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Excluding for inclusion?

Policy and categorizing practices in a school for all in Sweden

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Access to public education that provides equal opportunities[i] for all is a democratic right for every person living in Sweden. Schools are obliged to meet the needs of all individuals and provide a suitable and democratically organised education of high quality for everyone. This implies that the institution has to deal with diversity in a very obvious sense, Differences between children in their behaviours, attitudes, intellectual and social skills, physical ability, cleanliness, 'moral character' and so on have been pragmatic issues that have been attended to ever since the public schooling started in the 19th century. However, some pupils have difficulties in adapting to life in school, and schools continuously have to handle dilemmas in this respect. This implies that schools have to develop certain institutional practices in response to such problems in order to prevent school failure and in order to handle various concrete dilemmas. In this process categorization has become a necessity in the process of bringing order to the daily practices. In fact, the activity of classifying and categorizing children is "as old as schools themselves", as Mehan (1993, p. 243) puts it. In this paper I will give a brief historical review of categorizing practices in a school for all in Sweden.

The expansion of schooling and the tension between integration and segregation

In the 19th century, when the compulsory school - folkskola - was introduced in Sweden, as well as in many other countries, pupils from all social strata entered the school. And when "industrialization and compulsory school attendance converged to produce large numbers of students who were difficult to teach in traditional classrooms, the problem of school failure was reframed as two interrelated problems –"inefficient organizations" and "defective students" (Skrtic, 1991, p. 152). In my terminology, this reflects the main tradition of argumentation that is used in these settings: the problems are seen as reflecting either organisational dysfunctions or individual deficiencies. This inflow of new groups of pupils resulted in what was perceived by many as a range of new problems that had to be dealt with (Sandin, 1986). As Sundqvist (1994) puts it, frustrated teachers suggested various strategies for how to bring order to classrooms. 'Defective students' rather than 'inefficient organization' became the dominant account when discussing school failure, and strategies matching this account emerged. These strategies implied various models for segregating pupils, and children who did not fit in were given some kind of special treatment (Trent, 1994; Sundqvist, 1994).

The categories used as accounts reflect the discourse of their time, i.e. some accounts and categories are perceived as valid and legitimate during a certain period. Since an overtly moralising and religious discourse had a strong position in the 19th century in society in general, children with poor performance in school were described by means of categories that referred to shortcomings in their character. Categories such as vicious, lazy, slow, dull, vagrant child, nailbiters, slipshod, immoral and so on were used as accounts of school failure (Börjesson, 1997; Deschenes, Cuban & Tyack, 2001; Trent, 1994; Nordström, 1968).

However, the idea of differentiating pupils within education was not a new phenomenon even at this early stage of mass education. Already within so-called popular teaching organised by the churches in the 17th and 18th centuries such strategies were seen as called for. For example, during the 17th century children were divided into three different groups depending on their ability to read and understand Christian texts (Warne, 1929, p. 33-34). Furthermore, in 1738, Salvius, an editor of an economics journal, debated the motives of rationally sorting out the 'quick-witted' individuals (in Swedish: kvickare ämnena) (p. 128) for enrolment. This was seen

as a more profitable strategy than enrolling all children. Therefore, the 'inclinations' (in Swedish: böjelser) and the natural abilities of the young were examined "so that the amount of semi-educated people, who could cause more harm than benefit in the country, not will be enlarged" (Warne, 1940, p. 348). Thus, the idea of differentiating pupils within educational practices seems to have been an option discussed from the very beginning of mass education in Sweden. The fact that categorization is consequential is also obvious. Children classified as 'poor' or 'unintelligent' when the compulsory school started were marginalized by being offered a very short period of schooling. However, since the term 'poor' could be assigned to most of the pupils attending compulsory school during these early periods, it resulted in a situation in which most pupils went to school for a short time only (Nordström, 1968).

