



WILCO

Welfare innovations
at the local level
in favour of cohesion

Local welfare in Sweden: Housing, employment and child care

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WILCO Publication no. 03

This report is part of Work Package 2 of the research project entitled "Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion" (WILCO). WILCO aims to examine, through cross-national comparative research, how local welfare systems affect social inequalities and how they favour social cohesion, with a special focus on the missing link between innovations at the local level and their successful transfer to and implementation in other settings. The WILCO consortium covers ten European countries and is funded by the European Commission (FP7, Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. General background	3
1.1. Structure and development of the welfare state	3
1.2. Degree of centralisation	5
1.3. Recent developments	8
2. Housing	8
2.1. Demand and supply	9
2.2. Structure of the administration	11
2.3. Housing in relation to social exclusion	12
2.4. Recent developments	13
3. Employment.....	14
3.1. Demand and supply	15
3.2. Structure of the administration	18
3.3. Access to the labour market	19
3.4. Recent developments	20
4. Child care	21
4.1. Demand and supply	21
Proportions of different types of service providers	24
Local demands for and changes in demand for child care services	25
4.2. Structure of the administration	26
Roles and responsibilities of private for profit, non-profit organisations and parents.	27
Decentralisation trends in child care	28
4.3. Access to child care	28
4.4. Recent developments	30
References	31

1. 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Sweden has become a textbook example of a welfare state based on a large public sector, high taxes, and universal welfare services. As an illustration, Sweden has spent a larger percentage of national income on welfare services than any other country in the world (Ginsburg 2001). One reason for this could be the shared consensus on the importance of the welfare state in Sweden by both Social Democrats and bourgeois governments, regardless of their ideological differences. Consequently, Sweden is often perceived by other countries as a place where all, or most of, citizens' personal and social needs are addressed by the welfare state (Vamstad 2007). Even though this description is a bit one-dimensional, particularly against the backdrop of the developments in recent years - as will be discussed in this report - it is far from unfounded, not the least from a historical perspective.

1.1. Structure and development of the welfare state

A Swedish researcher asks "what is so Swedish about the Swedish welfare state?" (Vamstad 2007:18). According to Vamstad, much of what we regard as being particularly Swedish is in the fact influences from other European countries. Many of the defining principles and characteristics could therefore be argued to be less than exclusively Swedish. Having said this, there are some salient dimensions that taken together could be said to define a particular category of welfare regimes, to which Sweden could belong.

One such prevailing welfare regime typology is the one developed by the Danish sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen in his book *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Esping-Andersen 1990). In order to understand the place of Swedish welfare state in comparison to other welfare states, we will here use this typology. Based on comparative empirical research, Esping-Andersen has defined three types of welfare-state regimes: liberal welfare states, conservative-corporatist welfare states, and social democratic welfare states. The third category represents the Scandinavian countries in general and Sweden in particular. According to Esping-Andersen, this welfare regime is based on the principles of universalism and de-commodification and aims to provide services of highest standards to its citizens equally. Ensuring same rights for blue-collar and white-collar employees, one universal insurance system works for all in accordance with earnings. In terms of family policy, this regime takes preventive measures to render the costs of family life into a social matter and encourages independence from family. Even free of charge education from elementary school to university is an important part of the Swedish welfare system. Interestingly, Esping-Andersen describes this model, in which state services are also offered to the children, the old people, and the helpless, as "a peculiar fusion of liberalism and socialism" (Esping-Andersen 1990: 28).

Moving from more overarching typologies, a number of fundamental characteristics of the Swedish welfare state have been provided in the literature. The Swedish political scientist Rothstein, for example, mentions four political characteristics that historically have shaped the Swedish welfare state. The first is the preference for the public sector as a service provider; the second in the obligatory social security insurance tied to the level of involvement in working life; the third is the universal welfare benefits covering all Swedish citizens regardless of social class; and the fourth element in Rothstein's description of the Swedish welfare state is the additional means tested welfare benefits and special efforts aimed at specific marginalised groups in Swedish society (Rothstein 1994). Another fundamental characteristic of the Swedish welfare state is its very extensive public support. A survey of the Swedish peoples' attitudes towards the welfare state in the mid

1990s found, for example, a strong pattern of positive views of the existing political system (Svallfors 1996). Quoting a Swedish researcher, "the Swedish welfare state is, for lack of a better word, very *popular*" (Vamstad 2007).

Other suggested characteristics of the Swedish welfare state include the fight against class and gender inequalities (Ginsburg 2001), the welfare state as a way to democratise the economy (Korpi 1982), trust in political institutions (Rothstein 2003), and the dualism of the Swedish welfare state (Peterson 1999); the latter implicating a pragmatic willingness to emphasise both local and central institutions, and both collectivism and capitalism. It has also been argued that one of the ideological cornerstones of the Swedish welfare state is the idea of equality between different families despite demographic, socio-economic and ethnic characteristics as well as where they live, and that it is comprehensive, that is it includes everybody in contrast to residual welfare regimes (Magnusson Turner 2010).

As a welfare state, Sweden is very young (Lundström and Wijkström 1997). The Swedish industrialisation started relatively late in 19th century but developed rather rapidly. The ensuing social problems, especially those connected with poverty carried Sweden into a discussion of social policies in the 1880s, greatly influenced by Bismarck's social policies in Germany (Lundberg and Åmark 2001). Since then, Sweden has gradually improved its social insurance system (Lundberg and Åmark 2001; Swedish Institute 2004). It was not until the 1930s, however, when the first ideological breakthrough of the modern welfare state took place. Until then, Sweden had a rather liberalist and weak social insurance system. The historical turning point came with the depression and a parliamentary alliance between the Social Democratic Party and the Agrarian Party, which laid the foundation for an active policy of state intervention. The same period also marks a turning point for the labor market. Important agreements between the labor unions and the associations of employers were reached, forming the basis of the "Swedish model". However, in terms of reforms being carried out, it was not until after the Second World War that the cornerstones for the modern welfare state were laid, institutionalising the social insurance system and other support systems. Esping-Andersen even argues that the true Swedish model only came into place in the 1970s and the 1980s with the shift towards active labor market policies, social service expansion, and gender equalisation (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Esping-Andersen expresses an understanding for the fact that the Swedish welfare state and social democracy are concepts that sometimes have been used interchangeably (Esping-Andersen 1990). A reason for this is that the Swedish welfare state and the Swedish social democracy share a mutual history, and the welfare state is for many reasons shaped by the ideals and the ideology of the social democracy. However, Esping-Andersen and others make it clear that the Swedish welfare model is rooted deeply in the Swedish history, beyond what simply could be attained to the influences of the social democracy of Sweden. Accordingly, a Swedish researcher seeks the political ideas being the welfare state far back in Swedish history and suggests that the Swedish model stems from a general inclination towards collectivism (Lagergren 1999). As a contrast, another set of Swedes reach the opposite conclusion, in effect arguing that the universal welfare model is a system aimed at granting every Swede her or his much sought after independence (Berggren and Trägårdh 2006). By providing services and benefits from an impersonal collective as an entitlement, the Swedish citizen is emancipated from economic and social obligations to their surroundings.

Having said this, the history of the civil society welfare provision in Sweden is closely linked to the history of the welfare state in Sweden and the dominance of the social democratic party (Vamstad 2007). It could namely be argued that the social democrats in many ways gathered strength from the social capital of the civil society, when little or no other capital was available for the working classes (Korpi 1982). The social capital of the

early labor movement was later institutionalised in the social democratic welfare state, and Sweden still has a strong tradition of adult education (*folkbildning*), temperance societies, youth groups, centred around organisations formed during the era of large popular mass movements (*folkrörelser*) before the welfare state was established.

As the public sector and the political power came to rest with the social democratic party for many decades, however, the view of civil society organisations shifted (Vamstad 2007). While still encouraging popular mass movements in sectors like culture sports, and life style organisations, the relationship between the social democrats and the organisations in the civil society, particularly those providing the same services as the public sector, has at times become more strained. The skepticism towards non-public providers and alternative has had a somewhat different development at the local level. While the national level was dominated by ideological considerations revolving around ideals of universality and equality, fiscal realities have come to favor alternative, especially cooperative solutions on the local level. Consequently, the two local contexts where non-public providers of welfare services have flourished, are the very urban and the very rural contexts.

The relationship between the civil society and the welfare state has in the last few years been signified by a somewhat ambiguous combination of praise for the role of civil society organisations and the tenets of a modern form of social engineering. A number of political initiatives during the last ten years could serve as indicators that the civil society could be moving towards greater recognition as actors in the welfare service area.

1.2. Degree of centralisation

The organisation of the Swedish welfare state has a tradition of a high degree of self-government at the local level. Several hundred years ago the parishes were responsible for the care of the poor. In the mid-1800s, the local authorities were tasked with running the recently established elementary schools. When the development of the Swedish welfare state accelerated after the second world war, the parliament and the government at the time decided to place a great deal of the responsibility for public services with the local authorities. One of the reasons was the belief that local administration and local responsibility could best meet local needs. Sweden's county councils were also created in the mid-1800s. Their task was to deliberate and decide on a wide range of matters concerning the county, such as the economic situation, agriculture, communications, healthcare, education and law and order. Moreover, there is also a long tradition of local government. For example, local self-government and the right to levy taxes are stipulated in the instrument of Government, one of the four pillars of the Swedish Constitution. From this follows that much decision- and policymaking concerning welfare activities are carried out by the local authorities.

