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***Friluftsliv*: a contribution to equity and democracy in Swedish PE?**

- An analysis of codes in Swedish PE curricula

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Abstract

During the last decade, expanding research investigating school subject Physical Education (PE), indicates a promotion of inequalities regarding which children benefit from PE teaching. Outdoor education and its Scandinavian equivalent *friluftsliv*, is a part of the PE curriculum in many countries and these practices have been claimed to have the potential to contribute to more equity in PE teaching. Through an investigation of how stipulations regarding *friluftsliv* in the national Swedish PE curriculum are transformed and interpreted into 31 local PE syllabus documents, this paper investigates the possibilities for *friluftsliv* to fulfil this potential. In an analysis inspired by educational sociologist Basil Bernstein, I claim that Swedish PE teachers' marginalised interpretation of *friluftsliv* indicates its weak classification when a part of PE. When *friluftsliv* is addressed in PE, the strong dominance of a performance code transforms it into mere sport activities. The results of this study highlight questions regarding PE teachers' interpretation of learning aims and their work with text documents. It also discusses alternatives to implementing *friluftsliv* through PE and the role of teachers in curriculum reforms.

Keywords

Friluftsliv; Physical education; Equity; Classification; Code

Introduction

Outdoor education is a part of Physical Education (PE) in many countries (Brooks 2002, Bunting 1989, Cooper 2000, Zink and Boyes 2006). Besides emphasised values of social development (Beames and Atencio 2008, Quay et al. 2003) and environmental awareness (Thomas 2005, O'Connell et al. 2005), it has been suggested that teaching in outdoor education has a potential to contribute to equity (Paechter 2006). Outdoor education has been claimed to have the capacity to involve all pupils in PE, based as it is on child-centred and democratic values without demands of physical achievement or competition, and that it thereby could contribute to social change (Humberstone 1993). Research in PE indicates the difficulty of attaining a teaching characterised by equity (Evans and Davies 2006a, b). PE teaching has been shown to largely benefit boys and pupils active in the sports movement (Brown 2005, Hunter 2004, Redelius et al. in press). In this paper, this claimed potential of equity is investigated by the analysis of how the Scandinavian outdoor variant of *friluftsliv* is represented in text documents for Swedish PE teaching.

To analyse and discuss the relationship between how *friluftsliv* is expressed in words in the Swedish national PE curriculum and how it is transformed into 31 local PE text documents (syllabi), I use the perspective of educational sociologist Basil Bernstein and his theories of reproduction and change in school. Most importantly, I have taken note of how Bernstein uses codes as well as classification as analytical tools to decide the structure of the levels which he says constitute the relationship between the curriculum and the teaching (Bernstein 2000). Further, I have drawn on Evans and Davies' (2006a,b) work on how social inequalities are reproduced through prevailing codes within PE. There is a discussion of national curriculum issues with regard to outdoor recreation and outdoor education (see e.g. Bunting 1989, Cooper 2000, Williams 1994). However, there seems to be a lack of studies on how the national curricula regarding outdoor teaching practices are being interpreted on a local school level (for examples see Brooks 2002, Zink and Burrows 2008). Studying these issues may throw some light on the position of outdoor education within PE and its claimed possibilities to increase equity in PE.

The concept of *friluftsliv*

There have been several attempts to find a suitable translation for the Scandinavian concept of *friluftsliv*. Outdoor recreation, outdoor education and outdoor life are some of the concepts used but none of them has been seen to be an exact translation (Faarlund 1994, Repp 1996, Sandell 1991). Therefore more and more researchers have recently used the concept of *friluftsliv* even in English texts referring to its specific relation to the Scandinavian tradition, culture, and landscape (see e.g. Backman 2008, Breivik 1989, Henderson and Vikander 2007). Norway has assumed a preferential right of interpretation of the concept, probably due to the extent and tradition of their research in *friluftsliv*. An official definition was given by the Norwegian government more than three decades ago:

Friluftsliv entails living and engaging in physical activity in the open air during leisure time in order to achieve a change of setting and to gain experience of our natural surroundings (KUF 1972, my translation).

Despite the validity of this definition, different researchers and organizations have fervently proclaimed a variety of distinguishing features in *friluftsliv*, thus resulting in some dissonance concerning its value and meaning. These distinctions have mainly concerned where, how and with what purposes *friluftsliv* should be practised (Dahle 2002, Faarlund 1978, Tordsson 1993), matters also discussed in the definition of outdoor education and outdoor recreation (Cousineau 1989, Priest 1986). The development of *friluftsliv* in Sweden is similar to that in Norway, although not with the same high degree of autonomy from sport as in Norway (Schantz and Silvander 2004). The Swedish government has been inspired by the Norwegian definition but also added that *friluftsliv* should be practised ‘...without the demands of competition’ (Swedish Ministry of Culture 1999). The level of discussion concerning the values of *friluftsliv* in Sweden has subsequently intensified (see e.g. Backman 2005, Sandell 2003). To illustrate the difference between *friluftsliv* and outdoor recreation, Henderson argues that *friluftsliv* is ‘outdoor recreation with its

heart within the land and linked to a tradition of being and learning with the land' (Henderson 2001: 32). Based on this research claiming specific values in *friluftsliv* in relation to other outdoor practices, I therefore use the Scandinavian concept in this paper.