From social segregation to pedagogical differentiation

An ambition in the compulsory school in the second half of 19th century was to homogenize the classes (Nordström, 1968; Ahlström, 1986). One feature of this institutional strategy was to differentiate[ii] the pupils according to their age, and to make their progress to the next grade contingent on their performance. However, a consequence of this latter strategy was that a considerable proportion of the pupils were not allowed to move up to the next grade. The phenomenon of repeating grades - kvarsittning - eventually resulted in children leaving school without having come very far in the curriculum, since one was not allowed to stay in school after fourteen years of age at this time (Nordström 1968; Ahlström , 1986).

This state of affairs resulted in a widespread political dissatisfaction in the late 19th century. From these discussions, the idea of a 'bottom school' - bottenskola - a school for everybody independent of social class, was initiated in Sweden (Sjöstrand, 1970, p. 171). And, as one might expect, this idea of having a 'bottom school', again resulted in discussions about how to differentiate between pupils. Now there is a clearer articulation of a pedagogically motivated differentiation with a focus on pupils who were considered as intellectually less fit for education. It is interesting to note that this somewhat reduced the validity of the category 'poor' as an argument for giving pupils special treatment in school. Rather, the psychological/pedagogical arguments referring to intellectual capacity were foregrounded as primary. This is shown, for instance, in the argumentation provided at the end of the 19th century by SAF (Sveriges Allmänna Folkskollärarförening, in English: Swedish General Elementary-School-teachers' Association) recommending that children, "who, without being really idiotic, are with reference to intellectual capacity so insufficient, that for their spiritual development they need a special treatment", should be placed in so-called special classes (quoted from Nordström, 1968, p. 143). Thus, using arguments referring to 'spiritual development', children were assigned to special classes or remedial-classes, for their own best. This was one type of institutional reasoning used during this period.

Another way of reasoning employed considered differentiation/segregation to be beneficial for all pupils. Thus, the latter argument was given weight in the debate by claiming that children who were assumed to have intellectual deficiencies, had a "restraining influence and were dragging down the teaching and consequently deteriorating the results of the school-work to the detriment of children with a normal intellect" (Nordström, 1968, p. 144). This was an argument used not only in Sweden. For instance, in a study in the USA published in 1904, 9 per cent of all children in school were classified as 'mentally dull'. The question raised concerning these children was whether they should be allowed to interfere with the 'normals' and "remain a hindrance to the 90 or more per cent of normal children of the community?" (Monroe quoted in Trent, 1994, p. 147). Thus, it has often been argued that the "pupils in the pedagogical mainstream" have to be protected "from being 'retarded' by the nonmainstreamers" (Deschenes, Cuban & Tyack, 2001, p. 533). Consequently, 'slow learners' were identified as a group, and the term 'special child' was conceived (Trent, 1994).

Institutional strategies for handling diversity

At the turn of the century, a new phase in the ccategorizing practices used, and institutional strategies developed for handling diversity, can be found in many parts of the world. At about this time, the testing of intellectual capacities of children and their maturity was introduced. The testing movement was grounded in medical and psychological accounts of school readiness and school problems. This strategy also represented a

more standardised and scientific approach to diagnosis. Thus, when, for example, moving a pupil to a remedial class, the decision had to be preceded by a comprehensive testing of the child by a medical expert. Ability testing eventually became the accepted tool for evaluating pupils' capacities to manage school (Mercer, 1973; Sundqvist, 1994).

The institutional strategies now relied on 'objective' and 'scientific' instruments when dealing with issues of differentiation and segregation. The classical illustration of this development of ability testing is when Alfred Binet in 1904 was given the task of constructing a tool by means of which pupils with learning difficulties could be identified. The work on this issue by Binet and his colleagues in Paris resulted in the predecessor of the famous Stanford-Binet intelligence test, which was to have a considerable impact on selection for education all over the world for several decades. The idea behind the test was to predict pupils' success in school, and thereby provide a mechanism for separating pupils, who did not have the capacity to profit from education, from the normal population of school children. Through the use of this tool, schools were assumed to be able to solve what was conceived as one of their most pressing institutional problems. The result was that schooling could go on without taking into account those who were considered not to have the necessary intelligence required for succeeding.