The Swedish public administration has three levels of government: national, regional and local. Sweden is consequently divided into 290 local authorities, 18 counties, and two regions (Västra Götaland and Skåne). There is no hierarchical relation between local authorities, counties and regions, since all have their own self-governing local authorities with responsibility for different activities. The only exception is Gotland, an island in the Baltic Sea, where the local authority also has the responsibilities and tasks normally associated with a county council.

The current Local Government Act, which came into force in 1992, defines the roles of municipalities, county councils, and regions as follows:

- Local authorities are responsible for matters relating to the inhabitants and their immediate environment.
- The main task of the county councils and regions is healthcare and regional development.
- The Swedish parliament has 349 members and is the supreme political decision-making body in Sweden.

Accordingly, Sweden's local authorities, county councils, and regions have a great deal of freedom to organise their activities as they see fit. Their responsibilities are regulated partly in the Local Government Act and partly in laws and ordinances covering specific areas, for example the Social Services Act, the Planning and Building Act, the Education Act and the Health and Medical Services Act. The scope for local and regional self-government is also affected by decisions taken by the European Union.

Local authorities, county councils, and regions are entitled to levy taxes in order to finance their activities. Taxes are levied as a percentage of the inhabitants' income, and local authorities, county councils, and regions decide on their own tax rates. Tax revenues are the largest source of income for Sweden's local authorities, county councils and regions and account for approximately two-thirds of their total income. The state also provides grants that could either be general or targeted.

As a consequence, there are major variations in the average income of the inhabitants of Sweden's local authorities, county councils, and regions. The cost per inhabitant, for providing the services to which they are entitled, also varies. In order to ensure fairness, a system has been introduced, called the local government equalisation system, and managed by the state, with the aim of providing equitable conditions in all local authorities, county councils, and regions. The revenues are consequently redistributed on the basis of tax base and level of expenditure. Local authorities, county councils, and regions may also charge users for their services. A non-profit principle applies, however, which means that fees may not be higher than the costs relating to the service concerned.

Furthermore, local authorities, county councils, and regions may procure services from private companies. Activities carried out by private companies on behalf of local authorities, county councils, or regions are financed using public funds. Privately run activities that are financed using tax revenues must offer citizens services on the same conditions as those which apply to similar public services. This means, for example, that citizens pay the same for a service irrespective of whether it is provided by the public sector or by a private company. In some areas, such as refuse collection, public transport, and dental care, it has long been common for local authorities, county councils, and regions to procure services externally. It is only in the recent decades, however, that private companies have begun to run preschools, schools, and care facilities.

At the regional level there are both elected county councils and county administrative boards. County councils and regions have their own self-governing local authorities with responsibility for different activities. The county councils are responsible for overseeing tasks that cannot be handled at the local level by local authorities and that require coordination across a larger region, most notably health care and regional development. The county administrative boards are the central government's representatives at the regional level. The county administrative boards decide on such issues as land use and traffic.

Focusing on activities related to health care, the county councils and regions are responsible for ensuring that everyone living in Sweden has access to good healthcare. Healthcare is largely tax-financed in order to guarantee that people have access to the same high level of care regardless of where they live. The principle of local self-government gives the county councils and regions the right to design and structure their activities on the basis of local conditions. This means that patient fees may vary. On average, patient fees account for 3 per cent of the overall revenues of county councils and regions.

The structure of the health care system is such that there are over 1,000 local medical centres, doctors' surgeries, and district nursing clinics throughout the country. Together, these form what can be labelled as the primary care structure, which is the foundation of the Swedish healthcare system. At local medical centres, patients can be treated for all the health problems that do not require the technical and medical resources of a hospital. In addition to the local medical centres, Sweden has more than 70 hospitals at county level and 9 regional/university hospitals. The most advanced technical equipment is only available at these hospitals and highly specialised care has been concentrated here. Each county council/region also plans all publicly subsidised dental care in its own area, regardless of whether this care is provided in the public or private sector.

In regards to regional development activities, the county council or region, often together with the local authorities, in most counties, runs public transport. This is done either through jointly owned companies or through contractors. The county councils/regions also support business and industry in their area and encourage new enterprise, and are responsible for areas such as tourism and culture.

At the local level, the entire territory of Sweden is divided into local authorities each with an elected assembly or council. Local authorities are responsible for a broad range of facilities and services. The local authorities are also entitled to levy income taxes on individuals, and charge the citizens for various services. As a consequence, local authorities have a fair amount of latitude in deciding what services they should offer. Having said this, they are also legally obliged to provide certain basic services.

Three-quarters of the activities of the local authorities are directly related to demographic factors and are determined by the number of inhabitants, their age and their state of health. In regards to education, care and primary healthcare, for example, the local authorities are responsible for practically all primary and secondary education. Child care, preschools, and schools account for over 40 per cent of municipal budgets. The local authorities are also responsible for special schools for the intellectually disabled, for adult education (*folkbildning*), and for Swedish language courses for immigrants. Elderly care and care of the disabled are also important tasks for the local authorities and account for almost 30 per cent of their budgets. Care and assistance is provided in the home and in sheltered accommodation.

The different areas of responsibility mean that the local authorities play several different roles in the welfare system. For example, while the local authorities form part of the public sector, they are also major employers with a responsibility for labor law and the provision of employees. One in five employees in Sweden, or just over 800,000 individuals (in the year of 2004), worked for a local authority. Most of them work in the care and education sectors, and the majority of employees are women. In addition to the role of employer, the local authorities are also service providers in the fields of care, social services, education and infrastructure. Finally, they also have a supervisory responsibility,

for example, for the measurement of air and water pollution and for checking the labeling of food products.

1.3. Recent developments

One trend that cross-cut different fields in relation to welfare services are that the term welfare state is more and more considered as an antiquated leftover from the early phases of the Swedish welfare mode (Vamstad 2007). Many, politicians as well as academics, would like to replace the term with a new concept, focusing more on the welfare society. This phrase would according to its proponents imply a broader view of welfare; a welfare that includes both public and non-public providers, but also formal and informal welfare activities. One illustration used by the advocates of the concept of welfare society is that most of the social work in Sweden is carried out informally by unpaid people in some sort of a relation to the person receiving the help or care.

Another trend is related to the structure of the public administration, regional development, and the European Union, as regional issues have become increasingly important since Sweden joined the EU in 1995. Responsibility for regional development has for many years rested with the county administrative boards, as discussed above. In recent years, most of Sweden's local authorities, county councils, and regions have together assumed a greater responsibility for regional matters and have developed various forms of regional co-operation. The alleged aim is to make better use of the resources available at local level and to ensure that the local authorities, county councils, and regions can continue to offer good services to the public.

Moreover, estimates show that approximately 60 per cent of the issues dealt with by local authorities and county council assemblies are directly or indirectly influenced by European funding or decisions taken by the EU. Local authorities, county councils, and regions in Sweden also play an active role in a number of organisations at European level. The Assembly of European Regions (AER) has 14 Swedish county councils and regions among its members, ten Swedish coastal regions attend the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), and Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö are all part of the Eurocities network, while a number of medium-sized towns are members of Eurotowns.

2. HOUSING

Sweden has had a general housing policy since the late 1940's in the sense that it has been directed towards the housing market as a whole and not towards special categories of households or tenure (Bengtsson 2006). "Good housing for all", regardless of income, has been the overall goal for housing policy and an important ingredient of social welfare policy (Boverket 2008). The semi-public bodies - i.e. the municipal housing companies - has played a central role in the political goal of good housing for all. Public housing became in this way a cornerstone of the Swedish welfare policy (Magnusson Turner 2010).

During the 1990's Swedish housing policy changed dramatically with a deregulated housing market (Turner & Whitehead 2002) and a more market oriented approach. Since the mid 90s Swedish housing policy has changed from a general to a more selective policy where public housing no longer can be considered as a cornerstone in the welfare system. This is a policy change that has been supported by both former social democratic governments and the previous liberal/conservative government. In this way the Swedish policy follows mainstream European policy, with less tax benefits and restrictions. Housing in Sweden has to a larger extent come to be considered as a consumer good (Magnusson Turner 2010, p. 22f) and less as a social or welfare right (see Bengtsson 2001). As a consequence to these

changes housing policy is no longer a particularly visible policy field on the national level. Currently there is no housing department within the central government (this has been the situation since 1991 - a housing department existed from 1974-1991). Since 1991 the responsibility for housing issues has moved between different departments - Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communication and Ministry of Environment and Planning. Since 2010 Sweden has a minister of Public Administration and Housing who works at the Ministry for Health and Social Affairs.

2.1. Demand and supply

The three dominant forms of tenure in Sweden are rented dwellings, co-operative building society dwellings and home ownership. There is no housing segment corresponding to social housing. Rented dwellings and co-operative dwellings are mostly found in multi-dwelling buildings while home ownership is mostly associated with single dwellings. A co-operative building society dwelling is a specific "in-between" type of ownership. In this case a person/family pay for a membership in a building society which owns a dwelling unit with apartments, and every member possess an apartment. Membership includes access rights (seizin) to the apartment and a share in the co-operative. Since 2009 it is possible to own your own apartment but this is still not a usual form of tenure. In accordance with the general housing policy the tax subsidies on housing are comprising; everybody that takes a housing loan receive a tax subsidy of between 21-30 per cent on the interest costs. (www.sbab.se)

Table 1. Type of tenure 2006 and 2009, in 1000

Type of tenure	Rented dwellings	Co-operative building society dwellings	Home ownership	Other type of tenure	Total
2006	1810	785	1560	194	4349
%	42	18	36	4	100
2009	1828	838	1599	172	4437
%	41	19	36	4	100

(Source: Statistics Sweden database. *Bebodda bostäder (HEK)*, antal i tusental efter region, upplåtelseform, lägenhetstyp och tid [Based on a survey made on the households economical situation HEK])¹

The semi-public bodies' share of apartments in multi-dwelling buildings is decreasing. In 2008 19 per cent of these apartments were owned by the state, county councils or municipalities. In 2007 this share was 27 per cent. Co-operatives (brf) owned 51 per cent of the stock and private housing companies 30 per cent. (SCB 2010a).

