

EQUITY IN EDUCATION THEMATIC REVIEW

COUNTRY ANALYTICAL REPORT

SWEDEN

Ministry of Education and Science of Sweden

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EQUITY IN EDUCATION: COUNTRY ANALYTICAL REPORT – SWEDEN

**Ministry of Education and Science
Sweden**

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SECTION I: CONTEXT

Chapter 1: Sweden's context and current equity situation

History of the Swedish welfare state:

1. During the 1930s, Sweden began to build up what the then prime minister, Per Albin Hansson, called 'folkhemmet' or 'the home of the people'. Its vision was to lift Sweden out of poverty once and for all, and to build a society where all citizens, regardless of gender, class and social origins, would be guaranteed basic economic security. The Swedish 'folkhemmet' would not be dependent on charity, but instead would be financed by a tax system in which the well-to-do would bear the main economic burden.
2. From the early 1930s, the Social Democrats ruled without interruption for more than 40 years. It was mainly during the 1950s and 1960s, a period of unparalleled economic growth in Sweden, that the world's most extensive tax-financed social welfare system was built up. What characterizes the Swedish system is that the public sector has taken much of the responsibility for its citizens' economic security that has otherwise traditionally rested with the family.

The nature of the Swedish welfare state:

3. As a Nordic country, Sweden has a tradition of placing great emphasis on problems concerning equity. Generally, the Swedish view has been that equity is seen as 'equality of social output'. Social inequalities in income and in access to other important resources (such as education) should be as low as possible (known as 'the efficiency loss' as pointed out by e.g. Rawls). And furthermore, there should ideally be no correlation between social inequalities and variables such as gender, socio-economic background and immigrant status. In order to achieve this, Swedish policy has been a mix of other equality aspects such as 'equality of access or opportunity' and 'equality of treatment'. Therefore the strategy to achieve equality has been more focused on changing processes and initial differences in resources, and less formalistic and focused on juridical means than in e.g. the USA (Lewis and Åström, 1992).
4. Sweden is a typical case of what Esping-Andersen (1990) has categorized as a Social democratic (as opposed to a Conservative or Liberal) welfare state. Esping-Andersen's regime typology is based on the quality of social rights as measured by decommodification (eliminating the dependence of the market), the pattern of stratification resulting from welfare state policies, and the nature of the state-market nexus. Briefly, the social democratic regime is typified by universal benefits and services covering the entire population, a weakening of the influence of the market in distribution, and a strong commitment to full employment. Esping-Andersen also argues that each welfare state model is associated with a distinct labour market trajectory for women. Female employment levels would be expected to differ across regime types, with the highest levels of female employment in social democratic countries (in which demand is driven by a large public sector and supply by extensive service provision). And this is actually the case.
5. The health insurance system guarantees all inhabitants virtually free (besides some basic fees) healthcare and medicines. Care of the elderly, too, is almost entirely financed by the public sector. For the elderly there is a basic state old-age pension as well as an income-based supplementary pension. Sweden

also has publicly financed systems of housing allowances, unemployment benefits, sick pay, child allowances, parental insurance and social assistance.

6. In Sweden, the number of poor single parents is still low which probably has to do with the percentage of gainfully employed persons in this group being relatively high (Båvner 2001). Taxes and transfers are particularly effective when it comes to reducing poverty among children and most effective regarding the children of single parents (ibid). Families where either one or both parents are foreign-born make up a large proportion of those facing financial difficulties. The reason for this is that they are often poorly established on the labour market. (SOU 2001:79)

7. The wide social security safety-net also covers immigrants who have access at an early stage to a basic level of protection and afterwards enjoy the same rights to the social insurance system as Swedish citizens. Integration into the labour market has been rather slow, however, especially since the economic crisis of the early 1990s.

Recent trends:

8. In recent years, Sweden's very extensive welfare system has been sternly put to the test. Not so much by arguments in principle but by practical obstacles (even if there could be a principle-driven agenda behind the practical arguments). Equity has been set in contrast to efficiency. However, the principle of a highly equal society seems to still enjoy a high level of support in Sweden (Svallfors, 1996).

9. Sweden fell into a deep recession (the deepest since the 1930s) in the early 1990s. Unemployment went through the roof and the budget deficit was out of control. This forced a dramatic rethink in public spending. The latter stages of the 1990s saw a recovery, but unemployment is still inordinately high in terms of what Sweden is used to (5.5 per cent in August 2004).

10. Income inequality has no doubt increased in Sweden over the last decade (from a very low level), mostly due to the fact that those with high incomes have done better than mid-income earners. There has not been a substantial increase in poverty over the last decade (SOU 2001:79). Some groups seem to have become worse-off, especially single mothers, young people and newly arrived immigrants (SOU 2001:79). Establishing oneself on the labour market has obviously become more difficult for the latter two groups (Ds 2002:30).

Chapter 2: The Swedish education system

11. The Swedish state school system is made up of compulsory and non-compulsory schooling. Compulsory schooling includes regular compulsory school, Sami school, special schools for pupils with impaired hearing, and education for pupils with learning disabilities. Non-compulsory schooling includes the pre-school class, upper secondary school, upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, municipal adult education, and education for adults with learning disabilities. All education throughout the state school system is free. There is usually no charge to students or their parents for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport.

The Swedish Education Act

12. According to the Swedish Education Act, all children and young people shall have equal access to education. All children shall enjoy this right, regardless of gender, where they live, or social or economic factors. The Education Act states that the education shall 'provide the pupils with knowledge

and, in co-operation with the home, promote their harmonious development into responsible human beings and members of the community.’ Consideration shall also be given to students with special needs. The Education Act also extends the right of education to adults. This can be provided through municipally run adult education (Komvux), or in education for adults with learning disabilities (Särvux).

Responsibility and governance

13. The curriculum as well as national objectives and guidelines for the state education system are laid down by Swedish Riksdag and Government. The state budget provides municipalities with a sum of money to carry out the various municipal activities. However, most of the municipalities’ income comes from local taxes.

14. Within the objectives and framework established by the Government and Swedish Riksdag, the individual municipality may determine how its schools are to be run. A local school plan describing the funding, organization, development and evaluation of school activities shall be adopted. Using the approved curriculum, national objectives and the local school plan, the school principal of each school draws up a local work plan. This shall be done in consultation with the school’s teaching staff and other personnel.

15. The National Agency for Education shall evaluate, follow up and supervise the public school system in Sweden. Every year, the National Agency for Education presents a current overview of the school system to the Government and the Swedish Riksdag. This forms the basis of a national development plan for schools. The National Agency for Education has a supervisory role to ensure that the provisions of the Education Act are being complied with and that the rights of the individual student are respected.

Childcare:

16. Swedish child-care has two aims. One is to support and encourage children’s development and learning and help them grow up under conditions that are conducive to their well-being and the other is to make it possible for parents to combine parenthood with employment or studies. This dual-purpose approach was officially laid down in the early 1970s with the launching of a large-scale development program for Swedish childcare. Along with the parental insurance and child benefit systems, childcare has been a cornerstone of Swedish family welfare policy while at the same time having an explicitly educational orientation. In recent years, the educational policy aspects of childcare have come increasingly to the fore and in 1996 responsibility for public child-care was transferred to the Ministry of Education and Science.

17. The pre-school (förskola) cares for children while their parents are working or studying or if the children have special needs of their own. Pre-schools are open all year round and daily opening times vary to fit in with parents’ working hours. In 2002, 77 per cent of all children aged 1-6 attended pre-school. Children are generally divided into groups of between 15 and 20. As a rule, three employees - pre-school teachers and day-care attendants - are allocated to each group. The average pre-school comprises three such groups.

18. Universal pre-school for 4- and 5-year olds was introduced on 1st January 2003. The reform implies that all children should be offered a place in pre-school as of the autumn term in the year they become four. Universal pre-school is free of charge and entitles children to at least 525 hours of pre-school a year. In the same time another reform implied that all children between the ages of 1-5 whose parents were unemployed or on parental leave also should have the right to pre-school activities.

19. The government has instructed the National Agency for Education to monitor the reform on universal pre-school, pre-school for children of the unemployed or those on parental leave and the

maximum fee system (around 120 € for one child per month, and 80€ for a second child) for pre-school education and school-age child care.

Pre-school class:

20. Municipalities are obliged to provide a place in a pre-school class for all children starting in the autumn term of the year the child turns six. The pre-school class programme shall comprise a minimum of 525 hours per year and stimulate the learning and development of each child, as well as lay the foundations for continued schooling. How the pre-school class is arranged may differ between municipalities. Most often, it is organized and located in connection to a compulsory school.

Compulsory education:

21. Included in compulsory schooling are the regular compulsory school, Sami school, special school, and education for pupils with learning disabilities. The 9-year compulsory school education is for all children between the ages of 7-16 years. Upon the request of the parents, a child may begin school one year earlier, at the age of 6 and thus leave at the age of 15.

22. Sami children can receive education in Sami school that covers grades 1-6. This schooling corresponds to the first 6 years of compulsory school. Special schools offer a 10-year programme for the deaf and hard of hearing. Programmes for pupils with learning disabilities include compulsory school and training school for pupils with severe learning disabilities.

23. In general the same regulations apply to municipal and independent schools; they are funded the same way (by the municipal budget) and are governed by the same regulations, curricula and syllabi.

Upper secondary education

24. Almost all compulsory school students continue on directly to upper secondary school and the majority of these complete their upper secondary education in 3 years. Upper secondary education is divided into 17 national 3-year programmes. All of the programmes shall offer a broad general education and basic eligibility to continue studies at the post-secondary level. Alongside the national programmes, there are also a number of specially designed and individual study programmes.

25. The aim of the individual programme is to help pupils who are not eligible to apply to a national or specially designed programme. The individual programme is based on pupils' needs and can vary greatly both in terms of length and content. Each pupil has an individual study plan.

26. A municipality has the right to establish an individual programme to which pupils may apply (PRIV). The aim of this alternative is to enable a pupil to start education on national courses in a national programme at the same time as having the opportunity to study one or more of the subjects from the compulsory school where necessary. Having done this a pupil can then be admitted to a national or a specially designed programme. The pupil is then credited with the courses completed in the individual programme.

27. The individual programme can also be customized to incorporate different content for young persons who have recently arrived in Sweden e.g. special introductory courses in Swedish as a second language and social studies. A pupil on the individual programme can also combine employment as part of vocational education, with studies of certain subjects at upper secondary school.

Adult education:

28. A person has the right to begin upper secondary education in a regular upper secondary school up until the year s/he turns 20. After that, there are different types of municipally run adult education programmes. Among these are municipal adult education (Komvux) and education for adults with learning disabilities (Särvux). Komvux and Särvux form basic education, corresponding to compulsory school and programmes for pupils with learning disabilities, respectively, and non-compulsory education, corresponding to regular upper secondary and upper secondary courses for pupils with learning disabilities, respectively.

29. Komvux also offers continuing education programmes that give specialized skills in a particular occupational field. Companies from the private sector also provide educational programmes.

30. The Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning serves as a complement to municipal adult programmes for people who are unable to study in the town or community where they live. Part of the programme is by distance, in addition to students making regular visits to the school for teacher-directed instruction.

31. Swedish for immigrants (SFI) is designed to provide newcomers with knowledge of the Swedish language and Swedish society. Municipalities have an obligation to offer SFI, free of charge, to new adult immigrants. SFI programmes may be organized in different ways depending on the municipality.

32. A very large part of the Swedish population participates in liberal adult education each year and this is an important component in lifelong learning. The goal of liberal adult education is to strengthen opportunities for people to influence their living conditions, contribute to creating involvement in order to participate in the development of society, as well as to broaden participation in cultural life. Liberal adult education reaches many of those who do not normally participate in other forms of education. This form of education aims to promote democracy, equality, gender equality as well as international and cultural understanding and development.

University and post-secondary education

33. In Sweden, the state is responsible for the provision of higher education. The Swedish Riksdag and the Government decide what regulations are to apply and how resources are to be allocated. A number of agencies are actively involved in the higher education sector, one of them being the National Agency for Higher Education.

34. There are 39 universities and institutions of higher education, whose primary tasks are to provide undergraduate and postgraduate education and to interact with the surrounding community. A major proportion of state-funded research takes place at these higher education institutions.

35. Universities, university colleges and other institutions of higher education in Sweden are agencies that are accountable to the Government. Their operations are governed by the statutes and regulations that apply in the field of higher education. They are also regulated by the framework and resources determined by the Riksdag and the Government.

36. The Government issues educational directives to the higher education institutions. These directives lay down the objectives for their activities. For instance, they state the numbers of full-time equivalent students the institutions are to teach and also how many degrees or qualifications are to be awarded during a three-year period. The educational directives may also stipulate how many students should be enrolled for certain subject areas or how many degrees or qualifications are to be awarded in a certain field. These educational directives may also lay down specific undertakings for a particular

institution. Such special undertakings may, for example, include the provision of teaching in a specific area or for a specific objective.

37. The higher education institutions enjoy a great deal of freedom within the framework of the regulations and parameters laid down by the Riksdag and the Government. The institutions themselves decide how to plan their operations, utilize their resources and organize their programmes.

38. In Sweden the objectives for higher education are laid down in the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. These stipulate that higher education is to have an academic or artistic basis and to be grounded in tried and tested experience. Programmes are to give students knowledge and skills in the appropriate areas. Students should also acquire:

- the capacity to make independent and critical judgements,
- the capacity to discern, formulate and solve problems independently
- the capacity to face changes in the labour market.

39. All higher education must be of high quality. The higher education institutions are responsible for the development of the quality of their programmes for and quality assurance.

Liberal adult education:

40. A very large part of the Swedish population participates in liberal adult education each year and this is an important component in lifelong learning. The goal of liberal adult education is to strengthen opportunities for people to influence their living conditions, contribute to creating involvement in order to participate in the development of society, as well as broaden participation in cultural life. Liberal adult education reaches many of those who do not normally participate in other forms of education. This form of education aims to promote democracy, equality, gender equality as well as international and cultural understanding and development. One of the purposes of liberal adult education is to enhance people's opportunities to influence their own living conditions. It seeks to give everyone, but particularly those with limited education, a sound basis of knowledge and to stimulate interest in new areas.

