Breakdowns, overlaps and ambivalence
an Actor-network theory study of the Swedish preschool curriculum

Emilie Moberg

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Abstract
Within the discipline of early childhood education research, the present study will focus on the Swedish preschool curriculum text, using a sociomaterial approach offered by Actor-network theory (ANT). The study adopts ethnographic methods, foremost participant observations in a preschool, to generate knowledge of how the curriculum text comes to act through moments in the everyday preschool work. The doctoral thesis consists of three research papers. Research paper I explores the delayed access to the field through the occurrence of a water leak. Through the focus on the value of breakdowns in ANT, the water leak becomes an empirical event where the researcher is allowed to learn about the mundane objects and practices making a preschool work, such as schedules and lists. Research paper II reports on the case of the curriculum concept of children’s interests (Moberg, 2017). Here, empirical moments are highlighted where the curriculum concept of children’s interests is defined and made to act by children and materialities. Finally, research paper III (Moberg, in press) reports on the case of an evaluation meeting where an evaluation text is to be produced. Here, the curriculum text is highlighted as vulnerable in its inability of embracing pedagogical dilemmas and ambivalence in the preschool everyday work.

Keywords: Curriculum, preschool, actor-network theory, texts, children, materiality.

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Department of Child and Youth Studies
Stockholm University, 106 91 Stockholm
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Emilie Moberg
Till Kristina, Noah och Alvar
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1. Introduction

Within the discipline of early childhood education research, the present study will focus on the Swedish preschool curriculum text, using a socio-material approach offered by Actor-network theory. The present ‘kappa’ text [the coat] has been written in order to situate and describe the choices made when performing the study. In this first chapter, the introduction, I will outline the research-problem based on an introduction to the vaster network of texts in which the curriculum text is an actor. Furthermore, the introduction will introduce the reader to the reasons for choosing an Actor-network theory approach when studying the ways in which the Swedish preschool curriculum text comes to act in everyday preschool moments. This will bring us to the formulating of the aim of the research project and presentation of the research questions.

A personal entrance - the Swedish preschool curriculum text as an actor

When first approaching the Swedish preschool curriculum text as a study object, the following concerns occupied my mind: Where is the Swedish preschool curriculum text materialized or located in everyday preschool work? Where could the curriculum text be seen? Where could it be touched or felt? In my previous career, I worked closely with the Swedish preschool curriculum text. Through my work with sustainability issues in preschools at the National Agency of Education the curriculum was actualized daily. I read and wrote response to applications from schools and preschools about their sustainability projects in which they were required to display the connections with their pedagogic sustainability work and the curriculum text. As the curriculum text includes heavy emphasis on matters of equality, democracy, participation and care, there were many relations to the issue of sustainability that included social, economic and ecological aspects. In my work at the organization Håll Sverige Rent (Keep Sweden Tidy) with the Green Flag\(^1\) award I visited preschools in different municipalities all over Sweden. In these lectures and visits the connections between the preschool curriculum text and Green

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\(^1\) Green Flag is an international environment award for schools and preschools. The schools and preschools get to choose to work with a theme related to health and sustainability issues.
flag were constantly present. In a lecture on Green Flag for teacher students at Stockholm University the power point behind me displayed a quote from the curriculum text:

The preschool should put great emphasis on issues concerning the environment and nature conservation. An ecological approach and a positive belief in the future should typify the preschool’s activities. The preschool should help to ensure that children acquire a caring attitude to nature and the environment and understand that they are a part of nature’s recycling process. The preschool should help children understand that daily reality and work can be organised in such a way such that it contributes to a better environment, both now and in the future. (Lpfö 98/2010, p. 7)

At the time of the revision of the curriculum text in 2010 I was working at the Swedish National Agency for Education, which provided me with insights into the mundane work of putting together a curriculum text, involving compromises, coffee stains on print-out copies and talks in the lift or the staff room. These encounters with the curriculum text have crucially affected the present study on curriculum texts in everyday preschool events. The encounters described above mean that I was already involved in relations with the curriculum text when I started this thesis project and that these relations were the openings for this study.

In the text below, I will move into the wider network where the preschool curriculum text will be conceptualized as an actor together with other texts, as well as other kinds of actors, in order to formulate an overarching research problem for the study. However, first I need to situate the Swedish preschool curriculum text in relation to other national curriculum texts in order to outline its significant characteristics.

Situating the Swedish preschool curriculum text

In the field of early childhood education, where this doctoral research-project is situated, there has been a considerable production of new and revised curriculum texts during the last few decades. This includes the introduction of national preschool curriculums and programs in countries such as Norway (1996), Sweden (1998), Australia (2012) and the US (2013). In addition, the OECD has initiated the publication of thematic reviews identifying key elements of successful Early childhood education policies (OECD, Starting Strong, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2015, 2017). Increasingly, texts and standards are used as a means to increase quality in preschool institutions world-wide (Laevers, 2005). While some topics seem to be covered in most early childhood curriculums, such as emotional, personal and social development, large
differences occur in curriculum texts internationally. As Leavers (2005) points out, the point over which the curriculum texts tend to differ is about the extent of attention given to academic learning.

Let us zoom in a bit and take a closer look at some of the important features of the Swedish curriculum. I will start by relating the Swedish curriculum to the Norwegian curriculum, in order to illustrate different traditions of preschool curriculums. In the 1990s, the two Nordic countries introduced their first national preschool curriculums, Norway (1996) and Sweden (1998). However, in spite of the geographic closeness, these curriculum texts turned out very differently. The Norwegian curriculum provides the Framework Plan for Day-care Institutions, which gives a detailed framework of goals, content and methods. The Swedish preschool curriculum text, however, provides goals and guidelines for the pedagogic work but remains silent on the methods to be used. The Swedish curriculum text and the Norwegian Framework Plan are often taken as examples of two different traditions in early childhood curriculums (Åsén and Vallberg-Roth, 2012). While the Swedish preschool curriculum text could be considered a low standardized text belonging to a democratic, the Norwegian curriculum text is considered as belonging to an academic curriculum tradition (Laevers, 2005, Oberheumer, 2005). The preschool curriculum texts in England, Finland and Australia are other examples of academic curriculum texts, providing goals and methods corresponding to pre-determined development stages in children’s learning.

The Swedish curriculum for preschool text is a booklet consisting of 18 pages describing quality indicators, learning goals to strive for and documentation guidelines for all Swedish preschools, both public and private (Skolverket, Lpfö 98/2016; Åsén and Vallberg-Roth, 2012). Even before the 1998 national curriculum text there were national plans for the responsibilities of Swedish preschools, such as Pedagogiskt program för förskolan 1987 (Pedagogic program for the preschool 1987, National Board of Social Health and Welfare). At the time of these programs, the Swedish preschool institution was supervised by The National Board of Social Health and Welfare. However, the establishment of the national curriculum text in 1998 (Lpfö 98) moved the Swedish preschools into the jurisdiction of the National Agency for Education, making the preschool institution a part of the Swedish education system (Åsén and Vallberg-Roth, 2012). This meant that the preschool institution also became a part of the goal-steered education system, that the Swedish schools had been part of since 1878 (Normalplan för undervisningen i småskolor och folkskolor, 1878). Importantly, however, the preschool curriculum text prescribes goals to strive for rather than goals to achieve.

The curriculum text was designed to work in a decentralized education system in which the local Swedish municipalities were afforded possibilities to adapt the national standards to meet local work plans and methods for attaining the
These local adaptations are made by politicians, municipal officials, preschool leaders and pedagogic developers in the Swedish municipalities and municipal offices, including the municipality unit in Stockholm where I have done my fieldwork. In this sense, the Swedish preschool curriculum text, as will be discussed further in various parts of this thesis, may be described as a flexible text with a fairly non-detailed level of content regarding children’s cognitive and motor skills, working methods and daily routines (Åsén and Vallberg-Roth, 2012). A characteristic feature of the preschool curriculum text is also the frequent use of abstract ‘big’ concepts such as influence, democracy, children’s interests and learning. Importantly, the goals described in the 18-page long curriculum text are directed towards the teachers and the pedagogic work rather than individual children. This means that each list of goals in every section in the curriculum starts with the words ‘the preschool should ensure that every child develops’ (p 8), ‘pre-school teachers are responsible for’ (p 8) and ‘the work team should’ (p. 9).

In 2010, Swedish politicians decided to revise the Swedish preschool curriculum text, resulting in more specified learning goals for maths, science and language and a new section on documentation. This new section is entitled: Follow-up, evaluation and development. While follow-up is connected to the task of documenting the everyday pedagogic activities by means of pictures, films and written notes, evaluation is about evaluating the way these materials correspond to the curriculum goals listed in the national curriculum. Thus, in both everyday preschool practice and preschool research, follow-up and evaluation practices are closely connected. The following excerpt from the Swedish preschool curriculum illustrates this connection:

Preschool teachers are responsible for each child’s learning, and development is regularly and systematically documented, followed up and analysed so that it is possible to evaluate how the preschool provides opportunities for children to develop and learn in accordance with the goals and intentions of the curriculum. (Skolverket, 2016, p 14)

In relation to the 2010 revision, one of the most pressing issues discussed by researchers and practitioners was the adding of this specific goal. In the previous version (Lpfö 98) no directions concerning documenting, following up or analysing learning and the development of individual children were indicated, other than goals stating that children (p 11) and parents (p 12) should be involved in the evaluation of the preschool work.

In the first evaluation of the 1998 preschool reform, the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) presented a report that highlights the effects of the curriculum text (Skolverket, 2008). In interviews with preschool leaders and teachers, the curriculum text is noted as something to ‘go to in order to anchor
the things we do’ or a text ‘to lean on’ (pp 87-88, Skolverket, 2008). One preschool leader suggested that the curriculum text created a clearer focus of what to do in the preschool, ‘but there is still really big freedom to form the work and make use of your creativity and your ideas, but within these frames’ (Skolverket, 2008, p 88).

Texts in preschool settings: overview of earlier research

As I have already stated above, the primary focus of this study is on the role of the Swedish preschool curriculum text in everyday preschool work. However, the national curriculum text is only one of the many different kinds of texts circulating in preschool practice on a daily basis. Texts in the daily work in a preschool also include, for example, individual development plans (Vallberg-Roth and Månsson, 2008a, 2008b), evaluation texts (Löfdahl and Pérez Prieto, 2009), assessment documents and documentation of children’s activities (Johansson, 2016). This means that studies on individual learning plans, assessment and documentation in preschool practices are relevant to the present study and will be included as previous research.

Preschool curriculum texts have been studied scarcely through empirical inquiries (Jonsson, 2011; Ryan, 2004; Alvestad, 2004, Heydon, 2013). Individual learning plans, assessment documents, evaluation texts and documentation in preschool settings, however, have received more attention (Vallberg Roth and Månsson, 2011; Löfdahl and Pérez Prieto, 2009; Osgood, 2006a, 2006b; Basford and Bath, 2014). When examining the wider field of earlier research in early childhood education and curriculum studies for the present study, it was possible to see how the relations between texts and other actors in the everyday work of education practices have been approached and researched in a number of ways. On the one hand, teacher’s interpretations and experiences of curriculum texts have been researched through interviews and observations (Ryan, 2004; Jonsson, 2011; Alvestad, 2004; Sofou and TsaiFos, 2009). Here, curriculum texts are studied in terms of offering pedagogic support and resources to teachers. In these research accounts, teachers play a vital role in interpreting and adapting the curriculum to fit a specific preschool context. On the other hand, texts have been researched in terms of their ability to regulate preschool practices. For example, individual learning plans have been researched in terms of activating ideals of the normal child (Vallberg-Roth and Månsson, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; Vallberg-Roth, 2014, 2015). Furthermore, evaluation texts have been approached in terms of actors in an assessment ‘game’ in which performance and visibility are privileged (Basford and Bath, 2014; Löfdahl and Folke-Fichtelius, 2014, 2015; Löfdahl and Pérez Prieto, 2014; Osgood, 2006a, 2006b). Other studies point to the way in which
assessment discourses are entangled with slogans like life-long learning, cosmopolitanism and ultimately economic productiveness (Vallberg Roth and Månsson, 2011).

To sum up earlier research in the wider context of studies in my field, texts have been studied as *instruments of control* or *resources to steer, manage or control* the daily life of preschools. However, if instead we shift our standpoint on curriculum (and other texts) and adopt a view which makes it possible to see the text as an actor acting together with other socio-material actors in preschool practices, what kind of knowledge might then be produced? Thus, my research problem is not concerned with how well curriculum texts are implemented or in what ways they manage and control practices, but what they produce as one actor among others in the everyday life of preschools.

In the present study, curriculum texts, and more specifically the Swedish preschool curriculum text, will be studied with a socio-material approach called Actor-network theory (ANT). ANT is an emerging approach in education studies at large but has only rarely been used in early childhood education studies and early childhood policy studies (Hultman, 2011; Heydon, 2013; Heydon et al., 2014; Heydon et al., 2015). Actor-network theory has opened the door to inquiries on how learning and teaching are performed through relations among humans and materialities (Sorensen, 2010; Verran, 2000; Roth, 1999; Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuck, 2011). Within the study of curriculum texts and policy texts, foremost in schools, ANT has also opened the door to inquiries of how policy texts rely and depend on socio-material networks or assemblages. These networks are composed of relations between, for example, material objects, teachers, for-profit organizations, course objectives, books and floor space (Nespor, 2006; Mulcahy, 2016; Heydon, 2013; Gorur, 2011; Koyama, 2012). The term ´policy texts´ will be used all through this ‘kappa’ as an overarching term covering many different kinds of texts exemplified here. The term ´curriculum text´ will be used to describe documents containing prescribed pedagogical contents and standards in schools and preschools.

In what follows, I will introduce Actor-network theory to show how I hope this theoretical and methodological approach might lead to knowledge of curriculum texts in everyday preschool practices in a – perhaps – different way - a way that might also get us to think differently about concepts like implementation and the power-production of curriculum texts.
Studying texts with Actor-network theory

Actor-network theory is often presented as a set of methodological principles in social science research (Law, 2004; Sayes, 2014). Among these principles, the most controversial is perhaps the principle of general symmetry (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1999), which is vital for the present study. The principle of general symmetry, first described by Callon (1986), is about acknowledging all kinds of actors – humans, technology, concepts, texts, animals, nature – as potentially equally important in an empirical inquiry. Above all, the principle of general symmetry brings in all kinds of actors into the same analytical framework (Callon, 1986). This means that they are empirically and analytically approached as entities that are afforded capabilities and turned into actors at specific moments. This also means paying attention to mundane objects and relations that are often taken to be peripheral in practices. These everyday objects and relations appear as actors when using ANT, in terms of how they allow others to act. As Mol notes:

An actor acts. But how much exactly does it, he or she do? It is striking that some actors receive a great deal of credit: they are celebrated as heroes. But it may well be that they only seem so strong because the activity of lots of others is attributed to them. (2010, p. 255-256)

Influenced by these ideas in ANT, the present study directs attention towards moments in everyday preschool work where curriculum texts become actors through the work of schedules, children, Lego and interrupted circle-time events.

Focusing on potential symmetries

When thinking and working with ANT in a curriculum study, texts are viewed as becoming actors in certain situations when they activate relations to other entities (Latour, 2005). Hence, certain actors such as government programs or curriculum texts cannot be assumed to have at their disposal abilities that automatically make them matter in a school or a preschool. In line with this kind of thinking, the Swedish preschool curriculum text will be researched in terms of its relations to other actors in the present study. In this sense, the present study aims to produce knowledge about the way the curriculum text comes to act through situations and moments in everyday mundane preschool practice. This will be done by using ethnographic methods, foremost participant observations, where the participation of the researcher is seen as productive and active when generating data (Law, 2004; Bodén, 2016; Gunnarsson, 2015). An ANT methodology, as will be shown throughout this text, in different ways adds to and extends the research approaches to texts in preschool settings as referred to above. In the research methodology used in previous studies when
approaching texts, as noted above, as pedagogic resources or instruments of control, teachers are the key actors. This approach is challenged in the present study by bringing in a multitude of other entities that matter in their relation to curriculum texts. In a methodological approach towards texts as instruments of control, texts are the key actors. This approach is challenged in the present study by dealing with texts as vulnerable and in need of other entities in order to be able to act. Furthermore, an ANT methodology, as put to work in the present study, adds to and shifts critical approaches to curriculum texts. Such a critical approach, inspired, for example, by Foucault (2008), emphasises the discursive shift from care to learning in evaluation texts in Swedish preschools (Löfdahl and Folke Fichtelius, 2015; Vallberg Roth and Månsson, 2008a) or the increased tendencies towards individualisation, documentation and visibility of the child in early childhood contexts (Moss, 2016). While acknowledging the importance of such analyses, which I have chosen to term as critical, the present study argues that research on early childhood education also needs to pay attention to the ways these texts come into play in everyday preschool situations. When starting from such situations, as will be shown throughout this ‘kappa’, it becomes evident that texts, children, teachers and materialities emerge as actors by relying on one another. In such situations, an ANT methodology privileges analyses of the ways in which actors aid one another with both capabilities and limitations.

