among.

The attitude towards women changed dramatically during the years. In the 19th century the members had a very vague and romantic image about the other gender. To quote one member from a discussion from the 1920s about girls: It is impossible for us to have a discussion about this subject! We pupils from the upper secondary school have no knowledge about women."

For instance, we do not even have the courage to look at them! There were no female pupils in school, but once in a while the members met girls. They arranged, for instance, their own balls and invited so-called "nice" girls. The problem was that these respectable young ladies needed a chaperon, an older lady, often belonging to the upper social strata in the city. It was also important to place both girls and their chaperons in a special way at the ball. They had to sit together, not mixed with the male members, and their position in the ballroom had to be one of the best. Some of the balls or small parties took place in the home of one of the members. In such a case, the club needed to have a good relationship with the parents. It was also essential for the club to have a good relationship with the headmaster. If he wanted to, he could forbid balls and parties and also forbid the existence of the club! The relationship between the Lyre and the headmasters has almost always been good. The members of the Lyre sang and played music at school festivals, they represented the school at national conventions at the beginning of the 20th century and it was also the Lyre who introduced the typical school cap with a special badge for the members of the Lyre. Today, the club has a special room at the school for their archives. No other pupils have the right to visit this room. The headmaster today says that he likes what the Lyre does, that the club gives the school a special character and that it has an important function for the members.

The relationship between the Lyre and girls changed dramatically in the 1950s. Now members met girls in classrooms, in the library and almost everywhere in the school building. So what happened? Suddenly the romantic gentleman was gone and a new kind of discourse about girls emerged. At the same time, the attitude towards new club members also changed. As this story from one meeting in 1958 shows, discussions and images of women were a part of the way of treating the newcomers. One paragraph is called New Lyre member's paragraph. At almost every meeting in the 1950s there was paragraphs like this: Peter Andersson (a pseudonym) was asked to go down town immediately. His mission was to find some "raggare" chicks, [the 'raggar' culture is a kind of youth culture typical for Sweden which started in the late 1950s. Its symbols are large American cars and American rock & roll music. The 'raggar' go together with their
cars and one of the most important thing is who's car you ride in if you don't have your own car and, vice versa, which people who will ride with you in your car.] and start talking to them. He should ask them about both proper and not so proper things; to tell the truth, he was required to ask dirty questions and then come back to the club meeting and tell the members about what he had learnt.

A numbers of paragraphs latter:
Peter Andersson had been down town and watched the "raggar" chicks. As he said in his own words, he had given them one of his gentlemanly smiles and started to talk to them. They had told him that it looked stupid wearing a skirt and that it was only upper-class girls who wore them. After a while, Mr. Andersson wanted to talk about sex with the chicks and they told him that they had sex at least twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and of course on Sundays too, and sometimes also on other days, everything depending on how many people there were in the car.

We really do not know if Peter Andersson actually met the two girls. Other stories about newcomers to the club are so fantastic and sexist that it is impossible to believe in them. Anyway, the important thing is the way the boys talked about girls and specially girls from a different social class. They had no respect and the romantic way of talking about women was gone. The myth of the raggar-girl was that she was very sexual and preferred to have sex in the back seat of the car. At the same time the lads in the Lyre still wanted to be gentlemen as in the good old days. The addressed each other as mister and they still arranged balls. It was important for them to handle liquor in a "proper" way, that is, to drink wine at a three-course dinner and propose toasts in a proper way. They also smoked cigars at parties. They proposed a special toast for the female sex and also gave special speeches to the ideal woman. The club was actually a school for life. The members learned how to behave and at the same time they made closures to the other gender and to other classes.

So what happened in the 1970s when young people from all the social classes started to attend the upper secondary school? The brief answer is: nothing. The same kind of boys were elected to the Lyre. The reversed charter of the Lyre from 1970 says that the male pupils in Wargentinskolan (that is the name of the school) which have been found worthy to become members of the club, will receive a letter from Archa (the leader of the Lyre). Nothing was mentioned about the presumptive member attending the theoretical and not the vocational programme. But there was a sharp dividing-line between different programmes and no pupil in the vocational programme was ever elected to the Lyre. We interviewed members of the Lyre on two different occasions. Before and after the educational reform of 1990. We asked the members if the programme the new member
attended was important. The answer was no both in first and the second study. Then we asked why no member was attending the vocational programmes. The answers from 1992 concerned the length of the programme: - We cannot have that sort of member because he will only stay for two years and it is important to the Lyre that our members are active for a full period of time, and that is three years. In 1995, all pupils attend the school for three years. Nevertheless, no pupils from vocational programmes are elected. The answers this time were like this: - It's a problem having members from vocational programmes because they are often in work-places outside the school which means that they have difficulties in getting to the meetings. Again, the same kind of exclusion, but different explanations.

Conclusion

It is easy to find both differences and similarities between the youth club activities of today and in the past. The members of the Lyre still write poems and they arrange and attend balls and parties. The difference, though, is that today's members have daily contact with girls of their own age. Girls need not be chaperoned at parties and the romantic view of females has disappeared from poems and discussions and, incidentally, so have the vulgarities of the 1950s. But, along with this change, something else has disappeared from the youth club agenda, namely, the discussions about social and philosophical issues. Today's members do not debate political responsibilities or the social value of different professions. They do not orient themselves towards the adult world in the same way as the young men did at the turn of the century. Their activities are aimed at having fun and enjoying the company of peers. These changes in the club's activities clearly show how young people reach adulthood later in today's society. The years in upper secondary school are no longer a transition to adulthood and adult responsibilities, and for the young men of the Lyre, the future university students, they are not even a preparation.

However, there is at least one aspect of the club that has not changed together with society, and that is in the matter of social stratification. In the late 19th century, the members belonged to the upper social strata. And as we pointed out earlier, this has not changed over the years. Today's members are the sons of lawyers, physicians and company owners. In the 19th century and even in the 1950s, this kind of class-related recruitment was hardly surprising since almost only the boys from the upper social strata attended upper secondary school. Today, almost all young people, male and female, attend upper secondary school, although the youth clubs tend to perpetuate class
differences. They select their members very carefully and in their activities, like balls and three-course dinners, they reproduce the customs and manners of bourgeois culture. Drawing on Bourdieu (1986), one could say that being a member of a club such as the Lyre is equivalent to acquiring a certain cultural and social capital. The activities in the club train the members in various ways. They become good speakers and writers. They learn how to behave at balls together with women and they also learn to drink alcohol in a respectable way. Furthermore, the membership also functions as a symbolic capital, and we will argue that this is the reason why the clubs still exist.

One of the main purposes of the reorganisation of the Swedish upper secondary school in the late 1960s was to eliminate class differences. Education leading to academic studies and vocational training was, in some municipalities, not only in the same organisation, but literally under the same roof as well. Outside the classroom, there is no spatial separation of the future lawyer or physician and the plumber-to-be. Symbols, like a youth club membership become the distinctions by which the social order is upheld. And, in this regard, the political striving for equality has become the hotbed for pupil activities that contradict the political goals.

References


Neglected Children and their Saviours.

Philanthropic work among Poor Children and their Parents in a Stockholm Suburb 1900-1940

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Neglected Children and their Saviours. Philanthropic work among Poor Children and their Parents in a Stockholm Suburb 1900-1940

During the twentieth century, *The Century of the Child*, a fundamental change has taken place in what it means to be a child, and the term childhood has taken on a new meaning. The children who grew up in the first two decades of this century were the ones who experienced the initiation of this great change. Today, most of Swedish children live in towns and are subject to the scrutiny of an ever-increasing number of experts in child health care, kindergartens, the school system and organised recreational activities. The child's situation changed because the child became the focus of adult attention. At the beginning of the twentieth century the children of the poor were regarded both as a humanitarian issue and as a potential threat to society. According to the philanthropic view, these children had to be "saved", both for their own good and for the good of society (Platt, 1969). Public interest in the child, which appeared to increase rapidly during this time, showed itself in legislation and also in a number of privately initiated activities for children.

