



# Special Education in Swedish Upper Secondary Schools

Resources, Ability Grouping and Organisation

Joacim Ramberg

© Joacim Ramberg, Stockholm University 2015  
ISBN 978-91-7649-137-9  
Printed in Sweden by Holmbergs, Malmö 2015  
Distributor: Publit  
Department of Special Education  
Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden

# Abstract

This dissertation aims to examine some aspects of special education in Swedish upper secondary schools. The availability of special education resources, the occurrence of ability grouping and the organisational modalities of special education support are investigated. The further aim of the thesis is to discuss how these phenomena can be understood on the basis of democratic educational theories and theories of social educational justice.

The study describes how special education support was organised in 764 upper secondary schools in Sweden in the academic school year 2010/2011, with a response rate of 80.4% (n=764). The design of the study is a cross-sectional total population survey, where data have been collected by way of questionnaires and supplemented with public statistics.

The results of the study show that about 37.5% of upper secondary schools lack special education resources in terms of special educators or special education teachers. Special education support is not provided in 68% of the independent schools compared with 10% of the public schools. This uneven balance between public and independent schools can be interpreted to be a threat to an equivalent and democratic school, since students in need of special support do not have the same opportunities to receive such support in all schools. Furthermore, schools with a higher average parental educational background have shown higher availability of special education resources. It seems that students with parents who have higher educational backgrounds have to a greater extent access to special education resources.

Ability grouping is used in about 43% of the schools. It is most commonly used within foundation subjects, particularly in Mathematics. The schools that use ability grouping to a very large extent have lower and more varied merit rating values and greater availability of special education resources.

Special education support is primarily provided outside the students' regular teaching groups. This is also the case with support provided by other school staff: indeed, 87% of the schools report that the majority of special education support is provided outside the students' regular teaching groups. This can be understood as a way to organise special support in which heterogeneity and pluralism are not considered important. Based on democratic theories, the support provided outside the regular teaching group might be a risk to the creation of a democratic school where all students are given opportunities to meet and interact.

Overall, the results from this thesis show that special education resources are unevenly distributed among independent and public schools; that 43% of the schools use ability grouping; and that special support is primarily provided outside the students' regular teaching groups.

**Keywords: special education, upper secondary school, democracy, social justice, ability grouping, marginalisation, support, total population survey, Sweden**

# List of publications

The thesis is based on the three following papers:

- I. Ramberg, J. (2013). Special educational resources in the Swedish upper secondary schools: a total population survey. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 28(4), 440-462.  
doi:10.1080/08856257.2013.820458  
Reprinted with the kind permission of *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis group.
  
- II. Ramberg, J. (2014). The extent of ability grouping in Swedish upper secondary schools: a national survey. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603116.2014.929187>  
Reprinted with the kind permission of *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis group.
  
- III. Ramberg, J. (in press). Focus on Special Educational Support in Swedish Upper Secondary Schools: Provided within or outside the students' regular classes? In S. Bagga-Gupta (Ed.), *Marginalization Processes. Studies of membership and participation across disciplines and sites*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

# Acknowledgements

With almost ten years of teaching, I had no plans to enter the doctoral programme. However, in hindsight, it is undoubtedly one of the best decisions I have ever made and I am grateful for the opportunity. It has in many ways been a fantastic, educational and exciting time, although it has also meant a great deal of lonely work and many a moment of frustration. Despite the fact that the time spent working on the dissertation was often lonely, there remain many people that I would like to express my gratitude to, all of whom in various ways contributed to this dissertation and quite simply made it possible.

My first thanks go to all the principals and special educators/special education teachers in the upper secondary schools, who despite great workloads took their time to participate in this study.

My greatest thanks go to my scientific supervisors: Mara Westling Allodi, Professor, and Rolf Helldin, Professor Em., both at the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University. You gave me the freedom to design the study as I so chose while remaining available and providing me with important comments, and sharing and contributing with your experiences and knowledge. You have supported me in a sensitive way throughout the work. You have both been invaluable. Many thanks!

I would also like to thank the staff at the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University, for an academic and stimulating work environment. Special thanks to Margareta Ahlström, Head of Department and Ulla Ek, Director of Graduate Studies, who encouraged and supported me throughout my doctoral studies. Further, I would like to thank all my graduate student colleagues for productive discussions and seminars. A special thanks to Ulf Jederlund: you not only contributed to productive discussions concerning my work, but you also contributed greatly to a positive social environment.

At my 50% seminar, I received valuable comments on how the study could evolve and move forward. Thank you Frida Rudolphi, SOFI, Stockholm University. Thank you also Åsa Murray, Associate Professor at the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University, who was a reader at both the 50% and 90% seminars. Thanks to Lisbeth Lundahl, Professor at the Department of Applied Educational Science, Umeå University, who provided valuable comments at the 90% seminar.

I would also like to thank Sven Sundin, the Swedish National Agency for Education, who assisted me with access and data-processing, and Anders Skarlind, former statistician at Stockholm University, who contributed with statistical analysis and data-processing in Article 1.

During my work on the dissertation, I have had the opportunity to present different parts of the study at Ireland International Conference on Education (IICE) in Dublin; the International Multidisciplinary Workshop in Marginalization Processes in Örebro; the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) in Cadiz; and the International Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) & World Education Research Association (WERA) in Sydney. Attendance at these was very worthwhile and educational, and I would like to acknowledge the generous contributions from FORTE, Jerringfonden, Clas Groschinskys minnesfond and Filéenska testamentsfonden.

Finally, a big thank you to my beloved family, and especially Maria, for your genuine daily encouragement, involvement and support in a variety of ways. My children, Nils, Folke and Majken, you have helped distance me from my research by providing me with joy outside of work. Being part of the lives of three young children as they started out in life while I worked on this, my dissertation, has undeniably been challenging, yet has provided such a wonderful contrast.

Joacim Ramberg

Stockholm, 2015-04-08

# Contents

Abstract .....	iii
List of publications .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vi
List of figures.....	xi
List of tables .....	xii
Introduction .....	13
Aim .....	15
Study I .....	15
Study II.....	15
Study III.....	15
Development of upper secondary education from the 1960s.....	16
Three imported reforms .....	17
Decentralisation.....	18
The freedom of choice policy .....	20
The independent school reform.....	22
Upper secondary school from 1994 .....	25
Upper secondary school from 2011 .....	30
The governing of special education .....	31
Policy documents.....	31
Municipal level.....	33
School level .....	33
Professional level.....	34
The shifting roles of special education professionals in upper secondary school.....	34
Special education activities .....	36
Theoretical background.....	43
A shift in fundamental values in the education system.....	44
Democracy in school or a school for democracy .....	46
Democracy – a feature for conflict?.....	49
Social justice .....	55

Redistribution and recognition.....	56
Representation .....	57
Remedies for injustice: affirmation and transformation .....	58
A differentiated education system: perspectives on exclusion .....	61
Methodological issues .....	67
Design.....	67
Population.....	67
Questionnaire.....	69
Pilot study.....	69
Data collection .....	70
Database.....	70
Analysis .....	71
Non-response analysis .....	71
Reliability and validity .....	74
Desirability .....	75
Strengths and limitations.....	76
Ethical considerations .....	78
Results .....	79
Study I – Special educational resources in the Swedish upper secondary schools: a total population survey .....	79
Study II – The extent of ability grouping in Swedish upper secondary schools: a national survey.....	81
Study III – Focus on Special Educational Support in Swedish Upper Secondary Schools: Provided within or outside the students’ regular classes? .....	83
Reflection on the results .....	85
Discussion .....	86
Special education resources.....	86
Ability grouping.....	90
Aspects of support provisions .....	92
Possible changes towards a more democratic school.....	94
Originality and representativeness.....	101
Suggestions for further research.....	102
Sammanfattning på svenska .....	104
Syfte .....	104
Inledning.....	104
Bakgrund.....	105
Tre viktiga reformer.....	105
Styrning av specialpedagogiska verksamheter .....	106
Teoretisk bakgrund .....	107
Utbildning och demokrati.....	108

Gutmans teori om en demokratisk utbildning .....	108
Social rättvisa .....	109
En uppdelad gymnasieskola .....	110
Metod .....	110
Resultat .....	111
Studie 1 .....	111
Studie 2 .....	112
Studie 3 .....	112
Diskussion .....	114
Förslag till möjliga handlingsinriktningar .....	115
References .....	117
Appendix 1. Questionnaire .....	128
Appendix 2. Request letter .....	136
Appendix 3. Information email .....	137
Appendix 4. Missive letter .....	138
Appendix 5. Reminder email .....	139
Appendix 6. Reminder missive letter .....	141
Appendix 7. Variables .....	143
Paper I	
Paper II	
Paper III	

# List of figures

Figure 1. Number of different upper secondary schools by provider 1992 - 2012.....	23
Figure 2. Number of students in upper secondary school by provider 1992 – 2012.....	24
Figure 3. Various special education assignments across different levels.....	37
Figure 4. Four-celled matrix of affirmation, transformation, redistribution and recognition. Adapted from Fraser (2003, p. 203).....	60
Figure 5. Geographical distribution and number of different school types of the population for the study.....	68

# List of tables

Table 1. Different national educational programmes 1994.....	26
Table 2. Gender distribution among national programmes, 2010/2011.....	63
Table 3. Parental educational background distribution among national programmes, 2012/2013.....	64
Table 4. Non-response analysis on the means of variables between responding and non-responding schools.....	72
Table 5. Number and percentage of participating schools distributed among nine municipality groups.....	73

# Introduction

The right to an equitable and fair education for all is one of the cornerstones of modern democratic society. This right is an inviolable right, which is deeply rooted in Swedish democratic society, having emerged after many decades of striving towards an equitable education for all. The right to education and support is made clear in the Education Act and in national curricula. It is not only the individual's right to an equal education that is important; it is also the structure of the education system with respect to the way in which the best conditions for equal education are promoted.

How education should be applied or organised is a multifaceted question with historical, political, sociological, philosophical, economic and (special) educational dimensions. Education for all includes education at the upper secondary school level in Sweden, which is not compulsory. However, since the mid-1990s, almost all students in Sweden have chosen to attend upper secondary school.

The fact that most young people continue to upper secondary school has led to an increased need for special support as a consequence of a larger student population and as such a broader student variation. Special education within the upper secondary school, therefore, has come to play an increasingly important role. Research on special education at upper secondary school has been neglected. However, recently it has received growing attention, with some studies being particularly interested in specific student groups or educational programmes.

Sweden has a system for regular data collection on students, resources and results at the national, municipal and school level, which is provided by the Swedish National Agency for Education [SNAE]. However, there is no national data collection of the special education resources and provisions that are offered to students at upper secondary level. There are no available data sources that describe the situation concerning special education services at the national level. This lack of knowledge contributed to the author's interest in investigating these issues.

Special education within the education system aims both to ensure the right of each student to an equal education as well as to remove barriers for learning through the development of learning environments. In this study, I examine some aspects of special education in Swedish upper secondary schools, specifically the special education resources that are available; the

occurrence of ability grouping; and the way in which support is organised and whether it is provided within or outside students' regular classes.

The study that is the object of this dissertation aims to map special education that is offered in upper secondary schools in Sweden. The first article reports on how special education resources are distributed and allocated among schools; it also provides an analysis of the variables at the school level that predict the presence and availability of special education resources. The second article addresses the extent to which schools practise ability grouping at the upper secondary level in the Swedish context. Paper 3 addresses how schools support their students and in particular it addresses whether special education support is provided within or outside students' regular classes.

In addition to the results presented in the papers, the thesis also aims to provide a deeper understanding as to how these phenomena can be understood in the context of democratic educational theories and theories focusing on social educational justice. The study also discusses proposals for action towards a more democratic school in which togetherness and participation may become more authentic.

The background description and the theoretical section aim to contextualise the study within a broader societal level and to build useful tools for analysis that can support the understanding and discussion of the empirical results.

The Swedish upper secondary school has for the past 25-year period been subject to discussions and major policy reforms. The school system has clearly changed as a result of the market adaptation, and a new Education Act and national curricula have been implemented: this Education Act more than ever before emphasise the importance of special education competence in upper secondary schools.

Several studies point to the fact that there has been little focus on special education in upper secondary schools (Emanuelsson, Persson, & Rosenqvist, 2001; Hultqvist, 2001; Möllås, 2009; SNAE, 2007a, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a).

The first chapter of this dissertation examines a historical background of the upper secondary school education system in Sweden and describes a number of reforms of particular importance. The second chapter addresses issues of governing of special education at various educational levels. The third chapter presents the theoretical framework that has been used to understand and discuss the results of the study. The fourth chapter addresses the methodological issues. The results of the different studies are then presented, followed by a discussion chapter.

# Aim

The overall aim of the study is to investigate some aspects of special education that is provided in Swedish upper secondary schools – specifically, special education resources, the use of ability grouping and whether support is provided within or outside students’ regular classes. The thesis aims to provide a societal contextualisation of special education in upper secondary school based on democratic educational theories and theories that focus on social educational justice, which will serve as a basis for a theoretical interpretation of the empirical results in the articles.

The specific aims of the different papers are as follows:

## Study I

The aim was to describe and analyse special education resources in upper secondary schools, and to investigate which background variables at the school level were particularly important when it came to predicting the presence and availability rate of special education resources.

## Study II

The aim was to investigate and describe the extent of use of ability grouping in upper secondary schools, and also to show in which subjects it was particularly prevalent. The further aim was to compare different groups of schools with particular focus on those schools that reported using ability grouping to a very large extent.

## Study III

The aim was to examine where special education support was provided by the schools’ special education professionals and other staff. Special focus was on whether the support was provided within the students’ regular classes or outside these, which relates to issues of marginalisation.

# Development of upper secondary education from the 1960s

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief background as to a number of changes that the Swedish upper secondary education system has experienced mainly since the 1990s. Those elements and reforms that were considered particularly significant for this study are given special attention. Therefore, this background description should not be regarded as a complete description of the time period; rather, it should be regarded as a description of important events.

Education in Sweden at the upper secondary level can be traced far back in history; however, it has only been since the 1960s that previously different education alternatives have been collected into what became a unified upper secondary school. The 1964 school reform meant that previously different education alternatives came together in the common framework of upper secondary education, which was three years long with five different education options: humanities, social sciences, economics, science and technology. The existing school system was described as gradually differentiated, which meant that the degree of differentiation increased according to the age of the students (Dahllöf, Zetterlund, & Öberg, 1965).

In 1960, about 20% of the student cohort entered upper secondary education compared with only 7.8% in 1946 (Dahllöf et al., 1965). With huge labour demands within industry in the 1960s, the vocational school (*yrkesskolan*) rapidly expanded. A review in the 1960s led to the proposal that the vocational school should be affiliated with the unified upper secondary education. This occurred with the introduction of two-year programmes with a vocational focus. The merger of the vocational school and the academic educational options meant that for the first time, Sweden had an organised unified upper secondary school with the LGY-70 curriculum as a base (Richardson, 2004). In the 1970s, upper secondary school was a centrally controlled school, with state-regulated detailed curriculum, teaching methods and control systems. This system was motivated by the principle of equity as well as by the political argument that all students were entitled to the same education (Korp, 2006). Despite the unified upper secondary school organisation, major differences between the various education alternatives remained. The National Official Inquiry [SOU] 1980:30, *The social selection to upper secondary school*, shows that the new unified upper sec-

ondary school was unified in mainly the organisational sense: educational disparities between different social groups and gender persisted. The SOU 1981:96, *A reformed upper secondary school*, stated that a strong division remained between different social groups and gender in the different education alternatives. This was considered to be a major problem and the proposal was that students' educational careers needed to relate less to social class and gender. A formulated goal was that recruitment to upper secondary school should not be affected by family background or gender because "this is contrary to our perception of a socially equitable distribution of educational opportunities" (ibid, p. 62, own translation).

What characterises these intentions is the wish to even out recruitment based on gender and social background. These intentions were not realised, however, since these recruitment patterns have persisted over time and to this day (Lundahl, Arreman, Holm, & Lundström, 2014; SiRiS). (See also the section A differentiated education system: perspectives on exclusion, on p. 61.)

In the mid-1970s, youth unemployment began to rise sharply, which was seen as a major problem. A series of political labour efforts were made, which culminated in what came to be called the municipal monitoring responsibility (uppföljningsansvaret) for youth occupation. These efforts shifted form and content until the 1990s, when the proposal was made to include it in upper secondary school in the form of the individual programme (Hultqvist, 2001). These political actions meant that almost all young people made their way to an upper secondary school programme.

In order to meet the increased number of students and the broader variation of students, new programmes, mainly vocational ones, were introduced in 1994 (Hultqvist, 2001). The influx to upper secondary school was very high at this time. Historically, this was a new phenomenon. In the early 1970s, about 75% of the student cohort was enrolled in upper secondary education; during the 1970s, this increased to almost 80%. In the early 1990s, about 90% of the student cohort began upper secondary school, while practically all (99%) started in the late 1990s. These are high rates in comparison with OECD countries, where on average about 70% of the student cohort started upper secondary education at that same time (Department of Education, 1997; Richardson, 2004; SNAE, 2004a; SOU 1997:107; SOU 2002:120).

### Three imported reforms

During the 1990s, there were major changes to the Swedish education system. As well as a new upper secondary education organisation in 1994 with a new Education Act and new curricula and syllabi, there were three main education reforms made by government that came to influence the Swedish

education system: the decentralisation reform; the freedom of choice reform; and the independent school reform. These are addressed in the following sections. The freedom of choice reform and the independent school reform intertwine with each other; however, here they are presented separately.

## Decentralisation

As a reaction against the centrally controlled school, processes began in Sweden towards a more decentralised school.

The SIA-report, *The schools work environment* SOU 1974:53, stated that schools were too similar and too centrally controlled, and that greater consideration should be given to local needs and conditions. The decentralisation process took place in several stages during the 1970s and 1980s by way of a number of government bills that outlined an increasingly decentralised system (see, for example, Lewin, Hammargren, Andersson, & Eriksson, 2014). The main motivations for decentralisation were an increase in efficiency and in quality of education. Decentralisation was also intended to allow schools to adapt to local needs. Furthermore, decentralisation aimed to provide students and parents with increased opportunity to influence teaching and education. One important part of the decentralisation process appears to be the introduction by management of objectives and results as instruments for governing. This was expected to make the school system more appropriate and effective (Lewin et al., 2014). Waldow (2008) described these intentions by saying: “the state shall no longer be responsible and shall no longer control the conditions (input) for education but shall control the results (output) of education” (p. 142, own translation). The most crucial step in the decentralisation process was municipalisation, which came with the Gov. Bill, 1989/90:41. The main implications of municipalisation were that the state was no longer the teachers’ employer; instead, each municipality had direct responsibility for running all educational provisions for students living in that municipality. This implies that managers at the municipal level could decide on the organisation of the education service and the way in which resources should be allocated within the organisation. How this was done differed greatly between municipalities. A basic argument for this decentralisation policy was that a new form of resource allocation would mean that more consideration could be given to local needs and conditions, as well as closer proximity to the decision-making (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2006).

The Government Bill *Responsibility for the school* (Gov. Bill, 1990/91:18) specified the division of responsibilities between central and local government, where the municipalities were given considerable freedom to design schooling and budgets so that objectives that were established centrally could be achieved.

Helldin (2007a) discusses the possible difficulties of realising a democratic school through decentralisation reforms, for example, because differ-

ent groups in society are involved to different degrees and because there is a risk for potential conflict between groups as well as a risk that common interests are given less emphasis. Similarly, SOU 1990:44 *Democracy and power in Sweden* points at the difficulties that arise with the establishment of a democratic order in a decentralised system. More recently, Lewin et al. (2014) presented an extensive criticism of municipalisation and how it affected teacher status and wages negatively as well as how it resulted in less equivalence in Swedish schools. Also emphasised are the positive effects of municipalisation: “Municipalisation bolstered civic and user influence over schools” (p. 19, own translation). However, there is also a risk that a decentralised power structure may result in different groups and individuals in society being involved to varying degrees in the decision-making and thus having the ability to influence matters.

### **The re-centralisation**

The decentralisation trend in the public sector took place not only in Sweden, but also in much of Western Europe, where it had an important role and where it was a significant part of the OECD’s reform movement. However, it was implemented in different ways in different countries. In Sweden, the idea was that schools would have local autonomy but that the state would still control on them (Wahlström, 2009). Municipalities came to have an increasingly significant role in the education system. Local politicians, local education departments, principals and teachers were given more power over schools. The role of the state also changed. The Ministry of Education retained power over the nationwide Education Act and curricula, but: “As a result of municipalisation, the role of the state changed and the mandate of the newly established Swedish Agency for Education (Skolverket) was now primarily to follow up and evaluate the school system that the municipalities themselves were set to organise” (Nordin, 2014, p. 28, own translation). Altogether, the reform meant a separation between the purchaser and the provider of education. Decentralisation resulted in the state taking the role of purchaser of education, while the role of the municipalities was to provide education to citizens, which was inspected and evaluated by the state (Biesta, 2004; Nordin, 2014).

Hudson (2007) discusses how the role of the state came to be affected as a result of increased demands for quality controls, standardised testing and evaluations. State quality controls of education and schools were first conducted by the SNAE and since 2008 have been conducted by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate.

To summarise, the state (Ministry of Education) sets up common guidelines in the Education Act and curricula. These guidelines are national and general in nature. It is then up to every municipality and/or school to decide how the activities should be implemented. How local schools are organised

and which methods are to be used have become issues for local school politicians and school staff (Holmström, 2007; SNAE, 2000a).

Sweden underwent a shift in power, where both the municipalities and the state were subject to new roles concerning the governance and implementation of education. These new roles of governance and frameworks are further discussed in the section on the governing of special education, p. 31.

## The freedom of choice policy

The freedom of choice policy was implemented at about the same time as decentralisation (described above) and the independent school reform (described below).

As a result of the Government Bills 1991/92:95 and 1992/93:230, it became the right of every family and individual to freely choose their school. This freedom of choice<sup>1</sup> policy was intended to contribute to an increase in parental and student influence, pedagogical innovation, greater school diversity and economic efficiency. This was to be achieved by schools competing with each other, where the best and most effective schools would be those that students would choose to attend.

At the same time, a school voucher system was introduced, which meant that each student carried a pot of money (equivalent to 85% of the municipality's average student cost) to the school that the student or his/her parents selected (Carnoy, 1998). This sum was raised in 1996 so that it would cover 100% of the municipality's average student cost (Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2008).

### Effects on school choice

Numerous studies have been conducted on the effects of this increased freedom of choice. Some of these focused on whether it has led to increased efficiency, often in terms of student achievement and/or costs for school; often they were related to a political economic research context (for example, Böhlmark & Lindahl, 2007, 2008, 2012; Lindbom, 2010; Niepel, Edmark & Frölich, 2012).

Another focus of the research was on whether school choice affects issues of equity, segregation and social justice. As the focus of this thesis is closer to these areas, it is mainly the studies concerned with these that will be presented.

---

<sup>1</sup> The original idea is commonly ascribed to the liberal economist Friedman (for example, Friedman, 1955, 1997), who argued that competition between schools would lead to improved results. The idea was first introduced in Chile in the 1980s and in Sweden in the early 1990s (Carnoy, 1998).

The premise of these studies is that different student and parent groups act differently in situations of school choice. The more privileged groups tend to make more active choices and thus have greater advantages in a system of choice, while the less privileged groups often tend to make no choice and stay in the nearest school (for example, Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2008). This difference may contribute to an increased socio-economic and ethnic stratification and segregation in schools and society. National studies on the effects of freedom of choice on school segregation are mainly aimed at compulsory schools, with some exceptions related to upper secondary school. Reasonably, these results are transferable to the upper secondary level, where the school choice reforms have had a major impact (see, for example, Lundahl et al., 2014; SNAE, 2010b).

Since the introduction of the free school choice reform, the SNAE has examined its effects and found that the reform tends to increase segregation in Swedish schools, since families from different socio-economic backgrounds exercised their freedom of choice in various ways (for example, SNAE, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2000b, 2003, 2004b, 2006, 2009, 2012a). In other studies on the effects of free school choice in compulsory school, Östh, Andersson and Malmberg (2013) note that freedom of school choice clearly contributes to an increased social and ethnic segregation in the Swedish education system. They state that there is very little to suggest that free school choice can reduce widespread residential segregation. Instead, free school choice appears to be primarily something exercised by privileged groups in society. They further state that the results of the freedom of choice reform are not as were intended in terms of increased efficiency through competition among schools; rather, it has resulted in increased differentiation among schools. They state: “With expanding school choice, the differences between schools have increased and, at the same time, Sweden’s comparative performance has declined” (ibid, p. 422). The free school choice reform and its effects on segregation within compulsory schools are also reported in other studies, although the size of the effect cannot be easily clarified (Andersson, Malmberg, & Östh, 2012; Andersson, Östh, & Malmberg, 2010; Gustafsson, 2007; Trumberg, 2011). Söderström and Uusitalo (2010) examined the effects of school choice in Stockholm’s upper secondary schools and found that segregation increased because of the free school choice, especially with regards to merit rating values, and family background and ethnic aspects.

Bunar (2010a, 2010b) states that school choice has been the main force behind increased school segregation, since groups of educationally successful students have chosen some schools while other schools have to support the weaker students. In this way, free school choice has contributed to a more differentiated student population between schools.

Similarly, Wiborg (2010) states that: “. . . the evidence from a number of studies is that school choice in the Swedish school system has augmented

social and ethnic segregation, particularly in relation to schools in deprived areas” (p. 15).

The concept of segregation can have several meanings that are not clearly defined in these studies; generally, however, it means a clearer divide in student composition between schools with respect to the variables studied (for example, socio-economic, social and ethnic factors). The variation between schools has increased due to free school choice.

There seems to be some uncertainty about the extent of the effects of the free school choice reform, but the overwhelming picture is that it has resulted in increased segregation among lower socio-economic and ethnic groups. Reports by the SNAE over time have shown a consistent picture and support the national studies presented above.

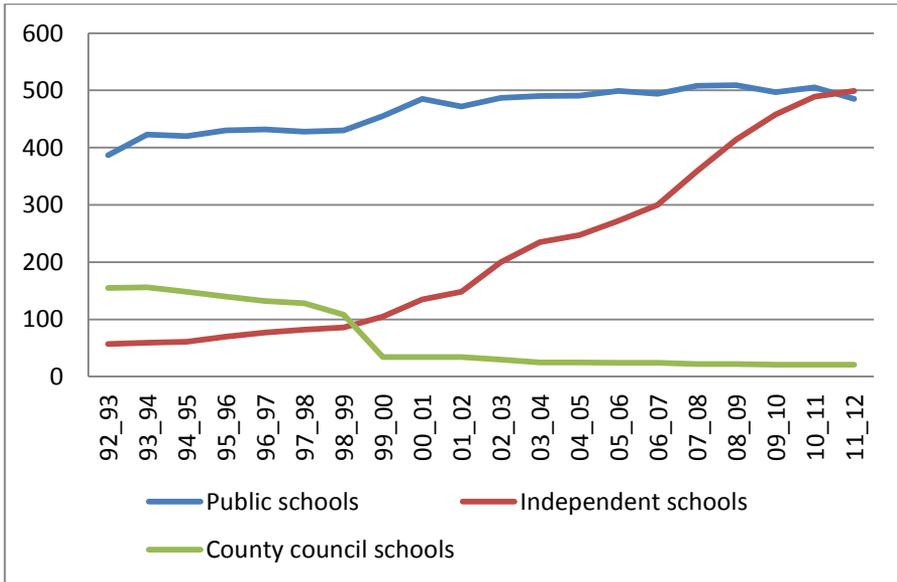
A more differentiated student population between schools emerges as an important factor for how schools organise their work. Such a population is a basic principle in the formulation of student groups in the organisation of special education and further differentiation, which of course are important for this study.

## The independent school reform

The freedom of choice reform did not only mean the freedom to choose school, but it also came to mean the right to choose the type of school provider. In Sweden, there are three types of school provider: public schools (run by municipal authorities), independent schools (mostly run as private companies or foundations) and schools run as county council schools. Before 1992, independent schools were a marginal element, even though there were some schools that were run by non-public providers. The prerequisites for other providers to run schools changed dramatically as a result of the reform (Gov. Bill, 1991/92:95), which made it possible for other providers to run schools. Independent schools opened up to everyone. They are not allowed to charge student fees. They must follow the same curriculum as public schools and must be approved by the SNAE. Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the number of upper secondary schools by provider and by the number of students enrolled within those schools in the years 1992 – 2012. As can be seen in Figure 1, the total number of upper secondary schools increased significantly during those 20 years. In 1992 there were about 600 schools in total, and since then, the number has gradually increased to over a thousand.

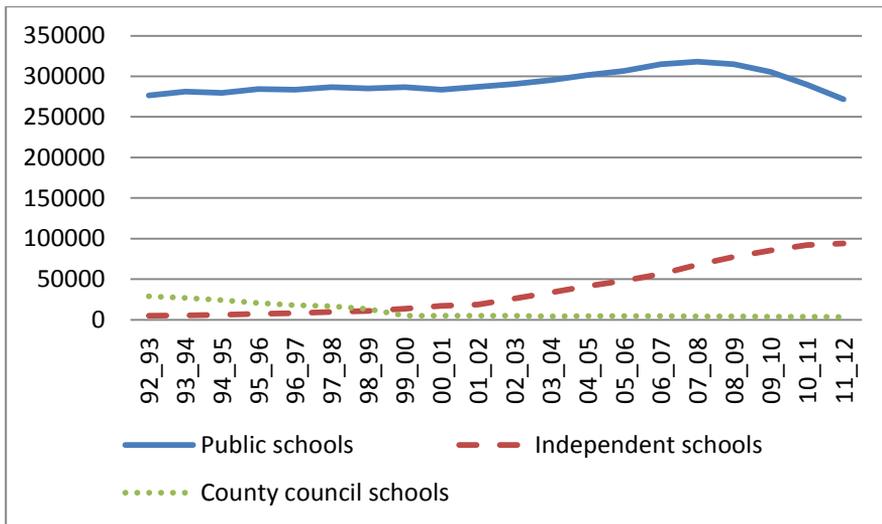
Figure 2 illustrates the number of students over this period that were enrolled in the different school types. Because of varying cohort sizes, the total number of students differs each year. In total it ranges between approximately 300,000 students to nearly 400,000 at most. Figure 2 shows that the proportion of students enrolled in independent schools has gradually increased, especially since the school year 2000/2001, and that the number of students enrolled in public schools has decreased, especially since the school year

2008/2009. In the school year 2010/2011, when this study was conducted, the share of independent schools was about 48%, but the number of students enrolled in independent schools was only about 24% (SiRiS). As can be noted, it is especially in the latest ten years of this period that the share of students enrolled in independent schools increased. Between 2001 and 2011, the share of students enrolled in independent schools increased from about 5% to about 24%. During the same period of time, the number of independent schools tripled, with increases especially in urban areas (SNAE, 2011).



Data provided by SiRiS. Figure by author.

*Figure 1.* Number of different upper secondary schools by provider 1992 – 2012.



Data provided by SiRiS. Figure by author.

Figure 2. Number of students in upper secondary school by provider 1992 – 2012.

At the same time as the total number of schools saw a dramatic increase, the total number of students decreased. According to the SNAE (2011), this has led to a situation where more and more schools are competing among fewer students.

In terms of independent schools, there are different forms of ownership. Vlachos (2011) states that the most notable development in recent years is the increasing number of profit-driven school chains, such as AcadeMedia, Kunskapsskolan, John Bauer and Baggium. Almost 90 % of independent schools are incorporated companies.

The independent school reform is very much intertwined with the freedom of choice school reform. The overall aim of the two reforms was, according to Blomqvist and Rothstein (2008), to provide a *revolution of freedom of choice* within the public sector. In addition to increased freedom for the individual, the reforms imply a transition towards a neo-liberal market adjustment of the education system, where students are customers through the voucher system mentioned on page 20.