The present study consists of three research papers that highlight empirical moments in everyday preschool activities created by the method of participant observations in which the curriculum texts act when researched with an ANT approach. Research Paper I explores the delayed access to the field through the occurrence of a water leak. By focusing on the value of breakdowns in ANT, the water leak becomes an empirical event where the researcher is allowed to learn about the mundane objects and practices that make a preschool work, such as schedules and lists. Research Paper II reports on the case of the curriculum concept of children’s interests. Here, empirical moments are highlighted, showing how the curriculum concept of children’s interests is defined and made to act by children and materialities. Finally, Research Paper III reports on the case of an evaluation meeting where an evaluation text is to be produced. Here, the curriculum text is highlighted as vulnerable in its inability to embrace pedagogic dilemmas and ambivalence in everyday preschool work.

Aims and research questions

The background and specific points raised above have led me to formulate the following aim and research questions for this doctoral project. The aim of this
research is to produce knowledge of the way the Swedish preschool curriculum text acts in everyday preschool events. Furthermore, the aim is to explore how ANT adds to the methodologies at work in the study of texts in preschool settings, with specific attention to critical approaches. The research questions that have been formulated to serve these aims are:

1. How does the Swedish preschool curriculum text act through relations between entities in everyday preschool events?

2. How does ANT methodology add to and extend current approaches to studying texts in preschool settings, with specific attention to critical approaches?

Reading instructions

This ‘kappa’ is organised in five chapters. In the first chapter, the reader is introduced to previous research on texts in early childhood education settings. An analysis will be provided of the methods and theories used and the implications for the knowledge that is created on texts, children and materialities as actors. This chapter concludes with a description of what ANT can add to the methods and theories used in previous research. In the second part, the reader is introduced to Actor-network theory, which has provided the methodological principles of both the empirical and the analytical work in the study. This introduction will focus on the methodological principles in ANT that are put to work in this specific study, especially the principle of general symmetry and the focus on relations, including materialities, in ANT. Thereafter, a description of the ethnographic methods in the study will be made. In this third chapter, the reader is introduced to the way the participant observations and the interviews have been carried out in relation to ANT. The researcher role and reflexivity will also be discussed, as well as the ethical dilemmas arising from encounters between many different actors in the ethnographic work. The fourth chapter presents the three research papers. The concluding chapter discusses the results of the study based on the research questions presented above. This last part of the ‘kappa’ points to connections, additions and extensions made in the present study to previous early childhood education research on texts, as well as to previous ANT studies on education policy. Finally, suggestions on future research are made. A Swedish summary of the whole of the study is also given.
2. Research on texts in education settings

In this chapter, I present research that is of specific interest to this study and to which the study activates relations in various ways. The first part of the chapter deals with research on curriculum texts, evaluation texts, assessment and documentation in preschool settings. These studies are presented under two main headings; a) *research on interpretations of texts* and b) *texts in assessment and documentation practices*. These are the groups that I have found to be most dominant in the research field in the sense that all the studies fit into one or the other of these two groups. The descriptions of these two groups of studies will focus on the research questions and methods used to create knowledge. Furthermore, descriptions will focus on the theories and concepts that work to create knowledge in the specific studies. This first part of the chapter concludes with a section relating the studies described to the ANT approach taken in the present study.

The second part of this chapter deals with education policy research, using ANT. While only a few studies have so far used ANT to study preschool curriculum texts (Hedyon, 2013; Heydon et al., 2014; Heydon et al., 2015), several studies have used ANT to study policy texts and assessment systems in relation to schools.

Research on interpretations of texts

Under this heading, I present studies that examine questions concerning teachers´ interpretations of and understandings of curriculum texts. A study that I have felt a strong relation to during my research work was made by Sharon Ryan. Ryan (2004) studied the implementation of the High/Scope curriculum in a New Jersey district in the USA. She carried out interviews and observations of two teachers´ classrooms. During the first year, Ryan (2004) followed the two teachers who were required to implement the High/Scope curriculum model with three and four-year-old children. The interviews were made in close relation to the classroom observations and were closely intertwined in the empirical materials that are presented in the study. Ryan (2004) concluded that the High/Scope curriculum is shaped by teachers´ experiences and education backgrounds as they adapt the curriculum in their classrooms.
In a Swedish context, Agneta Jonsson (2011) studied the way preschool teachers describe meanings of the phenomenon content and method in the Swedish preschool curriculum text. (See also Jonsson (2013) for a related study on how teacher’s create curriculums for children in preschools). Using semi-structured interviews with preschool teachers and a phenomenological theoretical framework, Jonsson (2011) highlights the concept of experience in her study. Jonsson (2011) concludes that teachers struggle in their everyday work to adapt the Swedish curriculum text to their context. However, she also notes the way teachers describe that they need to put the curriculum text aside because they are pushed to devote much of their attention to children’s movements and interests. A similar conclusion is drawn by Soufo and Tsaifos (2009), who explore preschool teachers’ understandings of the Greek preschool curriculum text. In their interview study, teachers are pointed out as important contributors to the way a curriculum text is enacted in a specific preschool context.

Alvestad and Berge (2009) similarly adopted interview methodology when studying teacher’s understandings of their pedagogic planning and practice in relation to the Swedish preschool curriculum text. A socio-cultural perspective is put to work in the study, where learning is approached as both an individual and a collective, contextual event. Their results point to the method of working with themes or projects in preschools as occasions when teachers relate to the curriculum text. All through a theme project, Alvestad and Berge (2009) note, teachers ‘go back’ (p. 64, my translation) to the curriculum text in order to assess how the curriculum text could be ‘built together with the interests prevailing in the group of children’ (p. 64, my translation). Two further studies explore preschool teachers’ understandings of early childhood curriculum texts. Alvestad (2004) studied preschool teacher’s understandings of the Norwegian National preschool curriculum while Alvestad and Duncan, (2006) analysed preschool teacher’s understandings of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum. The examples of previous research raised above point to the curriculum text as being a kind of support function, providing the basis for a professional identity as well as a philosophical and practical foundation or underpinning of everyday preschool work. Furthermore, preschool teachers and their experiences and professional beliefs are emphasised as crucial to the successful enactment of curriculum texts.

Texts in assessment and evaluation practices

The studies included in this section share an understanding of the increased tendencies towards individual assessment in preschool settings as problematic and in need of critical attention. Furthermore, there is a focus on the performativity of the preschool institution and its need to display itself in the face of inspection, control and competition.
Closely connected to the question of assessment in preschool settings is the use of individual development plans (IUPs). The term assessment is not mentioned in the preschool curriculum text, but because of the introduction of individual development plans into schools, they have also come to be used in preschools (Elfström, 2005). Using a Foucauldian approach, Vallberg-Roth and Månsson (2011) studied IPU's and documentation ‘as concrete expressions of human actions (i.e. language actions)’ from where it is possible to ‘analyse how children’s actions and positions are enabled and restricted’ (p 254). The empirical materials in their study consist of municipal websites and IUPs from preschools in a Swedish municipality. The written IUPs are analysed as expressing and materializing ‘standards of normality against which children are measured’. In addition, the IUP templates are described as providing a locked-in structure, establishing ‘normal’ knowledge stages (p 254). (See also Markström, 2005; Vallberg Roth, 2010 for further studies on IUPs in an early childhood context with a governmentality perspective). Alasutari and Markström (2011) studied teacher-parent evaluation conferences in Finnish and Swedish preschools. Using a discourse analytical approach, they noted how the evaluation, through text and talk, created ideals of a child where sociality is one of the key expectations that are formulated (See also Markström, 2010).

Furthermore, Johansson (2016), carried out participant observations in situations where assessments of children’s learning are assumed to take place. These places are restricted to teachers’ conferences, teachers’ meetings and meetings concerning children’s transition from preschool to school. Johansson’s (2016) theoretical framework builds on ideas of governmentality (Foucault, 1999), regulative discourses (Bernstein, 1977) and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1993). Johansson (2016) concludes that written and spoken assessments in preschools are made as part of an invisible pedagogic and regulative discourse that draws attention to individual children’s social skills, the ability to play and language skills.

One group of studies centres on ideas about performativity and fabrications in relation to the preschool institution. For example, Folke Fichtelius and Löfdahl (2015) draw on Ball’s enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012) when focusing on performativity in preschools when it comes to documenting quality. Here, performativity is taken as a regulative model where assessment, comparisons and performance are used as incitements of control and change. The empirical materials of the study consist of observations during staff meetings at a preschool focusing on the work of documenting quality in the preschool. Furthermore, meetings with preschool teachers and their managers were observed and individual interviews were made with managers and preschool teachers. The analysis of the study focuses on the ways the preschool teachers and their managers talk about care in relation to the work of quality document-
ation. Folke-Fichtelius and Löfdahl (2015) argue that there is a gradual translation process taking place, whereby care is disguised or reconceptualised in terms of learning. As the concept of care has been ignored in national and municipal policy documents, they argue, similar processes are taking place in local preschool practices. In this sense, this analysis points to preschool practices as reflections of national and municipal policy documents. Several other studies address the concept of care in Swedish preschool settings. Månsson (2000) and Lindgren (2001), for example, present historical surveys of the concept of care in early childhood education documents. Furthermore, Löfdahl (2014) presents a study of preschool teachers’ professional strategies for working with quality reports. She notes: ‘Thereby the preschool documents, such as evaluation documents, are regarded as fabrications in which the teachers handle the problems they are exposed to’ (p 104). Moreover, she argues, ‘fabrications are constructions of a preschool practice that don’t exist but rather are versions of a practice constructed to be effective in assessment situations’. (See also Vallberg Roth and Månsson, 2008a for further discussions on the concept of care in Swedish preschool settings).

A number of studies outside Sweden address the performativity of the present preschool institution in the wake of (neoliberal) demands for increased documentation and assessment. For example, Basford and Bath (2014) suggest that English Early Childhood Education policies have become a way for governments to exercise direct control over early childhood practitioners. Aiming to deconstruct English ECE policies, they refer to teachers having to play ‘an assessment game’. When playing this game, teachers need to make assessments according to two incompatible discourses: one emphasizing standards and the other emphasizing collaboration. In a similar way, Osgood (2004, 2006a) reports on teacher frustration and feelings of loss of control in relation to playing the game of assessment. Even if ‘the regulatory gaze’ of ECE policies can to some extent be negotiated and challenged, Osgood (2006a) notes, it cannot be sidestepped.

This relates to studies emphasizing forms and templates in documentation practices in preschool as active agents with inspiration from Barad (2003). Lenz Taguchi (2012) argues that the directions and materialisations involved in pedagogic documentation practices turn the documentation into an active agent in everyday preschool work. As an active agent, documentation practice works as an apparatus which makes some knowledge of children’s learning possible while disregarding other knowledge. In relation to this, Elfström Pettersson (2017) highlights the templates used for documentation purposes in preschools, referring to them as active and performative in enacting quality and children’s participation in the preschool. Elfström Petterson (2017) also brings in children as actors in quality issues by focusing on intra-actions among children, teachers and material agents. Thus, both Elfström Pettersson (2017) and Lenz Taguchi (2012) highlight documentation as a performative
agent rather than as retrospective representations of preschool events. With this way of thinking, texts in documentation, such as questions and written comments in relation to pictures, also become performative agents. This creates the analytical focus on texts directed towards what arises through interactions among questions, words, ideas and things. Elfström Petterson (2017) takes the example of a template for documentation of preschool systematic quality development. While the design of the template is seen as material, the written content of the template is defined as discursive.

Possibilities of thinking differently

Although, as noted in the research overview above, critical studies have dominated research on texts in preschool settings, there are also studies that attempt to find ways of moving beyond discourses of standards and instrumental definitions of quality. These studies strive to explore and enact new versions of the concept of quality, for example in terms of the preschool as a site for ethics and politics (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013) or in terms of bodies, matter and becomings (Osgood and Guigni, 2015; Jones, Rossholt, Anastasiou and Holmes, 2016). Furthermore, Elfström Petterson (2017) and Lenz Taguchi (2012) discuss the potential residing in the templates and forms used in pedagogic documentation in preschools that take part in producing alternative versions of knowledge and quality. Moreover, Vallberg-Roth (2014) uses the perspective of critical didactics which aims at opening up alternative tools and concepts of approaching quality in early childhood education. In addition, the simultaneous movements of control and resistance are highlighted in for example, Alasuutari (2015) and Alasuutari, Markström and Vallberg-Roth (2014). These studies note that governance always involves moments of resistance and that governance per se is not necessarily a negative phenomenon.

Teachers, texts and theories as actors: links with the present study

In order to be made an actor in ANT research accounts, empirical descriptions are required where an entity is described as making others act. This will be further elaborated in the chapter on ANT below. When using an ANT definition of an actor, the key actors in the previous research reported above are foremost teachers and texts. Teachers become actors through the use of interviews and observations of staff meetings or conferences. These are methodological sites, I would argue, where teachers easily become the most prominent actors. Furthermore, teachers become actors through the use of phenomenological and sociocultural, human centred perspectives, for example in studies on teachers’ understandings and experiences of curriculum texts.
When it comes to texts as actors in the research reported above, strong emphasis is placed on words and concepts. Texts as actors appear through interviews with teachers and observations of staff meetings where teachers’ relations to texts and documentation are put in focus. Ideas of governmentality (Foucault, 2008), fabrication and performativity (Ball, 2006) further support the methodological emphasis on words and concepts as key actors. In addition, this emphasis is supported by methodological choices of privileging empirical materials such as interview transcripts, observation transcripts and policy texts. Another contributory factor is the analytical strategy of approaching both written texts and spoken language in terms of discursive positions and as instruments of control and normalization. As Gunnarsson (2015, p. 41) notes in her overview of research on school and health, studies drawing on Foucault often overemphasize the role of language and discourse at the expense of materiality.

In the present study, children and materialities have come to occupy an important role in relation to the Swedish curriculum text. As noted above, teachers and texts are included as, in Latour’s words, ‘full-blown’ actors in previous research (Latour, 2005, p. 69). Children and materiality, however, are included as ‘intermediaries’ (Latour, 2005, p. 39), in terms of entities that transport force without transforming it. In this sense, empirical examples of the way children and materiality make other entities act are rare, when using the ANT definition of an actor referred to above. Some examples, however, exist. Jonsson’s (2011) interviews with teachers present descriptions of how teachers constantly need to take children and their interests into account and adapt the curriculum text accordingly. Furthermore, the performativity and materiality of templates in producing knowledge are included in Lenz Taguchi (2012) and Elfström Petterson (2017). Elfström Petterson (2017) approaches the templates as material active agents, stabilising and directing what preschool quality can become. Furthermore, the template restricts what it is possible to document. The written content made in connection with the template is, however, approached as a discursive element. Even if the perspective of agential realism is closely related to ANT, the principle of general symmetry makes it impossible to refer to written texts as foremost discursive. For example, in Research Paper III, texts are approached as material effects of the relations among entities involved in an evaluation meeting.

