



LEARNING AS A RELATIONAL FIELD

Experiences from Reggio-inspired early childhood education in Sweden

181020, CEDEP, Tokyo

Ingela Elfström & Bodil Halvars, BUV, Stockholm University

Ingela Elfström

Department of Child and Youth
Studies, Section for Early
Childhood Education, Stockholm
University

- Preschool teacher
- Teacher educator/researcher
- Research areas: evaluation and development of practice in preschool



Bodil Halvars

Department of Child and Youth
Studies, Section for Early
Childhood Education, Stockholm
University

- Preschool teacher
- Teacher educator/researcher
- Research areas:
ethics/fundamental
values, sustainability, play –
linked to preschool didactics



LEARNING AS A RELATIONAL FIELD

Why a heading like *learning as a relational field (of potentialities)*?

- A concept used for visualize the meaning making and the learning(processes)
- With roots in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking
- The preschool as a place where the children and their teachers move around exploring through dynamic movements
- Human beings, drawings, furniture, colors, toys, sounds, symbols, children's singing, smells, traditions, documentations, languaging, written signs, mathematical signs, dramas, desires...
- ... passing through all these qualities and powers

ZOOMNING IN THE FIELD – 4 PARTS:

- The preschool in Sweden - past and present – today's situation with a recently revised curriculum
- A meeting with the Reggio Emilia philosophy → reggio-inspired projects in Sweden
- The tree-project – focus on an exploring approach
- The roe deer-project – focus on the pedagogical documentation

THE PRESCHOOL IN SWEDEN - PAST AND PRESENT

The Swedish society during the 20th century until today:

- Reforms: the elementary school – school attendance, child benefit, parental leave, child care
- Other reforms: municipalization, "The reform of free schools" (idealistic or profit driven)
- The preschool tradition – the growth of preschool
- The today's preschool in Sweden – past and present – with a recently revised curriculum

FAST FORWARD: THE CASE OF SWEDEN

- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Social reforms in the welfare and family policy:

- The general child benefit, 1948
- The parental leave, 1974
- Child care - social to school authority, 1996
- "Max taxa", 1999

School reforms that have affected the preschool growth:

- Compulsory school, in 1842
- Compulsory elementary school, in 1962
- Preschool class, in 2017

1948 - CHILD BENEFIT

- Earnings-related, 1937 → general, 1948
- 1250 SEK (15684 YEN)/month/child, + supplementary child allowance (from the 2:nd child on)
- Until the child is 16 years old

IN THE 70's - PARENTS WITH CHILDREN DEMONSTRATING FOR DAY CARE

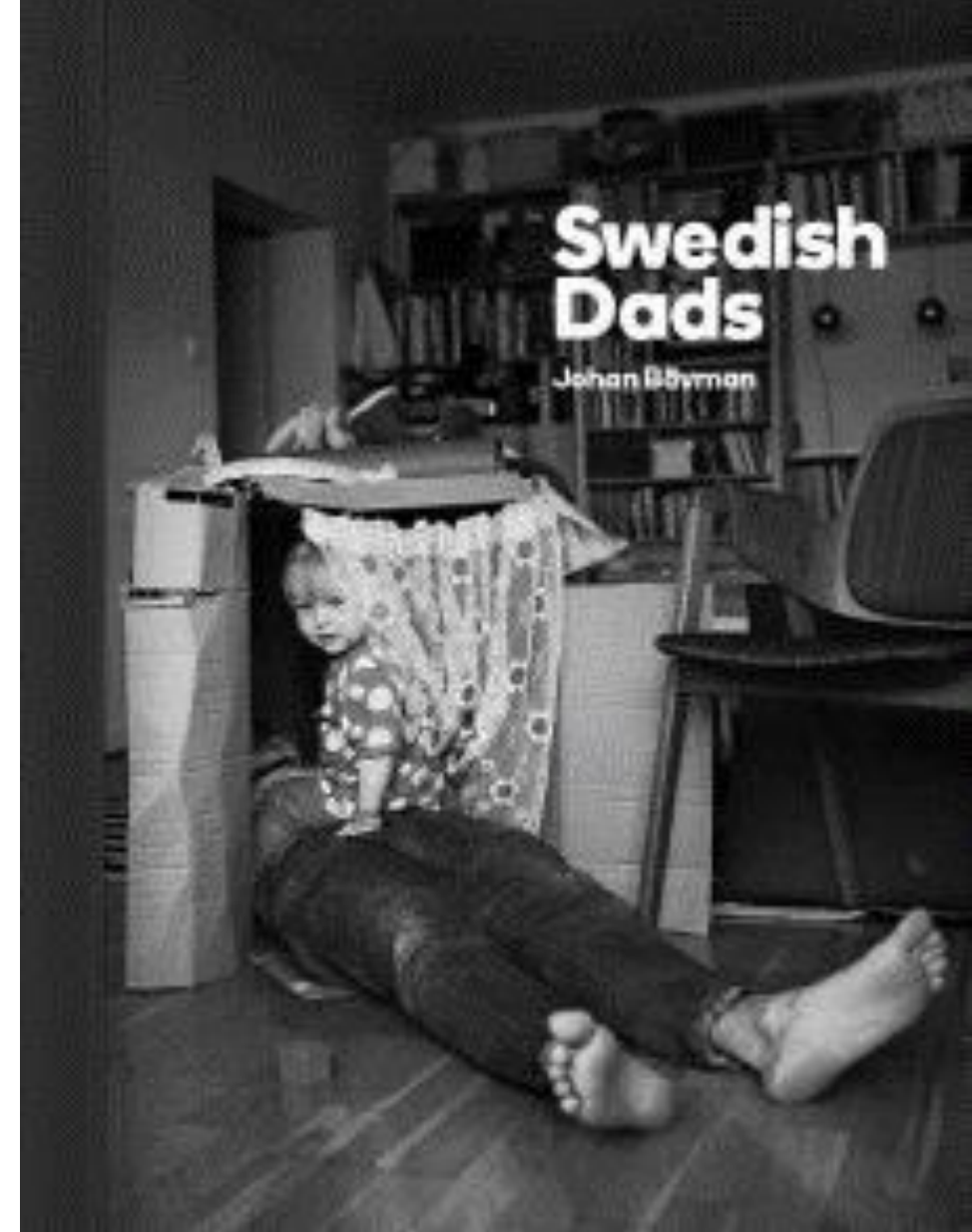
- "We demand day care for everybody!"
- Women demanded gender equality, participating in working life and society on equal conditions
- Highlighted the need for child care to put pressure on the organization to develop and expand.

