

Experiences of Decentralization in the Swedish School System

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Creating a Democratic and Equal School System

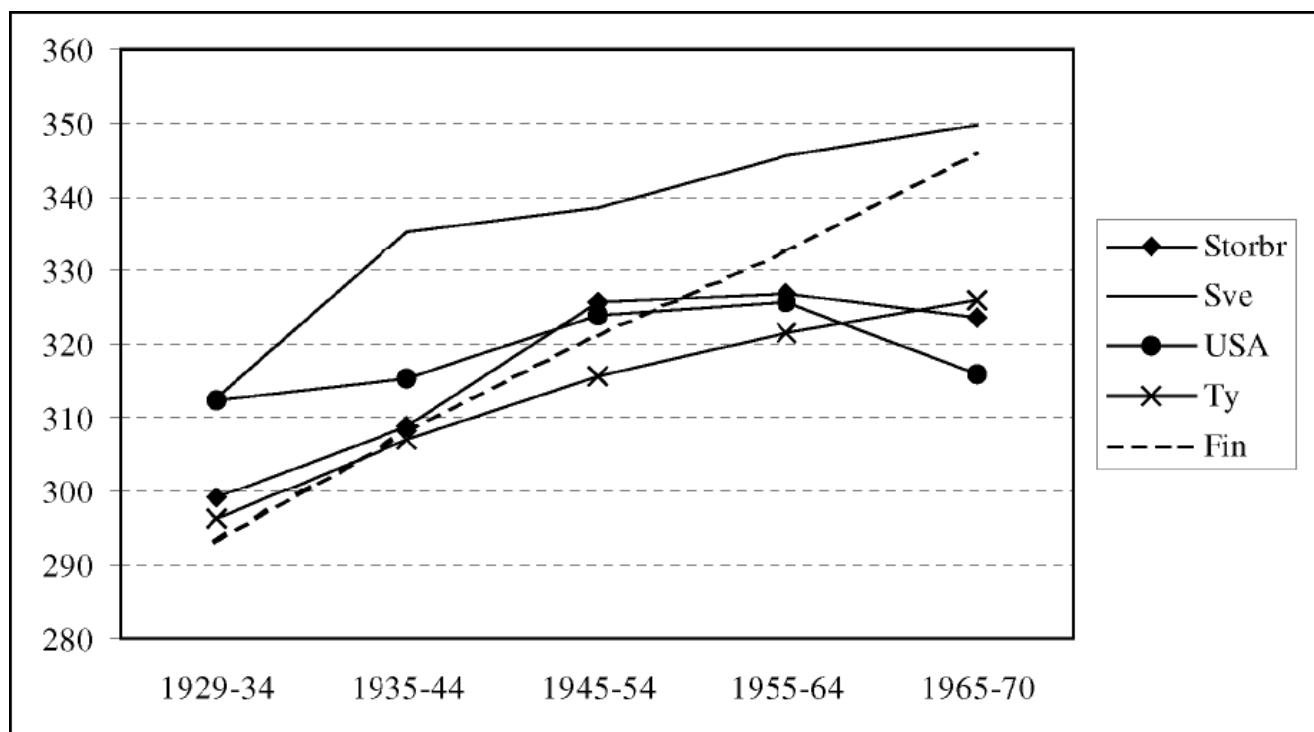
- First step: Creating a Democratic and Equal Framework (resources) with a Unity School
- Second step: Building a Democratic Way of Working in the Classrooms and Schools