The contribution of the present study consists in the choice of approaching texts by making participant observations in mundane everyday preschool work. Participant observations have so far rarely been used as the key method for studying curriculum texts (Heydon, 2013). In the present study, participant observations are used to include teachers and children’s bodily movements along with their talk. Furthermore, participant observations have become a way of including and even using events when activities do not turn out as
anticipated. In addition, ANT methodology makes it impossible to attribute concepts and words to regulative powers without attending to the relations and actors they are engaged in. Thus, the use of ANT in the present study has meant not jumping to conclusions about how texts, such as a curriculum text, take part in controlling and regulating teachers and children in specific ways. That is, the present study explores the relations texts take part in through an empirical inquiry that has not in advance decided what activities or places the researcher should take part in. In this sense, the present study adds to previous research by refraining from ruling out any entities as potential actors prior to the empirical inquiry. This has meant having to include chairs, carpets, subheadings in a document, books, Lego figures and children’s personal boxes as potential actors in everyday preschool scenarios. Ultimately, which has so far received less attention in previous research, this points to the need to explore the way texts not only regulate education practices but are also potentially defined, extended and played off through relations of actors in everyday educational events. Furthermore, the study makes a methodological contribution by arguing that the inclusion of children and materialities in studies on curriculum texts changes a critical approach whereby texts are privileged as instruments of control and normalization. In effect, extended and shifted positions for teachers, children and texts become available through the empirical cases presented in the thesis. This will be further highlighted in the final conclusion of the study.

Theories are assumed to be important actors in taking part in suggesting alternative enactments of quality. In this sense, post-humanist and post-structural theories and concepts, for example, emerge as actors in the research accounts aiming to suggest alternative ways of enacting quality (Osgood and Guigni, 2016; Jones, Rossholt, Anastasiou and Holmes, 2016; Elfström Pettersson; 2017; Lenz Taguchi, 2012; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013; Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). Furthermore, the concepts of discourse and governmentality become important actors in deciding what parts of the empirical accounts are to be highlighted and what are to be played down. As Vallberg Roth (2014) notes, documentation can be both supportive and deceptive. While teachers themselves, as Vallbeg Roth (2014) notes, put more emphasis on the productive, creative and supportive role of documentation in their everyday work with children, the aspects that are highlighted in her study are the normalizing and regulative function of documentation. Another example is Johansson’s (2016) study of assessment practices, where she notes that teachers do not themselves use the concept of ‘assessment’. As noted above, this concept is not included in the preschool curriculum text. Nevertheless, Johansson (2016) chooses to refer to the processes of documentation in the preschool as ‘assessment practices’. Even this choice seems strongly influenced by the concept of discourse and emphasis on the regulative and controlling ability of texts.
Education policy research using ANT

Actor-network theory has only fairly recently been picked up in education research and education policy research. In this section, I have chosen to specifically focus on a few of the education policy studies that raise important points in relation to the present study (Koyama, 2012; Gorur, 2011, Mulcahy, 2016; Heydon, 2013). These studies have been chosen because they actualize and illustrate different approaches to viewing texts with ANT. Furthermore, they cover both a traditional ethnographic (single-sited) approach and a multi-sited approach involving ethnographic tracings across sites. The latter kind of tracings, I argue, relate closely to a multi-sited ethnographic approach where, for example, an item or a text is traced across several sites (Marcus, 1995). It is important to compare this approach to the approach used in the present study. Furthermore, Heydon (2013) is one of few studies so far that use ANT in studying preschool curriculum texts.

Dianne Mulcahy (2016) studies the enactment of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) infrastructure program in Australia. Working with the concept of assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) and the concept of the actor-network (Latour, 2005), she starts out from the idea that the language of policy texts is interpreted and translated not only by human actors. Language in policy texts, she notes, is also a ‘performative agent or performative object which, like other performative objects such as new school infrastructure, creates material effects’ (p. 84). Moreover, Mulcahy (2016, p 84) notes, with reference to Butler (1990, p 337), that policy texts have ‘no ontological status apart from its various acts which constitute its reality’. Her study adopts a traditional ethnographic approach involving four schools with a ‘reputation for innovative pedagogic practice with regard to the up-take of new learning spaces’ (p 86). Video-based case studies were made during a one-day fieldwork project at each school, in combination with semi-structured interviews with principals, assistant principals, teachers and students. Furthermore, participating students led ‘conversational walks’ around the learning spaces and these walks were also filmed. The analysis directs attention to the ‘very particular, everyday material nodes (such as talk, texts, technologies)’ (Fenwick and Edwards, 2011, p. 724, as cited in Mulcahy, 2016, p. 86). Mulcahy (2016) claims that the policy text is translated and challenged by children, parents, community leaders and learning spaces through sites of micro politics (p. 91). For example, she claims that children reassemble or reterritorialize spaces in the school, whereby new territories are formed.

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As in Mulcahy’s (2016) study, Heydon (2013) uses a traditional ethnographic approach to ‘follow the actors’ (Latour, 2005) at two kindergartens in Ontario, Canada. By means of participant observations and interviews Heydon (2013) traces the kindergarten literacy curriculum through places where literacy activities occurred at the preschool. Here, toys and books as well as floor space are included as potential actors. Conversations were held with children during the observations, and semi-structured interviews were carried out with children based on their perception of kindergarten literacy curricula. Heydon (2013) concludes that ‘children produced or translated curricula to reflect aspects of their funds of knowledge of interests’ (p. 252). Still, she adds, the curriculum text goals were often powerful promoters of linear print literacy and an autonomous model of literacy’ (p. 253). In this sense, she presents the curriculum program as an ‘obligatory point of passage’ (Latour, 1987) through which all other relations in a network must pass at some time.

Another ANT-inspired study, Koyama (2012), aims to follow the actors involved in constituting ‘school failure’ under the No Child Left Behind Act in New York. Koyama’s (2012) study could be characterized as multi-sited ethnographic tracings. As Koyama (2012) notes, ‘the field became defined as transactional spaces across multiple contexts in schools, for-profit educational companies, and government agencies’ (p 876). Thus, her observations and field notes focus on governmental meetings, meetings at the Department of Education, school meetings, teacher-training sessions, community assemblies and policy forums. However, the main emphasis in the empirical materials for the study is on interviews with teachers, principals, administrators, staff at for-profit educational support companies as well as employees at the Department of Education. No parents or students were interviewed. Koyama’s (2012) findings focus on how a multitude of actors ‘generate, interpret, and challenge policy documents and assessments and also enact their accountability in their policy roles’ (Koyama, 2012, p. 878). For example, Koyama (2012) discusses the role of the teachers at the successful school that had been given a ‘failure’ label by the No Child Left Behind Act. She notes how teachers struggle to find an appropriate way to refer to the status of their school. The teachers agree, Koyama (2012) notes, to talk about it as a successful school that had ‘just been branded with the failure label’ (Koyama, 2012, p. 881).

As in Koyama (2012), Gorur (2011) traces the spread and up-take of policy texts, in her case the knowledge that is produced by PISA as an assessment tool. Influenced by early actor-network accounts of science laboratories, Gorur (2011) compares PISA to a laboratory that produces a specific kind of knowledge. She describes her study as an ethnography that traces how PISA knowledge comes to be made. The ethnography consists of interview data with two ‘insiders’ who work with PISA. OECD documents are also used as empirical accounts in the study. The method consists in tracing ‘the translations and the circulating reference that turn PISA into a centre of calculation’, which
is a concept introduced by Latour (1987). Gorur (2011) concludes that the production of PISA knowledge depends on choices of specific subjects or the use of certain statistical techniques (Gorur, 2011, p 78). Gorur (2011) aims at focusing on the fragility of PISA, arguing that by describing the messiness of the choices on which PISA knowledge relies, it becomes de-mystified and re-opened to debate (p. 79).

**Texts, contestations and materiality: links with the present study**

Whereas previous ANT studies in education research have to some extent attended to the contradictions and complexities of policy texts in everyday school practices, as exemplified above, the everyday day contestations and complex up-takes of policy texts in preschool practices has not been dealt with to the same extent. The above discussed ANT-studies present examples of empirical moments where the words and concepts in policy texts come to be contested, ignored as well as transformed in mundane education practices. Furthermore, Mulcahy (2016) and Heydon (2013) include children and students as actors that matter in situations where policy texts act. Mulcahy (2016) includes the architecture and interior design of the school as materializing processes, whereas Heydon (2013) refers to physical materials such as toys, books and floor space.

In line with Heydon (2013) and Mulcahy (2016), the present study adopts a view of materiality as the interior design of the preschool as well as the toys and books that children and teachers engage with. Gorur (2011) and Koyama (2012), however, use a method of ethnographic tracing which implies a multisited approach to ethnography (Marcus, 1995; see also Brogger, 2015 for an approach to ethnographic tracings that involves both texts and locations as sites). These studies mainly refer to texts, documents and reports as material objects, which reflects the locations that are included in the studies: teacher meetings, DFE meetings and staff meetings. Gorur (2011) and Koyama (2012) argue that policy texts work through assemblages and are highly dependent on the work of others. In these accounts, policy texts or PISA knowledge efficiently create and sustain realities where calculations of children and labelling of schools are turned into facts. Koyama (2012), however, points out the way teachers can, in some ways, distance themselves and even joke about the constant labelling of schools as successful or failing. At the same time, she notes that teachers take measures to increase the results in their classroom, fearing new labels or pressure from education authorities.

In Gorur’s (2011) study, words and concepts become privileged actors, influenced by the image of the laboratory (Latour and Woolgar, 1979). By means
of words and charts, PISA manages to ‘act at a distance’. As Gorur (2011) argues, the students and their learning have all been ‘detached, separated, preserved, classified, and tagged’ (Latour, 1999, p. 39). This analysis excludes any failures of the PISA system, which potentially confirms PISA’s status as a ‘calculation centre’. Since students’ own experiences and engagement are excluded from the inquiry into what constitutes PISA knowledge, this potentially reifies rather than infers classification. This connects to Leander and Lovvorn’s (2006) distinctions of ways of treating texts as actors in ANT, on the one hand by focusing on social histories and geographies residing in particular texts and on the other hand by focusing on particular ‘text-action-objects’ at given moments (p. 102). The present study is designed to focus on the latter.

This leads to the matter of thinking differently in relation to standardized discourses of quality, as raised in the section above on studies in preschool settings (Jones, Rossholt, Anastasious and Holmes, 2016). In line with Mulcahy (2016), Heydon (2013) and Koyama (2012), the present study aims to trace the everyday events where the Swedish preschool curriculum text is realised through relations between children, teachers and materialities. While ethnographic tracings of the ways in which macro-actors are constructed are vital to education research, this does not serve the aims of the present study. Thus, rather than focusing on explaining or understanding policy texts or assessment systems through ANT concepts, the present study will apply ANT as methodological principles. Ultimately this has meant decentring the qualities sometimes attributed to the language and texts controlling, classifying and normalizing education practices. Instead, language and texts, in this case the Swedish preschool curriculum text, will be approached in terms of responses, openings and extensions in relation to preschool practice.

To the above, I would like to add the way in which the Swedish preschool curriculum text as an actor has mattered when defining and approaching the preschool field. Since the impetus of making an ethnographic study has involved close relations to the Swedish preschool curriculum text, it will be presented as an ‘tracer’ in the three cases making up the doctoral project (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuck, 2011). This works in line with previous ANT studies that include policy texts as materials in an ethnographic study (Koyama, 2012; Gorur, 2011; see also Brøgger, 2015 as noted above). Nevertheless, my study is performed as a single-site ethnographic study and the preschool curriculum text is not treated as a site in the sense of multi-sited ethnography. Nor is the preschool curriculum text to be thought of as the background to a case or an object of study. Rather, the curriculum text is to be viewed as an active entity, an actor, in the study. This is underlined by the way my own specific relation with the preschool curriculum text is highlighted in the introductory chapter of the ‘kappa’.
In the next chapter, I will introduce the reader to the methodological principles of ANT that have guided the present study. Thereafter, the ethnographic methods, mainly participant observations used in the study will be described.
3. Introducing Actor-network theory

It is the methodological principles of Actor-network theory that are the protagonists of the third chapter. ANT is often described as both a theory and a method and has been referred to under many different labels: relational materialism (Law, 1999, 2000) material semiotics (Law and Mol, 1994, 2001), act-ant rhizome (Latour, 1999) and methodological sensibility (Law, 2001, 2004, Latour, 1999, Sayes, 2014). Law (2004) describes ANT as a ‘diaspora’, a diverse set of ‘tools, sensibilities and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural world as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located’ (Law, 2004, p. 595). Along with several other ANT researchers, I argue that ANT is not a ‘strong’ theory (Gad and Bruun Jensen, 2009) in the sense that it does not offer any overarching ideas about how the world is constituted (Latour, 1999).

ANT offers a strong focus on empirical materials, preferably including some kind of fieldwork in a certain practice guiding the inquiry. As Latour (2005) notes, the crucial aim of ANT is to learn from the actors in a certain practice in order to increase the number of actors assumed to matter and to highlight the abilities and properties of actors as shared and distributed. In the present study, as I will argue and show throughout the ‘kappa’, ANT has mainly come to offer methodological principles for approaching practices through sensitiv-ity to relations and mundane objects. Thus, this presentation of ANT will focus on the principles of ANT rather than on specific concepts. The principles that will be described are: the principle of general symmetry, the idea of networks, the value of breakdowns and the rejection of analytical divisions into macro and micro. In relation to the description of these principles, I will de-scribe how they work in the empirical cases of my study: the water leak, the curriculum concept of children’s interests and the evaluation meeting. This means that to some extent I will anticipate the description of the ethnographic work presented in the next chapter of the thesis.
The principle of general symmetry

General symmetry is about assuming that all kinds of actors are potentially equally important when studying social practices. This idea in ANT evolved from a critique of the asymmetry between nature and society used by sociologists when explaining science and technology (Callon, 1986). As Callon puts it: ‘When the society described by sociologists confronts nature (no matter which description they give), society always has the last word (Callon, 1986, p. 252). Society, Callon argues, supposedly possesses ‘superal forces’ such as classes, organizations and professions, which are used by sociologists to explain the emergence, development and eventual closure of controversies (Callon, 1986). The methodological suggestion arising from this critique was the principle of general symmetry, requiring the researcher to include all kinds of actors – texts, buildings, people, methods – in the same analytical framework. This also means not deciding beforehand who or what could be turned into an actor. Latour writes:

In the symmetry between humans and nonhumans, I keep constant the series of competences, of properties, that agents are able to swap by overlapping each other. I want to situate myself at the stage before we can clearly delineate humans and nonhumans, goals and functions, form and matter, before the swapping of properties and competences is observable and interpretable. Full-fledged human actors, and respectable objects out there in the world, cannot be my starting point; they may be our point of arrival. (Latour,1994, p. 35)

Annemarie Mol (2010) starts out from the principle of general symmetry when suggesting that the notion of affordance could account for the way actors continuously make each other be. Mol states:

Symmetrical, likewise, is the term affordance that stresses that actors do not and cannot act alone: they afford each other their existence and their capabilities. This calls up an activity that resembles giving, while the term attuning stresses that receiving also involves activity. If an actor attunes to actors and entities around it, it attunes itself. Thus, it becomes more sensitive and better capable of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling. But nobody and nothing can attune itself to “the world” all alone. (Mol, 2010, p 265)

This is another way of pointing out that actors are made in specific situations, when they swap properties and competencies between each other.
Agency residing in networks

The second principle I want to discuss is important in relation to how, in a taken-for-granted way, we ascribe agency to humans in most humanist and social science theories. In ANT, however, agency resides and emerges only in networks of relations. The symmetrical principle in ANT, as described in the previous section, is about refraining from viewing technology and humans as the one adapting to, or being determined by, the other. Instead, as Mol (2010) argues, the focus is on the ways humans and technologies ‘involved in a practice may mutually adjust themselves to one another’ (Mol, 2010, p. 264). ANT, also referred to as a material semiotic perspective, in this sense directs attention towards agency as the effects of relations, or networks, of a multitude of human and non-human actors, separating agency from the individual, intentional endeavour of any single (human) actor. Together with the concept of ‘subjectivity’, the notion of ‘intentionality’ is played down in ANT, as attention is rather focused on the socio-material relations that collectively generate agency. In preschool practice, for example, learning is not the accomplishment of either a preschool teacher, a child or a pedagogic artefact but would in ANT necessarily be thought of as relational accomplishments, acts made possible only through the mutual relations and negotiations between actors.