### A new foundation for education

The reforms of freedom of choice and independent schools imply a very clear break from a historically dominant model of education (Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006; Daun, 2003; Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2006), and are thus of great importance for Swedish school policy over the last 20 years. It is not only in Sweden that this trend can be seen. School choice and market forces within education systems are stated to be global trends in most western de-

mocracies (for example, Apple, 2011; Ball, 2007; Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2008; Whitfield, 2006). However, Sweden is special in many ways and is considered internationally to be a pioneer in marketisation and privatisation, especially within the upper secondary school market (Arreman & Holm, 2011; Fredriksson, 2009; Heath & Sullivan, 2011; Lindbom, 2010; Lundahl, Erixon Arreman, Holm, & Lundström, 2013). Lundahl (2002) states that these reforms have made Sweden one of the most decentralised school systems in the Western world. Likewise, Bunar (2008) states that Sweden now has one of the most liberal school markets in the world, and Lundahl and Olson (2013) conclude that: “upper secondary education in Sweden is presently framed in a neo-liberal, market-oriented context” (p. 204). Blomqvist and Rothstein (2008) state that the Swedish reforms of the 1990s have led to Sweden having a very generous system when it comes to the right of privately organised schools to public financing when compared internationally. There are many studies that show interest in the effects of these reforms, and Levin (2013) summarises this by pointing out that these reforms contributed to a decrease in equivalency in the Swedish education system.

In summary, it is beyond doubt that these reforms have contributed greatly to an increased marketisation of the school and that schools now operate in competitive neo-liberal environments. The freedom of choice and the independent school reform together with the decentralisation processes carried out over the past decades have fundamentally changed the basis of the Swedish education system (Kallstenius, 2010).

These reforms and processes have in some aspects meant a shift in the power of schools from a societal to a more local level. Through the freedom of choice reform, more and more power and responsibility have been distributed to the family and individual (Dahlstedt, 2007).

## Upper secondary school from 1994

At about the same time as the above-mentioned educational reforms were implemented, the Swedish primary and secondary school underwent major changes with new curricula, a process that was initiated by a Government Bill (Gov. Bill, 1990/91:18; Department of Education, 1994). This section intends to summarise the main changes for upper secondary schools from 1994 until 2011. It was during this period that this study was conducted, which is why it also serves as a contextual background to this thesis. The next section will focus on the more recent reform change, which came into force in 2011, the school year after the data collection for this study.

### **The programme structure**

One of the major changes for upper secondary school in 1994 was that all the educational options were converted into three-year educational pro-

grammes. Essentially, there were originally 16 national programmes, which later became 17, but there were also specially designed programmes and an individual programme (which will be presented later). The different national programmes consisted in turn of different orientations, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Different national educational programmes 1994*

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Orientations</b>
<b>Child and Recreation</b>	Recreational, Educational and Social Activities
<b>Construction</b>	Construction, Building, Painting, Metalwork
<b>Electrical Engineering</b>	Automation, Electronics, Electrical and Computer Technology
<b>Energy</b>	Operation and Maintenance, Marine Technology, Heating, Ventilation and Sanitation
<b>Arts</b>	Art and Design, Dance, Music and Theatre
<b>Vehicle Engineering</b>	Aeronautics, Coachwork, Motor Vehicle Mechanics and Engineering, Transport
<b>Business and Administration</b>	Business and Services, Travel and Tourism
<b>Handicrafts</b>	Various trades and crafts
<b>Hotel, Restaurant and Catering</b>	Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Services
<b>Industry</b>	Local specialisations, country-wide recruiting
<b>Foods</b>	Local specialisations, country-wide recruiting
<b>Media</b>	Media Production, Printing Technology
<b>Use of Natural Resources</b>	Local specialisations
<b>Natural Science</b>	Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Environmental Science, Natural Sciences
<b>Health Care</b>	No national specialisations
<b>Social Science</b>	Economics, Liberal Arts, Social Sciences, Languages

Source: SNAE (2014).

Every national programme comprised 2,500 credit points, which were divided into different courses. All national programmes included eight foundation subjects<sup>2</sup> (kärnämnen): English, Art, Physical Education and Health, Mathematics, General Science, Social Studies, Swedish (or Swedish as a Second Language) and Religion. In total the foundation subjects comprised 750 credit points. In addition to these foundation subjects, the programmes were distinguishable through programme-specific courses, comprising 1,450 credit points, where a project for 100 credit points was required (SNAE, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes also referred to as core-subjects.

## **A new grading system**

Another major change in the curriculum in 1994 was the grading system, which consisted of a four-point scale according to this model: Fail (IG), Pass (G), Pass with Distinction (VG) and Pass with Special Distinction (MVG). However, the main change regarding the grading system was that from this point on, grades were criteria-related and not relative, as had previously been the case (Department of Education, 1994). For students, this meant a great difference since they no longer were compared with their classmates' achievements but were scored in relation to the course objectives and the knowledge gained (Hugo, 2007). The change also meant that each course was graded upon completion. Previously, every subject had been graded in such a way that the student's grade could change each semester. This meant that a student could have different grades in the same subject and it also meant that grading was important in all school years. This grading system resulted in a clear distinction (borderline) between those students who passed or did not achieve the established objectives and clarified more so than before whether a student had not achieved the established objectives. Wahlström (2002) argues that this clarification of the borderline may be seen as a partial explanation for the increasing number of students who were considered in need of special support.

## **The individual programme**

In addition to the national programmes, an individual programme was introduced. From the academic year 1998/1999, a requirement of the national programmes was that students must have passing grades in Mathematics, English and Swedish. The students who were not eligible to apply for a national programme were thus placed in the individual programme, the main purpose of which was to prepare them for a national programme (Broady, 2000; Hellberg; 2007; Hultqvist, 2001; SOU 2002:120). The individual programme has also experienced an influx of students who for various reasons drop out of national programmes (Agency for School Improvement, 2006).

The proportion of students who go directly from compulsory school to the individual programme has gradually increased since its introduction. Between the years 1993 and 1997, the proportion was about 5%; in 1998 approximately 8%; between 2004 and 2007 about 11%; and in 2011 approximately 13% of compulsory school pupils went straight from primary education to the individual programme (Agency for School Improvement, 2006; SiRiS; SNAE, 2013a; SOU 2008:27). It has thus become one of the largest upper secondary school programmes. However, SNAE (2007b) states that the majority (80%) of students who started the individual programme did not complete a national programme within five years.

Hugo (2007), in a study on the individual programme, discusses how teachers who are working in the programme recognise in their students

school fatigue, disorientation, social immaturity and insecurity about their future studies. Often, the students are also truant and have insufficient prior knowledge from compulsory school.

Hultqvist's (2001) thesis on the individual programme reports that students in the individual programme have often experiences with segregated special education at the primary school level, many times in small groups or individually. A common factor among these students is that they failed in their studies at primary school and that they generally come from families with a significantly lower educational level than students in other programmes.

### **Intentions and some effects of the reform**

One of the main intentions with the introduction of the programmes was to reduce the academic differences between the theoretical and vocational programmes. This goal was achieved mainly by increasing the theoretical elements of all the vocational programmes in that they were extended from being two-year to three-year programmes. This meant that students in the vocational programmes could also attain basic eligibility for university studies (Hugo, 2007). Proponents of the change argued about the benefits of not letting students make decisive career choices too early and about the fact that it would open up opportunities for further education for individuals from social groups that traditionally did not proceed to higher education (Hall, 2010). Lindensjö and Lundgren (2006) argue that the reform meant a higher level of educational ambition, especially for the vocational programmes. However, there were also critics who felt that all students did not benefit from a more academic upper secondary school and that it was a waste of resources because all students did not have the necessary ability. Some students had simply decided on a professional career where deeper academic knowledge was not required (Hall, 2010).

Hall (2009, 2012) studied the effects of the change from two to three years and the theorisation of the vocational programmes. Her study is based on an extensive pilot project which preceded the educational reform, and she specifically analysed enrollment in university studies, the level of upper secondary schooling completed, the probability of dropping out and earnings later in life for vocational students. One of her main findings suggests that the level of upper secondary schooling completed among vocational students increased but also that the increase from two to three years may have been negative for a certain group of vocational students, especially those with very low academic achievement at primary school and those with non-academic parents. She concludes that the additional year and the increase in academic content in the vocational programmes led to an increased dropout rate, enrollment rates at university that were no higher than before and no increased earnings later in life. These results thus point in the opposite direction to the intentions of the reform.

Another intention of the reform was to reduce the clear social differentiation between different educational alternatives within upper secondary school. An explicit goal was to reduce the gender and class bias that was seen as a problem in upper secondary education (Lundahl, Arreman, Lundström, & Rönnerberg, 2010). Hugo (2007) suggests that even this intention failed since the differences increased with this reform rather than decreased. The previous status difference between the programmes still existed, and perhaps to an even greater extent. Similarly, Broady (2000) noted that upper secondary education failed to live up to its intentions, because the social differentiation between programmes has increased. He argues further that students from the vocational programmes rarely applied for higher education, just as was found by Hall (2009, 2012). Taken together, two theoretical programmes have grown substantially. In particular, the Natural Science programme has come to seem like an elite education with recruitment from the highest social classes (Broady, 2000). This division between different programmes has also been shown more recently by Palme (2008).

## **Summary**

In summary, it should be emphasised that the described educational reforms and the new national curriculum have interacted, since they were implemented at about the same time. Rather than becoming isolated, they have come to affect each other's design and content. Decentralisation, the freedom of choice policy, the independent school reform and the new upper secondary school 1994 together meant large changes for the Swedish upper secondary school. Richardson (2004) emphasises that these reforms involve the most significant changes ever made to Swedish upper secondary school. Englund (2005) states that these reforms have strong political and ideological undertones and that they are in many ways influenced by neo-liberal ideas with the mottos individualisation, responsibility, freedom of choice, competition and market adjustment. Westling Allodi (2009) discusses how the introduction of market mechanisms into the education system can be related to a decrease in the significance of central educational goals such as democracy and equity.

It is against the background of these major changes that schools came to be organised and shaped over the coming 17 years, and the results of this thesis should be seen in light of these changes. It mainly concerns the independent school movement, but also the way in which the basic conditions of education came to influence the formation of upper secondary education and special education.

Upper secondary school once again underwent change in 2011, and the next section involves a short presentation of this change.

## Upper secondary school from 2011

Upper secondary school, together with compulsory school, experienced another major change in 2011. This section intends to give a brief account of the main changes that came into force the year after the data collection for this study.

The programme structure was changed and now includes 18 national educational programmes: 12 vocational programmes and six higher education preparatory programmes. The former individual programme was replaced by five introductory programmes. One significant change is the admission requirements for all national programmes. The previous requirements were passing grades in Swedish, English and Mathematics. In addition to these, passing grades in a further five subjects are required for the vocational programmes. For the higher education preparatory programmes, a further nine subjects with passing grades are required, which makes for a difference in the admission requirements between vocational and higher education preparatory programmes (SNAE, 2012b). These further admission requirements have led to an increase in the proportion of students from primary school who are not qualified to apply for a national programme and a decreased interest in the vocational programmes (SNAE, 2013b).

On the whole, the reform meant increased differences between the higher education preparatory and vocational programmes, where the latter no longer qualified students for higher education (Nylund, 2010). However, it is possible to expand a vocational programme so that the student is eligible. Overall, there has been a major distinction between the vocational and higher education preparatory programmes in terms of both admissions and opportunities for further studies. According to Lundahl et al. (2010), one of the main purposes of the reform was to increase the differences between vocational and higher education preparatory programmes.

Another important change in 2011 was the introduction of apprenticeship education, which is an alternative within the vocational programmes where the student completes at least half of the programme at one or several workplaces. A further change was the grading scale, which is now represented by the grades A-F (SNAE, 2012b).

The higher admission requirements, both for vocational and for higher education preparatory programmes, mean a general increase in prior knowledge in the national programmes. This should reasonably mean an overall reduction of students in need of special education support. On the other hand, it also means that fewer students are qualified for the national programmes and are thereby referred to the different introductory programmes. Reasonably, this should increase special education efforts there if 99% of an age cohort continues to upper secondary education.

# The governing of special education

Special education is governed and regulated at many levels, and involves the influence of international and national policy documents as well how municipalities allocate resources. At the school level, principals have the main responsibility for special education, while special educators and special education teachers hold important professional roles.

## Policy documents

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 stated that every individual has the right to an education. This is also stated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1959 (see, for example, Westling Allodi, 2007). Westling Allodi (2005) discusses both how all children are entitled to support so that they can benefit from their education as well as how education is important so that they can acquire other rights in society. The student's rights to special education support that the school must adhere to appear at a variety of levels: international agreements and policies within the UN and the EU, national laws and regulations, as well as locally adapted formulations of objectives.

According to Ainscow and César (2006), the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994) is the most general international policy document relating to special education and the organisation of education. However, its guidelines are more international in character and are not absolute provisions. The main point made in the declaration presents a strong argument for an inclusive policy, where students should, as far as possible, be taught together regardless of their difficulties and differences. This document may, of course, be understood and interpreted in many different ways, which have to do with conditions and circumstances for different countries and education systems. It may in some countries be understood as a quest to serve children with disabilities within general educational settings but: "Internationally, however, it is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners. It presumes that the aim of inclusive education is to eliminate social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability" (Ainscow & César, 2006, p. 231).

Likewise, at the European level, one of the EU's cornerstones is to provide and strive for a socially cohesive society (Council of Europe, 2004). On the basis of this, it is desirable to develop education so that it is as equitable as possible, since research has demonstrated that the greater the educational inequity, the lower the level of social cohesion (Dayton-Johnson, 2001; Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003). Education is often considered to be one of the most powerful factors for the achievement of a better life by individuals, groups and society as a whole. An education system that builds on fairness and inclusiveness (the cornerstones of equity) is stated to be the most effective means of making society more equitable (OECD, 2007).

At the national level, it is primarily the Education Act (Ministry of Education, 1997, 2010) and the national curriculum (Department of Education, 1994; SNAE, 2013c) that shall guide the organisation and content of education. In the SNAE (2007a), the basic principles of these policy documents are summarised, and it emphasises, as do the international guidelines, that education shall be conducted in a spirit of inclusiveness and that students shall, as far as possible, be taught together. Efforts are to be made to see that students in need of special support receive it in their regular classes. At the same time, the report shows that many schools often employ segregation measures. This shows that the fundamental guidelines are inconsistent with the way that schools provide special support and in the way students and parents might wish. In many ways, what is happening in schools is only marginally consistent with what the national and international guidelines propose. Emanuelsson, Haug, and Persson (2005) state that: "the gap between political intentions and practical realities is considerable" (p. 122). Formulations in policy documents seem to be one thing and in practice often another.

In the school year 2011, the new Education Act 2010:800 (Ministry of Education, 2010) was introduced, where the importance of competence in special education was clearly strengthened in the Swedish upper secondary schools. It reveals that: "Student health services shall include medical, psychological, psychosocial and special education interventions. . . . Furthermore, personnel shall be available for students in need of special education." (Ministry of Education, 2010, chapter 2, para 25, own translation). In the previous Education Act 1985:1100 (Ministry of Education, 1997), there was no specific regulation as to special education competence in school. However, what was apparent was the right of each individual to support: "Special attention must be given to those students who for various reasons have difficulties reaching the educational goals" (Department of Education, 1994, p. 24, own translation) and: "A student shall be given special support if there is concern that the student will not achieve the educational objectives specified in the curriculum or if the student needs support for other reasons" (Department of Education, 1992, chapter 8, para 1, own translation). What clearly emerges in the Education Act (2010:800), which was implemented the year

after the data collection for this study, is that the student health team shall include special education intervention.

## Municipal level

As a result of the previously described municipalisation in 1991, a governmental grant system was introduced that by way of a revision in 1993 further increased the freedom of action on the part of municipalities. The allocation of resources within municipalities is thus an important part of the fact that all students should have access to an equitable education. Most national studies concerning resource allocation involve compulsory school, but the principle of resource allocation is the same for upper secondary schools. The SNAE (2013d) states that there are large variations between municipalities when it comes to the allocation of resources to different school activities and that the distribution of resources between schools varies greatly. It is further noted that municipalities do not sufficiently take into account socio-economic differences when allocating resources, which is confirmed in the Swedish Schools Inspectorate report (2014). Jarl and Rönnerberg (2010) also emphasize that it is at the municipal level that decisions are made as to how much and according to what principles allocation of resources shall be made and that the pre-conditions between public and independent schools shall be as similar as possible. They state: “the intention of the government is that all schools shall have as similar conditions as possible, regardless of provider type” (p. 55).

A deregulated school system means that a large proportion of decisions about resources for special education are made at the municipal level and that there is a large difference between how different municipalities deal with this issue.

## School level

At the school level, it is the principal who has the ultimate responsibility for the school’s activities and thus also special education and special support. It is the principal’s responsibility to ensure that a student’s need for special support is investigated and that an IEP (åtgärdsprogram) is devised, which must include a description of the special needs, how they shall be met and how the IEP will be monitored and evaluated (Department of Education, 1992). Since the principal has the ultimate responsibility, this also affects the organisation and design of special education at the school. Lindqvist and Nilholm (2013) state that: “The way educational leaders organise the work of these two occupational groups [special educators and special education teachers] can be seen as expressions of diverse ideas about how school prob-

lems should be handled” (p. 98). Therefore, the professional special educators and special education teachers are largely a part of a system that they themselves cannot fully control. Jarl (2012) discusses how principals have several different actors to relate to. It is about conflicts between the state and municipal governance, but also about teachers’ demands and expectations. Jarl (2012) stresses that principals at different schools in different municipalities deal with this in different ways.

## Professional level

Professional level is largely about the professional roles of special educators and special education teachers<sup>3</sup>, which is central to this thesis and which therefore is given further room here. First, a historical overview of these professions in Sweden is provided, followed by a section addressing their everyday tasks.

### The shifting roles of special education professionals in upper secondary school

In Sweden there are and have historically been two professional degrees in special education: the Postgraduate Diploma in Special Needs Training (special education teachers, speciallärare) and the Postgraduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs (special educators, specialpedagoger) (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education [SNAHE], 2012). This section aims to describe these two professional roles and their development in Swedish schools, since parts of the results concern the duties of these professions as well as their availability and accessibility in upper secondary schools.

The first university-level teacher training in special education was introduced in 1962 and involved one year of full-time study. Special education teachers were expected to teach students in need of special support, either individually or in small groups, a number of weekly lessons separately from their peers. This may have meant more permanent segregation solutions in special classes as well as pull-out variants in which students had a regular class affiliation (SNAHE, 2012).

An examination of the special education teacher programme resulted in the Government Bill 1988/1989:4, which proposed that the special education teacher programme be replaced by a new special educator degree, starting in 1990. Its main changes had a broader focus within the special education field and besides teaching also included counselling, and supervisory and advisory

---

<sup>3</sup> In the thesis, special education teacher is used to term this profession; however, in the papers, the term special teacher is used.

ry functions (SNAHE, 2012). The special education teacher's previous focus on work with students came by way of the move to have special educators also cover tasks affecting school improvement, counselling and supervision of other school staff (Malmgren Hansen, 2002). A new and longer Postgraduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs (special educator) was introduced in 2001, with higher ambitions: it now meant 1.5 years of full-time study, or 90 ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer System). In the context of the adaption to the European Bologna Process in 2007, new objectives for the Postgraduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs was formulated, as was a reintroduction of the Postgraduate Diploma in Special Needs Training (special education teacher) (starting in 2008), which now includes six orientations. In 2011, the number of students enrolled in the two programmes was about the same, with a total of 673 students distributed throughout eight universities. Both professional degrees are structured as postgraduate programmes for teachers with at least three years of professional experience (SNAHE, 2012).

In 2012 a survey was conducted by the teacher's union (Läraryrbundet), its intention being to identify the educational background of special education teachers and special educators. The study's scientific basis can be questioned, both with respect to the selection process as well as to the response rate. However, 3,955 special education teachers/special educators responded to the survey. What became apparent was that only 3% of these had an upper secondary school teacher degree, while most were primary school teachers (46%) or preschool teachers (36%) (Läraryrbundet, 2012).

It therefore appears that the number of special educators and special education teachers with an upper secondary school teacher background is very low.

From 1962 to 1990, only special education teachers received an education, and between 1990 and 2008, only special educators. Since 2008, these two programmes have been offered parallel to each other, meaning that both special education teachers and special educators can work in schools.

Generally speaking, the focus of special education teachers is to support the individual student who is in need of special support, while the main focus of the special educators is at the organisational and counselling level. The different curricula for these two teacher-training programmes indicate their similarity, although there are differences. The similarities are in particular in the emphasis on the communicative role and the administrative or advisory role in educational situations performed so that students' needs are met. Both professional degrees emphasise the removal of learning barriers through the development of learning environments. The ability to design and implement IEPs (åtgärdsprogram) is also emphasised in both degree programmes, as is the ability to empathise in relation to ethical aspects and special education issues.

The differences between the two educational programmes can be seen as a level difference, where special educators are expected to work at a more general level, which includes the individual, group and school level, while the special education teacher is expected to work more directly with the student's specific learning difficulties in different subjects (SFS 2007:638). Overall, it can be said that both professional degrees in large part are similar and that they are intended to complement each other. Several studies have been conducted concerning these two professional roles (for example, Gerrbo, 2012; Isaksson, 2009; Lansheim, 2010; Malmgren Hansen, 2002; Mattson & Hansen, 2009; Takala & Ahl, 2014; von Ahlefeldt Nisser, 2009), where it has been found that it is often difficult to differentiate between these two roles in everyday school work. What is more, special educators often perform duties and tasks that are clearly meant for special education teachers. It is also unlikely that the intended differences that can be discerned in the professional degrees are particularly well-known among school principals and school staff (Gerrbo, 2012).

## Special education activities

The special education assignment in schools is well-established in our policy documents as a result of the Education Act and the national curriculum. The aim of the assignment is that all students in the school should be given the opportunity to achieve the objectives based on their personal situation and ability. It is not only teachers, special education teachers and special educators who work with these issues, but also counsellors, school psychologists, assistants, study advisers, principals, etc. At the school level, it is the principal who is responsible for issues related to special education support, although the actual implementation is often managed by special education teachers or special educators.

### **Tasks at different levels**

As mentioned above, the general tasks of a special educator/special education teacher can be described as being at different levels: individual, group and organisational. Based on the two professional degrees, Ahlberg (2001) describes the primary content of special education through the following concepts: mapping, guidance/supervision and school development. Similar descriptions can be found in Rosenqvist (2007), and Byström and Nilsson (2003) through the following concepts: teaching, development and investigation. Consultation and establishment of IEPs (åtgärdsprogram) also appear to be important (Ahlberg, 2001). Taken together, the work as a special educator/special education teacher is complex and spans over the individual, group and organisational levels.

Individual level	Group level	Organisational level
Teaching		
Mapping		
	Counselling, guidance, supervision	
Screening, investigation		
		School development
Establishing IEP's		

Figure 3. Various special education assignments across different levels.

Figure 3 is intended to illustrate the varied special education assignments at different school levels. It should be noted that the various assignments or tasks can be performed at different levels. For instance, mapping can be done at different levels. This may involve mapping of a specific situation or individual student and is then at the individual level. However, it can also mean mapping of overall school issues or educational contexts, and is then at the organisational level. What is more, teaching can involve different levels, both individual and group. There are no clear boundaries between the different levels; therefore, they are often intertwined.

These various complex tasks that span over different levels of the school imply a lot of other daily tasks, such as development of teaching methods, work in the student health team, external contacts with parents, social authorities, psychiatry, police, health care and evaluation of various educational interventions. These tasks involve many meetings with other individuals and professionals. Communication appears to be an important part of the special education assignment.

Westling Allodi (2009) shows how 48 principals of compulsory schools who responded to a questionnaire answered that special education efforts were available on an average basis. The analysis shows there to be a large variation between schools and their ability to offer special support. The fact that schools are so clearly linked to market management seems for some principals to be an obstacle. In schools, there are various special education efforts that are different in character and breadth. These involve didactic efforts, collaboration within and outside the school, and organisational efforts that can lead to differentiation as well as efforts that can counteract

differentiation. She states: “The schools seem as a result to be able to choose between different models and can also keep in mind the objective of involvement in their organisation of special education efforts” (ibid, p. 220, own translation). Among the most common special education efforts are IEPs, collaboration with parents, individual adjustments and special education in smaller groups.

### **Everyday tasks**

Studies concerning everyday work in schools are limited, not least when it comes to upper secondary schools, which is why research from compulsory school is also used as a reference point.

Many of the national studies on special education that focus on upper secondary schools have particular focus on specific learning groups, special schools, schools for students with intellectual disabilities, the individual programme or other specific programmes (for example, Hellberg, 2007; Henriksson, 2004; Hugo, 2007; Hultqvist, 2001; Lang, 2004; Mohlin, 2004). These studies have in many ways highlighted special education in schools based on these groups. The upper secondary school organisation, through its various programme types and different student populations, means that the special education assignments differ depending on programme and school factors. It appears that the special education work in upper secondary school is more connected to school and programme contexts than it is in compulsory school.

Studies on everyday tasks are very limited. Göransson (2012) says that there is no solid research on the functions and duties of special educators and special education teachers in school and that perhaps teachers and/or principals do not always have the same view as special educators and/or special education teachers about what role they should play in the school or what is intended in the professional degrees.

### **Special education**

Möllås (2009) conducted a study on national programmes at upper secondary school level with a focus on students who have been assessed as requiring special support. She followed 11 students during their upper secondary school years and found that the wait for support to take place and the lack of collaboration within the school had a negative impact on these students due to exclusion processes. One important factor for these students was how late the support was provided. It seems to be of great importance that the students' difficulties are addressed as early as possible. Möllås (2009) also shows how support offered by schools primarily targets the individual, while additional levels (for example, relational and organisational) should be taken into account. She says: “The actions adopted are mainly individualised, but the study shows the need to take into account different levels so that better

preconditions for participation and learning can be created” (p. 225, own translation).

An interview study by the SNAE (2007c) found that many of the students who dropped out of school reported that they felt that the support had been given too late and that it was not in accordance with their perceived problems.

A study directed to a representative sample of 315 principals (response rate 77.5%) at upper secondary schools, conducted by the SNAE (2010a), aimed to provide a picture of the schools’ work related to assistance and support to students at risk of not achieving the objectives of their education. The main results indicate that the schools’ resources for support and assistance are to a large extent provided outside students’ regular teaching groups. It states: “According to the principals, special education is largely offered individually or in small groups. These forms of support mean . . . that the student leaves his/her class in order to receive special support” (p. 29, own translation).

Similarly, Giota and Lundborg (2007) and Giota and Emanuelsson (2011) emphasise how support is often organised in compulsory schools. Giota and Emanuelsson’s (2011) results are based on questionnaires directed to principals in more than 1,000 representative compulsory schools. The results show that about 25% of the principals report that there is some form of ability grouping for students in grades 7-9. Practically all principals for students in grades 7-9 perceive students’ special needs as essentially related to the individual rather than to the teaching or to the staff attitudes. Lindqvist and Nilholm (2013) also find this to be the case.

The main purpose of Giota and Lundborg’s (2007) study was to examine the extent and forms of special education support in compulsory school. The data material from the study is based on questionnaires from 17,000 students born in 1982 and 1987, and was collected between 1992 and 2003. The results show that in both cohorts, at least 40% of the students received special education support, at least during one point in time of their compulsory schooling. Boys, students with a foreign background and students with a lower parental educational background were over-represented. Giota and Lundborg (2007) state that: “students in need of special support are largely separated from regular teaching and receive special education in ‘segregated’ environments” (p. 26, own translation). In this way, the special education solutions were organised in such a way that was contrary to what is advocated in policy documents. These results, however, concern compulsory school ten years ago, and it is important to know if and how they have changed over the last ten years and if the same type of structure has been introduced at the upper secondary level.

A study that examined the situation of pupils in need of special support in all of Sweden’s independent compulsory schools indicated that the number

of pupils in need of special support is lower at independent schools than at public schools (Göransson, Magnusson, & Nilholm, 2012).

In a study by Johansson (2009), student groups in three different upper secondary school programmes were followed over three years. One factor in common among students in the Health Care programme was that they often left regular classes in order to receive support from the special educator, especially in Mathematics and English. As well, some students received all their teaching in the foundation subjects with the special educator instead of in their regular class. In contrast, in the Technical programme, this organisation was very rare and occurred only occasionally, and the support within this programme appeared to be part of regular teaching instead. Johansson (2009) says:

In the Health Care programme, there is more traditional special education support in the foundation subjects, which is not integrated in the programme's teaching as a whole. The students in the Health Care programme therefore sometimes leave programme classes to receive support (p. 218, own translation).

Giota and Lundborg (2007) reflected on the impact of special education support carried out from 1992 to 2003. The results of their study show that the students who received special education support reached the objectives to a lesser degree than those students who did not receive any. At the same time, the results show that students who received special education support for several years reached the objectives to a lesser degree than those who received such support for shorter periods of time. This mainly applies when the support is given in more or less segregated forms or specific groups. Giota and Lundborg (2007) point to two main interpretations of this empirical evidence. One interpretation is that it is the special education itself that is the cause of the lower performance because students consolidate their special needs. The second interpretation is that special education did not compensate sufficiently for the different backgrounds and needs of the student. They conclude that at least some forms of support activities may have negative consequences. However, their results cannot really point to any clear effects and contributions of the special education. This is a rather tentative discussion, since there were no control groups, and Giota and Lundborg (2007) cannot ever know what would have happened to the students who received special support if they had not received it, and possible variables that were not observed may have been influential. It is difficult to determine the impact of special education efforts. The case may be that the solutions did not suit all students. For some students, some kind of support might be preferable, while others need other solutions. Studies at the individual level might help to further investigate this relationship.

Lundgren (2013), who interviewed six students in a vocational programme about their perceptions of special education support at upper secondary school, showed that some of these students expressed a fear of being identified as a student in need of special support. The special education intervention may, therefore, be perceived to be a source of labelling and marking.

Löfgren (2012) also addressed the issue of special education support at upper secondary school through qualitative interviews with six special educators/special education teachers. The forms of support that the respondents talked about were mostly individualised compensatory support and specific support to individual students. The specific support to individuals usually took place at times scheduled outside the student's regular class. It also emerged that it was often the responsibility of the student to take advantage of the support being offered since it was often organised on a voluntary basis. Bengtsson and Lycke (2014) investigated the special education teacher's professional role, based on a questionnaire directed at 32 special education teachers who graduated 2011 – 2013. It was revealed that many had no work description. Most of them were employed as special education teachers and some as special educators. The results showed that there is a great variety of tasks that may be included in the work duties of a special education teacher. With regards to the educational element, they worked to a much greater extent with individual teaching or in small groups than within the regular class. All of the respondents reported that they worked with language development, frequently with models or methods that had already been developed. Most of the informants worked in compulsory school.

For this thesis, one important concept concerning the organisation of education is the concept of ability grouping. According to Wallby, Carlsson, and Nyström (2001), ability grouping can be compared to the concepts setting (UK) and regrouping (US). Ability grouping can, of course, be used in different ways for different time periods and with more or less consolidated group affiliations. In this study, the concept ability grouping refers to students who are originally in the same course or class who are then divided into different groups based on previous achievement or course pace.

## **Summary**

It can be concluded that the everyday work duties of special educators and special education teachers need to be investigated further, especially at the upper secondary level. The special education assignment encompasses many different functions, tasks and expectations from different stakeholders, and simultaneously these are performed at several different levels in schools. With regards to teaching, the general picture is that special education support in schools is often focused on solutions outside the students' regular teaching groups, but of course there are exceptions.

It should also be noted that the special education professionals in schools are largely part of a very complex dynamic system that they cannot fully

control. The actual actions and expressions that are made in the schools are often done so without real influence by the individuals working in them. They are, in fact, dependent on the system they are a part of.

# Theoretical background

The Swedish education system, which constitutes a major part of democratic society, has, as has been shown earlier, in many ways changed in recent decades. Sweden has undergone a change in control of school content through the introduction of management by objectives and results. There have been far-reaching freedom and choice reforms and a decentralisation of power that together profoundly altered the basis for education (for example, Lundahl et al., 2013), at the same time as the individualistic trends in much of Europe and Sweden have been prominent. Individualistic trends within education and special education are further discussed in Helldin (2002a). Simultaneously, citizens, as a result of a greater multicultural society, have changed through increased migration, influx of refugees and increased class differences between various groups of people. All this places great demands on how a democratic school should be organised where all citizens can feel a sense of togetherness and belonging, despite their different group affiliations. The democratic school can be created and can take form in relation to how student groups are organised in different teaching situations; how and where special education support is designed; and how solidarity is promoted among different social classes. What kinds of basic democratic perspectives are taken also mean different ways of organising education, teaching and special education interventions.