Labour market policy, e.g. vocational training to unemployed:

41. In addition, there are also labour market training courses organized primarily for the unemployed in need of retraining, further training and education. In the first instance, the Labour Market Board is responsible for labour market training. The Labour Market Board is an agency accountable to the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications.

42. Between 1997 and 2002, substantial resources were transferred from labour market training to the Adult Education Initiative, known as 'Kunskapslyftet' in Swedish. This initiative was aimed at providing a greater proportion of the population with knowledge equivalent to a completed upper secondary education. In total, there were more than one million participants in lower and upper secondary level of education.

43. Support is provided through industrial and tax policy for competence development in working life. Social policy provides direct support for educational measures, amongst others, rehabilitation, which is financed by social insurance offices. Through the EU's structural and social funds, Objective 3 invests significant amounts in i.a. competence development in working life and education as an instrument for reducing unemployment. A large part of organised learning also takes place in the form of in-service training financed by the employer (LLL).

The trends and outcomes of the Swedish educational system:

44. After the Second World War and particularly during the 1960s, the school system in Sweden was changed from a fairly traditional European system – with early selection, parallel school forms, several selection points, and small, exclusive secondary and tertiary levels – to a system reminiscent of the American one, with mass education at secondary level (Erikson and Jonsson, 1996). Since then, the age for the earliest transition has been postponed from 10 to 16, and most educational ‘dead-ends’ have been eliminated. Fees and other costs for education up to upper secondary school (age 18/19) have been abolished, and fairly generous loans are available to those who study at university.

45. The Swedish education system has a tradition of being decentralized. This has been accentuated during the last fifteen years, during which time there has been a strong trend towards even more decentralization and freedom of choice. During the early 1990s, decentralization was emphasized by introducing a goal and result-oriented system for schools with less detailed regulations in the curriculum, syllabus and timetable as well as giving the municipalities full responsibility for all resources, including teachers and other staff. Thus a lot of the equity issues are handled at the municipal level where resources are guided to schools and areas with many underprivileged pupils and students. Unfortunately we do not have any systematic information of the extent of these policies.

46. According to PISA, 15-year olds in Sweden perform on average relatively well in, reading literacy in particular, but also in mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. This is mostly explained by the relatively few poor performances. This is in turn probably due to the comprehensive school system and the equal opportunities of students in different schools. The ambition of the Swedish educational system is to avoid dead ends and to ensure that every child leaves compulsory school with at least basic skills, in other words a ‘no child left behind’-ambition.

47. During the 1990s, the vocational programmes were changed so that all upper secondary school programmes now provide eligibility for higher education. The transfer rate to upper secondary school programmes is very high, (98 per cent in 2002). The dropout rate, however, is also high. According to the National Agency for Education, 72.5 per cent of upper secondary entrants in the autumn of 1998 received final upper secondary school grades within four years (Skolöverket 2003). The corresponding percentages for pupils starting in the autumns of 1995, 1996 and 1997 were 75.7, 73.3 and 75.6 per cent respectively. This implies that last year’s increase in the number of pupils gaining final grades within four years after starting their upper secondary education was a random occurrence. There is considerable discrepancy in this respect however between those who attend General/Academic programmes (84 per cent) and those who attend Vocational/Technical programmes (72 per cent). More women than men completed their upper secondary education (76.1 compared to 69.2 per cent). The percentage of pupils with a foreign background starting their upper secondary education in 1998 and completing it within four years was 58.7 per cent.

48. One of the reasons for the high dropout rate is the strong emphasize on theoretical subjects in the vocational programmes. There is a larger amount of students in vocational programmes that do not achieve the targets in the core subjects. One way of achieving better results in core subjects, recently presented in the Government Bill 2003/04:140, is to integrate teaching related to the main theme of the programme into the teaching of the core subjects. Some targets in the core subjects can usefully be achieved by coordination with programme-specific subjects. Even if arrangements for education in the core subjects may vary, targets and syllabuses will continue to be the same for all pupils.

49. The dropout rate is comparably low in the first two years of upper-secondary education (over 90 percent of a cohort stays in upper-secondary education the first two years). It is in the third year the dropout rate increases. This may explain the fact that as many as 85 % of 22 year olds have a completed

upper-secondary education. Even though they dropout during their third year, their level of knowledge is so good that they can easily catch up in the adult education.

50. Some people remain handicapped by the fact they interrupted their education for the rest of their lives, experiencing both difficulty in finding employment and impaired career opportunities. Pupils who interrupt their upper secondary education are on average registered 60 per cent longer at the employment exchange (job centre) than those who complete their education (Skolverket 2004). The employment rate among those who have interrupted their studies is nearly 20 per cent lower than those who complete their education. And even though many of those who interrupt their studies then gain upper secondary school qualifications in adult education, they still have more difficulty finding employment than those who complete their education directly.

51. The high drop-out rates and the lack of apprenticeship training could contribute to the apparent increased difficulty experienced by young people in establishing themselves on the labour market (SOU 2003:92).

52. The fact that it has become more difficult for young people to establish themselves on the labour market and that the age of those managing to do so has risen sharply are important aspects for the education system to take into account. The percentage of young people in Sweden who neither study nor belong to the workforce has increased during the 1990s (Ds 2002:30). An estimated 70,000 young people (16-24 years old), 8 per cent of the population, are outside the labour market (SOU 2003:92). An estimated 25-30,000 have been outside the labour market for 2 years in succession and have difficulties in establishing themselves on it. Foreign-born people are clearly overrepresented in these figures and a large proportion of the group have not completed their compulsory school education.

Chapter 3: Social stratification

Socio-economic background:

53. Social stratification is an overall term for how living standards and life opportunities vary according to different background variables. This can for example be a question of social class, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. Social class background has traditionally been a central part of the Swedish debate. Most of our political parties, for example, have their roots in the class society. Nowadays, there are three different class concepts. The first is represented by Marxists and is associated with the role of the individual in production (Wright, 1978). The exact opposite, of this concept is a class based on consumption and lifestyle instead of the individual's role in production (Bourdieu, 1987). Here, class is more the sum of different types of capital - economic, social and cultural.

54. Finally, we have a number of definitions that fall somewhere between these two extremes. These classifications are founded on people's occupational affinity (i.e. which profession they belong to), but are less strict and theoretical than Marxist classifications and consider more dimensions (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992). The Swedish SEI code (socio-economic classification) is a prime example of this. In this report, these classifications are used in parallel. Most of the empirical data is, however, based on the third classification mentioned here, with the odd exception, when the different types of capital (economic, cultural and social) are discussed.

55. With a low income dispersion and generous welfare policies, Sweden is no doubt one of the more egalitarian Western societies. The relatively low level of inequality of living conditions, in combination with far-reaching educational reforms, should, one might assume, promote equality of opportunity in

Sweden. Empirical studies, to some extent, verify this. Unlike most other comparable nations, relative social mobility has increased in Sweden (Jonsson and Mills 1993), and the degree of 'social inheritance' is relatively low (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992).

56. During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, a series of major school reforms were implemented in Sweden. These reforms were seen almost as a springboard towards a more prosperous, democratic and equal society, and even as a means of 'dismantling the class society' (Myrdal, 1971). It was soon obvious, however, that education does not possess the expected equalizing effects, and consequently many researchers began to take an interest in the relationship between class and education.

Gender equality:

Gender equality policy objectives:

57. The overall aim of Sweden's gender equality policy is for women and men to have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all areas of life. This implies things like:

- an equal distribution of power and influence between women and men
- the same opportunities for women and men to achieve economic independence equal conditions and opportunities in respect of entrepreneurship, jobs, terms of employment and advancement prospects at work
- equal access to education and training and equal opportunities for developing personal ambitions, interests and talents
- shared responsibility for children and the home
- freedom from sexual (gender-related) violence.

Developments in gender equality since the 1970s (Statistics Sweden: 2004)

58. Women and men do not have to choose between paid work and children – they can have both (but the division of labour within the household is still unequal). The proportion of women aged 20–64 in the labour force was 60 per cent in 1970 and 79 per cent in 2003. The corresponding proportions for men were 90 per cent and 84 per cent respectively.

59. Women work equally in the public and the private sector while men work predominantly in the private sector. In 1970, 42 per cent of women worked in the public sector and 58 per cent in the private sector. In 2001, 51 per cent worked in the public sector and 49 per cent in the private sector. Among men, 21 per cent worked in the public and 79 per cent in the private sector in 1970. In 2001, 19 per cent worked in the public sector and 81 per cent in the private sector.

60. Directly elected political assemblies have an equal representation of women and men – indirectly elected assemblies do not. The sex distribution among parliament members in 1973 was 15 per cent women and 85 per cent men. In 2002, the sex distribution was 45 per cent women and 55 per cent men. In 1986, the sex distribution among representatives on central governmental lay boards was 17 per cent women and 83 per cent men. In 2000, it was 46 per cent women and 54 per cent men.

61. The labour market is still segregated by sex, though no more than other OECD-countries (Nermo).

62. Salary differences remain:

- female-dominated occupations are valued less than male-dominated ones;
- men have higher salaries/wages than women in most occupations.

63. In 1970, 7 per cent of all employed women and 4 per cent of all employed men worked in occupations with equal sex distribution. In 2001, the corresponding proportions were 12 per cent for women and 12 per cent for men.

64. In 1974, men accounted for 0 per cent of days for which parental allowance for caring of young children was paid. In 2001, this figure had risen to 14 per cent.

65. Since the mid-1990s, the Government has changed its working methods regarding the promotion of gender equality. Today, all ministers have a responsibility for gender equality within their respective policy areas and the Minister for Gender Equality Affairs, who acts as a coordinator, supports them. Previously, efforts have mainly focused on special measures aimed at eliminating sex discrimination. Now, gender equality is an integral part of the activities of the whole Government. This strategy is known as 'gender mainstreaming' – an internationally well-established term.

Gender equality and statistics

66. The Swedish Riksdag decided in the spring of 1994 on a new national action plan to implement the equality policy. In order to achieve a gender-equal society, a gender perspective should be applied to all policy areas. This means that all proposals and decisions must be analysed from a gender perspective in order to examine all possible consequences for women and men at the central as well as on a regional and local level. For this to be possible, statistics must be disaggregated by sex. The Swedish Riksdag has decided that gender statistics are to be a part of official statistics. The goal is that all statistics concerning individuals shall be collected, analysed and presented by sex, but also reflect gender issues and problems in society.

Ethnicity:

67. Traditionally, Sweden has been a very homogenous society, both socially and ethnically. However, during the latter half of the 20th century, Sweden evolved into an ethnically diverse society.

- More than one million out of Sweden's nine million inhabitants are foreign born. This proportion has increased from 4 per cent in 1960 to about 12 per cent in 2002.
- Over the last twenty years, the proportion of the Swedish population born outside Europe has increased from 1 to about 5 per cent.
- A further 800,000 people born in Sweden have at least one foreign-born parent.
- Sweden has inhabitants from 203 countries.
- The majority of immigrants have been here at least ten years.
- More than 60 per cent of those who have migrated to Sweden have Swedish citizenship. Generally, one is eligible for citizenship after being resident in the country for five years.
- The concept of 'immigrant' refers to those who have migrated to Sweden themselves. The expression 'people with a foreign background' refers both to persons who have migrated to

Sweden themselves and to those who were born in Sweden but whose both parents were born abroad (i.e. first and second-generation immigrants).

Integration policy

68. The Swedish Riksdag adopted the current integration policy in 1997. This decision was based on the Government bill 'Sweden, the future and diversity – from immigration policy to integration policy' (1997/98:16). The point of departure for integration policy is that general policy should be based on society's ethnic and cultural diversity. It should encourage individuals to support themselves and take part in society, safeguard fundamental democratic values, contribute to equal rights and opportunities for women and men and prevent and combat ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and racism. Integration is a process occurring at both the individual and the community level. The integration process is mutual in the sense that everyone is involved and must make a contribution. It is conditional, for example, on mutual respect for cultural differences, so long as these do not conflict with the fundamental democratic values of society.

69. The Swedish Integration Board was set up in 1998 with the task of developing introductory procedures for new refugee arrivals, of promoting integration and monitoring the situation and progress of integration policy objectives within the various sectors of Swedish society.

70. The needs of immigrants, like those of everyone else, must be taken into account in the context of general policies. Integration policy will be focused on the conditions and mechanisms in play throughout society. The introduction process for newly arrived refugees will be more effectively based on the background and conditions of the individual immigrant.

71. Despite extensive initiatives to give everyone the same opportunities in society, the disparities between immigrants and Swedish-born citizens remain large. This applies mainly to working life, but there are also clear differences within the educational and housing sectors. Children and young people who have migrated to this country have fewer opportunities than their Swedish peers. The health situation for immigrants is also worse than for Swedish-born citizens. One of the most important reasons for why some immigrants feel they are excluded is that they lack employment and a role in their new society.

72. Although the status of immigrants on the labour market has shown a marked improvement during the late 1990s, the disparities between immigrants and Swedish-born citizens are large, in terms of employment levels, unemployment and participation in the work force. More immigrants than native Swedes are overqualified in relation to their occupation. The reasons for the generally weaker position of immigrants on the labour market are multifaceted and complex. They may be related to the personal situation of the individual or they may be more structural. These reasons include the lack of a network, discrimination, insufficient knowledge of the Swedish language, their qualifications not being recognized in Sweden and the short length of time they have been living in the country. The longer immigrants have lived in Sweden, the higher their rates of employment and the lower their rates of unemployment.

