Reform of the Swedish education system in the post-war period as social rights of citizenship

Paper prepared for the RC19 "Social policies: local experiments, travelling ideas" Conference, 20-22 August 2009, Montréal.

First draft, do not cite.

Hrvoje Kap
Swedish Institute for Social Research
Stockholm university
hrvoje.kap@sofi.su.se

Abstract

Education systems have rarely been analyzed as integral parts of the welfare state. This paper seeks to show how education institutions may be understood in terms of social rights of citizenship by analyzing the main intentions of major reforms of the Swedish education system in the post-war period. The reforms of compulsory and upper secondary education mainly sought to raise the minimum level of knowledge and shared experience, to equalize opportunities as well as to shape social stratification by ways of reforming three dimensions of these institutions: organizational integration, curricular differentiation and expansion of vocational programmes. By analyzing intentions of reforms and interpreting them in terms of social rights, relevant institutional characteristics of an education system may be identified which can guide further comparative endeavours for understanding how education systems succeed in enhancing and extending citizens' life chances.

1. Introduction

Research on education systems and the welfare state have rarely been combined, using conceptual and empirical approaches in order to illuminate how education is an important part of the welfare state. This paper seeks to bridge this gap by applying concepts of political theory underpinning much welfare state research to the empirical analysis of an education system, specifically the extensive expansion and reform of the education system in Sweden in the post-war period. The theoretical concepts used are derived from T. H. Marshall's conception of social rights of citizenship, arguably the most influential treatment of the core principles of the welfare state, or citizenship in general in Western democracies. Applying such concepts to an education system can delineate the particular institutional characteristics which can be relevant to take into focus when analyzing how and to what extent national systems of education succeed in enhancing and expanding citizens' life chances. Furthermore, such analysis may offer heuristic analytical tools which can clarify relevant similarities and differences between welfare-states' ability to provide and distribute the access to educational opportunities, human capital, knowledge and skills among its citizens. These can also be contrasted or related to other welfare state institutions and labour market mechanisms which structurate citizens' life chances, and so potentially offer a deeper understanding of the institutional foundations of political economy.

The paper progresses as follows: first, the core ideas of the concepts of citizenship and social rights are discussed, relating these to the institutions of formal education. Thereafter, relevant institutional dimensions which can be seen as expressing these ideas are delineated. In the empirical part, reforms of the Swedish compulsory and upper secondary education institutions are described and analyzed in terms of main intentions. These are then interpreted as aspects of social rights of citizenship. The paper concludes with a discussion of the relevance, problems and possibilities of applying these concepts to education systems.

2. Theory of social rights of citizenship

The main conceptual tool here used is T. H. Marshall's ([1950] 1992) exposition of social rights of citizenship. I shall delineate the core of the ideas of citizenship and social rights, contrast the latter to civil rights, flesh out their main characteristics, relate them to the concept of formal education, and point to a number of important guiding features in the way they have been operationalized in influential contributions to comparative research on welfare states.

2.1 The concepts of *citizenship* and *social rights*

The concept of citizenship finds a variety of treatments in political theory. Citizenship can be defined as membership in a social (or political) unit; it can mean a status; it can mean a specific set of rights and duties associated with being a citizen (Pierson, 1996). For Thomas H. Marshall, and his exposition of the development of citizenship in modern society (with a particular reference to Britain), it has all of the above qualities: "Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed." (Marshall, [1950] 1992: 18)

The development of citizenship in Western democracies has according to Marshall occurred through consecutive stages: from civil, to political, to social rights; respectively institutionalized in the rule of law, liberal democracy and the welfare state. This development has not always, in all places, been linear, and it has often occurred through political struggle for social justice. It has also intermeshed with the extension of markets and economic growth. For Ralf Dahrendorf, these are the twin sides of the progress of modernity: the extension of entitlements and the growth of provisions which both contribute to the expansion and enhancement of individuals' life chances in society (Dahrendorf, 2008:14).

But rather than discussing the historical accuracy of such a description of the development of citizenship, for our purposes it is more relevant to understand the normative content of the concept. In as much as citizenship defines membership in a social unit – in most cases of its discussion during modern times the nation-state – it is concerned with encircling the set of capabilities (Sen, 1992) which create that particular status which defines membership. How are these sets of capabilities determined? For Marshall, citizenship rights can be divided into civil rights which are focussed on extending individual freedom, political rights which seek to grant access to political processes of decision-making, and social rights which encircle "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society." (Marshall, [1950] 1992: 8) Social rights have here, in contrast to civil and political rights, more the character of positive liberty in Isaiah Berlin's ([1958] 1997) sense of the term, that is they consist in the potential access to social resources which are provided by social institutions.