When attempting to find ways of describing how actors are related, I have been inspired by Abrahamsson et.al. (2015, p. 6), who suggest using other notions than agency to describe what things do. ‘Instead, we argue here, it might be a better idea to move beyond the agency-versus-causality divide altogether.’ Instead, they argue, we could explore ‘other modes of doing, such as affording, responding, caring, tinkering, and eating. Matters may engage in relations of ever so many kinds’ (Abrahamsson et.al., 2015, p. 6). Latour (2005) also suggests the notion of afford to account for the way things act:

In addition to ‘determining’ and serving as a ‘back-drop for human action’, things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on. ANT is not the empty claim that objects do things ‘instead’ of human actors; it simply says that no science of the social can even begin if the question of who and what participates in the action is not first of all thoroughly explored, even though it might mean letting elements in which, for lack of a better term, we would call non-humans. (Latour, 2005, p. 72)
To describe how entities such as schedules and children act through their relations to one another, as presented in Research Paper II, I have used different words to describe the ways in which what ways actors relate to one another. These words are overlap, afford and offer. The use of these words in the case of the curriculum concept of *children’s interests* represents attempts to describe the relationalities among actors since the principle of general symmetry has removed the possibility of viewing actors as separate in terms of capabilities and agency. In this way, the case of the curriculum concept, as presented in Research Paper II, highlights how children and materialities offer and afford one another abilities to act and abilities to pursue interests and disinterests. The empirical events that are analysed in Research Paper II are chosen for their potential to display relations among many different actors. Furthermore, these events involve connections to children’s interests.

**Texts emerging as actors**

I realize at this point in the description of ANT that many readers are potentially troubled, as I am, by the frequent and sometimes confusing use of the term actor in ANT. I have no desire to resolve that friction, which is I think potentially creative and should thus not be resolved. But at least I will offer the reader a description of how I use the concept of actor in this thesis. Mol and Law (2008) use the term *entity* to describe texts, materials or humans before they are turned into actors. I have adopted their use of the term *entities*.

If entities do not turn into actors until certain moments when they relate to other actors, do we have to refer to them as potential actors or entities? In order to emphasize the ways in which the preschool curriculum text is turned into an actor in everyday events in a preschool I have tried to describe the curriculum text as an actor only in terms of the relations activated in these everyday events. These events centre on the interruption of the *water leak* in Research Paper I, the curriculum concept of *children’s interests* in Research Paper II and the *evaluation meeting* in Research Paper III. The main point, however, is to emphasize the way in which, for example, children, schedules and texts swap abilities and capabilities between one another in specific events. Verran (1999, p 148) refers to an ‘actor-network’ in the Yoruban classroom, not only made up of children, teacher, principal, teacher educator and others, but also of ‘the scarce meter rulers, the school rooms and playgrounds, the curriculum documents that lie gathering dust on the floor of the principal’s office, the pencils and exercise books, parents and report cards’ (Verran, 1999, p 148). All participants, Verran notes, ‘are already and always both material and symbolic’ (Verran, 1999, p 147). She writes:

> Taking words as material and resisting the seduction of assuming them to be only symbols, we can see that they can be joined with each other and set against each other, manipulated as any other material can be manipulated (Verran, 1999, p. 150).
Because of this emphasis, the researcher cannot a priori, before an empirical event, describe children, schedules and texts as actors with specific abilities and roles. Here we need to return to Leander and Lovvorn (2006) note on the contradictory view of texts in ANT. They make a distinction between conceiving of translations in ANT, on the one hand through a focus on particular texts and the social histories and geographies condensed in them, and on the other hand through a focus on given moments where particular text-action-objects are configured (Leander and Lovvorn, 2006, p. 301). The present study is devoted to the latter.

The use of the term non-humans is another potential problem in ANT. I will use the term materials and materiality instead of non-humans that, for example, Latour (2005) uses. This is motivated here by the importance of paying attention to what materiality does as related to humans but not as opposed to humans, which the term non-human could risk implying. Furthermore, in order to stress the role of materiality in empirical and analytical accounts, there is a need, I argue in this study, to separate humans from materiality in order to prevent materiality from disappearing from accounts as humans are generally favoured as being the most important actors. While humans are of course also material, my argument is that there is a strategic gain in keeping them clearly separate in order to show how they are connected and how they overlap in everyday preschool events.

Making ambivalence appear in an evaluation meeting

As Law (2004) suggests, ANT has a sensitivity to complexity. This also includes a sensitivity to ambivalence, which has been examined in previous Science and Technology studies (STS), of which ANT is a part (Singleton and Michael, 1993; Leem, 2016; Woolgar and Cooper, 1999). Woolgar and Cooper (1999) emphasize the contradictory aspects of technology. They argue that technology ‘is good and bad; it is enabling and it is oppressive; it works and it does not; and, as just part of all this, it does and does not have politics’ (Woolgar and Cooper 1999, p. 443). Rather than striving for a ‘definitive account of the actual character of a technology’ (p 443) they argue that the more important task for researchers is to engage ‘in the essential ambivalence of artefacts in general’ (Woolgar and Cooper 1999, p 459). As an example, Singleton and Michael (1993) study the way general practitioners problematize their roles in the UK Cervical Screening Programme. Furthermore, they note, practitioners, problematize the use of the Cervical Smear Test to indicate early signs of cervical cancer. This problematisation, Singleton and Michael (1993, p. 257) note, means that ‘ambivalence, ambiguity, problematisation, marginality and multiple identities can also play a part in the reproduction of a network’.
The sensitivity to ambivalence as put forward in ANT has been highly influential when analysing the evaluation meeting (Research Paper III). Even here, the principle of general symmetry is involved. In the case of the evaluation meeting, the principle of general symmetry has worked to stress the evaluation goal as potentially equally important in relation to other actors. By assuming symmetry among actors, verbal discussions and children’s abilities to control the evaluation meeting appeared as important. The verbal discussions embraced pedagogic dilemmas related to children’s wrestling and fighting games. In this sense, the verbal discussions transcended or even extended what was put into words in the curriculum goals in the evaluation form. Furthermore, the teachers’ work of making connections between the everyday preschool activities and the curriculum goals highlighted ambivalence. The concept of ambivalence directed attention towards the potential vulnerability of the curriculum goal. This prompted a description of the way the curriculum goal depends on teachers and the verbal and written descriptions of everyday preschool activities. Furthermore, the evaluation goal is described as dependent on children’s doings and their bodies carrying out movements and activities that could be seen to be connected to the evaluation goal. Thus, for the goals to become influential, they need to activate relations to others in the evaluation meeting. In other words, for the goals to act, they need teachers’ verbal discussions and children’s bodily movements and games in everyday preschool work. This makes it possible for actors to work in different ways at the same time, to be both dependent and controlling at one and the same moment.

The value of breakdowns

In order for the researcher to be able to learn from the actors in a certain practice, Latour (2005) notes that actors need to be encouraged to talk. To be accounted for, he states (Latour, p. 79), ‘objects have to enter into accounts. If no trace is produced, they offer no information to the observer and will have no visible effect on other agents’. Material objects in particular need to be encouraged to talk and ‘offer descriptions of themselves, produce scripts of what they are making others – humans or non-humans - do’ (Latour 2005, p 79). If material objects are not encouraged to talk, human actors tend to block the view and material objects consequently slip away from empirical accounts. Latour (2005) writes:

Once humans become mediators again it is hard to stop them. An indefinite stream of data springs forth, whereas material objects, no matter how important, efficient, central, or necessary they may be, tend to recede into the background very fast, interrupting the stream of data – and the greater their importance, the faster they disappear. (Latour, 2005, pp. 79-80)
Therefore, Latour (2005) argues, researchers need to rely on specific strategies, or tricks, by which they can make all kinds of entities, but particularly material objects, enter into accounts and be made to talk. The study of accidents, breakdowns and strikes, Latour argues, provide empirical accounts where ‘completely silent intermediaries’ (Latour, 2005, p. 81), such as material objects, become mediators. To become a mediator, in ANT terminology, means being acknowledged as an actor capable of making others act and transforming the relations in which they take part. Studying breakdowns, in, for example, a lab (Woolgar and Latour, 1979; Latour, 2005) creates possibilities for researchers to grasp the actors and relations having practices together. For, as Latour (2005) argues, even if everything seems to be chaotic, there are always things that manage to stay the same. Thus, in order to follow this trick, the researcher needs to obtain from playing down and glossing over breakdowns in the empirical materials. Instead of tidying up the disparate threads and actors that appear through breakdowns, the ANT researcher is encouraged to follow them up and keep on encouraging them to talk.

Learning from a water leak

Emphasis on the value of breakdowns in ANT was an important impetus for elaborating on the idea that a water leak could be productive of knowledge and insights into everyday preschool practice. (Research Paper I.) This idea led to the practical arrangement of making the water leak an empirical event in the study. The practical arrangements included the performance of interviews, both individual and in groups, with preschool teachers, the educational developer and the preschool leader at the preschool. Thanks to these interviews, the interruption of the water leak became a rich methodological asset in the study. First and foremost, it became a way of foregrounding the mundane objects and relations that were activated when three teachers and 20 children had to be evacuated to another preschool. The work of carrying out the evacuation process, and the three months duration of the evacuation at the new preschool, was partly accomplished by mundane objects such as lists, schedules and group divisions. As described in Research Paper I, this way of making an interruption, such as a water leak, into a methodological strategy of (mundane) knowledge production involved a methodological shift in relation to the rest of the study. In particular the participant observations that started once the water leak was fixed and the evacuation process had ended were affected by the knowledge produced in the wake of the leak. Including the water leak as an empirical event created insights into the value of breakdowns in preschool practice as well as knowledge of the mundane objects, sometimes taken for granted, that keep preschool practice together. This opened up the potentiality for other kinds of interruptions in the preschool practice to be valuable; interruptions of circle-time events, interruptions of reading activities and interruptions of schedules and planning could also be included in the participant observations and in the field notes.
In the present study, I have used the concept of interruptions to describe events where mundane objects and relations among actors appear. In everyday preschool practice, as filtered through the participant observations and my field notes, the concept of interruptions has come to describe moments of pauses and hesitations when questions about who or what is acting are actualized and blurred. Such pauses or hesitations could, in my ethnographic work, be, for example, teacher’s discussions on children’s fighting games and toy guns in the case of the evaluation meeting, as presented in Research Paper III.

In the next chapter I will describe the way the methodological principles of ANT presented above have been put to work by means of ethnographic methods.
4. Doing ethnography with Actor-network theory

Ethnographic methods have been used to attain first-hand experience of people’s behaviour in a certain context (Hammersley, 2007). In line with this, Korp and Risenfors (2013) suggest that ethnographic research is about participating in and being a part of people’s ‘lived cultures’ (p. 77). Because of these alleged qualities of ethnography, it has come to be widely used in pedagogic research (Beach, 2010; Gordon, Holland and Lahelma, 2001). In an early childhood education research context, ethnographic methods have been used to create knowledge of a wide span of topics: ethical meetings (Halvars Franzén, 2010), children’s drawing practices (Änggård, 2005), gendered play (Eidevald, 2009) and documentation and assessment practices in preschools (Lenz Taguchi, 2000; Markström, 2005, Emilsson, 2008, Bjervås, 2011; Johansson, 2016). Johansson (2016), for example, describes her way of using ethnographic methods as a means of getting first-hand experience of preschool assessment practices. Even if ethnographic studies in early childhood studies using ANT are so far scarce (Heydon, 2013; Heydon et al., 2014; Heydon et al., 2015), there are a number of ethnographic studies using ANT within the field of education, as I have pointed out earlier and made adequate references to. Ethnographic methods in education studies using ANT focus on the mutual ongoing adaptations of humans and technology through which practices emerge. One way of finding a focus in ANT-inspired ethnography is described by Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk (2011, p. 122) as to choose ‘a site and just sit in it for a while or wander about in it, watching, listening, thinking, perhaps talking with people in the site until something of interest emerges’. Tracers, according to Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk (2011, p. 122), refer to ‘an object (tool, idea, text etc.) that appears to move and organize activity throughout the site’. They describe various tracers that have been used in ANT studies in the field of education policy, an individual learning plan (Hamilton, 2010), a science curriculum (Nespor, 1994), and a course plan (Roth, 1996).

In this chapter, I describe how ANT, in terms of methodological principles, has been activated when doing participant observations and interviews in the present study. Both examples of ANT literature in education studies use ethnography (Koyama, 2012; Nespor, 2006, Heydon, 2012, and Mulcahy, 2016), and some chosen examples of ethnographic preschool studies (Johansson,
2016; Bjervås, 2011; Lenz Taguchi, 2000; Dolk, 2013; Halvars Franzén, 2010) will be important conversation-partners in this chapter. The description focuses on the following themes: access to the field, participating in everyday preschool work and analysing, writing and ending the ethnographic work. In the following description, as in the whole of the present text, the concept of method applies to specific techniques such as participant observations or interviews, while the concept of methodology applies to the study’s approach in which theory, method and analytical strategy are taken together.

Access to the field

Most literature on ethnographic methods, for example Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) and Beach (2010), claims that there is formal, initial access to the field as well as an informal, continuous process of getting access to the field during the whole course of a study. Johansson (2016), for example, states that once she had got formal access to the preschool in question, she needed to gain the preschool teachers’ trust to be allowed to study their practice (Johansson, 2016, p. 117).

Interrupted (formal) access

The preschool that is involved in the study is situated in a suburb of Stockholm. The preschool was not chosen according to any specific criteria. Some previous preschool studies on documentation in preschools have specifically sought to include preschools with, for example, a Reggio Emilia approach or a specific kind of documentation routine (Vallberg Roth and Månsson, 2011; Bjervås, 2011). I had no such requirements. My only connection to the preschool was that I knew one of the educational developers in the municipal unit as the first gatekeeper. I contacted this person to inquire if any of the five preschools in the unit might be interested in taking part in the study. In September 2014, I met the educational developers in the municipal unit to discuss the study. They were interested and suggested a preschool that they thought might want to take part in the study. We arranged a meeting with the preschool teachers and the preschool leader in that specific preschool. In November 2014, I met the nine preschool teachers including the preschool leader and the educational developer at the preschool. I told them about my study and my interest in ANT, and about my idea of participating in the everyday work of one of the divisions at the preschool. At our next meeting, I also collected the informed consent forms from the teachers. All of the teachers signed the informed consent form after I had made sure they understood the ethical conditions of the research and that there would be no consequences for them if they decided that they did not want to be observed or engage in further conversations with me.
In early January 2015, I received an e-mail from the educational developer at the preschool telling me about a severe water leak in the preschool building with two rooms completely flooded and a group of 20 children and three preschool teachers evacuated to a nearby preschool. This delayed the start of the participatory work by about seven months. In the space that opened up as a consequence of the delay in starting observations, I developed the idea, together with the three preschool teachers, that the water leak could act as an empirical event in itself. We agreed that this event might serve as an interruption from which knowledge could be created, together with the mundane relations and objects involved in the everyday preschool work. This choice was, of course, made in close connection with my ANT readings of the value of breakdowns and interruptions, as noted above. In this sense, the water leak eventually came to be part of the empirical materials for the study. The story of how the water leak was turned into an empirical event is presented in Research Paper I. This paper puts strong emphasis on the methodological value of interruptions, as described in ANT, in ethnography.

A head start of the ethnographic study – doing interviews

The act of turning the water leak into an empirical event was made by interviewing the preschool teachers that were evacuated, the educational developer involved and the preschool leader responsible for the evacuation process. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out, difficulties in getting access to the field often present opportunities for learning things about the practice to be studied that could be of use later in the study.

The interviews can be understood as interactive and open-ended (see also Lenz Taguchi, 2000, p 150 on the importance of the relational and contextual conditions of the interview method) which had only one fixed question: In what way could the water leak be seen as an actor in terms of making a difference in the everyday preschool work? This question was sent out to the interview participants by email a week before the interviews to give them time to think. The interviews focused on specific examples the participants suggested, explaining in what ways the water leak had become involved in the preschool practices: changing groups of children, placing children and teachers in a different construction plan in the evacuation preschool and showing the reliance on paper lists and schedules. In connection to this, Bodén (2016) discusses the way interviews, even though focused on social interaction, could be ‘described as situations where materialities are central to the production of knowledge’ (Bodén, p 54, see also Gunnarsson, 2015, p. 86).