In Sweden, these new methods of selection were developed through Professor Jaederholm's work from 1914 on the issue of "The theory and praxis of measuring intelligence", which was the title of his doctoral dissertation. He introduced and developed further the psychometric method as a scientific tool to be used in Swedish schools with the purpose of measuring intelligence. This testing was carried out by the teachers and the doctors in cooperation. The assessment "in this way became more neutral and true" (Ohlander 1956, s. 30), the proponents argued. Ability testing in many respects can be seen as the beginning of the modern bureaucratic sorting out and categorization of pupils (Marinósson, 1999).

During this period of ability testing, new categories based on the intelligence measurement were introduced and put to work in school. These categories diversified and later included a fine-grained set of concepts, especially for describing the lower end of the scale. Terms such as feeble-minded, slow, ill-balanced, idiot, imbecile, moron, weak, subnormal and many others were used when accounting for children's difficulties. The institutional strategies that matched these categories implied streaming pupils and the organisation of a wide range of special classes.

Towards 'a school for all' – categorizing in the Post War reforms

In the 1940s, the political debate in Sweden again turned to discussing the possibilities of creating 'a school for all', that is, a school for all children irrespective of social class and ability. Rhetorically, the notion of 'a school for all' was built on the ideas of the old bottom school from the turn of the century. The background of the discussion was the political opposition to the social biases in the recruitment to further education. It could easily be seen that children from low-income families and from the rural parts of the country were heavily underrepresented in the grammar school (in Swedish: realskola), as were, of course, the girls (Richardson, 1980). It was argued that this social selection discriminating against these groups was a consequence of a school system where pupils' educational careers were decided on at an early age. In the so-called parallel school system, the pupils were streamed into more academic and vocational lines of study already at the age of 10 or 12, and this implied that for a large part of the population the possibilities of continuing schooling after the mandatory period of 6 or 7 years were low (Eriksson & Jonsson, 1993).

The Swedish comprehensive school - enhetsskolan/grundskolan - was introduced in the 1950s and 1960s, running parallel to the old grammar school system for about two decades. The first national curriculum, Lgr 62, appeared in 1962. This concludes a debate about the possibility of having a school for all children that started already at the beginning of the 19th century when the "1812 year Upbringing Committee" was given directives to examine whether it would be possible to organise such a school in the country (Fredriksson, 1971, p. 27). It is interesting to observe that this idea of having 'a school for all children' again was immediately connected to the necessity of having some strategies for differentiation/segregation. Already in the 1940 investigation of school (SOU 1945:60, p. 11), the following could be read:

> Modern society acknowledges unconditionally every growing's right to a development as far as his educability permits. However, everybody cannot be pushed in the same speed, in the same ways and towards the same goal. Some progress faster, have easier to learn and accomplish their tasks with more power and speed, while others are developing slower, are slow on the uptake and work more heavily and with restraints. Between these groups with higher and lower intelligence is the average group, which decides the normal working speed in every smaller homogeneous teaching department.

Thus, the differences between the individuals were seen as arguments relevant for a differentiation. Still, the idea was to organise classes that were as homogeneous as possible. This idea was valid for both the regular classes and for the special classes. This also implied that differentiation again was argued to be the best for everyone. Further, in the investigation it could be read that the "school is for the sake of the pupils; if their development is successfully promoted through a differentiation, then naturally this ought to be done" (SOU 1945:60, p. 42). This is an interesting, but also somewhat paradoxical, account for differentiation, since it implies that within an integrated school intended for all children, streaming is necessary.

