**European Sociology Association. Annual Meeting August, 2015, Prague, Czechoslovakia**

**Session: RN10 Sociology of Education. '5' Studies on social class and inequalities in education**

“The Paradox of Maintaining Educational Equality in Swedish Schools”
Wilfred Lau and Antoinette Hetzler

Swedish primary schools balance goals of maintaining high educational outcomes for all students with individual freedom for students, and their family, to choose their school. Different combinations of gender, ethnicity and social class of students can change a school’s social environment in a relatively short time period as students change their choice of school and move from one part of the city to another. This paper examines six different schools from two different areas of Sweden. The paper is based on a panel study of 800 students (2014-2015) in the sixth and eight grades as they go through three terms of school. Each class, during each term, has experienced students coming and going. The theoretical basis of the study is a focus on the concepts of stress and support from three different sources: school, family and peers and how it affects aggressive behavior and school outcomes. Results show that family support and support from teachers is negatively related, support from peers decreases in schools with patterns of movement of new groups of students entering or leaving a school. Support from teachers shifts from girls in the 6th grade to boys in the 8th grade. The paper concludes with an analysis of the mechanisms of perpetuating equality/inequality when where you live or family income, does not alone determine the school you attend.

Session: RN 32 Poltical Sociology

“Guaranteeing Social Rights and Regulating the Public Sector”
Colm Flaherty and Antoinette Hetzler

One of the biggest dilemmas facing the modern welfare state is how to advance and guarantee social rights for citizens while developing distributive models that incorporate cultural diversity. No where is this challenge more prevalent than in regulating institutions within the public sector charged with guaranteeing rights, particularly the right to equal education in a safe environment. Charged with the role of regulator, nation states attempt to mitigate local conflicts and dampen discontent as growing inequality in access to and in distribution of social services takes a decided cultural profile mirroring growing cleavages within the population.

This paper focuses on a comparison of regulating the quality and safety of education in Sweden and in the United States. Sweden, a welfare state, has over a sixty-year history of legislating equality and safety at school for all students yet truancy rates are high and children born outside of Sweden have lower school results than their Swedish peers. The United States, a liberal state with a history of race segregation, relies on federal and state legislation for bettering its school system, while Sweden has put into place an intensive National Inspection system. The paper presents an analysis of the differences and the consequences of the two systems and concludes that a type of principle-based self-regulation seems to be at work as an ad hoc solution in both systems although not formally acknowledged. The paper suggests that both systems, in differing degree, suffer from regulation failure.