Region:

73. Traditionally, Swedish regional development policy has not been characterized by strong regions but on the contrary by a strong centre. Swedish regional development policy has been influenced by economic considerations, hence the high level of acceptance for migration and depopulation. Current Swedish policy has however rejected this approach. The Government's regional development policy goals are to reach: 'Well functioning and sustainable local labour market regions with a good level of service throughout the country.'

74. The term 'well functioning local labour market regions' means that they are sufficiently attractive to people and enterprises to enable the potential and vitality inherent in all the regions to be realized. The term 'sustainable' means that the policy should help to create sound economic, social and ecological conditions for both current and future generations. 'A good level of service throughout the country' means that the measures should help to provide people and enterprises in all parts of the country with adequate access to both commercial and public services.

75. The educational system in Sweden is decentralized but at the same time expected to obtain uniform educational opportunities, independent of place of residence. During the 90s there was an expansion of higher education, mostly through establishment and enlargement of university colleges in areas outside the traditional university towns. Important in this aspect is also, already mentioned, The Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning.

Sexual orientation:

76. Over the last ten years, sexual orientation issues have gradually gained momentum in the Swedish public debate. This has occurred in parallel with a clear lessening in homophobic opinion and not least a number of key reforms. When the Swedish Registered Partnership Act was introduced on January 1, 1995, affording same sex couples access to a legal instrument that to a large extent corresponded to that of civil marriage for heterosexual couples, it was almost unique in the world. Denmark and Norway were the only countries that had similar laws. But these Scandinavian initiatives were to be followed by a strong progressive development also in other Western European countries. In 2002, the Swedish Riksdag passed an amendment to the Swedish Registered Partnership Act, thus making it possible for registered partners, just like married couples, to have joint custody of children and to adopt children jointly, including all forms of international adoptions.

77. It is clearly stated in Swedish curriculum, that the activities of pre-schools, school-age child-care and compulsory schools shall be permeated by a democratic approach and respect for the equal value of all people. The rights of children and young people must not be violated with respect to culture, tradition, religion and background, nor on the basis of their gender or sexual orientation.

78. Under the Act on the Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education (2001:1286), universities and university colleges shall actively promote the equal rights of all students and proactively prevent harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation. The wording of a similar provision for compulsory and upper secondary schools is being developed.

Religion:

79. Sweden underwent rapid secularization during the 20th century. Sweden is now one of the countries of the world where religion plays only a marginal role in people's lives. Less than ten per cent of the population are regular church-goers. Furthermore, Sweden has traditionally been seen as a religiously homogenous country and almost exclusively protestant. Religious affinity has traditionally therefore never formed a basis for classification. Until just a few years ago, Sweden had a state church. This state church has, however, pursued an ecumenical doctrine since the Second World War. Bearing this in mind, religion will not be discussed further in this report.

80. As a result of immigration, however, Sweden has become a more heterogeneous country as far as religion is concerned. Thanks to the independent school reform, some immigrant groups (e.g. muslims) have been able to start religiously independent schools. There are also, however, religiously independent schools that are not linked to particular immigrant groups but rather to free churches.

SECTION II: OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES

Chapter 4: Profile of equity in education

Social background

81. Previous research has confirmed that there is a connection between class background and education, and current research shows that this is still the case (SOU 2003:96). The fact that children and adolescents with different class backgrounds have always achieved different results at school has often been the focus of interest both in Sweden and the rest of Europe, especially in the 1970s (Skolverket2002). Today the class concept seems to have reclaimed some of its central position in research on school and education. Creating a school for everyone in Sweden was the mainstay of Social Democratic education policy, the intention being to locate and utilize the educational potential and eliminate class distinctions by giving everyone access to the same type of education. It was soon obvious, however, that education does not possess the expected equalizing effects, and consequently many researchers began to take an interest in the relationship between class and education. Research showed that, on the contrary, education tends to reproduce the current social order, that class distinctions are reproduced within and by means of the school system and that consequently educational patterns are also reproduced. Thus, class background is still a crucial factor. High-achievers at school today often have well educated parents and tend to come from homes with a long study tradition and where education is valued highly. This applies to Swedish children as well as to children with a foreign background, and to both boys and girls.

82. Inequality in educational opportunity is something that is built up during the entire course of a person's schooling, from pre-school to post-graduate education, as a result of social background having an effect on grades and influencing educational choices. It is therefore a process in which the inequality grows stronger for each new choice made - i.e. the effects of social origin on grades and educational choices at an early stage are supplemented by new ones.

Child care

83. During the 1990s, access to child-care markedly increased and more and more children were able to take part in the activities. In the same period, differences in practice, priorities and fees widened between municipalities. For example, the system of rules governing parental unemployment or parental leave and child varied greatly. This led to a lack of continuity for many children, and greater difficulty in running efficient educational activities. Children of foreign-born parents were less likely to have places in the pre-school system than others, a fact that was largely explained by their parents' lower employment rate.

Upper secondary education

84. Study results indicate that inequality in educational opportunity as regards higher education mainly occurs in conjunction with pupils choosing their upper secondary school programmes (Svensson). Children of high-level white-collar employees are strongly overrepresented and blue-collar children are clearly underrepresented on the General/Academic programmes. It is worth mentioning as an example that

nearly 70 per cent of all those born in 1977 to high-level white-collar workers completed a higher education preparatory programme at upper secondary school, compared to just 25 per cent of blue-collar children (SCB 2002). This obviously leads to considerable differences in the numbers of pupils going on to higher education.

Tertiary education

85. Inequality in educational opportunity at the higher education level can, to a large extent, though not completely, be explained by students' choice of upper-secondary school programmes. There is still a discrepancy between blue-collar and white-collar children when it comes to higher education transition rates, even in those cases where upper-secondary programmes preparing students for further studies are available. Considerably fewer young people from blue-collar homes than from white-collar homes, who have completed such a preparatory upper-secondary programme, choose to enter higher education within the next few years (SOU 2003:96). The results of blue-collar children who nevertheless choose to enter higher education do not differ that much from those of the average student.

86. The proportion of students from blue-collar families is lower on longer educational programmes leading often to relatively well paid professions, such as medical school, law school and graduate engineering programmes, than on shorter programmes, such as college diploma engineering programmes, teacher training and nurse's education (SOU 2003:96). Inequality in educational opportunity is less among women than among men. This is mainly due to a larger number of women than men applying to study major subjects such as healthcare science and teaching, where educational opportunity is much more equal among both women and men. Inequality in educational opportunity is most apparent on the longest programmes, and on programmes requiring the highest grades or credits, and is most marked at medical school. Along with graduate engineering programmes, medical school is also noteworthy since, unlike all the other major vocational degree courses, the problem of inequality in educational opportunity has not decreased during the 1990s.

How is inequality in educational opportunity changing?

87. Seen over the entire 1900s, it is clear that inequality in educational opportunity has decreased, even if obvious discrepancies still exist (Erikson and Jonsson 1993). Development over the last century led to a growing number of people from all the social classes receiving some kind of further education. The increase has been relatively faster for children among the previously most repressed social classes, leading to a reduction in inequality in educational opportunity. Social equalization began in the 1930s and was also quite rapid in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. There are a small number of factors that explain this drop in inequality in educational opportunity (Erikson and Jonsson, 1993):

- Narrower class differences, especially smaller discrepancies in income and lower unemployment rates;
- The introduction of comprehensive schooling;
- Study assistance being introduced for university education.

88. Inequality in educational opportunity at the higher education level hardly changed at all between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1990s (Erikson and Jonsson 1993). A certain broadening in the recruitment of university entrants up to 35 years has occurred during the 1990s (SOU 2003:96). One cause of uncertainty is whether this is due to pupils from academic homes having a greater propensity to study abroad.

Table 1. Higher education entrants under 35 years of age by social background

Per cent

SEI	High white-collar	Intermediate white-collar	Low white-collar	Farmers/self-employed	Skilled blue-collar	Unskilled blue-collar	Sum	Missing values
93/94	33	28	12	9	10	9	100	16
96/97	30	28	12	9	11	9	100	20
99/00	28	28	12	9	13	10	100	22
02/03	27	28	12	9	14	11	100	27
03/04	28	28	12	9	14	11	100	30

Source: SCB 2004.

89. During the 1990s, inequality in educational opportunity decreased. This happened at the same time as the inflow into higher education increased. However, the considerable expansion in the number of higher education places has made it possible for considerably more people with both blue-collar *and* white-collar backgrounds to continue studying. Social distribution seems to be most uneven in the youngest age group. There might be various reasons why. Firstly, there is a higher drop-out rate in other age groups, making comparisons rather sensitive. Secondly, it may be because people with blue-collar backgrounds wait for longer before continuing to study.

90. Earlier research has shown that the level of inequality in educational opportunity is relatively low in Sweden (Erikson and Jonsson, 2000). According to the most recent PISA study, the relationship between the socio-economic standing of parents and their children's level of educational attainment is less in the Nordic countries, especially in Finland, Sweden and Iceland, than in the OECD as a whole (Northern Lights on PISA 2003)

Regional patterns:

91. There are large discrepancies both when it comes to attainment in compulsory school (Lindgren) and regarding participation in higher education (SCB 2002). There is a wide spread in the aggregated entrant rate for 18-25 year-olds among Swedish counties, from 42 per cent.

92. The range of higher education programmes available has a considerable bearing on the social composition of the students. Disparities between universities/university colleges are mostly a consequence of differences in the social structure in their immediate surroundings, from where the majority of the students come, and differences in the range of programmes each institute has to offer.

93. The university colleges that have emerged since the 1960s are now responsible for most of the total inflow of students from homes with poorly educated parents (UF 20 SM 0401). During the latter half of the 1990s, the number of higher education entrants with poorly educated parents stopped rising at the older traditional universities and specialized higher education institutes, but continued to increase at other institutes.

Gender discrepancies in the education system

94. Overall participation in all kinds of school education is about the same for boys as it is for girls in pre-schools, pre-school classes, leisure time centres, compulsory schools and upper-secondary national

programmes. On the other hand, boys make up nearly 60 per cent of those attending education for pupils with learning difficulties and individual programmes for those who did not qualify for the regular upper-secondary education.

95. Regarding: compulsory school grades, test results, eligibility for upper secondary school and higher education, upper-secondary school grades, graduation from upper secondary school/interruption and transition to higher education, the statistics point to better figures for girls (apart from test results in mathematics, where no gender discrepancies are evident) (Könsskillnader i utbildningsresultat 2004). And the gap in grades between boys and girls seems to grow every year. Test grades indicate the same trend as final grades even though girls gain better grades than boys in relation to their test results.

96. Gender discrepancies in reading skills are remarkably wide, even in an OECD perspective (PISA). This is the same for the other Nordic countries apart from Denmark. Boys are less interested in reading, they read less and above all they read fewer narrative, 'continuous' texts than girls do. This gender discrepancy is not new but some reports indicate widening gender differences over the years. Reading is a basic skill and affects other learning and skills in general, which in itself warrants closer attention being paid to the weak performance of boys at school. According to the PISA study, this seems to apply to the ability to relate texts to one's own experiences, knowledge and opinions.

97. Gender discrepancies in reading skills show certain regional characteristics; they are wider in rural areas than in urban areas though this is a marginal pattern. Furthermore, discrepancies tend to be wider in lower performance groups but they are significant in all groups, including different social groups. The overall gender discrepancies in reading skills therefore appear to be neither a class nor an ethnic issue and only a minor regional issue.

98. Comparing PIRLS 2001 and PISA 2000, the results seem to suggest slightly narrower gender discrepancies in the reading skills of younger compulsory schoolchildren than among older pupils. On the whole, gender discrepancies seem to be narrower in the lower school years and wider in higher years.

99. Gender discrepancies in mathematics and science are nowadays only slight or non-existent. Girls have gradually caught up with boys when it comes to performance in these subjects.

100. Fewer boys than girls actually complete their upper secondary education. The throughput of students in higher education varies between different types of programmes. There are no major overall differences in study periods and graduation rates between women and men.

101. Women *participate more in* almost all forms of education outside the school system. Women make up two-thirds of adult education participants and about 60 per cent of higher education students. The proportion of men in all areas of higher education has decreased during the period 1997-2002 apart from in the humanities, art and healthcare where it has remained on a constantly low level. If the current trend persists, there will be as many women as men studying science subjects in less than ten years. Only in the field of technology are men still in a clear majority, despite a distinct shift towards a greater proportion of women. (At the same rate of change as in recent years, women will also be in the majority in this area within 15-20 years.) Women take the majority of higher education diplomas - 64 per cent of all the diplomas in 2002/03 were taken by women. The proportion of women graduates is 62 per cent (and 38 per cent for men). Basically the same number of women as men are accepted on postgraduate programmes; the percentage of men has decreased since the mid 1990s in all four scientific fields and there are nowadays no major differences when it comes to graduation.

102. Recent research shows that women are less likely than men to take part in formal on-the-job training (Evertsson, 2004). Among those who do receive training, women are more likely to take part in

industry-specific training, whereas men are more likely to participate in general training and training that increases promotion opportunities. The two latter forms of training significantly raise a man's annual earnings but not a woman's. It is argued that this gender inequality is partly due to employers' discriminatory practices. Among those who do receive training, women are more likely to take part in industry-specific training, whereas men are more likely to participate in general training and training that increases promotion opportunities. When industry is controlled for, however, this difference in the odds of taking part in different types of formal on-the-job-training disappears. General training and training that increases promotion opportunities are increasing significantly.

103. Despite the fact that girls, throughout most of the education system, gain better results, have a better throughput and are more likely to continue their studies, women still have a poorer standing on the labour market than men. Women have a lower return on their education than men (SOU 2001:79), the hourly pay-rate of women is still only 83 per cent that of men's (Easy guide to gender equality) and even if we apply a standard weighting for these differences, there is still an 8-percent unexplained discrepancy between the salaries of men and women. Women more often have fixed-time employment, are more likely to work part-time (either voluntarily or involuntarily), have much poorer career development than men (Committee on the Distribution of Economic Power and Economic Resources between Women and Men), and often have a poorer work environment than men.