While the debate about children is a fairly well-known area of study (Zelizer, 1985; Cunningham, 1991; Hendrick, 1994; Ohrlander, 1992), the concrete social and health care activities initiated privately have been of less interest to researchers. By studying this particular area, the practical work carried out by philanthropic organisations among the children of the poor, I have tried to answer questions dealing with childhood ideals as well as children's concrete social conditions and how these have changed. The issue of how the children themselves and their parents have reacted to "the children's saviours" forms a central part of the study. How preventive child health care and voluntary social work gradually became professionalised is another important theme. Problems concerning the take-over by the state of the clinics organised by the two philanthropic societies are discussed. The general purpose of the study is to investigate how a new childhood evolved in the meeting between children, parents, philanthropists and physicians.

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1 In the first year of the twentieth century, Ellen Key wrote her book *Barnets Ärhundrade* (1900). It was a sharp attack on the way children were looked after, among both the upper classes and the working class. The book contained a vision of a better society, expressing the hope that the twentieth century would be, as the title put it, the century of the child.

In order to try and answer questions such as those touched on above, it is not sufficient to study legislation and the national debate. Policies are not only created in the parliament, for example, but also and probably mainly in the local community. The meeting between the different players taking part in this particular drama took place on a local stage. It is there that people shape their lives and particular patterns can be discerned which are not evident in the history of a nation. Choosing to carry out a local study is thus a theoretical declaration as well. Hagalund, a suburb of Stockholm, was selected as a suitable for several reasons. Hagalund figured in the national debate as a problem area. Large numbers of people kept moving into the area and the proportion of children was unusually large, all of 41%. Playing truant was common and according to several reports the children begged and shoplifted. Many of the children were poor and were given social support, or were placed in foster homes. Shortly after the turn of the century, several institutions for promoting child welfare were opened on a private basis and they were in operation for a long time, a necessary factor in order to be able to study change.

In the thesis, two philanthropic societies devoted to child saving activities have been studied, i.e. Solna Mjölkdroppe (Solna Goutte de Lait) and Barnavårdsbyrån i Solna (Solna Child Welfare Bureau). These two societies both had clinics in Hagalund, a Stockholm suburb, from 1900 to about 1940. Their activities were slightly different in character. Mjölkdroppen focused on infant health care and its initial objective was to prevent babies which were not being breast fed from dying of diarrhoea. The mothers were offered sterilised milk in bottles. Barnavårdsbyrån in Solna had the wider objective of fighting against child "neglect". One could say that Barnavårdsbyrån carried out social work among families with children. The activities of the societies will serve as an example of two of the main paths leading towards the development of the welfare state (Seip, 1994). Solna Mjölkdroppe paves the way towards a health care organisation focusing on society as a whole, while Barnavårdsbyrån in Solna opens up the path from poor relief to social welfare. The study has shown that the similarities between the two societies are far greater than the differences. Both health care and social welfare, as seen from a philanthropic perspective, were about participating in a social reform movement geared towards influencing social politics and having an effect on the private individual. The educational element is seen to be very strong in the work carried out by the two societies.

What was all this interest in children about? Most children still lived in rural areas, but it was children in the growing cities who were perceived as being a problem. Urbanisation
made poor children visible to the upper classes. Children from Hagalund used to beg in Stockholm and literally knocked at the door. The study is about the meeting between the poor and the bourgeoisie and the worries about the future that these childhoods evoked. One finding is that in the local arena, the national debate was expressed in the form of conflicts about who was to make decisions about child care. Who were the best fitted to interpret the needs of children, the mothers or the doctors? Another question concerns what kind of education gave the right skills to deal with child care. It turns out that it was to a great extent a conflict between men and women - between male and female. This conflict manifested itself in the organisation of the work within the societies as well as in their direct work with the families. This is illustrated in the different strategies that mothers and fathers used in their attempts to support and care for their children. At a more generalised level, this touches on the question of who were to take the political responsibility for children. The study shows that the transition from philanthropy to public welfare to a great extent can be explained by the system of cooperation that developed between the societies and the local authorities. The changes were partly an effect of changes within the societies. Modern social work and child health care were created within philanthropy. The philanthropic societies must be understood both in relation to the social situation in Hagalund and to professional strategies and social ambitions of those who took part in the work done by the societies. This work was to a great extent about the image of reality, the construction of the task that the societies had taken on, infant mortality and the neglect of children. This tension between images of reality and social realities permeates the work done by the societies and is focused on in the study.

Interest in the care and health of the infant appears to have increased at the turn of the century, and from this time onwards it is possible to trace attempts to create a preventive child health care organisation. The physicians, who were given a new field of work at the newly opened Mjölkdroppen, took part in the national debate about children and their situation which was in progress at the turn of the century. A study of articles from the professional medical press between 1880 and 1930 reveals a negative attitude towards the mothers. They are often described as ignorant people who took the advice of others who were equally ignorant. Clearly, the physicians wished to create an image of themselves as the experts on child welfare. This is obvious in that they rejected the old traditions and habits regarding child care. The physicians had absolute faith in natural science, which was typical of the times, and in what we today call social engineering. Their professional interest may also have involved a desire to mark territory in relation to other groups with an interest in child welfare. Indications of this
can be found in their sceptical attitude towards midwives. Furthermore, at one point in time paediatricians tried to cut themselves off from other groups of physicians. Children attending Mjolkdroppen could be used in the training of paediatricians, and according to a report from the paediatrics section of The Swedish Medical Association of 1923, children's welfare clinics should be led by trained paediatricians.

Solna Mjölkdropp opened its clinic for infants in Hagalund in 1905. During the first fifteen years, the majority of infants attending the clinic were bottle-fed and the main point of its existence was the distribution of sterilised milk. The nature of its work changed rapidly after Axel Höjer became the acting physician in 1920. Dr Höjer set about expanding its activities. From that time, there was a more conscious interest in promoting breast feeding. From now on, all the children of Solna became the target group of the society. This led to increased cooperation with the county council and to an increase in grants from this institution. The matron paid regular visits to the parish registry office in order to obtain information about births in the parish. It was vital to get into contact with the mothers before they started bottle-feeding their infants. The society initiated visiting activities. The proportion of bottle-fed babies at Mjolkdroppen decreased rapidly. It is a remarkable fact that by the end of the 1930s practically all mothers residing in Solna took their infants to Mjölkdorpen. Thus a philanthropic organisation had managed to carry out a local social reform involving the monitoring and supervision of the health of its infants without state benefits and before the county council started organising preventive child health care. An older element of poor relief coloured its activities until the county council took over the responsibility in 1945. The purely medical element of its activities made up a small part of what was actually done. The social element is of great significance. The fact that a crèche formed part of Mjölkdroppens activities is an example of its broad social perspective.

Experience was no longer sufficient to get employment at Mjölkdorpen. Professional training became a prerequisite for working professionally with other people's children. Infant care could no longer be placed in the hands of lay persons, according to the physicians. The mothers were also heavily criticised. They were described as ignorant, irresponsible and superstitious. The criticism of the lack of competence among women can be seen as forming part of the emergence of paediatricians. An important element here was to put forward their own unique knowledge in this area.

The moralistic attitude that the physicians adopted towards the mothers was a factor in laying the blame at their door. It was the mother's fault if the child died. By focusing on the
role of the mother, the physicians contributed to keeping social and economical reasons for ill health in the dark (Lewis, 1980; Davin, 1978; Dyhouse, 1979). Those mothers who were unable to follow the advice given by Mjölkdroppen were abandoned to their fate, i.e. in their private life they had to try and solve the conflict between supporting and caring for their children. It has been difficult to say anything about the attitudes of the mothers towards Mjölkdroppen on account of the nature of the sources. There is reason to believe that the motives of the mothers for attending Mjölkdroppen did not always coincide with its objectives. It was not advice that the mothers primarily sought but "bread and butter" for their children. These mothers looked upon Mjölkdroppen as one of several possible means of trying to arrange a tolerable life for themselves and their children. The control visits to the homes may have been found uncomfortable by those mothers who had suddenly stopped attending the clinic or did not attend the clinic at all. With the rise in the standard of living a new group of mothers emerged who were interested in taking the advice given by Mjölkdroppen in their striving to obtain better health for themselves and for their children (Branca, 1975).

