

## Abstract

The thesis deals with the development of the secondary school teaching profession during the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century. The emphasis of the study is on the concurrence of three structural processes in this profession: feminization, professionalization and governmental bureaucratization.

The "teachers of the people" found themselves deeply affected by radical economic and social structural changes during the transition from classical industrial capitalism to organized capitalism at the end of the 19th century. These structural changes aggravated the conflicts between the classes and the sexes in society, and the elementary school became an important institution for social and ideological control. But the teachers were not content to be the mindless instruments of the predominant ideology. At an early stage the elementary school and the teachers themselves began to live "a life of their own". Both male and female teachers began to develop strategies in the struggle for power and control over their profession. In other words, a process of professionalization began.

At the same time as the teachers were organized collectively the women's share of the profession increased. The teaching of the lower classes was considered very suitable for unmarried middle-class women, and the cheap female labour was attractive to the politicians. There were risks of clashes between male and female interests, since the profession also attracted young men from the farming and working classes, who saw possibilities of social advancement in this sector of the school system.

The men developed different strategies against their female colleagues. During the whole of the 19th century women were integrated into the professional project. At the turn of the century the men developed a strategy of social closure against women, which meant that these were relegated to a lower level. At the same time the government introduced regulations which were intended to impede women's fast access to the profession. This triggered off an open conflict between the sexes in the profession, since the changes were initiated by male elementary school teachers who were leaders of the professional program as well as leading politicians in the government and the Riksdag.

Key-words: Swedish history, 19th and 20th social history, history of education, history of women, elementary school teachers, female teachers, organized capitalism, feminization, professionalization.