The differentiation and variation between schools have increased during and after the above-mentioned school reforms through a more segregated school (for example, Andersson et al., 2012; Andersson et al., 2010; Gustafsson, 2007; Söderström & Uusitalo, 2010; Wiborg, 2010; Östh et al., 2013). A collective heterogeneous organisation of teaching and education provides opportunities for meetings, participation and exchange of knowledge between individuals and groups of individuals that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. A democratically shaped upper secondary school, on this foundation, should as far as possible strive to bring young people with different group affiliations and backgrounds together within the various educational paths offered.

This chapter intends to address issues of democratic educational theories as well as theories focusing on social educational justice and different perspectives on exclusion. These issues will later be discussed in relation to the presented empirical results in the articles, and will thus be an important part

in the presentation of a deeper societal discussion of these results, which are part of this thesis aim (see above p. 15).

## A shift in fundamental values in the education system

Earlier in the thesis, there is a description of how the Swedish education system has basically come to change as a result of a number of important education reforms. Focus has been on the changes that have occurred in school in terms of operations and consequences. Some studies have been presented that show how perceptions of civil democratic and equality issues have changed over time. Olson (2008) shows how the democratic discourse experienced a setback during the educational policy of the 1990s, when democracy values became less important. She interprets this as an expression of a shift to a more market-oriented context. Eriksson (2013) finds that the education reforms implemented in the early 1990s, to a very small extent, were justified by arguments related to democracy and equality. The same trend in higher education is shown by Unemar Öst (2009), who examined the political struggle of defining the purposes of higher education in Sweden between 1992 and 2007. She finds that the discourse of democracy during this period receives an increasingly weak legitimacy and that the discourse that came to dominate more and more is the discourse of globalisation. She emphasises that the overall hegemonic discourse of higher education is best described in terms of competitiveness and economic growth, where the concept school quality is synonymous with employability.

In the same way, Carlbaum (2012) concludes that there has been a discourse shift from *a school for all* to *a school for the labour market*, which is reflected in changes to how citizenship is expressed in school reform texts between 1971 and 2011. Particularly at the end of this period, she states that instead of endorsing a collective and active citizenship based on democratic values, which were previously more prevalent, citizenship is now pronounced in terms of individual adaptability and flexibility. The same trends are also shown by Lundahl et al. (2010), who examined the Swedish upper secondary school reforms between 1968 and 2009. They point out that democracy and equality arguments are not discussed at all in relation to the implementation of the upper secondary school reforms which were initiated in 2011.

Adman (2014) finds similar results in an analysis of how democracy and equality arguments are used when reforms are justified. Through an examination of the political arguments used by both right- and left-wing parties, he finds that arguments rooted in democracy and equality are very rarely used by both sides. It is instead arguments related to the labour market that have a central position, and he notes that the democratic mandate is at risk of being ignored in the future discussion on education.

Likewise, Apple (2011) states that the very meaning of democracy these days is radically changing in most Western countries. He states:

Rather than referring to ways in which political and institutional life are shaped by equitable, active, widespread and fully informed participation, democracy is increasingly being defined as possessive individualism in the context of a (supposedly) free market economy. Applied to schools, this redefinition has given rise to the push for placing schools directly into the competitive market, management by private firms, commercialised media and materials and abandonment of the broader ideals of public education. (ibid, p. 21)

This implies a shift in school values towards a more individualistic and economic trend, especially since the turn of the century (Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006; Carlbaum, 2012; Englund, 1993, 1995, 2005; Helldin, 2002b; Lundahl et al., 2010; Unemar Öst, 2009). The social, equal and democratic arguments for school reforms seem to have diminished in strength, in favour of an individualistic, market-driven discourse. It can be argued that there has basically been a shift in school's essential values. It is from other prevailing arguments that the school's significance and role in society are motivated and justified. Boman (2002) summarises this shift by stating that:

. . . the collectivistic concept of democracy and the welfare state's cohesive aim for equality has been replaced by an individualistic concept of democracy and an independent school system with a variety of school types in order to create (marketable) variation and freedom of choice. (p. 380, own translation)

She continues to point out that in such a society, the individual is the most important unit and that collective group affiliations are about to lose their societal significance. Similarly, Sivertun (2002) has studied curricula texts over time and finds that there has been a change to a greater emphasis on the individual student. He states: "In the educational system of freedom of choice, the maximisation of private interests has become the focus, where each person must realise his/her own life plan" (p. 148, own translation). In such a system, the risk appears to be that certain groups of students seem to be losers at the expense of others. Stronger social groups succeed to a greater extent in the realisation of their own interests, whereas other weaker groups do not succeed to the same extent.

Englund (1995) has described the educational policy shift as a paradigm shift, from a common egalitarian school to a neo-liberal and market-oriented system.

There has been criticism from many directions that has been directed against this shift in school values, including from the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum, who argues that the economic and individual value-oriented school is emerging as a threat to the democratic future of all society. A school whose value system is based on economic and individualistic val-

ues risks undermining democracy since its citizens lack the necessary knowledge and understanding of what is required for democratic development (Nussbaum, 2010).

Even though many researchers point to how there has been a shift in the prevailing values of the school, it does not appear as if the values of democracy have faded at the rhetorical level. Democratic issues still have an important role in the Education Act and curricula.

Although this section is largely about how democratic values in school have come to change, it should be noted that the role of upper secondary school in society must also be seen as selective for future work and further study. Therefore, it must also change over time to adapt to a national and international labour market. It also serves to prepare individuals for personal development and active participation in society (see, for example, SNAE, 2012b).

In order to continue the discussion on what a democratic school actually means, a discussion of different democratic educational theories is presented.

## Democracy in school or a school for democracy

Efforts towards an egalitarian, equal and democratic school require discussion as to what a democratic school is and how the subjects (individuals) are affected within it. Recognising the foundations on which a democratic school can be understood is critical for such reasoning. The relationship between education and democracy has been the subject of discussion for a long time.

### **Education for democracy**

Biesta (2003, 2006) contributes to an extensive discussion on how this relationship can be understood from different perspectives on how the subject is formed and how this can be regarded as desirable or necessary. He stresses that the prevailing idea in education systems, ever since the Enlightenment, on this relationship has been to shape citizens who are equipped to participate in a democratic society. He states: “One influential line of thinking holds that democracy needs rational individuals who are capable of making their own free and independent judgements” (Biesta, 2006, p. 119). Citizens shall be made democrats; they must learn democracy. Based on this way of looking at the relationship, school thus becomes a tool for forming democratic citizens: *education for democracy*. This view of the relationship is criticised by Biesta (2006) for being instrumental and individualistic – instrumental in the sense that education is seen as an instrument for creating democracy; individualistic in the sense of creating democratic individuals, which means that the success of democracy is based on the individual’s

skills and abilities. However, Biesta points out that this way of looking at the relationship between education and democracy is the most common.

### **Education through democracy**

Biesta (2006) refers to an alternative way of looking at the relationship between education and democracy as *education through democracy*. Here, the starting point instead is in creating democratic situations in which subjects are given access to participation in the democratic process. Individuals should not be educated to become democratic citizens; they should be given opportunities to participate in democratic decision-making. Education shall be conducted through democratic modalities. Whatever the starting point is, it is about how we can best form the democratic individual: by educating people about what democracy is or by creating and promoting democratic conditions.

When transferred to the organisation of education and teaching groups in schools, these two approaches can be interpreted as within *education for democracy*; the bases and conditions of democracy shall be taught. It gives no greater attention as to how the groups or classes are composed. Students must learn the democratic order so that they can become democratic citizens. Such education may mean that the teacher transfers to students what democracy can mean and how it can be manifested – for example, by teaching about the political system. On the other hand, through *education through democracy*, I interpret it to be very much about the creation of common meeting structures, where accessibility and opportunities for participation will be central. To achieve this, all students must be given access and the opportunity to participate on an equal basis. The organisation of educational situations through the division of student categories or through special segregation solutions is a step in the opposite direction, away from the common, away from equal opportunities to participate. By instead encouraging student compositions of heterogeneity and pluralism, differences may be seen as important aspects. A pedagogical system might be created that gives students greater opportunity to participate on equal terms.

### **The democratic subject**

Biesta (2006) paints an alternative way of looking at the relationship between education and democracy rather than an instrumental and individualistic view. It is based on pluralism and recognition of diversity. He starts with different beliefs about the democratic citizen – an individualistic and a social, where he illustrates two different visions of democratic foundation which can be used to understand the relationship between education and democracy. Inspiration derives from two distinct time periods and democracy philosophers – Immanuel Kant and John Dewey – and is based on the above-mentioned notions of the democratic individual.

According to Biesta (2006), Kant's answer to the kind of citizen that a democracy needs is based "on the ability of individuals to make use of their own reason without direction from another" (p. 127). It is thus a democratic person who can think for him-/herself. Here, the individualistic inclination appears in the perception of the democratic subject. It is thus the qualified and competent individual who stands in focus: this derives from Kant's concept of the independent (*mündig*) person. The individuals shall be or shall become competent, and shall be guided by their own opinions and reasoning without being affected by others. In this way, there is a rational individualistic view of the subject where citizens, through education, become democratic citizens. This view has, according to Biesta (2006), come to strongly influence the liberal education tradition and is referred to as *education for democracy*. Against this individualistic rational view of subjectivity, criticism has been raised, primarily by the fact that subjectivity is formed by forces and processes beyond individual rational control.

An alternative view is based on Dewey's view of the subject, which is based on interaction with the social environment as a starting point. Dewey (1939/1988, p. 15) argues that human beings are *acculturated organisms* where social interaction with others creates habits, thoughts and reflection and where a strong focus is placed on mutual interaction and participation between individuals. This participation is central to Dewey's ideas, which means that it requires activity on both sides. It is a process about doing something together; there is no passive recipient of predetermined content. These processes create our identity in relation to the social environment we interact with, and the function of education is then, according to Dewey (1916), about a: "social function, securing direction and development in the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong ..." (p. 94). Dewey discusses further the importance of the group that the individual belongs to. He advocates constellations involving heterogeneity and pluralism, where different views and interests can and should occur.

Diversity of stimulation means novelty, and novelty means challenge to thought. The more activity is restricted to a few definite lines - as it is when there are rigid class lines preventing adequate interplay of experiences - the more action tends to become routine on the part of the class at a disadvantage. (ibid. p. 98)

In this way, an increased opportunity for individuals to grow and develop occurs. A limited assembly of individuals thus provides limited opportunities for development. Transferred to the context of the school's organisation, it is about how group formations are determined and whether or not they are permanent, and how they are generated by external and internal factors affecting group compositions. This occurs both at the national level through legislation and regulations as well as at the local level, between schools, where dividing up students into different schools and programmes allocates

different student categories in different group constellations in different areas. Also within schools as well as school classes, the placement of students over different lengths of time plays an important role – that is to say, in separated or divided educational settings. According to Dewey's way of looking at the democratic subject, this differentiation must be understood as being a limitation of opportunities for development for all individuals. It is, for Dewey, however, not only about the existence of pluralism and diversity within the group constellations; it is also about the establishment of an awareness of other individuals. In this way, opinions can be considered in light of others and can thus be developed. This implies an active approach in the creation of subjectivity, where the individual must be involved and create the context in which he/she is a part. The social view of the subject as Dewey demonstrates is called by Biesta (2006) *education through democracy*, and he states that: "A social conception of democracy expresses, in other words, that democracy is about inclusive ways of social and political action" (pp. 122-123).

Based on this, democracy is about the creation of inclusive activities, where the opportunity for participation and involvement is possible. Inclusive activities that are accessible to all are about striving for school solutions that do not involve specific groups or special segregating solutions for some of the citizens. Only then can the creation of a social and democratic school in such organisations take form.

With these two approaches, the democratic citizen and how he/she is created can be understood, and the democratic subject, the educational design, content and organisation can be reflected upon. But a democratic education can also be discussed based on different interests, preconditions and rights.

## Democracy – a feature for conflict?

School is an important part of our democratic society, a society that is politically controlled through the expression of different opinions, desires and aspirations; through control, policy and decision-making; and through action. The concept of democracy is widely used in different spheres of society, not least in terms of educational and school issues. It is for many schools important to appear to be democratic institutions, and parents and students often use democratic arguments to protect their rights. In society, there are many competing conceptions of what democracy is, and studying school from a social perspective thus also requires reasoning as to how these various interests or political expressions (conflicts) can be heard and how this might have an impact on the outcome of schooling.

Every political view or ideological point of departure sees the school and the formation of its content (Education Act and the curricula) as a policy instrument, a tool for changing and/or maintaining social structures (see, for

example, Dahlstedt, 2007). School policy documents, according to Lindblad and Popkewitz (2001), can therefore be regarded as political expressions of what is desirable to get out of school. Based on which political direction is chosen, the school's subject-related content is regulated within curricula. It is also about what kind of organisation the school should have, how educational groups are assembled and which basic values the school shall be based upon. There are many interests to take into account. Groups and those others who are interested in the formation of school are not only politically driven; this also involves school management, principals, teachers, students and their parents who have their own interests. It is also about external interests, such as those of the employer and the labour market, as well as different social groups and associations. The creation of the school, its content and organisation, can be assumed to be a tension between these different actors and their interests – or as Carnoy and Levin (1985) put it: “an arena of conflict over the production of knowledge, ideology, and employment, a place where social movements try to meet their needs and business attempts to reproduce its hegemony” (p. 50).

### **A political conflict?**

Political interests that are put against each other and that can constantly be described to be in conflict with each other also affect the school that is designed by policy. Larsson (2006) defines politics as a battle, a conflict in society about which values are to be prioritised, where different interests stand in relation to each other – the collective on the one side standing against the individual on the other.

Such a central struggle or conflict in politics, and not least for the school, stands between the individual's rights and everyone's common interests. This political divide, focusing on the individual or the collective, has its ideological origins in liberal and socialist ideologies, where liberal thinkers historically have defended the rights of the individual and family, while socialist proponents have put the group and the common good first. Transformed to the school context, these two paths largely come to be about, from a liberal perspective, a focus on and protection of the individual's rights. All individuals' rights are a central issue from a liberal perspective. A socialist perspective is instead based on a collective view and the idea of all individuals having an equal starting point, regardless of educational background, gender, ethnicity and so forth, and everyone's common interests. The main dividing line is thus about which starting point is taken – the individual or the collective. Boman (2002) describes it as a conflict between individual self-realisation and desire for belonging. This conflict revolves around the question of what we formulate as private and public matters.

Helldin (1997) discusses how the liberal idea has manifested itself in Swedish education policy. He argues that the liberal ideas of justice have been difficult to implement and that special education may be seen as an

attempt to overcome this failure, which in turn cannot be regarded as fulfilled since we have a school system in which many students fail. Furthermore, he refers to Lynch (1995), who argues that the liberal idea is not able to allow for an equal education or society. This criticism is based on the untouchable position of liberalism: “It values freedom of the individual above radical equality goals” (Helldin, 1997, p. 161, own translation). In the liberal tradition, it is mainly about equal *rights*. A more ambitious goal of justice would be more equitable outcomes of the education system. The achievement or striving for this more ambitious goal of justice is thus about providing for a more equal starting point for everyone. This might be done by reducing the impact of social background, class, gender and ethnic background on educational outcomes.

In the school’s organisation and formation of teaching groups and classes, these starting points are central. If they are created based on the individual student’s rights and difficulties, then classes might be divided, while a starting point in the common good endeavours to maintain and strengthen group constellations. These are two extremes that need to be balanced against each other. An excessively strong emphasis on the individual risks undermining common solidarity values, while excessive emphasis on common interests risks disadvantaging the individual.

The cornerstone of liberal ideology is the individual, and his/her rights and freedom, and the prominent position of the individual in relation to groups or collectives. Heywood (1998) emphasises the importance of this: “. . . the belief in the supreme importance of the individual over any other social group or collective body” (p. 28). The supreme belief in individual freedom manifests itself in the school context, where school issues rhetorically give great power to the individual and the family. Decisions relating to school and education must therefore be taken by each individual, based on his/her abilities, desires and choices. In this way, school becomes a private matter, an issue for the citizens of every society, just as responsibility for any kind of school failure needs to be brought back to the one taking responsibility, the individual. This is how school failure is often presented – that is to say, as a failure of the individual instead of a structural issue.

Although socialist ideology must in many ways be considered as diversified, with many different orientations and traditions, it has its common base in the collective, the group and the common interest. Heywood (1998) emphasises the importance of the collective: “. . . the belief that collective human endeavour is of greater practical and moral value than individual self-striving” (p. 107). The collective, through an emphasis on collaborative work and responsibility, is greater than the individual. The social and collective factors are also a prerequisite for individual development and self-striving. Based on this way of looking at school, it must be created to cater for the collective – that is to say, with everyone’s interest in mind and not just those of the individual.

## **Towards an equilibrium**

I have previously pointed to a shift in the Swedish school from a more collective approach to a more individual approach, from public good to private good. Helldin (2002a) discusses this interest dilemma where a too-strong emphasis on the individual can lead to neglect of common interests, while a too-strong emphasis on common interests may mean restrictions on the individual's capabilities. Helldin (2002b) directs criticism at the closest hegemonic effect that an individualistic view has had on research on special education and emphasises that it necessarily must include a supplementary perspective which includes common responsibility. An over-focus on the individual, both in terms of research and practice, leads inevitably to the individuals becoming the owners of their problems, and with this follows the special education methods for solutions, with a focus on individual ownership of problems and difficulties.

With a different starting point in collective and common interests, problems can instead be found within organisations and structures. The school's organisation, structures and power relations must necessarily also be included in such critical analysis.

There may seem to be an insoluble conflict between individual interests and the common good. From several directions, arguments have been heard about how this balance between the individual and common interests can be met without tipping the balance. A frequently used model is based on Gutmann's (1999) theory of a democratic education (see also Helldin, 2002a).

## **Gutmann's theory of democratic education**

Gutmann's (1999) main questions centres on whose interests it is that education should be shaped around in a democracy. She conducts a discussion on three widely different democratic educational theories or archetypes in an attempt to reconstruct a democratic educational theory. By illustrating these three different theories of democratic education, she shows how its consequences for how a democratic school can take form might be crystallised. Her method can best be described as finding the "good" arguments in these three theories, while other parts are rejected, and then merge the good parts and transfer them to another context. This means a form of rational considerations or a merger of a number of good arguments. It should be noted that the rational consideration which is the basis of her theory begins with an individual starting point, which is why her reconstructed theory can basically be said to have a liberal tone. She assumes that the concepts are neutral.

In her democratic theoretical basis, we find three different democratic views. These are called *The family state* (Plato), *The state of families* (Locke), and *The state of individuals* (John Stuart Mills).

In *The family state*, which is based on Plato's ideas, the shared central governmental responsibility for education shall prevail. The starting point is

the common universal good, and the individual cannot meet his/her own needs in other ways than through the group. The individual's contribution should thus benefit everyone. The school's mission will therefore largely be about creating similar individuals with the interests of the common good in focus. Gutmann's main criticism is that this approach can extinguish individual identity, and the particular interests of parents and individuals cannot be heard.

In *The state of families*, on the other hand, it is mainly the family's values and preferences with regards to the content of education that prevail. This is inspired by John Locke, and it is, in his ideological perspective, the family who should have the decisive power over their children's education. It is within the family, or rather with the parents, that the power of education should prevail. Gutmann's criticism of this order of power focuses on the weaknesses of the individual to be able to meet other differences, as well as the subordination of children to their parents.

In the third point of departure, *The state of individuals*, which is clearly inspired by liberal standpoints, the individual is the main carrier of educational values. It is the individual who owns the right to his/her education. There shall be no interference and no restrictions for individual freedom. In this way, a starting point is that there are an infinite number of choices, where every individual is well aware of the opportunities available. It is also against this that the main criticism is directed, where Gutmann argues that the knowledge of who you are and what you like is not only limited but also unevenly distributed among individuals. This is emerging as a common criticism of liberal viewpoints.

In these three theories of democracy, Gutmann (1999) points to extensive criticisms or deficiencies, but considers that all contain the necessary ingredients for a democratic education.

None provides an adequate foundation for educational authority. Yet each contains a partial truth. States, parents, and professional educators all have important roles to play in cultivating moral character. A democratic state of education recognizes that educational authority must be shared among parents, citizens, and professional educators. ... (p. 42)

In this way, Gutmann searches to find a compromise solution to the above-described basic conflict by highlighting emphases in the various theories as to how the individual's interests can be utilised while the common good is not lost. Gutmann (1999) refers to Socrates' definition of justice: "Justice . . . is the concurrent realisation of individual and social good" (p. 23). It is thus about simultaneously satisfying the individual and the common interest. Because the response of the individual also involves a contribution to the common good, according to Gutmann (1999), there need not be conflict between what is good for each of us and what is good for the common good.

The theory is in this way inspired both by common solidarity as well as by the individual and the argument of freedom of the individual.

The main question is about which political faction has the right to legitimise education. In this way, Gutmann's theory is a form of reconciliation between the various interests. A too-strong focus on one inevitably threatens the other. At the same time she points out that this form of sharing or balance cannot be seen as a natural guarantee of a neutral educational interest, but that it is the best of the possible solutions. Helldin (2002a) also points to an important criticism of her theory of democratic education involving a missing analysis of power between these interest groups. Do all interest groups have equal opportunity to make their voices heard, and do all arguments have equal opportunity to influence?

### **An uneven balance**

In order to establish a true democratic school, the internal power relations need to be revealed as a means of illustrating how certain interest groups are underrepresented. Based on the previous description of how the basic values and arguments changed in the Swedish school system, where the arguments and justifications of equality issues were pushed aside and made way for individualistic and market-inspired arguments, the balance between these theoretical polarisations seems to be fairly weak. It can be stated that there is a particular emphasis today on what Gutmann (1999) describes as the state of families and the state of individuals. Englund (2003) maintains that the influence over education, from this perspective, has changed and that families have more power through freedom of choice and school choice. He argues that there has been a shift, where the family's role and the individual's role in education have come to have an increasingly stronger position and that the school no longer, to the same extent, has the function as a meeting place between different social groups and different cultures.

According to Giroux (2003), education policy has changed from a democratic policy to a position with an emphasis on capitalism, individualism and market adjustment, which in itself has entirely eroded the original ideals of democracy. The differing conceptions of democracy presented are basically about what role the school plays in a society and how it should be organised. Here, different interests still stand in position against each other, and as has been emphasised, there seems to be a strong bias in favour of a more individualistic, market-driven, capitalistic view. Dahlstedt (2007) notes that: "the overall impression . . . is thus that the pendulum with recent decades of educational policy shift has increasingly swung from democracy towards capitalism as the superior education policy principle" (p. 35). According to Giroux (2003), to counteract this hegemonic distribution, we need to redefine educational purposes and meaning in a quest for a more democratic social order. Depending on which democratic opinion or which democratic perspective is taken, the school's content and organisation also change. I

have previously reported on how this balance is becoming strongly dominant in favour of an individualistic view, where the common values of democracy are being pushed aside. To strive towards balance between different conceptions of democracy may seem desirable, but at the same time, the uneven balance has its difficulties. Through a reconstruction of democratic beliefs, that balance could be reconciled and the school would to a greater degree be about shared values of solidarity, which would affect how student groups are put together and organised. Likewise, a critical review of (special)education could to a greater extent be about school structure, organisation and group composition instead of the highly dominant individualistic focus, where the individual is responsible for his/her failures.

Within a democratic school, the concept of justice appears to be very central, especially when the discussion revolves around different groups of individuals and their opportunities for participation and involvement. The next section is based on the concept of social justice.

## Social justice

Another theoretical approach when striving for a more democratic, equitable and inclusive school may start with a discussion about justice; about what justice might mean; and about what possible remedies for injustice might be. Such a discussion can, at best, provide suggestions for possible changes towards a more equal and democratic school.

The way in which education and educational situations are organised constitutes an arena of distributive justice. It is about fair opportunities and outcomes when assigning students to different schools, but also within schools to different educational programmes and ability groups. In this way, schools provide different educational opportunities and social experiences, which in turn affect students' academic achievements, their educational careers and, through that, also their occupational positions and life chances. Just like the concept of democracy, the concept of justice can be viewed from several different perspectives. Depending on which perspective is taken, various opportunities in educational arrangements are created for participation and equality, as well as for the form that pedagogical and special education interventions might take. The different perspectives might serve as a theoretical tool for an understanding as to how existing special education activities are carried out.

Justice is a concept with many different meanings, which also means that there are many ways to achieve it. As Walzer (1983) puts it: "Justice is a human construction, and it is doubtful that it can be made in only one way" (p. 5). As Walzer notes, there are many approaches towards the concept of justice and the way in which it can be implemented. One way to address this

question can be based in Fraser's (2003, 2010) reasoning on recognition and redistribution.

Justice as a concept has rightly been involved in the discussion about an equitable and inclusive school, and has also been used as a theory-based analytical tool about inequity in school (for example, Helldin, 2007b). I shall now introduce Nancy Fraser's two theoretically separate proposals *affirmation* and *transformation* as remedies or agents for change of injustice, but first, an explanation of the two paradigms of justice: *redistribution* and *recognition* (Fraser, 2003, 2010).

## Redistribution and recognition

Fraser's (2003) reasoning on how inequalities can be levelled or completely abolished is taken from two different levels in society: the political-economic and the symbolic-cultural. In reality, these are both interconnected to and influenced by each other, according to Fraser. Analytically, however, she chooses to separate them. This division of unjust bases has received a lot of criticism, but she argues that it is necessary that they be separated so that they can be theoretically discussed as remedies for various forms of injustice.

Injustices arising from the political-economic level are derived from society's political and economic structures, such as class affiliations, economic marginalisation or unsatisfactorily low standard of living of individuals or rather of groups of individuals. The symbolic-cultural injustices derive from social representation, interpretation and communication patterns, which may mean that a group of individuals is denied recognition by a superior cultural domination. Both of these analytically distinct structures of injustice are, argues Fraser (2003), deeply rooted in society and serve to disadvantage certain groups of individuals in favour of others. She concludes that both of these paradigms of injustice must be eliminated and distinguishes between its methods, which she notes must interact parallel to each other. The political-economic injustices should be addressed through *redistribution*, while the symbolic-cultural injustices should be addressed through *recognition*. These two sides of the concept justice, argues Fraser, are necessary to rectify injustices in society.

The theoretical concept of redistribution is largely inspired by John Rawls' *theory of justice* (Rawls, 1999), which is fundamentally about social regulations regarding a fair distribution of society's resources (see also Helldin, 1997). The concept recognition is in turn drawn primarily from Charles Taylor's and Axel Honneth's reasoning, which means that the recognition of the individual also represents recognition of diversity of communities (Heidegren, 1996; Honneth, 2003; Taylor, 1994).

Fraser's criticism of both of these arguments is that they are based on a view of justice that is too narrow, and she argues that a theory of justice

should be based on both of these dimensions and that justice is too complex to simply be reduced to mere redistribution or recognition. Both dimensions are needed, according to Fraser (2003, 2010).

## Representation

To these two concepts, Fraser (2010, 2011) adds the concept *representation* to complement the theory of justice. She hereby emphasises the social participatory aspect of the theory of justice, which in turn means that society's disadvantaged groups must be able to participate in society on equal terms with other groups. She states:

My proposal is to submit claims in all three dimensions to the overarching normative principle of *parity of participation*. According to this principle, justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. On the view of justice as participatory parity, overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction. (Fraser, 2010, p. 60)

This theory of justice will thus be about three aspects (*redistribution, recognition and representation*), all of which can be a limitation for certain groups to be on an equal basis and to participate in society's social interactions.

Fraser theoretically sets up three distinct terms, each of which must be met in order to achieve equal participation. None of them separately is sufficient for the achievement of equal participation. The first criterion deals with the distribution of material resources, which must serve as a guarantor of independence. In this way, it is basically about the distribution of economic resources and material. If the economic and material structure is too skewed, people are prevented from equal participation. In a school context, it is very much about distribution of resources to schools and/or individuals who are, in terms of resources, in a disadvantaged situation. The second criterion is about requirements as to how the social status between groups is ordered. This criterion, according to Fraser (2011), is inconsistent in environments with institutionalised value hierarchies that systematically devalue vulnerable groups and their characteristics and abilities. Finally, in the third criterion she sets up the claim to political power, where all actors in society are given equal political action, which is not consistent in structures that deny individuals or groups of individuals reasonable opportunity to influence the decisions that they themselves are affected by. In this way, she has inserted the concept of power in the justice debate in which she clearly indicates that all social groups must be given equal access to decisions and actions. All different interests must be taken into account and considered equally. In this way, she contributes (at least theoretically) to the argument that all group interests must be protected and not only those of the dominant and the privileged.

Fraser highlights the importance of application areas for equal participation and suggests that it can be applied to all the important areas of social life in which schooling must be seen as central. By this reasoning, she thus also emphasises the importance of representation and participation in efforts towards a more democratic and equal school.

## Remedies for injustice: affirmation and transformation

Fraser's (2010) reasoning on how these different dimensions of injustice might be dealt with or remedied is expressed in terms of *affirmation* and *transformation*. She means that different dimensions of injustice should be addressed in different ways. These remedies, I argue, can also be seen as expressions of current actions and serve as theoretical concepts for understanding why different actions are performed.

Before I examine these remedies for injustice, it is important to emphasise the tension between redistribution and recognition. Fraser argues that injustice due to political and economic structures in society requires redistribution of resources of any kind, which in practice is an endeavour to eliminate or reduce the group's actual meaning. Injustice with its basis in the symbolic-cultural sphere, in the form of misrecognition, on the other hand, requires recognition of these groups by giving value to the disadvantaged group and recognising its specificity. It seems that these two approaches work against each other; they are pulling in different directions. This becomes even more complex when it involves groups of individuals who are exposed to several kinds of pedagogical injustices, and thus would need remedies of both these types. It should once again be emphasised that in practice, these two fields are not distinct from each other, but rather they are intimately interlaced so that they also reinforce each other, many times resulting in a double effect of subordination: both economically and culturally. However, the tension between them and its internal contradictions appears to be reactive.

To abolish this contradiction, Fraser (2003) presents two broad approaches (*affirmation* and *transformation*) to deal with strategies when both redistribution and recognition can be applied in parallel without undermining each other's mutual effects. In the school context, as I see it, it is largely about where and when resources are used and how professional competences are used. It is about how to organise teaching and how these teaching groups are put together, where the specific resources and support are provided and to what extent, and when they are used.

The affirmative remedy for injustice deals with unjust outcomes or symptoms of social arrangements by focusing on the results of injustice, not its underlying causes. Transformative remedies have instead focused on the underlying structures that basically created injustice. Simply put, it means that affirmative remedial intentions are to change unfair symptoms. In this way, the unjust structures will also be maintained; they do not change fun-

damentally, but work in what can be seen as temporary support of resources. The affirmative approach can generally be said to be supported by the privileged groups who want to acknowledge their superior position by relieving the symptoms. It may be noted that the affirmative redistribution can also be regarded as necessary in the short-run, with reference to the subordination of weak individuals and groups. They need some form of redistribution here and now. Transformative remedies, on the other hand, seek a deeper and more lasting change. Followed by that, it means a more time-consuming change.

From a special education perspective, short-term reallocation of resources and compensatory-oriented actions can be seen as affirmative. They intend to make up for the unjust outcomes that the school provides, which in the short term must often be seen as necessary, not least for the students who have specific learning difficulties. Transformative actions on the other hand have a more long-term aim and intend to deeply change the structural causes of injustice. In this way, it is about creating educational conditions in which all have *equal preconditions* rather than *equal rights*.

An affirmative approach to symbolic/cultural injustice is manifested through a reevaluation of disadvantaged group identities, which also leads to an increase in support for differentiation between groups. Transformative remedies for the same kind of injustice involve a deconstruction, which in this case involves a fundamental change of the underlying culturally related values. A very clear distinction between the approaches is that affirmative remedies contribute to a strengthening of the current differentiation between groups, while transformative remedies, in the long-term, destabilise them. This also reveals the time aspect, which shows a more long-term and time-consuming change by transformation, while affirmation has the potential for more rapid changes. The affirmative actions also serve to maintain the current positions.