The Barnavårdsbyrå of Solna fonded in 1912 wanted to prevent child neglect. The concept is very vaguely defined in Barnavårdsbyrån's official documents but a distinction is made between physical and moral neglect. In the case records, a more concrete image of neglect is presented. The children are often described as pale and dirty in language full of perspicuous details. Sometimes metaphors are used where the children are compared to animals, for example bedraggled baby birds. The image of mothers is ambiguous. They are described as sloppy and lacking in responsibility as well as brave and struggling hard for their children. The fathers are looked upon solely as breadwinners, usually negligent ones. It is hardly plausible that those seeking help would describe themselves in these terms. It is important to point out that the description of the negligent family is one social class's description of another and serves the purpose of authorising an intervention.

The matron adopted a personal attitude to the families and as such embodied the idea of the importance of personal relations, a major line of thought within the philanthropic movement. The educational element is clear not only in relation to the children but also in relation to the mothers and is reminiscent of the maternal relationship between a younger and an older relative (Vammen, 1986). 'Help to self-help' was Barnavårdsbyrå'n's guiding principle. An important issue was to 'strengthen the responsibility of the parents', which meant that both parents were to be persuaded to contribute to the support of their children.
Another characteristic feature was a consciously methodological way of working. All work was carefully documented; for every child attending the clinic, a journal or case record was kept containing information about the child and its family. At its deepest level, this deals with tracing the roots of the social work carried out in our day and age. In this context, it is important to point out that the way of working as set down by Barnavårdsbyran differed a great deal in a number of significant ways compared to that practised by Solna poor relief. The latter had an administrative attitude: a group of people was allowed to come to the poor relief board and be questioned regarding their needs. Decisions were taken there and then. Thus it was not from here that a new way of thinking could be traced. It is somewhat of a paradox that that which appears to be a sign of typically philanthropic work - individualised help, personal involvement, etc. - at the same time was to become the characteristics of the new professional movement (Seip, 1984; Jordansson, 1991; Woodroofe, 1962).

How did rhetoric relate to practice? According to the rhetoric used by the Barnavårdsbyran in its annual reports, its purpose was to "strengthen parental responsibility and help parents and children to keep their homes together and to stand on their own two feet". This stands in sharp contrast to the frequency with which children were placed in foster homes. In 83 of the 132 families studied, one or more children were placed either in foster homes or in children's homes. Why was this? There are, of course, a number of reasons. In some cases, there were perhaps no other alternatives. In other cases, it was more a question of abiding by the norms laid down by society as to what constituted a good home. Obviously, it was thought that a good home, even if it was located away from Hagalund, was better than remaining in a bad one, even though this meant that the ties between children and parents, which held to be of major importance, were severed. This was a practice in line with that used by the poor relief; the poor relief that more or less always placed the children in foster homes.

What did the parents want? In only 15 percent of the cases did the families themselves ask for help initially. But in 57 of the 132 families (43%), it was the families themselves that contacted the bureau, at least on one occasion. This may be interpreted as meaning that when the families discovered the bureau and the possibilities it offered, they began making use of its services. However, the reason for making contact was not always positive. It may have been in the form of a protest. At Barnavårdsbyran, the staff was aware that a mother on her own, whom one wanted to help, did not always want her child to be placed in a foster home, and certainly not placed there forever. She would come to the bureau to get general advice, to get help to make the father pay for the child, and to get information about foster homes, "either
just for a short period of time, or - and this would be a difficult choice to make forever - to place the child in a home where it would be regarded as the family's own. Here, one can sense a conflict. There was also a difference between the way the mothers and the fathers acted. A conclusion that can be drawn is that the mothers wanted as far as possible to take care of the child themselves, while the fathers were more liable to choose a relocation project. Those fathers that took care of their children on their own were described in a negative way. The prevailing gender system was reshaped in the bureau's work with the families (Hirdman, 1988).

In previous research on the welfare state, children are described as objects for different measures of reform. But my study shows that children took an active part in creating their childhood. The 276 letters that were found in Barnavårdsbyrán's files do not indicate that the foster children have a passive and dejected attitude. They emerge as active fighters, not as objects for adults to impose their wills on. The children make clear demands. Sometimes but not always they were given what they wanted. At times their demands were contrary to the principles set down by Barnavårdsbyrán or clashed with concrete reality, but it often proved worthwhile for the children to express their opinions. They were often adept at arguing their case and they knew which strings to pull. They showed great competence and thus they were not powerless even if they were dependent on the willingness of adults to listen to them, in this case those at the Barnavårdsbyrán.

Philanthropic work was to a great extent a female world. 75 percent of the cases reported to the bureau were reported by women. This reflects both women's traditional devotion to children and the fact that most of the occupations dealing with children were practised by women. The daily work at Mjölkdroppen and Barnavårdsbyrán was done by women, and more women than men were members of the societies. Men dominated on the board which meant that women formally were subjected to men. On the other hand the matrons ran the business and as they remained in office for more than 25 years they exerted a great deal of influence on the activities.

The meeting between on the one hand, mothers and fathers and on the other, doctors, matrons and philanthropists is looked upon as a negotiation situation (Blom, 1988; Gordon, 1989). Consensus had to be created. The societies had no formal right to exercise disciplinary power over poor people. However, it can not be ruled out that they were looked upon as authorities. There was always the risk of being reported to the child welfare board.

Gordon shows in her study that family violence was socially and culturally

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1 Bvb So verksamhetsberättelse (annual report) 1917, s 8, Bvn, SSCA
constructed. What about neglect in the Swedish context? Without a doubt, there were children in Hagalund who were suffering. But there are signs that imply that the problems were at least to some extent constructed. Infant mortality had begun to decrease long before the first Mjölkkoppen was opened. However, at this stage it began to be regarded as a problem. It seems to have been a case of a change in attitude. Something which had previously barely been noticed, except by a small group of physicians and population experts, now began to be regarded as unacceptable (Armstrong, 1986). Children were not to be treated in any old way (Lökke, 1994). These ideas occurred internationally. In the age of hygiene, the children of Hagalund needed to visit the countryside and get sunshine and fresh air even though Hagalund could be described as a rural idyll. Of course, there were other reasons for visiting the countryside. It was a popular belief among philanthropists that children would benefit from good square meals and a proper upbringing. However, it is still remarkable that sunshine and fresh air were used as an argument for the children needing to get away from Hagalund. This type of argument was used in other countries (Cunningham, 1991). Children were seen as the ideal recipients of charity; they were helpless, pliable and grateful.

The issue of child welfare did not appear to have been a political issue, at least not something that the political parties had different opinions about. Since the parties were in agreement, no changes took place when the Social Democrats gained the political majority in Hagalund in 1920. The work carried out with the children continued as before. Nor did child welfare appear to be a class issue. The bourgeois family ideals were shared by the working class. However, it is evident from the material examined that the members of the working class did not share the ideas about children and childhood. For example, working-class parents were more positive to child labour than the bureau. For both Mjölkkoppen and Barnavårdsbyrån, the transition from being privately run to being run by the county council took place without any conflict. This is in line with the results of Seip as regards Norway (Seip, 1994). The study demonstrates that a plausible explanation for this is that at an early stage a condition of mutual dependence had taken place between the two societies and the county council. The county council delegated tasks to the societies and the co-operation between them gradually increased, among other things as a result of new legislation. The child welfare committee needed the help of Barnavårdsbyrån in order to be able to carry out the new tasks set down by the law. Mjölkkoppen's growing ambition in the early 1920s, to be able to reach all infants in the community, was dependent on building a positive relationship with the local authorities. The co-operation led to the establishment of personal contacts between the members of the society
and the people elected by and working for the county council. This resulted in the creation of a tightly knit network of philanthropists and persons tied to the county council. Another explanation for the smooth transition is, particularly as regards Mjölkdroppen, financial. The county council gradually took over the financial responsibility for Mjölkdroppen. In due course, the society's funds became insufficient to run an expanding enterprise. In the case of Barnavårdsbyrån, the county council gradually took over all its activities. The increasing competence of the local authorities led to a decrease in philanthropic work. Eventually Barnavårdsbyrån became superfluous. A positive view of the state among the leading men in the societies may help to explain why they did not fight the take-over by the state. They themselves went from the private to the public sector and ended up as high government officials.