In some treatments, they have been described as *claim rights*, because citizens may or may not wish to use these. The scope of the social resources which social rights of citizenship give access to changes over time, precisely because citizenship is a developing institution. Social rights are in

some sense open-ended. And this development is always related to the specific vantage point the struggle for entitlements has in a historical context; an ideal is set up towards which achievements and aspirations are measured. In Marshall's treatment, the core of the idea of citizenship is that it should always be related to a certain basic human equality which should be shared by all members of a common civilizational heritage.

This idea is also expressed as citizenship aiming at reducing qualitative inequalities as opposed to quantitative ones; its focus is more on equality of status, than equality of income. As such it is a democratizing force, for its levelling consists not in the ambition to equalize all spheres of life, but rather to transform rigid status divisions into degrees of status and promote social cohesion. In this sense it is concerned with notions of respect, recognition and social honour (Sennett, 2003) between individuals, groups, classes or strata within societies. This process is similar to what Marshall called *class abatement* – the suppression of social distance, levelling of inequality in terms of power and growth of shared life experiences between different social classes.

There are then three, in my reading, core elements of social rights of citizenship: i.) they aim at securing access to a minimum, common experience and level of decency in living standards, and by that include the citizen within the civilizational heritage of society; ii.) they aim at structuring just mechanisms of mobility in society, that is equal opportunities to positions of status, wealth and power within the institutions of society; and iii.) they aim at transforming the occupational and social class structure, compressing illegitimate inequalities. Social rights of citizenship do then not only aim at raising the common floor of living, but should also have an impact on the stratification of society. This is one of the reasons why Marshall's lecture was entitled *Citizenship and social class* – for these two principles, or set of ideas expressed in social relations, often have an antagonistic relationship to each other: *citizenship* is a system of equality, while *social class* is a system of inequality, and the impact of citizenship on social class is that of a struggle for social justice over the social resources which through pure market relations structure social closure and create social classes. The idea of *progress* can in this view be seen as one where the extension and development of citizenship, in every historical period, enables access to new spheres of capabilities considered part of a common civilization. The aim here is and will never be complete equality; but rather the creation of an institutional architecture upon which legitimate inequalities may develop (Marshall, [1950] 1992:36).

In a similar treatment, Dahrendorf has pointed out that dynamics by which entitlements (defined by citizenship) and provisions (created in the market economy) should not be seen as always contradictory, because both are necessary in order to create the optimum where life chances are advanced (Dahrendorf, 2008:42f). Entitlements without provisions have no substantial meaning,

while provisions without entitlements form an unjust society – the challenge is instead to find the right balance of the two where welfare is created and life chances expanded, while advancing social justice so that inequalities of provisions cannot be translated into inequalities of entitlements.

In Marshall's account, social rights are most closely related to the social services and the education system. Yet, research on the welfare state has rarely included the education system into its choice of institutions, but rather more often focused on institutions which cover social risks – most often social insurances. Such operationalizations have by Gøsta Esping-Andersen been termed as the one side of the dual types of policies which comprise the welfare state: those which seek to provide more passive income-maintenance – the other side being those policies which invest in human capabilities (Esping-Andersen, 2002:78). Formal education may be regarded as part of the latter.

2.2 Education as a social right

The education system is often depicted as being an integral part of the welfare state – but the precise dimensions of the way that education can be seen as a social right of citizenship have rarely been delineated. We should regard this right of the citizen as concerned with the development of the individual – in one apt phrasing with the aim to enable individuals to lead flourishing lives (Brighouse, 2006). One important aspect of this is to develop autonomy. Autonomy in social life implies having the social goods and capabilities necessary for leading a life in society with which one subjectively identifies as being in harmony with one's fundamental desires and interests.

Applying Marshall's view on the institutions of educational provision, education should first and foremost not be seen as the right of the child to education, but rather the right of the citizen to have been educated. The aims and effects of the individuals' education are also social, because society as a whole – politically, culturally, economically – depends on the level of civilization of its members. "And there is here no conflict with civil rights as interpreted in an age of individualism. For civil rights are designed for use by reasonable and intelligent persons, who have learned to read and write. Education is a necessary prerequisite of civil freedom." (Marshall, [1950] 1992:16)

In this view the positive liberty provided by education defined as a social right is a prerequisite to the negative liberty safe-guarded by civil rights. It encircles a minimum level of educational resources, as well as a common experience, which is necessary in order to be free in society. Such

a view treats the relationship between agency and social structure as a duality; they both reinforce each other through complex interaction by ways of *structuration* (see Giddens, 1984).

But how should we understand the concept *educational resources*? What kind of resource is education? We may seek an answer in the numerous contributions in the philosophy of education, and one topic which is often discussed is to what extent education brings forth the particular qualities and capacities of the individual on the one hand, and to what extent it develops general dispositions and attitudes shared by the society as a whole (see for example Kant, [1803] 1960; Durkheim [1911] 1956). Education as a social resource seeks to develop both, and here we often find a distinction made between general and particular knowledge and skills. General knowledge can be seen as the civilizational heritage of values, ideas, knowledge and beliefs shared by the society as a whole. Specific knowledge is on the other hand related to that particular social milieu – today most often occupation – towards which the individual is progressing in adult life.