***Friluftsliv* and outdoor education within a PE context**

The Swedish National Agency of Education emphasise *friluftsliv* as a significant element within Swedish PE (SNAE 2000) and similar conditions occur in New Zealand, England, parts of Australia and parts of USA regarding outdoor education (Brooks 2002, Bunting 1989, Cooper 2000, Zink and Boyes 2006). However, it seems as if the actual teaching of outdoor practices is limited, interchangeable and that its implementation is surrounded by difficult circumstances (Brown 2006). Davies (1992) and Williams (1994) have questioned whether PE teachers are best suited to teach outdoor education in school given that their main interest is often in physical activity and physical achievements. The focus on technical skills in outdoor education, rather than on holistic, personal and intellectual development, has also been criticized (Bunting 1989, Chapell and Wiggins 1997, Cousineau 1989, Humberstone 1993). A common phenomenon in British schools seems to be the replacement of outdoor education with orienteering (Harris 1999). Zink and Burrows (2008) note the unquestioned assumption that the outdoors is often emphasised as a natural and good learning environment and they claim this attitude to be reproduced by teacher education and thus transferred into the school curriculum. However, as Brown (2006) concludes we still do not know much of what actually is taught within adventure and outdoor education in PE.

In the latest national Swedish evaluation of PE, *friluftsliv* is a limited part of the teaching content. The majority of the pupils express their lack of knowledge in *friluftsliv* (Quennerstedt et al. 2008). Since the abolition of the days that were especially assigned to *friluftsliv* in the curriculum reform of 1994, teaching in *friluftsliv* in Swedish schools seems to have decreased. Instead it appears that the teaching of *friluftsliv* contains more activities of a sports character (Backman 2004). There have been efforts to find explanations for this condition by exploring *friluftsliv* at Swedish PE

teacher education (PETE) (Backman 2008). Teaching practices involving health, motor skills, ergonomics, swimming, dance and *friluftsliv*, all elements emphasised in the national Swedish PE curriculum, actually appear to be marginalised in Swedish PE teaching (Larsson and Redelius 2004, Quennerstedt et al. 2008). It would seem that *friluftsliv* and its international equivalents are important parts of the PE curriculum. Based on the difficulties in the transformation of *friluftsliv* and other practices within PE from the wordings of the curriculum to actual teaching, there is reason to explore what actually occurs during this transformation. To do so, I have gone deeper into Basil Bernstein's theory of pedagogic communication.

Theoretical perspectives

Basil Bernstein questions the educational system's ability to be neutral to the social hierarchy prevailing outside school. He contends that schools and the educational system reproduce social inequalities by the creation of codes within which children have different capacities to orient themselves. By a code he means the regulating principles that create meaning without our being conscious of them. Codes can be reflected in curriculum documents, for example in terms of power relations between categories and by the strength of boundaries separating content. Codes can also be reflected in to what extent certain factors control teaching (Bernstein 1971, Bernstein 2000: xi-24). Educational sociologists John Evans and Brian Davies are inspired by Bernstein in their critical analysis of the school subject PE. They claim that social, democratic and inclusive ideals are being marginalised and replaced by a focus towards talent identification, physical achievement, elitism and perfection (Evans and Davies 2006a: 4-7). Here I try to develop Bernstein's codes as I believe they can contribute to a deeper understanding of how the PE context can influence its content.

Classification and framing

To describe the structure of knowledge and to the ways it can be transformed from teacher to student, Bernstein uses the concepts classification and framing. By classification he refers to 'the degree of boundary maintenance between contents (Bernstein 1971: 49). If the

classification is strong, the content is clearly insulated by distinct boundaries and if the classification is weak these boundaries are more blurred. The classification tells us something about relations of power between categories and in my study, the structure within the first level, the curriculum (Bernstein 2000: 5-11). The concept of framing is used to decide the structure within the second level; the pedagogy. By framing, Bernstein refers to 'the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship' (1975: 89). Within the educational relationship between the teacher and the student, framing refers to who is in control of what can and what cannot be transformed. Bernstein claims that the degree of classification and framing is of significance for the production of knowledge in a society and that this creates the prevailing codes (Bernstein 1971: 49-51).