Hence, 'a school for all', as conceived within this post-war project, should include some forms of differentiation/streaming/segregation that were considered necessary and legitimated, and that should work in a compensatory direction. This is also clearly articulated in the first national curriculum for the comprehensive school, Lgr 62. In this document, eight types of special classes were described as institutional strategies to match the needs of particular groups of pupils:

- *Remedial class* (hjälpklass) was intended for intellectually retarded pupils, who were incapable of successfully participating in the regular teaching. The teaching recommended should be characterised by "simplicity and clarity" (p. 64). Tools for selection of pupils to this type of class were different kinds of tests, for example intelligence tests.
- *Special class for maladjusted children* (observationsklass) was intended for children with normal intelligence, but who showed the kinds of psychological characteristics that it would be impossible for them to be instructed in a regular class. The purpose of the teaching in this type of class was to offer instruction that would facilitate social adaptation of these pupils. The selection of pupils was made on the basis of a medical/psychological assessment especially "intended for pupils with difficulties in adapting" (p. 62). When the pupils displayed permanent improvement in their conduct, they should be transferred to a regular class.
- *Class for children with impaired hearing* (hörselklass) was intended for children with normal intelligence but with impaired hearing. The pupils trained their hearing, practised lip-reading and the use of technical aids. If the pupil's hearing improved, he/she was expected to return to a regular class.
- *Class for students with visual impairments* (synklass). This type of class was intended for pupils with normal intelligence but who were visually handicapped. The pupils were offered regular teaching except for the use of specific pedagogical and technical aids.
- *Remedial reading class* (läsklass) was intended for children of normal intelligence who had pronounced difficulties in reading and writing. The task of the teaching was to "remedy the individuals' reading and writing difficulties" (p. 67). The curriculum described these children in the following manner: they "often display nervous symptoms, are anxious and lack in concentration" (p. 67). When selecting pupils for these classes, tests of reading and writing skills as well as intelligence tests were used.
- *Open-air and health class* (frilufts- och hälsoklass) was for children with weak health. It was especially intended for children suffering from tuberculosis.
- *School readiness class (*skolmognadsklass) was intended for pupils who, at the age of seven, were found not to be mature enough for school. The pedagogy aimed at developing motor, linguistic and social skills. After one to three years in such a class, the pupils were supposed to return to a regular class.
- *Class for children with cerebral palsy* (CP-klass). This type of class was intended for children with cerebral palsy irrespective of whether they had normal intelligence or some kind of intellectual handicap. The teaching recommended in the curriculum was similar to the one in the remedial class (Lgr 62, pp. 64-68).

As can be seen, the idea of a comprehensive school for all children was not seen as conflicting with strategies that implied differentiation on pedagogical grounds. Intellectual capacity seems to have been the most common category judged relevant for making such decisions on how to organise schooling. Intelligence tests continued

to be used when carrying out the task of matching the pupils to a type of education that was seen as relevant for them. This was a necessity for fulfilling the goals in the curricula. For instance, in Lgr 69 it was argued that one condition for an education with satisfactory results was to individualize, and the demands on the pupils should be formulated on the basis of their capacity. Their capacity should be established through an assessment of the pupils' physical as well as intellectual abilities and, following this procedure, their schooling should be arranged accordingly (Lgr 69, p. 62, 76). This implies that the tendency to localise the difficulties within the pupil remained a prominent way of reasoning also within the newly instituted comprehensive school.

Thus, the social language of this time, when accounting for failure in school, predominantly referred to constitutional factors, and categories such as educationally difficult, dullards and so on were used. Gradually, however, social factors also began to be taken into account, for example in the second curriculum for the comprehensive school, Lgr 69. Categories such as aggressiveness, disorderly behaviour, concentration difficulties, immaturity, truancy, shoplifting, and rejected children now came to play a prominent role.

Consequently, the arguments used for organising an education for all were based on the idea of meeting the individual pupil's needs, which, in concrete terms, implied developing institutional strategies for differentiating pupils. This is another interesting paradox in this context of creating 'a school for all': integration will be achieved through differentiating pupils into homogeneous special classes that should work in a compensatory manner.