When Marshall speaks of a shared common experience and minimum level of resources, it can be interpreted as a minimum level of general knowledge, as well as a process of socialization of youth. This is in turn closely related to the second important dimension in which education is a social right: that of promoting the ideal of equality of opportunity. This is not only achieved if all pupils enjoy the right to access to the same quality and level of educational provision, but also to the way in which streams and tracks within the educational system's progressing levels are organized. For this curricular differentiation has an impact on the subsequent life chances of the pupil – the age grade at which it takes place, its content, the subsequent possibilities of admission to higher levels of education and the value and quality of the qualifications rewarded upon completion, all structure these life chances. These concern the individual pupil. Yet, the streams and programmes within the education system also structure and create groups of pupils by various criteria – increasing homogeneity within and heterogeneity between them – and so create new or reproduce existing social divisions (Marshall, [1950] 1992:39). These organizational features are related to the extent to which social rights manage to change status differences and inequalities – the qualitative aspects of social inequality.

The explicit idea of equality of opportunity should according to Marshall be interpreted as the "equal right to display and develop differences, or inequalities, the equal right to be recognized as unequal" (Marshall, [1950] 1992:38). Such a statement demands further elaboration: the aim is to develop abilities which are not hindered by the pupil's social background – hereditary privilege should not be of relevance in the learning process. The education system, primarily teachers, should then aim at enabling every pupil to develop her or his particular talents and aptitudes; as

such it is a process of *individuation*, yet its quality of equality lies in the aim to minimize the extent to which social background hinders this development.

In educational research, much effort has been laid down on understanding how social background is associated with educational results or attainment – using this association as an indicator for how well an education system succeeds in equalizing opportunities. In one influential field of research, importance is given to the particular background factors affecting the choices pupils take when making a transition from one level of education to the next (see for example Mare, 1980). Several approaches have also highlighted the importance of institutional features of the education system – particularly age and extent of streaming within schools – in influencing the choices pupils and their parents make in transition between educational levels (for an overview, see Breen & Jonsson, 2005).

The third dimension of social rights of citizenship relevant to the education system is the impact of these on the social class structure. In Marshall's view this is the process whereby social mobility occurs in the wider society, primarily on the labour market and in the occupational structure. The education system is also an instrument of social stratification since the qualifications which school-leavers bring with them to the labour market have an impact not only on their chances on this market, but also to the wider functioning of the economy, since the supply of skills and knowledge has a direct bearing on the organization and functioning of markets, actors and institutions within them.

Moreover, there is an inherent relation to justice here: these qualifications do bear with them a stamp of legitimacy and in as much they are associated to corresponding jobs on the labour market, the education system becomes a just system of mobility and stratification in as much it offers true equal opportunities. Inequalities on the labour market are then also more legitimate since (or if) they are a consequence of the way principles of citizenship structure the education system. This is what is meant by the expression of the idea that citizenship is the "architecture upon which legitimate inequalities may be built".

2.3 Connections to comparative welfare state research

In the fields of research on welfare states which use typologies to compare similarities and differences between welfare states or welfare regimes, some of the most influential typologies have also been based on T. H. Marshall's conception of social rights of citizenship. In the Social Citizenship Indicator Program tradition, institutional characteristics are seen as the most valid empirical indicators of relevant dimensions of social rights, and when institutional typologies are

developed, analytically clearer assessments can be made as to their particular social or political outcomes, as well as to the driving forces which put them in place. So, for Walter Korpi and Joakim Palme (1998), it is the institutional characteristics of social insurance models – the social policies most relevant in this regard are those that cover the most basic and universal risks: old-age pensions and sickness insurance – which to various degrees resemble actual cases in countries, that are shown to have an impact on distributional processes and political solidarities. Identifying the institutional properties which affect levels of poverty and extent of inequality is here the key approach for understanding the effects of implementation of social rights of citizenship.

Likewise, for Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990), the welfare regime is a constellation of specific relationships between the state, market and households. What differentiates regimes from each other is the specific way that they de-commodify, for according to Esping-Andersen, this concept is at the heart of what social rights of citizenship are about: the capacity to offer alternative means of subsistence outside the labour market. Focus lies here also on social insurances. But the point of speaking of 'welfare regimes' instead of welfare states is to show that the specific design and programme content of these institutions has consequences for the whole of society; for patterns of social stratification, formation of solidarities, and gender relations (Esping-Andersen, 1999). The relevant institutions which express the social rights of citizenship should then not only be analyzed to the extent that they manage to offer, in Marshall's terms, that minimum level of social resources for membership, but also in the way that they have an impact on relations between social classes, strata and gender, the occupational structure and labour market.