Codes

On a comprehensive level, Bernstein divides the curriculum into two different types which he claims have their origins in different codes. A curriculum within the collection code is characterised by its contents standing in a closed relationship to each other with distinct boundaries separating them. The specialization existing within the collection code often results in an early development of a loyalty and identity closely related to the subject and in a way of thinking of what separates rather than of what unites. Within the collection code here is a striving to maintain strong and distinct boundaries. The integrated code is characterised by more indistinct and blurred boundaries between contents. According to Bernstein, one of the essential differences between the collection code and the integrated code is also the displacement of power in the educational relationship, from the teacher to the student. (Bernstein 1971: 51-54). Two other codes permeating the educational system in the UK are the competence code and the performance code. These codes have some similarities with the integrated code and the collection code in that they focus on what people have in common (the competence code) and on what separates people (the performance code) (Bernstein 2000: 44-50).

PE research on curriculum studies, classification and codes

The concept curriculum is vital for the work of Bernstein and is also used in this text. Therefore, it should be emphasised that in the Swedish context curriculum refers to the text document, stipulated by the government to manage school activity, while it has a wider meaning also including the teaching practice in Anglosaxian countries (Forsberg 2007). Drawing from Penney's (2006) extensive review, international PE curriculum studies appear to be a relatively well-developed area of research. She emphasises Bernstein's concept of classification and framing as powerful tools for curriculum studies. MacDonald and Glover (1997) suggest that PE-teachers have a strongly classifying attitude towards what can and cannot count as PE-content. When PE-teachers' expertise and values are questioned through curriculum reforms, this usually leads to a stronger opposition and a surveillance of subject boundaries. Swedish PE has been claimed to be characterised by a strong classification (Karlefors 2002) as well as a weak classification (Lundvall and Meckbach 2008). There have also been efforts to discuss Swedish PE in terms of external and internal classification (Kougioumtzis 2006). Evans and Davies claim that the performance code has a dominating position within PE. Even though Bernstein does not pay particular interest to the body in his studies, Evans and Davies suggest that the process of embodiment is of significance to understand the development of codes in the PE-context.

...physical education and health (PEH) curricula are now increasingly dominated by pedagogic modalities expressing body perfection and performance codes. Our use of the term code is drawn explicitly from the work of Bernstein (...) and we use it, as he does, to explore how (...) pedagogic codes and pedagogic modalities in schools are acquired, shape pedagogic consciousness and, in our terms, are 'embodied'. (Evans and Davies 2006b: 207)

Regarding PE, there are similarities between the performance code's predominance over the competence code and what in Sweden can be described as the sports and physical activity discourse's predominance over the learning discourse (Larsson and Redelius 2008, Redelius et al. in press).

On a curriculum level, there are examples of an earlier specification of traditional sports activities being replaced by more interdisciplinary intentions and aims. In parts of Australia, Key Learning Areas (KLA) has been introduced, where Health and Physical Education (HPE) constitutes one such area. Kirk and MacDonald have questioned teachers' possibilities of engaging in the implementation of curriculum reforms and being a part of the production of new and interdisciplinary areas of learning. Based on their position in the reform process, teachers become receivers of already established decisions, a process claimed to be both 'pseudo-participatory and quasi-democratic' (Kirk and MacDonald 2001: 565). Although PE curriculum studies seem to be a relatively well-developed area of research, it has also been claimed that we know very little of what is going on when national PE curricula are interpreted in schools (Penney 2006: 572-573). Obviously, the boundaries surrounding the organisation of PE can be studied from different perspectives and PE contents are likely to be affected by prevailing codes.

The ambition of the present study is to illuminate what happens when a specific aim in the national Swedish PE curriculum is interpreted on a local school level. Focusing on the formulation and the transformation of *friluftsliv* in national and local curriculum documents can perhaps contribute to a deeper knowledge of the consequences of different ways of implementing *friluftsliv* and outdoor practices in a school context. The aim is therefore to analyse the relationship between the representation of *friluftsliv* in the national Swedish PE curriculum and the transformation of *friluftsliv* into local PE syllabi in a selection of Swedish compulsory schools. More specifically, the following questions will be answered and discussed: 1. How is *friluftsliv* formulated in the national Swedish PE curriculum? 2. How is *friluftsliv* transformed into local syllabus documents in some Swedish schools? 3. What can the analysis of the transformation of *friluftsliv* from a national to a local level say about the possibilities for *friluftsliv* to contribute to more of democracy and equity in PE?

Method

The choice of text analysis

The syllabus is the only document where Swedish teachers are obliged to formulate their interpretations of the national curriculum. These documents can therefore be seen as an informative source as to how teachers think about their teaching as regards aims, content and criteria for assessment. Although Hodder (2003) claims that the gap between the author and the reader increases once words are transformed into written text (p. 157), it is my opinion that a document can give a more comprehensive picture of the structure and organisation of subject content, compared to a conversation. However, it is important to remember that a text can give new meanings in different contexts and that ‘there is no “original” or “true” meaning of a text outside specific historical contexts’ (p. 156). The awareness of the multiple possibilities of interpretations of concepts is of importance in the sense that all the authors of the syllabi studied will probably have different understandings of the meaning of *friluftsliv*. From a constructivist point of view (Burr 2003: 2-9), this study will result in many different truths about the Swedish PE teachers’ formulation of their teaching in *friluftsliv*.