A further explanation for the lack of conflict is quite simply that dedicated philanthropists were becoming scarce. Membership decreased, particularly for Mjölkdroppen. A plausible explanation would be the professionalisation of child welfare work. There was no longer room here for amateurs. Perhaps the focus on general actions was felt to be alien to the traditionally minded philanthropists who had the "help the individual to help himself" running through their veins and who looked upon poverty as the enemy to be conquered. A fossilisation of the members may also have contributed to the lessening of interest. Obituaries and references to deaths occur frequently in the minutes and the annual reports. The recruitment of new members was not successful. There were no longer plenty of women available who had both financial and other means to devote time to philanthropic enterprises.

In the early days, it was the informal women's networks that were of primary importance. These were no doubt essential for making the enterprises work, but the increasing co-operation between professional members and the local authorities ironically enough led to the downfall of the activities. Closely-knit contacts and increased co-operation eliminated the need for separate institutions. In reality, the differences between social work carried out by philanthropists and by the local authorities were eliminated. Thus we are able to understand why the transition was painless. That it was the philanthropic movement that had to give way is another story and thus it was not treated in detail in this study. Being economically dependent on benefits was hardly a good basis for independence. The ambitions of professionals and politicians alike demanded the support of local taxes and the need for legislation when it came to taking general actions. It was no longer sufficient to rely on female social networks and individual efforts prompted by
philanthropists to help children in distress. The saving of the children had to become a task for society.

While the leading male figures became government officials, the women remained active within the local community. The last matron was employed by the local authorities and the fact that she was married was another indication that society had changed and with it the conditions for philanthropy.
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Orphanages for girls-  
social control and family strategies in Stockholm at  
the turn of the century  

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Orphanages for girls - 
social control and family strategies in Stockholm at the turn of the century

During the second half of the nineteenth century a lot of orphanages were founded in Sweden. They were a part of the institutionalization which was going on in many areas and which was looked upon as a way to find solutions to different problems in society as well as being seen by many as a positive possibility, a way to educate and train. The orphanages were also part of a new interest in children as can be seen in the social debate which paid great attention to children and their conditions and in Sweden as in many other countries a number of organizations and societies were founded to find ways of saving children who were considered to be in danger and threatened with immorality, the dangers of the streets and whose parents were considered to be bad and neglectful. Through these organizations and societies a wealthy middle class could make a contribution to help poor people, but at the same time they gave opportunities for ideological influence and control. The first institutions for day-care, useful-employment schools, milk-depots and summer camps belong to this epoch. The first orphanages in Sweden started in the seventeenth century but during this period they expanded in number and became more differentiated.

Orphanages were an urban phenomena and when looking at the number of orphanages Stockholm held an exceptional position but it can also be important to point out that we find orphanages in many small towns as well as larger communities.

There were orphanages which admitted both boys and girls and orphanages for boys or girls. Among those for just one sex we find particularly many orphanages for girls and in my forthcoming dissertation I will discuss why girls were considered to be particularly well-suited as objects for charity and poor relief in the form of institutions and what kind of childhood these institutions created. In this paper I will present some preliminary findings about the relationship between family and institution, trying to answer questions such as how

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1 I must however point out that few of the children at these institutions were real orphans. Most of them had in fact at least one parent alive.

2 For a discussion, see for instance Barbara Brenzel (1983), David J Rothman (1971).
the institutions regarded their own roles and tasks in relation to the families and what the institutions meant to the families. The question which I will discuss when it comes to the parents is not so much why they left their children but more about how the orphanage as an institution was interpreted to the family itself and in relation to other alternatives like foster homes. In Sweden we can since the 1760s follow the arguments of advantages and disadvantages concerning foster homes and orphanages in the debate of how to take care of children whose parents by different reasons couldn’t do it themselves. From the official point of view, and especially after the turn of the century, foster homes were considered to be the best solution since they were real homes, but a government committee report from 1944 pointed out that some children were brought up at orphanages since the parents had refused to have them in foster homes.

When looking at studies concerning institutions for children and youth that have been published in the last two decades one finds that perspective from below has been important and that the individuals’ and families’ own decisions and the ways in which they have acted in relation to organizations/institutions have been emphasized. This also implies that an institution which has been founded for a special purpose can be used for another and that it can have different roles and be used in different ways at the same time. The studies are about varying types of institutions and are in many ways different from each other although they deal to some extent with the same questions: the institution as a strategy for survival, as a training institute, as a home, as a form of social oppression, the way parents were looked upon from the institutions’ point of view and the possibilities to reclaim children, questions which also will be discussed in this paper.

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3 In this paper the parents play an important role and the family is considered as a unit although I am aware that different members of the family probably had different opinions about questions concerning contact with authorities, institutions and children. For a discussion, see Linda Gordon (1988). The sources which I have used here do not give us knowledge about this and especially not about the girls’ opinions.

4 Gustaf Lindstedt (1915) p 51.

5 See for instance the discussion in connection with three new laws concerning children and youth in 1902. Emil Sundberg (1903).

6 SOU 1944:34 s 137.

My study concerns five orphanages for girls in Stockholm. The period is 1870-1920 with a focus on the turn of the century. One of the orphanages, Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor, belonged to the poor relief authorities; Malmqvistska barnuppföstringsanstalten was run by a philanthropic society and the other three - Adolf Fredriks barnhem för flickor, Klara barnhem and Kungsholms barnhem - were parish orphanages. Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor and Malmqvistska barnuppföstringsanstalten each admitted about fifty girls but the parish orphanages were much smaller with 10-15 girls. The orphanages had been founded during the second part of the nineteenth century (1870, 1852, 1874, 1868 and 1892 respectively). The statues and regulations give a general framework for tasks and activities and the five orphanages have much in common although there are also differences. The admitted girls should be poor and defenceless, they must not be ill or display any delinquency. The girls had to be at least 5-7 years old when they entered the orphanages and at the turn of the century they could in general stay until the age of 15-17 years. The age for leaving varied somewhat and in the case of the public orphanage it was raised gradually, from 14-15 years in the 1870s to 18 years in 1918. All five orphanages had the same aim: to train the girls to be competent servants.

The way the girls came to the orphanages varied. The girls who were admitted to Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor had all been sent by the poor relief authorities. The private orphanages had some of their girls from the same authorities and some from philanthropic societies. In which way and why the parents had come into contact with one or the other will not be discussed here, but it can be noted that the parents have turned to or been encouraged to turn to the poor relief authorities or a private philanthropic organization and we can assume that they have found themselves in a troublesome situation. I have combined informations about the homes and the families from admission papers and minute books to get an idea if the girls' backgrounds.

For Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor I have looked at admission papers from 1905-1914. The period was chosen since there were a fairly large number detailed papers from these years. During this period 54 girls were admitted at the orphanage. The youngest girl was 5 years old, the oldest 14. The girls came from 46 families since some of them were sisters. Most of the families had only a few members, almost half of them had just one or two children.

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under age to provide for. Only six families had more than five children. Almost half of the girls had lost mother and/or father but only six were real orphans. This also means that almost all girls had at least one of their parents alive and most of the girls had lived with their parents before they entered the orphanage.

The main problem seems to have been that the families were poor - a poverty mostly connected with low wages and illness, not with unemployment - and had difficulties to take care of the children since the parents had to work. For widowers and unmarried mothers the need of care is stressed. For other women (widows, divorced women and abandoned women) the admission papers often indicate a combination of economic problems and problems with care which is probably due to the fact that these women had more children and less regulated jobs and consequently earned less.

When looking at the comments made by the poor relief authorities there proved to be rather few critical remarks, in fact positive statements such as "the mother is respectable and hard working", "the home is simple but tidy" outweigh the more negative ones. 8

From Klara barnhem there are no admission papers, only notes in the in the minute-book. This means a much briefer presentation and many girls are just mentioned by their names and without any comments on their parents or homes. From 1868 (the orphanage was founded this year) to 1920 I found forty girls with remarks about home and parents. Six of them were orphans, one girl had unknown parents. These girls were all admitted before 1891. Six girls had unmarried mothers, three mothers were widows, one father had abandoned the family, which means that ten of the girls had single mothers who took care of the family. Twelve girls had lost their mothers.