104. A question we must ask ourselves is whether these differences have something to do with the education system. And concerning how much the education system is to blame for creating inequality on the labour market, sex segregation obviously plays a central role. There is obviously a strong connection between sex segregation in the education system and sex segregation on the labour market. Women and men are still educated for different professions (SOU 2003:96). The most obvious gender discrepancies are to be found at upper secondary school, especially in shorter educational programmes. The traditional choice of e.g. technical subjects by boys in post secondary education still seems to prevail. It appears that young women, however, are starting to break their traditional habits of studying education and healthcare subjects.

105. Many more boys study vocational programmes than girls and many more study those where boys dominate strongly. A much lower percentage of girls study strongly sex-segregated programmes. The major trends in gender division have not changed much over the last 60-70 years (Jonsson 2004b). This does not mean, however, that nothing has happened. There are clear signs of partial equalization, e.g. regarding scientific and longer technical upper secondary programmes. But there is also evidence to the contrary. It seems, for example, that sex segregation has intensified over the last twenty or thirty years when it comes to healthcare subjects, a trend that probably depends on greater female representation at more advanced education levels (more female medical students, for example). Since the beginning of the 1990s, gender discrepancies in choice of specialization at upper secondary school and higher education have not changed in general. There are, however, signs of increased sex segregation at upper secondary school and counteracting tendencies in higher education, where technology is becoming less male dominated but medicine/odontology are becoming more female dominated.

106. When it comes to actual school results (attainment), girls come out on top. But when it comes to the educational environment in general, we obtain a mixed picture.

107. A third of pupils experience either constant or very frequent stress at school, a level that has remained constant since 1997 (see Table 2). There is considerable discrepancies between girls and boys. While almost 50 per cent of girls say they experience either constant or very frequent stress, only a fifth of boys feel the same way.

Table 2. 'How often do you experience stress at school?' Percentage of pupils replying they feel either constant or very frequent stress, 1997-2003

In total and classified by gender, type of school and type of educational programme. (Skolverket 2003b)

	In total	Girls	Boys
1997	25	33	17
2000	35	46	26
2003	34	47	21

108. Research into stress often looks at the combination of 'demand' and 'control'. We now know that high demands and little control over one's own work situation heightens the risk of negative stress considerably. The survey results show that a larger number of girls than boys (18 versus 9 per cent) feel the demands placed upon them at school are too high.

109. A questionnaire study of school environments indicates that there is hardly any gender discrepancy in the classroom environment (SOU 2001:79). On the other hand, there are classroom studies indicating that boys get most talking time and most attention. Bullying is rather rare (SOU 2001:79; skolverket 2002) but it is clear that girls are bullied less than boys. One frequently debated issue is that of sexual bullying/harassment, e.g. when girls are verbally abused (using words referring to sex or sexual intercourse), or actually sexually assaulted. One study shows that 15 per cent of students have been sexually harassed but bearing in mind the prevailing confusion over what the term 'sexual harassment' actually means, it is difficult to interpret such a statistic (National Agency for Higher Education).

Ethnicity

110. There are substantial differences in the results achieved by native pupils (i.e. ethnic Swedes) and by pupils with a foreign background in Sweden as well as in many other OECD countries (Skolverket 2003a). But the scope for integrating pupils with a foreign background also varies considerably from one country to the next. The specific Swedish situation is illustrated by the Swedish National Agency for Education's in-depth PISA study, 'Reading skills among pupils with a foreign background'. The most significant difference is between native pupils and foreign-born pupils. But even pupils with a foreign background who were born in Sweden (second generation immigrants) perform as a group worse than native pupils.

111. The magnitude of the difference in reading ability between native pupils and pupils with a foreign background, the so-called 'performance gap', varies considerably in different countries, even when various background factors such as socio-economic status have been taken into consideration. In Sweden, the performance gap between native pupils and pupils with a foreign background is close to the average for OECD countries, but there are several countries that have a much narrower gap than Sweden. The difference between native pupils and pupils with a foreign background is particularly narrow in Anglophone countries.

112. One reason why the performance gap between native pupils and pupils with a foreign background is wider in Sweden than in Anglophone countries has to do with the composition of immigrants coming to Sweden compared to these countries. In Sweden, as in Denmark and Norway, immigration during the 1990s has mainly been composed of refugees and close relative immigration from countries that are relatively different from Scandinavian countries in terms of language and culture.

113. Countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, however, have far fewer refugees in relation to their populations compared to the Scandinavian countries. They also have immigration policies

that encourage the immigration of well-educated individuals or people with special vocational expertise. The Anglophone countries, with the exception of the United States, are characterized by the fact that a relatively large proportion of their total immigration is made up of people from other Anglophone countries, or from developing countries with Anglophone backgrounds e.g. South Asia. The scope for taking care of and integrating pupils with a foreign background differs widely therefore and the Scandinavian countries have a much more complex situation than most of the other countries in the study.

114. A study of the PISA data reveals that pupils of a foreign background and those born abroad who arrived in Sweden before starting school are just as good as Swedish pupils (after taking the usual background variables into consideration). Those arriving later, however, retain a considerable net effect (Skolverket 2004).

115. The number of fathers who don't work is much higher among pupils with foreign backgrounds, 30 per cent among foreign-born and 16 per cent among Swedish-born pupils with a foreign background. We can compare this with native pupils, only 7 per cent of whom say their fathers don't work. The report shows that there is a connection between a pupil's performance and his/her father's labour market status in Sweden. In the Scandinavian countries, the percentage of fathers who don't work among pupils with a foreign background born in another country is about four times that of fathers of native pupils. The corresponding figure for countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States is on average only 1.5 times higher.

116. As many as 82 per cent of pupils with a foreign background born in another country speak a language other than Swedish at home. Among pupils with a foreign background who were born in Sweden, 47 per cent speak a different language at home. If we compare pupils with the same migratory background, those who speak Swedish at home perform better than those who speak another language. But this also has to do with how well the family is integrated rather than some kind of 'language effect'.

117. As well as a pupil with a foreign background performing poorly on average, one with a foreign background who also attends a school with a high immigrant population can be expected to perform even worse.

118. More detailed studies are required to find out the causes of this, but it is reasonable to assume that the effect is linked to housing segregation. One feasible cause is that newly arrived immigrants and refugees are overrepresented in areas and hence in schools with a high immigrant population. Another possible reason is that the pupil's individual performance in reading, apart from being influenced by his/her own foreign background, is also affected by the fact that many of those around him/her also have such a background. For example, it is likely that such pupils' contact with the Swedish language is less, both in and out of school, than that of pupils who attend schools with low immigrant populations.

Sexual orientation

119. The problems of equity are different for GLBT people (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) and the empirical data is unavailable. We know very little about participation nor attainment. We do know, however, that heteronormativity is problematic for GLBT people, both in the teaching, the school environment and in their spare time. This is also discussed in the next section. In contrast to the other stratification dimensions, there is nothing to say that participation and attainment are negatively affected to any large degree. The living conditions of GLBT students are negatively affected and the quality of education they receive is then worse than it should be. A relatively large number of GLBT students have attempted suicide (three times the number of other students of the same age).

SECTION III: CAUSES AND EXPLANATIONS

Chapter 5: Understanding the causes of inequity

Social background

120. Inequality in educational opportunity can be seen to consist of two interrelated factors. One is that children from 'higher' social groups generally perform better at school. The other is that among children on the same performance level, those from higher social groups more often go on to study theoretical subjects. These two effects are approximately equal in strength and continue throughout a child's education, from compulsory school, through upper secondary and to university level (Svensson, 2002; Erikson and Jonsson, 2000).

121. Differences in performance levels are sometimes explained by genetic differences in intelligence. In a much-debated American book from 1994 (*The Bell Curve*), psychologist Herrnstein and political scientist Murray argue that class and race differences in the United States are the result of congenital differences in IQ. This study has received strong criticism based on a number of different premises, including the fact that such IQ measurements are unscientific (see, e.g. Stephen Jay Gould, 1996). A study has, however, been performed using Swedish data (UGU) and it indicates that about a third of the relationship between social origin and educational results can be attributed to IQ, measured at the age of thirteen (Erikson and Jonsson, 2000). A substantial number of the IQ discrepancies in 13-year-olds are, however, almost certainly caused by social factors, according to the authors of the study themselves, i.e. less than a third of the difference is due to genetic heritage.

122. Differences in socialization and the resources of parents provide another explanation. In many countries there is a direct effect of financial resources, in that it allows children to delay entry into the labour market. Such direct financial effects have only a marginal impact in Sweden. There is a weak correlation between the economic standards of parents and their children's school results (attainment) in the Nordic countries, much less than the OECD as a whole (Northern Lights on PISA; the report published in May 2003 is a detailed review of Nordic research into the results of the Nordic countries in PISA 2000).

123. The significance and effects of parents educational levels is often explained in terms of 'they can help with homework'. This is just part of the explanation, however, as it is also a question of the entire social and cultural capital passed down to the child, which is also significant when it comes to school work. The children of well educated parents have more access to newspapers, encyclopaedias and computers at home and they receive more training in searching for and interpreting information than children of poorly educated parents. All this provides them an advantage at school and also familiarizes them with school working methods. Language use, cultural capital, social capital and work-related socialization patterns and the social make-up of the school class have all been aired as theoretically feasible explanations for inequality in educational opportunity but have received surprisingly little empirical support (Erikson and Jonsson, 2000). What the PISA study does indicate, however, is that the effect of cultural capital on pupil performance is stronger than the effect of economic standard and social capital (Northern Lights on PISA 2003). Sweden is below the OECD average when it comes to the correlation between the social capital of parents and the performance of their children. Regarding cultural

capital (parents' education, etc.), the relationship is relatively strong in Sweden and about the same as the OECD average.

124. A third explanation is that the school favours white-collar children. The class discrepancies appear to be narrower on standardized tests than on grades. This can occur directly, i.e. straightforward discrimination, but probably also indirectly, i.e. because typical 'white-collar behaviour' pays off. School itself is active in the class-distinction process, since it constitutes a familiar environment for pupils with a middle-class background, whereas other pupils feel less at home, or even estranged from it. It is the 'language' of the middle class that is used to communicate at school, and middle-class children often have the advantage of 'feeling at home' since they come from homes where education is considered important and encouraged. Researchers have also taken an interest in the school situation itself, what happens there, how pupils with different class background are perceived by their teachers, how pupils resist school or adapt to it, etc. In Sweden, Elisabeth Öhrn and Mats Trondman, among others, have studied class at the individual and classroom levels, looking at what pupils actually do and experience from their different class positions and their attitudes to school and education. When discussing boys in particular, both believe that middle-class children can cope with classroom dynamics whilst working-class children put up active resistance to the education system and by doing so lay the foundations of their own subordination (cf Willis, 1977).

125. But perhaps the most important explanation for class differences in grades is the level of ambition or, to be more exact, expectation of future life choices (Erikson and Jonsson, 2000). As it is seen as unlikely that working class youngsters will embark on an academic career, an investment in human capital is also perceived as unnecessary. For white-collar children on the other hand, the entire environment is conducive to investment in education. This has both an indirect effect on inequality in educational opportunity since school results are affected and an effect on which upper secondary school and higher education institute the young people choose to go to. It also affects expectations of future choices. These expectation-based differences are completely rational and can arise even at an early age, channelled to a great extent via parental expectations.

Recent studies of inequity in educational opportunity by social background:

Jan O. Jonsson – Förskola för förfördelade? (Pre-school for the disadvantaged?)

126. In this report, Jonsson investigate whether participation in pre-school can improve social equity or whether the foundations for inequality in educational opportunity are laid as early as in pre-school. He uses data from the Swedish Living Standards Surveys (Levnadsnivåundersökningarna, LNU) in 1991 and 2000 and a sample consisting of people born between 1966 and 1981 (who were 18-25 years old when they were interviewed in 1991 and 2000). The sample consisted of about 1,500 people in total. The interviewees answered questions on what type of childcare outside the home s/he had experienced and for how long.

127. Firstly author ascertains that when more child day-care places became available (from the beginning of 1970s onwards), it was mostly middle-class children and children of well-educated parents who became 'pre-schoolers'.

128. Secondly, he has studied the effect of time spent at pre-school on the transition to studying theoretical subjects at upper secondary school using regression analysis, where he has taken into account parents' education and social class, where they live, type of family, financial resources index, gender, etc. The results point to a slightly positive effect of attending a pre-school/day-care centre, but the parents' social background and education are of much more significance. However, the model appears questionable; a slight change in the model produces different results and the model as a whole has rather low explanation value.

129. Finally, he examines whether day-care has any kind of compensatory effect, i.e. if the effect is stronger for children from homes with weak financial resources, but he finds no evidence of this. It is however uncertain how he carried out this analysis. There may also be smaller groups that cannot be differentiated in the LNU surveys, but on whom day-care has had a particularly beneficial effect (examples are provided including the children of substance abusers, the long-term unemployed, etc.).

130. In conclusion, it seems that middle-class children with well-educated parents monopolized day-care to a certain extent as a result of its expansion in the early 1970s, something he highlights as worrying if it were the case that pre-school did have a manifestly positive effect on children's success at school. The effect on their transition to upper secondary school is however weak and unsystematic.

Allan Svensson: Inequality in educational opportunity – when and how does it arise?

131. Svensson stresses the problem of inequality in educational opportunity in the Natural Science Programme (NS), since it provides pupils with the broadest qualifications and prior knowledge. The biggest problem is the major differences in the mathematics grades of the various groups. Svensson recommends that measures are targeted at mathematics in order to increase the number of blue-collar children on the NS Programme. These measures should be implemented in the early stages of compulsory school and preferably as early as pre-school.