The empirical material

The empirical material is divided into two levels. First, I have analysed how *friluftsliv* is expressed on a national curriculum level, i.e. in general national Swedish curricula and in the national PE curricula from 1955, 1957, 1962, 1969, 1980 and 1994. Second, I have analysed how *friluftsliv* is expressed in local PE syllabi from a sample of compulsory schools in Sweden. The syllabi have been collected within the SIH-research programme (SIH is an acronym for *Skola-Idrott-Hälsa*, School-Sport-Health). Within the SIH program children’s and youths’ physical activity, physical ability, health, leisure habits and experience from PE have been studied. The program has involved both quantitative and qualitative empirical collections, carried out in 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2007, mainly from PE teachers and pupils in selected compulsory schools, equally spread over Sweden (Larsson and Redelius 2008, Lundvall and Meckbach 2008).

Sample selection and collection of data

The collection of the local PE syllabi studied in this paper was done after contact with the PE teachers taking part in SIH 2007. Of the 47 compulsory schools taking part in the SIH project in 2007, 31 syllabus documents were sent in by PE teachers. An initial letter to the PE teachers was followed up by reminders via telephone and mail. The majority of the PE syllabi documents were sent in by e-mail. It is possible that the schools who have contributed with their local PE documents to the study are not representative in that they may have got further with their internal curriculum development than the schools not submitting their PE syllabi documents. For this reason, the syllabi in this study can not be considered as representative of a larger sample.

Analysis of the PE syllabi

There are similarities in the acts of analysing texts and analysing interviews, especially regarding the process of finding a way of presenting the material in themes and categories. I have tried to follow Silverman's advice of adopting a clear analytic approach and working with a deep analysis of a limited number of texts, (2003: 347-353). I have also dealt with what Hodder (2003) mentions as the three areas of evaluation. First, the context in which the documents have a similar meaning must be identified. In my study, the context is considered to be the conditions for transforming national aims for *friluftsliv* among Swedish PE teachers. Second, the interpreter must recognise similarities and differences in the textual document, and thirdly, a relevant theory must be applied to discuss the evidence (2003: 167-168). Since the collected PE syllabi were written in Swedish I have translated the quotations presented in this paper.

Friluftsliv in national curriculum documents

To describe the position of *friluftsliv* within the Swedish curriculum an historical retrospect may be warranted. The Swedish name of the school subject PE has varied over the years but here the abbreviation PE will be used consistently. One specific phenomenon in the Swedish school is the so called *friluftsliv* days, days that were specifically assigned to *friluftsliv* for the pupils and the staff of the schools. Previously the number of these days

was regulated in the general national curriculum. I will therefore try to separate stipulations regarding the *friluftsliv* days and *friluftsliv* within PE although, in practice, these two arenas probably often share a common ground.

Friluftsliv on the friluftsliv days

In the general Swedish curriculum of 1955 (Kungliga Skolöverstyrelsen) it is stressed that *friluftsliv* days and time for play should correspond to at least one and a half hours a week or from 10 to 12 full days per year. The aim and content of the *friluftsliv* days are developed further in a proposal for the general curriculum of 1957.

The *friluftsliv* days should give the pupils a valuable change in their school work and a possibility for teachers and students to get to know each other under circumstances partly different from those in the classroom. The *friluftsliv* days are meant to prepare the pupils for a strengthening stay in the forest and to create an interest for a toughening and recreational *friluftsliv*. The aim of the teaching should be to [...] wake the pupils' interest for the beauty of nature and an understanding of the importance of taking care of nature. The *friluftsliv* days make it possible to carry out exercises that cannot be done during a normal PE lesson for practical reasons, for example competitions, orienteering, cross-country skiing, teaching of road safety, protection from fire and accidents. (Skolberedningen 1957: 138, my translation)

The general curricula for the compulsory school of 1962 and 1969 are largely similar regarding *friluftsliv* days. One of the characteristics is the regulation of specified content in terms of activities and the emphasis on the possibilities to integrate teaching in different school subjects. In the curriculum from 1962 it is suggested that the *friluftsliv* days should be practised in the forest and countryside through activities such as swimming, hiking, orienteering, cross-country skiing, and skating (Kungliga Skolöverstyrelsen 1962: 42-43). In addition to this, the curriculum from 1969 suggests activities such as track and field and ball games (Skolöverstyrelsen 1969: 3-10). The specification of the number of

friluftsliv days during the school year and the activities proposed can be seen as an expression of a strong classification. It should be stressed that in the general curriculum, the *friluftsliv* days have never been expressed as a part of the subject PE even though this might have been the case at many schools. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions regarding PE as a subject by analysing the curricular provisions for *friluftsliv* days. In the general curriculum for the compulsory school from 1980, the following is stated:

