Focus on Sweden
Public family policies and their consequences

Ann-Zofie Duvander
Demography unit, Sociology Department
Stockholm University
Parental leave

- 8 months to each parent, but possible to “transfer” days
- Income replaced at 77.6%
- Possible to extend by adding unpaid days
- Very flexible, can use part of days
- Mothers use ~75% of all parental leave

>>Children’s time home with parent before preschool varies considerably
Preschool

- Guarantee of place at age 1 since ~ 2000
- Subsidized and same cost for all, maximum ~130 Euro for first child, less for second, meanst-tested
- Part of educational system, pedagogics important
- Increasing share of tertiary educated personnel
- Private alternatives available, but same rules and costs apply
Labor market

• Parents have protected employment when on parental leave (also extended leave)
• Right to reduce work hours to 75% until child is 8 years old
• Children reduced right to preschool when parent is unemployed or on leave (minimum provision 15 hours a week)
• Preschool has extended opening hours (7-18) and night-childcare is sometimes available
The share of children in preschool 1995-2014

Source: The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2015
Age in weeks by which 50 per cent of the children have started preschool
Children born 1995-2008

Source: Own calculations in Viklund and Duvander 2016
Differences in age of entry into preschool (in weeks) between income groups
Children born 1995-2008

Source: Own calculations in Viklund and Duvander 2016
Consequences

• Children
  – Uniformity of childhood
  – Positive outcomes of early education (?)

• Parents
  – Facilitates labor market participation
  – No care gap
  – Gender equal aims in part reached

• Fertility
  – Relatively high and stable by cohort
  – Gender equality enhancing fertility (?)
Concerns and challenges

• Good or bad with long time home before preschool?
• Quality of preschool a constant concern and discussion
  – Large groups of children
  – Education of personnel
  – Division between public and private alternatives
• Marginalised groups’ access to family policy
  – Start earlier or not at all?
  – Flat rate parental leave
  – Fewer hours in preschool