132. Svensson also points out that getting more blue-collar children to choose the NV Programme is not enough. They should also complete the programme to the same extent and gain approximately the same results as others. This is currently not the case. And there are major differences both in the drop-out rate and in the final grades. One reason is that differences in the amount of help pupils receive at home with their school work (blue-collar children receive less help) continue to be significant at upper secondary level, something for which the school must start to compensate. Social background does not seem to have any bearing on application rates to higher education among those who complete the most academic programmes. Selection does however increase as a result of the choice of university and university college courses. Young people with white-collar backgrounds more often choose longer, more prestige-oriented, educational programmes, whereas those with blue-collar backgrounds often choose shorter programmes that do not provide them with the same career opportunities (UF 20 SM 0202). There have been only negligible and slow-moving changes in this pattern in recent years.

Gender

133. There are a number of possible explanations of the gender differences that can be summed up as the following similar assertions as for social background.

Explanations on the individual level

134. Biological explanation models have often been used to explain the differences in women's and men's behaviour. Unfortunately, the aim of this research has been to explain why men are more intelligent than women and has also been of a substandard quality (Fausto-Sterling 1992; Ledberg 1999) so it is of little help to us.

135. Boys and girls bring the same resources (economic, cultural and social capital) with them from home since the sexes are obviously evenly distributed amongst the different social classes. Gender does, however, form an extremely strong basis for classification in society. Research also indicates that it is difficult to find underlying explanations to variations in gender-typical and gender-atypical behaviour (Dryler, 1998). This may point to the existence of a hegemonic masculinity and femininity which are very difficult to break down (Connell, 1995). Studying and performing well at school are to a certain extent feminine traits. This is most evident in the stereotyped male environments in some parts of the rural

community. But it seems on the other hand to have more or less of an impact in all environments. We need more research on the traditionally male ideal of not being too committed to one's school work. What we do know from for example the PISA-study is that gender-specific changes and differences in reading habits, computer habits and leisure time patterns explain some of the gender discrepancies in reading skills in particular and other school activities in general.

136. Here, as is the case when it comes to social class, one's expectations of adult life determine to a large extent one's attitude to school and education. But these future expectations hardly explain the identified gender discrepancies, but they may explain why girls have increasingly outperformed boys at school. The Nordic welfare model has also been successful when it comes to gender equality (despite the relatively late introduction of expressed goals to this effect). The high female labour force participation rate has no doubt played a significant role regarding the study results and subject choices of girls. In practice, no girls count on becoming housewives and many expect to compete on the same terms as men when it comes to their careers. It has also been an aim to mainstream gender equality into the education system, all the way from pre-school to postgraduate studies, the result being not only that girls have caught up with boys when it comes to grades, throughput and how many of them go on to higher education but they now constantly outperform their male counterparts and are extending their lead.

Institutional environment

137. While there are few examples to be found in the 1960s and 1970s of research discussing aspects of sex/gender in relation to pre-school and 'the school for everyone', there was a considerable increase in scope and extent during the 1980s and, especially, in the 1990s (Skolverket 2002). This research is, on the whole, relatively closely linked to practice and is well anchored in empirical data. There has been a more limited interest in development of theory, and there are few feminist-theoretical studies related to pre-school and school.

138. The areas highlighted in gender-critical research on the content and working methods of the school system are those that have a long tradition in a male world of knowledge and experience. There are plenty of examples of didactic research on natural science, technology and mathematics, especially among minor studies where measures to be taken are recommended. Most of the studies of this kind focus on girls' relations to these areas of knowledge. There is no extensive research with a special focus on boys' relations to different subject areas, irrespective of whether these subjects are considered typically male or female. There are also few studies discussing teaching subjects within the areas of social science and the humanities, except for the history of literature, or 'Swedish.'

139. The teachers appear as rather neutral entities and administrators in the school system. There is limited access to research on the dominating patterns in this area, for example the impact of the fact that the educational system is more and more dominated by women. Pre-school teachers, teachers in the lower grades and special teachers are almost exclusively women trained by other women. One question is if this has created a less favourable environment for many boys.

140. There is no proof that the gender of teachers in a school could explain gender differences in grades. There has been some apprehension about the feminization of the whole education system, however this hypothesis is almost impossible to either prove or reject.

141. The school system has over the years incorporated an increasing number of options, for example by introducing more profiled content and working methods in individual subjects as well as by organizing special classes. When schools also offer other kinds of organized segregation, this has been deliberately planned and implemented in order to achieve an increase in equality at school. This is especially common in gender-related subjects and activities. While there are many projects here primarily oriented towards the

lower grades, there is a great lack of research discussing the didactic choices and consequences of segregated education and activities.

142. The procedures for differentiation and gender construction are clearly visible in the history of the school system and education. Class-related gender patterns were created by means of having separate goals, contents and working forms for boys and girls. Today's school system also contributes actively to creating patterns of class, gender and ethnicity and involves a differentiation of the pupils. Research has taken an increasing interest in how this differentiation has developed, the main focus has been on how interaction and communication patterns in the activities of pre-school and school contribute to the creation of gender differences. Many examples of the principle 'A separate logic behind the treatment of girls and boys' has been presented. Pre-school and school research debating a school for everyone has mainly focused on girls' relations to this developmental and educational environment. There are comparatively few studies that highlight the relationship between school and boys, whether it concerns their achievements, patterns of masculinity, relations to different subjects, content or school as a culture.

143. The modified working methods and forms of schools designed to promote more individual work and provide the individual pupil more responsibility coupled with the somewhat delayed social 'maturity' of boys might have led to the adoption of a less favourable teaching approach for boys as a group than for girls.

144. In some recent school research, gender-related differences are illustrated in terms of attitudes to school and to the learning environment it provides. The research on results achieved at school shows that 'using the school environment for studies' should be interpreted in a pattern related to gender, class and ethnicity.

Higher education

145. An issue that both concerns equity but that cannot be sufficiently examined here relates to educational content. There is still much to be done to highlight women, their life situations, and patriarchal gender patterns in almost every subject and at all levels.

Ethnicity

146. Some of the differences between ethnic Swedes and immigrants can be explained by the fact that pupils with a foreign background more often come from homes with a lower socio-economic status, have poorly educated parents (on the average people with a foreign background have the same level of education, but the spread with regard to education is greater than among ethnic Swedes), have parents who don't work, and also by the fact that boys are slightly overrepresented among pupils with a foreign background compared to the native pupil group. Furthermore, pupils with a foreign background are much more likely to speak another language at home, compared to native pupils, something that also correlates to reading ability.

147. In different ways, languages and language learning have been the focus of pre-school and school research studying 'a school for everyone' from the perspective of ethnicity (Skolverket 2002). It was originally a problem experienced by the schools that had to be solved, since the increasing immigration in the 1960s and 70s resulted in an increasing number of pupils at school and children in pre-school with mother tongues other than Swedish. The Swedish school system was expected to teach children who had no, or very limited, useage of Swedish. The principal issues addressed were how to achieve bilingualism, how to acquire Swedish and how to learn in the most efficient way if Swedish is not the pupil's first language and is in the process of acquiring it. The initial research dealt with the best ways of becoming bilingual, the most appropriate way of organizing education, language models and the importance of the

mother tongue. In the 1990s, when a change in structural conditions resulted in e.g. increased segregation and schools in multiethnic suburban areas with almost exclusively multilingual pupils, research has increasingly focused on Swedish as a second language. Second language acquisition is a process that differs considerably from first language acquisition.

148. In the period studied here, there are recurrent examples of studies of success at school in terms of grades assigned, results in the national tests and recruitment to higher education. Success at school is clearly related to a combination of class and gender. As for the importance of ethnic background and being an immigrant or not, the picture is complex, difficult to portray and partly unexplored. Many interacting factors seem to have an impact, for example proficiency in Swedish, age on arrival and years of residence in Sweden.

149. The attitudes of teachers and the school are another area that has been studied in the late 1990s. Studies show that teachers treat minority pupils differently from majority pupils. There is a categorization, frequently into 'we Swedes and those others -the immigrants', in society as well as at school, which highlights a difference that tends to become stigmatizing. There is also evidence of cultural categorization in a negative sense, i.e. difficulties and problems tend to be explained with reference to different cultures.

150. Some areas have not received research attention. There is, for example, hardly any research on bilingualism from a subject-didactic perspective, and we need to know more about bilingual and multilingual pupils and their studies in various subjects, e.g. civics, mathematics and biology. Language studies have been criticized for concentrating too much on what happens between teachers and pupils in the classroom. In addition, however, we need to know more about the relationship between homes and schools. We need more studies that go outside the classroom and study friends, school and what the pupils do in their spare time. We also need to know more about how pupils view each other, the processes of marginalization and exclusion and how the pupils relate to school. Research has mainly focused on the pupils and has not paid as much attention to the school as a system. We need more studies of complex relationships. A comparison with research in other countries shows that there are also surprisingly few studies of xenophobia and racism at school.

151. There is a negative effect of attending a school with a high immigrant population but this effect only manifests itself in those schools with the highest ethnic mixes. Such schools are so few in number that only a small minority of pupils with immigrant backgrounds actually attend them, so they have little to do with the problems in general.

Region

152. In smaller urban and rural/sparsely populated areas, the impact of social factors was less a question of segregation and more about the predominant local 'school culture', i.e. the attitude to and importance attached to education (Lindgren). Pupils in lower secondary education in these areas did not in general perform poorly, especially when you consider the low level of education among the adult population. More striking, however, are the major gender discrepancies in these areas (ibid). The predominantly male culture ('hunting and fishing') seems to have a detrimental effect on the performance of boys at school even if more research into the mechanisms is needed.

153. The discrepancies among the counties in the number of higher education entrants are related to several underlying factors. The social composition of the population in the county is one of these factors, since a person's propensity to enter higher education is connected to their social background. Access to higher education and the labour market are other factors that affect the number of people entering higher education in a county.

Sexual orientation

154. Educational surroundings in all environments are characterized by heteronormativity and this is true of everything from pre-school games to the educational content of teacher education programmes (Olsson & Olsson). The problems facing GLBT persons are two-fold. Firstly, they are still discriminated against in schools and in higher education and secondly, pupils receive inadequate education when it comes to GLBT issues in general.

155. Attitudes to GLBT persons in schools are however surprisingly open and it seems that something has happened to change this over the last few years (Ambjörnsson, 2004). Girls are more tolerant than boys. Boys still contrast their masculinity against the symbolic femininity of homosexuals. Lesbianism, on the other hand, remains invisible even if it is present. In the education system, as in society at large, expressions of heterosexuality in public are not even classed as 'sexuality', whilst the slightest public expression of homosexual intimacy is seen as unsuitable and the shocking encroachment of bedroom behaviour into the public domain (Ambjörnsson 2004, Kulick 2004).

156. There are many problems still to be solved when it comes to the subject of sexuality education (Huris, 2003). This is no longer limited to the subject of biology but should be integrated into all relevant subjects. Despite this, however, the textbooks still concentrate on a biology context, i.e. there is too much emphasis on reproduction. The social aspects tend to disappear (which is not just a problem for GLBT persons but also heterosexuals). Another problem is that homosexuality is still portrayed as deviating behaviour in existing textbooks even if it is much better tolerated these days. This of course violates the rights of GLBT persons.

SECTION III: POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Chapter 6: The bearing of active education policies on equity

Mainstreaming policies:

157. Equity has been one of the cornerstones of the Swedish education system, and mainstreaming has been the major strategy for achieving this. The basic systems are in themselves seen as a way of achieving equity; an important feature of the Swedish education system being its homogeneity. The basic idea is to provide all children and young people with access to the same education, regardless of gender, place of residence, social and financial circumstances. Each type of school must offer equivalent education irrespective of where it is provided. The curricula and timetable are valid nation-wide and the education shall take account of pupils with special needs. A school for all is the underlying principle - all pupils shall be able to reach the goals set in the curricula for compulsory education and also follow a three-year upper secondary school programme making them eligible for higher education studies. The same basic ideas are found throughout the whole of the education system i.e. accessibility, openness, equity and quality.

158. Homogeneity is present in many different ways:

- through the curricula for the pre-school, the compulsory school and the upper secondary school where they have the same foundation values and in many respects the same basic structure,
- by children and young persons with different kinds of functional impairments being integrated as far as possible in mainstream public education,
- by integration of vocationally oriented and general education in the upper secondary school, where all education programmes contain the same core subjects which all pupils study,
- by the fact that the system has no 'dead-ends', where a wide range of adult education options is a guarantee that it is always possible to re-enter the formal education system
- by having a homogeneous framework in higher education, where there is no difference between universities and university colleges in their undergraduate programmes.

159. One of the most important changes in the three-year vocational upper-secondary school programme was that it qualified students to go on to higher education. The idea behind the change was to combat so-called 'dead-ends'. Despite the scope of and considerable expectations attached to this reform, it has only been evaluated to a very limited extent.

Other important means of enhancing equity are:

160. Education at compulsory, upper secondary and state higher education is free of charge, as is municipal adult education. In compulsory education and to some extent upper secondary education, books

and other school material are provided free of charge and school meals are served to all. In compulsory education, school transport is also free, provided pupils go to the school proposed by the municipality.

161. The law requires that all school activity shall be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values. Each and everyone working in the school shall encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person as well as for the environment we all share. In particular, everyone working in schools shall promote gender equality as well as actively counteract all forms of abusive treatment such as bullying and racist behaviour

162. Pre-school is seen as the base for lifelong learning, and reforms have been made to widen access to pre-school (see below). Even before this reform, child-care was provided to all children whose parents who work or study, or children who are in need of such care for their own well-being. In 2002, 80 per cent of children aged 1-5 attended pre-school or other form of child-care.

163. Student aid – consisting of upper secondary student aid (grants only) and post secondary student aid (student grants and student loans) + Since 1975 all employees have been entitled by law to unpaid leave of absence for studying, providing they had the same employer the last six months or for a total of 12 months during the two previous years. The choice of study rests solely with the employee and there are no restrictions on the duration or the type of studies.

164. Grades are given first in lower secondary school. The school is responsible for ensuring that all pupils receive the support they need for achieving the goals set out in the curricula and syllabi.