During a number of days throughout the year (4-8 days), school work should be carried out through *friluftsliv*. The aim of *friluftsliv* is, through active recreation, to give the pupils a change from the usual school-work and opportunities to spend time in nature. [...] The *friluftsliv* days should be spent outdoors, especially devoted to the activities that cannot be taught during a normal lesson. (Skolöverstyrelsen 1980: 47, my translation)

In the general curriculum from 1980 (Skolöverstyrelsen), a loosening of the classification can be discerned, in that the activities are no longer specified. In the curriculum reform of 1994, the regulation of *friluftsliv* days was removed and today it is up to the local school to provide resources for them. In the general curriculum, the regulated number of days devoted to *friluftsliv* has decreased dramatically during the last 50 years. However, it should be emphasised that even today there are not many schools that do not hold any *friluftsliv* days at all (Backman 2004). The content of the *friluftsliv* days in the curriculum has successively loosened up from a relatively high degree of classification.

Friluftsliv within PE

The Swedish PE curriculum from 1955 until today has developed from stipulating specific details regarding teaching content into less specified provisions. In the PE curriculum from 1962 and 1969, the concept of *friluftsliv* did not occur at all. Instead, several outdoor activities such as cross-country skiing, skating, orienteering and swimming were mentioned. It was also stressed that the PE teacher was expected to make use of both *friluftsliv* days and ordinary PE lessons to make the teaching in time-

consuming outdoor activities possible (Kungliga Skolöverstyrelsen 1962: 344-347, Skolöverstyrelsen 1969: 166-169). In the PE curriculum from 1980, one of the aims reads:

Through spending time in the countryside, pupils should gain knowledge in *friluftsliv*, get an understanding of the ecological balance, learn to take responsibility for the countryside and to use it in the right way for recreation and *friluftsliv* (Skolöverstyrelsen 1980: 91, my translation)

In the same curriculum “*Friluftsliv* and orienteering” are mentioned as a single unit and as one of the main elements of PE, leaving the impression that there is no distinct boundary separating these practices. This condition appears to be the case in Swedish (Backman 2004) as well in as British schools (Harris 1999). The knowledge content in *Friluftsliv* and orienteering is expressed as using a map and compass, hiking and doing day-trips in different seasons and learning about environmental protection, the right manner of clothing, safety issues and different techniques when practising *friluftsliv* (Skolöverstyrelsen 1980: 94). In the national Swedish PE curriculum from 1994 (revised in 2000), the structure and character of the subject is set out as follows:

The subject is linked to the well-established cultural traditions in Sweden that involve the enjoyment of nature. Through outdoor activities and experiences, pupils gain awareness, knowledge and experience which can stimulate a continuing interest in outdoor life, nature and environmental issues. The subject also helps to stimulate involvement in the importance of protecting and safeguarding nature and the environment (SNAE 2000).

As shown above, the current Swedish PE curriculum emphasises *friluftsliv* as a cultural value and as a method of increasing pupils’ awareness of the importance of an ecologically sustainable society. In addition to swimming, orienteering, ergonomics, dance and emergency situations connected with water, *friluftsliv* is one of the few elements expressed as an aim of learning

in Swedish PE. After the course is finished the pupils are expected to be able to:

...have a basic knowledge of outdoor life as well as a familiarity with the principles of the Right of Public Access. (year 5) (SNAE 2000)

...be able to plan and carry out a field trip in nature during different seasons of the year. (year 9) (SNAE 2000)

In one of the aims above The Right of Public Access is mentioned. This non-legislated tradition, with its history back in the beginning of the 20th century, can be described as a confidence given to the Swedes, allowing them to make outings in their land and countryside without many detailed restrictions (Sandell 2001). In the current PE curriculum there is no mention of content in terms of activities or methods but instead this is up to the PE teacher to decide. This idea of decentralisation, where PE teachers are given the responsibility to interpret the aims and concepts in the curriculum, has resulted in increased possibilities for collaboration between subjects (Karlefors 2002) but, along with the erasure of the regulation of *friluftsliv* days in the general curriculum, also a decrease in the realised teaching of *friluftsliv* (Backman 2004). The tendency not to specify activities and methods in the national PE curriculum may, on the one hand, be seen as a weakening of the classification of Swedish PE, and on the other, as an opening towards an integrated code. The description of PE as having a strong classification (Karlefors 2002) can perhaps be seen, partly, as an expression of the general idea of PE as being an important and appreciated subject in school, and partly based on its similarities with the activities in the organised sports movement (Larsson and Redelius 2004, Quennerstedt et al. 2008). There are reasons to believe that the PE teachers' interpretation of the concept of *friluftsliv* (Backman 2005) is a decisive issue for the transformation of *friluftsliv* into local PE syllabi. The analysis in terms of degree of classification in this study can perhaps say something about the position of *friluftsliv* within Swedish PE.