An affirmative approach towards politically/economically rooted injustice manifests itself in the form of superficial reallocations of resources without fundamentally changing its underlying causes. Fraser argues that these ways of redistribution traditionally belong to the liberal welfare state, and that this way of redistribution also enhances differentiation among groups in society. It also involves the maintenance of social structures through changes, or redistributions constantly need to be implemented since the basic causes are not affected. Transformative remedies, on the other hand, intend to fundamentally change the underlying causes of where these injustices have arisen – an approach that in its description is closer to a social point of view, since it aims to create more equal conditions for education. Fraser concludes by maintaining that affirmative remedies of injustice lead to greater differentiation between groups, while transformative remedies tend to blur them and promote solidarity. Figure 4 illustrates the reasoning above.

	Affirmation	Transformation
Redistribution	<i>the liberal welfare state</i> surface reallocations of existing goods to existing groups; supports group differentiation; can generate misrecognition	<i>socialism</i> deep restructuring of relations of production; blurs group differentiation; can help remedy some forms of misrecognition
Recognition	<i>mainstream multiculturalism</i> surface reallocations of respect to existing identities of existing groups; supports group differentiation	<i>deconstruction</i> deep restructuring of relations of recognition; blurs group differentiation

Figure 4. Four-celled matrix of affirmation, transformation, redistribution and recognition. Adapted from Fraser (2003, p. 203).

Figure 4 illustrates how different types of remedies for injustice can interact and how different remedies counteract each other. Fraser finds that two cases of common remedies seem to be valid: affirmative redistribution and affirmative recognition, which both lead to a greater differentiation between groups. The other alternative is transformative redistribution and transformative recognition, both of which undermine differentiation between groups. Fraser concludes that to fundamentally change the injustices that can be found in society, we need to tackle these through transformative processes. The affirmative paths lead, at best, to short-term changes that simultaneously undermine continued subordination of structures, and an increased or maintained level of differentiation.

When Fraser's reasoning is linked to the previous discussion on democratic theories, clear similarities can be seen in the fundamental starting points, although Fraser's main reasoning is fundamentally about groups and not about individuals. The affirmative actions are based on a liberal, individualistic idea about redistribution. The weak should be given what they need to adapt to the existing order, which in turn paves the way for a continued division and differentiation between groups in society. It does not alter the prevailing injustice but evens it out temporarily while it makes itself essential for the future when nothing really fundamental has changed. The transformative proposals have similarities in the collective democratic ideas presented earlier. Here, the starting point is rather deep changes and values of society's distribution and norms. From a special education perspective, perhaps both forms must be seen as necessary. In the short-run, to abstain from

affirmative remedies would mean penalising the weak and subordinate groups. Also Helldin (2007b) has pointed out how short-term compensatory special education prevent a long-term systematic change, which he emphasises as being a difficult problem, although even short-term actions must be considered. But in order to be able to change towards a more equitable and democratic school, the focus should be transferred to the transformative actions.

Finally, I would like to highlight Fraser's (2003) discourse of needs. The theory of the battle for needs assumes that conflicting groups in society struggle for their needs and demands, and that society should take actions that enable the group to participate equally with others. Special education needs can be seen as such a requirement of satisfaction of needs, in which different groups are fighting to satisfy their specific needs. Based on this process, the battle of needs between different groups can be seen as depoliticisation of a central educational issue. Fraser means that these needs are *leaking* or *runaway needs* that have broken out of the politicised arena. The battle for needs has become a matter for the various groups and their interpretations and arguments, rather than a societal political issue. Fraser (2003) also emphasises that when subordinate groups' specific needs are excluded from the political discursive arena, there is an imminent risk that domination and subordination relationships are reproduced.

## A differentiated education system: perspectives on exclusion

Finally, in this chapter, I want to address some theoretical perspectives on exclusion and its possible causes in a strongly differentiated upper secondary education system.

Swedish upper secondary education has a tradition of being differentiated through its division of different educational programmes and also schools. This is reflected through a clear bias between different schools and programmes with respect to, for instance, gender, and social and ethnic background. This section intends both to discuss how this structural division has been, and still is, provided, and to link this to a theoretical discussion on how this might explain how educational marginalisation can be created and enhanced.

### **Differences between programmes**

A major education policy issue in recent decades that is related to upper secondary school centred on breaking the traditional social bias in recruitment to various schools and programmes, not least between vocational and theoretical programmes, which was also one of the strongest intentions of

the school reform of 1994 (Alexandersson, 2011; Hall, 2010; Hultqvist, 2001; Lundahl et al., 2010). However, Hultqvist (2001) noted that the pursuit of the reform, contrary to its intentions, failed, and biased recruitment to various programmes has instead been cemented. This biased division of students counteracts the societal goal of an equivalent upper secondary school for all students, since social background and gender limit students' educational opportunities. Similarly, Broady (2000) noted that upper secondary schools in the late 1990s even more so than previously separated students, since "weak" students could clearly be found in a number of specific schools and educational programmes. Reuterberg and Svensson (1998) found that students' choice of educational programme did not change but followed previous class and gender patterns. Beach (1999) also studied the changes in the 1994 reformed upper secondary school and found that even though it was now the same curriculum for the various programmes, there was different content for the different programmes, and there were different ways to address and evaluate various programmes. He notes that upper secondary school at this time covered the whole population, but that the differences between different social groups persisted. The difference between weak and strong social classes was further entrenched when opportunities to achieve high-status education and work became increasingly difficult for the weaker groups. The hierarchical status between different schools and different programmes not only persists, but has been amplified (for example, Broady, 2000; Hugo, 2007; Johansson, 2009; Palme, 2008). As mentioned above (p. 21), the hierarchical division between schools and programmes may be partially explained by the freedom of choice and competitive system that was introduced, where some student categories are gathered in some schools and programmes, while other student groups are gathered in other schools and programmes. How the recruitment to various programmes is distributed, with respect to gender and educational background, is presented below.

### **Parental educational background and gender recruitment patterns to different programmes**

In sociological terms, Palme (2008) (inspired by Bourdieu) paints a picture of the social landscape of Stockholm's upper secondary schools. Two main polarities in this social landscape are found, which Palme terms *elite education – folk education (folkliga)* and *culture – economy*. The picture gives a very varied distribution, where the schools are clearly divided in terms of students' social origin, based on these two polarities. It should be noted that it is likely that the same variation between schools is not as obvious in smaller school markets outside the big cities.

Tables 2 and 3 show that there is still a very uneven distribution in terms of gender in most programmes as well as in terms of parental educational background, which still stands out as an important factor for students' eligibility and enrolment to upper secondary school programmes. Table 2 shows

the gender distribution between the various national programmes in the academic year 2010/2011. It is only in three programmes (Hotel, Restaurant and Catering, Natural Science and Social Science) that the gender distribution is within 40 – 60% for both boys and girls. It is also clear that in many programmes, there is a highly skewed distribution between boys and girls, especially in some programmes that are dominated by boys.

Table 2. *Gender distribution among national programmes, 2010/2011*

	% boys	% girls	% total
Child and Recreation	27.4	72.6	100
Construction	90.6	9.4	100
Electrical Engineering	95.0	5.0	100
Energy	96.5	3.5	100
Arts	33.5	66.5	100
Vehicle Engineering	89.7	10.3	100
Business and Administration	35.3	64.7	100
Handicrafts	12.3	87.7	100
Hotel, Restaurant and Catering	41.9	58.1	100
Industry	89.0	11.0	100
Foods	23.5	76.5	100
Media	39.5	60.5	100
Use of Natural Resources	32.2	67.8	100
Natural Science	51.1	48.9	100
Health Care	22.1	77.9	100
Social Science	40.2	59.8	100
Technology	80.2	19.8	100

Source: SiRiS. (Table by author)

Also in terms of parental educational background, there is a variation between different educational backgrounds and whether students are eligible for or enrolled in their first programme choice. Within the vocational programmes, 86% of students in the highest parental education category qualified for their first choice, and 76% started this programme. In the lowest education category, the corresponding figures were 53% qualified and 46% started. Regarding the programmes that prepare students for higher education, 97% of students in the highest parental education category qualified for their first choice, of which 84% started. Among students in the lowest parental education category, 83% qualified for their first choice and 64% started. There is considerable variation between students from different parental

educational backgrounds and eligibility for and enrolment in the various programmes, as shown in Table 3. Accordingly, there is a bias in the programmes also in terms of parental educational background. Table 3 illustrates the academic year 2012/2013, as it was the first year in which statistics were generated for this.

Table 3. *Parental educational background distribution among national programmes, 2012/2013*

Parental education level <sup>a</sup> :	% eligible for first-choice programme					% enrolled in first-choice programme				
	1	2	3	4	Total	1	2	3	4	Total
Vocational programmes	53	79	85	86	77	46	69	75	76	68
Preparatory programmes for higher education	83	94	96	97	95	64	79	83	84	80

<sup>a</sup> Note: Parents' highest level of education. Refers to the parent with the highest educational level. The educational level is divided into four categories: 1, primary school; 2, upper secondary school; 3, short post-secondary education; and 4, long post-secondary education.

Source: SiRiS. (Table by author)

Overall, this shows that there is still a hierarchical order between schools and programmes, where gender and parental educational background still have an important impact on individuals' opportunities for educational options, just as stated in Lundahl et al. (2014).

There is, therefore, a hierarchical power and status order not only between schools but also between programmes. I will continue now to reason on how this hierarchical division between programmes and schools might risk creating exclusion and marginalisation of individuals and groups of individuals. The differentiation of students within school can take its starting point in reasoning about normality.

### **Normality**

The concept normality can be said to have two implications: it can mean the most current, frequent or average, and can also mean what should be pursued, the ideal or the ultimate. Based on this, the concept is a description that also has a regulatory function in social settings, and it serves to construct

power relations. Ambjörnsson (2004) reflects on normality's nature and emphasises some important aspects. Partly, she says, the norm never exists in isolation, but only in relation to an antithesis, the deviant. Between them, there is also a hierarchical relationship, where the deviant is subordinated to the norm. The important aspect about the instability of normality is also pointed to. Norms exist only in relation to their counterparts, meaning that normalities in themselves are not stable and constant; rather, they are changing, fragile and vulnerable (Ambjörnsson, 2004).

Reasoning about normality can help us to understand how individuals, educational programmes, various support activities and schools can be considered as deviants in relation to the other, the norm. It is thus applicable at several different levels. This has been examined and discussed in a study by the SNAE (1998). The study emphasises how those students who are considered to be deviants also have an increased risk of dropping out of school. At the programme level, highlighted by the concept *school value*, various programmes have different hierarchical status levels, where those with the lowest status (individual and vocational programmes) might be seen as deviating and thus risk having a marginalising function. It emerges from the study that the programmes themselves are ordered hierarchically and are perceived as such by the students and teachers who work in them. It is stated that the dropout rates are significantly higher in those programmes that have a low status and that have low average merit rating values. This finding is in line with results in a study by Murray and Sundin (2008), who found that the dropout rates in different programmes relate highly to the merit rating value of the programme.

Helldin (2002a) refers to Foucault, and he points out how different professional discourses emerge through habitual acts, which in some parts are different between vocational and theoretical teachers. These differences are generally used not as a resource but they:

. . . form a solidified basis for a bitter alienation and for parallel systems in what should be commonality. . . . An "us and them" way of thinking develops, stealthily and unnoticed, in the traditional disparate educational processes that have existed for a long time. (p. 21, own translation)

At the individual level, as found in the SNAE (1998), there is an increased risk of marginalisation and dropout for those students who are regarded as deviants. In most programmes, the gender distribution is very skewed, as shown earlier. This implies that a girl who is enrolled in a male-dominated programme can be regarded as being outside the norm and thus be exposed to a higher risk of marginalisation and school dropout. The SNAE (1998) states that:

A special group of deviating students are those who are enrolled in programmes that are heavily dominated by the opposite gender. This applies to girls in the Vehicle Engineering programme and the Construction programme and to boys in the Health Care programme. . . . The underrepresented gender is strongly overrepresented among dropouts. This applies to all programmes with one-sided gender recruitment but especially in the male-dominated programmes. (ibid, p. 52, own translation)

Swärd (2007) argues in a similar way that an outsider is an individual who differs from the norm by possessing characteristics or behaviours that deviate from the those of the majority and therefore is regarded as deviant.

Hence, a divided and differentiated school system may lead to an increased risk of marginalisation and drop out. If efforts were in place to develop an upper secondary school where social and gender recruitment to the different programmes and different schools was more equal, the normality and deviant patterns would not become as strong. It should be noted that the issues of marginalisation and dropout are complex, and that there are many different factors at different levels that are important. It can be individual factors such as disease, psychiatric disorders, psychological problems or social factors that lead to the student not wanting to or not being able to pursue his/her education. However, a differentiated school system seems to play an important part in this complex issue.

# Methodological issues

## Design

The design of the study can be described as a cross-sectional total population survey. A cross-sectional study is conducted to provide results and lead to conclusions about a population at one point in time (Hall, 2008). In this case, it provides information from the academic school year 2010/2011. It can be regarded as a snapshot of the population at that specific time. Data collection was done using a questionnaire, where all schools responded over a relatively short period of time, January – March 2011, which according to Liu (2008) is preferable. All schools are chosen, which means a total population survey. Cross-sectional surveys are used to collect data that cannot directly be observed in order to say something about opinions, beliefs and attitudes, and the presence and extent of a particular phenomenon. The data collected are typically used to determine the frequency distribution of certain behaviours, opinions, attitudes or beliefs. Cross-sectional data can be highly efficient when testing the associations between two variables and when making comparisons between subgroups (Liu, 2008), as was the case with this study.

On matters of design, Hall (2008) suggests thinking in the following steps: (a) conceptualising (research design), (b) sample design, (c) questionnaire design and (d) operations planning. The first step is described above and the following will be described below.

## Population

The population of the study is every upper secondary school in Sweden during the academic school year 2010/2011. At that point in time, 1,015 schools were registered with the SNAE, and they represent the entire population. These schools and their geographical distribution are illustrated in Figure 5.



Type of school	Number of schools
Public	477
Independent	452
County council	21
Excluded schools	-65
Total population of the study	950

*Figure 5.* Geographical distribution and number of different school types of the population for the study.

Sixty-five of these schools had at this point only conducted school activities for half a year and generally had students in the first school year only. Since these schools had just started, there were no other statistics or information about them. They were omitted from the participating schools, which is why the population for the study consists of 950 schools: 477 public schools, 452 independent schools and 21 schools run as county council schools. Altogether, about 385,000 students (or about 5.5% of the Swedish population aged between 6 and 64 years) were enrolled at upper secondary school at this time (SiRis). Among the schools, there are large variations. There are some schools with very few students and some very large schools with more than 3,000 students. The variation between schools is also large in terms of many other variables, such as teacher density, average final grade score, proportion of students at the school with general admission to universities and proportion of students with a completed educational programme, especially in the urban areas. This is mainly followed by the external differentiation processes that take place when students apply for different schools and different educational programmes. There are also large variations between different educational programmes within the same school. Each school constitutes one unit in the population.

## Questionnaire

The next step in the procedure was to design the questionnaire (appendix 1) for the data collection. The questionnaire consists of four blocks of questions. The questions were constructed by adapting similar concepts and questions as in previous research (Hall, 2008). Some concepts and questions were modified from the SNAE (2010a), and some questions were developed to answer the research questions raised. In the blocks of questions (blocks two and three) that intend to respond to the degree to which schools used different approaches for supporting their students, questions were formed as agree statements followed by five response alternatives on a continuous Likert ordinal scale. It should be noted that it is about estimates that the respondents made on an ordinal Likert scale and not about precise values, which are discussed further in the section strengths and limitations on page 76.

The answers from these two blocks of questions were later dealt with as an approximated interval scale so that statistical presentations and analyses could be conducted. This way of transforming data from one scale level to another is often used in educational research. Harwell and Gatti (2001) published a research review on educational research where ordinal-scaled dependent variables were used as interval-scaled data. They found that 73% of the dependent variables in articles from three journals over five years were constructed as ordinal-scale and later on as interval-scale. One reported reason for this is suggested to be that the dependent variables are often constructed to meet the needs of the research, where these variables are likely to possess an ordinal scale. However, there are a number of problems related to the issue of transforming data to a higher scale level. One way to get around this is to carry out non-parametric testing as well, which is done and more clearly described in the analysis section on page 71.

## Pilot study

When the questionnaire was constructed and internally evaluated, it was piloted with respondents from about 20 schools. These schools were randomly selected and asked to participate (see appendix 2). The respondents, who were head principals at the schools, were asked to especially review the terminology used and to check whether the concepts that were used were clear so that misunderstandings could be minimised. They were also asked whether they thought the questions were consistent with the overall research questions. Some modifications and clarifications were made before the data collection started. These changes are about making it clear that it was special educators and special education teachers with a university degree that the questions related to and not teachers with just some further training in special education. Participants in the pilot study also pointed out that it was difficult to distinguish between special educators and special education

teachers and their tasks (as also noted previously in the section the shifting roles of special education professionals in upper secondary school on p. 34). Therefore, the consideration was made to merge the two professions special educator and special education teacher.

## Data collection

The data collection started in January 2011. First, the head principals of all schools were informed about the survey by email (appendix 3). Later on, regular post was used to send the following to the head principals in all schools: a missive letter (appendix 4) and the questionnaire (appendix 1) accompanied by a response envelope. The response envelope was coded with an anonymous code, which made it possible to check which schools had responded and which had not. The first response round was three weeks. Of those schools that had not responded within those three weeks, a reminder email (appendix 5) was sent out, and the head principal had a further ten days to respond. To those schools that still had not responded to the questionnaire, another round of regular post was sent out with a new questionnaire, missive letter (appendix 6) and response envelope. This correspondence was later followed by the last reminder sent out by email. The data collection was completed in March 2011.

## Database

While the data collection was being completed, a database was established in SPSS. All schools are represented as one unit followed by data from that specific school. The data from the questionnaire were supplemented with public statistics from SiRiS, the national statistical database provided by the SNAE. They were also supplemented by aggregated school variables with assistance from statisticians at the SNAE. These data were aggregated to school level, based on individual data from all students enrolled that specific academic school year. Information on which municipality the school was located in was included, followed by the type of municipality group it belonged to, based on the grouping made by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) in 2005. The different municipality groups are presented in the section non-response analysis on page 73. This way of gathering data from different sources is often described as multi-source cross-sectional design, according to Liu (2008). All the data used from the SNAE were digitally transformed into the database, which means the risk of incorrect coding was minimised. The data from the questionnaire, on the other hand, were fed manually. There is always a risk of input errors when answers are being transformed manually into digital form (Djurfeldt, Larsson, & Stjärnhagen, 2010). In order to minimise the risk of typing wrong numbers when the database was being established, in addition to special

attention and accuracy, 20% of the schools were randomly chosen and double-checked. All data that stood out as outliers were also double-checked. These two actions intended to minimise the risk of wrong data being typed into the database. All variables, their abbreviations, coding and specific descriptions from the responded questionnaire and from SiRiS and the SNAE are presented in appendix 7.

## Analysis

Different analysis models and statistical tests have been carried out in different parts of the study, which include the following: descriptive statistics, significance testing, analysis of variance (ANOVA), simple and multiple linear and logistic regression analysis. SPSS was used for these analyses and for a further description, I refer to the separate papers.

Non-parametric tests have also been conducted to check for possible inaccuracies that may occur when performing tests at a higher scale level (Kruskal-Wallis' test) and in those cases the requirement for normal distribution is not met (Mann-Whitney's test) (Djurfeldt et al., 2010). The results from these tests have been very consistent with the parametric variance tests described above.

### Non-response analysis

Missing data from the total population can be divided into two categories. First, it is those schools that do not respond to the survey, and secondly, it is those schools that respond but have a loss of data in all or some questions. According to Bose (2001), if the overall response rate is less than 70%, a non-response analysis must be conducted in order to evaluate potential sources of bias. This is not the case for this study; however, a non-response analysis can give information as to potential differences between the non-responding and the responding units. A non-response analysis was conducted, where all non-responding schools were compared with the responding ones on the means of variables available for all schools. These means and their standard deviations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Non-response analysis on the means of variables between responding and non-responding schools*

Variable	Responding schools			Non-responding schools		
	<i>n</i>	M	(SD)	<i>n</i>	M	(SD)
Provider <sup>a</sup>	751	1.48	(0.50)	178	1.53	(0.50)
Female teachers	744	49.6	(16.4)	182	46.3	(18.5)
Teacher density	744	8.87	(4.18)	182	9.41	(4.73)
PedDegree	744	67.9	(19.9)	182	64.7	(22.0)
School size	751	426	(424)	181	331	(430)
Female students	704	50.9	(19.4)	160	47.9	(20.4)
ForeignBg	758	0.17	(0.15)	186	0.19	(0.17)
CompEdPr	584	77.5	(13.2)	135	76.0	(16.6)
GenAdm	622	86.1	(10.8)	139	84.7	(12.5)
Grade USS	641	13.9	(1.5)	144	13.5	(1.7)

<sup>a</sup>Only public and independent schools are included

As can be seen in Table 4, there are some differences in the mean values between the responding and the non-responding schools. In most variables, these differences are negligible. One exception is in the variable school size, where the responding schools on average had 426 students enrolled, while the non-responding schools on average had 331 students. It can be concluded that the schools with fewer students to a higher extent did not participate in the survey, but the overall conclusion from this comparison is that the two groups of schools to a very large extent are comparable.

In addition to the non-response analysis, participation from the nine municipality groups has also been checked, since it was desirable that all groups be well-represented. The representations of schools within these groups are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Number and percentage of participating schools distributed among nine municipality groups

Municipality group <sup>4</sup>	<i>n</i> of municipalities	<i>n</i> of schools	Percentage (%) of participation
Metropolitan municipalities	3	172	80.2
Suburban municipalities	38	110	82.7
Large cities	27	309	82.2
Commuter municipalities	41	45	84.4
Sparsely populated municipalities	39	43	72.1
Manufacturing municipalities	40	52	82.7
Other municipalities more than 25,000 inhabitants	34	118	74.6
Other municipalities 12,500 – 25,000 inhabitants	37	72	86.1
Other municipalities fewer than 12,500 inhabitants	31	29	65.5
Total	290	950	80.4

As can be seen in Table 5, the participation distribution among the different municipality groups differs to some extent. The average percentage of participation is 80.4%, and it is especially schools located in the municipality group with the lowest number of inhabitants that did not respond very frequently. It can also be noted that the fewest number of schools are placed in this group. The overall conclusion from this participation distribution is that all groups are represented to a satisfactory level.

A summary of the non-response analysis and the participation distribution among the municipality groups shows that the non-responding schools do not differ from the responding ones to any appreciable degree. Therefore, the data from the responding schools can be seen as representative for the entire population.

Non-response can also occur when a unit, for whatever reason, does not respond to any questions at all (unit non-response) or in (a) specific question(s) (item non-response) (Cohen, 2008). Regarding unit non-responses, only one school responded with no items filled in at all. This unit was treated as a non-responding school. Concerning the item non-responses, very few questions were not responded to, and the conclusion was that these items were not systematically distributed. Item non-responses can be dealt with by way of imputation and direct estimations (Leeuw & Hox, 2008). Since there were very few in total and since they were not specific to any item, these

<sup>4</sup> The different municipality groups used are based on the grouping made by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) in 2005. The municipalities were divided into nine categories on the basis of structural parameters such as population, commuting patterns and economic structure.

item non-responses have not been dealt with in any particular way but have just been left blank. However, in those analyses carried out where many variables are gathered, the units that had any partial loss in any data were excluded from the list: Leeuw and Hox (2008) argue this to be the most common way to deal with this issue. However, when descriptive data are presented for a single variable, all units responding to this item are reported.

## Reliability and validity

### **Reliability**

The fundamental issue of the concept of reliability refers to accuracy and answers the question on how the measuring is done (Djurfeldt et al., 2010). The internal consistency between different questions that are asked to answer the same or similar phenomena is one way to clarify the reliability. This is done for the questions about the use of ability grouping, where a strong correlation ( $p=0.000$ ) indicates a high level of internal consistency, at least related to these issues. Also Cronbach's alpha reliability test (for example, Scott & Mazhindu, 2005; Vogt, 2005) is performed on the three ability grouping variables, and the score was 0.83. Altogether, these tests indicate that the internal reliability is trustworthy.

### **Validity**

Generally, validity can be defined as the extent to which the measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure. It is the relationship between the intended and the measured data that is of interest (Carmines & Woods, 2004).

#### *Internal validity*

According to Mertens (2005), the study shall be identical for all participants; they shall receive the same instructions and the same information. These factors have been achieved through equal information, missive letters and questionnaires sent to all the schools at the same time. Another way to improve the internal validity is to conduct a testing of the measurement instrument before the data collection (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). This was done by the pilot study (see p. 69).

#### *External validity*

External validity is basically about whether a study's results can be generalised in other contexts such as population and time (Kalaian & Kasim, 2008; Lavrakas, 2008a). The results from this study should be related to the time when the study was conducted. The study cannot be considered generalisable to other contexts of time, since schools and organisational conditions for education and special education change over time. However, external validi-

ty is also about generalisability in relation to the entire population. This issue has been dealt with and described by the non-response analysis, the response rate and the municipality group analysis, which together show a high external validity.

### *Threats to validity*

Lavrakas (2008a) and Lavrakas (2008b) point to several issues that can be seen as threats to the validity of a study. The main threats they point to are about the selection process and the time aspect. This study deals with the entire population of upper secondary schools and thus has not undergone any selection process and suffers no threats when it comes to selection. This study was conducted at the same time for all respondents, and over a short period of time, which minimises any threats to validity that relate to aspects of time.

### Desirability

Desirability might occur when respondents want to project a more favourable image of themselves or to avoid negative evaluations (Callegaro, 2008; Furr, 2010). It may be that this has come to play a larger role in the market-oriented school, since for every school it has become increasingly important to measure and compare.

According to Furr (2010), social desirability bias is especially essential in self-reported questionnaires. Assuming that social desirability is present in this study, it would reasonably mean that the respondents have answered in such a way that their school would appear to be better than others. If this assumption is correct, it becomes natural to ask *what better answers are*.

Because the study is about the extent and organisation of special education, it becomes reasonable to assume that the possible desirability bias would mean that the respondent states a higher degree in the occurrence of special education and an organisation that is more in line with national policy documents, as this would make the school look better. There is no reason to believe that some specific groups of schools have responded with a higher or lower desirability than others. The exception would be those schools with no or a very low degree of special education resources or those schools whose support activities deviate significantly from national policy.

If it is assumed that desirability prevails and that the assumptions made above are correct, then the results should actually mean that there is an even lower amount of special education resources among the schools and that the support activities would likely be of an even more exclusive character. Overall, there are no specific factors that point to this, but as far as desirability influencing the results is concerned, the effect should reasonably be in that direction.

## Strengths and limitations

On several occasions during the dissertation process, I considered developing the methodological approach further through qualitative data collection and analysis, which could have contributed with more in-depth information and knowledge about special education at schools. By doing this, I would also have been able to provide a deeper insight into different underlying backgrounds, decisions and arguments of different solutions to the organisation of special education. It is mainly due to external factors in terms of time and resources that this was not carried out, and that means of course a limitation when it comes to the results and conclusions that can be drawn from the study. Nevertheless, it leads to further issues and questions on which there could be follow-up: these are presented later in the section Suggestions for further research on page 102.

A limitation of the study is that it can only point to how things are at a given time. Since no previous similar national study had been done in the field, there is no obvious point of reference to compare the results with. (However, there are some selection studies that are referred to in the papers and discussion.) A repeat of this cross-sectional survey in the future may show changes over time. In the same way, the study design means that it is rarely possible to say something about causal relationships. Only one measurement occasion has been carried out. Liu (2008) states that: “The biggest limitation of cross-section data is that they generally do not allow the testing of causal relationships . . .” (p. 171). These limitations could partly be managed by designing repeated cross-sectional surveys; at least they could say something about changes over time.

Another way to manage the data in the study could have been through studying programmes instead of whole school units. There are several good reasons for this. First, there are great differences between different programmes in many schools, both in terms of background variables and also, possibly, in terms of the responses to the questionnaire as there are likely differences between different programmes within the same school. Such results could also have pointed out how different programmes possibly differ between each other and how they allocate resources in different ways. A study of programmes instead of schools could have enriched the results about programme variation beyond school variation. There are essentially two reasons why this was not done. The first is that the existing statistics that were collected from SiRiS were accessible only at the school level (at the data collection time) and could not be broken down to the programme level. The second reason was the assumption that in many schools it is difficult to fully specify the programme resources and organisational solutions to specific programmes. Many who work in schools are linked to several different programmes, so to ask programme-targeted questions would lead not only to difficulties, but also to unreliable responses. It would also significantly in-

crease the response burden for the respondents, especially in schools with many programmes, which probably would have meant a lower response rate, not least for schools with many programmes, which in turn could have biased the results.

There are also some strengths with the study design. According to Liu (2008), participants are often more willing to cooperate in a one-time study than in longitudinal designs, which can increase the response rate. Cross-sectional surveys also provide effective data for comparisons between sub-groups: these comparisons were carried out in this study, and the data are often highly effective when it comes to the testing of variables that are associated with other variables, such as public and independent schools.

The consideration to manage the data collection through regular post instead of by way of the web or by e-mail meant a certain administrative workload and costs, both while sending out the survey as well as while processing the data. In a meta-analysis that compared the response rates between web and regular post surveys, Shih and Fan (2008) found that surveys sent by regular post generally have a higher response rate than web surveys, and that school staff in particular respond to surveys sent by regular post to a higher degree. What is more, follow-up reminders appear to be more effective in surveys sent by regular post. The choice to manage the data collection and reminders by regular post, according to these results, may also have contributed to the high response rate.

Many questions were constructed as agreement statements assessed by a five-grade ordinal scale. It is important to stress that this way of asking questions does not give any concrete values, but does instead give estimations from the respondent. An assumption that has been the basis for this approach to formulating questions was that it would be too hard for the respondents to be able to give exact values of these issues. It would have probably resulted in unreliable responses and a significantly lower response rate. However, the responses from these questions shall be seen as estimations from the respondents rather than exact values. Since the results from these questions are presented at the national level, they provide an overall picture rather than exact values from individual schools.

Respondents at schools have varied, where both principals and special educators/special education teachers have contributed in order, to the greatest extent, to involve those school professionals who have best insight into the questions.

One way to ensure that the questions measure what they were intended to was incorporated into the pilot study, where respondents gave feedback about whether they considered the questionnaire to reflect the overall research questions. According to Hall (2008), it may also be worthwhile to use similar concepts as in previous similar studies if possible, which was partially done (SNAE, 2010a).

It should also be noted that the study of schools or elements of their work involves a very complex research context. An upper secondary school includes all the students and their different experiences, attitudes, expectations, relationships and abilities, and in many cases also those of their parents. In addition to this, we have each member of staff at the school and his/her mutual relations and the organisation and all of their relationships with students. Over and above this is school management and control of resources within the school and at another level, the influence of the school environmental context in relation to other nearby schools, and to location in the municipality, geographically and demographically, as well as in terms of status. Finally, there is also the strong influence of regional, national and global expectations and regulations through policy documents. All in all, one should take into account that changes in this environment affect and change other factors. What I want to say is that schools and their activities are not easily studied. They are part of a large and complex societal context.

## Ethical considerations

Important during the study was the anonymity of schools: the identity of the schools would not be disclosed. This was done by numbering the schools with an anonymous code that cannot be linked to the school's name. All schools were informed of this procedure, just as they had been informed that participation in the study was voluntary. Schools were also informed that their responses would be linked to official statistics from the Swedish National Agency for Education (see appendices 3 and 4). In this way, the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council have been followed (Vetenskapsrådet, 2006).

When the results are presented, they are about large groups of schools at the national level. It would also be possible to present these at a more local level, but the decision was made not to do so since some municipalities have only a few schools; therefore, the anonymity of the schools would have been jeopardised.

# Results

This section is divided into four parts. The first part focuses on special education resources and the results from the analyses. The second part discusses the extent of ability grouping. The third part focuses on whether the special education support is provided within or outside the student's regular class. Finally, some reflections on the results are provided.

## Study I – Special educational resources in the Swedish upper secondary schools: a total population survey

Ramberg, J. (2013). Special educational resources in the Swedish upper secondary schools: a total population survey. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 28(4), 440-462.

The overall aim of this study was to examine the extent<sup>5</sup> of special education resources in upper secondary schools and to investigate which school-level variables determine the presence and availability rate of those resources.