Each interview was followed by a second interview a couple of weeks later in which I presented a summary of our last interview, as well as my preliminary analytical ideas in relation to ANT. These interviews could be seen as a
method of creating response data. As Lenz Taguchi (2000, p. 153) notes, response data is a way of presenting the researcher’s analyses of the data produced in a study to the study participants. By including the responses to the analyses by the study participants, a new set of knowledge is produced — response-data (Lenz Taguchi, 2000; see also St Pierre, 2011; Lather, 1996; Heydon, 2013). Another example of this kind of approach is Halvars Franzén’s (2010) use of stimulated recall with teachers, which she notes made it possible to make a ‘collective analysis’ (Halvars-Franzén, 2010, p. 77). Furthermore, Dolk (2013, p. 53) refers to ‘response-data’ as included in her analysis of situations in preschool practice. In this initial part of the ethnographic work in my study, it was valuable to get responses from the preschool teachers concerning the parts of ANT they connected to and the parts that were dismissed as less relevant. Especially, knowledge about the relations among children, paper lists, paper schedules, rooms and teachers was created in the interviews, as presented in Research Paper I. Thus, the water leak became the first tracer (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuck, 2011) in the ethnographic study. The interviews also marked the start of continuous informal conversation between me and the preschool teachers about the role they played in the preschool, amidst other potential actors such as paper schedules, children and materials. This informal conversation continued during the whole duration of the study, involving issues such as evaluation, planning and acknowledging children’s interests.

Formal access granted – informing parents and children
Once the water pipe was fixed, new floors were in place and everything was back to normal, the participant observations in everyday preschool work could begin - or rather the process of informing parents and getting informed consent from the children who would potentially be involved in the study. There was no parental meeting planned when I could inform the parents, so I decided to inform the parents myself and hand out the forms of consent individually to each parent with some help from the preschool teachers. Of the 16 children in the group, consent was denied by the parents of three children. These three children were not included in my field notes and my subsequent analysis. However, they participated, of course, in all the usual activities, and as a researcher I would engage with them in the same way as with the other children during the period of participant observations.

In Sweden, children have to be informed about a research project according to their age and maturity. Even if the parents of the children agree to their participation, verbal consent from the children is needed in the daily encounters between researcher and child, for the researcher to be able to carry out research (SFS 2003:460; Swedish Research Council, 2011). During my first day at the preschool, I used 30 minutes in the morning to present myself and my study to the children. When the children to be involved in the study were
assembled, I told them my name, that I work in a school for adults called Stockholm University and that I hoped to be able to do research in their preschool during the coming two terms. I brought my small black note book to the meeting and asked them what they think you can do with a note book. ‘Write or draw,’ they said. I told them I would bring my notebook to write down what goes on in the preschool so that I will remember it and not forgot what has happened during the day. I also told them that I was interested in who or what gets to decide in their preschool. Is it the preschool leader, or is it the educational developer or is it the teachers? I said the names of these persons. ‘Or is it maybe tables, chairs or papers?’ ‘NO!’ the children shouted when I suggested the material actors. Naming the material actors was my way of trying to explain initially, perhaps too banally, my theoretical approach to the children as I wanted them to know what I was looking for in my research work. One child said: ‘I think it is the books that decide.’ Again, the other children shouted: ‘NO!’ I told them it is important that they tell me if there is any activity or situation they don’t want me to take part in or observe. I also told them that they do not have to tell me but that they can also tell one of the teachers if they do not want me to participate or write. I also asked them if they had any questions, but they didn’t; rather, they seemed eager to return to their playing. I asked them if they wanted to take part in my study and if it was OK for me to take part in their everyday activities. They all said (shouted): ‘YES!’ None of the children explicitly opposed being part of the study at this stage. I am aware that it is a difficult situation for an individual child to step forward and object to being part of a study (Docket, Einarsdottir and Perry, 2009; Elfström Petterson, 2017). This makes it even more important, continuously during the field work, to be attentive to the children’s need for privacy and to take measures to create possibilities for them to express, verbally or bodily, what they wish to take part in or not (Docket, Perry and Einarsdottir, 2012). Mortari and Harcourt (2012), along with many others, raise the argument that the ‘critical ethical act in participatory research with children is not to obtain the informed consent of the gatekeepers and/or the participants, but the ethical posture the researcher assumes throughout the time of research in their relationships and actions’ (p. 237). I will address this issue further below.

Participating in everyday activities

Participant observation is often viewed as one of the cornerstones of any kind of ethnographic fieldwork (Devault and Devault, 2002). The method of participant observation, as described in literature on ethnography, is characterized by shifting between participating in activities and reflecting on the activities one has taken part in (Devault and Devault, 2002). As Bjervás (2011) notes, the design of participant observations is often ongoing during the whole period of field work. In my case, the basic structure of attending the preschool two days a week from nine o’clock until three o’clock was the same during the
whole period. During those two days, I took part in all kinds of activities including meal times. Nespor (2006) along with Smith (1987) question the tendency in education research to observe sectioned units of time, such as observing one specific class or one specific part of the day. As Nespor (2006) notes, people act in different ways in different situations. Compared to, for example, Johansson (2016) and Dolk (2013), who chose to observe conversations on children’s development between teachers and parents and teacher-led activities on ‘children’s choice’ events respectively, I chose to attend all kinds of activities during the two days a week I was at the preschool.

Switching between observing and participating
As a former preschool teacher, Halvars Franzén (2010, p. 57) describes her researcher role when doing participant observation in a preschool as a constant shift between participation and observation in a well-known, yet constantly changing context (see also Ambjörnsson, 2004; Dolk, 2013). In the beginning, I often joined children in their activities in order to get to know them, and in order for them to get to know me. But even later in the fieldwork there could be days, for example if I attended an excursion, when I was almost only engaged in talking or playing with the children, and only occasionally did some writing. On other days, I could sit at the table in the preschool room all day to observe and write. Still, these acts of observation always also involved participation, since children and teachers continually asked me questions, invited me to take part in conversations or called me to lunch. Johansson (2016) points out the constant doubts about how to behave as a researcher, which is often elicited by the children. She chose to take the role of an adult visitor, one that did not lead pedagogic activities but could help children and teachers with different things (p. 119).

Participation as problematic and other ethical concerns
While there are many potential ethical dilemmas in research involving young children, the issues that turned out to be most vital in the present study concerned children’s right to privacy and confidentiality (Powell, Truscott and Graham, 2016). The literature on ethics in projects involving children as participants stresses the promotion of ‘a culture of ethics’ (Powell, Truscott and Graham (2016), as well as ‘cultivating sincere reciprocal relationships with the research participants and structuring contexts of inquiry where good experiences are possible’ (Mortari and Harcourt, 2012, p 236). Moreover, Christensen and Prout (2002) suggest the importance of reflecting on children’s decision about participating in research by considering ‘not only what children say, but how they act and what contexts these acts and words are located in.’ In line with this, Docket, Einarsdottir and Perry (2012) note the ways in which children, through their bodies, signal preferences about participation in research.
While I argue that children’s involvement in the present study has done no harm to any of the children involved, I can identify several situations when the children might have become confused as to the role I played in the preschool. This highlights the potential problems of an active participant approach. Every time I attended an activity that I thought might be more intimate, I asked the children before joining them. This includes, for example, situations when a couple of children are sitting close to one another at a table drawing or writing. When I attended circle times I did not feel the same need to ask their permission as these situations did not feel as intimate and private. Only one time did a child say that I was not allowed to participate in their activity; this was a kind of detective game involving the children running along the corridors in the preschool using magnets as magnifiers. Besides asking for permission to join an activity, I have tried to use the sensitivity to children’s bodily signals that Docket, Einarsdottir and Perry (2012) refer to. Acknowledging my own bodily involvement in the preschool activities helped me use that sensitivity, as I will discuss in the coming section.

In line with Dolk’s (2013) experiences of doing field work in a preschool, I especially experienced the first few months of field work as difficult and exhausting as a researcher. Many times, it became particularly difficult, if not impossible, for me to know clearly if I was a researcher or a teacher. This especially occurred in conflict situations among children or when children overstepped certain rules and I was the closest adult in the situation. At these times, I had to make a quick assessment of how important it was that the situations were dealt with immediately or if I had time to fetch a teacher. One example: A castle was being built on the round green carpet and an older child told a younger child that s/he couldn’t join the building since s/he was ‘a baby’. When the older child started to pull the arm of the younger child harder and harder, there was neither time nor space to make a choice. Consequently, I reacted by physically separating the two children from each other. At that very moment, it was as if the roles of potential researcher and teacher coincided.

The productiveness and embodiedness of participation

The engagement of the researcher in the practices studied has long been acknowledged as productive rather than creating a negative bias in ethnographic research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Nespor, 2006; Smith, 1987). However, the researcher’s bodily participation in the practice studied is less emphasized (Gunnarsson, 2015 and Lenz Taguchi, 2013). I would characterize my participation in the everyday preschool work as, at least initially, being an uncomfortable and clumsy stranger. One daily recurrent bodily inconvenience was the circle-time sitting position. This involved having to sit with your legs crossed or, worse, on your knees on the round green carpet.
Often, though, there was not much space for me, so I had to kneel on the hard floor. Even sitting on the carpet was uncomfortable, as I constantly had to change position, not knowing where to place my legs (as I am tall). This also applied to other locations in the preschool; the small tables and chairs where children made drawings or threaded beads, or the carpet where children played with Lego or magnets. All these locations required me to sit in positions that were difficult to get up from. This mattered in the study as it made me less inclined to switch back and forth between observing and participating on these occasions. Rather, once I had taken a seat at a table or on a carpet, I often sat there for a while, which further slowed down my participation in the activities.

Furthermore, from these experiences I learned that bodily movements were a great part of performing the circle-time event as well as other activities in the preschool. This gave me some kind of methodological sensibility to relations, bodies and objects in the preschool. One example is children’s wrestling games and the choreography of bodies involved, included in the case of the evaluation meeting in Research Paper III. This closely relates to Halvarsson-Franzén’s (2010) aims of ‘capturing bodily expressions’ (p 63) including examples of children’s wrestling games and the careful choreography of bodies in an activity that at first sight appears violent and aggressive. This also connects to Elfström Petterson’s (2017) suggestion that children’s participation in documentation practices is ‘in some situations very physical; it entailed pushing buttons, fetching papers, putting papers into plastic pockets and then into binders, drawing and so on’ (pp 54-55).

Looking for tracers

As noted above, one suggestion about how to perform ANT studies is by following a tracer throughout the practice: an item, a concept or a person (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuck, 2011). Koyama (2012) notes that there are two ANT approaches: to follow the actors through ethnographic methods ‘or to first examine material objects, such as texts, reports, and databases, which serve as intermediaries that pass between actors’ (p. 876). The present study may be seen as a combination of these two approaches, as it both focuses on the actors and uses the Swedish preschool curriculum text as an actor in the empirical inquiry.

In order to find a tracer in the ethnographic work, my initial idea was to use the curriculum text itself as a tracer. Consequently, I started looking for physical copies of the curriculum for preschool text in the preschool. This was based on the hypothesis that the places where the curriculum text was kept in the preschool building could provide some clues as to how it acted in everyday preschool work. Except for in the office and on the notice board in the hall, there were no curriculum text booklets visible in the preschool.
As I continued my quest for a way to scale down and make the curriculum text easier to grasp in everyday work, the curriculum concept of children’s interests came up (Research Paper II). Revisiting the description of the Swedish preschool curriculum text in the opening chapter of the ‘kappa’, I want the reader to recall the unique qualities of this text; especially the frequent use of abstract, ‘big’ concepts such as democracy and children’s interests. When looking for tracers, the concept of ‘children’s interests’ in the curriculum text in the back of my head tied in with questions brought up in previous research that I had recently engaged with (Jonsson, 2011 and Ryan, 2004). The frictions and relations between academic standards and children’s interests in Jonsson’s (2011) and Ryan’s (2004) study made me attentive of the many events I experienced every day that potentially displayed and activated children’s interests. The events and situations that I found myself drawn to now seemed to make sense in terms of the curriculum concept of children’s interests. The explorations of the curriculum concepts of children’s interests, in the ways children and materialities extended and bent the concept, turned into a specific inquiry which is presented in Research Paper II.

The next tracer emerged in relation to an evaluation meeting (Research Paper III). In November 2015, I attended the first of two evaluation meetings during my field work. Already before this meeting I had anticipated the meeting as a place where the curriculum text would be actualized. Here, it is important for the reader to recall the addition of the section on follow-up, documentation and evaluation in the 2010 Swedish preschool curriculum text. This new section instructed teachers to follow up and analyse the learning of each individual child while evaluating the extent to which the preschool offers children conditions for learning and development. In the meeting I attended, all the teachers at the preschool were supposed to produce a written account of how they had covered the goals in the local work plan for that year in their daily work. In other words, the daily work with children was to be transformed into written statements correlated to each of the five goals set up by the preschool leader and pedagogic developers in the preschool unit comprising five preschools. By giving the evaluation such a central role in the whole of the present study the added section on follow up, documentation and evaluation in the curriculum text played an important part. The water leak as a tracer, as presented in Research Paper I, is described and discussed in the section above on access to the field.

Writing field notes
Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995, pp. 5-6) describe field notes as ‘accounts describing experiences and observations the researcher has made while participating in an intense and involved manner’. Johansson (2016) describes the way the field notes at the beginning of her field work had a more general char-
acter and how they eventually came to be more detailed and helped her identify situations of assessment that she would otherwise have missed. During my field work, I experienced a similar process in the sense that the field notes changed from initially mostly documenting teachers’ doings and movements to documenting more entities and more potential actors, especially children and materialities.

ANT researcher Nespor (2006) notes how writing live field notes changes the way you experience an event. You are ‘participating in order to write’ (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 19). This is not how we usually participate in things, Nespor (2006) notes. At the beginning of the fieldwork, I had an empirical and analytical approach made visible by my field notes on teachers as actors, planning and organizing the work in the preschool. Children, however, were described in the field notes as more or less subordinate to the planning and organization of the preschool activities. When I attended teacher-led activities, I often felt uncomfortable when children interrupted, argued with the teacher or went into another room, which was reflected in my field notes. As a former teacher I was perhaps, at least initially, more aligned with the teachers’ position and what pedagogic content was the focus of the activity. Furthermore, I suspect that my focus on the curriculum for preschool text strengthened my inclination to initially privilege the teachers’ role when participating in activities and taking field notes. In this sense, I viewed interruptions, at least initially in my field work, as things out of the ordinary, failures, so I did not include them in my notes.

During the course of time, however, something happened. I started to find the ‘failed’ or unplanned events more interesting than other events. With the water leak and the ANT readings of the value of breakdowns, together with the principle of general symmetry, I could write accounts that included children and things alongside teachers. These could include, for example, the joint efforts to perform a reading activity that was at several points interrupted by children’s questions, comments and stretching bodies. This discovery generated a kind of aha! response and I started seeing all these events as constant enactments and extensions of the curriculum concept of ‘children’s interests’ in the Swedish preschool curriculum text. Thus, I came to view these events as moments when the curriculum texts and the children somehow touched upon each other. The symmetrical principle, in other words, made it necessary to take into account the work done by other actors than teachers, and even include them as ‘full-blown actors’, as Latour writes (2005, p. 69). This is when the ANT methodology of restricting the empirical and analytical work to the relations among actors was activated through my field notes.