As in the case of Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor negative remarks concerning the parents’ behaviour are very unusual.

Today it is impossible to know what the parents actually said when they asked for help but many of them seem to have been in great need of economic help and help to take care of the children during day time. It is striking how difficult it was to be a single parent, to be alone, earn money and take care of the children.

In spite of the state of the orphanages as what might be called voluntary institutions it is not unreasonable to assume that many parents more or less were forced to leave their children

8 Anne Løkke presents similar findings in her study about neglected and delinquent children in Denmark 1880-1920. Anne Løkke (1990) p 113.
due to circumstances over which they had no control, even if we must also take into account
the fact that some parents may have wanted to get rid of their children.\footnote{For a discussion about this, see Anne Løkke (1990) p 67f.}
But we also find parents who refused to leave their children even though the orphanage probably was the only
help they could get in a strained situation.\footnote{From Klara barnhem there are three such examples in the 1880s. A mother has "declined the right" to have her girl in the orphanage, a girl "has not got the permission" by her guardian and one mother didn’t accept the offering. Klara församlings barnhems protokolsbok: 25/11 1885, 7/2 1883, 29/5 1884.} Maybe many parents just received an offering; they couldn’t say no or had no reason to request a foster home instead of an orphanage.
There were also parents who disliked the orphanages but probably couldn’t refuse when offered but by moving or pretending to move from Stockholm the girls were soon removed.\footnote{Maria Sundqvist gives several examples of this strategy in her study of Childrens’ Welfare Board of Norrköping and the families whose children were reported as delinquent or morally neglected. Maria Sundqvist (1994) p 231. See also Anne Løkke (1990) p 105.}

The sources preserved do not in general enable us to find out what the parents’ thoughts about
orphanages were, since it seems that very few parents wrote an applications themselves.\footnote{I have found such applications only from two of the five orphanages, Kungsholms barnhem and Malmövided barnuppföringsanstalten. This could of course be due to the fact that applications are missing or are incomplete and/or that applications were often done by a person who hold a professional possession like a parish deaconess or a person employed by the poor relief authorities.}
Indirectly, we find parents in applications which they have signed but applications that were
probably written by another person since the handwriting is different. Sometimes applications
and minute books refer to what parents have said or wished. In spite of an outsider speaking
for the parents this does not necessarily mean that we don’t hear the parents and especially
not if the poor relief authorities are concerned since foster home was a much cheaper
solution.

It can be noted that at least some parents have asked to have their children at an orphanage.
They have tried to establish contact with a special orphanage or told the poor relief authorities
that they wanted to have their child at Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. There are also a few
parents who handed in letters in which their employer certified the need for an orphanage.\footnote{See for instance Kungsholms barnhem. Protokoll 1/6 1917.}
This can have been a strategy to get the kind of help which they wanted to have, maybe it
served to bring pressure upon the poor relief authorities. It can also be noted that according
to a memorandum from the city council in 1910 some of the girls at Uppfostringsanstalten
for flickor were admitted at this institution because their parents had refused to get separated from their children if the girls had to go to foster homes. This indicates that more parents than the number we find in the applications in fact wanted to have their children in orphanages instead of foster homes. By analysing the cases where the parents have given a kind of reason for their choice, even though they are few in number, it will be possible to get an idea of what an orphanage could mean to a poor family at this time.

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The orphanages will be discussed from two perspectives: the orphanage in relation to home/family and the orphanage as a training institute. I will look at them from the founders' and the boards' point of view which means the way in which the orphanages present their tasks in relation to the families, and from below, from the parents' point of view.

In rules, regulations, minute books, addresses and annual reports the girls' parents and homes are often described in negative terms. Three of the orphanages have the word defenceless in their rules. To be defenceless meant to be without protection and indicates indirectly that the parents could not protect their girls, that they didn't fulfill their duty as parents. The rules of Klara barnhem speak about "children who otherwise would fall a victim of mentally and physically neglect". The board of Adolf Fredriks barnhem presents their mission in this way: "... from need and misery snatch as many as the resources allow of those defenceless little ones, who otherwise maybe without defence and care will be blamed or as you say be drifting aimlessly". The annual reports from Malmqvistska barnuppfostringsanstalten are particularly full of formulations like these. The children have been brought up in "temporal and intellectual neglect, influenced by the most pernicious examples", the orphanage will "try to save from destruction as many as possible of those girls who otherwise will to be blamed".

In 1896 the manager at Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor described the girls with the following...

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15 Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor, Adolf Fredriks barnhem för flickor, Kungsholms barnhem.
16 Klara barnhem. Stadgar § 1.
17 Styrelseberättelse öfver förvaltningen af Adolf Fredriks Församlings Barnhem under åren 1878 och 1879.
18 Berättelse angående Malmqvistska barnuppfostringsanstalten 1865 p 7 and 1867 p 5.
words: "When the children come to the asylum most of them have not learned either obedience nor good manners or order; many of the old girls are both untruthful and immoral and the young ones have not even learned ordinary cleanliness." 19

The way in which the institutions describe their task gives us almost an impression of an institution with the aim of rescuing children: the children are to be saved from bad environments and the orphanages will give them the protection they do not have. In the admission papers mentioned above and in the minute book notes concerning individual girls we find some families with remarks about alcoholic, immoral, neglect, criminality but these families do not dominate at all and the bombastic words must be interpreted as a way of emphasizing the importance of the orphanages. 20 Maybe they also reflect a way of looking upon poor people. Being poor was considered by many as a fault of the individual, something that one was responsible for. According to this view, a poor parent meant a bad parent, a parent who could not take care of the children. The parents were not just poor, there was something else wrong with them too. 21

When the children were admitted to the orphanages the parents had to resign their guardianship. As a result, the orphanages practically took over the tasks of the parents and the institutions also describe themselves in parental words. The girls will be given "Christian parental care and education". The manager at Adolf Fredriks barnhem shall be "in stead of a mother" 22 and the regulations from 1874 concerning Malmqvistska barnuppföringsanstalten say that the manager and the female manager must never forget that they have taken the parental care on themselves and that they as parents must faithfully take care of the children in regard to both their physically and mentally education.

But to make an application didn’t have to mean that you as a parent renounced your duties. An application from 1907 to Uppföringsanstalten contains this note:
"The man says that he wants to have his children at Stockholms stads uppföringsanstalt för flickor at 7 B Barnängstvärgatan and he is ready to pay 15 cr/m, perhaps 20 cr/m. He says that he wants this in order to get better care for the girls than if they should stay at home and

19 Uppföringsanstalten för flickor. Skrivelse från föreståndarinnan till styrelsen 21/2 1896.
20 Anne Lekke describes the same phenomena. Anne Lekke (1990) p 81.
21 For a discussion see, Linda Gordon (1988).
22 Kungsholms barnhem. Stadgar § 1.
take care of themselves when he is away from home during his working hours.” The man was a coppersmith and his wife had recently died. The sum of money he offered to pay was half of the sum which the city had to pay for the girls at Uppfostringsanstalten but it was more than the city paid to foster homes.

Concerning the other orphanages parents or relatives sometimes had to undertake to pay unless the orphanage, someone else or the poor relief authorities promised to pay. For more than five years a woman paid for her niece at Malmqvistska barnuppfostringsanstalten. The fee had been paid "in order but with pain".

In December 1913 the board of Kungsholms barnhem received this application:

"The reason for this request is that we have got into financial difficulties and if the home has to be broken up for a while, you don’t know for how long, it would be safe to know that our girl has a good home where she gets education and everything she needs and that she does not have to go from one place to another."

The parents did not want to give up their child but they did want be sure that the child would be safe and have a good home. Parents in economic and/or social stress could maybe, as Barbara Brenzel suggests, feel relieved if the child could enter an orphanage. To ask for an application or to accept an offer could in this perspective be looked upon as a representation of parental responsibility, a strategy for survival in the prevailing conditions.  