Housing availability differs a lot between different regions of the country and between cities, especially between the metropolitan areas and smaller cities. The overall trend in the last decade is that housing shortages is a growing problem in the larger cities and in the university cities. The situation is worst in the metropolitan areas of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (NBHBP) states in their yearly report on the Swedish housing market, that the number of municipalities that reports a shortage in rental apartments has increased. But, during the latest years fewer municipalities are reporting a shortage of owner occupied housing.

¹ Between 1960-1990 Population and Housing Censuses was conducted every fifth year. Since 1990 no Population and Housing Census have been made in Sweden, which means that the information on the housing stock and homeowner ships is based on projections of the latest census, information from different sources on changes in the housing stock and surveys made by Statistics on the households' economic situation; HEK.

Around 75 per cent of the Swedish municipalities are reporting a shortage of rental apartments, but there is a rather modest lack of apartments in many of these municipalities. (Boverket 2010a).

Table 2. The situation on the Swedish housing market in 2000, 2005 and 2010

	2000	2005	2010
Shortage	16 %	38 %	41 %
Balance	22 %	33 %	39 %
Surplus	62 %	28 %	20 %
No answer		1 %	
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

(Source: Boverket 2005a, 2010 Bostadsmarknadsenkät)

Since the late 1960s low income households can receive housing allowances. Currently the target groups that can apply for housing allowances are families with children (under the age of 18), young people between 19-28 and old age pensioners. The level of the allowance is based on income and capital, number of persons in the household, housing costs and living space. To be able to apply for housing allowances a person must be living in Sweden and registered in the Population Register (RTB). And, registered and permanently be living in the accommodation for which he/she is applying allowances for (Magnusson Turner 2010, p. 26).

Table 3. Households with housing allowance and pensioners with housing allowance, 1000

	2000	2005	2009
Housing allowances (households)	227	177	141
Housing allowances for pensioners (persons)	458	430	398

(Source: SCB 2010a Yearbook of Housing and Building Statistics 2010. Official Statistics of Sweden, table 6.2.4).

Households that are not able to arrange housing by their own means are entitled to support, according to the Social Services Act, by local government. This is administered by the Local Social Authorities (LSA). The different types of supported housing supplied by LSA have by researchers been labelled as the "secondary housing market", which consists of various kinds of apartments and rooms that are sub-leased on special terms - *special contracts* - without tenure security (Sahlin 2006).

According to NBHBP this housing segment consists of 13 400 units (Boverket 2011a). These dwellings are sublet with restrictions in seisin. This housing segment was originally developed for the clients of the LSA, i.e persons/families with social problems e.g. alcohol and/or drug addiction, mental illnesses a s o. Due to housing shortages in the larger cities, and increasing demands on new tenants by landlords, on e.g. income from labour and personal references, a growing number of people are housed by the LSA's. For example immigrated persons/families which are not yet established on the labour market and for obvious reason have no references from Swedish landlords (Nordfeldt forthcoming).

The building sector in Sweden is dominated by a small number (4) of large companies. Besides these, there are several middle-sized and some small building companies. From the Second World War and up and up till early 1990's when considerable reforms took place in Swedish housing policy there existed a system with considerable state measures to support housing construction. The support was directed towards the housing construction sector as a whole but with conditions that were especially favourable for the municipal housing sector (Boverket 2008). The system of state subsidiaries to housing construction

has been phased out and ended completely in 2006. Today there are no subsidiaries on housing construction. The costs for building are paid by the building enterprises with loans from commercial banks. Effects of this are high costs, and consequently, high prices for new built apartments, both rental and co-operative apartments. There is also a low incentive to build rental apartments with today's system.

By international comparisons Sweden is seen as a fairly un-corrupt society. Illegal activities connected the housing market has not been an issue that has gain any specific attention or being debated. Swedish tenancy laws apply strong legal rights for tenants. Even so, there exist a "black market" in relation to rental apartments in the largest cities where one can pay "under the table" for apartments in the more central districts. This has received some media attention but there is a lack of knowledge about how prevalent this phenomenon is. There also exist illegal second- and third hand rentals, which too is most common in the larger cities, where persons with a first hand contract, sub leases the apartment without a permit from the land lord and often to a high price. And, from time to time media observes and reports on less serious land lords who require exorbitant rents.

The rate of homelessness is by international comparison low in Sweden. Still, it is a consistent and, according to the last survey, a growing problem. The National Board on Health and Welfare (NBHW) has conducted three surveys on homelessness since the early 1990's (1993, 1999 and 2005), and a fourth survey will be made during 2011. The three mappings are not completely comparable though the definition has been changed for every survey occasion. For the survey in 2005 and the ongoing survey 2011 definitions have been adjusted to correspond in a higher degree to the *Ethos* definition developed by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless; Feantsa (www.feantsa.org). In 1993: 9 903 persons were reported homeless, and in 1999: 8 440 persons (Socialstyrelsen 1993, 2000). In the survey in 2005 a total of 17 800 persons were reported homeless where off 3 600 in the most vulnerable group of homeless people around 900 of these people had been sleeping rough. The main reason for this large increase from 1999 is changes in definition. With an adjustment to the definition of 1999 homelessness has, according to NBHW, increased by between 2000-3000 persons (Socialstyrelsen 2006).

2.2. Structure of the administration

The responsibility for housing supply lies at the local level, with the municipalities. The local governments are according to the Law of housing supply obliged to compile a policy for local housing supply, once every length of office (which is four years). As mentioned above, the local government is also by law (SoL) obliged to support persons that of social and/or socio-economical reasons are not able to arrange housing by his/her own means.

Permits are regulated by the Law on planning and building construction (Plan- och byggnadslagen 2010: 900) This law regulate the planning of land, water and building construction. According to the law, the responsibility lies with the municipalities and decisions are taken by the local governments. Plans are to be displayed publicly and all citizens possess the right to state viewpoints and claims.

EU-regulation on e.g. state support and competition has an impact on municipal planning in Sweden. EU-regulations do not always correspond to Swedish law and practice and therefore bring about some restrictions in the acting space for local housing policy measures. Other policy fields that are topics for cooperation within EU and that by indirect means affect local housing policy are e.g. urban development and planning, social policy, energy and transport, environment and taxes (Boverket 2011b, p.13).

As mentioned above there is no housing segment in Sweden corresponding to social rented housing. There exists no income- or means testing to receive a special type of housing. The rents for both the semi- public (*sw. allmännyttta*) and the private owned rented housing are decided in negotiations between the property federation and the union of tenants, guided by the system of "utilisation value". (Bengtsson 2006: 101). Private as well as and semi-public housing bodies set their own requirements though, on new tenants. A trend in the latest decades is that these requirements have been reinforced and made more homogeneous, even though these requirements are not always outspoken. Landlords often demand, for example, guaranteed income from employment, the absence of previously unpaid debts, and personal references (Boverket 2005b). This bring about that economically disadvantaged households and households that lack references from previous housing, such as refugees and other newly arrived immigrants (see Sahlin 2002) or families that have previously been evicted (Flyghed 2000) experience great difficulties in being approved for a first-hand rental contract, which, in many cases, is the only option for individuals and families that do not possess the economic resources to purchase a house or an apartment, or do not have a sufficiently income level to be granted a housing loan from a bank (Nordfeldt, forthcoming).

Trends of decentralisation and deregulation have been strong in this field, starting in the early 1990s. These trends consists' of processes towards market orientation and privatisations, with a concomitant decrease in public control over the allocation of housing. Housing assignment agencies have been closed down in most municipalities, municipal housing companies have adopted market principles, and rental apartments are being converted into co-operative apartments (mainly taking place in central Stockholm). Also, the fact that the system of state support for housing construction has ceased has lead to a decentralisation of financial risks from the state to the housing construction companies.

2.3. Housing in relation to social exclusion

Low income households predominantly live in rented apartments owned by semi public bodies. But, not all low income households live in rented dwellings. Statistics from the database EU-SILC indicates that more than one third in the first income deciles, and close to half in the second, live in owner occupied dwellings. For households in the higher income deciles rented dwellings do not appear to be an alternative (Magnusson-Turner 2010). There are though geographical variations. In urban areas low income households mostly live in rented dwellings, foremost in suburban areas (ibid 2010) In rural areas, and smaller municipalities, these groups can live in smaller single houses. Statistics on housing allowances demonstrates that a majority - around 89 per cent - of households that are entitled to housing allowances live in rental apartments. Around 6 per cent live in co-operative dwellings and 3 per cent in owner occupied single dwellings. A majority are single headed households - around 77 per cent (numbers from 2009). The number of young people (18-29) receiving housing allowances is increasing while the number of families with children is declining (www.forsakringskassan.se).