This meant that when writing the field notes, I tried to include as many entities as possible, in terms of what they did in relation to one another. For example, ‘a child sits on the carpet with outstretched legs, another child comes to sit..."
next to the child and together they pick up cars lying spread out on the carpet; one child picks up one of the cars and moves it across the carpet and makes it sound like a car’. I never wrote names, but sometimes I wrote he or she, which I turned into s/he in the written analysis in line with Mol’s (2010) idea of not supporting the categories of man and woman, but instead shifting and changing them. Furthermore, the children’s gender was not in focus in my study. In the field notes, there were plenty of stars and arrows connecting different sections. Often, I did not have time to write down every detail as it happened; instead, I usually wrote a rough story of what had happened at one particular moment. When that moment was ‘over’, I sat more secluded but still among the children to fill in the details as well as the children’s or teacher’s comments to one another. Nespor (2006) notes the importance of completing the first ‘jottings’ made when the event is being played out as soon as possible after the event. The completed, or extended, notes are what constitute the field notes, Nespor (2006) states. During the field work I filled four notebooks in A5 format with notes. These were both ‘live’ field notes and reflections on the field notes made on the Underground on my way home from the preschool in the afternoons.

Sharing preliminary findings – informal conversations

In line with Lenz Taguchi (2000), and in relation to the response-data referred to above, I did not want to carry out a study which applied the theoretical perspectives to the data afterwards and without the teachers’ knowledge. As noted above, the interviews covering the water leak marked the start of a line of informal conversations with the preschool teachers in which response-data were created throughout the study. The teachers chose different kinds of engagements in this response. Some were very engaged and took the initiative in sharing analytical ideas with me. For example, one teacher came up to me one morning and said ‘Emilie, I came to think about something yesterday, you know when we talked about the role of paper in the evaluation and what would we do if we couldn’t write down our evaluation…’. Occasions for such conversations could well be on the way to the park, during coffee breaks in the staff room or on the tram heading for an excursion. The meal times also contained (fragmented) discussions with teachers about quality indicators or curriculum goals - in between bites of food, phrases like ‘Could you pass me the potatoes, please’ or bending down to pick up a spoon for a child. Furthermore, certain periods of time in the preschool activated certain involvements and conversations. For example, during the period prior to the evaluation meeting, the talks between me and the teachers revolved round their preparations for the meeting. Johansson (2016) notes the value of these kinds of ‘field conversations’ for clearing up misunderstandings by the researcher or getting input about which activities in the preschool to take part in and document (p. 122). These field conversations, Johansson (2016) notes, became a part of the field notes along with tentative analytical ideas.
None of the teachers seemed stressed or uninterested in my attempts to discuss my preliminary findings with them. This does not exclude the possibility that they were indeed so, and that my demands on them to become involved intruded on their already overloaded schedule.

Analysing, writing and reaching an end

In this last part of the description of the ethnographic work, I describe the acts of analysing and writing about the ethnographic materials. In the previous chapter on ANT, I discussed how the empirical materials were analysed in accordance with the ANT methodological principles. In this chapter, however, I discuss the joint work of analysing and writing and the reflexive efforts involved. But first, let me describe the last meeting I had with the children participating in the study as well as the last meeting with the teachers, when I shared the results of the study with them.

The last meeting with the children

The last days of participant observations took place in June 2016; in a way, this came naturally, as a large number of the children included in my study would start school in the autumn. I had arranged a meeting on my last day with the children included in the study together with the preschool teachers. I brought with me a doctoral thesis written recently by a colleague that the children could browse through. I let the book pass round the circle where all the children were sitting. Most of them held the book for a while, opened it, slowly browsing back and forth. Occasionally one child tried to read a passage aloud and started laughing out loud. I told them I was going to write a book like this that was going to be about the things I had experienced at their preschool. I gave them some examples of the events that would be in the book and told them that there would be no names of any children in the book. They were enthusiastic and again I asked them if they wanted to be included in the book I was going write. ‘YES!’ All of them shouted. I do not view this as a further guarantee of the informed consent of the child participants in the study. However, I find it an important occasion as it is part of my striving to make my methods and my researcher role transparent to children and teachers. Furthermore, the meeting clearly marked the end of my participation in the preschool, which felt important since I had by that time formed close relationships to the children.
Analysing and writing - versions of reflexivity

Ethnographic literature points to the importance of reflexivity, that is, acknowledging the importance of the social and cultural background of the researcher and the researcher’s participation in the findings of the study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; see also Bryman, 2015, p. 388). In line with this, feminist posthumanist researchers stress that the researcher is always involved in the production of a certain practice or phenomenon (see Bodén, 2016; Gunnarsson, 2015; St. Pierre, 2011; Lenz Taguchi, 2013; Hultman, 2011). Hultman (2011) discusses the researcher role in an ANT preschool study. In line with her argument, my role as a researcher could be viewed as an ‘obligatory point of passage’ through which all the decisions made in the thesis project must pass’ (p. 23).

Within the field of Science and Technology studies, of which ANT is a part, a reflexivity debate emerged in the mid-1980s following a similar debate within anthropology which largely focused on writing about cultures (Ratner, 2012). While Woolgar and Latours’s classic study Laboratory Life (1979) showed the construction of facts in the natural sciences as a messy and contingent affair, such accounts were themselves accused of claiming to be neutral and using a realist writing style. This reflexivity debate directed attention both towards the textual and narrative devices used by STS scholars and towards the limits of representation. The ‘answer’ was formulated in terms of new literary styles. Reflexivity became a question of how the author was made absent or present in the text, which would disturb the ‘realist genre’ (Woolgar, 1988, p. 28) of writing by eliciting ‘the contingent, paradoxical, and dialogical aspects of the construction of knowledge’ (Ratner, 2012, p. 45).

In the present study, the acts of analysing and writing down accounts of the strengths and vulnerabilities of various actors have activated a multitude of ethical dilemmas. The choice of deciding which actors and relations are allowed to appear or not in the articles creates a researcher position of power and imagined distance. The empirical work and the work of writing are in a way separate practices, but they are still enmeshed in the act of analysing. In the empirical work at the preschool I strove to overtly display my presence and role as a researcher. In the written empirical accounts, I have tried to include myself as an active participant. For example, in the circle-time activity, I describe myself as a researcher involved in the child’s refusal to go outside (Research Paper II). In the Minecraft games, I sat at the table where the children played, they flew the Minecraft figures above my head and crawled under the table turned into a cave where I kept my feet (Research Paper II). In the Lego building activity, I asked the children what they were building and they responded by telling me that the Lego figures sleep on the roof and that one of them has a birthday party (Research Paper II). The moment when the child stood on a chair in order to reach for the schedule to show the jottings s/he
made last week, I sat at the table from where s/he picked a chair and it was to me s/he triumphantly showed the jottings on the schedule. ‘Look, what I managed to do!’ (Research Paper II). Furthermore, the description of the situation with the monocular that is turned into a gun, as well as a fixer, in Research Paper III involves myself as an active participant.

Sharing findings with the teachers

In May 2017, I came back to the preschool to discuss the result of my study with all the teachers at the preschool. This was a happy and lively occasion, more than I had envisioned when taking the Underground to the preschool that morning. As I presented my three articles, laughter and jokes immediately started circulating and the teachers started filling in on the stories I described. I had decided to read aloud a long passage from one of the articles I had translated into Swedish. This was the empirical moment and the analysis of the circle-time event with the child that left the circle with a note with his/her name on it (Research Paper II). In response to this passage there were chuckles and loud laughter. Even though not all the teachers present had been attending that specific circle time, they seemed to be able relate to similar situations. Laughter also came when I told the story about the Minecraft figures (Research Paper II). More laughter came when I told them my analyses of the evaluation meeting and the ambivalence related to children’s play with toy guns (Research Paper III). They had all talked about this particular meeting as a disaster, one of them saying s/he felt sorry for me that I had to take part in it. Maybe, though, the loudest laughter came in response to the presentation of the water leak article (Research Paper I). All of them knew I had been writing an article about the water leak and I had involved several of them in the interviews. Even though most of them had heard some of my preliminary analyses before, my impression was that it still seemed a strange idea to foreground things like a water leak and ambivalence around toy guns in an article. These were all things that were not supposed to happen, and to include them and even foreground them as analytical events seemed to create a lively and laid-back atmosphere. At the presentation, we all laughed together at all the things that went wrong during the ethnographic study and in their daily work.

… and new actors emerging…

We came to talk about the Minecraft game that had been so important to the children in the group I was engaged with during my research. In addition, we talked about the way the Minecraft figures came to be material actors in the everyday preschool activities. One preschool teacher said: ‘Yeah, that was the time when Minecraft was so popular, it isn’t any more’. ‘OK,’ I said, ‘so what is important now?’. ‘The TV show the labyrinth,’ the teachers respond. ‘Ah, so do they bring things from home as they did with the Minecraft game?’, I say. ‘No, they don’t,’ the teachers say. There was a pause in the conversation and, at least I looked in my head for possible reasons why the children did not
bring any ‘things’ to the preschool. ‘No,’ one teacher said and smiled. ‘There are no ‘things’ made for this TV production. You see, it is SVT (the Swedish public television channel).’ Everybody laughed and again there is silence. Then one teacher replied, ‘I think instead they are playing the TV show, they are building labyrinths together, all the time they do it.’ She lifts her hands in the air as if to show how labyrinths are built. The other teachers nod in agreement. I say that I think of these labyrinth games as another kind of materialisation of the TV show compared to children bringing Minecraft figures from home into the preschool setting. This reminds me that if I had done the ethnographic study this term instead of last term, I would have other actors and relations to take into account when engaging with curriculum texts in everyday preschool events.
5. Summaries of the studies

Research Paper I. Learning from/with a water leak – on the methodological productiveness of breakdowns in ethnography

This paper deals with the interruption caused by a water leak in the phase of getting access to the field in an ethnographic study in a Stockholm preschool. With the help of Actor-network theory readings that recognize breakdowns as valuable methodological assets, the water leak was turned into an opportunity for learning about the preschool practice to be studied. Using interviews to make the water leak into an empirical event, knowledge was created of the mundane objects and relations stabilising and organising the everyday preschool activities, such as schedules, lists and construction plans. Interviews were made with the evacuated preschool teachers, the pedagogical developer as well as the preschool leader. In particular, the interviews focused on the water leak and what changes it led to in the preschool practice through the subsequent evacuation process. The results point to the way interruptions in ethnographic studies can open up spaces where knowledge could be created from the practices studied. Furthermore, the paper points to the inclusion of the water leak as an empirical event, potentially creating ethnographic sensibilities towards interruptions, mundane objects and relations in practices.

Research Paper II. Exploring the relational efforts making up a curriculum concept – an ANT analysis of the concept of children’s interests

This paper undertakes an investigation of the ‘life’ of the curriculum concept of children’s interests in a preschool practice. The concept of children’s interests plays a vital role in the Swedish preschool curriculum text and in the preschool field. The paper engages in ethnographic materials generated at a Stockholm preschool over a period of 10 months. Strongly inspired by Actor-network theory readings, the paper aims at producing accounts making visible the making of the concept of children’s interests through relations among children, carpets, Minecraft figures, boxes, teachers and schedules in a preschool practice. The result of the study points to the way a curriculum concept comes
Research Paper III. Children, sub-headings and verbal discussions achieving evaluations – acknowledging the productiveness of ambivalence

This paper works with the question of how an evaluation text is put together at an evaluation meeting by relations of texts, teachers, ambivalence and children’s toy guns. The paper draws on ethnographic materials in terms of participant observations carried out at a Stockholm preschool over a period of 10 months and specifically the participant observations carried out during two evaluation meetings. The paper works with the principle of general symmetry offered by Actor-network theory. This principle is put to work through the analytical strategy of assuming that all the actors involved in the evaluation meeting are potentially equally vulnerable in relation to one another. This strategy made one specific curriculum goal become visible at the evaluation meeting by displaying its inability to connect and embrace children’s fighting games and teachers’ discussions on pedagogic ambivalent decisions. While ambivalence arising from children’s doing were excluded from the evaluation text, they became part of the evaluation through the teachers’ verbal discussions. The result of the paper points to the way a curriculum goal comes alive and is set in motion by the frictions among the words in the curriculum text, ambivalence and the requirement to write down a result and an analysis in an evaluation text.
6. Everyday relations making texts act and critical approaches shift

A potential trouble with ANT is that an actor is always simultaneously an actor-network. It is one thing to define both humans and materiality as actors but quite another to focus the work of many entities that make actors possible. ANT, as it has been put to work in this doctoral thesis project, has been devoted to the latter. Returning to the descriptions of previous research in which teachers and texts were privileged actors, the present study privileges relations among entities through which actors emerge. In this concluding discussion, this approach will be exemplified by the empirical cases presented in the three research papers and put in relation to previous research, while answering the two research questions: 1. How does the Swedish preschool curriculum text come to act through relations among entities in everyday preschool moments? 2. How does ANT methodology add to and extend current approaches to studying texts in preschool settings, with specific attention to critical approaches? Furthermore, the discussion will address differences and similarities between the ANT approach used in the present study and the previous research in the field of early childhood education research on texts, as well as previous ANT studies on education policy texts.

Breakdowns, overlaps and ambivalence

When beginning to answer the question how the Swedish preschool curriculum text acts through relations among entities in everyday preschool moments, we need to recall once more how, in previous research on texts in preschool setting, the emphasis has been on teachers and texts as actors. In line with the formulation of the research question, the present study aims to extend the focus on relations. Moreover, by attributing empirical value to breakdowns, ambivalence and overlaps, in line with Actor-network theory, the study focuses on the relations in which curriculum texts are involved. Thus, the sub-headings below direct attention to breakdowns, ambivalence and overlaps involved in making the curriculum text act in the cases presented in the three research papers.
Texts are made to act by children and materialities

Research Paper II explores the curriculum concept of children’s interests in terms of the relations it is activated by in everyday preschool events. This resonates with Jonsson’s study (2011), where children and their interests put pressure on the teachers to ‘put aside what you have planned’ (Jonsson, 2011, p. 84). The present study, however, explores children, things and texts as if they were already connected and related. The focus on potential symmetry among entities creates opportunities for attentiveness to relations and attachments rather than differences and pre-defined structures. For example, the case of the curriculum concept of children’s interests could be compared with discussions on the concept of care in previous research (Månsson, 2000; Löfdahl and Folke-Fichtelius, 2014; Löfdahl and Pérez Prieto, 2014). In these research accounts, the concept of care plays the key role in terms of the ideological and discursive traits it carries. Thus, this prominent role of the concept of care plays a part in analyses of the neglect of care in preschool practices, where learning comes to be favored at the expense of care. The limitations of such an approach, when thinking with ANT, are that they give a textual concept such a prominent role without exploring the relations with which it engages in everyday practices.

Previous research presents some examples of focusing on relations among, for example, children, texts and teachers in curriculum inquiries, mainly through interviews or teachers’ accounts (Heydon, 2013; Jonsson, 2011). Heydon (2013) comes closest to the aims of the present study, by way of her focus on children as translating the curriculum according to their own interests. Furthermore, ANT studies of ethnographic tracings, such as Gorur (2011) and Koyama (2012), have focused on the relational efforts of texts, charts and, to some extent, teachers as actors. In line with the present study, these studies highlight relations between entities. The ethnographic tracings, however, follow the text through official contexts, such as staff meetings, meetings at the Department of Education or meetings at for-profit organizations. The choice of studying these specific sites makes only a few relations between entities appear, such as those involving state officials, government labelling, principals and to some extent teachers. In the present study, a post-ANT approach has prompted me to highlight instances in everyday preschool work where children, things and the curriculum concept meet.

When contemplating the second research question of how ANT methodology might add to and extend current approaches to studying texts in preschool settings, I would argue that previous methodological approaches have not offered the same incentive to explore instances where children, things and curriculum concepts produce practice together. For example, as noted above, a social constructionist approach privileges the linguistic and textual actors, either in texts or talk, by generating examples of the subject positions available to children
and teachers. Furthermore, with a critical approach, the concept of children’s interests – through the use of text analysis – could potentially turn into a critical story about the subject position of the competent child who is assumed to carry interests, passions and knowledge with him/her to preschool. Moreover, and along the same lines, a text analysis could highlight the Swedish preschool curriculum text as part of an individualized, neo-liberal discourse, or as part of a trans-national agenda of school readiness. While not necessarily dismissing such a story, the present study points to the need to include more entities in the relations by which texts are assumed to become actors.

Lastly, in studies focusing on understanding or experience, through phenomenology or sociocultural theory (Ryan, 2004; Jonsson, 2011; Alvestad and Berge, 2009), texts come to act as they are interpreted or experienced by practitioners, filtered through the personal and professional experiences of teachers. As the concept of understanding, as used in these studies, assumes a human, adult interpreter, this approach excludes both children and materialities as active parts of the process of interpretation.