Renouncing the guardianship meant that the orphanage decided if och when parents and children were allowed to meet and if and when a child could go back to its parents, but the orphanage could also be a way to keep in touch. The orphanages were situated in the city, where the parents lived; children who were placed in foster homes often had to leave the city and go out into the countryside, far away from home. The orphanages had visting-hours and the children could visit their homes or relatives. Astrid was admitted at Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor in 1912. Her mother was unmarried, she worked as a servant and could not have

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24 See Barbara Brenzel (1983) p 7. Barbara Brenzel suggests that it could provide emotional relief too, which according to my opinion is more difficult to speak of. Also Volker Hunecke discusses parents’ relations to institutions as a strategy for survival in his study about foundlings in Milan. In Milan a lot of married couples left their children at the foundling hospital and in the middle of the nineteenth century 60-70% of the foundlings were legitimate children. Hunecke explains this with poverty among the parents and that the institutions were willing to receive children. By using the foundling hospital the parents did not have to pay wetnurse and child care during the child’s first years and the mother could work. It was easy to leave the child but also easy to reclaim it and Hunecke suggests that this effected the parents. Volker Hunecke (1994). On the other hand according to the American antrophologist David Kertzer there is no obvious connection between poverty and parents leaving the children at foundling homes. Kertzer sees the foundling homes as social oppression. Unmarried mothers were forced to leave their children at these institutions and Kertzer suggests that the working class culture was influenced by the foundling homes readiness to take care of children in a way which made parents look upon leaving their child as a right. David Kertzer (1993) Chapter 8.
her daughter living with her. The mother wanted the daughter to be admitted at Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor since she wanted to visit her. Karin came a year later. She had lost her whole family, mother, father, brother to tuberculosis. Her grandmother who couldn’t take care of her asked to have her at an orphanage “within the city” and for instance the orphanage at Barnängstvärgatan. 25

At Malmqvistska barnuppostringsanstalten parents could come twice a week, Wednesdays and Sundays between three and five. The children were allowed to go home four times a year if they behaved well and came back to the orphanage in time. 26 At Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor the board decided in 1918 that visiting-hours would to be on Sundays between two and four. The children could go home five times a year. It has not been possible to find out the earlier rules, but in 1904 there is a note in the minute book that relatives visited children “at other times than those intended which had caused inconvenience”. 27 Kungsholms barnhem changed visting-hours in 1914, from six times a year to thirteen times: the first Sunday each month and Boxing day. The words in the minute book indicate that the parents had asked for increased visiting-hours. 28 The differences between the orphanages could be due to different views held by the boards but it could also be connected with size and district. Girls came from all over the city to the two big orphanages, Malmqvistska barnuppostringsanstalten and Uppfostringsanstalten and these orphanages had more generous visiting-hours than the little local orphanage Kungsholms barnhem with just one adult employed.

The orphanage decided on the contact to be permitted and nothing indicates that the orphanages encouraged contact with relatives. 29 yet could this fact, that the orphanages provided opportunities for keeping in touch, have been of importance. The orphanage could

25 Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Inskrivningshandlingar 1910 S, 1911 W.
26 Malmqvistska barnuppostringsanstalten. Ordningsstadga från 1874.
27 Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Protokoll 24/1 1918, 14/4 1904.
28 Kungsholms barnhem. Protokoll: Visting-hours discussed 18/12 1909, 16/2 1910, 3/5 1910, 21/3 1911, 16/12 1913, 16/5 1914.
29 Jaegerspris, the biggest orphanages for girls in Denmark, had according to Lis Petersen no interest in the parents. They were looked upon as bad parents since their children had to be brought up at an orphanage. The board and the staff wanted to keep the contact at a minimum. All letters were censured. Parents and other relatives were allowed to come each sixth week, 2-3 persons at a time. Lis Petersen (1987) p 35, 190, 192.
in this way from the parents’ perspective be a chance of preserving the family.30

There are no comments about numbers of children being visited, nor are there any comments about how often relatives came or whether the children used to visit their homes. But from the available sources we know that parents came at visiting-hours, that some tried to come on others days and at other hours and that probably the parents acted to improve visiting-hours at Kungsholms barnhem. We also know that some girls visited their homes, but these visits are only mentioned when the girls and their parents did not follow the rules for time and behaviour. Kristina, from Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor, didn’t come back to the orphanage since her mother needed her help and Sigrid, from the same orphanage, stole some money when she visited her sister "on the usual day for visits in the home, close to exam-day."31

Neither rules, reglementations nor minute books indicate that parents or other relatives could mean anything to the girls although it is likely that the girls did have their own families in mind.32 But even if the orphanages didn’t encourage contact it seems as if from the orphanages’ points of view parents ought to keep in touch with their children. When Olga who stayed at Kungsholms barnhem died in 1913 her parents wanted to have her bank-book33 but the board decided to use the money for Olga’s funeral since the parents had not been interested in Olga during her time at the orphanage.34 Also from other orphanages we find similar examples, that not keeping in contact with the child was considered bad parental behaviour.35 (This must not mean that the contact was considered as important for the child, it could also be interpreted as the way you ought to behave if you were a parent.)

30 Ruth M Alexander describes also in her study the institution as a way to preserve the family but from a quite different starting-point. The institutions were reform schools, the girls were much older than the girls in my study, they had run away from home, were considered as delinquents and the aim was to have the girls to adapt themselves to their families and to society. In this work the institutions used the families although the parents were looked upon as not very good parents but the institutions thought that it would be difficult to reform the girls if the families dissociated themselves from the girls. They wanted to put them back into the families and under the power of the parents. The staff disliked personal visits, they preferred letters but all letters were censured. Ruth M Alexander (1995).

31 Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Protokoll 14/7 1888 Bilaga D and 21/8 1903 Bilaga C.


33 The girls had bank-books at the orphanages and the orphanage attended the saving.

34 Kungsholms barnhem. Protokoll 16/12 1913.

35 See for instance Malmqvistska barnuppföstringsanstalten. Inkomna handlingar 1905.
The contact was of course influenced by other factors, for instance the parents possibilities to use visiting-hours, the attitudes of the staff, if the parents felt welcomed och how the visits turned out. We can also assume that rules and norms concerning homes respectively orphanages differed from each other but what this meant to the contact is today difficult to say anything about.

Applying for a place in an orphanage could also in another way express a wish to preserve the family: sisters could be placed in the same orphanage. In 1912, 54 girls were staying at Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Among these we find six pairs of sisters and a group of three sisters. During the period 1905-1914, in general each year a pair of sisters was admitted and five new girls had already a sister at the orphanage. In 1912 a father wanted to move two daughters from a foster home to Uppfostringsanstalten where he already had his eldest daughter. The reason he gave for his request was that his was very pleased with the orphanage and that he wanted the sisters to be brought up together.36

Trying to preserve the family by using the orphanage could, of course, also be a way of preserving one’s own parental role, avoiding competition with foster parents and a new home.

Some applications mention disadvantages with foster homes. A mother who had her daughter in a foster home in Småland, in the south of Sweden wanted to move the girl to Kungsholms barnhem and wrote this letter to the board in 1915: "... and as far as I have heard and understood from letters it is not so good for her she has to work as a grown up even though she is only eleven years old there won’t be any time for learning my youngest is att Sättra barnkoloni /another orphanage/; now I have heared that she too will be sent away to Småländ, I am in dispair about this..."37 There were also other mothers who wanted to move their girls from foster homes. They feared that the children had to work too much, that school was neglected; one mother wrote that the foster parents took care of the child just to get the money.38

In her book Labouring children, the Canadian historian Joy Parr describes the situation of the

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36 Priscilla Ferguson Clement writes that over half of the children in her study between 1881 and 1814 were admitted with one or more brothers or sisters. Priscilla Ferguson Clement (1986) p 345.