One important feature to understand Swedish housing policy is the so called Million Homes Programme (MP). In the mid 1960s the Social democratic government launched the Million Homes Programme (MP). In a period of ten years a million dwellings were built to combat the problem of housing shortage and to modernise the housing stock. In most cities this resulted in new housing estates being built in the urban periphery. The MP comprised a mix of tenure forms and housing types but the new neighbourhoods tended to be rather homogenous. The most common dwellings consisted of either single-family houses with homeownership or multi-family housing with either rental or co-operative tenure. Most of

the critique that's been expressed against the MP has concerned the rather few areas that were of large scale and high-rise in character. The problems that have been pointed at have both concerned the areas physical appearance and the lack of social and sometimes also commercial facilities (Andersson *et al.* 2010: 237f). Today these large housing estates in the city suburbs are associated with segregation and social problems. Refugees and immigrants - especially from outside the OECD-region - have been directed towards these so called "underprivileged" neighbourhoods, together with early retirement and disablement pensioners, low income, single supported, households and other socially underprivileged groups. In these neighbourhoods there are close connections between segregation, social welfare dependence and poverty (Schierup 2006).

Residential segregation has been on the political agenda since the early 1970s and has gained a greater attention since the 1990s due to observations of a growing segregation. Most attention has been focused on segregation in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Ethnic background is an important factor in segregation. But, researchers have pointed at the fact that the majority of the suburbs that has been referred to as the most segregated areas are not characterised by ethnic homogeneity. Instead there is a great ethnic diversity in these areas. What characterises these areas is a very low proportion of native Swedes. Segregation can therefore be describes as a distinction between predominantly Swedish-populated residential areas versus predominantly immigrant-populated residential areas (Gullberg 2002; Andersson 1998). Research on segregation has indicated that there are "neighbourhood effects" in the sense that there is a neighbourhood impact on income, which vary by age, gender and country of origin. The income trends for native Swedes residing in rental houses in large-scale suburbs - MP areas - both men and women and regardless of education level - were less favourable than for persons residing in other parts of Stockholm (Gullberg 2002; Andersson 1998). In Sweden stigma is rather related to processes of segregation than of segmentation. Stigma is i.e. attached with certain suburbs/neighbourhoods then with specific types of housing. Again this is related to suburbs with large housing estates build as a part of the Million Programme.

2.4. Recent developments

Housing can't be claimed to be a debated issue in Sweden on the national level. One explanation to this is the fact the main responsibility of housing supply lies with the local level, as described above. Some issues related to housing have though gained some political and/or media attention during the latest years.

How to combat housing segregation has been on and off on the political agenda during the latest decades. This is mostly a rhetorical issue for the moment, there are no special programs launched, except for some attempts to mix different forms of dwellings and tenure when new houses are built in the MP suburbs. (During late 1990s and early 2000s a larger program called the Metropolitan Initiative took place in the most disadvantaged suburbs, in the largest cities). An interesting point to make is the absence of a political debate on the issue of discrimination. The current government initiated a research project on discrimination on the housing market. But, the results, that clearly indicated that there exists discrimination foremost with an ethnical dimension on the housing market, have not been object to political attention.

Pros and cons of privatisation of rented dwellings are debated, but this is mainly an issue in the city of Stockholm. Most transformations of rented dwellings to co-operative building society dwellings and the selling out of semi-public buildings to private landlords are taking place in the inner neighbourhoods of Stockholm.

The issue of evictions of families with children has gained some attention during the 2000s. The starting point for this attention was in the early 2000 with an official report, published in 2001, which stated that a considerable number of children, approximately 2,000, lived in families that had been evicted from their homes. This led to a governmental commission was appointed to look into this issue further (SOU 2005:88). Families that are evicted and become homeless imply that there are homeless children, which is a phenomenon that had earlier been regarded as non-existent in Swedish society. The National Board on Health and Welfare has been taken some measures on this matter by publishing guidelines for the local social authorities on prevention of evictions, and by including homeless families as a target group in the surveys on homelessness in Sweden in 2005 and 2011.

The latest financial crisis has not had any severe effect within the field of housing in Sweden. The financial crises of the early 1990s had a more thoroughgoing effect which were followed by "regime" changes of housing policy that since then has formed the direction of this field (Turner 2000). During the economic crisis of the early 1990s it came into light that too many dwellings had been built and at the wrong places, i.e. outside of the urban areas and university cities. During the rest of the 1990s the rate of new constructions were very low and during the 2000s it has somehow increased but not till the same levels as in the late 1980s and first years of 1990s. The low level of constructions has instead resulted in a housing shortage in the larger cities and cities with a university, as described above.

It is difficult to point at any striking new local innovations in this field. Sustainable development has been a goal in urban development and policy since mid 1990s. Physical and social environment are central concepts in sustainable development. Different goals have been launched on favouring sustainability. One such goal is to break social, economic and discriminating segregation in the urban areas (Holmqvist 2009). Mixed dwellings and tenant forms are one way that has been tried out to counteract segregation. This is not a new idea but recently tried out in MP neighbourhoods. Innovation in housing is mainly related to discussions on sustainability from an environmental perspective, e.g. issues of heating (like self-heated houses) and environmental friendly construction.

One new, and which seems to be a coming, housing concept in Sweden is the building of new neighbourhoods which bear characteristics of "gated communities", i.e. with clear elements of e.g. control and guarding. In the city of Malmö a neighbourhood is being built that is described as a "resort" with restaurants, cinema, swimming pool and Spa, a park with a putting-green, tennis court and premises for conferences and celebrations, a s o. Another phenomenon that recently has got some media attention is a connection between housing and child care. In a newly built neighbourhood in Stockholm, families with small children that buy these apartments, are also guaranteed local child care (DN 2011).

3. 3. EMPLOYMENT

Sweden, as the other Nordic countries, has a tradition of encompassing and redistributive income security and active labour market policies. Sweden possesses a long history of active labour market policy measures, based on a strong work ethic. The traditional labour market policy can be described as a universalistic model of activation, in contrast to selective models of activation. The active labour market policy has been described as developed from the mid-20th century and onwards. The active policy was directed towards different segments of the population and with the aim to integrate or re-integrate unemployed citizens into the labour market. This has often been combined with - at least formally - strict forms of work enforcement within the social protection system (Johansson and Hvinden 2007)

The overall goal for the labour market policy is to contribute to a well functioning labour market and to contribute to fulfil the goals of the European Employment Strategy. The Swedish Government accentuate three areas in focus for the labour market policy. (1) To stimulate the labour supply by securing that the unemployment insurance is a reconversion insurance, i.e. that the levels of compensation make it profitable to work. (2) Stimulate labour demand by interventions that reduces employers cost to employ a person with difficulties to get a job and who has a marginal position in relation to the labour market. (3) To match job seekers and vacancies. This includes e.g. persons with long term unemployment and on long term sick leaves (Sibbmark 2009: 5).

The practice of labour market policy today is a combination of job service, guidance, labour market programs, vocational induction schemes, rehabilitation for working life and activities for young persons with functional limitations. Responsible for the implementation of these measures are the local employment offices (Sibbmark 2009). The local employment offices are part of the national Government authority **Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen)**.

3.1. Demand and supply

The employment rate in Sweden was 64.7 per cent in 2010. For men it was 67.1 and for women 61.8. These figures were somewhat lower compared to the figures from 2005, and consequently the unemployment rates are a little higher. In 2010 the unemployment rate were 8.4 per cent; 8.5 per cent for men and 8.2 per cent for women. For persons that were born outside of Sweden the employment rate were lower that for native Swedes; 55.2 compared to 66.7 per cent. And, unemployment rate is higher; 16.0 per cent, compared to 7.0 per cent. The largest difference in employment rate is between women born in Sweden - 64.2 per cent and women born outside of Sweden - 50.5 per cent.

Table 4: Figures on employment rate 2005 and 2010

	2005	2010
Total	65.4	64.7
Men	67.9	67.6
Women	62.6	61.8
<i>Ages:</i>		
15-24	38.5	38.5
25-54	83.9	85.0
55-74	46.3	45.1
<i>Born in Sweden:</i>		
Total	66.8	66.7
Men	69.2	69.0
Women	64.4	64.2
<i>Born outside of Sweden:</i>		
Total	55.9	55.2
Men	59.5	60.3
Women	52.6	50.5

(Source: Statistics Sweden)

Table 5: Figures of unemployment rates 2005 and 2010

	2005	2010
Total	7.8	8.4
Men	7.8	8.5
Women	7.7	8.2
<i>Ages:</i>		
15-24	22.8	25.2*
25-54	6.2	6.1
55-74	4.2	5.0
<i>Born in Sweden:</i>		
Total	6.8	7.0
Men	6.8	7.2
Women	6.8	6.7
<i>Born outside of Sweden²:</i>		
Total	14.1	16.0
Men	14.8	15.6
Women	13.5	16.5

(*incl students)
(Source: Statistics Sweden)

Rates on employment and unemployment do not differ a lot between men and women in Sweden. But, when it comes to part time employment there are considerable gender differences. Almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of the female work force work part time. When it comes to temporary work rates, women possess temporary work to a slightly higher degree than men. The striking differences are between ages; young people are to a high degree employed by temporary work contracts, to a lesser degree the young adults but still to a much higher rate than middle aged people.

Table 6. Figures on part time employment and temporary work rates 2010

	Part time employment	Temporary work rates
Total	23.4	15.8
Men	13.2	14.0
Women	34.7	17.6
<i>Ages:</i>		
15-24		57.1
25-34		19.1
35-44		8.2
45-54		6.3
55-64		5.5
65-74		46.7

(Source: Statistics Sweden)

² There is no Swedish statistics on ethnicity.