Home language tuition and Swedish as a second language

165. All students whose mother tongue is a language other than Swedish can study Swedish as a second language throughout their time at compulsory and upper secondary school. The subject 'Swedish as a Second Language' has its own syllabus and is deemed equivalent to the subject 'Swedish' when students are applying for entry at a tertiary education institution, for example.

166. The regulations governing school education make it possible to offer pupils lessons in some subjects in their mother tongue. This is most often the case in schools with a high proportion of immigrant pupils and in independent schools with a language profile, where the language of tuition is not Swedish. If possible, the pupils in reception classes are also given tuition in their mother tongue.

167. Students with a mother tongue other than Swedish have the right to receive tuition in their native language as a school subject. This subject, 'Home language tuition', has its own separate syllabus, which also covers the literature, history and culture of the country of origin. Grades awarded in this subject are equivalent to grades in other subjects

168. The aim of home language tuition is to enable pupils who speak a language other than Swedish at home to maintain and develop it. Pupils are to be given the opportunity to become bilingual and familiarize themselves with their cultural background.

169. The mother tongue may be studied as an alternative to the second foreign language, as a pupil option, a school option or outside normal timetabled lessons. The right to tuition in the mother tongue is in principle restricted to seven years, if the teaching is organized outside normal lessons. Exceptions are made for the Nordic languages and for the national minority languages.

Systems for follow-up and evaluation

170. New structures for follow-up and evaluation have been set up in the school system and these are also important factors for being able to secure equity within the systems. The school system in Sweden is largely decentralized, and this reflects also on the way in which the evaluation of schools (pre-school, compulsory school and upper secondary school) is carried out.

171. The Government and Parliament lay down the legal framework under which local schools operate. The overall goals towards which the schools are orientated are formulated in the Education Act, the national curricula and other steering documents. The 289 municipalities have great autonomy to administer the education system within this legislative framework. The division of responsibility in the steering system ensures that the municipalities themselves are responsible for the organization and implementation of school evaluation. Hence, the major part of the evaluation takes place locally in municipalities and schools. Information is collated each year relating to how activities are organized, how much they cost and the results. Follow-ups form the basis for official statistics relating to childcare and the school sector. The generation of statistics has, in recent years, increased in scope due to a rising interest on the part of the media, municipalities and the general public.

172. National evaluation, carried out by the National Agency for Education, entails in-depth study and analysis in specific areas. Evaluation aims at a deeper understanding and explanation of outcomes and relationships in school activities than can be provided by follow-up. This means that evaluation and in-depth analysis are carried out within selected problem areas. Evaluation is closely related to the goals applicable for school activity, and has the dual purpose of not only checking, but also providing a basis for further development of the school system.

173. Evaluation takes place in a selected number of municipalities and in various types of childcare establishments and/or schools. The results of evaluations form the basis for those responsible for, and active in, childcare and schools in their efforts to improve and revitalize their work. The overriding goal is to encourage the development of childcare and schools and to reach national objectives by providing the state, the municipalities and other authorities responsible for schools with information relating to actual quality and progress in evaluated areas.

Specific measures aimed at specific target groups:

The Adult Education Initiative ('Kunskapslyftet')

174. The Adult Education Initiative, 1997-2002, has been the subject of a number of evaluations. Sparsely populated municipalities and municipalities with high rates of unemployment have used the Adult Education Initiative more than other municipalities. Of those studying under the Adult Education Initiative, approximately three quarters have gone on to further studies or obtained work on completion of their studies. The corresponding proportion for those in open unemployment was approximately 50 per cent. International experts regard the Adult Education Initiative as a very ambitious project, the scope of which has not been seen in other countries.

Language pre-schools

175. For children who do not attend pre-school, many municipal authorities run what are called 'open pre-schools', which children and their parents can attend for a few hours a day. For many families with a foreign background, these 'open playgroups' function as a meeting place and provide a good first step into Swedish social life. Many municipal authorities also run what are called 'special language pre-school groups', which children with a mother tongue other than Swedish can attend for two to three hours a day in order to learn Swedish and receive learning support in their mother tongue. The aim is to develop active bilingualism and a dual cultural identity. These courses are free of charge.

National minorities

176. In 1999, the Swedish Riksdag established the Sami, Swedish Finns, Tornedalers, Roma and Jews as national minorities. Sweden's policy on minorities aims to protect national minorities, promote their participation in community affairs and public decision-making and help keep long-established minority languages alive. The curricula have been modified to incorporate learning about Sweden's national minorities. The compulsory and voluntary school form curricula state that the school is responsible for and must strive towards every pupil possessing knowledge about the culture, language, religion and history of the national minorities. Syllabi have also been reviewed and changed accordingly. The syllabi highlight the Sami people in particular since they constitute an indigenous people. When the Sami syllabus was recently revised, the role of the Sami language as an official language of the Sami and a tool for the development of the Sami language and culture received special emphasis.

Newly arrived immigrants

177. Most municipal authorities offer newly arrived immigrant children the choice of starting off at school in a reception class; these classes usually include both children seeking asylum and those who have been granted a residence permit. Pupils receive tuition in the Swedish language, learn about Swedish society and are taught school subjects at a level based on what they have already learned. How long a pupil attends the reception class varies, depending on the individual pupil's level of previous education and how quickly he or she acquires a reasonable command of Swedish to follow lessons in a mainstream class.

178. Newly arrived pupils who have moved into a mainstream class are taught with the same national subject syllabi as other pupils. Generally speaking, newly arrived pupils are placed in classes with pupils of the same age. This may mean that newly arrived pupils need additional support to be able to follow the lessons. If so, they are entitled to what is called 'study guidance'. This extra help, which is given by a support teacher, may be provided either in Swedish or in the pupil's mother tongue. The support teacher often brings together a small group of pupils who need extra help for special lessons but he or she may also assist individual pupils during their 'normal' classes.

179. The school performance of the newly arrived pupils is assessed using the same grading criteria as for all other pupils. In Sweden, pupils do not receive subject grades until the autumn term of their eighth year at compulsory school. A pupil who does not achieve the standard required for a pass grade or better is entitled to a written certificate stating what he or she has learned.

Newly proposed or implemented systems:

The Quality Programme

180. The Government has decided to take measures to strengthen systematic quality work throughout the system, from pre-school to adult education in order to make it possible for more children, young persons and adults to attain the goals of the education. A concentration of resources on quality work must have an impact in all schools and in all municipalities. This requires greater emphasis on quality work at all levels – at the school itself, in the municipality and at the national level.

181. In light of this, a number of changes will take place. In March 2003, the National Agency for Education was transformed into an authority with additional resources for educational inspection, and at the same time the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement was established. The National Agency for Education now has greater responsibility for educational inspection, national follow-up and evaluation. Schools and municipalities have been obliged to submit annual quality reports since 1997 and initiatives are now being taken to introduce this rule into pre-school and school-age child care.

182. In addition, the National Agency for Education will be given the task of developing standardized measures for assessing results in pre-school, school and adult education, which will be used in quality reporting. The rules governing the school's obligation to inform parents and pupils about pupils' study progress on a regular basis throughout compulsory schooling will be strengthened and an obligation will be introduced for the compulsory school to issue written assessments for pupils who do not achieve the goals.

183. Over the period 2001–2006, a targeted government grant will gradually raise the level of appropriations made to municipalities to enable them to put more staff in schools and leisure-time centres, until the level of resources available has been increased by SEK 5 billion (about EUR 550 million). This will make it possible to employ about 15,000 new teachers and other specialist staff. The new resources are to be used for strategically important appointments.

Legislation banning discrimination

184. The Government has appointed a commissioner to draw up a proposal for legislation banning discrimination and other abusive treatment that may occur in pre-school, compulsory school, upper secondary school and adult education. The starting-point is for the provisions to cover discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic background, religion or other belief, sexual orientation and disability. Sanctions such as financial damages shall be imposed on those violating the ban.

185. The commissioner should propose regulations that promote equal rights and combat discrimination and other abusive treatment both in municipal and independent schools, pre-schools and school-age care. An interim report containing legislative proposals is to be presented in the spring of 2004.

Universal pre-school

186. Universal pre-school for 4 and 5-year olds was introduced on January 1, 2003. The reform implies that all children should be offered a place in pre-school in the autumn term of the year they turn four years. Universal pre-school is free of charge and entitles children to at least 525 hours of pre-school a year.

187. The Government has instructed the National Agency for Education to monitor the reform on universal pre-school, pre-school for children of the unemployed or those on parental leave and the maximum-fee system for pre-school education and school-age child care. The Government has also decided to monitor developments in family day-care homes. A report on this task is to be presented in the autumn of 2004.

The Gender Equality Delegation

188. The Delegation for Gender Equality in Pre-School was appointed by the Government in 2003 and will continue its work until June 2006. The main aim of the delegation is to emphasize, reinforce and develop the gender equality activity in Swedish pre-schools. In order to achieve this goal they work with e.g.:

- granting money to different projects concerning gender equality in pre-schools;
- choosing and documenting gender equality projects in a number of different pre-schools;
- distributing the acquired knowledge and experience;
- emphasizing and rewarding gender equality work of high standard;

- disseminating knowledge from other countries about successful gender equality work in pre-schools;
- developing tools for employees to be able to look into and analyse toys and children's books from a gender perspective;
- emphasizing successful examples, both from Sweden and other countries, on efforts to attract men to start working in the pre-school system and efforts to keep the existing men working there;
- compiling the knowledge of gender equality and gender studies that is available today and make sure that it is spread within the pre-school system. finding out what kind of knowledge about gender equality people within the pre-school system is missing, examining the format and content of gender equality and gender studies education included in university pre-school teachers' education programmes.

Higher education:

189. Higher education has been expanded throughout the country in order to increase access and broaden recruitment. This expansion has led to the establishment of strong universities/university colleges in every county which act as power centres for development in every region. These new universities/university colleges have played a crucial role in broadening recruitment and reducing regional discrepancies in higher education participation.

190. Other important initiatives to broaden recruitment were proposed in the government bill A more open higher education system (Government Bill 2001/02:15), adopted by the Riksdag in December 2001. In accordance with this bill, a provision has been incorporated into the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) enjoining universities and university colleges to promote and broaden recruitment to higher education. A Recruitment Delegation has been established to stimulate recruitment activities at universities and university colleges and SEK 120 million (EUR 13 million) has been earmarked for this purpose during the period 2002-2004. Key ratios have been developed by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education to enable the results of recruitment broadening measures to be followed up. Basic education, which has been a successful recruitment instrument, has been broadened and to bridge the gap between upper secondary school and higher education, universities and university colleges may arrange so-called 'college education programmes' in partnership with the municipal adult secondary education system. The collaboration of universities and university colleges through the Swedish Net University provides a greater range of and gateway to ICT-aided distance learning for students. Supplementary educational programmes provide immigrant academics with better opportunities on the Swedish labour market.

191. Universities and university colleges also have the task of reporting the measures they have implemented to achieve a more even balance in educational programmes with uneven gender distribution. The reporting done by the higher education institutes shows that measures are being implemented but that the pace of change is unfortunately rather sluggish. It is very important for universities and university colleges to implement targeted measures to increase the recruitment of students from the underrepresented gender to programmes where there is an uneven distribution.

The Validation Delegation

192. A government authority, the Validation Delegation, has been appointed for the period 2004-2007. The authority's main tasks are to promote and advance the development of methods and systems for validation and to work towards a national equivalence, high quality and security for the individual. The Government has also given the National Agency for School Improvement the task of extending adult skills

validation pilot schemes. The report that led to the establishment of the Delegation also presents other measures that promote validation work. One such measure is the development of a national on-line portal containing information on all education in Sweden.

Sexual orientation

193. Sexuality education is an area of knowledge that embraces all subjects and school principals have a particular responsibility for ensuring it is properly integrated into the various different subjects in accordance with the national school curricula (Lpo 94 and Lpf 94). The biology syllabus includes objectives relating to the pupil gaining sufficient knowledge about fertilization, sex life biology, contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STI) and being able to have a discussion about sexuality and partnership whilst showing respect for different views and different forms of partnerships. Following the comments made in the quality audit of sexuality education in Swedish schools, discussing and reflecting on concepts such as identity, sexuality, love and gender equality were introduced as part of the social studies syllabus as from the autumn of 2000. The change also implies that sexuality education should also include partnerships and relationships, the way people are seen in society and language use in order to be able to discuss value issues in this context.

194. The National Agency for Education's quality audit of sexuality education indicated that the governance and coordination exercised by school principals is crucial in enabling all pupils to gain access to good-quality, varied teaching. There were however large discrepancies in quality both between schools and within individual schools, which were the consequence of poor governance. In the light of this, the National Agency for Education has produced a handbook called 'Min uppgift är att knyta ihop det' (My job is to tie everything in together) aimed at inspiring principals and supporting the efforts of schools to promote basic values and improve 'interdisciplinary studies'. As part of improving the skills of school personnel, the Agency also arranged a national conference on sexuality education in the autumn of 2001 in partnership with the National Institute of Public Health in Sweden, the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) and a number of county councils.

195. The National Agency for School Improvement is currently performing a case study of the interdisciplinary knowledge of which sexuality education is a part. This study will be presented during the spring of 2004. The Agency has also presented its experiences from a project on gender-equality in the Swedish education system in the publication *Hur är det ställt? Tack ojämnt (How gender-equal is the system? It's not)* and in another publication on how we can reflect on issues of gender, power and ethnicity entitled *Starkare än du tror (Stronger than you think)*.

196. Working life applies anti-discrimination legislation and the Act on the Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education governs students at higher education institutes. As yet, the rest of the school system has not been afforded the same level of legal protection. The Government has, as a result, appointed a special investigator to draw up draft legislation prohibiting discrimination in pre-school, compulsory and upper secondary school. This protection shall apply to discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic background, religion or other faith, sexual orientation and disability.

197. The Government also intends to keep a close eye on the work going on at universities and university colleges in order to achieve the objectives laid down in the Act on the Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education.

