Child well-being in Sweden

Cecilia von Otter, Ph.D in sociology (Stockholm university). Currently analyst at Swedish schools inspectorate
Children and the Swedish school system

- High coverage, high quality pre-school
- Performance measured from mid school
- Support for low achievers mainly in upper-middle school
- First decisive tracking at age 15

- (In theory) focus in teaching on the (individual) learning process and grading in relation to subject-specific capabilities
- Increasing school segregation by education and migration status
Figure 1. Educational achievement across pupil-SES and school-SES (NBE, 2015)
There’s more to school than meets the eye

• Most adolescents are less aware of the basic mechanisms of learning & assessment in school than one might believe. Formative assessment

“*She [the teacher] describes the skill requirements and how they’re assessed. It’s really good ’cause it tells us what to be mindful of and all that*”

• Lack of ”peace for studies” linked to general teaching qualities

”*it’s much calmer, ’cause everyone knows what to do and why*”
Perceptions of school age 10-18 (NBE 2019)

- In most/all classes the atmosphere is nice and positive
- Most/all teachers can make me interested in their subject
- I feel stressed at school everyday/once a week
- School makes me want to learn more
Children’s social worlds & well-being/ill-health

• School is a safe and friendly place for most

• Parents are used to discuss problems or worries and 90 percent say they get along with parents and that parents have time for them

• Leisure: Organized sports and media/gaming/”being on the internet” among younger children
  ➢ Internet is fully integrated in children's lives and socializing
Health and well-being among adolescents

Occurrence of worries, fear or anxiety among 15-24

- Light problems (girls)
- Light problems (boys)
- Severe problems (girls)
- Severe problems (boys)
Medicalization

Prescriptions per 1000 age 15 to 24

- Tranquilizers /anxiety reduction
- ADHD
- Anti-depressants
- Painkillers
Ending thoughts.

Remind policy-makers to be sensitive to the conditions of childhood, asking them:

- How does this practice affect the majority of children? The most vulnerable children?
- How does this structure foster resilience in children and encourage child agency?

...pushing for policies that enhance children’s social environments while monitoring the socio-economic retribution of ”good” environments