37 Kungsholms barnhem. Inskrivningshandlingar 1915.

38 See for instance Malmqvistska barnuppfostringsanstalten. Inkomna handlingar 16/9 1875.
foster girl as being inside the family but outside the incest taboo.\textsuperscript{39} In the sources where we directly and indirectly meet the parents’ points of view there is no indication of this problem, but the manager at Uppfostringsanstalten was upset about it. This orphanage which was run by the poor relief authorities also sent girls to foster homes in the countryside. The city accountants had criticised the orphanage and pointed out that the number of girls who were sent to foster homes was too small. They suggested that more children be sent to foster homes since this was cheaper for the city. In answer to this, the manager drew up a list of the girls placed in foster homes by the orphanage between 1880 and 1894. During this period, 77 girls had been sent to foster homes och according to the manager four of these had been sexual abused in their foster homes, three by their foster fathers and one by the son in the family. The list was compiled as a defence and in reply to the critical remarks made by the accountants and perhaps the mananger regarded placing out as a threat to her own institution and position but since the list contains names, titles, addresses I doubt whether she would have dared do this without being certain. In October of the same year she gave the board another report about sexual abuse. A girl who had been in a foster home had returned to the orphanage and had told the mangager that the male servant had abused her several times.\textsuperscript{40} The board of the orphanage wrote to the poor relief authorities that with these remarks from the manager "one could be frighten from placing out at least girls"\textsuperscript{41} and I think that it is not unreasonable to assume that parents could have experienced the same anxiety although they do not actually say so. When dealing with exploitation, work or sexual, one could look upon the orphanage as a shelter and in this case the board/staff and the parents could have had the same point of view.

Perhaps the standard has influenced some parents’ view. In the application from 1913 mentioned above the parents wrote that they wanted a good home, where the girl could get all she needed. Compared with the girls’ own homes and many foster homes the standard of the orphanages seems to have been fairly good at this time. When the girls left the orphanages they were also given some equipment: clothes, shoes... In a note from Malmqvistska barnuppfostringsanstalten we can see that the board decideded that a girl who had entered the orphanage at the age of thirteen had to leave the institution with only half of

\textsuperscript{39} Joy Parr (1980) s 114.

\textsuperscript{40} Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Förteckning öfver de barn, som blifvit utackorderade från Stockholm stads uppostringsanstalt för flickor under åren 1880-1894, skrivelse till styrelsen för Stockholms stads uppostringsanstalt för flickor från föreståndarinnan daterad 12/3 1896 samt skrivelse från föreståndarinnan till styrelsen daterad 16/10 1896.

\textsuperscript{41} Skrivelse till Stockholms stads fattigvårdsnämnden från Styrelsen för Stockholms stads uppostringsanstalte för flickor daterad 25/2 1896.
the equipment. Did the board suspect that the parents had placed their daughter at the orphanage in order to get the equipment? If the value of the equipment could have influenced parents, from the board's view it could be used as a way to control the reclaiming. Anna, born in 1887, had entered Malmqvist's barnuppföstringsanstalten five years later. In 1904 she had got "a private employment". Maybe parents or relatives had found a job for her. According to the board Anna could leave the orphanage, but she couldn't count on the equipment if she left the orphanage before "the appointed time". According to the register Anna stayed at the orphanage, at least some months, maybe almost a year. We don't know what Anna and her parents or relatives thought about the board's decision but clothes and shoes might have had some importance. A year later, there is another example from the same orphanage. Ester's parents had reclaimed her. In the minute book we can read that Ester was due to leave the orphanage the following autumn and if she wanted to leave before she would lose "the usual equipment".

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From the orphanages' points of view the institution was a permanent home; neither minute books nor annual reports indicate that the girls were to return to their parents in spite of the fact that most of them had at least one parent alive and in spite of the fact that parents, at least theoretically, had made an application voluntarily. We don't know what parents thought of the future when they left their children at the orphanages; if they looked upon the orphanage as a permanent home or as a temporary solution.

Few of the girls returned to relatives and in that sense the orphanages became the girls' homes. 15 out of 134 girls who during 1888-1906 left Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor returned to parents or other relatives, which is a figure of almost 12%. The register from Malmqvist's barnuppföstringsanstalten gives the same picture: 12 out of 160 girls returned to relatives (7%). This meant that the girls stayed for many years. The girls who in 1898 left Malmqvist's barnuppföstringsanstalten had spent almost 9 years at the orphanage, those...

42 Malmqvist's barnuppföstringsanstalten. Protokoll 9/9 1904.
43 Malmqvist's barnuppföstringsanstalten. Protokoll 18/6 1905.
44 Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Förteckning öfver Inkommande och utgående flickor vid Stockholms stads upfostringsanstalt för flickor åren 1888-1937. Malmqvist's barnuppföstringsanstalten. Utskrivningslagare. Lis Petersen presents almost the same number for Jagerspris. 14% of the girls returned 1897-1901. Lis Petersen (1987) p 298. Priscilla Ferguson Clement found that after 1880 more than 70% of the children in her study returned to parents or relatives. Priscilla Ferguson Clement (1986) p 348.
who left ten years later seven years.

Did the orphanages also become a home in the sense that they could with the girls enter into relationships which we associate with a family? The Danish historian Tinne Vammen suggests, that the home as a model had influenced many of the philanthropic institutions which were founded during the nineteenth century and she writes, that the word home when used in names of institutions reflects the devotion of the bourgeois family sphere and that the word in this connection gives an idea of how to organize an institution. From this perspective words like "instead of a mother" and "Christian parental care" could be interpreted as an expression for what she calls philanthropic maternalism, that these words reflect the relationship between staff and children and that the middle class family, and above all, the relations between the members of the family served as a model. As long as the girls stayed at the orphanage the board and staff made the decisions and it is not until the girls have left the orphanages that we can test the family model. Did the contact between child and orphanage cease when the girls left the institutions? If it didn't: what did it look like and who laid down the conditions?

Annual reports and minute books display that some girls returned to the orphanages. They took part in Christmas parties, they visited the orphanages or wrote letters and related what had happened to them but they also turned to the orphanages for help.

The orphanages could help the girls with new jobs and they could give financial help. Elsa had left Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor in 1903. She had been placed out with a teacher since she had some problems with her heart. Later on, she trained to be a teacher. Her education was paid for by the orphanage and she got 100 crowns for equipment. She was to give the money back "if she got the opportunity to do it". Anna had been brought up at Malmqvistska barnuppostringsanstalten. She could not get a job as a servant since she wasn't strong enough. She supported herself by sewing but had been forced to pawn her sewing machine since she had to pay a loan of twenty crowns. The board offered her the same sum of money in order to give her a possibility to get her sewing machine back. A girl from Klara barnhem came with a bill from a dentist. She had recently left the orphanage and had had to visit a dentist. He wanted 90 crowns for his work, she earned 15 crowns a month. The

\[45 \text{ Tinne Vammen (1986) p 130.}
\[46 \text{Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Protokoll 23/10 1910.}
\[47 \text{Malmqvistska barnuppostringsanstalten. Protokoll 23/3 1902.}
board decided to pay the bill and in the minute book the secretary wrote that the orphanage ought to have given her necessary dental care.\textsuperscript{48}

The minute books and annual reports tell us about girls who returned to the orphanage when they became ill and had been forced to stop working,\textsuperscript{49} about girls waiting for new jobs.\textsuperscript{50} Some girls returned to live at the orphanages while they studied (often at teachers’ training-colleges)\textsuperscript{51} and girls who didn’t become servants and had no families to live with could stay at the orphanage and pay for food and lodging although they in fact had been discharged. Signe had been brought up at Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor and she had become a teacher. She had worked as a governess in the countryside and had later obtained employment at the French School in Stockholm. She asked if she could stay at the orphanage if she paid for food and lodging.\textsuperscript{52} Was it a way to save money for her? Her choice indicates that she didn’t look upon the orphanage as something to feel ashamed of.

The orphanages differ from each other both with respect to the number of girls admitted and the number of girls returning for help. We have only few examples from the small institutions but the pattern is the same. At Malmqvistska barnuppsstringsanstalten this form of contact seems to have been particularly common and it is possible that this orphanage which was a large one and was run by a philanthropic society had other possibilities to help than Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor which belonged to the poor relief authorities. The contact depended on the girls, not on the institution\textsuperscript{53}; that they returned and used the orphanage as a resource to solve different problems. And maybe the relationship was based on these resources; that the girls knew that they could come back and get some help. But we must also point out that it seems as if the orphanages had some frames concerning help. According to the manger’s notes about the girls at Uppfostringsanstalten some of them gave birth to

\textsuperscript{48} Klara församlings barnhems protokollsbok 30/11 1916.