***Friluftsliv* in the local PE syllabi**

The relationship between the wordings of the national curriculum and the transformation into local PE syllabi can be viewed from different perspectives. One is to expect that the relationship should be causal and deviations not tolerated. From my perspective 'curriculums do not have the capacity to manage all things but are expressions for compromises and agreed principles in order to reach a desirable development' (Linde 2006: 48, my translation). It is not my intention to decide which of the PE teachers' interpretations I consider most appropriate, but rather I want to call attention to the different interpretations of *friluftsliv* teaching and discuss their educational implications.

The idea of a decentralised responsibility for the interpretation of national aims could be seen in the curriculum reform in 1980 but was more intensified in the reform of 1994. Among PE teachers in Sweden, the PE curriculum's power of impact has been questioned (Annerstedt and Bergendahl 2002: 9). Larsson (2004) claims that this critique must be seen in the perspective of the PE teachers' unfamiliarity with a decentralised management in which the concrete guidelines are few and blurred. The following analysis of the transformation of *friluftsliv* can be regarded as an expression of what Swedish PE teachers regard as valuable in their teaching.

There is a significant variation in the logic of structure among the investigated syllabi. In Tholin's study there were several schools in total lack of a local syllabus (2006: 116). Perhaps some of these schools are to be found among the drop-outs in this study. From a first rough analysis, three different categories appear: the aims of PE; the content of PE; and the criteria for assessment in PE. Each of the analysed syllabi usually consists of one of these three categories. Some of the syllabi are very short and scantily worded, a few to the extent that it is difficult to assess which category to refer them to.

The pupil should:

- be present at least 60 percent of lessons.
- actively participate in lessons.
- be considerate to his/her classmates.
- have suitable PE clothing.

(School nr. 28)

There are also syllabi that are similar to the formulations in the national PE curriculum. In some cases, this similarity is more of an identical copy, a feature also found in other Swedish studies of PE teachers' work with curriculum issues (Larsson 2004). There are several possible explanations for the absence of local and concrete interpretations. One might be that there is a weak tradition among PE teachers in general of formulating their teaching in text documents (Underwood 1983). Another is perhaps a fear of not knowing the limits of the interpretations, i.e. what is allowed and to what extent the aims and criteria can be made concrete in relation to the national PE curriculum. Lacking good answers, many teachers might feel it is safer to keep to the national documents. Perhaps this is also a general attitude among teachers, since the same theme was found in a study of English syllabi in Swedish schools (Tholin 2006: 132).

Activities or learning?

One logic that is common in the syllabi studied is to divide PE into different activities. This logic has also been identified in other studies of PE and has resulted in a discussion of the educational consequences of the sport and physical activity discourse's dominance over the learning-discourse (Hunter 2004, Larsson and Redelius 2008, Redelius et al. in press). In several of the analysed syllabi, *friluftsliv* (or nature related topics) was not mentioned by name, despite its prominent position in the national PE curriculum (SNAE 2000). Here are two examples of an activity structure in PE in which *friluftsliv* has been left out.

The elements included in PE at the x-school are: play and ballgames; dance and movement to music; track and field; fitness training; orienteering; gymnastics; swimming; skating; theory e.g. physiology, ergonomics, CPR.

(School nr. 15)

Syllabus for year 9: fitness, strength and movement; ballgames and teamwork; racket games; gymnastics; movement to music; games; track and field; orienteering; winter sport; swimming; rescue in emergencies; physiology and nutrition; leadership.

(School nr. 10)

The examples above could be seen as an expression of what Evans and Davies call a performance code within PE (2006b: 207). The absence of *friluftsliv* in these examples could have several explanations. One is perhaps that *friluftsliv* is already included in some of the activities mentioned, such as orienteering, winter sports and swimming. It might also be that the space for interpretation of *friluftsliv* is so extensive that it could therefore be left out. This gives reason to discuss, on the one hand, what can be mentioned as *friluftsliv* in a context of PE (see e.g. Backman 2004, Backman 2005), and on the other, the educational consequences of the position of *friluftsliv* within Swedish PE. I will focus more on the latter discussion in this paper. However, there were also attempts to structure the subject according to other kinds of logic than this activity discourse. The formulation of PE from different perspectives below was one of these exceptions.

- Historical perspectives regarding the history and traditions of sport.
- Environmental perspectives are central to PE issues regarding nature, *friluftsliv* and lifestyle.
- International perspectives in terms of games, dances and sports from different countries.
- Ethical perspectives in terms of rules, friendship and respect.

(School nr. 13)

Raising issues regarding learning, as in the above quotations, causes confusion within the dominant sports activity discourse and performance code within Swedish PE. If there is no other rhetoric, learning in PE often

becomes the learning of an activity, traditionally measured in terms of practical skills, sport results, level of physical activity and fitness, a theme also illuminated by Redelius et al. (in press). The above quotations from the organisation of content indicate that *friluftsliv* does not easily fit into the sports activity discourse and performance code. This is probably one reason why the learning dimension in *friluftsliv* becomes even harder for PE teachers to relate to. In the following categories we shall see other ways of addressing *friluftsliv* within Swedish PE.