Test results for the adult population

Post Secondary Education

Den svenska skolan – effektiv och jämlik?, SNS, 2003



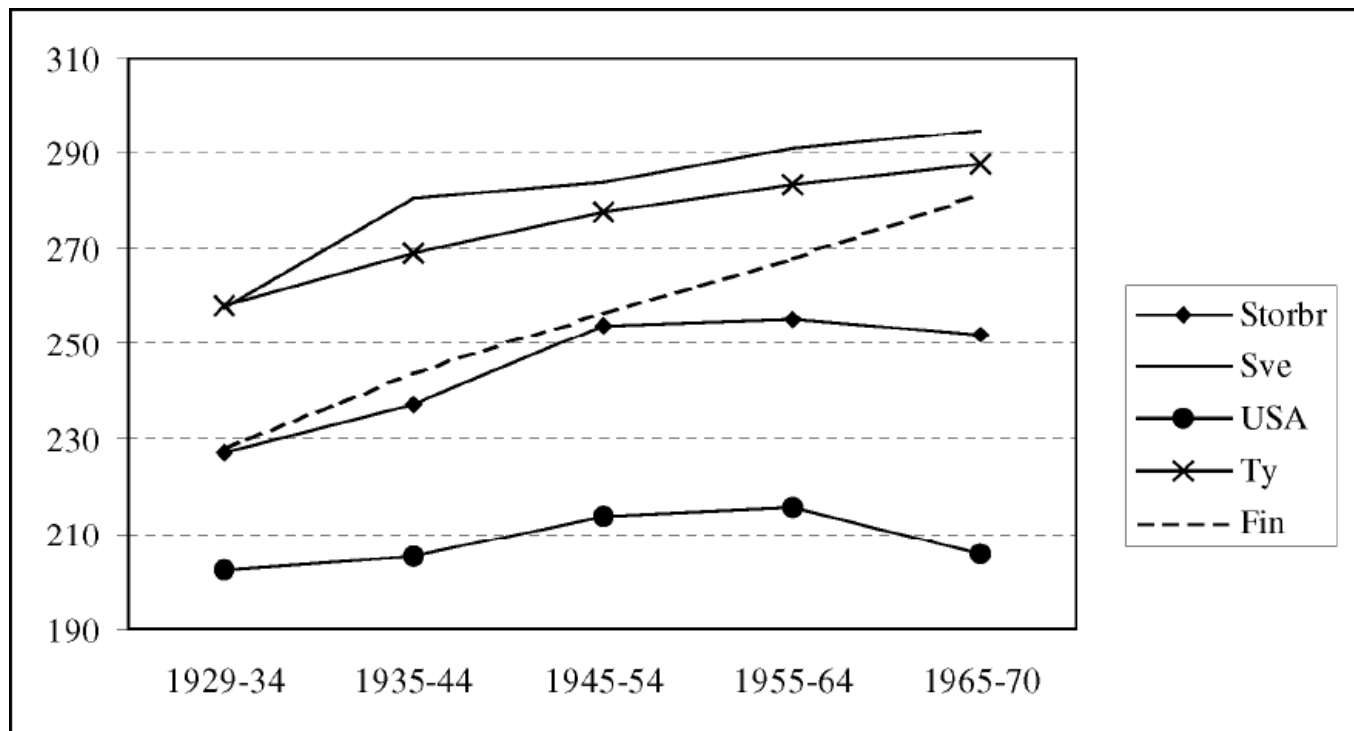
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Test results for the adult population