The consequences of differentiation/segregation

One interesting point of the consequences of differentiation in the comprehensive school is visible if one examines the distribution of resources to special classes (in SOU 1974:53, pp. 139-140). In the 1970s it was found that classes intended for pupils with intellectual disabilities and maladjusted children totally dominated the resources available for special needs education. The resources allocated to pupils with physical handicaps, hearing impairments or visual handicaps accounted for only two per cent of the total resources available for special education.

An interesting feature of these discussions is, of course, to what extent the strategy of having special classes could be shown to result in improvements in educational success in some respect. This issue was addressed in some studies. Johnson (1962) and Österling (1967), for example, showed that for 'mentally handicapped children', there was no evidence that those enrolled in special classes performed any better than children remaining in regular classes. It is, Johnson claims,

> indeed paradoxical that mentally handicapped children having teachers especially trained, having more money (per capita) spent on their education, and being enrolled in classes with fewer children and a program designed to provide for their unique needs, should be accomplishing the objectives of their education at the same or at a lower level than similar mentally handicapped children who have not had these advantages and have been forced to remain in the regular grades (1962, p. 66).

Emanuelsson (1976) examined pupil dropout during compulsory schooling during the period 1964-1968. He found that more than 50 per cent of those who dropped out had been pupils in a special class. In addition, he found that among these dropouts, who had been placed in special classes, there were clear differences between girls and boys. The girls had usually been in remedial classes or received individual special teaching during their schooling, whereas the boys had been in school readiness classes, remedial reading classes or in classes for maladjusted. Another interesting result shown in this study, was that a placement in a special class usually was permanent. Consequently, when pupils were placed in a special class of any kind, they tended to stay there throughout their school years. Very few returned to regular classes. They simply left school as 'educated special pupils', as Emanuelsson (1986, p. 146) puts it, rather than as regular school graduates. This is also an interesting, although paradoxical, consequence of the differentiation practices in the Swedish schools; the compensatory strategies seem to have been "slight and probably not particularly meaningful" (Johnson, 1962, p. 66).

The institutional strategies deployed are interesting from a gender perspective as well. A report from The Swedish Statistical Department (SCB 1974:5, p. 28) shows that in the mid 20th century, 2/3 of all pupils in

special classes were boys. Furthermore, in the case of special classes for maladjusted children, the ratio of boys to girls was even higher: as many as 90 per cent of the pupils were boys (see also Ahlström, 1986, p. 52). Another Swedish researcher, Husén (1969), uses a class perspective in an empirical analysis of pupils who attended Grade 3 in elementary school in Malmö in 1938. The purpose of the study was to identify certain "formative factors in childhood" (p. 23), and to document what these imply for the pupil's future career in life. Husén found that "every fifth student from social class IV [non-skilled workers on social welfare, according to the definition used in this study] has spent some part of his primary education in a special school" (Husén, 1969, p. 88). In social class I [employers and managers with higher education] only 3 per cent of the pupils had attended a special class.

Studies of this kind started a new, rather intense, debate in Sweden concerning issues surrounding 'a school for all' and equal access to education. In addition, a dramatic increase in the number of pupils in special needs education was reported during the early years of the comprehensive school system. For example, in 1972, about 40 per cent of the pupils in school came into contact with some kind of special teaching (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000, p. 65).

This resulted in a new curriculum again heavily emphasising equality of opportunity in the sense that all pupils "independent of gender, geographical residence and social and economical conditions" should "have equal access to education in the compulsory school" (Lgr 80, p. 14, my translation). In this curriculum, the descriptions of disabilities and school difficulties were less specified, and special classes were not mentioned at all. Instead, it was argued that in "the working unit" (Lgr 80, p. 54) problems of different kinds should be solved. The individualizing of teaching according to this curriculum should be achieved "in line with the pupils' interests" (p. 50, my translation). The pupils were, irrespective of ability or capacity, intended to work together.