Chapter 7: Non-educational policies

198. An aspect not discussed in chapter 4 is that differences in health and nutrition also could account for some of the relationship between class origin and academic ability. The effect of such factors may have lessened during this century, thanks to generally improved living conditions. Furthermore, these factors may be of less importance in Sweden than in many other countries due to the high equality in level of living conditions. However, the improvement in health and nutrition could hardly have been so much more impressive in Sweden than elsewhere to explain the comparably small class inequality in educational attainment (Erikson and Jonsson, 1996).

SECTION IV: CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 8: Conclusions and assessments

199. The Nordic Welfare Model focuses strongly on equality and its ambitions have also survived both globalization and economic crises. However, even if the Nordic Welfare Model is a success story in the issue of equity, the Swedish educational system has its own share of inequity.

200. We can divide equity problems into two parts. Firstly, there must be a certain amount of difference between individuals, and secondly, this difference must not be correlated to gender, social background, ethnicity and the like. If we consider the first aspect here, we can see that the Swedish education system seems to function reasonably well in most cases. Sweden is characterized by a high level of general education among the adult population, a fact confirmed by the IALS study and the rather narrow spread among pupil attainment seen in the PISA study. There are many parts of the Swedish education system where the objective (or at least the interim target), is to increase the 'lowest level' of knowledge in the population (comprehensive school, the three-year vocational programmes at upper secondary school, extensive adult secondary education, initiatives such as the Swedish Adult Education Initiative, etc.)

201. There is however an area where there is gives cause for concern, namely the dropout rate from upper secondary school. It is difficult to say how Sweden compares internationally in this respect but the fact that more than a quarter of the pupils don't complete their upper secondary education within four years is well below what is considered a reasonable target. This is particularly relevant given life opportunities of those who do not gain final upper secondary school grades are much lower than those who do. And we can also expect society to place higher and higher educational demands on people over time. It is true that there is plenty of scope for 'a second chance' but this is a much more uncertain road to take and also costly, both from an individual and from a societal perspective.

202. A previous objective for the Swedish education system has been as an 'equalizer' – diminishing the differences children bring with them into the system. There is proof that this objective has been fulfilled since, internationally speaking, Sweden has very little variation in pupil attainment and there is little correlation between attainment and social background regardless of how these parameters are measured. There has also been a trend towards less inequality in educational opportunity since the mid-1990s. It is worth pointing out here that this has occurred despite the rise of inequalities in many other areas of society and therefore the Swedish education policy has been relatively successful. But although there is more equality in Sweden than many other countries, this does not mean to say that there are not inequalities. Social background still has a considerable impact on both study results (attainment) and choice of subjects. And there is evidence indicating that the relatively equal outcome of Swedish schools depends just as much on the relative equality that pervades the society at large as on the education system in itself. On the other hand, there is little doubt that Sweden's coherent education system and generous student support have also played a positive role. It will be an important task to highlight the next steps in reducing inequality in educational opportunity, especially since economic capital seems to play much less of a role than social and cultural capital. Differences in the latter are probably more difficult to equalize.

203. The educational system in Sweden is not gender-equal, but interestingly enough it is boys that are disadvantaged. In short, there is a tendency for girls to improve their relative performance over time as a group in relation to boys as a group, for fewer boys to complete their education, particularly at upper secondary school and for girls to increase their share in higher education and postgraduate studies. Despite this, however, we have yet to see positive effects of this on the labour market in the form of diminishing gender inequality. And this inequality is linked to the continuing sex segregation in the education system.

204. The fact that sex segregation is not homogenous and takes different forms at different levels of the system may mean it is possible to conquer. This suggests that it to a large extent depends on the fact that pupils and students make rational choices and that it can therefore be eradicated by changes being made to the labour market and the education system. Concerning upper secondary school, boys are increasingly (but slowly) taking traditionally female-dominated programmes. When it comes to higher education, however, the trend is the other way round, female students are increasingly (and fast) starting to take traditionally male-dominated programmes.

205. Regarding the relatively poor attainment of boys, the allocation of resources obviously plays less of a role than motivation and attitudes. How shall we change the attitudes of boys (and working-class children) to education and school? With information on the importance of education for future opportunities in life? Or is it rather the case that the structure of the system and the social context actually mean that these attitudes are based on rational and informed choices? It is clear that the school system must be better in stimulating the boys' commitment to learning.

206. The multicultural society is something rather new in Sweden and the Swedish model has not until now been very successful at solving the problems associated with social equity and gender equality, especially when it comes to immigrants establishing themselves on the labour market. The PISA study indicates that the Swedish education system is not as successful as we had hoped regarding pupils with a foreign background. The National Agency for Education has shown that this is a partly a composition effect, i.e. there are differences in types of immigrants between the countries and Swedish immigrants have, on average, more disadvantaged backgrounds. There is also considerable heterogeneity in attainment among pupils in Sweden with a foreign background. A recent analysis of PISA-statistics shows that the dividing line is between pupils arriving before and after school starts. Greater attention must be paid to this heterogeneity among different immigrant groups and similar issues when formulating education policy. One question for the future is how we should look upon the role of integration policy. Shall we move in the direction of integration or diversity and if we really want diversity, what should such an education system be like?

207. One final point is that our discussions centre a great deal on system issues but very little on teaching methods. How can we open up and broaden the debate on the importance of pedagogics (at all levels) for equity? It is certainly the case that pedagogics is a professional issue, but this does not mean that we can just ignore it in the democratic debate.

ANNEX 1: DESCRIPTION OF DATA

Common background variables

A. Gender

1	Men
2	Women

B. Region

208. To provide data for the analysis of regional discrepancies, a selection of tables are presented here in accordance with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities' classification of groups of municipalities.

Groups of municipalities
Cities
Suburban municipalities
Large towns
Medium-sized towns
Industrial municipalities
Rural municipalities
Sparsely populated municipalities
Other large municipalities
Other smaller municipalities

See Annex 2 for an explanation of the different groups of municipalities.

C. Immigration status

209. The requirement is to present first-generation immigrants (those who have immigrated themselves) and second-generation (children of foreign-born citizens) separately. If there is a lack of data for one of the parents, the person is classified using the information available on the other parent. If there is a lack of data on the place of birth of both parents, it is assumed that at least one of them was born in Sweden if the person her/himself was also born in Sweden (category 1 as below). This applies first and foremost to older people for whose parents no data has been registered. If there is no data on the parents' country of birth for people born abroad, it is assumed that neither parent was born in Sweden (category 3 as below).

1	Swedish background	People born in Sweden, with at least one parent also born in Sweden.
2	Foreign background, born in Sweden	People born in Sweden with both parents born abroad
3	Foreign background, born abroad	People born abroad, no parents born in Sweden

210. In case the statistical data does not cover information on the country of birth of the parents, only the person's own country of birth is presented, assuming such information is available.

1	Swedish born	
2	Foreign born	

D. Birth regions of immigrants

211. Another classification of foreign-born persons is occasionally used based on which continent (or other country grouping) they were born in. People are grouped by birth region to provide data on the population's education. These groupings are not included in other tables.

Region
Sweden
Nordic countries other than Sweden
EU15 excluding the Nordic countries
Other European countries
North America
South America
Africa
Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria
Other parts of Asia and Oceania
Unknown2

212. Classifying people in this way means that immigrants from new EU member states are put in the same category as the large number of refugees who arrived from the Balkans, but since this concerns historical data, using EU25 as a classification basis did not seem warranted.

E. Socio-economic status of the parents

213. Presentation by the socio-economic class (SEI) of the parents is not commonly available as part of normal education statistics. Data is mostly available from old population and housing censuses as well as from Living Conditions Surveys (ULF) and Labour Force Surveys (AKU).

214. Statistics on higher education also contains data on social background in accordance with the classification in the census of 1985 (FoB 1985). Children are grouped in this way in accordance with parents who belong to the 'highest' socio-economic group. Since the socio-economic standings of families is primarily available for older data, parents' education is used to describe social background.

F. Parents' education

215. There is a reasonable amount of data on parents' education. The variable is divided into three groups according to the parent with the highest education as below. The grouping does not consider parents who are not known or whose education is not known.

Group	Description	Father's and/or mother's education
1.	Compulsory school level (equivalent)	Highest compulsory school level or equivalent (ISCED level 2)
2.	Upper secondary level	Upper secondary school or equivalent, including continuing education and training and higher education shorter than 2 years (ISCED level 3 or 4)
3.	Higher education	At least 2 years higher education (ISCED level 5-6)
9.	Not known	Education of neither parent known

G. Ethnicity

216. There is no data on ethnicity in the statistics produced by Statistics Sweden. Data on country/region of birth can to a certain extent be used to estimate ethnicity, but for the sake of clarity, a sub-group by country of birth should be presented under the heading 'immigration status' and the ethnicity classification has been scrapped.

H. Language

217. Data on language group is mostly inapplicable to Sweden and language group has therefore been scrapped as a background variable. In some cases, however, there is data on the number of pupils participating in (or having the right to) home language teaching at compulsory school. The criterion for being eligible for home language teaching is for a language other than Swedish to be spoken at home. This is however not relevant for this report.

Tables

218. The data appendix includes 17 main tables classified in accordance with the above-mentioned variables. In most cases, specific reference is made to a corresponding table in the OECD's report on education indicators in the publication 'Education at a Glance (EAG)', 2003.

T.1. Participation in education at ISCED level 0 (pre-school)

T.2. Participation in education at ISCED levels 3 and 4. Studies at ISCED levels 3 and 4 in the current education system mainly include:

- Upper secondary school;
- Special upper secondary school;
- Upper secondary studies and supplementary courses in adult education;
- Folk high schools;
- Foundation year at university/university college in technical/science subjects.

219. There is separate data for all these forms of education apart from special upper secondary school covering the last few years. Comparable data for 2000-2002 has been compiled from the register of citizen participation in education by simplifying the statistics (i.e. by excluding the 5,000 or so special upper secondary school pupils but including all adult education students).

T.3. Students on ISCED level 3 by subject orientation (general/vocational)

220. The Swedish upper secondary natural science (N) and social science (S) programmes are classified as 'General/Academic' and other upper secondary programmes are classed as 'Vocational/Technical'. In adult education, individual subjects can be classed either as 'General/Academic' or as 'Vocational/Technical', but since the same person has often read more than one adult education course, the problem arises as to whether one should put the person in both categories or just one. When assessing the person's total adult education, which often stretches over several terms, Statistics Sweden employs a 'most-criterion' insofar as his/her education is assessed as vocational if a certain percentage of the courses in which the person has gained at least a Pass grade are vocational.

221. Classifying adult education studies in this way for just one single term is not to be recommended.

222. We have chosen only to present upper secondary students by subject orientation. Furthermore, we have not included data on folk high schools and technical/science foundation years, which in this context can be construed as 'General/Academic'.

T.4. Participation rates in tertiary education – percentage of a cohort who enter tertiary education

223. Table C2.1 in EAG refers to university entrants.

T.5. Distribution rates in tertiary education

224. The description of the preferred table content refers to Table C2.3 in Education at a Glance, in which students at ISCED level 5-6 are classified by ISCED categories 5A/6 and 5B, and by type of school governor/owner for each institution respectively. 'Private' owners provide mostly Advanced Vocational Education (AVE) programmes, whereas university and university college programmes are mainly provided by the public sector. Chalmers University of Technology, Jönköping University and the Stockholm School of Economics are then counted as 'Government-dependent private institutions'.

225. In conclusion, we feel that a classification by type of owner is not useful when it comes to analysing equity aspects, at least on such an aggregated level. As a result, this is not presented in this statistical compilation.

T.6. Percentage of adults aged 35 and over enrolled in all types of education.

226. Data on parents' education is seen as unuseful for people of such a high age.

T.7. Survival rates in tertiary education

227. Percentage of graduates in relation to the number of entrants. The proportion of graduates in relation to the number of entrants (at the same time) does not take the actual number of students into consideration. The concept used in EaG can be said to be a simplification for the want of better-quality underlying data. Full-scale follow-ups of the majority of higher education programmes are performed in Sweden. One problem is that the Swedish system is divided into modules, and that there are university entrants on single subject courses who do not intend to take a degree. The analysis should also take into consideration the fact that there are ex-students with sufficient qualifications for them to be able to gain a degree but who have not done so, i.e. they have successfully completed their education but for some reason or other have not collected their degree certificate.

T.8. Percentage of the population aged 25-29 who have completed an educational programme equivalent to ISCED level 3 or beyond.

T.9. Percentage of the population aged 50-54 who have completed an educational programme equivalent to ISCED level 3 or beyond.

228. The tables are presented by level of education for the relevant educational categories classified by gender or national background. The highest level of their parents' education is also presented for the youngest age groups, 25-29 and 30-34 years old respectively.

T.10. Upper secondary (Academic) graduation rates to the population of the typical age of graduation.

T.11. Upper secondary (Vocational or Technical) graduation rates to the population of the typical age of graduation.

229. It is proposed that the data only refer to those who have graduated from upper secondary school.

T.12. Percentage of the population aged 30-34 who have completed an educational programme equivalent to ISCED level 5 or beyond.

T.13. Percentage of the population aged 50-54 who have completed an educational programme equivalent to ISCED level 5 or beyond.

T.14. Labour market participation/status by type of upper secondary education completed by type of upper secondary education (general/vocational).

T.15. Labour market participation/status by type of tertiary education completed by type (5B or 5A/6).

230. The sample of age groups is the same for both categories despite the example table in EaG (A12) covers different age groups for employed and unemployed persons. Data on the general/vocational dimension is not available in known abstracts from the labour force surveys (AKU surveys). This variable is assessed as being of little analytical interest concerning possible differences with regard to the selected equity variables. Data on parents' education and social background is felt not to be useful for person of such a high age. The youngest age group in Table A12 in EaG is 30-44 years.

T.16. Average annual earnings by level of educational attainment.