The contingent process of doing ethnography

How else might ANT methodology add to and extend current approaches? In the present study, there are several objects and relations which, with another approach, would have remained anonymous. The water leak, as presented in Research Paper I, is one such example. Without the possibilities created by the use of ANT of including breakdowns, the water leak would have become a mere parenthesis in the methods section in the study. The ANT focus on breakdowns as valuable provided the present study with opportunities to make the water leak an empirical event in order to learn from it (Latour, 2005).

Most ethnographic studies encounter trouble when accessing the field of study, which is reflected in the study, often, however, with a focus on finding solutions to the problem. Thus, in a study underpinned by a methodological perspective not actively including material objects or privileging interruptions, the water leak would have remained a mere obstacle to being granted access. This is also closely related to ANT applied as methodological sensibilities rather than focusing on specific concepts. A study applying early ANT aimed at explaining how the Swedish preschool curriculum text come to be constructed might not direct the same attention to the contingent process of doing ethnographic work. Furthermore, I would argue, studies inspired by early ANT, including Gorur (2011) and Koyama (2012), do not as explicitly direct attention towards the possibilities and limits of their own methods. Making the water leak an empirical event, I argue, also depends on an active acknowledgement of the complicity of methods in crafting realities, as noted by, for example, Law (2004).
Moreover, the influence of Feminist new materialist studies as well as feminist post-structuralist studies in the present study, highlighting the researcher as vulnerable in relation to the practices s/he is studying, also helped to advance the idea of the water leak as something to learn from (Lenz Taguchi, 2000, 2013; St Pierre, 1999, 2011).

Focusing on the inabilities of texts

The case of the evaluation meeting, as presented in Research Paper III, could be taken as an example of how actors are afforded other abilities with ANT compared with previous research. With ANT, the evaluation meeting became a location where points of contact in the everyday preschool practice and the process of putting together an evaluation text could be explored. As Ryan (2004), Jonsson (2011), Lenz Taguchi (2012) and Elfström Petterson (2017) point out, using different theoretical tools, the layout and materialities of texts and documentations matter in everyday preschool work. For example, as Jonsson (2011) notes, the Swedish preschool curriculum text is flexible and ‘airy’, permitting many different interpretations. The present study adds to and expands on these findings, in response to both the first and the second research question, by emphasizing the way texts gain their abilities through relations with other actors. The case of the evaluation meeting could, with governmentality theories (Foucault, 2008), have turned into a critical analysis of the regulation and normalization of children by excluding the uncomfortable aspects of their games in the evaluation text. Moreover, the evaluation form could be analysed as a technique for governing and normalizing preschool practices, allowing some aspects of the daily work to be featured while excluding others.

Thus, in response to, in the first place, the first research question, ANT allowed an inquiry that did not necessarily privilege the text as an inherently powerful actor. Rather, the verbal discussions in the evaluation meeting were allowed to play an important role through their ability to embrace children’s games. Thus, the exclusion of children’s games with toy guns in the evaluation text did not necessarily, with the use of ANT, point to the power of the text on practices. On the contrary, the exclusion of children’s games with toy guns in the text was taken as a sign of the inability of the text to respond to and embrace children’s doings and above all, ambivalence. In this scenario, the evaluation text was highlighted in terms of its need of everyday preschool activities and children. In order to qualify as an evaluation text, when read by the preschool leader and the municipal politicians, it needs children and everyday preschool activities. In this sense, ANT allows an analysis of the mutual constituency of children’s everyday activities and the evaluation text. Ambivalence is an example of such mutual constituency where abilities are shared among actors. ANT helps, as Fenwick and Edwards (2010, p 78) note, ‘slow down an inquiry’, allowing things and people to act in ways that would otherwise have been dismissed as peripheral or uninteresting. In the present study,
this has allowed actors to shine with new abilities and share intricate stories about what they do. In the case of the evaluation meeting, the text is afforded the abilities to be vulnerable and to bend towards the purposes of children and teachers.

Furthermore, with ANT the text acquires the abilities in the evaluation meeting to create confusion and frustration but also satisfaction and laughter. This gives texts the abilities to be both strong and vulnerable at the same time. With ANT, the evaluation meeting becomes a space where actors are simultaneously strong and weak since abilities are shared. The evaluation text is only afforded the ability to sort and order everyday preschool practice by the input of the preschool teachers’ and children’s everyday doings. To some extent previous ANT studies display such possibilities, for example Heydon’s (2013) focus on children translating the curriculum text to fit their interests. At the same time, the curriculum text is presented as an ‘obligatory point of passage’ in her study (Latour, 2005). In Koyama’s (2012) study, she points out how teachers manage to keep the labelling of their school as ‘failing’ at a distance. At the same time, however, they take measures to increase results in their classrooms as they fear new labelling. In a way, this shows the possibilities of keeping policy at a distance, while at the same time being drawn into actions striving to satisfy policy makers or inspectors.

Adding to and shifting critical approaches

Studying curriculum texts in education practices seems to result in a critical, distanced approach from the researcher and his/her methods. The crucial question that needs to be answered here, in response to the second research question, is: In what ways does ANT add to and extend the focus of critical studies on texts as a means of governance, normalization and control?

Methods as performative

The critical studies I refer to above include early childhood studies on texts as instruments of control and normalization (Vallberg Roth and Månsson, 2011; Löfdahl and Folke Fichtelius, 2015; Basford and Batch, 2014; Osgood, 2006). However, a critical approach, I argue, is also put to work in studies using an ANT approach, where concepts of mobilization, enrolment and translation are used as tools to explain and understand assessment systems (Gorur, 2011; Hamilton, 2011; 2017; Koyama, 2012, 2016). ANT, as has been noted all through this ‘kappa’, can be applied in many different ways. The present study has adopted a post-ANT approach, applying ANT as methodological sensibilities (Mol, 2010, Gad and Bruun Jensen, 2009), not aimed at explaining or understanding the Swedish preschool curriculum text. Rather, a post-ANT approach, as put to work in the present study, has meant engaging in empirical
situations where breakdowns (Research Paper I) overlaps (Research Paper II) and ambivalence (Research Paper III) become apparent. This approach is strongly inspired by Mol’s writings on feminism in ANT and is an attempt to refrain from ‘repeating categories’ and instead to strive to ‘shift and change them’ (Mol, 2010, p. 256). Finally, then, in this concluding chapter of the ‘kappa’, I will address the ways in which the present study takes part in shifting and changing categories of children and teachers inscribed in previous research on texts in early childhood education. This helps to further answer the second research question by also describing how this particular ANT study is important for preschool practitioners and children.

Expanding abilities of children and teachers

In line with the approaches of agential realism and feminist new materialism, as mentioned above, ANT takes methods and theories to be neither innocent nor neutral tools used to generate knowledge of, for example, curriculum texts. Rather, methods and theories take part in performing new realities. Law (2004) raises the issue of what methods do and notes the researcher’s ‘own unavoidable complicity in reality-making’ (p. 153). One question that works as a driving force in much of the previous research on curriculum texts and assessment texts is: What discursive subject positions are available for teachers and children? This could include roles of adaptation as well as resistance, even if resistance is rarely included and exemplified (Lopes, 2016; Alasuutari, Markström and Vallberg-Roth, 2014). When thinking of methods as performative, in line with Law (2004), these subject positions are picked up and performed in preschool practices. In other words, preschool practices more or less come to rely on these subject positions. With ANT, the concept of subject position is not workable, since the subject, as Latour notes, is a property ‘of the gathering itself’ (2005, p. 218). Rather, a somewhat different question is activated when thinking with ANT. This question concerns what socio-material actors emerge through relations with curriculum texts, and what abilities they are afforded through these relations. This approach creates possibilities of extending and shifting the subject positions of children and teachers offered in the critical approaches used in previous research.

Teachers occupy a key position in dominant previous research studies on curriculum texts. Teachers are described as the most important actors in making curriculum goals become picked up or not. In this sense, a heavy burden is placed on the teachers. In studies on interpretations and experiences of curriculum texts, teachers are highlighted as making connections between themes and the curriculum (Alvestad and Berge, 2009). Furthermore, teachers, in Jonsson (2011) and Sofou and Tsaifo’s (2009) study, are described as co-constructors of the preschool curriculum. When mapping out the subject positions available for teachers in critical studies on inspection, curriculum and documentation, the available positions seem rather limited and mostly negative.
These positions include teachers experiencing loss of control and frustration (Osgood, 2006), teachers focusing too much on assessment of individual children (Vallberg Roth and Månsson, 2011) or teachers doing documentation that risk violating children’s privacy (Vallberg Roth, 2014).

The present study reveals that a range of new potential roles and abilities are added next to the subject positions analysed in the research referred to above. Firstly, the ANT approach, in the case of the evaluation meeting, affords teachers the ability to creatively connect everyday events with curriculum texts (Research Paper III). Furthermore, the case of the evaluation meeting affords teachers the ability to use evaluation meetings to discuss urgent pedagogic dilemmas. Moreover, the case of the evaluation meeting affords teachers the ability to experience satisfaction in relation to the work of evaluating their practice. When the preschool curriculum text puts great demands on preschool teachers, there is a need to go beyond studying assessment in preschools as control technologies. There is a great deal more to assessment than is displayed with critical approaches or by restricting the study to Individual development plans (IUPs) or teacher-parent conferences. The present study adds to the studies of evaluation and assessment by suggesting that researchers spend time in everyday preschool work on whole-day participant observations as well as attending staff meetings and looking at IUPs. This combination makes it possible to generate knowledge of more ways and strategies of working with, for example, evaluations. In relation to previous research on performativity and the alleged games of assessment (Löfdahl and Folke Fichtelius, 2015; Basford and Blatch, 2014), the present study adds to this research by acknowledging other ways of taking part in ‘the assessment game’.

Children occupy a key position in basically all previous research on curriculum texts as the ones acted upon by others, that is, adults. When analysing the available subject-positions for children described in previous research on documentation, curriculum and inspection, they are allowed to appear as overdocumented, lacking integrity, governed by texts and caught up in school readiness discourses (Vallberg Roth, 2014; Basford and Batch, 2014). As a consequence of the findings of the present study, I would like to add a range of new positionings and abilities, besides the ones mentioned above, that children achieve through relations with others. As in the case of the curriculum concept of children’s interests, the ability to activate and extend curriculum texts is actualised (Research Paper II.) In addition, the curriculum concept of children’s interests activates the ability to occupy the preschool building through bodies and noises (Research Paper II). The case of the evaluation meeting also creates the ability of children to take part in evaluations without being bodily present, as well as the ability to constantly interrupt and transform the preschool building, the teachers planning and the curriculum text (Research Paper III). Furthermore, children are afforded the ability to activate close relations
with materialities such as toy guns, sticks, Lego and name tags, which make them influential in relation to texts.

Concluding words: shifting enactments of quality

The approach used in the present study involves an attempt, in line with Mol’s idea, to shift and change the assumed structure of a neoliberal and instrumental approach to assessment and curriculum in early childhood research. Thus, the politics involved in using ANT, as suggested in the present study, is about describing empirical events where actors are allowed to change positions and roles. This in part means resisting (research) attempts to reduce, for example, a preschool setting to an object of neoliberal and standardized discourses of quality. The present study shifts not only categories of teachers, children and texts but also the role of theory and concepts in studies of curriculum texts. Theoretical concepts do many things; they are seductive and powerful as well as eye-opening and emancipating. The concept of discourse is such a powerful and seductive concept in studies of curriculum texts. When thinking with ANT, discourses are studied in terms of effects of relations rather than as starting points of inquiries. The advantage of using (post) ANT in the pursuit of studying and enacting alternative versions of quality is the focus on methodological principles rather than on concepts.

As I have shown in the chapter on previous research, a number of studies have dealt with the creative task of suggesting how to think differently about quality, posing alternatives to instrumental ways of reducing the notion of quality in early childhood. Studies such as that by Jones, Rossholt, Anastasios and Holmes (2016) consider the epistemological and ontological resources of post-humanism. Here, a theoretical shift is needed to explore or enact alternatives. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) suggest the practices of pedagogical documentation as a forum for reflection and democracy. Here, a method is needed to explore or enact alternatives. Elfström Pettersson (2017) points to an agential realist non-representational view of documentation as producing alternative versions of quality. Even here, a theoretical shift is suggested for alternatives to be enacted.

The present study, through the use of ANT, adds to the aim of thinking differently about quality in early childhood education. Paradoxically, ANT does not require any specific kind of work from practitioners for alternative enactments of the concept of quality to be materialized. What are needed, however, are research methodologies that sensitively and carefully learn from the actors in empirical events in preschool practices. In this sense, ANT offers an empirically driven methodology that privileges breakdowns, ambivalence and overlaps over structures, positions and orders. This means that alternative enactments of quality are already constantly materializing and evolving in events
in preschools, which the research papers presented in this thesis aim to exemplify.

Suggestions for future research
Starting from the results of the present study, future studies need to engage in empirically driven studies that direct attention to the way curriculum texts and quality assessments work, or not, in everyday events in education practices. In relation to the present study, it is crucial to ask questions about what quality assessments do, in terms of the responses and relations activated with other entities. In line with the present study, this would mean focusing on the relations through which quality standards work. Moreover, it would focus on the work through which curriculum texts and quality assessments act. This would put less focus on distance and critique, while focusing more on the involvement of researchers and practitioners in a research methodology. In addition, empirical studies on children’s views on and bodily responses to being documented and assessed need more attention, using a post ANT approach to knowledge-production.
Svensk sammanfattning

Denna avhandling handlar om hur den svenska läroplanen för förskolan (Lpfö 98/2016) görs till en aktör i en förskolevardag. Studien använder etnografiska metoder, i form av deltagande observation i en förskola i en förort till Stockholm och intervjuer med pedagoger, pedagogisk utvecklare och förskolechef. Studien använder ett sociomateriellt perspektiv på en förskolepraktik, i form av aktörnätverksteori (ANT). Detta perspektiv innebär i studien att barn, texter, materiella ting och lärare, inför genomförandet av den etnografiska studien, betraktas som potentiellt lika viktiga i att utforma förskolevardagen (Lautour, 2005).

Introduktion


Genom att den första nationella läroplanen för förskolan introducerades 1998 (Lpfö 98/2016) blev förskolan en del av det svenska skolsystemet. Idag är förskolans läroplan ett 18 sidor långt häfte som beskriver de mål som förskolor i Sverige ska sträva mot. Det som särskilt utskiljer den svenska läroplanen från andra läroplaner är dess fokus på verksamheten och förskollärares ansvar. Andra, mer akademiskt inriktade, läroplaner tenderar istället att fokusera på vilka förmågor barn bör ha uppnått vid en viss ålder. Även om den svenska

Förskolans läroplan som aktör


Utifrån denna bakgrund har följande syfte och frågeställningar för studien formulerats: Syftet med studien är att med etnografiska metoder skapa kunskap om hur förskolans läroplan görs till en aktör bland andra aktörer i förskoleverdagen. Syftet är också att undersöka hur en ANT-ansats bidrar till och utvidgar redan förekommande ansatser i forskning kring texter i förskolan.
1. Hur görs den svenska läroplanen för förskolan (Lpfö 98/2016) till en aktör i en förskolevardag?

2. Hur bidrar en ANT-ansats till redan förekommande forskningansatser kring betydelsen av texter i förskolan med särskilt fokus på kritiska ansatser?