Table 7: Unemployed and persons participating in programs with activity support, per cent of population

	Total 16-64 Unemployed	Total 16-64 In programs	Young persons 18-24 Unemployed	Young persons 18-24 In programs
2010	3.9	3.0	4.8	6.2
2005	4.2	1.7	6.2	2.6
2000	4.1	1.6	4.4	2.5

(Source: Statistics from the employment office: <http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Om-oss/Statistik-prognoiser/Tidigare-statistik.html>)

Recent analyses from the Swedish Economic Research Institute indicate that there is a mismatch between unemployment and vacancies on the labour market. While the over all unemployment rate lies at a relatively high level some private enterprises have problems to find eligible employees, i.e. with the right education and skills. This mismatch is currently an issue for a political debate on national level. Concerning sectors and branches the unemployment has become more heterogeneous and the major differences are between levels of education. The unemployment for people who only possess a high school education were in 2010 18.2 per cent, which can be compared to 7.9 for persons who have completed upper secondary education and 5,0 for persons with higher education like e.g. supplementary courses and/or university studies (Konjunkturinstitutet 2011).

There is a regional unbalance in employment and unemployment rates which is rather constant and not dependent on ups and downs in the conjuncture, with Stockholm at the top having the highest employment rates during the 2000 (3-6 percentage points above the national average). And, the northern regions of Sweden having the lowest employment rates (SCB 2010b). But, according to statistics for the OECD countries the regional diffusion of employment and unemployment this smaller than in many other European countries (SOU 2007: 35, p. 15).

The employment offices organises subsidised jobs - called e.g. "new start jobs", "first step jobs" a s o, for different target groups. These groups are for the moment; young people under the age of 25, newly arrived immigrants, people that have been long time unemployed and, persons on long term sick leave or having reduced working capacity. An employer can receive a subsidy for up till 80 per cent of the salary when employing someone that is categorised into these groups. The number of participants in the so called "new start jobs" have grown considerably during the last year. During 2010 there were an average of 33 000 persons, which is 14 000 more than during 2009, 37 per cent were women, 35 per cent were born outside of Sweden and 28 per cent had only a grade from high school. Other subsidised jobs are within the special programs for disabled persons. In the special programmes 68 000 persons participated in 2010 which is 1000 more than a year earlier. 47 000 persons were employed with subsidised salary ("lönebidrag") (Arbetsförmedlingen 2011).

The work force that is employed within the informal segment of the labour market is mainly immigrants (foremost with a short time in the country, or asylum seekers). This is the only labour market that is open, and the only way to support the living, for paperless asylum seekers (Social rapport 2010). There is still a lack of research that has investigated the size and structure of the informal labour market bur there seems to be strong relation between ethnic segregation, social welfare dependency, poverty and a connection to the less regulated labour market.

Legal positions do not differ between full-time or part-time workers. The main difference in legal positions is between permanent and temporary work. Part time or full time work has mainly effect on the level of old-age pension. The level of the pension is directly related to the number of year worked and previous income. This has a direct gender effect. Women stay home in longer periods with small children than men and women also work part-time to a substantially higher degree than men, which has an effect on the level of the pension.

The Swedish social security system is strongly connected to employment and earned income. Unemployment and sickness benefits, incl. parental insurance are based on previous time in work and earned income, which means that temporary workers can have a marginal position in relation to the general security systems and receive lower social benefits. The legal protection for employment is strong on the Swedish labour market, through the Act of Employment Protection (SFS 1982: 80) But it doesn't fully cover temporary work, which has become more common with the "project economy", i.e. employment in different kinds of temporary projects. Dismissal procedures are much shorter for temporary workers and bases for dismissal are not regulated. The act of Employment Protection regulates though how long you can be temporary employed before you have the right to a permanent employment. Since 2002 there is also a law on prohibition of discrimination against part time workers and workers with temporary employment (SFS 2002: 293).

3.2. Structure of the administration

In Sweden the central government through the Ministry of Employment is responsible for the labour market policy. The public authorities in this field are Swedish Public Employment Service, Swedish Unemployment Insurance Board (IAF), Swedish Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation and the European Social Fund (ESF). The Swedish Employment Service are divided into 68 geographical labour market regions in which local employment offices are arranged.

Since the 1990s Swedish labour market policy has been restructured. There is still a strong, and also strengthened, focus on activation, but organised in a different way. The Swedish system has moved from a universalistic towards a more liberal model of labour market policy (Johansson and Hvinden 2007). The new policies can be labelled as "workfare" with a stronger emphasis on activation, expressed as an obligation to work or to participate in job creating measures (Salonen 2009). An import shift in has been from an emphasis on education and participation in different programs for competence improvement to job searching activities. Swedish labour market policy has in this way developed in line with the European Employment Strategy and EU-terminology is used in Sweden like e.g. "flexicurity", employability, life long learning, social exclusion (Johansson 2009).

The current liberal/conservative government has launched a program for long-term unemployed that is called "the work and development guarantee". The basic aim with this program is to offer long-term unemployed individually adapted support, organised in three phases. In phase one the individual tries to find a work with support from a coach. Phase two involves job training and practice. In phase three employers receive financial compensation to offer long-term unemployed work. Phase three of this program has been the object of severe criticism from participants, politicians, media and evaluators. The work that is conducted as a part of the program is supposed to be job training, but is not allowed to replace "ordinary work". These are instead chores that otherwise would not have been performed on the workplace. The criticism has taken different stands. E.g that it can be considered as "storage" of long term unemployed, that employees have no or

totally meaningless and/or degrading work or that they are used as ordinary workers but with no salary (www.tcotidningen.se). Phase three is therefore for the moment heavily debated.

An introductory program has also been launched - which also has been in focus for rather intense political and media debate - for persons on long term sick leave. New time limits has been set for sickness allowances (adm. by the National insurance office) whereafter a person is directed to the employment office to participate in a program and obliged to stand to disposal to the whole labour market (e.g. take any work at any place).

The unemployment insurance in Sweden consist of two parts; a basic insurance and a loss of income insurance. The *basic insurance* concerns persons that fulfil the *Condition of work* (i.e. during the latest 12 months been working at least 80 hours per month in at least six months) and who are not member of an unemployment fund, or been a member for too short time. The *loss of income insurance* pertains persons that are members of an unemployment fund (for at least 12 months and fulfill the condition of work) (Sibbmark 2009).

The role of the non-profit sector has had a more indirect than direct role due to the Swedish tradition that has been characterised as a corporative system where the parties on the labour market; employers' organisations and unions have influenced political decisions. The more direct role in labour market policies of non-profit organisations has been to offer different kinds of extension education and subsidised work (Lundström and Wijkström 1997). Another role has been to offer an extra social security system for the most marginalised and excluded persons that fall outside of the public social security system, by e.g. give temporary financial support and services and shelters to homeless (Olsson and Nordfeldt 2008). During the 1990s the social economy came into focus as a new form for creating new jobs. This interest has declined during the last decade. But as part of regional policies there is an interest in small scale cooperatives and entrepreneurship within the civil society contribution to employment in the more peripheral regions in Sweden. (See e.g. Nordfeldt and Lundstedt 2001). Private actors have recently entered this field by being engaged by the local employment offices as work coaches for long-term unemployed.

Decentralisation in this field has taken place since the mid 1990s. Since then the municipalities have been primary actors to run different forms of programs (as described above) to activate unemployed and persons on social welfare benefits. It is up to the different municipalities to develop programs - within frames of the central policy - that are adapted to local needs and resources. These programs are often run as projects for a limited period of time (Thorén 2009).

3.3. Access to the labour market

The unemployment rate has decreased some during 2010, compared to recent years, but the number of people that are in long term unemployment are rising. 17,000 more people were long term unemployed (i.e. more than 6 months) when comparing 2010 with 2009 and both men and women are part of this increase. Long term unemployment is growing among young people, between the ages of 15-24. There has been a debate though on how to measure long term unemployment. Persons that participate in job creating measures through the local employment services, and persons that are going in and out of different short time employments are e.g. not included in this statistics. There is a lack of knowledge on the characteristics of long term unemployment, but according to the Swedish Public Employment Service the major groups are persons with functional limitations, low level of education and immigrants (Arbetsförmedlingen 2011).

The Swedish labour market is to a high degree gender divided, as to what kind of work men and women are occupied with and which sector that dominates. The public sector is predominantly occupied by women. There are still gender differences in wage levels. In 2008 Swedish women earned 84.2 per cent of the men's wages. When taking different factors like occupation, education, age and working time into consideration the difference is 6.6 per cent (Medlingsinstitutet 2009). There are some differences between men and women when it comes to participating on the labour market. Of the men 73.9 per cent are part of the labour force. Corresponding figure for women is 67.4 per cent. 67.1 of the men are employed and 61.8 per cent of the women (Statistics Sweden 2010b).

Recent labour market research indicates that there exists a rather extensive ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labour market (de los Reyes 2006). Migrants - and in particular migrants from non-European countries - are unemployed to a considerable higher level and have lower incomes than natives Swedes (Rydgren 2004). Rydgren (2004) identifies three mechanisms of exclusion as particularly important; statistical discrimination (based on stereotypical thinking), network effects (due to separated, ethnically homogeneous networks), and institutional discrimination. With the latter Rydgren refers to state programmes and legislation that sometimes have unintended consequences that can lead to institutional discrimination (p. 698).

3.4. Recent developments

The unemployment rates increased with the recent financial crises, but not to any substantial higher levels than in other periods of recession. For the Swedish economy the financial crises in the early 1990s had much more thoroughgoing effects which resulted in structural changes on the labour market. Up till the end of the 1980s Sweden had very low unemployment rates, which changed dramatically at the beginning of the 1990s when the country experienced the most severe labour market crisis since the 1930s. The labour market has recovered since then but the unemployment rates have remained at a higher level than before the crisis of the 1990s (Attström 2007).