1974 - THE PARENTAL LEAVE

- Earnings-related parental leave - a cornerstone of Swedish family policy
- The aim: to enable women and men to combine work and family linked to a goal of gender-equal use of parental leave benefits
- Parental leave, introduced in 1974, gave the parents rights to 6 months leave to share between them
- Today the parental leave has evolved into 16 months, which 13 months are compensated at almost 80% of the parent's income

1974 - THE PARENTAL LEAVE

- Length of paid parental leave: A total of 480 days, 390 days at 80% of income and 90 days at a flat rate of 180 SEK (2258 YEN) per day
- Each parent has an exclusive right to 90 days of the parental leave
- Talking about Swedish dads and sometimes "latte-dads"



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlfNT5EHb_Q

IMPORTANT **SCHOOL** REFORMS IN SWEDEN

1842 – Compulsory School

1962 – Compulsory comprehensive
School (7-15 years)

2017 – PRESCHOOL CLASS

- From autumn 2018 - compulsory for children to start in a preschool class at the age of 6
- Preschool class activities use the same curriculum as comprehensive schools and day recreation centers

THE GROWTH OF THE SWEDISH PRESCHOOL

A CHILD CRÈCHE IN STOCKHOLM, 1909

THE SWEDISH PRESCHOOL

- With a proud tradition
- Highly internationally ranked
- Preschool - from social to school authority, 1996

THE SWEDISH PRESCHOOL OF TODAY

- Preschool - from social to school authority, 1996
- Preschool is voluntary
- Municipalities must offer preschool for children from the age of 1:
 - when the parents are working or studying
 - when the parents are unemployed or on Parental Leave
- All municipalities use a system with a maximum fee, an upper limit ("max taxa") is set for how high fees can become for different types of families, 1382 SEK (17340 YEN)/child + 461 SEK (5784 YEN) for child 2+3

WHAT IS THE SITUATION FOR THE SWEDISH PRESCHOOL OF TODAY?

- Children in preschool, 1-5 years old: ca 84%
- Children in preschool, 4-5 years old: ca 95%
- An average number of children in preschool group: 15,3
- An average child/staff ratio in preschool: 5,1
- 40% preschool teachers

THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Shortage of preschool teachers
- 3½ years education for future preschool teachers
- Master's Programme
- Postgraduate studies
- Preschool didactics

PRESCHOOL DIDACTICS – A RESEARCH SUBJECT

- Pedagogical perspectives of the discipline: the philosophy, ethics and history of learning, play and care
- The pedagogical perspectives also include the societal, relational and material preconditions of early childhood education
- Inter- and transdisciplinary studying learning, play and care, and the many various encounters children are engaged in within the practices of early childhood education and with the surrounding world
- Studying processes that follow, challenge and develop children's exploring and experimental play and learning, aesthetic learning-processes and involving information and communication technologies and using pedagogical documentation