\textsuperscript{49} See for instance Berättelse angående Malmqvistska barnuppsstringsanstalten 1882 p 6, 1884 p 6.

\textsuperscript{50} See for instance Berättelse angående Malmqvistska barnuppsstringsanstalten 18822 p 6, 1883 p 5, 1884 p 6, 1897 p 5. Also Klara församlings barnhems protokollsbok 3/4 1894.

\textsuperscript{51} See for instance Berättelse angående Malmqvistska barnuppsstringsanstalten 1891 pp 5-6, 1893 pp 5-6.

\textsuperscript{52} Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor. Protokoll 25/2 1910.

\textsuperscript{53} Jaegerspris used a form of gradually leaving which meant that the orphanage sometimes contacted families where the girls worked and sometimes even the parents if the girls had returned home. Lis Petersen (1987) pp 24, 298, 346.
children without being married and it is not unreasonable to assume that the same happened to girls from the other orphanages. But as far as can be seen from the sources none of these girls returned to her old orphanage. Perhaps we could look upon the stay at the orphanage as a contract. For girls who behaved well at the orphanage and who, after leaving, continued to behave well and to be moral the orphanage could serve as a real resource, as a possibility to get help and the orphanages rather than being formal, appear to be fairly flexible in these cases.

The orphanages were also training institutions. The five orphanages had the same aim: to bring up the girls to be competent servants. From the orphanages’ points of view this aim was very important since the number of girls who left the orphanages as servants could be a way of judging whether the orphanage was successful or not. The aim implied that the girls’ stay at the orphanages, at least from the founders’ points of view, shouldn’t be temporary and that the orphanage was responsible for the girls’ future. The aim gave identity, it motivated the existence and distinguished the orphanage from a foster home.

Barbara Brenzel points out that many parents who sent their girls to Lancaster considered education to be important. In her study, Priscilla Ferguson Clement stresses the orphanages as important when it comes to school education since the public school system wasn’t properly organized. Stockholm had a fairly good public school system by this time and signs of anxiety about schooling were more common in the case of foster homes in the countryside. Applications and notes in minute books connected with admission contain hardly any questions concerning school and the future and it seems as if the orphanage as training institute was not a factor in the parents’ wish to apply to an orphanage. Perhaps this can partly be explained by the age. Lancaster admitted girls between 7 and 16 years old, but little by little fewer young girls were admitted which could have made the question of education more important. The girls who came to the orphanages in my study were almost all very young.

From the girls’ point of view the orphanage as a training institute was of great importance.

54 Lis Petersen shows however that Jaegerspris helped such girls. She suggests that the parents were less helpful than the orphanage concerning unmarried pregnant girls. Lis Petersen (1987) s 299.


56 Priscilla Ferguson Clement (1986) p 343, especially before 1890.
The education provided had a special aim which had a great influence on their lives and their daily activities. More than 70% of the girls who left Uppfostringsanstalten and Malmqvistska barnuppföstringsanstalten during 1888-1906 left the orphanages as servants. From this perspective there was little that the girls could do themselves; they had to take a low-status job which other urban girls often disliked and tried to avoid. But we must also admit that we don’t really know what other options they may have had; if they had relatives who could help them to find a job. From Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor we have some notes which show that girls returned to their parents or other relatives fairly shortly after having left the orphanage as servants. This could indicate that the wish to place the girls as servants reflected not only a view of the parents as bad parents but also the importance of the aim.

For the individual girl, the orphanage could serve as a training institute in another way too, since some girls were allowed to continue studying. For these girls, the orphanage may have been of special importance in that it opened doors which would have otherwise probably been closed. Some started their studies during their stay at the orphanage, others when they left. However, this applied to only a minority of the girls. Of 134 girls who left Uppfostringsanstalten för flickor during 1888-1906, only two were allowed to continue school during their stay and four in connection with the leaving. In the beginning of this century a change seems to have occurred and more girls had the opportunity to go on studying.

Today, it is difficult to find out why certain girls were allowed to continue school. Hulda left Uppfostringsanstalten in 1902 and the manager wrote in her list that Hulda had behaved well, that Hulda was very clever and that she most of all wanted to study, but Hulda left as a servant. Being clever and behaving well do not seem, at least not always, to have been enough. Some of the girls suffered from poor health and the combination being clever and having poor health is also stressed in connection with a bequest which the orphanage received from a former orphanage girl in 1910: "...the interest from the fund /should/ if needed be given to a girl who trains to be a teacher - a training which many a girl very much longs for, when she has talents and when she is too weak to become a servant." Put simply, this meant that a girl who was not good enough to be a servant, she could be a teacher. The bequest suggests that many girls wanted to become a teacher which at least indicates that they had dreams and hopes and that hard work could result in an opportunity to go to a teachers’ training college. But as we have seen above, most of them became servants.


17
In simple terms we could say that the orphanages describe themselves as a shelter, as a home and as a training institute. Parents attitudes could also be analysed in these terms but partly from another point of view and with another meaning. According to the orphanages themselves they saved children from bad homes and bad parents. They looked upon themselves as protecting children and serving as a shelter in relation to parents and sometimes also in relation to foster homes and they gave the girls a new home. Parents wanted also to protect their daughters but from exploitation in foster homes; they wanted the orphanage to take care of the children, they wanted a home in order to preserve the family, not the opposite. We should not forget the fairly good standard at the orphanages which might have been important in a time when the ability of a working-class family to survive often depended not only on the male breadwinner but also on the wife’s opportunities to earn some money.

We know that most of the girls stayed for many years at the orphanages and that few of them returned to their parents. This corresponds with Lis Petersen’s study about Jaegerspris, the largest orphanage for girls in Denmark but differs substantially from Priscilla Ferguson Clement’s study about three orphanages in New Orleans where the children stayed rather few years (1.5-4) and where many of them (70% after 1880) returned to parents or relatives. According to Priscilla Ferguson Clement, this could partly be explained, especially when it comes to the orphanages run by women, with the boards’ view of parents, that they were sensitive to the parents’ wishes. She also points out that in New Orleans, as a part of the South, domestic work was considered to be work for black people which meant that orphanages for white children could not become domestic training institutions.59

The parents in my study had lost their guardianship but they could reclaim the children and some of them did but very few.60 Why didn’t the parents reclaim their daughters? This could, of course, be due to different reasons. Where the parents still poor and/or alone to take care for the family? Yet it would not be unreasonable to assume that some girls could have returned to their families when they were twelve-thirteen years old. At this age, they could take care of themselves better than before and they could also contribute to the family’s


60 The number of reclaimed children is less than the number of returned children. The minute books for Uppfostringsanstalten 1870-1920 content only thirteen cases when reclaiming is discussed. Ten of these girls returned to their parents.
income. Were the parents satisfied? Had the stay influenced family relation in a way which made it difficult to live together? I think that the small number of girls who returned to their families can partly be explained by the institutions’ view of its role as a training institute; a role which seemed to be of little importance to the parents when they applied to have their daughters admitted, but a role which later on probably influenced their opportunities for reclaiming and one to which they had to adopt themselves more or less. The aim implied that the girls should stay, they should not return to their homes and they should leave the orphanage as a servant. The orphanages were also dependent on the girls for the work they did, and especially the older girls played an important role in the daily care at the orphanages. If the girls left the orphanages at the age of thirteen, the institutions would not have enough people to do the work since the permanent staff only consisted of a few adults. By virtue of their guardianship, the boards decided if, when and to whom the girls were allowed to leave and since the institutions had no interest in parents taking their daughters home, admission once voluntarily could in a way turn to its opposite.

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vanartade och i sedan ofte försunnade barn samt behandlingen av minderåriga förbrytare. Med förklarande anmärkningar utgifna af Emil Sundberg.


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.

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