However, this renewed policy of having 'a school for all' was once again complemented with ideas that implied assigning students to "special teaching groups" when this was deemed necessary. The curriculum prescribed that if pupils had extensive difficulties - in the form of "intellectual or physical handicaps, emotional or social disorders" (p. 55) - some compensatory strategies were recommended. These included, for example:

- placement in a 'special teaching group' (särskild undervisningsgrupp),
- placement in a Pastoral Care center (skoldaghem) or
- that the pupil be given an adjusted line of study (anpassad studiegång) (p. 55).

The local school itself had to decide what kinds of problems or difficulties should be considered relevant for placing pupils in the special programs suggested.

In the next curriculum, Lpo 94, this principle of decentralisation of responsibilities and strategies for how to handle diversity is even more obvious. Here, no strategies or specific disabilities are mentioned. Instead, in line with the overarching principle of having a 'goal and result-oriented school', issues of diversity have to be addressed at the local level. When it comes to the individualising of teaching, this is expressed as being the concern of the teachers in their attempts to meet "every individual pupil's needs, abilities, experiences and thinking." Teachers are also obliged to "stimulate, instruct and give special support to pupils with difficulties" (Lpo 94, p. 14, my translation).

Arguments for segregating and integrating in the Post War era - the neuropsychiatric discourse enters the stage

In the 1950s, a new medical diagnosis, MBD - Minimal Brain Damage - was introduced. It was to have a growing impact on the interpretations of learning difficulties. The use of this diagnosis spread, and in the 1970s, the concept of MBD (by then, the acronym had been redefined to refer to Minimal Brain Dysfunction) served as an accepted and well-established diagnosis when accounting for school difficulties in Sweden as well as in many other countries, for example, in the USA (Gustavsson, 1993; Hagberg, 1975; Rydelius, 1999).

However, it was not long before criticism of the concept of MBD began to be heard in various parts of the world. For example, a Scottish doctor of neurology early on claimed that "'[m]inimal brain damage' is not a diagnosis; it is an escape from making one" (Ingram, 1973, p. 527). Another critique, which became decisive for the future of the diagnosis of MBD, was offered in a German study in the late 1980s. In this review of research findings in the area, it was forcefully argued that there was no homogeneity in terms of symptoms among the children classified in this manner (Schmidt et al., 1987).

The German report, and the discussion that followed, led to a change in terminology as well as in the diagnosis itself in many parts of the world. The diagnosis was now held to be symptomatic. In Sweden, the term Damp (Dysfucntion in attention, motorfunction and perception) was introduced (Gillberg, 1991), and in the US, ADHD (Attention, Deficit, Hyperactivity, Disorder) was adopted. In the UK, HKD (HyperKinetic Disorder) came to be widely used.

At present, ADHD has become a worldwide and predominant disorder, estimated to affect 5 to 10% of children and 4% of adults (Faraone et al., 2003; Holmberg, 2009). The relative proportion of boys and girls is four to one, that is, it is four times more boys who receive the diagnosis (Kopp, 2010; Velasques, 2012). The rapid increase of the diagnosis has caused an intense debate. The discussion is primarily about causality between experts from medical and social sciences. In Sweden, for example, massive criticism has been levelled by a sociological researcher, Kärfve (2000), who argues that there is not enough research evidence for using the Damp/ADHD diagnosis. In addition, Kärfve claims that by accounting for school failure by means of a biomedical diagnosis, the focus is placed on the children themselves instead of considering social and environmental conditions or an inefficient organisation. Elinder (1997), a medical expert, argues that the diagnosis is a cultural handicap rather than a medical one. Kihlbom (2000) claims that when using this particular diagnosis, family or environmental factors are hidden from view, and the medical perspective gains primacy over other perspectives that are relevant for understanding children's problems and that have to do with their social conditions. In addition, the growing number of children who are claimed to have neuropsychiatric handicaps could be interpreted as a sign of an increasing acceptance of the idea of diagnosing and sorting children according to their alleged abilities (Börjesson, 1997).