The lessons learned from these approaches is that the institutional characteristics are crucial for identifying to what extent, how and in what ways aims and ideals of citizenship are fulfilled by the implementation of social rights. This would apply equally in analyzing national systems of education, and the identification of the relevant dimensions of these institutions would be of central concern. The approach of this paper is to seek to understand how intentions of educational reforms can be understood as implementations of social rights of citizenship, for this is the way to relate ideas and principles with their actual institutionalization in society. This is in essence a Weberian approach which understands institutions primarily in terms of their meaning-complexes. The outcomes of these institutionalizations are here missing, and will have to be supplemented in further analyses.

The particular choice of institutions here is the Swedish education system: the reforms which lead to the expansion of Swedish compulsory and upper secondary education in the 1960s. This period saw a substantial expansion of welfare state institutions, and by some accounts the

reforms of the compulsory and upper secondary education institutions were the most extensive in the Western world (Marklund, 1974:13). For this reason the Swedish case may be a good example for identifying some of the most important institutional properties of social rights of citizenship as regards to the education system.

3. Method, empirical material and analysis

The three distinct core normative principles of social rights of citizenship are operationalized as follows in applying them to dimensions of education systems.

i.) A **minimum level of social resources and shared experience** is in school-terms understood as the shared distribution of resources for fulfilling the aims of compulsory education, however they are formulated in nationally defined curricula – that is the same teaching quality should be offered irrespective of background characteristics of pupils. 'Shared' experience also implies that pupils are taught together, and not segregated. Segregation can occur in several ways and to varying degrees, from learning separate courses, to studying in different streams of programmes, to going to different kinds of schools for different programmes.

ii.) Within the whole education system: **equality of opportunity**, not hereditary privilege; the "equal right to display and develop differences" should be the principle which defines pupils' development and differentiation. This is implied in the first point above, but is also expressed in the definition of the age and process whereby differentiation into streams or tracks occurs. These dimensions have implications for pupils' life chances further on; the procedures for how choices for different streams are made are of relevance.

The characteristics of streams and tracks also mould abilities into groups which become internally homogenous and externally heterogenous. The quality of education within these in terms of qualifications for the labour market, or of attained knowledge for access to further levels of the education system are defining features, because these have an important impact on subsequent chances once that level has been completed. In this regard, the characteristics of criteria for entering higher levels of education will also define these chances.

iii.) Education in relation to the occupational structure is an **instrument of social stratification**. Because the qualifications which the educational system provides are linked to jobs in the occupational structure, the system will have consequences for stratification in society. The kinds and the quality of qualifications which the education system provides at the exit points is here of relevance – the most common distinction is made between academic and vocational skills, or

between general and specific skills. Vocational skills are in turn usually differentiated according to the extent of apprenticeship training within them.

The choice of empirical material for assessing intentions of the main reforms enacted falls on the government bills defining the major reforms of compulsory education in 1962 and upper secondary education in 1968, and their respective governmentally appointed investigations (SOU). These reforms were all very extensive and went through much debate after extensive investigating. Choice of documents is decided by assessments based on wider knowledge of the whole reform process.

The bills (government bill 1962:54 and government bill 1968:140) have been interpreted in order to grasp their main intentions; the subjective meaning-complex of these social actions is interpreted (Weber 1947:101). These bills were largely based on extensive public investigations of their subject matter (*Statens Offentliga Utredningar*); therefore the most important investigations for these bills have also been analyzed.

Analyzing intentions of reforms may give us empirical ground for assessing to what extent these can be conceptually understood in terms of social rights of citizenship, as delineated above. Outcomes of these reforms are here not taken into account, and although they are relevant for an assessment of to what extent these institutions of education actually fulfil the principles they are intended to embody, the focus here lies on the process of institutionalization and change of these institutions. It should also be noted that the particular political constellations and conflicts over these reforms have not been taken into account here, because the intentions of reforms are analyzed in terms of their ideas and principles, not ideology. It can briefly be stated that the reforms were enacted while the Social Democratic party was in government, and the support for the reforms was eventually quite broad across the political spectrum (Marklund, 1982).

4. Educational reform and expansion in the 1960s

The following expositions start with descriptions of the main institutional changes of the reforms of compulsory and upper secondary education respectively; each is followed by an analysis of the main intentions of these reforms.