The most substantial effects of the 2000' crisis have been on groups that possess low levels of education. For a majority of the new vacancies candidates are required to have at least a grade from secondary school, and the tendency seems to be rising demands on higher education (Konjunkturinstitutet). Other effects of the recent financial crises are cut backs in the social security system with new, lower compensation levels and introduction of shorter time limits. This is further described above.

Labour market issues are debated at the national level and often make a political battle between the right wing government and the left wing opposition. Currently debated issues are (1) the described above, "mismatch" on the labour market between requested qualifications for new vacancies and the existing education and skills among the unemployed labour force. (2) High unemployment rates among young people. The political blocs are debating on how to get young people into work and whether the strong legal protection for employees stated in the Employment Protection Act make a hindrance for young peoples entrance to the labour market. Swedish politicians have e.g. been looking towards the model implemented in Denmark of "flexicurity". (3) High unemployment levels for immigrants. "Ethnic entrepreneurs" are e.g. publicly celebrated as a way to solve this problem. But these enterprises often struggle with long working hours, bad profitability and no social security and enterprises that survives because of family members voluntary work (Schierup 2006) (5) Tax subsidies for services in and for households as a way to transfer informal services to formal and a way to integrate immigrants on the labour market. This type of services is emphasised, in a political consensus, as a market which

enable immigrants to start small enterprises. (6) Cut backs and new time limits in the social security systems - as described above - with transfer of people from the health insurance fund to the local employment offices.

A new trend in the field of employment that has been implemented on the local level is organisational coordination between authorities like insurance offices and employment offices in line with "one-stop-shop-models". One primary target group for this development is persons on long term sick leave. (In line with the changes in time limits for sickness allowances as described above). A concrete example of a "one-stop-shop-model" is the "jobs market squares" that has been developed in Stockholm. The aim is described as: "from welfare to work" and a target group is persons on long term social assistance. The "jobs market squares" are administered by local employment offices by organised in cooperation with other authorities, employers and organisations. "Job Market Square is also working with agencies, organisations, foundations, associations and the Employment Service and Insurance to get best results." (From the website www.stockholm.se/Arbete/Jobbtorg-Stockholm). A part of this trend is that private actors are coming in to this field, working for the local employment offices as coaches for long term unemployed. They are e.g. involved in the "one-stop-shop-models" and in other programs as described above. The work of the coaches has also been debated in media as it is a fairly expensive system but no actual control on skills and results for the coaches.

4. 4. CHILD CARE

According to the official rhetoric, Swedish national child care has two aims. The first is to "make it possible for parents to combine parenthood with employment or studies" and the other is to "support and encourage children's development and learning and help them grow up under conditions that are conducive to their well-being" (National Agency for Education 2001: 3). This dual-purpose approach was officially laid down in the early 1970s with the launching of a large-scale development program for Swedish child care. Along with the parental insurance and child benefit systems, child care has since that time allegedly been a cornerstone of Swedish family welfare policy while at the same time having an explicitly educational orientation.

4.1. Demand and supply

The roots of the Swedish child care system can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century. Industrialisation and migration to the towns had given rise to widespread poverty among families. Infant crèches were opened for the children of single mothers obliged to work for a living. Work shelters took in schoolchildren from poor families in the afternoons while at the same time trying to teach them some rudimentary crafts. Both the crèche and the work shelter were social institutions usually run by private citizens or by charities. They were soon joined by the kindergartens. Kindergartens were educationally oriented and were attended mainly by the children of well-to-do families (National Agency for Education 2001).

It has been argued that most child care at this time was provided and performed by civil society (Vamstad 2007). The civil society child care of the first half of the 20th century, however, has little to nothing in common with the civil society child care of today. At that point, child care was a charitable relief for the children that had fallen outside the family-based social structures that characterised welfare. The developments thereafter could be summarised as follows:

- During the 1930s and 1940s the public authorities gradually assumed greater responsibility for the care and fostering of children. In the mid-1940s,

government grants were introduced in Sweden for both work shelters and infant crèches. A growing number of local authorities took over the running of the crèches, which were renamed day nurseries, and of the work shelters, which became leisure-time centres. The number of children attending these centres however was still fairly modest.

- In the 1960s demand for child care increased. Female labor was in demand and calls for a major expansion of child care facilities intensified. In 1968 the government appointed a special commission, *the National Commission on Child Care*, instructing it to develop a proposal on a child care system that could meet social, educational, and supervisory needs (e.g. SOU 1971/1977). The proposal of the Commission has influenced the trajectory of Swedish child care since that time. Among other things it laid the foundations for the Swedish preschool model. Day care centres and playschools were to be combined in a preschool system that would serve the interests of children as well as allowing parents to work or study.
- Despite rapid progress in the development of the child care system in the 1970s and early 1980s in Sweden, local authorities were unable to expand facilities to such an extent that the waiting list for places disappeared. The birthrate had increased rapidly, as had the number of mothers in employment. Legislation was therefore revised in 1995, formally requiring local authorities to provide child care without undue delay for all children requiring it.

One factor explaining the rapid growth of child care in Sweden was the political and economical motive of making women, previously tied to family obligations, available for work in the growing industries (Vamstad 2007). Another motive was the concern over the low birth rates during the early to mid 20th century. Paradoxically enough, this was seen as a result of women giving up family life for salaried work. Child care was in other words an important measure for allowing for more children while simultaneously providing labor in the expanding industrial economy of Sweden. These motives were in the latter period of the 20th century complemented with educational concerns.

In Sweden, all children are entitled to a preschool place. Child care has been an integral part of the Swedish welfare system for almost three decades, and public child care is formally extended to children aged 1-12. In Sweden, compulsory school begins at the age of seven but prior to that almost all six-year-olds attend voluntary preschool classes designed to prepare them for the first grade. Children who have yet to start school or preschool classes for six-year-olds can attend regular preschools, family day care homes and open preschools while older children have access to leisure-time centres, family day care homes and open leisure-time activities (National Agency for Education 2001).

- The **preschool** cares for children while their parents are away working or studying or if the children have special needs of their own. Preschools are open all year round and daily opening times are varied to fit in with parents' working hours. Children are registered and the parents pay a fee (with a cap, see below) that in most areas is linked to the family's income and the child's attendance.³
- The **family day care home** involves municipal child-minders providing care in their own homes while the parents are working or studying. The children are registered and opening hours are again varied to fit in with the parents'

³A note related to fees: Children born in Sweden are entitled to child allowance, regardless of attendance in child care. A parent does not need to apply for child allowance. The benefit is paid from the month after the birth of the child or later if the child moves to Sweden. The child allowance is tax-free and is paid until the quarter when the child reaches the age of 16. The child allowance is currently about 120 € per child and month. Large family supplement is paid automatically if child allowance is received for at least two children.

schedules. The family pays a fee in the same way as for preschool care. Family day care complements preschool by providing for children who for one reason or another need to be in smaller groups or who live far from the nearest preschool facility. This alternative is more common in rural areas and in small towns than in metropolitan areas. The number of children in family day care has steadily declined since the late 1980s.

- The **open preschool** is an alternative to regular preschool for the children of parents who are at home during the day. It also supplements family day care. Together with their parents or municipal child-minders, children are invited to take part in a pedagogical group activity. In some housing areas, open preschools collaborate with public bodies like the social welfare services and the maternity care and child health care services. The children are not registered and are not required to attend regularly. Most open preschools are free of charge.
- The **leisure-time centre** provides care for children whose parents are in gainful employment or studying during the time the child is not in school, that is early mornings, afternoons, and during holidays. Leisure-time centres are open all year round and daily opening hours are varied to fit in with parents' schedules. As in the case of preschool and family day care, parents pay a fee (with a cap, see below), which in most areas is linked to the family's income and the child's overall attendance.
- **Open leisure-time activities** are described in the Education Act as an alternative to leisure-time centres and family day care for children aged 10-12. Such facilities however are not very widespread. In 2001, about three quarters of the country's local authorities lacked open activities directed at this age group (National Agency for Education 2001).

In the autumn of 2000, the Swedish parliament passed a decision on the introduction of another set of child care reforms. These reforms aimed at providing more children with access to preschool and leisure time centres and providing free child care facilities available to all children (National Agency for Education 2001).

- One of these reforms, introduced in 2002, was the introduction of a maximum fee for preschool activities and care of school-age children. This implicated that a ceiling was set on the fees payable by parents for their children. In preschool, the fee charged may be no more than between one and three per cent of the family's income, depending on how many children the family would have. For the local authorities, the introduction of the maximum fee was voluntary. Those municipalities that adopted the new system received compensation for loss of income.
- Another reform introduced is that local authorities from 2001 and onwards are made liable to offer places at preschool or in a home day care nursery to children between one and five years old whose parents are unemployed. Previously, this obligation extended only to children whose parents were employed or who were studying. Consequently, children are from 2001 to be guaranteed a place at the preschool or a family day care home for at least three hours per day. From 2002, the obligation also applies to children whose parents are on parental leave with a younger sibling.⁴

⁴ Sweden provides generous parental leave in international comparison. All working parents are entitled to 16 months paid leave per child, the cost being shared between employer and the state. To encourage greater paternal involvement in child-rearing, a minimum of 2 months out of the 16 is required to be used by the "minority" parent - usually the father. Some Swedish political parties on the political left even argue for legislation to oblige families to divide the 16 months equally between both parents.

- Finally, from 2003 universal preschool has been introduced for all four and five-year olds, regardless of the circumstances. All children are from this point in time offered free schooling for at least 525 hours per year, equivalent to about three hours per day during the school terms.

