

## Abstract

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TITLE: *Sjukgymnasten – vart tog han vägen? En undersökning av sjukgymnastyrkets maskulinisering och avmaskulinisering 1813–1934.*

ENGLISH TITLE: *The Physiotherapist – What happened to him? A study of the masculinization and de-masculinization of the physiotherapy profession 1813–1934.*

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AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH CENTURY, the physiotherapy profession in Sweden saw the beginnings of a complete gender transformation. In 1934 it changed, from having been a highly esteemed, scientifically ambitious profession, practiced by male upper-class and nobleman-officers, into a low-paid semi-profession on the "backyard" of the medical sciences far from its previous autonomous position, dominated by a female workforce. The changes made in 1934 had all the same purpose – to make men avoid the physiotherapy profession. One governmental investigation from 1929 even recommended that male students should not be allowed to enter the physiotherapy training program.

In trying to explain this "androphobic" dimension or topic in the gender recoding of the physiotherapy profession, this thesis departs from those currents of gender- and professionalization theory which aim to explain the "sex changes" of a profession in terms of feminization and masculinization, in that it calls for a supplementary terminology. In order to adequately explain the gendered history of the physiotherapy profession, it argues, a new term is needed, that of *demasculinization*.

To render the increased inclination of women to embark on a physiotherapy career more understandable, the thesis suggests a sidestep from theories of gender and power that trust an analytical focus on the battle between the sexes to deliver exhaustive explications why and how women are able to enter and act in environments controlled by men and male institutions. Claiming that such theories may lead the analysis of how gender transformations are initiated in the labour market into a dead-end, the thesis guides the discussion and the historical data of the process through an alternative route. The analysis proceeds by way of *the battles for power between men and male hierarchies* rather than via those between men and women.

In the case of physiotherapy, the *homosocial* conflict between physicians and physiotherapists becomes central. The strategies employed by the two sides in this battle are identified as *demasculinizing*, and, the thesis claims, this project of *demasculinizing* becomes both a necessary *precondition* and a *final* for the feminization process.

– en undersökning av sjukgymnastyrkets maskulinisering och avmaskulinisering 1813–1934

KEYWORDS Physiotherapy, Medicine, history, demasculinization, feminization, masculinity, professionalization, strategies, power, Physical Education, Medical Gymnastics.