4.1 Reform of compulsory education institutions

Prior to the final reform in 1962 of compulsory education after an extensive period of trial of the new school type between 1950-1962, the Swedish primary and lower secondary school system

was comprised of the compulsory *folkskola* which ranged from ages 7 to 14 (Marklund, 1980:9). In order to continue to upper secondary school, pupils would transfer to lower secondary institutions, primarily the *realskola* which also had vocational preparatory tracks. Since 1927, the transfer would occur after four years in folkskola; this changed in 1956 to six years (Marklund, 1974:34). There was a wide variety of lower secondary institutions, with varying quality and extent of vocational preparation; a pupil in 7th grade could attend at least nineteen different institutions. At the same time, the compulsory *folkskolor* were of varying quality, and the curriculum was not as nationally standardized as for upper secondary education institutions (Marklund, 1980:36f). The Swedish school system could at that time still be characterized as a parallel system "where pupils of the same age went to separate schools even during the years of compulsory school attendance" (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996:70).

When the new comprehensive and compulsory school (*grundskola*) was fully introduced in 1962 it spanned for nine years, between 7 and 16. It was divided into three three-year subparts, and differentiation occurred from grade 7, although successively in terms of curricular content, where the ninth grade offered different programmes, some vocational (*linjer*). Resources and curriculum were highly standardized nation-wide, as was the grade-point system (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996:71).

The two most marked institutional changes with this reform were the *integrational aspect* where compulsory schooling is offered in one single, standardized institution; and the extension of the compulsory number of years of education. Connected to this, and partly a consequence thereof, was the postponement and then removal of differentiation, that is the curricular streaming of pupils.

The first can be understood as an implementation of the principle of *equal opportunities*. The idea of an *enhetsskola*, that is one school within one common institution for all pupils – the comprehensive compulsory school – was in the initial government bill of 1950:70, which laid down the early general principles for this reform, aimed at enabling every Swedish youth to develop his or her abilities for future tasks in society, irrespective of social background. The institutions of a parallel system of schooling (overt or in disguise) were not seen as compatible with such a view of equal opportunities (p. 190). Opportunity of what? For compulsory schooling, it was mainly defined as knowledge which should be taught to pupils in order for them to attain a level deemed necessary for participation in society. The same bill states that society's ability to offer educational provision so that each individual may acquire the education which corresponds to his or her particular dispositions and interests (p. 31f) is one of the main meanings of this social reform. Equally important seemed to be the goal to provide every citizen

with a level of education (*bildning*) which would enable his or her individual development within society, as well as foster cooperation with others based on common values, and a sense of responsibility for developing a shared society on a democratic basis (p. 31f). The provision of the minimum level of knowledge aimed at both individual as well as social ends.

Within the school itself, a shared experience by pupils of various backgrounds was seen as an end in itself, a social integration of pupils: in government bill 1962:54, one important aim of offering education within the same institution is to develop capacities of pupils to learn to work and cooperate together; this would not be achieved solely by intensive intellectual training. For this reason, elements of prestige and gradation should not be allowed within the school before a level of social counterweight had been created in order to deflect their negative effects (p. 76f). *Organizational* integration was seen as one way of achieving this goal; that is offering the same educational provision to pupils irrespective of social or regional differences.

The other element is the postponement of differentiation into various curricular streams in grade nine. For similar reasons as mentioned above, the streaming of pupils with various abilities was seen as important to postpone until the common experience had created the needed counterweight to the introduction of elements of social prestige and gradation within the school (Prop 1962:54; p. 76). And when streams would become relevant at a later stage within the comprehensive school form, they should be chosen freely by the pupil and his or her parents; the main criterion here is individual choice rather than selection by teachers in the school, or by "society" (SOU 1961:781). With the government bill of 1962, streaming in grade nine was implemented; some of these streams were of vocational preparatory character. But in the beginning of the 70s, these were removed completely and comprehensive education had no differentiation.

A final remark on the extension of compulsory education to nine years: this was an extension of two more years; and it was motivated in bill 1950:70 primarily with the reason that youth need a better and higher education in a more demanding society. Another reason presented was the increasing lack of employment opportunities for youth in changing labour markets. In the defining government bill of the reform, 1962:54, the aim of schooling emphasized increasingly the personal development of the pupil; to enable his or her comprehensive development and personal maturity, in order to as a citizen find his or her personal fulfilment and in co-operation with others take responsibility for the democratic development of society (p. 31f).

Thus, these reforms intended to expand both the minimum level of i.) knowledge and ii.) shared experience (social integration), while also expanding equal opportunities by offering the same

quality of schooling nation-wide (organizational integration and standardization) as well as postponing, and eventually removing curricular streaming (differentiation).

4.2 Reform of upper secondary education institutions

Institutions of upper secondary education underwent a minor reform in 1966 (government bill in 1964) prior to the major reform of 1971 (government bill in 1968). With the reform in 1966, the main institution was the *gymnasiet* which had five academic programmes preparing for further studies in higher education institutions (Marklund, 1982:132). Two of these five programmes had formerly been taught in separate institutions: *handelsgymnasier* and *tekniska gymnasier*. These became economic and technical programmes, and along with the social science, natural science and humanities programmes made up the five academic tracks of the gymnasium (Marklund, 1982:129f).