- a) To which extent are special education resources available in Swedish upper secondary schools?
  - b) Which differences are there between public and independent schools?
- c) Which background variables at school level predict the presence and the availability rate of special education resources, and to what degree?

The presence of special education resources within all schools was 62.5%. There was a great difference between public and independent schools, where the former had a presence of special education resources in about 90% of their schools, and the latter in only about 32%. The great difference is also

---

<sup>5</sup> I alternately use the terms presence, extent and availability. Presence of special education resources in the schools refers to whether or not a school has a special education resource. Extent refers to the amount of special education resources (in working hours) that a school has, and availability refers to the total extent of special education resources at the school with regard to the number of students. Availability rate is the total of special education resources of the school divided by student and week.

confirmed when comparing the availability rate of special education resources, where public schools had an availability rate of special education resources for their students that was three times higher than that at independent schools. The main reason for the great difference is the fact that many independent schools did not have any special educator or special education teacher at all. Results also show that the individual programme in general has more special education resources than the national programmes. However, when the resources and students connected to the individual programme are excluded, the difference between the two school types persists. The availability rate within the national programmes was as follows: 7.0 minutes per student in public schools compared with 2.4 minutes within independent schools. Whether the individual programme is included or not, or the presence or availability rate as a measure of special education resources is used, the public schools as a group provide about three times the amount of special education resources compared with independent schools. However, at the individual school level, it is important to state that there are some independent schools that provide a high rate of special education resources.

When attention is given to which variables at school level are of importance when predicting the presence and the availability rate, it seems as if there are different variables depending on which outcome variables are analysed. When an analysis was conducted of which variables determine the presence of at least one special educator/special education teacher, it was concluded that provider type had the highest determination rate, 43.3%. The logistic regression shows that the odds ratio for an independent school compared with a public school is 0.053, and when checked for all other variables in the model, this increased to 0.118. Therefore, the odds of finding a special educator/special education teacher at an independent school are more than eight times lower than at a public school. The logistic regression also showed that school size was significant in the prediction of the presence of special education resources. The odds of finding a special educator/special education teacher at a smaller school are therefore much lower than at a bigger school.

Results also showed that there are no particular differences in the aggregated student variables or the teacher variables between independent schools with special education resources and independent schools without special education resources.

When an analysis is conducted of which variables are important when predicting the availability rate of special education resources, the linear regression analysis showed that merit rating value, parental educational level and school size play an important role. Merit rating value had the highest determination rate, 23.7%, which shows that merit rating value has a considerably negative effect on the availability rate of special education resources. This negative relation was, however, stronger within public schools. Also, school size has a negative effect on the availability rate of special education

resources. When an analysis of the effect of parental educational level is conducted, it is shown to have a negative effect, but when checked for merit rating value, this changes to a positive effect. A possible interpretation is that both merit rating value and parental educational level indicate a generally high ability at school and low special education needs. However, within schools with the same average merit rating value, the conclusion is that there are more special education resources when the average educational level of parents is higher. A parental educational level at the school that is one step higher means 2.82 more available special educators/special education teachers per student. It seems as if schools with more highly educated parents receive more special education resources at the same average merit rating value.

## Study II – The extent of ability grouping in Swedish upper secondary schools: a national survey

Ramberg, J. (2014). The extent of ability grouping in Swedish upper secondary schools: a national survey. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.

The aim of the study was to investigate and describe the extent of ability grouping in Swedish upper secondary schools. It further intended to show in which subjects this was particularly prevalent and aimed at comparing different groups of schools with particular focus on those schools that reported using ability grouping to a very large extent. It also aims to investigate what school variables characterise these schools.

- a) To what extent is ability grouping used in Swedish upper secondary schools, and are there any differences between different types of schools?
- b) In which subjects is ability grouping particularly prevalent?
- c) Which variables play an important role in the prediction of the extent of use of ability grouping?
- d) Which school-level variables characterise the groups of schools that use ability grouping to a very large extent?

The results of this study build on data from 764 schools, where respondents have estimated the use of ability grouping in their school. Most schools (56.4%) reported that ability grouping is not used in any course or subject. Among the schools (43.6%) that reported using ability grouping to some extent, it was reported to be most commonly used in two to three courses (19.9%) or only in one course (17.9%). In total, 331 schools reported using ability grouping in at least one course. The comparison analyses between

public and independent schools show that there is no significant difference in the use of ability grouping according to number of courses. Both school types seem to use about the same amount of ability grouping with respect to the number of courses.

Regarding the use of ability grouping in the foundation courses, one-quarter of the schools reported that it was used to a large or to a very large extent, and no particular differences were found between public and independent schools, just as in the comparison between the numbers of courses with ability grouping.

In the programme-specific courses, a lower use of ability grouping was reported compared with within the foundation courses. Only 7.3% of the schools reported using it to a large or to a very large extent. Unlike the other ability grouping variables, the comparison analyses show a significant difference in the use of ability grouping in the programme-specific courses between public and independent schools, where the latter reported using it to a larger extent.

Another grouping of schools that was compared is schools with and without special education resources, where it is concluded that there are no particular differences in the use of ability grouping with respect to the numbers of courses or the use in foundation courses. On the other hand, ability grouping in programme-specific courses is reported to be used more commonly in the group of schools that have no special education resources.

Two-hundred and sixty respondents from the schools answered the open-ended question on which subjects they used ability grouping in, and it was clearly most frequently used in Mathematics, followed by English and Swedish.

With regards to which school-level variables play an important role in the prediction of the extent of ability grouping, it was found that the average merit rating value on school level has a significant negative association to all three ability grouping variables, just as available special education resources have a significantly positive association to all three ability grouping variables. In particular, it is the group of schools that reported using ability grouping to a very large extent that also on average has much lower merit rating values and a higher availability rate of special education resources. This group of schools also has greater variance in merit rating values than all other groups of schools, and also a lower median value, and all quartiles are at a lower level than all other groups of schools. The mean value for this group of schools is also significantly ( $p < .0.001$ ) distinct from all the other groups of schools in all three ability grouping variables. The same pattern is presented in the availability rate of special education resources and the group of schools that reported the largest use of ability grouping. This group of schools reported having greater variation, higher median and all quartiles at a higher level, and a significantly higher ( $p < .0.001$ ) mean value than all other groups of schools in all ability grouping variables.

## Study III – Focus on Special Educational Support in Swedish Upper Secondary Schools: Provided within or outside the students’ regular classes?

Ramberg, J. (in press). Focus on Special Educational Support in Swedish Upper Secondary Schools: Provided within or outside the students’ regular classes? In S. Bagga-Gupta (Ed.), *Marginalization Processes. Studies of membership and participation across disciplines and sites*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

The aim of the study was to examine where special education support, provided by the schools’ special education professionals and by other school staff, was provided. Special focus was on whether the support was provided within the students’ regular teaching group or outside the ordinary class setting, which relates to marginalisation issues.

The results regarding the support provided by the special education professionals at schools builds on data from the 477 responding schools with presence of professional special education staff. On the question on the extent to which these professionals provided support within the students’ regular class, the most common response was to a very small extent (n=159), followed by to a small extent (n=119). One hundred and ten (n=110) schools reported that they provided it to a large extent and 60 schools to a very large extent. The results show that the responses to whether support is provided within the students’ regular class is in descending order, where it is most commonly reported to be to a very small extent, and least commonly reported to be to a very large extent. It is also notable that there are some differences between the public and independent schools, where the latter group of schools reported to support their students within their regular class to a somewhat greater extent.

On the other question regarding to what extent the special education professionals provided support outside the students’ regular class, the most common response was to a very large extent (n=224), followed by to a large extent (n=169). The respondents from the schools reported that the support was provided outside the students’ regular class to a small extent (n=49) and to a very small extent (n=31). In the same way, the responses are reported in ascending order, where it is much more common for the support to be provided outside the students’ regular class to a very large extent or to a large extent. There are no reported differences between public and independent schools. In many schools, there are several special education professionals working, and the support may look different depending on several factors. However, the support outside the students’ regular class seems to be much more prevalent than support within the students’ regular class.

In addition to providing support directly to students, the special education professionals also perform other tasks at different levels. There are tasks (establishing IEPs, screening of students' level of knowledge and supervising mentor teachers) that are at a more general school level and tasks (supporting students outside and within their regular classes and in "open" workshops) that are more directly related to supporting individuals. The study shows an indication as to how much attention is given to those different tasks. The task given most attention is the provision of support outside the students' regular class, followed by establishing IEPs and screening students' level of knowledge. The task given least attention is the provision of support within the students' regular class, followed by teaching students in open workshops. In addition to these fixed tasks, many schools reported in the open-ended question that the special education professionals also work with tasks linked to the student health team and external contacts, such as social services, child psychiatry and compulsory schools, and also had motivational conversations with students.

The study also aimed to examine the support activities at schools that are provided by other school staff than the special education professionals. These questions were directed to all schools (n=764). Of particular interest was the investigation of whether this support was provided within or outside regular lessons. On the question as to what extent the support was provided within regular lessons, it was most commonly reported that it was provided to a very small extent (n=289), followed by to a small extent (n=178). One hundred and seventy-one (n=171) schools reported that they provided support within regular lessons to a large extent and 76 schools to a very large extent.

On the question as to what extent support was provided outside regular lessons, the opposite pattern was found. Three-hundred and thirty-one (n=331) schools reported that it was provided outside the students' regular class to a very large extent; 253 schools reported to a large extent; 112 schools to a small extent; and 44 schools to a very small extent.

Just as with support provided by special education professionals, support by other school staff can be provided in different ways. The overall picture is that support outside regular lessons is much more common than support within the students' regular classes.

The questionnaire also asked questions about where (within or outside the regular classroom) special education was provided on a percentage distribution scale. The question was responded to by 679 schools, and about 87% reported that the main part of the support was provided outside the students' regular class, while about 13% reported that the main part of the support was provided within the students' regular class. The most frequent response option (n=330) was that the support was given to about 80% outside and 20% within the students' regular class.

## Reflection on the results

This thesis studied various aspects of special education in Swedish upper secondary schools. These aspects have not previously been investigated at a national level, which is why this study contributes a series of new results. The Swedish school system has undergone a major transformation over the past 25 years, where adjustments towards a market-driven system have been prominent. One consequence of these adjustments is the establishment of independent schools, which are found to have a significantly lower extent and availability of special education resources, even when other factors, such as previous merit rating value and parental educational background, are examined. The results also show that schools with higher educational backgrounds have more special education resources, even when checked for other factors. It seems that stronger social groups (higher educational background) manage to better provide themselves with these resources in a system that does not regulate the extent or availability of special education resources.

The external differentiation in upper secondary schools is based on principles of selection and preparation for further work and studies. Greater freedom of choice for individuals and families has been shown to increase the differentiation between different societal groups, where school segregation has come to occur more often through the increased variation between schools. Results from this study show that this external differentiation is associated with further differentiation in the form of ability grouping, where schools that reported using ability grouping to a very large extent also had significantly lower and more varied merit rating values. Students at these schools are therefore at risk of being exposed to a double differentiation in that they are gathered at certain schools and at these schools a higher degree of ability grouping is used.

When it comes to special education support, the results show that they are primarily provided to students outside their regular teaching group, which must be seen as not being fully in line with the guidelines of international and national policy documents.

How the results can be understood from a societal perspective and how the chosen theoretical framework can support understanding of the results will be presented in the next chapter.

# Discussion

The discussion chapter presents the main findings of the separate papers and how these can be understood on the basis of democratic educational theories and theories focusing on social educational justice. Some sketched ideas of possible directions for action towards a more democratic school in which togetherness and participation may become more authentic are provided. Finally, the study's originality and representativeness will be discussed, as well as some suggestions for further research.

## Special education resources

Special education resources are, like most other school and educational resources, governed and affected by factors at various levels. Since municipalisation, resource allocation occurs mostly at the municipal level, where municipalities are responsible for the allocation of resources. It has been found that different municipalities deal differently with the issue of resource allocation (Jarl & Rönnberg, 2010; SNAE, 2013d). At the school level, it is the principal who has the ultimate responsibility for the school's activities and who decides about resource allocation between different areas, where special education is included. The principal's view on issues about and decisions on special education thus becomes an important factor in the distribution of special education resources (Lindqvist & Nilholm, 2013). This study has focused on how these special education resources are distributed between schools and between public and independent schools.

There is a very high proportion of independent schools that do not have professional special education competence. Only one-third of independent schools report this resource at all. The availability of time per student within independent schools is about one-third of the time within public schools as a group.

Independent schools in Sweden are, from a historical perspective, a relatively new phenomenon and have increased in number since the 1990s. They increased further during the 2000s and now represent half of the total number of upper secondary schools (SiRiS). They illustrate one market adjustment of several that the Swedish school system has gone through during this period. The main arguments behind the independent school reform was to increase educational diversity and freedom of choice for students and fami-

lies, but according to Vlachos (2011), about 90% of independent upper secondary schools are driven by incorporated companies, most with private equity firms as owners. Educational diversity does not seem to have been realised to the desired extent. There should be no real differences between public and independent schools according to the laws and guidelines they both must follow. The same Education Act and curriculum apply. The analyses from this study show a considerably lower degree of special education resources among the independent upper secondary schools as a group, even when checking for prior academic performance and parents' educational background. Similarly, it has been shown that other resources (for example, libraries and medical staff) in independent schools as a group are available to a significantly lower extent than in public schools. For instance, the lack of school psychologists in independent schools received serious criticism by the OECD (2013), where the waiting time for a student to see a school psychologist was more than twice as long in independent schools compared with public schools. On the whole, the provider type of the school seems to play an important role in the issue of equity in the Swedish school system. All students, regardless of school or provider, shall have the same right to an equal education. The provider type seems to be crucial, within a range of factors related to equivalence in school. The wide variation in the availability of special education professionals is a serious threat to an equitable school, since students in need of special support do not have the same opportunities for this in all schools. This could mean a further differentiation and reduction of opportunities, since students are admitted to other schools in order to receive the special education resources and competence they need. Upper secondary education is already a clearly differentiated type of school, and the uneven distribution of special education resources may then also help to reinforce this differentiation of students. For the individual student who needs (or will need) special education and his/her family, this also means a broader responsibility for them to examine what their prospective school has to offer and what special education competences there are in the school. The responsibility comes to lie with the individual student or the family to explore if there are the necessary special education competences and resources. This is done more actively by the more privileged groups, just as they tend to be more active when it comes to school choice (for example, Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2008).

Based on Gutmann's (1999) theory of democratic education, it appears as if the question of responsibility has its base in the state of families and/or the state of individuals rather than in the family state. This is a responsibility that in a fair and equitable school system is questionable, since every school has the same law and regulations to follow.

It should also be noted that there is no significant difference in the student or teacher variables between independent schools with and without special education resources. This shows that the variables that are checked cannot

explain why so many independent schools lack special education resources. It must be due to something else, but it means that within a large number of independent schools, there are many students who are unable to receive special education support.

It may also be emphasised that the total availability of special education professionals is significantly lower in upper secondary school than in compulsory school. In addition, only about 3% of existing special educators and special education teachers are qualified upper secondary school teachers (Läraryrbundet, 2012). It appears that upper secondary teachers are not particularly inclined to further their education as special educators or special education teachers. This can be interpreted to mean that there is no knowledge tradition for upper secondary teachers for this kind of further education. Another possible explanation could be the wages, where upper secondary teachers generally have higher salaries than compulsory teachers, and therefore the wages do not function as an equally strong incentive for them to further their education. It is also likely that in upper secondary schools, there is a different culture than in compulsory school, where special educators historically do not have the same natural role, since there have historically been different student populations in compulsory and upper secondary school. The increased need for special educators/special education teachers in upper secondary school, since currently all students continue to upper secondary school, has possibly not been implemented. However, the shortage amongst special educators and special education teachers with an upper secondary teacher background seems fairly large and is, moreover, increasing because of the clearer demand in the Education Act 2010:800.

Fraser (2011) reasons about the importance of representation so that there is opportunity to achieve a fair and just order in society and in education. She sets up three separate criteria, each of which must be met in order to achieve equal participation. The first criterion concerns distribution of resources, which must serve as a guarantee of independence. She means that if resource allocation is skewed, this function will serve as a barrier to equal participation. The special education resources between schools and groups of schools are, as demonstrated in this study, distributed unevenly, where certain groups of schools appear to be very resourceful while others have very low resources or a complete lack of resources. Based on Fraser's (2011) reasoning of how we can achieve equal participation in school (and also other social functions in society), the unequal distribution of special education resources between independent and public schools appears to be a barrier on the path towards equal participation in school. Westling Allodi (2007) points out how opportunity to participate in school is an important factor for later participation in community social life. Based on this, restrictions with regards to equal participation mean not only a limitation during the school years, but also for continued participation and active citizenship.

Another result I want to highlight from this study revolves around the availability of special education resources in relation to average parental educational level at school. The study shows that the higher the average educational background of the parents, the more special education resources are accessible at the school, even when other background variables, such as merit rating values, are checked. This can essentially be interpreted in two ways. It may be that students in need of special education who have more highly educated parents to a greater extent actively seek schools with a high degree of special education resources. This interpretation would fit well into the theory of school choice, where students and families have the opportunity to choose which school and resources they need. Students with more highly educated parents make active school choices to a greater degree due to requests and needs (Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2008).

Another interpretation is that these students (through their parents) better manage to meet their special education needs. Based on Fraser's (2003) reasoning about needs, this could be understood to mean that the more highly educated groups better manage to meet their demands for satisfaction of needs. The battle for needs takes place between different groups instead of in the politicised discourse arena. This form, emphasises Fraser (2003), risks reproducing existing dominance and subordination relationships rather than diminishing them. The battle of needs could be brought back into the political arena, instead of taking place between different groups. Fraser refers to this as *runaway needs* that must be conveyed in the political discourse.

The uneven distribution of special education resources between independent and public schools, and in terms of parental educational background, is also an issue related to the equivalence between schools. Regardless of underlying causes, parental educational background appears to be important when it comes to allocating special education resources in schools. Those with lower parental educational backgrounds, traditionally working-class children and youth, then appear to be the losers in this system. The stronger, more highly educated groups "fill their needs" in a more efficient manner than disadvantaged and less educated groups.

School should be equitable and fair, but these results show that in schools with higher average parental education, more special education resources are available. We have known for a long time that the education level of parents is of great importance in terms of students' school results. Here, perhaps one of the causes can be discerned. This group has a greater availability to special education resources. If this is so in the case of special education resources, it might also be valid in the case of other educational resource factors.

In the discussion above, mainly resources and allocation of special education resources have been discussed. The underlying point has been that special education in general is for the educational good, something to strive for. This can, of course, be questioned, and there are many critical voices regard-

ing how special education traditionally is designed. What is needed is a more critical discussion about different ways to look at special education activities and possible consequences of these on the basis of presented background and theory.

## Ability grouping

In most education systems, differentiation through the categorisation and division of students into different groups occurs in various ways and at different ages. Sweden has a tradition of having a comprehensive compulsory school without any organisational differentiation among students up to grade 9, although it has been shown that 25% of principals in compulsory school report that some form of ability grouping is performed for students in grades 7-9 (Giota & Emanuelsson, 2011). In upper secondary school, there is, on the other hand, a tradition of dividing students between many different programme options, although there have been reforms over the years that have intended to reduce this division, mainly between theoretical and vocational programmes (for example, Hugo, 2007; Hultqvist, 2001; Lundahl et al., 2010). Several studies point out how the variation between schools comes to increase because of market adjustment and freedom of choice policy that the Swedish education system has gone through (Andersson et al., 2012; Andersson et al., 2010; Gustafsson, 2007; Söderström & Uusitalo, 2010; Trumberg, 2011; Östh et al., 2013). There are considerable variations in terms of student population between different schools and different programmes. Söderström and Uusitalo (2010) found that this difference increased upon the introduction of the free school choice. At the upper secondary level, the hierarchical order between programmes was through the 1994 reform intended to decrease; instead, the opposite was found to be true (Broady, 2000; Hugo, 2007; Palme, 2008). I previously showed (see pp. 62-64) that the bias and social recruitment for different educational programmes remains very strong. The focus of this study has not been this kind of external organisational differentiation, but rather the internal pedagogical differentiation in the form of ability grouping. However, it is also crucial for these results to examine how the previous organisational differentiation manifested itself, since it contributes to increased differences between schools in terms of student population.

From a democratic equality perspective, much criticism has been directed at the use of ability grouping, since social and democratic values are not taken into account. At the same time, many researchers from around the world show, over a long period of time, that there is no significant improvement in the results of the average student; on the contrary, often the opposite is true, and in particular disadvantage those students placed in the low-achievement groups (for a more detailed description of these studies, see

Ramberg, 2014). It should be noted that there are difficulties with a comparison of results between different countries and education systems. The degree of organisational differentiation and the stage when it is implemented in different education systems vary, so the transferability to the context of this study should be viewed with caution.

However, there is also empirical evidence from some studies showing that ability grouping, dependent on how it is organised, may be beneficial for special talented students (for example, Rogers, 2007; Shields, 2002). It can be worthwhile for a small proportion of motivated and special talented students in that they may be offered more stimulating educational content. It is important not to forget this element of the student population. From this perspective, ability grouping can also be understood to be a tension between student populations, where students in the low achieving groups appear to be losers in the use of groupings with respect to ability, while there may also be losers in the absence of ability grouping.

One main result from this study shows that approximately 43% of Swedish upper secondary schools use ability grouping in one or more subjects. This result is consistent with a previous sample survey (SNAE, 2010a). It also emerged that there was no significant difference between independent and public schools. However, schools with greater availability of special education resources employed ability grouping to a greater extent. Two main reasons are discernible. One is based on the student population and the other on the greater availability of special education resources. At the schools that reported using ability grouping to a very large extent, there are students with significantly lower average merit rating values and greater variation. This, in turn, is partly dependent on the external differentiation processes through the free school choice, where students with lower grades end up in particular schools (for example, Söderström & Uusitalo, 2010). As a result of the freedom of choice reforms and market adjustment outlined above, schools have come to a much greater degree to compete against each other (Lundahl et al., 2014). This in turn has led to increased stratification and hierarchical divisions between schools, which means that in some schools, students are gathered who have very low and/or varied merit rating values from compulsory school. The school staff at these schools possibly sees a greater need for further differentiation in the form of ability grouping.

The other interpretation could be that the low average merit rating value at the school demands a greater availability of special education resources, followed by the generally lower level of prior knowledge and greater variability. One can imagine that it is the increased availability of special education resources that creates further differentiation through ability grouping. It may then be that when there are more special education resources, there come requests for more “special” alternative ways to organise teaching, for example, through ability grouping. Based on a critical view of traditional special education support, this could be the case. The reasons, arguments,

and bases on which schools choose to use ability grouping would need to be explored much more for this to be better understood.

In Swedish steering documents that apply to upper secondary school, there is no specific regulation that addresses the use of ability grouping. It has become a matter for each school and its staff to manage this issue. However, international education policies denounce a clear move away from ability grouping where encouragement is directed towards common educational settings where ability grouping should be avoided in the pursuit of a more equitable and democratic school. INCLUD-ED (2011), where strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe are drawn up, states that streaming contributes to social exclusion. Streaming as a concept can have different meanings depending on context. In this case, it includes differentiation according to different ability levels.

Fraser (2010) argues that justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate in social life on an equal basis where all are given opportunities to interact with each other as equals. To prevent injustice therefore means dismantling institutionalised obstacles that prevent certain people from participating at the same level as others and as full partners in the social interaction. Ability grouping may imply a division between individuals, often based on previous academic achievements but also sometimes on the basis of choices or preferences. This kind of division may mean an obstacle that prevents different people from meeting and having the opportunity to participate equally in terms of social interaction. Ability grouping may also mean a strengthening of value hierarchies and status conditions that are already established and strong in the school, and must be understood as a further step away from the possibility of equal participation. In this way, schools, or education in general, paradoxically, must not just be seen as a possible solution for unfair social structures. They must also be understood as a primary cause or a source of enhancement of the same.

## Aspects of support provisions

The overall aim of this study was to examine where special education support is provided (whether it is provided within or outside the regular teaching group). This has been investigated both among professional special education staff as well as other school staff. The results show that there are support activities both within and outside the regular teaching group but that the vast majority are provided in constellations outside the student's regular group affiliations, both in terms of the professional special education resources and the other school staff. The respondents in the schools report that they, to a much larger extent, provide support to students outside their regular teaching groups. These findings are in line with previous research in compulsory

school (Giota & Lundborg, 2007) and upper secondary school (Löfgren, 2012; SNAE, 2010a).

This way of providing support is questionable in the pursuit of a democratic and inclusive school environment, although inclusion as a concept is much broader than just being about where special support is provided. Nor is it in line with national policy guidelines, which emphasise that it is desirable to provide special support in the students' regular class affiliation (SNAE, 2007a). Previous research (Giota & Emanuelsson, 2011; Giota & Lundborg, 2007; Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2002; Isaksson, 2009) also shows that the special support that takes place outside regular teaching groups may lead to feelings of exclusion and stigmatisation, especially when it takes place over long periods. Whether segregated support results in feelings of exclusion and stigmatisation is, of course, contextually related. The time aspect appears to be important, where segregated solutions over time appear to be more negative (Giota & Lundborg, 2007). The results of this study do not show how long the efforts in terms of special education were implemented, which is a limitation of this study. The support can also be perceived in many different ways by different students, so these possible effects cannot be said to be the case for all students.

The reasoning about possible feelings of exclusion and stigma may be understood from the discussion of normality, which must be understood as never existing in isolation but always in relation to the abnormal (for example, Ambjörnsson, 2004). If one sees the regular class constellation as being normal, then it appears that teaching or special support that takes place outside is abnormal. Between these two, there is also a hierarchical division, where the abnormal emerges as subordinate to the norm. The subordination that this implies risks leading to feelings of exclusion and stigmatisation and even an increased risk of dropping out of school, as suggested in the SNAE (1998).

The results also show that independent schools to a somewhat greater extent seem to provide special support within the ordinary class compared with public schools. One interpretation for this could be that independent schools in general have much less special education resources that can provide support outside the student's regular class (Ramberg, 2013). This interpretation assumes that special education resources contribute to an increase in support outside regular class activities, which seems to be consistent with what the professional special education staff stated. In this case, the availability of special education resources can be seen to be a contributing factor to increased support provided outside the student's regular class. This in turn relates to the different professional roles that special educators and special education teachers have, where the special education teachers are generally more focused on giving students individual support. It may be the case that the wider role of special educators is not fully implemented in the schools. Previous research on these two professional roles shows that in many

schools, special educators have had difficulties transforming their new role (Gerrbo, 2012; Isaksson, 2009; Lansheim, 2010; Malmgren Hansen, 2002; Mattson & Hansen, 2009; von Ahlefeld Nisser, 2009). They often seem to fall back into the traditional role of special education teacher. This study has not made a distinction between these two roles (as explained previously, pp. 69-70), but it would be worthwhile to investigate this further. The respondents from the schools also reported that the special education professionals work with several other tasks: here, it would be interesting to study further whether it is primarily special educators or special education teachers who are engaged in different tasks.

The special education assignment involves a variety of tasks at different levels in school. Here the discussion has mainly been on the teaching role and the place where teaching is conducted, that is to say, inside or outside the regular teaching group. It should be emphasised that the other tasks appear to be important in the special education assignment. In Ramberg (in press), it appears that a large part of the special education time is used to provide support outside the student's ordinary class.

The assignment of special educators and special education teachers is partly dependent on factors beyond their control or influence. Their assignment and support activities are also governed by expectations from other school staff, such as teachers and principals, as well as by demands and desires of parents and students. There may also be general guidelines from the municipality or from the independent school provider. Their assignment and support activities should therefore be understood from a larger and complex governing system, where they function as one important part.

## Possible changes towards a more democratic school

This section aims to provide some suggestions for possible changes towards a more democratic school based on the study's results and the theoretical framework that is chosen.

### **Criteria for equal participation**

In the pursuit of equal participation, Fraser (2011) sets up three criteria: these are described earlier. In order to achieve Fraser's criterion of distribution of resources, the impact of provider type on special education resources must cease or at least be greatly reduced. This could be done by laws and/or by control over the schools to ensure that resources are allocated more equally. The strengthened demand of special education competence in the Education Act 2010:800 can be seen as such an expression, even if it only outlines the obligation of schools to have this competence and not what it means or the extent to which it should apply. Clearer directives regarding special education resources and their allocation would be a step towards creating a more

equitable distribution of resources, which could contribute to a more equitable school.

Fraser's (2011) second criterion, which is required to achieve equal participation, is about how the social status order between groups is ordered. This criterion, Fraser argues, is inconsistent in environments with institutionalised value hierarchies (for example, different educational programmes) that systematically devalue vulnerable groups and their characteristics and abilities. A move away from the institutionalised hierarchical division is worth striving for, since it increases differences between various individuals and groups of individuals. One example is to strive for an equalisation of the different educational programmes, where many vocational programmes currently have a low status. This endeavour could even out the skewed recruitment to various educational programmes in terms of gender and parental educational background. This has, through reforms described earlier, been attempted, but has not succeeded (for example, Broady, 2000; Hugo, 2007; Palme, 2008). Early support and encouragement of those students who come from a background of low education, so that they make study choices that are less influenced by their social background, could be a step in that direction. If social recruitment for the various programmes was less influenced by social background, the result could be an equalisation of the different educational programmes. These actions can be seen as transformative as they basically strive to change the underlying causes of skewed recruitment. An affirmative action could instead be to recruit girls to programmes strongly dominated by boys. In this way, more girls could attend these programmes, at the same time as the underlying causes remain.

At the school level, endeavours towards an equalisation of the different programmes could mean closer cooperation between different programmes so that students from different programmes meet and interact more – for example, in cross-programme work. In this way, preconceived notions and attitudes might change. Principals, special educators/special education teachers and teachers have greater opportunity to further develop such arenas, at least in those schools with many different programmes.

### **Institutionalised barriers to a fair education**

Based on Fraser's (2010) reasoning on justice, social arrangements are required that allow all individuals to participate equally and interact with each other. This requires a dismantling of institutionalised barriers to facilitate participation on equal terms. Ability grouping can be seen as such a barrier, where students are divided by, for example, academic performance. To increase the opportunity for students to participate on equal terms in a fairer and more democratic school, the use of ability grouping and its effects should be, if not limited, at least illuminated and analysed. One step in that direction would be to bring the issue to a societal school policy level: cur-

rently, this is dealt with individually by each school. It could also be an issue that is discussed more clearly within teacher training and special education teacher training programmes, where the organisation of ability grouping and its possible effects and consequences are highlighted. Research (for example, Björklund, Fredriksson, Gustafsson, & Öckert, 2010; Hallam, Rogers, & Ireson, 2008; SNAE, 2007d, 2010c) has shown that teachers often have a positive view of ability grouping, which does not seem to be fully in line with existing results as to its effects.

### **The struggle over needs**

This study shows that schools with students whose parents have a higher educational background have a higher availability of special education resources. If, on the basis of Fraser's (2003) reasoning on the struggle over needs, it is the case that this group (the more highly educated) can better meet its needs, it would be desirable to move the struggle over needs. What ought especially to be a public debate over needs has been pushed into the private sphere, giving dominant (better educated) social groups the advantage, and thus penalising the subordinated (less educated) groups. Fraser talks about these politicised needs as *leaking* or *runaway needs*. These are needs that have broken out of the political arena and that have been constructed within private spheres. Every individual's right to special support is clearly formulated in laws and regulations. It is needs that are determined in the political arena and that shall apply equally to all. Because elements of these needs *run away* or *leak out* from the political arena into the private or the familial, an unfair balance arises in what was supposed to apply equally to all. More dominant (more highly educated) social groups thus become winners when the struggle over needs takes place outside the political arena. This change can in many ways be compared to the shifting power balance, as demonstrated previously (see p. 25 and p. 54), in schools where more and more power has been moved to individuals and families. It is an expression of how competition and market ideology manifest themselves in the education system. To reclaim the issue over needs and satisfaction of needs, the discussion needs to move away from different societal groups (in this case, groups with different educational backgrounds) onto a societal level and into the political arena. The need for access to special education is an issue that should not be dealt with by various social groups but that should rather be on a political level.