Friluftsliv=orienteering?

One common phenomenon found in several of the PE syllabi analysed is that, apart from in the national Swedish PE curriculum, *friluftsliv* and orienteering are not separated but mentioned as a single unit. The consequence of this is that *friluftsliv* is not defined in terms of learning, content or criteria for assessment but instead the focus is placed on orienteering itself. In the following example this is expressed in the criteria for grading in the unit called Orienteering and *friluftsliv*.

Pass	With a certain amount of guidance and with the help of a map be able to locate your position in the forest and countryside. Take part in practical and theoretical exercises in orienteering.
Pass with Distinction	Show an understanding of the map and be able to choose the best direction for the terrain. Be able to orienteer without difficulty in partly unknown terrain.
Pass with Special Distinction	Show a good understanding of the principles of maps and of orienteering. Be able to orienteer safely in unknown terrain. (School nr. 3)

One interpretation from the above criteria is that, in a PE context, orienteering is the same as *friluftsliv*, or at least they are hard to separate, a

fact stressed by Harris (1999) in his study of outdoor education in the UK. This further illuminates the difficulties of formulating *friluftsliv* in terms of learning and criteria for assessment in a PE-context. It appears that the Swedish teaching of *friluftsliv* within PE has a relatively low degree of classification as it is possible to be substituted with other teaching content. Judging by PE teachers' detailed conceptual frame, orienteering seems to have a relatively high degree of classification. The example below is from the aims for the Pass grade in orienteering (year 9).

To receive the grade Pass you have to be able to:

- understand the meaning of colour on the map and the most important signs used.
- know the most common concepts used in orienteering.
- know how to hold the map so it corresponds correctly with the ground.
- know the signs on the map for differences in altitude.
- be able to find at least half of the checkpoints in the forest.
- take part in the orienteering exercises on the *friluftsliv* day and do your best.

(School nr. 8)

The lack of progression

One consequence of the lack of a learning dimension within *friluftsliv* is also the lack of formulations regarding progression. This seems to be a general difficulty in PE, but compared to other PE content perhaps even more so in *friluftsliv*. At several schools it is sufficient to have taken part rather than to have reached certain aims in terms of learning. This is exemplified in the following criteria for assessment.

Pass	You should have participated in the <i>friluftsliv</i> days.
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Pass with Distinction	You should have participated in the <i>friluftsliv</i> days.
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Pass with Special Distinction You should have participated in the *friluftsliv* days.

(Schools nr. 16 and nr. 24)

However, there were a few exceptions of schools that try to express progression in the teaching in *friluftsliv*, as in the criteria for assessment below.

Pass You participate in, and prepare for, a country outing.

Pass with Distinction You apply your knowledge of *friluftsliv* and the Right of Public Access.

Pass with Special Distinction You plan and evaluate your country outing.

(School nr. 29)

Progression implies that a certain unit is taught repeatedly in several grades, which is also what generally happens. In a few schools in the study, the elements of PE are organised so they can be taught more intensively during a certain part of the year. Making a distinctive separation in PE content between grades was the exception in my study. This exception can be seen as an effort to deepen the learning perspective rather than allowing the subject to be organised within the activity discourse as mentioned above.

The Right of Public Access and clothes according to weather

Far from all the schools participating in the study have tried to define content in their *friluftsliv* teaching. However, when this occurs, formulations often include The Right of Public Access and the ability to choose appropriate clothing. In the example below both the content and aims of *friluftsliv* are expressed.

Content: clothing, equipment, games, making a fire and using spirit stoves, Right of Public Access.

(School nr. 1)

Aim: The pupil should have knowledge of; The Right of Public Access, clothing for different seasons, the use of *friluftsliv* materials, techniques and equipment for spending the night in nature, some games in nature, something of survival techniques.

(School nr. 5)

The Right of Public Access, which is a unique Swedish phenomenon (Sandell 2001), can be seen as a local and contextual expression which, according to Brooks (2002), is something generally lacking in outdoor teaching. Although only few, I did find some alternatives to speaking of *friluftsliv* in terms of orienteering, The Right of Public Access, equipment and clothing.

When practising *friluftsliv*, we intend to let the pupils get in contact with nature during different seasons. (...) From a perspective of health, the pupils get an opportunity to develop a lasting interest in the forest and in nature.

(School nr. 6)

The pupil should:

- be stimulated to spend more time in the countryside.
- participate in traditional outdoor activities such as skiing, skating and hiking, which are connected to the different seasons and to the local and traditional culture.

(School nr. 4)

The main impression one gets of an analysis of local PE syllabi is the significant variation in the PE teachers' interpretation of *friluftsliv*. This observation connects to the conclusion drawn by Lindensjö and Lundgren (2000) that one of the consequences of decentralisation is a discrepancy of teaching. So, what is the problem if PE teachers make their own interpretations of *friluftsliv* in relation to their local context? Isn't this what professionalism is about? When it is occasionally formulated in terms of learning, *friluftsliv* becomes (roughly speaking); orienteering, The Right of Public Access, and the ability to choose suitable clothes for being outdoors.

