Title of proposal:
Unfolding Processes of Accountability in a Changed Educational Landscape

Authors(s) of proposal including affiliations and email addresses:
Anna Jobér, Malmö University, anna.jober@mah.se

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3 - 5 keywords: accountability, actor-network-theory, education, homework companies

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework:
In recent year test and measurement has gained a strong position in education. PISA results, league tables, etc. has from a neoliberal perspective created a discourse about a school in crisis (Popkewitz, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). At the same time a growing edu-market (Ball, 2012) with a free school market and homework companies has entered the educational landscape. Education has traditionally in Sweden been a state issue, however this has changed dramatically. This has led to a re-territorialisation of educational responsibility (Tröhler, 2009) where e.g. private school are taken for granted and a growing number of so called home work companies providing families help with home works. Following the traces of Popkewitz and Wehlage's (1973) discussion on accountability, this paper briefly describes ongoing research that intend to unfold and disassemble processes of accountability in the intersection between family, education, and the free school market; homework companies.

This paper starts out in the societal desire of a more effective schooling where measurements and testing are used to track knowledge production (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010), i.e. the "enthusiasm for accountability that grows out of the sense of frustration and impatience in accomplishing basic educational goals" (Popkewitz and Wehlage, 1973, p. 48). This turns education into school credentials which in turn enables processes of who to hold accountable (Labaree, 2008). Therefore I claim processes and materialization of accountability are of special interest. In a time when "development of measurable objectives is the sine qua non of accountability" (Popkewitz and Wehlage, 1973, p.49) the notion of accountability serves as "a potent vehicle of expression" (ibid, p. 48) and a vehicle of analyse.

The overarching aim of the ongoing research is therefore to unfold and disassemble processes of accountability in a changing educational landscape in Sweden. More specific, this paper reports on research how accountability is flowing, moving, translated, negotiated and materialised in practises of homework companies.

Following Nespor's (2002) research on homework and Fenwick's (2010b) view on ANT as a possibility of researching education I will use ANT as theoretical and methodological frameworks. Briefly, the main idea with ANT is that ideas, practices and facts are effects of assemblages and webs of relations between (human and non-human) actors (Gorur 2011). ANT does not privilege the human, actors can be both animate and/or inanimate and treats social relations, including power and organization, as network effects. Likewise several researchers, I will treat networks as assemblages of heterogeneous materials such as videos, written curricula, utterances, people, building, reports (Edwards, 2002). In intersections (such as practices of homework companies), or following the construct of Latour (2005) and Fenwick (2011); in *nodes*, it is possible to trace interactions, negotiations, and translations to explore how not only actions, but also power and truths comes into being. ANT therefore offers one way of tracing dynamics of assembling and disassembling, embodiment and

materialising processes, often unmentioned or considered unintentional in education (Fenwick and Edwards, 2012).

Regarding accountability processes, Fenwick and Edwards (2012) has pinpointed the notion in relation to ANT. They claim for example that "ANT concepts help to trace important nuances in these processes, showing how they actually function as messy networks folded into spaces alongside other networks, and how injunctions of accountability are negotiated at different nodes of these networks" (ibid, p.115). In addition, researching humans and non-human simultaneously becomes important in this research since there is a risk that students "internalise these forms of self-regulation through representations of their performance … actors make themselves into calculable subjects (ibid, p.115).

Method:

This paper reports from a larger research project that is in the bud. Up to this point, processes and practices into two threads has been followed: 1) Homework company websites and 2) interviews of four employees at homework companies.

Building upon ANT, website and interviews, non-humans and humans, are treated as active members of networks, transacting themselves, translating ideas and affecting action through relationships. ANT in this research are therefore used both as a theoretical and a methodological approach that not only set the ontological agenda but also leads me to what kind of data to be used.

There are several homework companies in Sweden. These companies provide help to families through their study buddies who meet up with student and help them with for example homework and pre-test training. The families pay approximately 300 SEK (30 EUR) for one hour with a study buddy. The study buddies are often students, some of them teacher training students.

At this point, two websites from the two of the largest homework companies in Sweden has been read through. In addition, four interviews has been undertaken with four employees (so called study buddies) at two major homework companies,

The transcription process is ongoing and the analyse procedure is under development. At the moment, questions from Fenwick's (2010a) earlier research are used when going through the first data: "What kinds of connections are continuing to hold, why, and what else is working to hold them in place? What changes occurred in the process of these connections—and what didn't change?" (ibid, p.131). In addition to these question, based on Gorur (2013), identification of four moments of translations will be used.

Expected outcomes/results

This research is ongoing, however, the first preliminary analysis of websites indicates that the companies do not express any kind of accountability regarding overarching goals or curriculum. Instead, the websites express their own methods, tutoring and goal, stating: "*In summary, we design tuition for each and every student and customize it for the individual student*" [website, company B]. Or they set up help that "*suits the student's needs*" [website, company A]. This indicates that the companies do not place themselves in relation to the curriculum in Sweden. This place the companies alongside not only curriculum and tests but accountability.

The preliminary results of the interviews indicates negotiations and translations. The study buddies says about their employer: "*They don't have the same responsibility …. So honestly speaking … I am a little bit sceptic to this…. There is no law or document that hold them accountable. So the whole situation becomes a little bit risky.*"[Martin, interview]. Another states:

> "*The teacher and the student still have the same responsibility as before. Even though there is an extra chief... just because there is a study coach as well it does not make their responsibility smaller. I am just a bonus. I don't have the full responsibility. It is very safe to feel this way. … I could fail and it wouldn't matter to me….*" [Carl, interview]

The preliminary conclusion indicates an evasive accountability when it comes to homework companies. A growing edu-market has received a strong position in education, however this strong position seems to be a chimera. When looking at actors in the network it becomes clear that accountability flows, moves and becomes evasive, the opposite of the intention with notion accountability. The discourse of a school in crisis which asks for accountability has created a growing edu-market with no accountability.

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