Between these groups, there is a clear power relation, where the more highly educated groups better manage to satisfy their needs. If the issue were moved to the central school-policy level, this power balance might come to have less importance, and the influence of parental educational background on the access over special education needs might be less important.

## The democratic school

The democratic school can have different forms, depending on the democratic starting point. The democratic perspective that is the starting point leads to different outcomes in a number of key questions about how schools and teaching groups should be organised.

Based on Dewey's (1916, 1939/1988) reasoning as discussed in Biesta (2003, 2006), *education through democracy* emerges as a pathway where the creation of democratic structures in educational settings appears important. This can be done by giving students the opportunity to participate and be part of democratic decision-making. A student constellation is encouraged where heterogeneity and pluralism are prominent, where diversity and differences are seen as important aspects. A limited range of differences in educational composition therefore means fewer opportunities for development. An increase in educational compositions that encourage diversity, where students can meet, understand the perspectives of others and garner knowledge from others, leads to an increased opportunity for development. To further divide and differentiate students by performance or by providing special education support outside the regular teaching group can be understood as a general move away from the common and diverse group dynamic that a heterogeneous classroom means. Ability grouping is one way of several to reduce the heterogeneity of teaching groups, since it many times leads to homogenous groups.

With students from different social groups who have different parental educational backgrounds, ethnicity and gender, meetings in everyday educational situations provide opportunities for greater understanding through an increased opportunity to listen, bring forth and hear arguments from other individuals (for example, Roth, 2003). A differentiation of student groups in terms of ability grouping and special support outside the regular class thus contributes to a restriction in the creation of a common democratic school where all students are given equal opportunities to meet. By organising education and educational situations that provide opportunities for common meeting structures and opportunities for participation, we can increase the opportunities for *education through democracy*. As I see it, this is largely about how we organise education in general and special education in particular. The main inspiration for this view of democracy is taken from Dewey (1916), who strongly emphasises social interaction and opportunities for participation as central to the development of the democratic school. It is of great importance that the social groups that are created within educational settings are heterogeneous and pluralistic in nature, and that different social positions and interests can meet. I show earlier how the Swedish school system has become increasingly differentiated as a result of clear stratification between schools and between different programmes, but also how ability grouping and special support can serve as catalysts for further internal dif-

ferentiation within schools. This is a system and an organisation that represents a distance in the pursuit of a democratic and equitable school. According to Biesta (2006), education through democracy involves the pursuit of inclusive practices in social institutions in which everyone has the opportunity to meet and develop.

### **Towards more balanced education**

The threefold theoretical model of educational democracy that Gutmann (1999) presents is an attempt to reconcile different interests. It may seem like a fundamentally good idea to endeavour to resolve this conflict or dilemma of interests, at the same time as the balance between the various interest parties today seems to be rather weak. There is currently a focus on arguments drawn from liberal individualisation, where the individual's and the family's rights stand over those of the collective. Helldin (2002b) describes how the concept of individualism in the school context is rightly often a carrier of positive connotations, at the same time as he points to a number of negative consequences. In a school where the individualistic interest becomes too dominant, values of solidarity and community risk being toned down, and the opportunity for democratic interaction decreases. Helldin states: "The individualistic point is that the individual alone is responsible for his/her actions as well as for the problems he/she meets (p. 32, own translation).

It is with the unequal balance of Gutmann's described spheres of interest in mind that I want to criticise the theory. Basically, it can be seen as desirable, but it means that all parts must be recognised and be heard. The current predominance of individualistic values is strong, and it seems that the arguments for the collective in today's schools have fallen away, or at least faded (for example, Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006; Boman, 2002; Englund, 1995; Eriksson, 2013; Helldin, 2002b). With a more neutral or balanced starting point, the collective democratic arguments can be strengthened and promoted, and can thus lead to an alternative discussion on how educational settings and special education can be organised.

Based on a shift towards a more balanced starting point, the school, with its problems and challenges, may also involve other levels. A reduction in the importance of the individualistic knowledge tradition means that the analysis of school difficulties can move away from the individual to be more about structures, organisations and group assemblies. Transformative actions would at best be able to weigh up the bias. For this to happen, there must be a deconstruction of the entire school system, its basic structure, organisation and values.

Professionals within the school, particularly special educators and special education teachers, could contribute with their knowledge of group dynamics and organisational impact on learning. These professionals are explicitly trained to understand and analyse the work of the school and its difficulties

from multiple perspectives. Their knowledge and understanding of this might not be sufficiently implemented in the schools.

A more balanced starting point could lead to increased heterogeneity and pluralism, where diversity is valued and where differences can meet instead of being separated.

From an individualistic point of view, responsibility for school failure becomes an individual and/or family problem. It becomes a personal individual failure. Based on a more collectivist and common basis, school failure can instead be sought in organisations, structures and power relations within the school. This could mean that individuals are not, to the same extent, identified as unsuccessful and are not responsible for their school failure.

A more varied analytical starting point would mean that all these spheres were included and taken into account. The individual starting point is of course also necessary, but would increasingly need to be supplemented with organisational and structural perspectives. Through this shift, we could, to a greater extent, be able to reach a balance between the spheres of interest as Gutmann (1999) presented.

### **Affirmative and transformative actions**

Fraser (2003, 2010) reasons how inequitable structures should be approached with different remedies depending on the origin of two theoretically separated spheres. Injustices arising from the political-economic sphere are dealt with through redistribution of resources. Injustices arising from the symbolic-cultural sphere must be dealt with through recognition of the subordinated group. When individuals or groups of individuals are simultaneously exposed to injustice rooted in both spheres, Fraser (2003) talks about bivalent injustices, which then require both redistribution and recognition. The skewed recruitment, with respect to gender, social class and ethnicity, to upper secondary school can be seen as an unfair structure that has arisen from both spheres, and should, according to Fraser, be dealt with simultaneously. The affirmative remedy would imply a short-term redistribution of resources to the schools that need them (such as socially disadvantaged schools) and recognition of this group as particularly vulnerable, which in turn amplifies the weak group and/or school affiliation. A transformative approach would instead focus on reconstructing the bias in recruitment to the schools so that the problem was resolved. This may lead to more heterogeneous group affiliations, which in the long-run could mean that differences between groups are reduced. This reasoning is not only valid at a “between school” level, but can also be applied to at the “within-school” level (between different programmes where there are different statuses) and between the different educational groups where students are grouped based on previous academic performance or choice (for example, ability grouping or specifically designed support activities). Ability grouping or special support

outside the student's regular teaching groups must, based on Fraser's reasoning, be understood as affirmative actions that maintain and reinforce hierarchical groupings and differentiation between groups. A transformative approach would imply a deep restructuring of resources at an earlier stage so that these groups would not be necessary. I have previously discussed how affirmative actions in the short-term must be seen as necessary, even though they basically do not change the current system. Affirmative actions require a constant renewal of superficial redistributions. They do not lead to a structural change but rather enhance the differentiation between groups, since they maintain the origin of injustice. Fraser (2003) also emphasises how the recipients of these redistributions in such a system may appear to be insatiable and inadequate since they are constantly in need of more and more. They can thus be seen as privileged recipients of this special treatment.

In this way, the affirmative actions can be considered as special education tools to meet each student's right to special support. It is the individual's right to support that is the starting point, which is clearly protected in the Education Act and the curriculum. Efforts in terms of special education are basically used to compensate when the regular teaching is considered insufficient. These interventions or activities fill for many students an important function that helps them better utilise their education, especially those students who have specific learning difficulties.

The transformative actions on the other hand can be considered to be more preventive in nature than the affirmative ones since they create a more equitable basis for all students. They are based on equitable preconditions or outcomes rather than on the individual's needs. Affirmative actions focus on eliminating unfair results of social arrangements, sometimes without taking into consideration the underlying structures that cause them. Transformative actions seek to eliminate unfair results through a transformation of the underlying causes. Here, there is also a clear link to the two political directions liberalism (affirmative) and socialism (transformative), which are described earlier. Efforts in terms of special education may, on the basis of Fraser's social policy concepts, thus be understood from these essentially politically-based concepts. Affirmative actions intend to minimise the results or symptoms of existing unjust structures (which may contribute to increased differentiation between groups) and transformative actions intend to fundamentally change unjust structures (which may help to reduce the differentiation between groups).

In the reasoning outlined above, just like in Helldin (2007b), it appears as though the liberal idea of affirmative justice rather strengthens the differentiation patterns that exist within school. It implies a system that instead maintains unjust structures; it does not really change the premises for injustices.

If we want to create an equitable democratic school for all, more is required than just superficial redistribution and recognition of the disadvantaged groups. We need a fundamentally profound change to the factors that

affect the equitable structures in and outside of school. Both types of actions seem unavoidable if we want education to be, as far as possible, equitable. Affirmative actions seem necessary for the maintenance of the individual's rights to education and support. The transformative seems necessary to, in the long-run, ensure a more democratic equitable order.

### **Summing up**

Several of the outlined principled directions of action concern the level on which educational decisions are taken. Moving central educational and special education issues from a local (school, family, individual) level to a more central level could mean that more balance could be achieved. Gutmann (1999), in her theory on educational democracy, seeks to find the balance between different societal spheres (individual, family, state). Today, it appears as though the balance between these spheres is rather weak. Decisions on many central school issues, not least those related to special education, do not take into account the different spheres of interest adequately. Many of these issues are today put to the school, the family or the individual, which is in line with the shifting balance of power as demonstrated earlier. A more even balance between central and local actors would be desirable.

Special education in schools is, of course, strongly connected to society as a whole, and prevailing values and democratic ideals of school. I argue earlier that there is currently a strong emphasis on the individualistic, as opposed to the common good. Such a basis of fundamental values also provides affirmative actions in terms of special education that fundamentally do not change existing structures, although they may be needed in the short-term, as discussed above. They can, of course, also play a very important role for some students or groups of students.

Based on a more balanced basis, the hegemonic individualistic approach could change and a more common equitable school would be possible. How we organise education and special support, based on this way of seeing it, is the result of deeper political, democratic and ideological assumptions. For genuine change to happen, there is a need to reflect on and discuss the prevailing democratic values on which education and special education should be organised.

## **Originality and representativeness**

The previous studies on special education at upper secondary schools in Sweden have involved qualitative or ethnographic approaches. Some studies have also been specifically targeted at different groups of youths or parts of upper secondary school, such as the individual programme, specific vocational programmes, etc. This study therefore appears original in its design, since it provides a comprehensive picture of the resources and modalities of

special education as it is conducted in Swedish upper secondary schools, phenomena that were not previously well-known. The comprehensive data collection and the non-response analysis point also to representativeness of the study.

## Suggestions for further research

During this study, a series of new questions and reflections have emerged: some could serve as suggestions for further research. One such issue concerns a follow-up study of this present study. Results of this study focus on a single point in time, and it is important to see how the picture of special education resources and activities may have changed over time. This appears particularly interesting because the new Education Act 2010:800, which were implemented the year after the data collection for this study, more clearly emphasise the importance of special education competence in upper secondary schools. Has this change meant that schools employ more special educators/special education teachers? Do they work in a different way than this study shows? Such a study could be designed as a naturalistic experiment, where the implementation of the new Education Act 2010:800 serves as the intervention, although it would be difficult to isolate any possible changes to the intervention.

In particular, the independent upper secondary schools as a group and their organisation of special support need to be studied further, partly because there are so many independent schools that do not have special education resources and partly because they may organise special support in other ways. There might be other professional roles that provide support in these schools. This study has been unable to give any answer as to why so many independent schools lack special education resources, just that this cannot be explained by the variables used in the analysis. The possible reasons for this would be worth investigating further.

It would also be interesting to study specifically selected groups of schools more deeply. For example, schools that reported that they use ability grouping to a very large extent could be such a group of schools. Through case studies of these schools, we could acquire more knowledge about why or what arguments underlie the high usage. Likewise, it would be interesting to qualitatively study schools that indicated that they work exclusively with special support within the student's regular education group, as well as schools that have reported the opposite. Such studies could contribute with knowledge about different arguments and reasons that could be discerned behind these different approaches for providing special support. Another such group of schools are those that report that they do not have any special education resources at all. What are the reasons for this? Do they organise support in other ways? Maybe there are schools that feel they do not need

special education resources. If so, why is that? In this way, this study could serve as a basis on which to access specific schools or groups of schools.

Another area that would be interesting for further study is the way in which the special support provided in schools is perceived by students, teachers, special education professionals and principals. This could be done through qualitative case studies of specific schools.

The different professions of special educator and special education teacher are earlier in this thesis shown to be hard to distinguish in everyday school work (for example, Gerrbo, 2012; Malmgren Hansen, 2002). It would be valuable to study this further. Do they work at different levels in the school, which to some extent is the intention with the two teaching degrees, or is there ambiguity between these two professions?

Many of the suggestions for further research that are given would require other scientific methods than quantitative, and they would need to target individual schools or groups of schools. Studies of this nature would contribute to the knowledge of special education at the Swedish upper secondary school level.

# Sammanfattning på svenska

## Syfte

Denna avhandling syftar till att undersöka några aspekter av specialpedagogiska verksamheter på de svenska gymnasieskolorna. Mer specifikt undersöks förekomsten av och tillgängligheten till de specialpedagogiska resurserna (utbildade specialpedagoger och speciallärare), förekomsten av nivågruppering och organisation av specialpedagogiskt stöd. Dessa aspekter presenteras i tre artiklar och kappan syftar vidare till att diskutera hur dessa empiriska resultat kan förstås utifrån demokratiska utbildningsteorier och teoribildning kring social rättvisa. Avhandlingen bidrar även med förslag till möjliga handlingsinriktningar mot en skola där gemenskap och delaktighet kan bli mer autentiskt.

## Inledning

Rätten till en likvärdig och rättvis utbildning för alla är starkt förankrad i det svenska demokratiska samhället, och betonas i skollagen och läroplaner. Det är dock inte bara individernas rättigheter till en likvärdig utbildning som är av vikt, utan också strukturen och organisationen hos utbildningssystemet, genom hur lika förutsättningar för utbildning främjas och stimuleras.

Strävan mot en utbildning för alla i Sverige omfattar även gymnasieskolan sedan mitten av 1990-talet, då i praktiken alla ungdomar påbörjar denna utbildningsnivå (SNAE, 2004a). Genom den ökade och mer varierade elevpopulationen som detta inneburit har också behovet av specialpedagogik på gymnasieskolan kommit att spela en viktigare roll, samtidigt som forskning inom det specialpedagogiska fältet med inriktning mot gymnasieskolan har konstaterats vara försummad (se t.ex. Emanuelsson, Persson, & Rosenqvist, 2001; Hultqvist, 2001; Möllås, 2009; SNAE, 2007a, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a).

Trots att Sverige, genom Skolverket, har regelbundna insamlingar av uppgifter om elever, resurser och resultat på nationell, kommunal och skolnivå, saknas en nationell överblick över de specialpedagogiska resurserna och organisationen av dessa verksamheter på gymnasial nivå. Denna brist har bidragit till intresset att undersöka dessa frågor, för att försöka belysa vissa aspekter av de specialpedagogiska verksamheter som tillhandahålls på

gymnasieskolorna i Sverige. Således bidrar denna studie med ett viktigt tillskott av kunskap.

## Bakgrund

### Tre viktiga reformer

Det svenska skolsystemet har sedan 1990-talet genomgått en rad förändringar, både inom grundskolan och inom gymnasieskolan. Särskilt fokus i denna avhandling har varit den förändring som skedde 1994 genom en ny gymnasieorganisation samt tre viktiga sammanhängande skolreformer; decentraliseringen, valfrihetsreformen samt friskolereformen. Tillsammans och interaktivt har dessa kommit att i grunden ändra förutsättningarna för utbildning och undervisning.

Decentraliseringen av den svenska skolan kan närmast beskrivas som en process där flera steg tas i en decentraliserande riktning. De huvudsakliga argumenten beskrivs av Lewin et al. (2014) ha varit att öka effektiviteten och kvaliteten på utbildning samt ge ökade möjligheter till lokala anpassningar och ge möjlighet till ökat medborgarinflytande. Ett viktigt steg i denna process var införandet av mål och resultatstyrning av utbildning. Det mest avgörande steget i decentraliseringen är själva kommunaliseringen, där Sverige strävade efter att skapa ett system där kommunal autonomi över utbildningen skulle råda (Wahlström, 2009). Genom detta förändrades både statens och kommunernas roll. Staten behöll kontrollen över innehållet i utbildningen genom nationella riktlinjer i skollag, läroplaner och kursplaner. På kommunal nivå gavs en stor frihet att utforma utbildning och budget för att uppnå de statligt fastställda målen. Staten kom också att få en utökad kontroll och utvärderingsfunktion av de utbildningsverksamheter som genomfördes i kommunerna (Biesta, 2004; Nordin, 2014).

Genom införandet av det fria skolvalet 1992 blev det varje familjs och individs rättighet att fritt välja skola. De huvudsakliga intentionerna med reformen var att öka föräldrars och individers möjligheter till påverkan, att skapa pedagogiska innovationer, bidra med en ökad mångfald av skolor samt ge en ekonomisk effektivitet. Genom införandet av ett skolpengssystem blev varje elev bärare av en skolpeng, vilken beräknades på kommunens genomsnittliga elevkostnad (Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2008). Skolverket har sedan införandet av reformen undersökt dess effekter och konstaterar över åren att reformen har bidragit till att öka segregationen mellan skolor, genom att olika socioekonomiska grupper tenderar att utöva det fria skolvalet till olika grad (t.ex. SNAE, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2000b, 2003, 2004b, 2006, 2009, 2012a). Likaså konstaterar Söderström och Uusitalo (2010) att segregationen

mellan Stockholms gymnasieskolor ökat genom införandet av det fria skolvalet, med avseende på betyg, familjebakgrund samt etnicitet.

Vid ungefär samma tidpunkt genomfördes friskolereformen, som innebar ökade möjligheter för privata aktörer att äga och bedriva skolor. Under läsåret 2010/2011, då data för denna studie samlades in, drevs ungefär hälften av Sveriges ca 1000 gymnasieskolor av en fristående aktör och hälften av en kommun, samtidigt som ca 25 % av eleverna gick på en fristående gymnasieskola. Vlachos (2011) konstaterar att den mest anmärkningsvärda utvecklingen under senare år är det ökade inslaget av vinstdrivna skolkoncerner och att nästan 90 % av de fristående gymnasieskolorna drivs som privata aktieföretag. Friskolereformen och valfrihetsreformen är på många sätt sammankopplade och Blomqvist och Rothstein (2008) sammanfattar syftet med reformerna med att de skulle åstadkomma *en revolution av valfrihet* inom den offentliga sektorn.

Sammantaget har det skett stora förändringar inom utbildningsväsendet och Sverige framstår som ett av de mest långtgående länderna i anpassningen till valfrihet, ett generöst friskolesystem, decentralisering och marknadsanpassning, inte minst inom gymnasial utbildning (Arreman & Holm, 2011; Fredriksson, 2009; Heath & Sullivan, 2011; Lindbom, 2010; Lundahl et al., 2014; Lundahl et al., 2013). Levin (2013) sammanfattar effekterna av dessa reformer och pekar på hur dessa bidragit till en minskning av likvärdigheten i det svenska utbildningssystemet.

Under denna tid förändras också gymnasieskolans organisation, utbildningsinnehåll och styrningsmekanismer. En ny läroplan tillsammans med nya kursplaner som regleras av målrelaterade betyg får stor betydelse. Strukturen för gymnasieskolan förändras genom att det skapas 17 nationella program tillsammans med det individuella programmet (Department of Education, 1994; SNAE, 2014). Framförallt sker en markant förändring för de praktiska programmen genom en ökning av teoretiskt utbildningsinnehåll. Ett av huvudargumenten med reformen var att minska den sociala differentieringen mellan olika utbildningsprogram, vilket kan konstateras som misslyckat då den sociala snedrekryteringen till olika utbildningsprogram inte jämnats ut, utan snarare tvärtom konsoliderats ytterligare (Broady, 2000; Hugo, 2007; Palme, 2008).

## Styrning av specialpedagogiska verksamheter

Specialpedagogiska verksamheter styrs och regleras på olika nivåer, vilka bl.a. omfattar internationella och nationella styrdokument och kommuners tillvägagångssätt att allokera resurser till skolor. På skolnivå utgör rektorer samt specialpedagoger och speciallärare särskilt viktiga funktioner.

Varje individs rätt till utbildning och stöd då det behövs är starkt förankrat i skollagen. I Salamancadeklarationen, som enligt Ainscow och César (2006), är det viktigaste internationella policydokumentet relaterat till speci-

alpedagogik, framhålls en strävan mot inkluderande arbetsformer. I SNAE (2007a) sammanfattas riktlinjerna för de svenska policydokumenten genom att utbildning skall bedrivas i en anda av inkludering och att studenter så långt det är möjligt skall undervisas tillsammans.

Genom kommunaliseringen infördes ett statligt bidragssystem till kommunerna, vilket innebar att kommunerna kunde styra resurser mot olika utbildningssatsningar, så som specialpedagogiska verksamheter. I SNAE (2013d) konstateras att det råder en stor variation i hur kommuner riktar resurser samt att det råder en stor variation mellan skolor.

Rektorer har det yttersta ansvaret för skolans verksamhet, och därmed också det specialpedagogiska arbetet. Rektorerers olika sätt att organisera specialpedagogiskt arbete kan uppfattas som olika uttryck för hur skolproblem skall hanteras (Lindqvist & Nilholm, 2013).

I Sverige finns två specialpedagogiska professioner; speciallärare och specialpedagoger. Generellt kan sägas att speciallärarens huvudsakliga fokus är att stödja den enskilde eleven, medan specialpedagogens fokus ligger på en mer organisatorisk och handledande nivå. Tidigare studier (t.ex. Gerrbo, 2012; Malmgren Hansen, 2002; Mattson & Hansen, 2009) konstaterar att det i det dagliga skolarbetet ofta är svårt att skilja dessa yrkesroller åt, samtidigt som t.ex. specialpedagoger många gånger utför arbetsuppgifter avsedda för speciallärare.

Det specialpedagogiska arbetet innebär en rad olika arbetsuppgifter på olika nivåer. Det innebär bl.a. kartläggning av skolsvårigheter, handledning, skolutveckling, undervisning, utredning, konsultation och arbete kring åtgärdsprogram (Ahlberg, 2001; Byström & Nilsson, 2003; Rosenqvist, 2007). Dessa olika arbetsuppgifter kan beskrivas förekomma på olika nivåer; individ, grupp och organisation. Göransson (2012) konstaterar att det saknas gedigen kunskap och forskning om specialpedagogers och speciallärarens funktioner och arbetsuppgifter i skolan. Angående den undervisande specialpedagogiska rollen visar tidigare studier att den ofta är fokuserad på stödjande arbete utanför studenternas ordinarie undervisningsgrupp.

## Teoretisk bakgrund

Det teoretiska ramverket för avhandlingen utgår från demokratiska utbildningsteorier och teorier som fokuserar social rättvisa kopplad till utbildningsfrågor.

Variationen av elever mellan skolor har visats öka genom de ovan beskrivna skolreformerna (t.ex. Andersson et al., 2012; Andersson et al., 2010; Gustafsson, 2007; Söderström & Uusitalo, 2010; Wiborg, 2010; Östh et al., 2013). Detta gäller såväl grundskolan som gymnasieskolan. En rad studier har fokuserat på hur utbildningsrelaterade värdefrågor förändras i det svenska utbildningssystemet. Sammantaget pekar de på hur frågor kring

demokrati, gemenskap och rättvisa har skjutits åt sidan för en mer individualistisk, nyliberal och marknadsstyrd ordning.

## Utbildning och demokrati

Biesta (2003, 2006) bidrar med en diskussion om hur relationen mellan utbildning och demokrati kan förstås, där han kontrasterar två synsätt; *utbildning för demokrati* samt *utbildning genom demokrati*. Biesta utgår från två skilda syner på det demokratiska subjektet, inspirerat utifrån Immanuel Kant och John Dewey. Utifrån Kants teorier kring det starka subjektet och den handlingskraftiga individen, bör vi sträva efter att individer skall bli kompetenta och kvalificerade till att göra oberoende val. Genom utbildning skall vi göra och fostra demokratiska medborgare. Denna syn på relationen mellan demokrati och utbildning har, enligt Biesta, starkt kommit att påverka den liberala utbildningstraditionen där individen sätts i fokus, och benämns som *utbildning för demokrati*. Den andra synen tar sin utgångspunkt i Deweys (1939/1988) teorier kring det demokratiska subjektet vilka utgår från interaktion och samspel med den sociala miljön. Genom socialt samspel och möte med andra skapas vanor, tankar och reflektion där ömsesidig interaktion och möjligheter till lika deltagande är framträdande. Dewey (1916) diskuterar kring vikten av grupp tillhörigheten för individen och förespråkar konstellationer som bygger på heterogenitet och pluralism, där olika synpunkter och intressen kan och skall råda. Genom att olikheter får mötas uppstår ökade möjligheter till att individer kan växa och utvecklas. Överfört till skolans organisation handlar det till stor del om hur elevsammansättningar ser ut, både inom skolor och mellan skolor. Denna sociala syn på det demokratiska subjektet benämner Biesta som *utbildning genom demokrati*.

## Gutmanns teori om en demokratisk utbildning

Gutmann (1999) framför en teori om en demokratisk utbildning som innebär en jämkning av olika intressesfärer i samhället. Hon utgår från tre skilda demokratiteorier i ett försök att rekonstruera en demokratisk utbildningsteori, där hennes metod kan beskrivas som att finna det goda i dessa tre olika teoretiska inriktningar. Teorin framstår som en kompromiss av olika demokratiska utbildningsteorier. Hon utgår från familjestaten (Platon), staten som familj (Locke) och staten bestående av individer (John Stuart Mill). Gutmann söker finna en kompromiss mellan dessa tre olika intressesfärer, där individens friheter inte skall hotas av allas gemensamma intressen och vice versa. Ett allt för stort fokus på den ena hotar oundvikligen den andra. Det är delningens princip som skall gälla. En rad forskare har intresserat sig för hur balansen mellan dessa intressesfärer förändrats i det svenska utbildningssystemet sedan 1990-talet, där en allt större tyngd förskjutits till familjen och individen genom ökad valfrihet och inflytande över utbildningsfrågor.

Englund (2003) menar att det har skett en förskjutning av maktpositioner, där familjers och individers roll i utbildningsfrågor kommit att få en allt starkare ställning, och att skolan inte i samma utsträckning fyller funktionen som en mötesplats mellan olika sociala grupper och kulturer. Balansen mellan Gutmanns (1999) intressesfärer framstår som tämligen svag. Genom ett ökat fokus på det gemensamma skulle denna obalans kunna jämnas ut och värderingar kring solidaritet och gemenskap skulle kunna få ett ökat utrymme, vilket påverkar hur elevgrupper sätts samman och organiseras. Det skulle också innebära att skolproblem i större utsträckning kan förstås utifrån skolans struktur och organisation, utöver den individfokuserade utgångspunkten.

## Social rättvisa

Fraser (2003, 2010, 2011) resonerar kring hur orättvisor i samhället och skolan kan förstås och behandlas. Hon utgår från begreppen *omfördelning* och *erkännande*, vilka i sig är hämtade från historiska diskussioner kring begreppet rättvisa, som analytiska verktyg mot samhällliga och utbildningsmässiga orättvisor. Orättvisor som härstammar från den politisk-ekonomiska sfären bör behandlas med omfördelning medan orättvisor uppkomna ur den symboliskt-kulturella sfären bör behandlas med erkännande. Båda angreppsätten är nödvändiga, enligt Fraser (2003, 2010). Vidare kompletterar Fraser (2010, 2011) teorin om rättvisa med begreppet *representation*, och betonar därmed vikten av att alla samhällets missgynnade grupper måste kunna delta på lika villkor som andra grupper. Fraser argumenterar för tre kriterier, som var och ett måste uppnås, för att ett likvärdigt deltagande skall kunna ske; en jämn fördelning av materiella resurser, en jämn social status mellan grupper samt en likvärdig tillgång till makt och handling. Allas olika intressen måste beaktas som lika viktiga. Genom begreppen *affirmation* och *transformation* för Fraser ett långtgående resonemang om hur orättvisa strukturer kan förändras. Affirmativa handlingar fokuserar på orättvisa symptom eller utfall av sociala arrangemang snarare än dess underliggande orsaker, vilket också i grunden bibehåller den orättvisa strukturen. Transformativa handlingar fokuserar istället på de underliggande strukturer som i grunden skapat orättvisor, medan mindre hänsyn tas till de orättvisa resultat den innebär. På kort sikt måste de affirmativa handlingarna ses som nödvändiga för de individer som har behov här och nu, samtidigt som de i grunden inte förändrar den orättvisa strukturen. Transformativa handlingar söker en djupare och mer långsiktig förändring. Utifrån ett specialpedagogiskt perspektiv, kan de kortsiktiga omfördelningarna av resurser och kompensatoriska handlingar ses som affirmativa. De avser att kompensera för de orättvisor som finns inom skolan, vilket på kort sikt många gånger måste ses som nödvändigt, inte minst för de många studenter som har specifika inlärningssvårigheter. Transformativa handlingar har ett mer långsiktigt mål och söker att i grunden förändra

de strukturella orsakerna till orättvisa, genom att skapa utbildningsmässiga villkor där alla har lika förutsättningar. Fraser poängterar också att affirmativa handlingar leder till en ökad differentiering mellan grupper, medan transformativa handlingar på sikt tenderar att sudda ut skillnader och främja solidaritet.

## En uppdelad gymnasieskola

En viktig fråga för gymnasieskolan de senaste decennierna har varit att bryta den traditionella sociala snedrekryteringen till olika skolor och olika program, inte minst mellan teoretiska och praktiska program. Detta var också en stark intention i 1994 års gymnasieförändring (Hall, 2010; Lundahl et al., 2010), vilket kan konstateras som misslyckat då den skeva rekryteringen snarare förstärktes (Broady, 2000; Hultqvist, 2001; Palme, 2008). Även under senare år framstår utbildningsbakgrund och kön som viktiga faktorer för rekryteringen till de olika utbildningsprogrammen. Många program har en skev könsfördelning, och särskilt många program domineras starkt av pojkar. Även elevers utbildningsbakgrund har en stark påverkan, där elever från hem med lägre utbildning generellt har svårare att komma in på olika program, och därmed begränsade utbildningsmöjligheter.

## Metod

Studiens design kan beskrivas som en så kallad cross-sectional totalundersökning av Sveriges gymnasieskolor under läsåret 2010/2011. Datainsamlingen skedde genom enkäter under januari – mars 2011, riktade till samtliga Sveriges gymnasierectorer (N=950). Svaren från enkäterna har sedan kompletterats med offentlig statistik från Skolverket (SiRis), samt med aggregerade skolvariabler från skolverket och uppgifter från Sveriges kommuner och landsting. Av de 950 tillfrågade skolorna deltog 764 skolor i studien, vilket innebär en svarsfrekvens på 80,4%. Respondenter på enkäten har varit rektorer, studierektorer, specialpedagoger och speciallärare. Av de 764 svarande skolorna drevs 393 av en kommunal huvudman, 358 av fristående huvudman och 13 drevs av landsting. Varje skola utgör en enhet i analysmaterialet. Innan datainsamlingen genomfördes en pilotstudie riktad till ca 20 rektorer, för att kontrollera enkätens interna validitet. En bortfallsanalys har genomförts mellan de icke-svarande skolorna och de svarande på de befintliga variabler som var tillgängliga för alla skolor, vilken konstaterar att de till mycket stor del liknar varandra. Även fördelningen mellan nio olika kommungrupper har kontrollerats, och konstateras vara god. Sammantaget pekar bortfallsanalysen och den höga svarsfrekvensen på en god representativitet för hela populationen.