231. Swedish data in EaG refers to aggregated income in accordance with people's tax assessments.

232. Presenting parents' education or social background is felt to be meaningless for the 25-64 age group.

T.17. Proportion of the population aged 15-24 years who neither study nor work.

233. Data from the labour force surveys (AKU surveys) for the first quarter of 2001-2002 has been compiled for the INES Network and is included in the YALLE database. Data presented by groups of municipalities has not been compiled.

Choice of reporting year

234. Data has been compiled for the 'latest available year', which in most cases means the 2002/2003 academic year and the 2002 calendar year respectively.

235. The request for historical data refers to data from 5, 10 and 20 years ago. Up to now, data has been compiled for 1997 or the 1997/98 academic year and 1992 and the 1992/93 academic year if it is directly comparable with the current data.

ANNEX 2: COMMENTS ON TABLE ANNEX FOR SWEDEN

T.1. Participation rates in pre-primary education.

236. There are two different tables here. The first follows the OECD definition and omits all children under the age of three since it is felt they only receive care. The second presents all registered children and is the one on which the analysis is based.

237. We can see a dramatic increase in the percentage of one to five-year-old children registered at pre-school, from 47.5 per cent in 1994 to 72.2 per cent in 2002. The percentage of children at private pre-schools has doubled from 6 per cent to 12 per cent but the increase is greater in municipal pre-schools (20 per cent) in absolute terms. This increase is for all age groups (one to five year-olds). Much of this increase is counterbalanced by a reduction in the number of children registered in family day-care. It is also worth noting that the size of cohorts decreased during the period, which means that the increase in numbers is substantially less than the percentage rise. The only other analysis possible is the percentage of children who attend day-care is greater in large towns (and cities) than elsewhere in the country.

T.2. Participation rates in upper secondary education (gymnasieskolan).

238. We can see an increase between 1993 (88 per cent) and 1997 (93 per cent) and then a slight decrease up until 2002 (92 per cent) in the number of 16-18 year-olds attending upper secondary school. The figure is high regardless of the type of municipality but it is slightly lower in cities and slightly higher in sparsely populated areas.

239. There is basically no gender discrepancy. There is a difference between children with parents who only have a compulsory school education and those whose parents have studied at a higher level. This difference has also increased slightly since 1999. There is some discrepancy between first-generation and second-generation immigrants (children of foreign-born parents) and a similar difference between the latter and other Swedes. These differences have decreased somewhat since 1999. There are no interaction effects for educational background-immigrant status or gender-immigrant status. But the effect of coming from a home where there is no study experience is greater for boys than for girls.

T.3. Proportion of upper secondary enrolments that are (a) General/Academic and (b) Vocational/Technical

240. In total, 52 per cent attend vocational programmes, 41 per cent go on higher education preparatory programmes and 7 per cent are on individual programmes (2002 figures). The number of students on individual and vocational programmes has gone up one or two per cent since 1997 while those on higher education preparatory programmes has correspondingly decreased.

241. There are moderate gender differences at this level, i.e. vertical sex segregation is relatively minor in upper secondary school. Horizontal sex segregation is however very widespread (Statistics Sweden 2004, Lathund om jämställdhet - An easy guide to gender equality). There is a slightly higher percentage (1-2 per cent) of boys than girls on individual programmes and a correspondingly lower percentage attend higher education preparatory programmes. There is actually a higher percentage of second-generation immigrants than 'other Swedes' on higher education preparatory programmes but a

higher number also attend individual programmes. A much higher percentage of first-generation immigrants go on individual programmes and a lower number attend the other two categories.

242. There are considerable differences between children with different educational backgrounds even if these have decreased somewhat since 1997. There is a 7.5 per cent difference when it comes to students studying higher education preparatory programmes between those whose parents only have compulsory school education and those whose parents have an upper secondary school qualification, and as much as a 24-percent difference between the latter and those who have at least one parent with a higher education diploma.

243. Interaction effects: There is a slightly greater gender discrepancy among immigrant groups (immigrant girls prefer higher education preparatory programmes). When it comes to the number of pupils on higher education preparatory programmes, there are hardly any gender differences among those who have at least one parent with a higher education diploma, but there is a higher proportion of girls among those pupils whose parents have lower educational qualifications. The most interesting interaction is between immigrant status and educational background. Educational background is much less significant for first and second-generation immigrants than it is for other Swedish pupils. However, the non-response rate is far too large for the figures to be considered accurate.

T.4. Participation rates in tertiary education. Percentage of the population 25 years of age 2003 who had entered an undergraduate course/programme in a Swedish university or university college.

244. In total, 41 per cent of 25-year-olds had entered a university/university college programme in 2003. But the differences were quite substantial among the sub-groups. Among those having entered higher education, 48 per cent were women and only 36 per cent were men. Furthermore, we can see large differences between first-generation immigrants (25 per cent), second-generation immigrants (33 per cent) and other Swedes (45 per cent). The differences are also substantial concerning educational background. Of those whose parents had only received a compulsory school education, 22 per cent had entered higher education; the corresponding figure for those whose parents had an upper secondary school qualification was 33 per cent and for those with at least one parent with a higher education diploma it was as high as 65 per cent. The figures for educational background only include 'other Swedes' since, as mentioned above, the non-response rate when it comes to educational background is considerable and seemingly systematic among immigrants.

T.5. Distribution of students in tertiary education.

245. The OECD's analysis requirement refers to the distribution of students in higher education by type of principal/owner and by 'student destination' (classification into ISCED categories 5A/6 and 5B respectively). The classification by type of principal/owner is of only subordinate interest for Sweden from an equity perspective.

T.6. Percentage of adults aged 35 and over in enrolment in education.

246. In the 35-64 age group, 3.5 per cent of men and just over double the number of women (7.6 per cent) participate in some form of 'formal education' (2002). First-generation immigrants participate most (8.7 per cent), then second generation immigrants (6.9 per cent) and lastly other Swedes (4.9 per cent). A minor increase has been observed since 1999 and the regional differences are also slight. Participation in education is low in suburban municipalities in particular. There are only moderate differences when it comes to educational background.

T.7. Survival rates in tertiary education.

247. In 2002, around half (49 per cent) of those who had started a higher education programme seven years previously had actually completed it. This is a substantial reduction. This reduction is the same in all the sub-groups.

248. There are considerable group differences with regard to whether one completes a higher education programme one has started (survival rate). Women succeed much more than men and second-generation immigrants are less successful than other Swedes. The differences with regard to educational background are, however, marginal. There are no substantial interaction effects.

T.8. Percentage of 25-29 year-olds who have completed upper secondary education.

249. An increasing number of 25-29 year-olds have completed their upper secondary school education; the figure has risen from 81 per cent in 1990 to 88 per cent in 2003. Women lie one or two per cent ahead of men but the difference has diminished somewhat. Regional differences have also decreased and are now only marginal.

250. The percentage of first-generation immigrants (foreign-born) who have completed upper secondary education (72 per cent) is much lower than the corresponding number of second-generation immigrants (whose parents are foreign-born) (85 per cent) and other Swedes (92 per cent).

251. We can see a minor difference between the sexes, 90 per cent among women and 88.5 per cent among men in this age group have completed their upper secondary education. In light of the substantial (and no doubt systematic) non-response rate concerning educational background among immigrants, this only includes the 'other Swedes' group. There is a difference of about 10 per cent between those whose parents only have a compulsory school education and those who have at least one parent with a higher education diploma and this difference is slightly greater among men than among women.

T.9. Percentage of 50-54 year-olds who have completed upper secondary education.

252. The proportion of upper secondary school graduates in this age group has increased substantially during the period 1990-2003, from just over half to three-quarters. At the beginning of this period, there was hardly any gender discrepancy but at the end, a difference of 7 per cent (in favour of women) had emerged. The difference between the genders is less in large towns (including cities and suburbs) than in the rest of Sweden. There are quite considerable regional differences. Large towns (including cities and suburbs) have approximately 10 per cent more upper secondary graduates in the 50-54 age group than industrial and rural municipalities.

T.10. Upper secondary (Academic) graduation rates – ratio of upper secondary graduates to the typical age of graduation.

253. In total, one third of 19-year-olds have a higher education preparatory qualification from upper secondary school (decreased from 36 per cent in 1998). The proportion is four per cent higher among women than among men and slightly more in large towns (including cities and suburbs) than in the rest of Sweden.

254. There is considerable discrepancy when it comes to the educational backgrounds of parents. When it comes to pupils gaining a higher education preparatory qualification at upper secondary school, 16 per cent of them have parents who graduated from upper secondary school themselves and as many as 48 per cent of them have at least one parent with a higher education diploma. Among first-generation immigrants, the proportion was 23 per cent, among second-generation immigrants, it was 31 per cent and among other Swedes, it was 35 per cent. There are no obvious interaction effects.

T.11. Upper secondary (Vocational and Technical) graduation rates - ratio of upper secondary graduates to the typical age of graduation.

255. In total, 41 per cent of 19-year-olds have a vocational or technical qualification from upper secondary school (an increase from 37 per cent in 1998). This figure is two per cent more among women than among men and the proportion is much less in cities (and slightly less in large towns and suburbs) than in the rest of Sweden.

256. There is some discrepancy when it comes to the educational backgrounds of parents. Thirty-eight per cent of those gaining a vocational or technical qualification at upper secondary school have parents with only a compulsory education whereas 45 per cent of them have parents with an upper secondary school qualification; the corresponding figure for those with at least one parent with a higher education diploma being 37 per cent. The proportion was 29 per cent among first-generation immigrants (foreign-born), 34 per cent among second-generation immigrants (with foreign-born parents) and 42 per cent among other Swedes. There are no obvious interaction effects.

T.12. Percentage of 30-34 year-olds who have completed tertiary education

257. Thirty-nine per cent of this age group had completed tertiary education by 2003. This is an increase of 50 per cent compared to ten years ago. The gender difference has risen from a marginal level and now stands at 7 per cent. There are considerable discrepancies by region, especially among men. For example, only 16 per cent of men in sparsely populated areas have completed tertiary education. There are also major differences when it comes to educational background. Double as many of those who have at least one parent with a higher education diploma have completed tertiary education themselves compared to those whose parents only have an upper secondary school qualification and three times as many compared to those whose parents only have a compulsory school education. There is only a minor difference between first-generation immigrants (foreign-born) and other Swedes; in fact, a larger proportion of first-generation than second-generation immigrants have completed tertiary education. There are no major interaction effects.

258. We also have data on which part of the world the immigrants come from. A considerably larger proportion of immigrants from North America and EU15 (excluding the Nordic countries) have completed tertiary education. Only just over a quarter of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa have a higher education diploma. Other immigrant groups are only moderately different from the 'other Swedes' group. In the majority of the immigrant groups (as among 'other Swedes'), the proportion of those who have completed tertiary education is higher among women than among men, the exception being 'Asia and Oceania (excluding the Middle East)' and especially Africa.

T.13. Percentage of 50-54 year-olds who have completed tertiary education

259. The pattern in this age group is very similar to the younger age group. Thirty-two per cent of this age group had completed tertiary education in 2003. This also represents a rise of about 50 per cent compared to ten years ago. The gender difference has increased and amounts to five per cent in 2003. There are considerable discrepancies by region, especially among men.

T.14. Labour force participation rates for the population 25-64 years of age.

260. The labour force participation rate for this age group as a whole is 84 per cent. This figure is 5 per cent higher among men (87 per cent) than among women (82 per cent) and 10 per cent lower for first-generation immigrants (78 per cent) than for second-generation immigrants and other Swedes (both 88 per cent). The labour force participation rate differs considerably between people with different educational

qualifications. Those who only have a compulsory school education stand out in particular, with only 72 per cent of them being part of the labour force. This difference is most marked among women.

T.15. Unemployment rates for the population 25-64 years of age

261. The unemployment rate for this age group as a whole is 4.1 per cent. It is 1 per cent higher among men (4.6 per cent) than among women (3.5 per cent) and there are major differences when it comes to immigrant status. The unemployment rates vary but there are no dramatic differences between people with different educational qualifications. The rate is one per cent lower among those who have completed tertiary education than those with lower educational qualifications. The difference by education is most obvious among women here as well.

T.16. Mean income (including taxable social transfers but excluding capital income).

262. In the 30-44 age group, those with the highest type of education (long academic tertiary education) earn 66 per cent more than those with the lowest form of education (compulsory school education only). The relative income differences are less among women than among men (and the levels are of course much lower among women in general). The relative income differences are considerably greater in cities and suburban municipalities than in the rest of Sweden (large and medium-sized towns are put into an intermediate group). First-generation immigrants have a lower income than others, but the relative income differences by type of education are similar for first-generation immigrants, their children (second-generation) and other Swedes. There is a similar pattern for the 55-64 age group, although the income levels are higher and the income differences between those with the lowest and those with the highest education are greater.

263. The last table in 16AF 2002 has a slightly different focus. There we can see whether educational background has an effect on its own given a person's own level of education. We can then see that among those people with a higher education diploma of their own, those with at least one parent who has completed tertiary education have a higher income than those whose parents have not completed tertiary education. This difference is, however, quite small. One reason for the difference might be that those with highly educated parents more often choose educational programmes that give a greater return (evidence for which can be found in several studies (SOU 93)). Another reason might be that they have a better level of attainment, or that they find it easier to penetrate the labour market thanks to possessing greater social capital.

T.17. Percentage of people in young cohorts not in education or in the workforce.

264. This table describes what we, in a recently published government report, refer to as 'young outsiders'. These are young people who neither study nor work (including those applying for work). We can see that they make up a rather small group among 15-19 year-olds, a mere 3.5 per cent. There is no difference between first-generation immigrants and other Swedes but there are more than double the number of young male outsiders than young female outsiders. In the older cohorts, the percentage of men is lower whilst the percentage of women is higher, especially among first-generation immigrants. This can be reasonably explained by child-bearing. To conclude, we can also see from the table that those in the 20-24 age group who have completed their upper secondary education make up a much smaller proportion of young outsiders than those who have not.

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