A survey made in 2005 showed that parents have been affected by these new reforms and are adapting to them. For example, the number of children aged 1-5, with an unemployed or a parent on parental leave, attending preschool increased significantly between 1999 and 2002. The survey from 2005 indicated a continuation in this trend, although at a slower pace. And close to 88 per cent of all 1-5 year olds in Sweden are consequently today in preschool or in a family day care home. Of those not attending child care, about 50 per cent are at home with a parent on parental leave (National Agency for Education 2007a).

Proportions of different types of service providers

It has been argued that the Swedish welfare state is signified by such a high quality public service that the need for complementing private solutions is preempted (SOU 2001:52). However, the past decades in Sweden has been marked by a steady gain made by the for-profit sector as a provider of welfare services (Vamstad 2007). Hence, although most areas of welfare still are dominated by the public sector, private agents are noteworthy in some areas of welfare. Child care is one such area, in which the developments towards diversification have been especially significant.

It has even been argued that the number of non-public providers is unusually large in this field of welfare in Sweden (Vamstad 2007). The expansion of non-public providers in child care has been explained by a host of different factors, such as capacity shortage (Gustavsson 1988), tax reforms (Stensöta 2004), cost-efficiency (Antman 1996), and attempted democratisation (Möller 1996).

In accordance with the above, almost all local authorities in Sweden are able to provide places at a preschool, at a leisure-time centre, or in a family day care home without undue delay. At the same time, local authorities are also obliged to provide grants for non-municipal child care, that is undertakings run by a principal other than the local authority.

Table 8. Service providers in Sweden (National Agency for Education 2011)

	Number of local authorities with child care	Number of institutions (% of total)	Number of children (% of total)
Total	290	19 152	856 922
Local authority as principal	290	14 844 (78%)	725 777 (85%)
Private principal*	250	4 308 (22%)	131 145 (15%)

* No information available on the distinction between for-profit and non-profit (e.g. National Agency for Education 2011). Information exist, but requires specific data-sets from SCB (Interview 2011-04-20).

As a consequence, the number of non-public child care providers more than tripled in the early 1990s and the number of children attending them quadrupled during the same time

period (Vamstad 2007). In 2001, about 15 per cent of all registered children in preschools attended a facility that operated under non-municipal auspices. The figure is almost twice as high if one only studies the major urban areas of Sweden (Pestoff *et al.* 2004). In 2010 that number for all forms of child care was still about 15% (National Agency for Education 2011).

The most common form was the parent cooperative (National Agency for Education 2001). Of the non-public child care, parent cooperatives constitute about 44% while the for-profit providers make up just over 20%. Another 20% of the non-public preschools belong to a diverse category comprising of actors such as the Church of Sweden and other civil society organisations. The remaining percentage is mainly composed of worker cooperatives (SOU 2007:37). The principal difference between parent and worker cooperatives is, of course, that the worker cooperatives are run collectively by staff, whereas parents run the parent cooperatives.

Notable is that child care provided by the local authorities tend to have more children per institution than the privately owned. A number of local authorities in Sweden also lack facilities operated under non-municipal auspices, a fact more common among the smaller local authorities (National Agency for Education 2008).

Local demands for and changes in demand for child care services

There were significant changes in the demand during the period of 1970-1995 in Sweden. These were addressed by child care reforms taking place in the 1990s (National Agency for Education 2001). Having said this, the past ten years have seen local demand increase dramatically in some of the major cities of Sweden, such as Stockholm, where local authorities are struggling to meet the demand in certain popular parts. Previous relocation patterns, according to which younger couples moved to the suburbs with their children, are no longer valid, and a trend of families with younger children staying in the cities poses a challenge for local authorities. There are even reports of guarantees of child care place being issued by local authorities related to the purchase of certain apartments in residential areas under development (DN 2011). Despite changes in the demand during the past ten years, most local authorities in Sweden are on a general level argued to still being able to provide places at a preschool, at a leisure-time centre or in a family day care home without undue delay.

When it comes to the demand for child care, the vast majority of parents with children aged 1-5 (over 90 per cent) are satisfied with the kind of care that their children have according to a questionnaire carried out in 2005 (National Agency for Education 2007a). The percentage satisfied is higher when children are in preschool than when they have other forms of child care (92 per cent versus 87 per cent). Most satisfied are the parents whose children attend private preschools and least satisfied are those who use some form of private settlement as a nanny, relatives, neighbors, etc. Even school children's parents are satisfied with their child care (93 per cent of total), and especially if the child has some form of child care, compared with 83 per cent of those who do not.

Of those not satisfied with the child care, those who have their children in preschool would usually prefer some other form of preschool instead or some kind of improvement in the current form (National Agency for Education 2007a). This applies to 40 per cent of those not satisfied with a child in preschool. Almost as often, the parents want to be home with their child. In families where children are at home with parents and the parents are not satisfied with the situation, about three quarters would prefer primarily a place in a preschool or a family day-home. Furthermore, of the parents of 6-9 year olds who are not satisfied with the child's form of child care, more than 60 per cent would prefer to stay

home with the child. Of those who are at home with their child, and are not happy with it, just under 60 per cent prefers instead that the child would have a place in leisure-time activities (primarily focused on recreational activities).

Why does the child not have the child care the parents wish for? The most common reason for 1-5 year olds not attending preschool, even though the parents wish for it, is that there is no place (National Agency for Education 2007a). Just over four in ten parents who would prefer preschool for their child but do not have it, state that it is due to lack of space. About 10 per cent of parents say that it is too expensive. Somewhat fewer state reasons related to quality deficiencies in preschool. 16 per cent say it is not possible for the child to attend preschool due to the operating hours or distance to the preschool. Among those who would like to stay at home with their children, the economy is the most common obstacle. Three out of four parents who would prefer to stay home with their preschool children, but are not, argue that it would be too expensive. Moreover, why do not the children aged 6-9 have the care the parents wish for? Local authority regulations (children of unemployed or parents on parental leave do not have similar access) and lack of space are the most common responses among parents with children aged 6-9 desiring leisure-time activities for their children. About 50 per cent of the parents in this group answer the question this way. And of those parents who would like to stay at home with the child, just over half says that it is impossible for economic reasons.

"New demand" for child care declined markedly between 1999 and 2002 as a result of the reforms in the early 2000s (National Agency for Education 2007a).⁵ It was primarily demand for new places for children of unemployed or parents on parental leave who declined. According to the 2005 survey, there is still some new demand, especially among schoolchildren. For children aged 1-5 years the demand for places is in principle satisfied for children whose parents are working or studying. Only a few per cent of the children in other groups, such as children of unemployed or parents on parental leave, there is demand for places. In total, the demand for new places for children aged 1-5 is one percentage, or approximately 5000 children. Furthermore, in total new demand for children between 6-9 year-olds is only one percentage of all children in that age group, or about 4,000 children. The demand for places is in principle satisfied when the parents are employed or studying. However, there is a new demand of about six per cent for children whose parents are unemployed or on parental leave.

4.2. Structure of the administration

During the 1990s, "governance by the rulebook" has been replaced by a more target-oriented and results-oriented system when it comes to division of responsibilities among national, regional, and local governments in managing child care. This means that the central government in Sweden now outlines the overall goals for child care while the local authorities are responsible for implementing them. In accordance with these developments, in 1996 the government moved responsibility for child care from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Science as part of an effort to reform and expand early childhood education and care (National Agency for Education 2001).

The regulations governing child care are set out in the Education Act. The present Education Act came into force in 1995 and prescribed stricter compliance on the part of the local authorities than previously. The Act defines the forms of child care that are to be provided. It also spells out the obligation of local authorities to provide child care for

⁵ The concept of "new demand" refers to the proportion of all children in an age group without a place in the preschool or leisure-time activities, but whose parents wish for a place.

children aged 1-12 to the extent required in order for parents to work or study (National Agency for Education 2001).

The National Agency for Education is the central supervisory authority for both child care and schooling. Its tasks include ensuring fulfilment of the national goals for child care by means of follow-ups, evaluation, development research and supervisory work, and generally supporting progress in the child care sector (National Agency for Education 2001).

Child care in Sweden is financed partly by central government grants and partly by tax revenue and parental fees (see previous sections on parental fees). The government grants are not specifically earmarked for child care but are part of a general-purpose grant to local authorities to be used for a number of different sectors (National Agency for Education 2001).

Practically all child care in Sweden is heavily subsidised by public funding, including parent cooperative child care and even private for-profit child care (Vamstad 2007). The funding is based on a fixed sum per child plus possible additional funds to cover housing costs in cases where the preschool is not located in municipal housing. In order to be eligible for public funding, the preschool has to be certified by the local authority. The criteria varies with different local authorities, but a general criterion is that the child care should be in accordance with the social service law and its different paragraphs Sundell & Ståhle 1996).

Local authorities distribute resources to preschools and other organisations based on volume (based on the number of children, their age, and daily attendance) and additional resources when necessary, which could be based on socio-economic factors, a child's special need, and language support (National Agency for Education 2008). More than three in four local authorities distribute 80 per cent of the resources solely based on volume rather than needs and different circumstances of the children. A report shows that the effects of such a system leads to large groups of children with fewer teachers (National Agency for Education 2007a).

Roles and responsibilities of private for profit, non-profit organisations and parents

Financed and regulated by local authorities various forms of organisations can provide child care. In reality, this means that local authorities run child care facilities, as well as private for profit companies, non-profit organisation, and employee and parent cooperatives.