# Resultat

## Studie 1

Resultaten från denna studie visar att det på 62,5% av Sveriges gymnasieskolor finns specialpedagogiska resurser (utbildade speciallärare och/eller specialpedagog). Det råder en stor skillnad mellan fristående och kommunala skolor, där det på de kommunala skolorna hade detta på ca 90 % av skolorna medan motsvarande för fristående skolor endast var ca 32 %. Även vid en jämförelse av tillgängligheten av specialpedagogiska resurser per elev konstateras skillnaden vara stor. De kommunala skolorna har ca tre gånger högre tillgänglighet av specialpedagogiska resurser per elev än de fristående skolorna. Den stora skillnaden förklaras till största del av de många fristående skolor som saknar specialpedagog/speciallärare. Analysen visar också att det individuella programmet generellt har mer specialpedagogiska resurser än de nationella programmen, men även när elever och specialpedagogiska resurser knutna till det individuella programmet är borträknade kvarstår skillnaden mellan kommunala och fristående skolor. Oavsett vilket mått på specialpedagogiska resurser som används eller om det individuella programmet är medräknat eller ej, har de kommunala skolorna ca tre gånger så mycket specialpedagogiska resurser jämfört med de fristående skolorna som grupp.

Vilka variabler som är av särskilt stor betydelse för förekomsten och tillgängligheten av specialpedagogiska resurser har undersökts genom multivariat logistisk och multivariat linjär regressionsanalys. Den logistiska regressionsmodellen visar att huvudmannskapet har den enskilt högsta förklaringsgraden av närvaro av specialpedagogisk resurs, följt av variabeln skolstorlek. Även kontrollerat för genomsnittlig meritpoäng, föräldrars utbildningsnivå, andel elever med utländsk bakgrund och skolstorlek är oddsen att finna en specialpedagog/speciallärare på en fristående skola hela åtta gånger lägre, jämfört med en kommunal skola. Även skolans storlek är av stor betydelse för närvaron av specialpedagogisk resurs, och oddsen att finna en specialpedagog/speciallärare på en liten skola är betydligt lägre, jämfört med en större.

Det råder ingen nämnvärd skillnad mellan fristående skolor med specialpedagogisk resurs och fristående skolor utan, i avseende på tidigare meritpoäng, föräldrars utbildningsnivå, andel elever med utländsk bakgrund, lärartäthet eller andel lärare med behörighet, varför dessa variabler inte kan förklara skillnaden mellan dessa grupper av skolor.

Den linjära regressionsmodellen visar att det främst är tidigare meritpoäng, föräldrars utbildningsnivå samt skolstorlek som är av betydelse för tillgängligheten per elev av specialpedagogiska resurser. Högst förklaringsgrad har tidigare meritpoäng, som har en negativ effekt på tillgängligheten av

specialpedagogiska resurser. Det framkommer också att på skolor med samma genomsnittliga meritvärde, har skolor med högre genomsnittlig nivå av föräldrarnas utbildning, också mer specialpedagogiska resurser.

## Studie 2

Resultaten bygger på data från de 764 svarande skolorna och visar att nivågruppering används i någon omfattning i 43,6% av skolorna. Vanligast förekommande i 2-3 kurser (19,9 %) eller i en kurs (17,9 %). Det råder ingen nämnvärd skillnad mellan kommunala och fristående skolor i antalet kurser som de använder nivågruppering. Nivågruppering används mer flitigt i kärnämnen och ca en fjärdedel av skolorna uppger att de använder nivågruppering i stor eller mycket stor utsträckning i kärnämnen. Även här råder ingen nämnvärd skillnad mellan kommunala och fristående skolor. I de program-specifika ämnena rapporterar endast 7,3 % av skolorna att de använder nivågruppering till stor eller mycket stor utsträckning, samt att de fristående skolorna tillämpar detta något oftare.

Det vanligaste ämnet där nivågruppering används är matematik, följt av svenska och engelska.

Studien har också fokuserat på vilka bakgrundsvariabler som är av särskilt stor betydelse för omfattningen av nivågruppering. Skolans genomsnittliga meritvärde har en signifikant negativ korrelation med samtliga tre nivågrupperingsvariabler. Skolans tillgänglighet per elev av specialpedagogiska resurser, å andra sidan, har en signifikant positiv korrelation med alla tre nivågrupperingsvariabler. Det är framförallt i gruppen av skolor som rapporterat att de använder en mycket hög grad av nivågruppering som det också är betydligt lägre genomsnittligt meritvärde samt högre tillgänglighet av specialpedagogiska resurser. Denna grupp av skolor har också en större variation i meritvärde, lägre medianvärde samt lägre kvartiler än alla andra grupper av skolor. Den har också signifikant lägre medelvärde än alla andra grupper av skolor när det gäller meritvärde, i samtliga nivågrupperingsvariabler. Samma mönster återfinns i relationen mellan tillgängligheten per elev av specialpedagogiska resurser och användandet av nivågruppering. Gruppen av skolor som uppger att de använder nivågruppering till en mycket stor utsträckning har större variation, högre medianvärde samt högre kvartiler av tillgängliga specialpedagogiska resurser per elev än alla andra grupper av skolor, i samtliga nivågrupperingsvariabler, samt signifikant skilt medelvärde.

## Studie 3

Denna studie har främst fokuserat huruvida det specialpedagogiska stödet, som erbjuds av specialpedagog/speciellärare samt övrig skolpersonal, tillhandahålls inom eller utanför elevernas ordinarie lektionstillfälle. Resultaten

som behandlar specialpedagogers/speciallärares stöd bygger på data från de skolor som uppgett att de har detta (n=477), medan resultaten som behandlar specialpedagogiskt stöd av övrig skolpersonal bygger på data från samtliga skolor (n=764).

På frågan i vilken utsträckning det specialpedagogiska stödet, av specialpedagog/speciallärare, tillhandahölls inom elevernas ordinarie lektionstillfälle, var det vanligaste svaret att det skedde i mycket liten utsträckning (n=159), följt av att det skedde i liten utsträckning (n=119). 110 skolor uppger att det sker i stor utsträckning, medan 60 skolor uppger att det sker i mycket stor utsträckning. Resultaten visar alltså att svaren angående vilken utsträckning specialpedagoger/speciallärare tillhandahåller särskilt stöd inom det ordinarie lektionstillfället är i fallande ordning, där det är vanligast att det förekommer i mycket liten utsträckning, och minst vanligt att det förekommer i mycket stor utsträckning.

Skolor med specialpedagog/speciallärare har också svarat på i vilken utsträckning de tillhandahåller särskilt stöd utanför elevernas ordinarie lektionstillfälle. Här är mönstret det omvända. Det vanligast förekommande svarsalternativet är att det sker i mycket stor utsträckning (n=224), följt av att det sker i stor utsträckning (n=169). 49 skolor uppger att det sker i liten utsträckning, medan 31 skolor uppger att det sker i mycket liten utsträckning. Här visar resultaten att svaren angående vilken utsträckning specialpedagoger/speciallärare tillhandahåller särskilt stöd utanför det ordinarie lektionstillfället är i stigande ordning, där det är vanligast att det sker i mycket stor utsträckning, och minst vanligt i mycket liten utsträckning. Den sammanlagda bilden av dessa resultat visar att det är betydligt mer vanligt att specialpedagoger/speciallärare tillhandahåller särskilt stöd utanför elevernas ordinarie lektionstillfälle.

Utöver att tillhandahålla särskilt stöd, visar resultaten att specialpedagoger/speciallärare arbetar med en rad andra uppdrag och arbetsuppgifter; såsom att upprätta åtgärdsprogram, genomföra tester av elevers kunskaper, handledning av mentorer och ämneslärare samt undervisa elever i öppen stödundervisning (t.ex. mattestuga eller skrivstuga). Studiens resultat ger en indikation av hur stor vikt som läggs vid de olika arbetsuppgifterna, där det som framträder som mest förekommande är att ge elever stöd utanför deras ordinarie lektionstillfälle följt av att upprätta åtgärdsprogram och att genomföra tester av elevers kunskaper. Den arbetsuppgift som rapporteras läggas minst vikt vid är att tillhandahålla särskilt stöd inom det ordinarie lektionstillfället. Utöver de fasta svarsalternativen rapporterades också av många skolor (n=174) i den öppna frågan att specialpedagoger/speciallärare också arbetar med frågor kopplade till elevhälsan och externa kontakter såsom socialtjänsten, BUP, grundskolan samt med motiverande elevsamtal.

Angående det särskilda stödet som tillhandahålls av övrig skolpersonal rapporteras ett liknande mönster. På frågan om i vilken utsträckning stödundervisning tillhandahålls under ordinarie lektionstid var det vanligaste svaret

att det sker i mycket liten utsträckning (n=289), följt av det sker i liten utsträckning (n=178). 171 skolor uppger att det sker i stor utsträckning och 76 skolor att det sker i mycket stor utsträckning. På frågan om i vilken utsträckning stödundervisning sker utanför ordinarie lektionstid är mönstret det omvända. Här uppger 331 skolor att det sker i mycket stor utsträckning, följt av att det sker i stor utsträckning (n=253). 112 skolor uppger att det sker i liten utsträckning och 44 skolor att det sker i mycket liten utsträckning. Den sammanlagda bilden är att stödundervisning i mycket större utsträckning sker utanför elevernas ordinarie lektionstillfälle.

Det frågades också efter den totala fördelningen (inom/utanför den ordinarie undervisningen) av var de specialpedagogiska resurserna på skolan riktas. Frågan besvarades av 679 skolor, och det framkom att 87 % av skolorna uppger att den huvudsakliga delen tillhandahålls utanför den ordinarie undervisningen. Det mest vanliga svaret (n=330) var att det tillhandahålls till ca 80 % utanför och till ca 20 % inom den ordinarie undervisningen.

## Diskussion

Huvudmannaskapet har visat sig ha stor betydelse för tillgången och tillgängligheten av specialpedagogiska resurser, där fristående skolor som grupp har betydligt lägre tillgänglighet per elev, även kontrollerat för andra faktorer såsom meritvärde och föräldrars utbildningsnivå. Detta har konsekvenser för likvärdigheten i skolsystemet då det innebär begränsningar för elever i behov av särskilt stöd då de inte ges samma möjligheter i alla skolor. Det innebär också ett större ansvar för eleven och familjen att undersöka vilka specialpedagogiska resurser som erbjuds på skolorna. Utifrån Gutmanns (1999) teori om en demokratisk utbildning, tycks ansvarsfrågan till stor del vara förlagd inom familjen och/eller individen. Ett ansvar som i ett rättvist och likvärdigt skolsystem bör ifrågasättas, då alla skolor, oavsett huvudman, har samma lagar och regler att förhålla sig till. Utifrån Frasers (2011) resonemang kring hur vi kan uppnå ett jämlikt deltagande inom skolan, framstår också den ojämna fördelningen av specialpedagogiska resurser som en barriär till jämlikt deltagande i skolan. Att skolor med högre utbildningsbakgrund tillhandahåller mer specialpedagogiska resurser kan förstås utifrån Frasers (2003) resonemang kring behov. Denna grupp lyckas då att bättre tillgodose sina specialpedagogiska behov. Kampen om behoven, som Fraser uttrycker det, sker mellan olika grupper i samhället istället för på den politiska diskursiva arenan. De är läckande eller förrymda behov, och skulle behöva föras tillbaka till den politiska dagordningen.

Ca 43 % av skolorna använder sig av nivågruppering, vilket stämmer väl överens med en tidigare urvalsundersökning (SNAE, 2010a). Särskilt fokus har riktats mot de skolor som uppgett att de använder nivågruppering i mycket stor utsträckning. Dessa skolor har betydligt lägre och mer varierade

meritvärden samt högre tillgänglighet av specialpedagogiska resurser. Utifrån Frasers (2010) teori kring social rättvisa, krävs sociala arrangemang som sätter alla i stånd att delta som jämlikar, och vi måste undanröja sådana institutionella hinder som sätter vissa människor ur stånd att delta på jämlika villkor. Nivågruppering kan förstås som ett hinder som motverkar olika människor att mötas och ha möjlighet till ett jämlikt deltagande i det sociala livet.

Den huvudsakliga delen av det specialpedagogiska stödet tillhandahålls utanför elevernas ordinarie lektionstillfälle, både vad gäller specialpedagoger/speciallärare samt övrig skolpersonal. Dessa resultat stämmer väl överens med tidigare studier från grundskolan (Giota & Lundborg, 2007) och gymnasieskolan (SNAE, 2010a). Tidigare studier (Giota & Emanuelsson, 2011; Giota & Lundborg, 2007; Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2002; Isaksson, 2009) visar att särskilt stöd som ges utanför elevens ordinarie undervisningsgrupp kan leda till känslor av utanförskap och exkludering, även om detta så klart kan uppfattas och upplevas på olika sätt av olika elever.

## Förslag till möjliga handlingsinriktningar

Fraser (2011) ställer som krav, för att uppnå ett jämlikt deltagande, att fördelningen av resurser måste vara jämnt fördelad. Utifrån detta måste påverkan av huvudmannskapet på specialpedagogiska resurser kraftigt avta, vilket skulle kunna göras genom förändrad lagstiftning och kontroll av skolorna. Klarare direktiv kring specialpedagogiska resurser och deras allokering skulle vara ett steg mot en jämnare resursfördelning, vilket kan bidra till en mer jämlik skola. Det andra kriteriet handlar om hur den sociala statusen mellan grupper (t.ex. olika utbildningsprogram) är ordnad. En strävan bort från institutionaliserade hierarkiska uppdelningar vore ett sätt att göra detta, t.ex. en utjämning av statusen mellan olika program. Om den sociala rekryteringen till olika program gjordes mindre påverkad av social och etnisk bakgrund samt kön, skulle detta kunna innebära en utjämning av de olika utbildningsprogrammen och dess hierarkiska status uppdelning.

Mer dominant grupper (högre utbildning) i samhället framstår som vinnare i ett system där kampen om specialpedagogiska behov sker mellan olika samhällsgrupper, samtidigt som underordnade grupper (lägre utbildning) framstår som förlorare. Det vore önskvärt att föra tillbaka kampen om specialpedagogiska behov till den politiska arenan. Behoven av specialpedagogisk tillgänglighet är en fråga som inte bör behandlas mellan olika samhällsgrupper utan på en övergripande samhälls- eller politisk nivå.

Utifrån Biestas (2003, 2006) resonemang kring demokratiska utgångspunkter framstår *utbildning genom demokrati* som ett sätt att uppmuntra elevkonstellationer där heterogenitet och pluralism är framträdande, där mångfald och olikhet ses som värdefulla tillgångar. Nivågruppering och specialpedagogiskt stöd utanför elevens ordinarie lektionstillfälle kan förstås

som en strävan mot mer homogena undervisningsgrupper, och motverkar således en grupsammansättning som värdesätter olikheter och främjar ett klimat där alla inte ges samma möjligheter att delta, mötas och utvecklas på jämlika villkor.

Fraser (2003, 2010) diskuterar hur orättvisor kan angripas med begreppen *affirmation* och *transformation*. Begreppen har här också använts som analytiska verktyg för att förstå redan befintliga specialpedagogiska handlingar. De affirmativa handlingarna diskuteras som nödvändiga på kort sikt och fyller för många elever en viktig funktion här och nu. De transformativa handlingarna kan förstås som mer förebyggande och vara av långsiktig karaktär, och ta sikte på att skapa så lika förutsättningar för utbildning som möjligt.

Flera av de förslag till möjliga handlingsinriktningar som diskuterats här handlar om vilken nivå som utbildningspolitiska beslut tas på. Genom att flytta centrala utbildningsfrågor och specialpedagogiska frågor från en lokal (skola, familj, individ) nivå, till en mer central nivå, skulle kunna innebära att en jämnare balans kan uppnås i den demokratiska utbildningsteori som presenterats av Gutmann (1999).

# References

- Adman, P. (2014). *Who cares about the democratic mandate of education? A text analysis of the Swedish secondary education reform of 2009*. Working paper 2014:2. Uppsala: IFAU.
- Agency for school improvement. (2006). *Kvalitet inom IV – hela skolans ansvar*. Stockholm: Liber.
- Ahlberg, A. (2001). *Lärande och delaktighet*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Ainscow, M., & César, M. (2006). Inclusive Education Ten Years after Salamanca: Setting the Agenda. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 21(3), 231–238.
- Alexandersson, M. (2011). Equivalence and choice in combination. The Swedish dilemma. *Oxford Review of Education*, 37(2), 195-214.
- Ambjörnsson, F. (2004). *I en klass för sig: genus, klass och sexualitet bland gymnasietjejer* (Doctoral thesis, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden).
- Andersson, E., Malmberg, B., & Östh, J. (2012). Travel-to-school distances in Sweden 2000–2006: changing school geography with equality implications. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 23, 35-43.
- Andersson, E., Östh, J., & Malmberg, B. (2010). Ethnic segregation and performance inequality in the Swedish school system: a regional perspective. *Environment and planning*, 42(11), 26-74.
- Apple, M. W. (2011). Democratic education in neoliberal and neoconservative times. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 21(1), 21-31.
- Arnesen, A. L., & Lundahl, L. (2006). Still social and democratic? Inclusive education policies in the Nordic welfare states. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 50(3), 285-300.
- Arreman, I. E., & Holm, A. S. (2011). Privatisation of public education? The emergence of independent upper secondary schools in Sweden. *Journal of education policy*, 26(2), 225-243.
- Ball, S. J. (2007). *Education plc: Understanding private sector participation in public sector education*. New York: Routledge.
- Beach, D. (1999). Om demokrati, reproduktion och förnyelse i dagens gymnasieskola. *Pedagogisk forskning i Sverige* 4, 349-365.
- Bengtsson, C., & Lycke, V. (2014). *Speciallärare - nybyggare i skolan? En enkätstudie kring speciallärares yrkesroll och didaktiska kompetenser* (Master's thesis, Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik, Göteborg University, Göteborg, Sweden).
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2003). Demokrati – ett problem för utbildning eller ett utbildningsproblem? *Utbildning & Demokrati*, 12(1), 59-80.
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2004). Education, accountability, and the ethical demand: can the democratic potential of accountability be regained? *Educational Theory*, 54(3), 233-250.
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2006). *Beyond learning. Democratic Education for a Human Future*. Colorado: Paradigm Publishers.

- Björklund, A., Fredriksson, P., Gustafsson, J. E., & Öckert, B. (2010). *Den svenska utbildningspolitikens arbetsmarknadseffekter: Vad säger forskningen?* Uppsala: IFAU.
- Blomqvist, P., & Rothstein, B. (2008). *Välfärdsstatens nya ansikte: demokrati och marknadsreformer inom den offentliga sektorn*. Stockholm: Agora.
- Boman, Y. (2002). *Utbildningspolitik i det andra moderna: om skolans normativa villkor* (Doctoral thesis, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden).
- Bose, J. (2001). *Nonresponse bias analyses at the National Center for Education Statistics*. In Proceedings of Statistics Canada Symposium 2001. Washington: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Broady, D. (2000). Skolan under 1990-talet. In *SOU 2000:39. Välfärd och skola*. Stockholm: Antologi från Kommittén välfärdsboksut.
- Bunar, N. (2008). The free schools “Riddle”: Between traditional social democratic, neo-liberal and multicultural tenets. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 52(4), 423-438.
- Bunar, N. (2010a). The Geographies of Education and Relationships in a Multicultural City Enrolling in High-Poverty, Low-Performing Urban Schools and Choosing to Stay There. *Acta Sociologica*, 53(2), 141-159.
- Bunar, N. (2010b). Choosing for quality or inequality: current perspectives on the implementation of school choice policy in Sweden. *Journal of education policy*, 25(1), 1-18.
- Byström, A., & Nilsson, A-L. (2003). *Specialpedagogens verksamhet efter examen*. Rapporter om utbildning. Malmö Högskola: Lärarutbildningen.
- Böhlmark, A., & Lindahl, M. (2007). *The Impact of School Choice on Pupil Achievement, Segregation and Costs: Swedish evidence*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 2786. Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA).
- Böhlmark, A., & Lindahl, M. (2008). *Does School Privatization Improve Educational Achievement? Evidence from Sweden's Voucher Reform*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 3691. Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA).
- Böhlmark, A., & Lindahl, M. (2012). *Independent Schools and Long-run Educational Outcomes – Evidence from Sweden's Large Scale Voucher Reform*. Working Paper No. 2012:19. Uppsala: Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU).
- Callegaro, M. (2008). Social Desirability. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 826-827). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Carlbaum, S. (2012). *Blir du anställningsbar lille/a vän?: Diskursiva konstruktioner av framtida medborgare i gymnasierreformer 1971-2011* (Doctoral thesis, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden).
- Carmines, E., & Woods, J. (2004). Validity. In M. S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. F. Liao (Eds.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods* (pp. 1172-1173). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Carnoy, M. (1998). National Voucher Plans in Chile and Sweden: Did privatization reforms make for better education? *Comparative education review*, 42(3), 309-337.
- Carnoy, M., & Levin, H.M. (1985). *Schooling and work in the democratic state*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Cohen, M. (2008). Unit Nonresponse. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 928-929). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Council of Europe. (2004). *A new strategy for Social Cohesion*. European Committee for Social Cohesion. CDCS.

- Dahllöf, U., Zetterlund, S., & Öberg, H. (1965). *Gymnasiet och fackskolan enligt 1964 års skolreform*. Stockholm: Svenska Bokförlaget/Bonniers.
- Dahlstedt, M. (2007). I val(o)frihetens spår. Segregation, differentiering och två decennier av skolreformer. *Pedagogisk forskning i Sverige*, 12(1), 20-38.
- Daun, H. (2003). Market forces and decentralisation in Sweden: Impetus for school development or threat to comprehensiveness and equity? In D. N. Plank & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Choosing choice: School choice in international perspective* (pp. 92-111). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dayton-Johnson, J. (2001). *Social Cohesion and Economic Prosperity*. Toronto, ON: James Lorimer.
- Department of Education. (1992). *Gymnasieförordning (1992:394)*. Stockholm: Regeringskansliet.
- Department of Education. (1994). *Läroplaner för de frivilliga skolformerna, lpf-94*. Stockholm: Fritzes.
- Department of Education. (1997). *Gymnasieskola i ständig utveckling*. Stockholm: Fritzes.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Dewey, J. (1939/1988). Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder. In J.A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey. The later works, 1925-1953. Volume 14*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Djurfeldt, G., Larsson, R., & Stjärnhagen, O. (2010). *Statistisk verktygslåda 1: – Samhällsvetenskaplig orsaksanalys med kvantitativa metoder*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Emanuelsson, I., Haug, P., & Persson, B. (2005). Inclusive education in some Western European countries: Different policy rhetorics and school realities. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *Contextualizing inclusive education: Evaluating old and new international perspectives* (pp. 114-138). London: Routledge.
- Emanuelsson, I., Persson, B., & Rosenqvist, J. (2001). *Forskning inom det specialpedagogiska området: – en kunskapsöversikt*. Stockholm: Liber.
- Englund, T. (1993). *Utbildning som "public good" eller "private good": svensk skola i omvandling?* Uppsala: Pedagogiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet.
- Englund, T. (1995). *Utbildningspolitiskt systemskifte?* Stockholm: HLS Förlag.
- Englund, T. (2003). Skolan och demokratin – på väg mot en skola för deliberativa samtal? In B. Jonsson & K. Roth (Eds.), *Demokrati och lärande. Om valfrihet, gemenskap och övervägande i skola och samhälle* (pp. 49-64). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Englund, T. (2005). *Läroplanens och skolkunskapens politiska dimension*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Eriksson, J. (2013). *An upper secondary school for everyone – Analyzing problem framings and conflicts in Swedish educational policy*. Working paper 2013:7. Uppsala: Department of Government, Uppsala University.
- Fraser, N. (2003). *Den radikala fantasin. Mellan omfördelning och erkännande*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Fraser, N. (2010). *Scales of justice: Re-imagining political space in a globalizing world*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fraser, N. (2011). *Rättvisans mått. Texter om erkännande, omfördelning och representation i en globaliserad värld*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Atlas.
- Fredriksson, A. (2009). On the Consequences of the Marketisation of Public Education in Sweden: for-profit charter schools and the emergence of the 'market-oriented teacher'. *European Educational Research Journal*, 8(2), 299-310.

- Friedman, M. (1955). The role of government in education. In A. Solo (Ed.), *Economics and the Public Interest* (pp. 123-144). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Friedman, M. (1997). Public schools: Make them private. *Education Economics*, 5(3), 341-344.
- Furr, R. (2010). Social Desirability. In N. J. Salkind (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Research Design* (pp. 1395-1399). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Gerrbo, I. (2012). *Idén om en skola för alla och specialpedagogisk organisering i praktiken* (Doctoral thesis, Göteborg University, Göteborg, Sweden).
- Giota, J., & Emanuelsson, I. (2011). *Specialpedagogiskt stöd, till vem och hur? Rektorers hantering av policyfrågor kring stödet i kommunala och fristående skolor*. Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik. Göteborgs universitet.
- Giota, J., & Lundborg, O. (2007). *Specialpedagogiskt stöd i grundskolan. Omfattning, former och konsekvenser*. IPD-rapport 2007:3. Institutionen för pedagogik och didaktik. Göteborgs universitet.
- Giroux, H.A. (2003). *Public spaces, private lives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Government Bill. (1988). 1988/1989:4. *Skolans utveckling och styrning*. Stockholm: Regeringskansliet.
- Government Bill. (1989). 1989/90:41. *Om kommunalt huvudmannaskap för lärare, skolledare, biträdande skolledare och syofunktionärer*. Stockholm: Riksdagstryck.
- Government Bill. (1990). 1990/91:18. *Ansvar för skolan*. Stockholm: Riksdagstryck.
- Government Bill. (1991). 1991/92:95. *Proposition om valfrihet och fristående skolor*. Stockholm: Riksdagstryck.
- Government Bill. (1992). 1992/93:230. *Valfrihet i skolan*. Stockholm: Riksdagstryck.
- Green, A., Preston, J., & Sabates, R. (2003). Education, Equality and Social Cohesion: a distributional approach. *Compare*, 33(4), 453-470.
- Gustafsson, J. E. (2007). Kommentar. In A. Lindbom (Ed.), *Friskolorna och framtiden* (pp. 119-126). Stockholm: Institutet för framtidsstudier.
- Gustafsson, J. E., & Myrberg, E. (2002). *Ekonomiska resursers betydelse för pedagogiska resultat – en kunskapsöversikt*. Kalmar: Skolverket.
- Gutmann, A. (1999). *Democratic education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Göransson, K. (2012). Yrkesroll under lupp. *Specialpedagogik*. Retrieved from <http://lararnasnyheter.se>, 20120403.
- Göransson, K., Magnusson, G., & Nilholm, C. (2012). Challenging traditions? Pupils in need of special support in Swedish independent schools. *Nordic Studies in Education*, 32(3-4), 262-279.
- Hall, C. (2009). *Does making upper secondary school more comprehensive affect dropout rates, educational attainment and earnings? Evidence from a Swedish pilot scheme*. Working paper No.2009: 9. Uppsala: IFAU - Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation.
- Hall, C. (2010). *Empirical essays on education and social insurance policies* (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden).
- Hall, C. (2012). The effects of reducing tracking in upper secondary school - evidence from a large-scale pilot scheme. *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(1), 237-269.
- Hall, J. (2008). Cross-Sectional Survey Design. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 173-174). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Hallam, S., Rogers, L., & Ireson, J. (2008). Ability grouping in the secondary school: attitudes of teachers of practically based subjects. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 31(2), 181-192.
- Harwell, M. R., & Gatti, G. G. (2001). Rescaling ordinal data to interval data in educational research. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(1), 105-131.
- Heath, A., & Sullivan, A. (2011). Introduction: The democratisation of upper secondary education? *Oxford Review of Education*, 37(2), 123-138.
- Heidegren, C-G. (1996). Kamp för erkännande. Axel Honneth's försök att aktualisera en tankefigur hos Hegel som centralbegrepp i en kritisk samhällsteori. In D. Rendtorff (Ed.), *Individets genkomst i litteratur, filosofi og samfundsteori* (pp. 135-159). Århus: NSU Press.
- Hellberg, K. (2007). *Elever på ett individuellt anpassat gymnasieprogram: Skolvardag och vändpunkter* (Doctoral thesis, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden).
- Helldin, R. (1997). *Specialpedagogisk kunskap som ett socialt problem. En historisk analys av avvikelse och segregation*. Stockholm: HLS Förlag.
- Helldin, R. (2002a). *Specialpedagogik och sociala problem i gymnasieskolan: En granskning av skoldemokratins innebörder och kvalitet*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Helldin, R. (2002b). *Specialpedagogisk forskning – en kritisk granskning i ett omvärldsperspektiv*. Kalmar: Lenanders Tryckeri AB.
- Helldin, R. (2007a). *Kommunerna och den specialpedagogiska verksamheten: Nutid och framtid*. Stockholm: HLS Förlag.
- Helldin, R. (2007b). Klass, kultur och inkludering. *Pedagogisk forskning*, 2, 119-134.
- Henriksson, C. (2004). *Living Away from Blessings. School Failure as Lived Experience* (Doctoral thesis, Växjö University, Växjö, Sweden).
- Heywood, A. (1998). *Political ideologies: an introduction*. Basingstoke, UK: MacMillan Press Ltd.
- Holmström, O. (2007). *Skolpolitik, skolutvecklingsarena och sociala processer – studie av en gymnasieskola i kris* (Doctoral thesis, Lund University, Lund, Sweden).
- Honneth, A. (2003). *Erkännande – praktisk-filosofiska studier*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Hudson, C. (2007). Governing the Governance of Education: The State Strikes Back? *European Educational Research Journal*, 6(3), 266-282.
- Hugo, M. (2007). *Liv och lärande i gymnasieskolan: En studie om elevers och lärares erfarenheter i en liten grupp på gymnasieskolans individuella program* (Doctoral thesis, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden).
- Hultqvist, E. (2001). *Segregerande integrering – En studie av gymnasieskolans individuella program* (Doctoral thesis, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden).
- INCLUD-ED. (2011). *INCLUD-ED: Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education*. Brussels: European Commission.
- Isaksson, J. (2009). *Spänningen mellan normalitet och avvikelse: om skolans insatser för elever i behov av särskilt stöd* (Doctoral thesis, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden).
- Jarl, M. (2012). *Skolan och det kommunala huvudmannaskapet*. Malmö: Gleerups.
- Jarl, M., & Rönnerberg, L. (2010). *Skolpolitik. Från Riksdagshuset till klassrum*. Malmö: Liber.
- Johansson, M. (2009). *Anpassning och motstånd: En etnografisk studie av gymnasieelevers institutionella identitetsskapande* (Doctoral thesis, Göteborg University, Göteborg, Sweden).

- Kalaian, S., & Kasim, R. (2008). External Validity. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 255-258). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Kallstenius, J. (2010). *De mångkulturella innerstadsskolorna: Om skolval, segregation och utbildningsstrategier i Stockholm* (Doctoral thesis, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden).
- Korp, H. (2006). *Lika chanser i gymnasiet? En studie om betyg, nationella prov och social reproduktion* (Doctoral thesis, Malmö Högskola, Malmö, Sweden).
- Lang, L. (2004). *...Och den ljusnande framtid är vår... Några ungdomars bild av sin tid vid riksgymnasium* (Doctoral thesis, Malmö Högskola, Malmö, Sweden).
- Lansheim, B. (2010). *Förståelser av uppdraget specialpedagog - blivande och nyblivna specialpedagogers yrkeslivsberättelser* (Licentiate thesis, Malmö Högskola, Malmö, Sweden).
- Larsson, R. (2006). *Politiska ideologier i vår tid*. Studentlitteratur: Lund.
- Lavrakas, P. (2008a). External Validity. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 346-352). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Lavrakas, P. (2008b). Internal Validity. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 346-352). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Leeuw, E., & Hox, J. (2008). Missing Data. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 468-472). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Levin, H. M. (2013). *Ideas and consequences of market principles in education: The Swedish case in an international perspective: Evaluating the consequences of educational privatization*. Paper presented at the meeting of The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, 20130311. Stockholm.
- Lewin, L., Hammargren, L., Andersson, U., & Eriksson, J. (2014). *Staten får inte abdikera – om kommunaliseringen av den svenska skolan. Betänkande av Utredningen om skolans kommunalisering. SOU 2014:5*. Stockholm: Fritzes.
- Lindblad, S., & Popkewitz, T. S. (2001). *Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion: National Cases of Educational Systems and Recent Reforms*. Uppsala Reports on Education 34. Uppsala: Department of Education, Uppsala University.
- Lindbom, A. (2010). School choice in Sweden: effects on student performance, school costs, and segregation. *Scandinavian journal of educational research*, 54(6), 615-630.
- Lindensjö, B., & Lundgren, U. P. (2006). *Utbildningsreformer och politisk styrning*. Stockholm: HLS Förlag.
- Lindqvist, G., & Nilholm, C. (2013). Making schools inclusive? Educational leaders' views on how to work with children in need of special support. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(1), 95-110.
- Liu, C. (2008). Cross-Sectional Data. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 171-173). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Lundahl, L. (2002). Sweden: decentralisation, deregulation, quasi-markets - and then what? *Journal of Education Policy*, 17(6), 687-697.
- Lundahl, L., Arreman, I. E., Holm, A. S., & Lundström, U. (2014). *Gymnasiet som marknad*. Umeå: Boréa Bokförlag.
- Lundahl, L., Arreman, I. E., Lundström, U., & Rönnberg, L. (2010). Setting things right? Swedish upper secondary school reform in a 40-year perspective. *European Journal of Education*, 45(1), 46-59.