During the 1960s, pre-vocational continuation institutions called *fackskolor* had been instituted partly as a response to the dismantling of the variety of lower secondary institutions with the 1962 compulsory education reform, and partly to meet rising demand for secondary non-compulsory education. These institutions offered pre-vocational programmes (general curricular content with some vocational preparation) of three types: economic, technical and social, all spanning for two years. They were gradually instituted, officially being set up in 1966 (SCB 1978:120).

More explicitly vocational preparatory institutions had existed for a long time in Sweden, ranging as far back as to the guild associations and their apprenticeship training for various crafts, but in the 20th century the wide variety of vocational preparatory institutions were gradually standardized into a coherent system. During the 1930s, these institutions were expanded, mainly in order to decrease unemployment among youth (SCB, 1978:122). In the 1960s, the institutions were placed on equal level and status as the other two upper secondary institutions, *gymnasiet* and *fackskolan*. At that time the *yrkesskolor* were of four types, differentiated according to the way they were organized by authorities and their form of training. Based on content, they could be separated into five areas: technical vocational education, vocational education for industry and crafts, vocational education for the trades and office, for household work, and for care work (Marklund, 1982:164).

In the major reform of 1971, these three institutions – the academic *gymnasium*, semi-vocational *fackskola* and vocational *yrkesskola* – were integrated into one single organization, *gymnasieskolan*. This meant social, pedagogical and facility integration, with a shared principal, school board and

teachers (Marklund, 1982:191). But the content of the programmes was largely unaltered, except for the vocational tracks of the *yrkesskola*, where the number of programmes decreased and their content became less specialized.

The programmes of gymnasiet and fackskolan were 2- or 3/4-year long theoretical tracks within the new school organization, while the programmes of yrkesskolan were 2-year vocational tracks, along with up to ~400 special courses ranging from a few weeks to 3 years. These special courses were very specialized and recruited pupils from the whole country, about 6-7% of all upper secondary pupils in the 1970s. The *studentexamen* – a final examination – of academic upper secondary education was removed.

Contrasting this reform with the situation prior to 1966, a steady progress of integration is visible: from highly separated institutions and the creation of new vocational and semi-vocational institutions, these are all organized within one organizational structure where the 22 programmes are divided into 2-year long vocational tracks, and 2- or 3/4-year long theoretical tracks.

What were the main intentions of integrating these three institutions into one organization? One theme is quite central in acts and investigations: the expansion of vocational programmes and the relation of these to the other programmes, particularly academic programmes. In various ways, the integrating reform sought to *equalize opportunities* and *status* for pupils entering upper secondary education. It also sought to meet rising demand for vocational qualifications among larger cohorts, and in an expanding economy.

The equalization of opportunity is in many ways closely related to the equalization of status. In a citation from an investigation, the phrasing "when status is more equal, choices also become more free" (Prop. 1968:140, p. 11) sums up the position that the up-lifting of vocational programmes to the level of the academic ones would not only compel more compulsory school-leavers to choose these lines of study, but would also increase their quality and so value on the labour market. Yet, the equalization of status was mainly achieved – apart from offering all programmes within the same organization and so avoiding that the programmes from the *fackskola* and *yrkesskola* were too isolated from the academic ones of the *gymnasium*, and therefore perceived as being of less value and by that educational dead-ends (SOU 1963:835) – by designing curricular content in a standardized way for *all* programmes. Whether academic or vocational, they should be constructed upon common principles defining length, width, successive differentiation and content of subjects; these common principles should contribute to equalizing the status among programmes. This was intended as leading to a decrease of status-

and prestige-related valuation of different lines of study and choices of vocation (Prop 1968:140, p. 142).

Equalizing opportunities was also achieved by the fact that organizational integration implied that the variety of programmes within the common upper secondary institution was to be provided in every single institution all over the country (Prop 1968:140, p. 8). This was an important criterion for fulfilling the aim of being able to offer all educational programmes throughout the country without regional differences as regards to educational opportunities (SOU 1963:835), since geographical distance does influence choice of programme. Choice of programme should not be limited by place of residence.

Neither should the construction of programmes, and their division, segregate pupils into groups – rather it should meet the demands of a variety of individual needs and abilities: creating an upper secondary education within a common organization would meet the fine balance needed in order to meet the variety of individual abilities, interests and needs among pupils studying at this level, while at the same time minimizing the social distance between such programmes by holding them within the same organization and so avoiding organizational "barriers" (SOU 1963:42, p.835). The segregation into three distinct programme types is in an investigation argued to be avoided, because the distribution of pupils' abilities would not conform to such crude divisions – instead the amount of programmes should as far as possible seek to accommodate the shifting and varying abilities and needs. This was thought to be better achieved with the three types of programmes in an integrated school organization, than with three separate institutions (SOU 1966:3, p. 183).