Moreover, parent cooperatives aside, parents have long played a part in the child care system on an everyday level. According to the general conception, during the settling-in period for the child, which may take up to two weeks for the youngest children, the groundwork is laid for close contacts between parents and staff. This interaction is further enhanced in the daily contacts that are supposed to follow, for instance when the parents deliver and fetch their children. Parents can allegedly also influence developments by sharing what they have learned about their own particular child. At least once a term, preschools and leisure-time centres organise parents' meetings. Sometimes they may also organise soup dinners, markets or other activities at which children, parents and staff can get together. Regular "progress discussions" are also supposed to take place, at which parents get the chance to talk things over with one or more of the staff at the preschool or leisure-time centre, or with the municipal child-minder (National Agency for Education 2001).

Decentralisation trends in child care

A study from 2010 shows that the preschool organisation is highly decentralised (National Agency for Education 2008). Various reforms have led to the fact that responsibility for preschool activities since the 1990s has become increasingly decentralised. The first national evaluation found that local authorities have implemented a far-reaching decentralisation of responsibilities and decisions in a number of important issues. In many local authorities, it was the managers of the institutions themselves - within the given economic framework - that decided about staff development and planning time, for example. Even in matters of group sizes and activities for children in special needs, decisions were more frequently taken at the organisational level than at the local authority level. Hence, when compared with previous national evaluations of the preschool situation in Sweden, it seems that decentralisation has increased, and resources are more often directed to the institutions from the local authorities. However, resources for children with special needs is one of the areas that are the least decentralised (National Agency for Education 2008). These resources are retained in many local authorities completed at the central level. Two-thirds of the local provide extra money for children with special needs. These resources, however, constitute only a small proportion of preschool budget - an average of 5 per cent.

4.3. Access to child care

Even though it is highly unusual (less than one per cent) that children are at home with a parent working full time from home or who is unemployed, children to parents with university degrees are over represented in private preschools (for-profit and non-profit preschools) (National Agency for Education 2007a). The education level of the parents has previously affected the attendance of children in child care. The increased accessibility, as a result of reforms during the early 2000s, however, has made this difference disappear almost entirely. Close to 80 and 85 per cent of children aged 1-5 are in preschool regardless of the educational background of the parents.

The great difference today concerns the election between a public and a private preschool. According to research, almost 20 per cent of the children, with parents that have at least three years of university education, attend a private preschool. This could be compared to only five per cent when the parents only have a pre-high school education (National Agency for Education 2007a). The birth country and marital status of the parents also carry significance. Children of parents born in another country than Sweden and children of single parents are underrepresented in private preschools (ibid). One reason for the latter may be that individual preschools often are run as parent cooperatives with additional work requirements demanded from the parents, something that may be difficult for single parents to meet.

Parents' education level has previously played a role in whether children aged 6-9 attend child care or not as well. Despite the recent expansion, part of this difference among 6-9 year olds remains. 56 per cent of all 6-9 year olds, whose parents only have pre-high school education, attend after-school, compared to 82 per cent when parents have at least three years of tertiary education. Also the parents' country of birth has been associated with 6-9 year-olds' care. Children use child care more frequently if at least one parent is born in Sweden than if both have been born abroad (National Agency for Education 2007a).

The Education Act includes child care for children up to twelve years. But school activities for 10-12 year olds are claimed to be a "disadvantaged business". Barely one in ten 10-12 year olds attends in leisure-time centre or family day care homes, while seven per cent use

open recreational activities. This means that over half of all 10-12 year olds are by themselves after school before parents get home. For the younger school children the situation is better. Three quarters of the 6-9 year olds use some form of child care. Of the remainder, the vast majority is often with their parents who work but whose hours of work permit that they are at home with the children, taking turns at being at home (National Agency for Education 2007a).

According to research, attendance in child care continues to decrease. In 2005 the average attendance at preschool was 29 hours a week, which was an hour less than in 2002 and two hours less than in 1999. At the family day care home the average attendance is 27 hours; also a decrease since 2002 and 1999. The reduction concerns almost entirely children of unemployed or who have parents on parental leave. In preschool, the average attendance for the children of employed or students have almost not changed at all between 1999 and 2005; hovering at around 32 hours per week. Meanwhile, attendance for children of unemployed or on parental leave is reduced by an average of four or five hours a week. The family day care home evolution has been similar (National Agency for Education 2007a).

As before, having a mother working has been showed to be more significant for the child's attendance in preschool. The longer the mother is working or studying, the longer the child attends preschool every day. It differs from up to 13 hours per week between children whose mothers are working or studying at least 35 hours per week and those whose mothers work part-time or not at all. The father's work or study is not as important. The mothers' occupation is also significant for the attendance of the 6-9 year olds. The longer working hours the mother has, the longer time the 6-9 year olds spend in the child care. For fathers, there is no corresponding trend (National Agency for Education 2007a).

A prerequisite for preschools is the access to well-trained staff, i.e. university educated staff, according to policy documents (National Agency for Education 2008). Local authorities as well as private organisations' ability to recruit well-trained staff varies among different local authorities. The lack of well-trained staff is severest in big cities in Sweden and local authorities located close to these big cities. Moreover, big cities in Stockholm also have a difficult time fulfilling the requirement of the Education Act of providing child care in a timely fashion and in accordance with preferences to all parents (Interview 2011-04-20). One reason for this could be that larger local authorities, such as big cities, find it more difficult to plan for future demand.

In 2006 a regulation on the quality in preschool was introduced, which among other things, meant that each local authority run preschool have to report on its work with continuously improving quality (National Agency for Education 2008). A national evaluation showed that there were variations among local authorities in terms of quality, but primarily among preschools in the same local authority, in particular with regard to external conditions such as preschool child group size, facilities, and opportunities to recruit qualified personnel (National Agency for Education 2008). For example, preschools located in more developed areas (*högresursområden*) often had better conditions and also managed to fulfill its mission more satisfactory compared to preschools located in other areas (*lägresursområden*).

A case study of child care in Stockholm and Östersund, with a particular focus on civil society providers, concluded that these providers are of as good quality as other forms child care (Vamstad 2007). Non-profit providers are hence not a cheap low cost and low quality alternative. Using several indicators used to measure quality, such as staff's education, child per staff ratio, user satisfaction, resources, and work environment, the study supports the notion that Swedish child care is of exceptionally high quality, but that

these characteristics should not be confined to the provision of child care found among local authority providers.

A coalition of private pre schools, organised in the umbrella organisation *SverigesFriståendeFörskolor*, argues that even though the Education Act prescribes the local authorities to treat all preschools in the same manner, private preschools are disadvantaged with effects on quality (Thorburn 2011).

4.4. Recent developments

One hotly debated issue in the area of child care concerns the competence of the teachers at all levels in the educational system (Interview 2011-02-11). The largest trade unions are lobbying for a teacher's certification in an attempt at increasing the legitimacy for their members and as a move to value education higher. Another hot issue relates to how children learn and structural issues connected to learning (National Agency for Education 2010).

Limited impacts of the financial crisis on the field of child care, according to experts (Interview 2011-04-20), certainly not in accessibility, since it is being stipulated by the Education Act. There could be, however, quality aspects. The latest statistics reveal an increase in the number of children per teacher, which could be correlated with the financial crisis.

One of the political parties has opened up the child care system for alternative organisational forms to preschools, more based on family day care activities and parent initiatives (Interview 2011-04-20). Experts at the National Agency for Education are aware of these new forms, but believe them to be limited, with low national appeal.

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Dr. Marie Nordfeldt is Assistant Professor at the Department of Civil Society Studies at ESUC. She has a PhD in Social and Economic Geography from Uppsala University (Sweden). She works as a researcher and lecturer at Ersta Sköndal University College. Main focuses for her research have been relations between civil society organizations and public sector, especially at the local level, and *issues of social exclusion and homelessness*. She participated in an interdisciplinary collaborative research project - Third Sector European Policy (TSEP) - involving nine European countries. She has also participated in Nordic and Swedish research projects studying local welfare systems with comparative perspectives. For the moment, Marie Nordfeldt is project leader of a following up study of the Swedish “compact” that was agreed between the state and civil society organizations in 2008.

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THE WILCO PROJECT

Full title: Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion

Acronym: WILCO

Duration: 36 months (2010-2013)

Project's website: <http://www.wilcoproject.eu>

Project's objective and mission:

WILCO aims to examine, through cross-national comparative research, how local welfare systems affect social inequalities and how they favour social cohesion, with a special focus on the missing link between innovations at the local level and their successful transfer to and implementation in other settings. The results will be directly connected to the needs of practitioners, through strong interaction with stakeholders and urban policy recommendations. In doing so, we will connect issues of immediate practical relevance with state-of-the-art academic research on how approaches and instruments in local welfare function in practice.

Brief description:

The effort to strengthen social cohesion and lower social inequalities is among Europe's main policy challenges. Local welfare systems are at the forefront of the struggle to address this challenge - and they are far from winning. While the statistics show some positive signs, the overall picture still shows sharp and sometimes rising inequalities, a loss of social cohesion and failing policies of integration.

But, contrary to what is sometimes thought, a lack of bottom-up innovation is not the issue in itself. European cities are teeming with new ideas, initiated by citizens, professionals and policymakers. The problem is, rather, that innovations taking place in the city are not effectively disseminated because they are not sufficiently understood. Many innovations are not picked up, because their relevance is not recognised; others fail after they have been reproduced elsewhere, because they were not suitable to the different conditions, in another city, in another country.

In the framework of WILCO, innovation in cities is explored, not as a disconnected phenomenon, but as an element in a tradition of welfare that is part of particular socio-economic models and the result of specific national and local cultures. Contextualising innovations in local welfare will allow a more effective understanding of how they could work in other cities, for the benefit of other citizens.