Metod och teori

I föreliggande studie har etnografiska metoder använts för att studera hur förskolans läroplan görs till en aktör bland andra aktörer, såsom barn, lärare, leksaker, mattor och scheman. Forskaren har spenderat i genomsnitt två hela dagar i veckan, mellan 9.00 och 15.00, på en förskola i en förort till Stockholm under en period på 10 månader. Forskaren har inte valt ut särskilda aktiviteter att delta i utan har deltagit i alla slags aktiviteter såsom lek på förskole gården, samlingar, utvärderingsmöten, reflektionsmöten, måltider, utflykter samt teaterbesök. Forskarens deltagande har dokumenterats genom fältanteckningar. Dels har fältanteckningar gjorts direkt i anslutning till deltagande i en aktivitet. Dels har fältanteckningar kompletterats och fyllts på med ytterligare detaljer kort efter deltagande i en aktivitet. Forskaren har också initierat och fortsört under studien engagerat förskollärare, i mån av intresse, i informella konversationer kring läroplanens roll i förskolevardagen. I dessa informella konversationer har forskaren delat med sig av preliminära teoretiska analyser, vilket definierats som ”respons-data” (Lenz Taguchi, 2000, s 153) i analysen. I studien har aktörnätverksteori använts som teoretiskt og metodologiskt förhållningssätt (Latour, 1987, 2005). ANT har framförallt använts i termer av metodologiska principer i studien, vilket kan beskrivas som en post-ANT ansats (Gad och Bruun Jensen, 2009). Särskilt viktig har principen om generell symmetri blivit i studien, där materiella och mänskliga aktörer fokuserats som potentiellt lika viktiga i att utforma händelser i en förskola. Även principen om att placera relationer i förgrunden har blivit viktig i studien i det att analysen riktats mot hur enskilda enheter, t ex barn eller leksaker, blir aktörer först när de träder in i relationer med andra enheter. Utöver detta har ANT erbjudit den metodologiska principen att inkludera och använda sammanbrott i förskolevardagen som värdefulla empiriska situationer där relationer och beröenden blir särskilt tydliga. Dessa metodologiska principer har styrt såväl det etnografiska arbetet som det analytiska arbetet samt arbetet med att skriva artiklar och denna kappa text.
Fynd och sammanfattande diskussion

För att svara på den första frågeställningen i avhandlingen som gäller hur den svenska läroplanen blir till en aktör i en förskolevardag, ges exempel på de empiriska situationer som placerats i förgrunden av de tre forskningsartiklarna. Jämförelser har gjorts mellan hur ANT och andra teoretiska och metodologiska förhållningssätt närmar sig dessa situationer analytiskt. För att svara an på den andra frågeställningen om hur ANT bidrar och utvidgar befintliga ansatser till texter i förskolor, har konsekvenser av användandet av olika teorier för förskolepraktiken adresserats i analyserna. Med an ANT ansats visar det sig att de subjektpositioner som erbjuds lärare och barn i tidigare forskningsstudier kommer att skiftas och utvidgas i de exemplifierade situationerna i som redovisas i de tre forskningsartiklarna.

Föreliggande studie bidrar till och utvidgar tidigare studier kring texter i en förskolepraktik genom att fokusera på de relationer genom vilka läroplanen görs till en aktör. Medan tidigare förskolestudier har fokuserat antingen på läroplanen som resurs för tolkning eller som verktyg för kontroll och normalisering, fokuserar föreliggande studie på de potentiellt symmetriska relationerna mellan barn, materiella objekt, lärare och texter i vardagliga situationer i en förskola. En sådan situation är när ett barn bryter upp från den dagliga samlingen med en lapp med sitt namn på i handen, för att undvika att lappen blir placerad på den laminerade bilden på skogen, vilket skulle dirigera barnet till att ingå i skogsaktiviteten (forskningsartikel II). Denna situation skulle, med ett kritiskt perspektiv, kunna analyseras som en styrning av barnet genom lapparna med barnens namn och de laminerade bilderna av olika aktiviteter. Den skulle också kunna analyseras utifrån de val pedagogen gjorde eller inte gjorde i relation till läroplanskrivningarna om barns delaktighet. Om situationen analyseras med ANT, vilket illustreras i avhandlingen, kan ingen av enheterna på förhand urskiljas som mer eller mindre inflytelserik än någon annan. Snarare är det i den specifika situationen som enheterna tillägnar sig egenskaper och kvaliteter med vilka de kan agera. Därigenom illustrerar analysen beroenden, överlappningar och erbjudanden bland enheterna snarare än illustrerar hur en enhet styr eller reglerar en annan.

En annan situation är den vattenläcka som inträffade i startskedet av det etnografiska arbetet (forskningsartikel I). I en studie med något av de vanligtvis förekommande teoretiska perspektiven som används i forskning om texter i förskolan, såsom ett sociokulturellt eller ett social konstruktionistiskt perspektiv, hade vattenläcken definierats som ett hinder för access/tillträde till forskningsfältet (Johansson, 2016; Löfdahl och Folke Fichtelius, 2015). Med ANT blev det möjligt att använda vattenläcken som ett tillfälle att lära mig mer om den förskoleverksamhet som jag skulle studera. När inte deltagande observation alltså blev möjlig under denna tidsperiod valde jag att studera det sammanbrott och den evakueringsprocess som vattenläcken gav upphov till med


I relation till tidigare ANT-studier av utbildningspolicy, bidrar föreliggande studie med ett post-ANT (Law, 2004; Mol, 2010) perspektiv på läroplaner i en pedagogisk praktik. Medan tidiga ANT-studier fokuserar begrepp som mobilisering, konstruktion och översättning, inspirerade av Latour och Woolgar’s Laboratory Life (1986) fokuserar föreliggande studie på ANT som metodologiska principer som beskrivits ovan. Snarare än att förklara eller förstå hur bedömningsystem eller policytexter konstrueras och vinner gehör, fokuserar föreliggande studie på hur läroplanstexter är en bland många aktörer, och
därför skiftar mellan att verka stark och att verka sårbar. Resonemanget ovan illustrerar hur ANT sätter en kritisk analys av läroplanstexter, barn och pedagoger delvis ur spel. Istället bidrar ANT till att producera kunskap om de relationer som läroplanstexter är engagerade i, vilket får konsekvenser för vilka positioner och roller som erbjuds barn och pedagoger i forskningsredogörelser. Utifrån ANT, liksom utifrån andra post humanistiska teorier såsom agentisk realism eller feministisk nymaterialism, anses metoder och teorier vara performativa i bemärkelsen att de aktivt deltar i att utforma den praktik forskaren studerar. Följaktligen bidrar metoder och teorier till att förstärka eller undergräva tendenser i de vardagsdiskurser som cirkuleras i en förskola. Därför blir det centralet att analysera vilka roller och positioner som blir möjliga för lärare och barn att anta, utifrån de metoder och teorier som används i en studie.

Tidigare forskning kring texter i en förskolevardag laborerar med begrepp som subjektspositioner (Vallberg Roth och Månsson, 2011; Johansson, 2016). Om vi analyserar vilka subjektspositioner som erbjuds pedagoger och barn, framstår pedagoger som fångade i ett bedömningspel i relation till både barn och myndigheter (Löfdahl och Pérez Prieto, 2010), samt som avgörande för anpassningar av läroplanen till en förskolekontext. Barn, å andra sidan, framställs som de som blir agerade på av vuxna, samtidigt som deras integritet riskerar att bli kränkt av de ökade dokumentationskraven i förskolor (Löfdahl, 2014). Utöver detta framställs barn som fångade i de normaliserande idealbilder som skapas av dokumentation och bedömning (Vallberg Roth och Månsson, 2011). Texter blir i dessa analyser styrningsverktyg och bärare av neoliberala diskurser om ekonomisk produktivitet.

gör dem inflytelserika i relation till läroplanstexter (forskningsartikel I, II och III).

### Appendices

#### Appendix 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant observations of meetings and interviews, November 2014-August 2015</th>
<th>Number of occasions</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff meetings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,5 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning meetings</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amounts of hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>29.5 hours</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in and observation of planning meetings, staff meetings and everyday work, September 2015-June 2016</th>
<th>Number of occasions</th>
<th>Hours /days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning meetings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation meetings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Everyday work with children and teachers</strong></td>
<td>2 days a week, 6 hours each day</td>
<td>approx. hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amount of hours/days</strong></td>
<td><strong>72 days</strong></td>
<td><strong>28 hours</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Informert samtycke och förfrågan om medverkan till forskning vid Stockholms universitet

Till pedagoger på förskolan X

Studiens syfte

Syftet med studien är förenklat uttryckt att förstå något om hur läroplanen så att säga *blir till* i relationen till er som pedagoger, barn, rum, pedagogiskt material, leksaker, utemiljö och annat. Mina frågor handlar om vad läroplanen som en aktiv aktör ”*gör*” med pedagoger, barn och andra aktörer på förskolan, men lika mycket om vad pedagoger, barn och andra aktörer i förskoleverksamheten ”*gör*” med läroplanen. I min studie kommer både människor och material, såsom texter, bord, stolar, leksaker, stenar och kritor, betraktas som aktörer som påverkar varandra.

Studien kommer att vara en del av min doktorsavhandling som är en sammanläggningsavhandling. Det innebär att jag kommer skriva 3-4 artiklar som ska publiceras i internationella vetenskapliga tidskrifter. Språket för min avhandling är engelska men vissa delar kan komma att skrivas på svenska.

Den övergripande frågan för min avhandling är:

- Hur blir förskolans läroplan till i en praktik av olika aktörer i form av saker, idéer och människor?

När och hur kommer studien genomföras:

Studien är planerad att genomföras under två terminer med start vårterminen 2015 och avslut i slutet av höstterminen 2015. Under några veckor i jan-februari kommer jag att delta i verksamheten ca 4 dagar i veckan för att lära mig mer om verksamheten. Under resten av tiden för studien planerar jag att delta i er verksamhet 1-2 dagar, a’ 2-5 timmar, de flesta veckor men inte alla. Jag går ibland på kurser och deltar i konferens och är därför ibland helt frånvarande en vecka då och då.

Vilket material från er förskola kan komma att analyseras i min avhandling:

- Emilie’s dokumentation (anteckningar, ljudinspelningar och fotografer) från den dagliga verksamheten på förskolan samt från pedagogernas reflektionsmöten och planeringsmöten
• Dokumentation som ni själv gör som ni har lust att lämna ifrån er till min studie
• Transkriptioner av intervjuer och samtal med pedagoger

Sammanhang där delresultat och slutresultat från studien kan komma att offentliggöras:

• I artiklar i min avhandling samt i konferensprésentationer, kapitel till böcker, populärvetenskapliga redovisningar/framställningar och föreläsningar

Vad innebär det som pedagog att vara med i studien:

• Att vara med i en studie innebär en vilja att dela med sig av sitt arbete, sina tankar och erfarenheter och att hantera närvaron av en ytterligare vuxen i verksamheten
• Att förhålla sig till frågor om och medverkan i intervjuer och ytterligare möten där verksamheten diskuteras med forskaren
• Att pedagogernas kommentarer till forskningsanalyser och övrigt material också kan användas som forskningsdata.

Jag, Emilie Moberg, lovar:

• Att förvara det aidentifierade datamateriilet i ett låst skåp för avsedda värdehandlingar på Barn- och ungdomsvetenskapliga institutionen, Stockholms Universitet.
• Att under studien låta pedagogerna på begäran få ta del av de delar av mitt dokumentationsmaterial där de figurerar.
• Att under bearbetningen av materialet inte visa annat än aidentifierat material i forskningssammanhang, dvs. endast för personer i de forskningsgrupper jag tillhör som led av mina handledare samt på forskarkonferenser.4

Uppsägning av kontrakt:

- Om du inte kan eller vill delta i studien så går det när som helst från det att kontraktet undertecknats att bryta kontraktet (ingen anledning behöver uppges).
- Vid uppsägning av kontraktet kommer all datagenerering där du finns med att avslutas.

Den pedagog som undertecknar detta kontrakt samtycker till att (kryssa i ett alternativ):

FULLT TILLSTÅND:

_____ bli intervjuad och dokumenterad med hjälp av ljudupptagning, fotografering samt papper och penna av forskaren

AVBÖJER DELTAGANDE:

_____ inte på något sätt bli dokumenterad eller intervjuad

Undertecknat i Stockholm den 2014 av

Namnförtydligande:

Kontaktuppgifter (gärna telefonnummer och email):


Appendix 3

Informationsamt och förfrågan om medverkan till forskning vid Stockholms universitet

Till föräldrar/vårdfadshavare på förskolan X

Hej!


Syftet med studien är förenklad uttryckt att studera hur förskolans läroplan medverkar i den vardagliga verksamheten. Jag vill undersöka vad läroplanen ”gör” med pedagoger, barn och andra aktörer men också vad pedagoger, barn och andra aktörer i förskoleverksamheten ”gör” med läroplanen.

När och hur ska studien genomföras

Studien är planerad att genomföras under ca 1 termin med start i slutet av vårterminen 2015 och avslut i slutet av höstterminen 2015. I början av perioden kommer jag att delta i verksamheten ca 4 dagar i veckan för att lära mig mer om er verksamhet. Under resten av studien planerar jag att delta i verksamhet 1-2 dagar i veckan. De data som planeras samlas in är anteckningar, fotografier och ljudinspelningar. Jag kommer inte videofilma.

Jag kommer att delta i olika delar av ditt barns förskoleverksamhet, såsom lekstioner, måltider, utomhusverksamhet, projektverksamhet och samlingar. Min närvaro får inte störa verksamheten eller påverka ditt barns delta-gande i förskolans aktiviteter. Det är viktigt för mig att barnen ska känna att de när som helst kan välja att inte bli observerade, fotografierade eller inspelade i en viss situation. Det är mitt ansvar som forskare att vara lyhörd för när ett barn eventuellt inte känner sig bekväm med att bli observerad och dokumenterad av mig. Jag kommer då att avsluta dokumenterandet av detta barn, alternativt hela gruppen, beroende på situationen.

Jag garanterar att inga barn eller vuxna, och inte heller förskolan, kommer att kunna identifieras i de dokumentationer som transkriberas till min forskning, och som kan komma att redovisas i forskningsartiklar eller i presentationer av
min forskning. Detta betyder att även fotografierna kommer att behandlas så att människor och miljöer inte kan kännas igen. Språket i artiklarna är engelska men delar av avhandlingen kan komma att skrivas på svenska.

Min fråga till Dig som vårdnadshavare är om ni godkänner att Ditt barn under pseudonym kan förekomma i text och/eller bild i mitt avhandlingsmaterial, på villkor att jag hanterar materialet på ett professionellt och forskningsetiskt korrekt sätt enligt det kontrakt som följer.

Jag, Emilie Moberg, lovar:

- Att förvara det avidentifierade datamaterilet i ett låst skåp för avsedda värdehandlingar på Barn- och ungdomsvetenskapliga institutionen, Stockholms Universitet.
- Att under bearbetningen av materialet inte visa annat än avidentifierat material i forskningssammanhang, dvs. endast för personer i de forskningsgrupper jag tillhör som ledas av mina handledare samt på forskarkonferenser.

Vad innebär det att Ert barn är med i studien?

- Även om barnen är för unga för att skriftligt ge sitt samtycke till deltagande i studien, så kommer jag berätta för dem om studien samt fråga dem om de vill medverka i studien och respektera deras svar. Det innebär att även om en vårdnadshavare godkänner barnets medverkan i studien, men barnet själv inte vill delta i studien, så kommer barnet inte inkluderas i studien som helhet eller i den specifika situationen.

Uppsägning av samtycke till forskning

- Om det inte längre finns möjlighet, eller Du inte längre vill, att ditt barn ska delta i studien, så går det att när som helst att få detta kontrakt upphävt (utan att ange anledning).
- Vid uppsägning av kontraktet så kommer all datainsamling där Ditt barn finns med att avslutas.
Den vårdnadshavare som undertecknar detta kontrakt samtycker till att (kryssa i ett alternativ):

**FULLT TILLSTÅND:**

_____ mitt barn återfinns i text (under pseudonym) och på aidentifierade bilder i avhandlingsarbetet samt i andra redovisningar inkl. föreläsningar kring detta arbete

**AVBÖJER DELTAGANDE:**

_____ mitt barn inte på något sätt förekommer i textutdrag eller på bilder i avhandlingsarbetet

Mitt barn heter:

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1 Professor Hillevi Lenz Taguchi, Barn- och ungdomsvetenskapliga institutionen, Stockholms universitet, e-post: hillevi.lenz-taguchi@buv.su.se

Professor Eva Forsberg, Institutionen för pedagogik, didaktik och utbildningsstudier, Uppsala universitet, e-post: eva.forsberg@edu.uu.se


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