Primary Education

Den svenska skolan – effektiv och jämlik?, SNS, 2003



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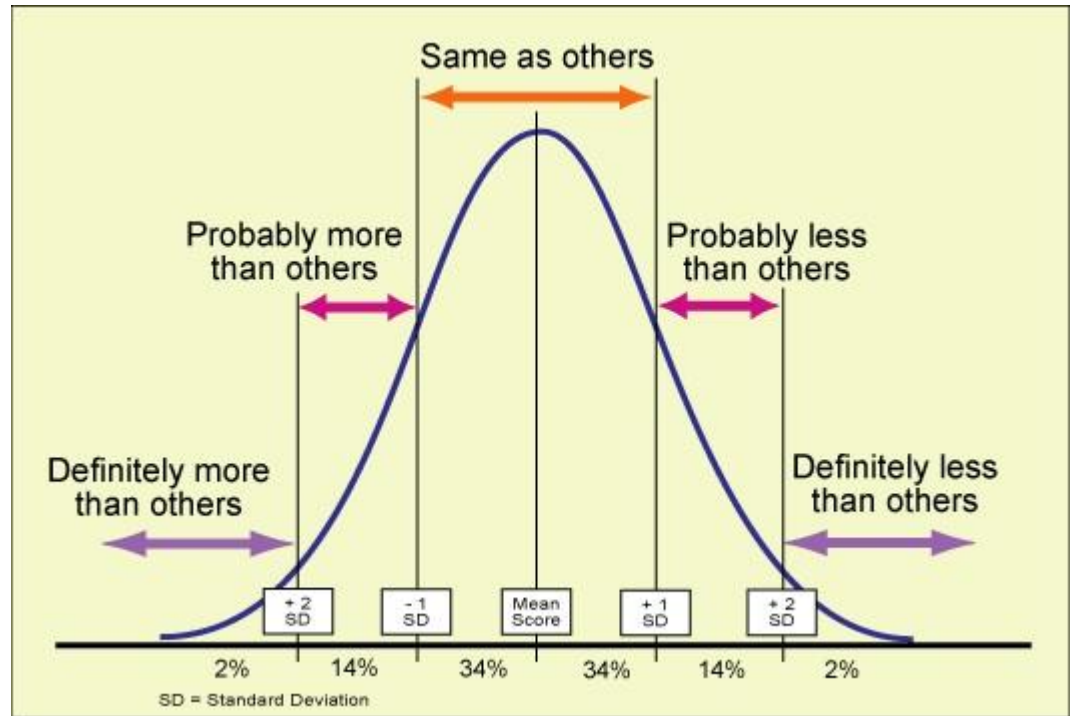
Critique of the School System in the 1970's and 80's

- Bureaucracy
- Over-centralization
- Lack of Democracy
- Lack of Flexibility
- Lack of Adjustment to Individual or Local Needs
- Critique of the Centralized Tests
- Critique of the Grading System



The relative grading system 1962-1994

- **5** -7% Highest
- **4** -24%
- **3** -38% Normal
- **2** -24%
- **1** -7% Lowest



”from government micro-management
to a goal-oriented and decentralized
school system”



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Swedish school reforms during the early 1990's

- Transfer of responsibility for the schools from the national level to the municipalities 1991
- The Royal Swedish Board of Education was replaced by Swedish National Agency for Education 1991
- Freedom of choice
- Public funding of Free schools 1992
- School Vouchers
- New curriculum 1994



- New teacher education
- New grading system 1994
- Laxed qualification requirements for headteachers
- Laxed qualification requirements for teachers
- New Union contracts concerning working hours for teachers 1996
- Organization of teachers around pupils – not subjects
- Problem-based Learning



The Results

PISA 2000 – 2009

Reading

From the top to average

Mathematical literacy

From above average to average



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Scientific literacy

From average to below average

Equality for immigrant students

From the top to average

Socio-Economic background

Below average



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TIMMS

8th grade Mathematics

Below average

8th grade Science

Average

“Sweden is one of the countries in the OECD that has weakened its results most in Mathematics and Science since 1995.”



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4th grade Mathematics

Below average

4th grade Science

Average



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TIMMS 2008 Advanced 1 Upper Secondary Mathematics

Last (out of 5 participating countries)

412 points compared to the best that had 552

Physics

Next to the last

497 compared to 582



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“79 % of Compulsory Schools for the earlier years don’t know the learning development of each pupil in every subject.”

The Swedish School Inspectorate 2008



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Grades – at present

- More than a quarter of the pupils in the compulsory schools fails to get grades in every subject
- More than half of the students at upper secondary level fails to get grades in every course



Current Swedish School Reforms

- A more powerful Government School Inspectorate
- New School Law
- New Curriculum
- New Grading System (and grades from 6th grade)
- New Teacher Education
- More National Tests
- Higher requirements for entering upper secondary education



Current Debate

- Role of the National Government in Education
- Profits in the School System and the Role of Big Business
- How to teach more efficiently
- How to improve measurement of results
- More focus on subject knowledge



Conclusion



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