A number of main intentions with the expansion of vocational programmes can be identified in the relevant investigations and acts. A large number of youth were seen as having aims to educate themselves after compulsory school, but not for the academic degree; a demand for shorter vocational programmes was identified as increasing. It is stated in an investigation that the primary aim is that all pupils who wish an education for a vocation at upper secondary level, should have the possibility for doing so (SOU 1966:3, p. 129). But at the same time a trend was noted, where pupils in general tended to want to choose vocational area later than before (Prop 1968:140, p. 11).

Also, in order to meet some of the demand that already exists for the academic tracks, the expansion of continuation programmes (what was *fackskola)* was seen as beneficial. Still, all programmes which differentiate the upper secondary education institution were intended to be differentiated gradually; in the beginning the amount of common subjects would be wider, while

the specific curricular content would increase over time. Also here, the term "tillval" was seen as central for the dynamic of differentiation over the years – the idea that differentiation is based on the free choices of pupils as they progress through the programme (SOU 1963:838).

The changing state of the economy and labour market are also in investigations and acts stated as relevant for the institutionalization and expansion of vocational programmes. The labour market is in one investigation said to be in a shortage of labour in an expanding and rapidly changing economy. This would call for quantitatively and qualitatively relevant vocational qualifications that also aim to equip students with knowledge and skills for adapting to a variety of organizational circumstances and change (SOU 1966:3, p. 128f). Curricular content, it is argued, should not be too specialized.

The new streams with vocational content would all in all gain in length, which means that the added general knowledge in the curriculum would not necessarily decrease teaching of the specialized subjects. (Prop 1968:140, p. 133) Furthermore, it was intended that even vocational programmes should offer some possibilities for further studies (SOU 1966:3, p. 184). In effect, this meant that the lowest level of educational attainment was raised among upper secondary pupils, when even differentiated programmes contained more general subjects. In the defining government bill of 1968, it was stated that a higher level of knowledge of communication skills and general orientation would be necessary for citizens in a rapidly changing society and working life (Prop 1968:140, p. 133).

5. Concluding discussion

It is fruitful to make an analytical distinction when analyzing these reforms in terms of the core ideas of social rights of citizenship: the education system can be analyzed internally, and externally, that is by reference to its internal organization and functioning, and to its external relations to other spheres of society.

Externally, the organizational integration of both compulsory as well as upper secondary education intended to **equalize opportunities** by i.) offering the same quality of educational provision nation-wide, and ii.) offering it within one institution to which admittance is not affected by social background (as was the case with the old parallel system). Equality of opportunity means here then the minimizing of the impact that regional or social class factors may have on pupils' access to education. And this access to educational resources was here the

minimum defined level of knowledge which compulsory education offers; and the full variety of academic and vocational programmes which upper secondary education offers.

At the other end of the institutions, its exit parts, equality of opportunity is related to the possibilities for either continuing up the educational ladder, or for employment in the labour market. The reform of compulsory education made every pupil eligible for the upper secondary education institutions, programme admittance would only depend on achieved grade level. The reform of upper secondary institutions sought to increase the quality and status of vocational programmes and by that make them more valuable on the labour market.

Internally within the education institutions, the provision of a **minimum level of knowledge and shared experience** is also expressed through the organizational integration and nation-wide standardization of compulsory education institutions, but internally it is implemented by raising the level of education to nine years, and by postponing and eventually removing streams. In upper secondary institutions, general subjects are increased, and particularly in vocational programmes their specific content decreases. With this general shift of differentiation to higher levels and later grades, the minimum level of knowledge and shared experience (which can be understood as socialization) is raised.

Furthermore, the internal differentiation of upper secondary education (as well as the initial streaming in compulsory education) does come quite close to expressing the idea of individuation: by minimizing the difference between different programme groups and increasing their particular content (partly by offering some individual choice) the variety of programmes in terms of curricular content is increased. This is motivated, for both reforms, as on the one hand decreasing distance between curricular groups, and on the other increasing possibilities of pupils finding programmes which correspond to their individual needs and abilities. As shown, both the organization of schools as well as design of curricular content was thought to be of relevance to achieve these goals.

It is here important to note that the above principles of social rights of citizenship find different institutional expressions – although similar – at the two different levels of education. This can be understood as primarily due to the fact that the levels differ in educational aims.

The aspect where the education system is an **instrument of social stratification** is part of the arguments where vocational programmes are intended for the labour market: offering better qualifications for youth and also being of higher value in an economy where demand for skilled labour is on the increase. The vocational programmes are in several ways enhanced with more general knowledge and longer programmes. Furthermore, the inclusion of vocational

programmes into the *gymnasieskola* meant a standardization of content, as well as a compression of the amount of vocational programmes in existence in the education system as a whole. It may be possible to regard this reform as one where the curricular content of vocational preparation was generalized. With the attempts to equalize these qualifications' status with the other programmes, increase the amount of general knowledge and enable possibilities for continued studies, their value on the labour market was intended to rise. This would increase qualification-holders' freedom on the labour market and improve their position in occupations and employment relations, which can be interpreted as a process shaping social stratification.