At present, we have a 'goal and result-oriented school' and decentralisation and deregulation became the buzzwords of the day. This implies that the responsibilities for running schools, for allocating resources, and for dealing with issues that relate to pupils in need of support, rest with the local school authorities, the schools and their leadership, in particular with the principal. It is at the local level that the solutions have to be found, and where the knowledge about the needs of pupils has to be present in the day-to-day practices.

From 2011 we have a new Education Act, stating the need for inclusion. Categories from earlier curricula reappear used as examples of difficulties that may lead to school failure, and there are no indications of suitable pedagogical strategies to handle them (since these are now up to local authorities to formulate and implement). The groups that are mentioned as being more vulnerable than others are pupils:

- with learning disabilities
- with functional impairments
- with neuropsychiatric impairments
- who have difficulties adapting to the forms of teaching
- from socially underprivileged and other at-risk environments
- who are exposed to maltreatment
- who are violent and aggressive
- who are silent and passive
- who play truant (SOU 2002:121, p. 337).

Especially, it is observable from the mid-20th century and onwards that the medical/psychological discourse, which has always played a part when discussing and handling diversity in school, reappears in a new form (Mehan, in press).

Being assigned with a diagnosis implies often being placed in a special teaching group organised for children having a certain kind of diagnosis. Groups for pupils having ADHD or Aspergers, respectively, can be offered.

However, in Sweden we do not do statistics of these arrangements, nor on the amount of pupils being assigned with neuropsychiatric diagnoses or other disabilities, which implies that these activities are hidden from being inspected. However, the Swedish national agency reports that the amount of segregating solutions for children being in need for special support has increased (Skolverket, 2008; 2009). Every municipality has in average four such smaller groups according to these reports. In the official statistics we can read about special schools for deaf and hearing impairments (in total 511 pupils). We can also read about schools for pupils with learning disabilities (mentally retarded?) (in total about 12 115 pupils in primary and secondary).

Official statistics from the Swedish school

In Sweden we have, according the Education Act, compulsory school attendance from age 7-16. In 2012, 885 000 pupils are expected to attend to school – 88% in the municipal school and 12% in free-schools. We also have a so called "same-skola", schools for Sami and 141 pupils attended to this school in 2011.

81% of the Swedish children attend to day-care centers (Utbildningsstatistisk årsbok, 2012).

Table 1: Numbers of pupils enrolled in preschool and compulsory school

School sector	2001	2004	2007	2010
Pre-school class (voluntary)		89.324	93.393	100.283 (96%)
Primary (7-9 years)	724 483	650 432	593.952	583.291
Secondary(10-13 year)	334 639	373 292	368.397	303.196
School for pupils with learning difficulties (mentally retarded; särskolan) (7-16)	14 261	14 715	13 884	12115
Total	1 073 383	1 127 763	1 069 626	998 885

Conclusions

References

[i] A key term in the Swedish political debate and legislation used in this context is 'likvärdig' education. This expression, which is very difficult to translate, is itself an illustration of a highly specific institutional language originating in Swedish educational debates over the past few decades. The point is that children should not be given the same education or training, but rather that the instructional approaches and learning practices should be allowed to vary so as to enable each child to find her or his way to success.

[ii] In the political debate on education the term differentiation, as opposed to segregation, came into use in the 20th century. The term differentiation, when used in political discussions and in research on education, referred to strategies for separating pupils that were motivated on educational criteria such as age, intelligence, interests, etceteras. From an analytical perspective differentiation, for instance into special classes of various kinds, of course, can be seen as a form of segregation. The term segregation eventually came to have negative connotations and was no longer used in educational contexts. However, here I use both the terms with roughly the same meaning.