Formulations regarding encounters with nature, environmental perspectives and a sustainable development are (almost) never mentioned in the PE syllabi studied. The occurring and non-occurring themes in the analysis indicate a need for a deeper discussion about the boundaries surrounding Swedish PE teachers' space of interpretation.

Conclusions

The classification of categories within a school context can be analysed on different levels. This is made visible when, on the one hand, *friluftsliv*, based on its lack of a developed vocabulary and its interchangeability with other PE practices, can be claimed to have a weak classification in relation to other teaching content in PE (for example orienteering). On the other hand, the marginalised interpretation, and in some cases omission of *friluftsliv* in the syllabi analysed, also tells us something about Swedish PE as a whole. Despite the fact that *friluftsliv* is an obligatory aim in the national PE curriculum it seems to be able to be ignored without this being noticed. For PE in Sweden, it appears as though there is a hidden curriculum working alongside the manifest one. The elements emphasised in the national Swedish PE curriculum (dance, *friluftsliv*, orienteering, swimming, ergonomics and emergency situations connected with water) has a weak classification in the sense that teaching of these elements is marginalised (Lundvall and Meckbach 2008), but when popular sports activities, and their inherent logic from the Swedish sports movement, are allowed to dominate, this contributes to a strong classification for PE in the public awareness. Similarities can be seen to the way Hunter (2004) discusses the relationship between the macro (curriculum and policies) and the micro level (the lived experience) in PE teaching or with Kougioumtzi's (2006) description of Swedish PE as having a weak external classification and a strong internal classification. If PE in Sweden were to have a high degree of classification for real, the teachers would regard the formulations in the curriculum as more of an obligation to fulfil than what now seems to be the case.

The fact that *friluftsliv* becomes orienteering and the ability to choose outdoor clothing and is often replaced by various sport activities can be

seen as a result of the strong influence of the performance code in PE (Evans and Davies 2006b), in Sweden also expressed as a sports and physical activity discourse (Larsson and Redelius 2008, Redelius et al. in press). A similar tendency is displayed by Gard (2006) who claims that the adjustment of dance to the PE context transforms its aesthetic and artistic values into mere physical activity. There is no doubt that several researchers believe in the potential of *friluftsliv* and outdoor education to contribute to more of equity and less emphasis on competition and physical achievements in PE. Sundberg and Öhman (1999) claim that *friluftsliv* could 'represent an alternative movement-culture, characterised by joy of movement, sensibility and cooperation, where the experience of nature is placed in focus' and could thereby be a 'guide for other physical activities in PE' (p. 116, my translation). According to Paechter (2006) 'some outdoor adventure activities (...) may give some possibilities for using PE to encourage more open, communicative and connective body practices and break the stranglehold that gender stereotypes have on the more traditional forms of PE and sport' (p. 203). However, when *friluftsliv* is transformed into sport practices it is doubtful whether one reaches other groups of children than those already active in the voluntary Swedish sports movement, i.e. the children whose voice is already heard in Swedish PE (Larsson and Redelius 2004). One main conclusion of this study is that the contribution of *friluftsliv* depends on the dominant code in within PE. From the results in this study, teaching in *friluftsliv*, investigated here through local PE syllabi, will have only limited possibilities to improve the current condition of enhancement, inclusion and participation in Swedish PE (Bernstein 2000: xx-xxi, Evans and Davies 2006b: 10-11), and thereby contribute to more equity and democracy. In a wider context, this issue is about the reproduction of unequal conditions regarding who benefits from the Swedish school system.

In the face of a new Swedish curriculum reform, I want to highlight some issues mirrored in this study that are in need of further discussion in order to create better conditions for using the equity potential in *friluftsliv* and outdoor teaching practices. One of these issues, discussed previously, is about whether *friluftsliv* is to be a part of PE and whether PE teachers are best suited to teach *friluftsliv* (Chapell and Wiggins 1997, Davies 1992,

Williams 1994). One alternative would be to emphasise *friluftsliv* as a part of the general curriculum, perhaps through interdisciplinary *friluftsliv* days, as was the case previously in Sweden (Kungliga Skolöverstyrelsen 1955, Kungliga Skolöverstyrelsen 1962, Skolöverstyrelsen 1969, Skolöverstyrelsen 1980). Teachers viewing *friluftsliv* from the perspectives of school other than PE would perhaps create a closer relationship to the competence code (Bernstein 2000b: 44-50). Another issue is about how to get teachers involved in, and make them the owners of, curriculum reforms and thereby avoid them being experienced as ‘pseudo-participatory and quasi-democratic’ processes (Kirk and MacDonald 2001: 565). The peripheral position of teachers in the reform process may well be part of the reason for the gap between learning aims in the national Swedish PE curriculum and its local interpretations.

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