It should be added that this third dimension of social rights of citizenship is also affected by the first two: a raised minimum level of knowledge and more equal opportunities do have an impact on social stratification. We could regard this as indirect consequences. This illustrates one reason why we should also include analyses of outcomes when studying institutions.

A Weberian approach has here been applied to the analysis of institutional dimensions of educational reform: we have sought to understand these dimensions in terms of the meaning they were given by the actors who put them in place. This does not necessarily mean that these dimensions' outcomes were as intended, and while such assessments are important for research on the relative capacity of these institutions to fulfil their aims, the purpose of this paper has been to analyze whether and to what extent the core intentions of institutionalization within one particular case of education systems can be understood as implementations of the more abstract concepts of social rights of citizenship, and by that as integral parts of the welfare state. By doing that, our analytical framework for further assessments of how welfare state institutions succeed in enhancing and expanding individuals' life chances in society can be improved.

This analysis of the Swedish case has sought to show how aspects of organizational integration, curricular differentiation and expansion of vocational programmes in the education system can be understood in terms of principles of equality of opportunity, the provision of a minimum level of knowledge and shared experience, as well as attempts at shaping social stratification.

References

Aron, R., (1967). *Main Currents in Sociological Thought 2 – Durkheim, Pareto, Weber.* London: Pelican Books.

Berlin, I., ([1958] 1997). "Two Concepts of Liberty" in *The Proper Study of Mankind.* New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux.

Breen, R. & Jonsson, J. O. (2005). "Inequality of Opprotunity in Comparative Perspective: Recent Research on Educational Attainment and Social Mobility" in *Annual Review of Sociology* 31.

Brighouse, H., (2006). *On Education.* London: Routledge.

Dahrendorf, R. (2008). *The Modern Social Conflict.* New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Durkheim, E., ([1911] 1956). *Education and Sociology.* New York: The Free Press.

Erikson, R. & Jonsson, J. O. (1996). "The Swedish Context: Educational Reform and Long-term Change in Educational Inequality" in Erikson, R. & Jonsson, J. O. (eds.), *Can Education Be Equalized?* Boulder: Westview Press.

Esping-Andersen, G., (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Esping-Andersen, G., (1999). *Institutional Foundations of Post-industrial Societies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Esping-Andersen, G. (2002). "A new European social model for the twenty-first century?" in Rodrigues, M. J. (ed.). *The New Knowledge Economy in Europe.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Giddens, A., (1984). *The Constitution of Society.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Husén, T. (1986). "Why Did Sweden Go Comprehensive?" *Oxford Review of Education* 12(2).

Kant, I., ([1803] 1960). *Education.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

Korpi, W. & Palme, J., (1998). "The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality and Poverty in the Western Countries", *American Sociological Review* 63(5).

Mare, R., (1980). "Social Background and School Decisions", *Journal of American Statistical Association* 75(370).

Marklund, S. (1974). *Vår skola.* Stockholm: Bonniers.

Marklund, S. (1977). "Differentiation and integration in the Swedish upper-secondary school". *International Review of Education* 24(2).

Marklund, S. (1980). *Skolsverige 1950 – 1975 Del 1 – 1950 års reformbeslut.* Stockholm: Liber UtbildningsFörlaget.

Marklund, S. (1981). *Skolsverige 1950 – 1975 Del 2 – Försöksverksamheten.* Stockholm: Liber UtbildningsFörlaget.

Marklund, S. (1982). *Skolsverige 1950 – 1975 Del 3 – Från Visbykompromissen till SIA.* Stockholm: Liber UtbildningsFörlaget.

Marklund, S. (1985). *Skolsverige 1950 – 1975 Del 4 – Differentieringsfrågan.* Stockholm: Liber UtbildningsFörlaget.

Marklund, S. (1987). *Skolsverige 1950 – 1975 Del 5 – Läroplaner.* Stockholm: Liber UtbildningsFörlaget.

Marshall, T. H. & Bottomore, T. ([1950] 1992). *Citizenship and Social Class.* London: Pluto Press.

Pierson, C. (1996). *The Modern State.* London: Routledge.

SCB. (1978). *Utbildningsstatistisk årsbok.* Stockholm: Statistiska centralbyrån.

Sen, A., (1992). *Inequality Re-examined.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sennett, R., (2003). *Respect – In a World of Inequality.* New York: Norton.

Weber, M. (1947). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization.* New York: The Free Press.

Empirical material

Proposition 1950:70
Proposition 1962:54
Proposition 1964:171
Proposition 1968:140
SOU 1961:30
SOU 1966:3
SOU 1963:42