- Lundahl, L., Erixon Arreman, I., Holm, A. S., & Lundström, U. (2013). Educational marketization the Swedish way. *Education Inquiry*, 4(3), 497-517.
- Lundahl, L., & Olson, M. (2013). Democracy lessons in market-oriented schools: The case of Swedish upper secondary education. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 8(2), 201-213.
- Lundgren, A. (2013). *Elevers uppfattningar om specialpedagogik: En intervjustudie av några elever på ett yrkesprogram i gymnasieskolan* (Master's thesis, Högskolan i Halmstad, Halmstad, Sweden).
- Lynch, K. (1995). *The limits of liberalism for the Promotion of Equality in Education*. Equality studies Centre, University College Dublin.
- Läraryrket. (2012). *Specialpedagoger och speciallärare, vilka är de?* Läraryrket. Retrieved from <http://lararforbundet.se>, 20141015.
- Löfgren, A. (2012). *Stöd på gymnasieskolan - vad är det för särskilt med det? En studie om hur några speciallärare och specialpedagoger uppfattar stödet för elever på gymnasiet* (Master's thesis, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden).
- Malmgren Hansen, A. (2002). *Specialpedagoger. Nybyggare i skolan* (Doctoral thesis, Lärarhögskolan, Stockholm, Sweden).
- Mattson, E. H., & Hansen, A. M. (2009). Inclusive and exclusive education in Sweden: principals' opinions and experiences. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 24(4), 465-472.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative & qualitative approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Ministry of Education. (1997). *Skollagen 1985:1100*. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- Ministry of Education. (2010). *Skollagen 2010:800*. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- Mohlin, M. (2004). *Att vara i särklass – om delaktighet och utanförskap i gymnasiesärskolan* (Doctoral thesis, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden).
- Murray, Å., & Sundin, S. (2008). Student flows and employment opportunities before and after implementation of a third year in vocational programmes at upper secondary school. *European Journal of Vocational Training* 44(2), 110–131.
- Möllås, G. (2009). *"Detta ideliga mötande" – en studie av hur kommunikation och samspel konstituerar gymnasielära skolpraktik* (Doctoral thesis, Jönköping University, Jönköping, Sweden).
- Niepel, V., Edmark, K., & Frölich, M. (2012). *The Short- and Long-term Effects of School Choice on Student Outcomes – Evidence from a School Choice Reform in Sweden*. CDSE Discussion Paper.
- Nordin, M. (2014). Centralisering i en tid av decentralisering. Om den motsägelsefulla styrningen av skolan. *Utbildning & Demokrati*, 23(2), 27-44.
- Nussbaum, M. (2010). *Not for profit. Why democracy needs the humanities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nylund, M. (2010). Framtidsvägen: Vägen till vilken framtid för eleverna på gymnasieskolans yrkesprogram? *Pedagogisk forskning i Sverige*, 15, 33-52.
- OECD. (2007). *Ten steps to equity in education*. Policy Brief. January 2008. OECD.
- OECD. (2013). *MENTAL HEALTH AND WORK: SWEDEN*. OECD
- Olson, M. (2008). *Från nationsbyggare till marknadsnomad: Om medborborgarskap i svensk utbildningspolitik under 1990-talet* (Doctoral thesis, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden).

- Palme, M. (2008). *Det kulturella kapitalet: Studier av symboliska tillgångar i det svenska utbildningssystemet 1988–2008* (Doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden).
- Ramberg, J. (2013). Special educational resources in the Swedish upper secondary schools: a total population survey. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 28(4), 440-462.
- Ramberg, J. (2014). The extent of ability grouping in Swedish upper secondary schools: a national survey. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.
- Ramberg, J. (in press). Focus on Special Educational Support in Swedish Upper Secondary Schools: Provided within or outside the students' regular classes? In S. Bagga-Gupta (Ed.), *Marginalization Processes. Studies of membership and participation across disciplines and sites*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Rawls, J. (1999). *En teori om rättvisa*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Reuterberg, S. E., & Svensson, A. (1998). *Vem väljer vad i gymnasieskolan?* Göteborg: Institutionen för pedagogik. Göteborgs universitet.
- Richardson, G. (2004). *Svensk utbildningshistoria*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Rogers, K. B. (2007). Lessons Learned About Educating the Gifted and Talented. A Synthesis of the Research on Educational Practice. *Gifted child quarterly*, 51(4), 382-396.
- Rosenqvist, J. (2007). Några aktuella specialpedagogiska forskningstrender. In C. Nilholm., & E. Björck-Åkesson (Eds.), *Reflektioner kring specialpedagogik: sex professorer om forskningsområdet och forskningsfronterna* (pp. 36-51). Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet.
- Roth, K. (2003). Valfrihet, gemenskap och deliberativa samtal. In B. Jonsson., & K. Roth (Eds.), *Demokrati och lärande* (pp. 19-44). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Scott, I., & Mazhindu, D. (2005). *Statistics for Health Care Professionals. An introduction*. London: SAGE.
- SFS 2007:638. *Examensordning*. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- Shields, C. M. (2002). A comparison study of student attitudes and perceptions in homogeneous and heterogeneous classrooms. *Roeper Review*, 24(3), 115-119.
- Shih, T., & Fan, X. (2008). Comparing Response Rates from Web and Mail Surveys: A Meta-Analysis. In J. Hughes (Ed.), *SAGE Internet Research Methods* (pp. 357-379). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- SiRiS. SNAE. SiRiS, the Swedish National Agency for Education's online information system on results and quality, has been in operation since 21 September 2001. SiRiS is an Internet database containing information on education and childcare. Retrieved from <http://sirris.skolverket.se>, 2015-03-30.
- Sivertun, U. (2002). *Utslagning eller demokratiskt samarbete i gymnasieskolan? Specialpedagogiska perspektiv på sociala problem*. Individ, omvärld och lärande/Forskning nr 13. Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm: Stockholm.
- SNAE. (1993). *Val av skola. Rapport om valfrihet inom skolpliktens ram läsåret 1992/93*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (1996). *Att välja skola – effekter av valmöjligheter i grundskolan*. Rapport 109. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (1998). *Gymnasieskola för alla ... andra – en studie om marginalisering och utslagning i gymnasieskolan*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (1999). *Fristående gymnasieskolor*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2000a). *Reformeringen av gymnasieskolan – en sammanfattande analys*. Skolverkets rapport nr 187. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2000b). *Kartläggning av elever i fristående skolor*. Stockholm: Skolverket.

- SNAE. (2003). *Valfrihet och dess effekter inom skolområdet*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2004a). *Skolverkets lägesbedömning 2004*. Skolverkets rapport nr 249. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2004b). *Vad kostar de fristående skolorna? - en studie om fristående grundskolor och kommunernas kostnader*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2006). *Schools like any other? free schools as part of the system 1991 - 2004*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2007a). *En sammanfattning av resultat och erfarenheter under tre år*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2007b). *Heltid och resursförstärkning. Utvecklingen av individuella program*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2007c). *Varför hoppade du av?* Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2007d). *Attityder till skolan 2007. Elevernas och lärarnas attityder till skolan*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2008a). *Studieresultat i gymnasieskolan – en statistisk beskrivning av ofullständiga gymnasiestudier*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2008b). *Studieavbrott och stödinsatser i gymnasieskolan. En kunskapsmanställning*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2009). *What influences Educational Achievement in Swedish Schools? A Systematic Review and Summary Analysis*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2010a). *Risk för IG. Gymnasierektorer om skolornas stöd till elever som riskerar att inte nå målen*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2010b). *Konkurrensen om eleverna. Kommunernas hantering av minskande gymnasiekullar och en växande skolmarknad*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2010c). *Attityder till skolan 2009. Elevernas och lärarnas attityder till skolan*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2011). *Skolverkets lägesbedömning 2011*. Skolverkets rapport 363:2011. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2012a). *Likvärdig utbildning i svensk grundskola? En kvantitativ analys av likvärdighet över tid*. Rapport 2012:374. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2012b). *Upper Secondary School 2011*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2013a). *Elever per programtyp och program*. Skolverkets rapport 2013:395. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2013b). Press Release, SNAE. *Färre elever på yrkesprogram*. SNAE. Retrieved from <http://skolverket.se>, 20131121.
- SNAE. (2013c). *Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2013d). *Kommunernas resursfördelning till grundskolor*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SNAE. (2014). *Läroplaner, ämnen och kurser före 2011*. Retrieved from <http://skolverket.se>, 20150420.
- SNAHE. (2012). *Behovet av en särskild specialpedagogexamen och specialpedagogisk kompetens i den svenska skolan*. Rapport 2012:11. Stockholm: Högskoleverket.
- SOU 1974:53 *Skolans arbetsmiljö. Betänkande avgivet av Utredningen om skolans inre arbete – SIA*. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- SOU 1980:30 *Den sociala selectionen till gymnasiestadiet. En jämförelse mellan fyra årskullar*. Stockholm: Liber förlag.
- SOU 1981:96 *En reformerad gymnasieskola. Betänkande. Av 1976 års gymnasieutredning*. Stockholm: Liber förlag.

- SOU 1990:44 *Demokrati och makt i Sverige*. Statsrådsberedningen. Stockholm: Fritzes.
- SOU 1997:107 *Den nya gymnasieskolan – problem och möjligheter*. Stockholm: Fritzes.
- SOU 2002:120 *Åtta vägar till kunskap – En ny struktur för gymnasieskolan*. Stockholm: Fritzes.
- SOU 2008:27 *Framtidsvägen – en reformerad gymnasieskola*. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- Swedish Schools Inspectorate. (2014). *Kommunernas resursfördelning och arbete mot segregationens negativa effekter i skolväsendet*. Stockholm: Skolinspektionen.
- Swärd, H. (2007). Om outsiders och att hålla normalitetsdjävulen i schack. Normer och normalitet i socialt arbete. In K. Svensson (Ed.), *Normer och normalitet i socialt arbete* (pp. 49-62). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Söderström, M., & Uusitalo, R. (2010). School Choice and Segregation: Evidence from an Admission Reform\*. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 112(1), 55-76.
- Takala, M., & Ahl, A. (2014). Special education in Swedish and Finnish schools: seeing the forest or the trees? *British Journal of Special Education*, 41(1), 59-81.
- Taylor, C. (1994). *Det mångkulturella samhället och erkännandets politik*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Trumberg, A. (2011). *Den delade skolan: segregationsprocesser i det svenska skolsystemet* (Doctoral thesis, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden).
- Unemar Öst, I. (2009). *Kampen om den högre utbildningens syften och mål: en studie av svensk utbildningspolitik* (Doctoral thesis, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden).
- UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality. Paris: UNESCO.
- van Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. *Social research update*, 35, 1-4.
- Vetenskapsrådet. (2006). *Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning*. Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet.
- Vlachos, J. (2011). Är vinst och konkurrens en bra modell för skolan? *Ekonomisk debatt*, 4, 16-30.
- Vogt, W.P. (2005). *Dictionary of Statistics & Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- von Ahlefeldt Nisser, D. (2009). *Vad kommunikation vill säga. En iscensättande studie om specialpedagogers yrkesroll och kunskapande samtal* (Doctoral thesis, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden).
- Wahlström, N. (2002). *Om det förändrade ansvaret i skolan. Vägen till mål- och resultatstyrning och några av dess konsekvenser* (Doctoral thesis, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden).
- Wahlström, N. (2009). *Mellan leverans och utbildning. Om lärande i en mål- och resultatstyrd skola*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Waldow, F. (2008). *Utbildningspolitik, ekonomi och internationella utbildningstrender i Sverige 1930 – 2000*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitets förlag.
- Wallby, K., Carlsson, S., & Nyström, P. (2001). *Elevgrupperingar: En kunskapsöversikt med fokus på matematikundervisning*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- Walzer, M. (1983). *Spheres of justice: A defense of pluralism and equality*. New York: Basic Books.

- Westling Allodi, M. (2005). *Specialpedagogik i en skola för alla. Granskning av specialpedagogiska verksamheter i en svensk kommun*. Stockholm: Lärarhögskolan. Individ, omvärld och lärande/Forskning, (27).
- Westling Allodi, M. (2007). Equal opportunities in educational systems: The case of Sweden. *European Journal of Education*, 42(1), 133-146.
- Westling Allodi, M. (2009). Byråkrati, marknad eller lotteri? Organisation och styrning av utbildning: effekter och risker för specialpedagogiska verksamheter. In P. Adolfsson, & R. Solli (Eds.), *Offentlig sektor och komplexitet: om hantering av mål, strategier och professioner* (pp. 199-225). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Whitfield, D. (2006). *A typology of privatisation and marketisation*. ESSU Research report, no. 1. European Services Strategy Unit.
- Wiborg, S. (2010). *Swedish free schools: Do they work?* LLAKES Research Paper No. 18. Centre for learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies.
- Östh, J., Andersson, E., & Malmberg, B. (2013). School Choice and Increasing Performance Difference: A Counterfactual Approach. *Urban Studies*, 50(2), 407-425.

# Appendix 1. Questionnaire

*Translated from Swedish to English*

## QUESTIONNAIRE – Special education at upper secondary school in Sweden.

**RESPONDENT:**  Principal  
Informant to the survey is:  Vice-principal  
 Special educator/ Special education teacher  
 Other function:.....

---

### NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Number of students enrolled at the school during the school year

2010/2011:.....

---

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH THE GRADE IG (fail)

**Report the percentage (%) of students who are at risk of scoring IG in an ongoing course or who have received the grade IG in one or more completed courses.** (These are the students who are at risk of receiving an IG in an ongoing course and those who have already received IG aggregated together.)

Proportion of students who are at risk of scoring IG in an ongoing course or who have received the grade IG in one or

more courses completed:..... % of the students.

---

### EXTENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATOR/SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER.

**This question refers only to special educators or special education teachers with a university degree.** (The professional roles of “special educator” and “special education teacher” can differ between schools and educational programmes. In this study, the two professionals are not differentiated.)

Does a special educator/special education teacher work at the school? (Are there several? The combined total number of hours they work per week is reported.)

No   
Yes  Number of hours/week:.....



**TASKS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATOR/SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER**

(These questions are to be answered only if there is a special educator/special education teacher at the school.)

**To what extent do special educators/special education teachers work with the following tasks?**

(Mark the option that best matches each statement)

	<i>To a very large extent</i>	<i>To a large extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>To a very small extent</i>	<i>Does not exist</i>
Support of the student <b>outside</b> his/her ordinary class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support of the student <b>within</b> his/her regular class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervision of mentor teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching students in “open” workshops (studios for mathematics, writing/reading studios or similar activity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening students’ knowledge levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing Individual Education Plans (IEP) for students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other task you feel is performed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which:.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....



## METHODS FOR SPECIAL SUPPORT

**To what extent are the methods described below used for special support in your school?**

(Mark the option that best matches each statement)

	<i>To a very large extent</i>	<i>To a large extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>To a very small extent</i>	<i>Does not exist</i>
Ability grouping within <b>foundation subjects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability grouping within <b>programme-specific subjects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Open for all” support activity (studios for mathematics, writing/reading or similar) at specified times within <b>foundation subjects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Open for all” support activity (studios or similar) at specified times within <b>programme-specific subjects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support activity <b>outside</b> ordinary class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support activity <b>during</b> ordinary class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summer school in the holidays and/or at weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homework assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compensatory tools (e.g. computer, speech- programmes, daisy player, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

**What proportion (%) of special education resources do you estimate are used within and outside the regular classes? Mark the option that best matches your school.**

(Only one mark is possible.)

### Within / Outside

- 0 / 100
- 20 / 80
- 40 / 60
- 60 / 40
- 80 / 20
- 100 / 0
  
- No special education support exists

---

## ABILITY GROUPING OF COURSES

(This refers to the grouping of students within the same class into different groups, for example, on the basis of prior knowledge or study pace.)

**At the school, are there ability-grouped courses? If there are, what are they?**

- Yes, in 1 course:.....
- Yes, in 2-3 courses:.....
- Yes, in 4 or more courses:.....
  
- No



## Appendix 2. Request letter

*Translated from Swedish to English*

### **Request for your participation in a pilot study on special education in upper secondary schools.**

This is a request to you as the head principal of an upper secondary school to be part of a pilot study for a research project at the Department of Special Education at Stockholm University. The study aims to examine special education in upper secondary schools and the data collection will consist of a questionnaire. The study will be presented in an ongoing doctoral thesis. Before commencing with my study, I need active upper secondary school principals who with their expertise can review the questionnaire.

### **What do you need to do?**

Read through the questions and instructions in the enclosed questionnaire and be observant of and critical on issues that you find hard to answer, or any areas that you think need to be specified more clearly. Is something missing in the questionnaire that you require in order to be able to respond to the overall research questions?

After completing the questionnaire, I would like to have a short phone call with you or to receive feedback from you via email, whichever you prefer, where we discuss how you felt about answering the questionnaire and whether you have suggestions for improving the questions and/or information. This will give me the opportunity to make revisions before the data collection.

### **The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes only to complete.**

### **Why should you participate?**

I am very aware that a principal's time is extremely valuable, but I would ask for your cooperation so that I can develop the best possible working material. In the long-run, it can also lead to increased knowledge about students who are in need of special support in upper secondary schools.

Thank you in advance for providing me with your feedback.

Kind regards  
Joacim Ramberg  
PhD-Student  
Department of Special Education, Stockholm University  
Phone:  
E-mail: joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se

## Appendix 3. Information email

**Date: 2011-01-03**

*Translated from Swedish to English*

### **Regarding a national study of special education in upper secondary schools in Sweden.**

This email is addressed to all principals/heads of schools at all Swedish upper secondary schools and provides information about an upcoming survey that is being sent out in approximately one week. The survey is part of an ongoing doctoral thesis at the Department of Special Education at Stockholm University that is examining special education in Swedish upper secondary schools. A questionnaire is being sent to all upper secondary schools. All information provided will be kept confidential and all responses will be received in such a way that no single school can be identified.

If you, as principal, believe that someone else at the school is better suited to answer the questions, I would ask you to forward this email to that person and also, later on, the questionnaire to this person. However, I would appreciate it if you, the principal and therefore the person with ultimate responsibility within the school, would act as the respondent.

This is a total population survey, which is uncommon, and it is therefore especially important that your school participates.

On the response envelope, there is a numerical code that will be used to link the responses from the questionnaire to existing statistics from, for example, the Swedish National Agency for Education. The code also works to see which schools need to be reminded to answer the questionnaire. All responses are then made anonymous.

The questionnaire is quite small in scope and takes only about 10 minutes to complete. More information on this will follow in the missive letter.

Upper secondary school and special education is a research area that in many ways is neglected, which means that your participation will contribute to increased knowledge in the field. This is especially important since upper secondary school is facing major changes through the new upper secondary school in 2011.

I would like at this early stage to thank you for your participation. Questions are answered by the undersigned.

Thank you!

Joacim Ramberg, PhD-student in Special Education  
Department of Special Education  
Stockholm University, SE 106 91  
Stockholm, Sweden  
[joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se](mailto:joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se)

# Appendix 4. Missive letter

**Date: 2011-01-05**

*Translated from Swedish to English*

**To the principal/head of school at an upper secondary school in Sweden.**

**Regarding the study of special education in Swedish upper secondary schools.**

## **Content & Purpose**

All upper secondary schools in Sweden are included in this study. The survey aims to study the extent and content of special education in all upper secondary schools in the country. The survey is part of an ongoing doctoral thesis and is being carried out by the undersigned at the Department of Special Education at Stockholm University.

The questionnaire is being sent to all upper secondary schools, and **your participation is of very great importance for the outcome of the study and the production of results.**

## **Informants**

It is the principal who is responsible for ensuring that the questionnaire be completed. He/she may, in cooperation with other employees at the school, answer the questions. It is important that the corresponding part of the school has the necessary knowledge about special education.

It is estimated that it will take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

I would like to receive your response as soon as possible and no later than **2011-01-24**. Please **send the completed questionnaire in the enclosed response envelope.**

## **Anonymity**

The results will be reported anonymously, and no reported results can be traceable to any single school. The numerical code on the response envelope is a control number only, which will be used for checking which schools have responded and which need to be reminded. After the data collection has been completed, all identifying information will be removed.

## **Contact Details**

The study is being conducted by the undersigned with the support of supervisors: Mara Westling-Allodi, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, Stockholm University and Rolf Hellidin, Professor, Department of Special Education, Stockholm University.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact me at:

Email: [joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se](mailto:joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se)

**Your participation is of greatest importance for the study and its results, and I want to express a big thank you for your participation!**

*Joacim Ramberg, PhD-student at  
Department of Special Education, Stockholm University.*

## Appendix 5. Reminder email

**Date: 2011-01-21**

*Translated from Swedish to English*

**Reminder: Regarding the study on special education in Swedish upper secondary schools.**

**About two weeks ago, a questionnaire was sent to your school. I have yet to receive a response from your school and would ask that you send the completed questionnaire back to me in the enclosed response envelope as soon as you can.** (If you recently sent it, please disregard this reminder).

**If you need a new questionnaire, please let me know.**

### **Content & Purpose**

All upper secondary schools in Sweden are included in this study. The survey aims to study the extent and content of special education in all upper secondary schools in the country. The survey is part of an ongoing doctoral thesis and is being completed by the undersigned at the Department of Special Education at Stockholm University.

The questionnaire is being sent to all upper secondary schools and **your participation is of very great importance for the outcome of the study and the production of results.**

### **Informants**

It is the principal who is responsible for ensuring that the questionnaire be completed. He/she may, in cooperation with other employees at the school, answer the questions. It is important that the corresponding part of the school has the necessary knowledge about special education at the school.

It is estimated that it will take you about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

I would like to receive your response as soon as possible. **Send the completed questionnaire in the enclosed response envelope.**

### **Anonymity**

The results will be reported anonymously, and no reported results can be traceable to any single school. The numerical code on the response envelope is a control number only, which will be used to check which schools have responded and which need to be reminded. After the data collection has been completed, all identifying information will be removed.

### **Contact Details**

The study is being conducted by the undersigned with the support of supervisors: Mara Westling-Allodi, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, Stockholm University and Rolf Helldin, Professor, Department of Special Education, Stockholm University.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact me at:

Email: [joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se](mailto:joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se)

Phone:

**Your participation is of greatest importance for the study and its results, and I want to express a big thank you for your participation!**

*Joacim Ramberg, PhD-student at  
Department of Special Education, Stockholm University.*

## Appendix 6. Reminder missive letter

**Date: 2011-02-01**

*Translated from Swedish to English*

**To principals /heads of schools at upper secondary schools in Sweden.**

**Reminder: Regarding the study of special education in Swedish upper secondary schools.**

**About two weeks ago, a questionnaire was sent out to your school. I have yet to receive a response from your school and would ask that you send the completed questionnaire in the enclosed response envelope to me as soon as possible. (If you recently sent it in, please disregard this reminder.)**

**Here comes a new questionnaire with the hope that you will participate. Your participation is of great importance for the outcome of the study and the production of results.**

### **Content & Purpose**

All upper secondary schools in Sweden are being included in this study. The survey aims to study the extent and content of special education in all upper secondary schools in the country. The survey is part of an ongoing doctoral thesis and is being completed by the undersigned at the Department of Special Education at Stockholm University.

The questionnaire is being sent to all upper secondary schools and **your participation is of very great importance for the outcome of the study and the production of results.**

### **Informants**

It is the principal who is responsible for ensuring the completion of the questionnaire. He/she may, in cooperation with other employees at the school, answer the questions. It is important that the corresponding part of the school has the necessary knowledge about special education at the school.

It is estimated that it will take you about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

I would like to receive your response as soon as possible and no later than **2011-02-10. Send the completed questionnaire in the enclosed response envelope.**

### **Anonymity**

The results will be reported anonymously, and no reported results can be traceable to any single school. The numerical code on the response envelope is a control number only, which

will be used to check which schools have responded and which need to be reminded. After the completed data have been collected, all identifying information will be removed.

### **Contact Details**

The study is being conducted by the undersigned with the support of supervisors: Mara Westling-Allodi, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, Stockholm University and Rolf Helldin, Professor, Department of Special Education, Stockholm University.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact me at:

Email: [joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se](mailto:joacim.ramberg@specped.su.se)

Phone:

**Your participation is of greatest importance for the study and its results, and I want to express a big thank you for your participation!**

*Joacim Ramberg, PhD-student at  
Department of Special Education, Stockholm University.*

# Appendix 7. Variables

## Variables in the database

Variables	Variable abbreviation	Description and coding
School code		Anonymous code unique for every school <sup>a</sup>
School ID		ID-number unique for every school <sup>a</sup>
Postal address		Postal address for the school <sup>a</sup>
Email address to principal		Email address for the head principal at the data collection time
Province		Province affiliation of the school <sup>a</sup>
Municipality		Municipality affiliation of the school <sup>a</sup>
Municipality group		Belonging to municipality group. The grouping was made by SALAR in 2005 and the groups are: Metropolitan municipalities(n=3), Suburban municipalities(n=38), Large cities(n=27), Commuter municipalities(n=41), Sparsely populated municipalities(n=39), Manufacturing municipalities(n=40), Other municipalities more than 25000 inhabitants(n=34), Other municipalities 12500 – 25000 inhabitants(n=37), Other municipalities fewer than 12500 inhabitants(n=31) <sup>b</sup>
School provider type	Provider	Divided by public schools, independent schools and county council schools <sup>a</sup> . Coded as 1=Public school, 2=Independent school and 3=County council school
Number of principals		The number of principals at school <sup>a</sup>
Number of teachers		The number of teachers at school <sup>a</sup>
Female teachers		Proportion (%) of female teachers at school <sup>a</sup>
Male teachers		Proportion (%) of male teachers at school <sup>a</sup>
Teachers / 100 students	Teacher density	The number of teachers / 100 students at school <sup>a</sup>
Students / teacher		The number of students / teacher at school
Teachers with degree	PedDegree	Proportion (%) of teachers with a pedagogical degree <sup>a</sup>
Ped degree teacher / 100 students		The number of teachers with pedagogical degree / 100 students at school
School size		The number of students at school

School size ln	School size	The number of students at school, transformed to a logarithmic scale
School size national programmes		The number of students at school enrolled in national programmes
School size Individual programmes		The number of students at school enrolled in the Individual programme <sup>a</sup>
Students in school year 1		The number of students in school year one at school <sup>a</sup>
Students in school year 2		The number of students in school year two at school <sup>a</sup>
Students in school year 3		The number of students in school year three at school <sup>a</sup>
Female students		Proportion (%) of female students at school <sup>a</sup>
Male students		Proportion (%) of male students at school <sup>a</sup>
Average merit rating value from compulsory school	MeritRV	The average merit rating value is the school average (upper secondary) of the students' merit rating value (the sum of the scores from the students' grades). The grading system has a four-grade scale where IG = 0, G = 10, VG = 15 and MVG = 20. The average merit rating value at the school level is the average of the individual student's scores calculated from their grades in 16 subjects at the end of compulsory school. <sup>c</sup> (The scores provided by the SNAE have been adjusted for the analysis through division by 100.)
Average parental education level	ParEd	The average at school level derives from data at the individual level <sup>c</sup> and is taken from a three-level scale of educational level where 1 = lower secondary education; 2 = secondary education; 3 = post-secondary education.
Students with foreign background	ForeignBg	The average at school level derives from data at the individual level <sup>c</sup> and is calculated from a two-level scale where 0 = born in Sweden with Swedish parents and 1 = born outside Sweden or at least one parent born outside Sweden.
Average final grade at school	GradeUSS	The average final grade score at the school <sup>a</sup> .
Percentage of students with general admission	GenAdm	Percentage (%) of the students at the school with general admission to universities <sup>a</sup> .
Percentage of students with completed education programme within four years	CompleEdPr	Percentage (%) of students with completed education programme within four years <sup>a</sup> .

Responder		Responder to the questionnaire at school. Coded as 1=Principal, 2=Assistant principal, 3=Special educator/Special education teacher and 4=Other professional at school
Proportion of IG		The proportion (%) of reported students with an IG or at risk of receiving an IG in any course
The presence of special education resources	PrSpecEd	Presence of special education resources at the school. Coded as 0 = no; 1 = yes.
Number of hours worked by special educator/special education teacher	NoHSpeded	Number of hours worked by special educator/special education teacher per week at the school.
Presence of Individual programme at school		Coded as 1=No and 2= Yes
Proportion of special educator to the Individual programme		Proportion (%) of the reported special education resources distributed to the Individual programme at school
Number of hours special educator in Individual programme		Number of hours of special education resources distributed to the Individual programme
Proportion of special educator to the national programmes		Proportion (%) of the reported special education resources distributed to the national programmes
Number of hours special educator at national programmes		Number of hours of special education resources distributed to the national programmes
Other special education resources		Number of hours reported special education resources performed by others than special educator/special education teacher
Description of above Special educator tasks:		The descriptive of above
Support for the student outside his/her regular class		Coded as 0=does not exist, 1=to a very small extent, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a large extent, and 4=to a very large extent
Support of the student within his/her regular class		Coded as 0=does not exist, 1=to a very small extent, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a large extent, and 4=to a very large extent
Supervision of mentor teachers		Coded as 0=does not exist, 1=to a very small extent, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a large extent, and 4=to a very large extent

Teaching students in “open” workshops		Coded as 0=does not exist, 1=to a very small extent, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a large extent, and 4=to a very large extent
Screening students’ level of knowledge		Coded as 0=does not exist, 1=to a very small extent, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a large extent, and 4=to a very large extent
Establishing Individual Education Plans (IEP)		Coded as 0=does not exist, 1=to a very small extent, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a large extent, and 4=to a very large extent
Other task		Descriptive of the other tasks reported
Amount of other task		Coded as 0=does not exist, 1=to a very small extent, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a large extent, and 4=to a very large extent
Additional comments		Additional comments of special educator tasks
Methods for special support:		
Extent of ability grouping (AG) in foundation courses	AGFoundC	Extent of AG at the school within the foundation courses. Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Extent of AG in programme-specific courses	AGPrSpC	Extent of AG at the school within the programme-specific courses. Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Open for all support activity within foundation courses		Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Open for all support activity within programme-specific courses		Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Support activity outside regular class		Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Support activity during regular class		Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Summer/Holiday school		Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Homework assistance		Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Compensatory tools		Coded as: 1 = does not exist, 2 = to a very small

		extent, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent
Additional comments		Additional comments of methods for special support
Distribution of special support		The percentage distribution of the location of the support divided by within / outside the regular class. Coded as 0=Does not exist, 1=0/100, 2=20/80, 3=40/60, 4=60/40, 5=80/20 and 6=100/0
No. of courses at the school with AG	NoCAG	Number of reported courses where the school used AG. Coded as: 1 = 0 courses, 2 = 1course, 3 = 2-3 courses and 4 = $\geq 4$ courses.
Which courses with AG		Descriptive of courses reported with AG
Other comments		Descriptive of other comments
Special educator / student all programmes		The number of minutes worked by special educator / special education teacher per week and student at all programmes
Special educator / student national programmes		The number of minutes worked by special educator / special education teacher per week and student in national programmes
Special educator / student Individual programme		The number of minutes worked by special educator / special teacher per week and student in the Individual programmes
Availability rate of special education resources	AvailSpecEd	Number of minutes per week and student a special educator/special education teacher was available at the school, transformed to logarithmic scale.

<sup>a</sup>These data were provided by SiRiS, the national statistical database, provided by the SNAE.

<sup>b</sup>These data were provided by SALAR

<sup>c</sup>The data at the school level derive from the average value from all individuals at the school. These data were provided by statisticians at the SNAE and are not published elsewhere.