

Gender, Work and Family issues in Sweden
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Acker, Joan. 1994. "Chapter 1: Women, Families, and Public Policy in Sweden." Pp. 33-50 in *Women, the Family, and Policy*. Albany, New York: State U of New York Press.

This chapter examines Sweden and its policies in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Sweden is recognized as having the most progressive policies for both gender equality and family care, but it is pointed out that Sweden is still failing to achieve full gender equality, despite the progressive policies. The author finds that both parents are generally in the work force, but women are typically only employed part-time in poorer quality jobs. Women still spend more time doing unpaid care work, overall, than men, and it is suggested that Sweden still favors production over reproduction.

Andersson, Gunnar, Anne-Zofie Duvander and Karsten Hank. 2003. *Do Childcare Characteristics Influence Continued Childbearing in Sweden? An Investigation of the Quantity, Quality and Price Dimension*. Rostock, Germany: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research www.demogr.mpg.de.

A regional study of the impact that the availability and quality of childcare has on the decision to bear multiple children. In searching for a correlation between childcare and fertility rates, the findings were not what the researchers were expecting in some cases ended up being counterintuitive. This fact led the researchers to conclude that it is the numerous other benefits that Swedish family policy offers that aid in families continuing to have children despite being unhappy with local childcare facilities.

Bjonberg, Ulla. 2004. "Making Agreements and Managing Conflicts: Swedish Dual-Earner Couples in Theory and Practice." *Current Sociology* 52(1):33-52.

This article looks at Sweden, its gender equality policies, and the actual practices of heterosexual families from a theoretical perspective with an emphasis on agency. The author is able to look at the practices of families via a study of 22 couples, and she pays particular attention to how work and money are divided up in order to create a viable reciprocity. A theme within the article is the dichotomy of autonomy and community between the heterosexual couples and how they manage to balance the two through bargaining. Various scenarios are studied to learn how families delegate responsibilities of work and family within this socialist state. The article concludes with the suggestion that more policy must be created to ensure that men assume more of the care and domestic work, and to ensure societal membership for women.

Bygren, Magnus and Ann-Zofie Duvander. 2006. "Parents' Workplace Situation and Fathers' Parental Leave Use." *Journal of Marriage & Family* 68(2):363-372.

This article addresses the “hot topic” of Swedish fathers taking parental leave, and attempts to explain the different ways in which the workplace context might affect the amount of leave they actually use. In this study, the authors came up with several hypotheses to test the influence of several independent variables: the public/private sector, size, percentage of women, behavior of other fathers for each parent’s workplace; and the age, seniority, education, and income of each parent. The authors concluded that several factors in the father’s workplace are likely to affect the amount of leave he takes, but that the mother’s workplace does not usually have much influence. This article also gave a great background of Swedish family policy, including years and an outline of various aspects of policy.

Calasanti, Toni M. and Carol A. Bailey. 1991. "Gender Inequality and the Division of Household Labor in the United States and Sweden: A Socialist-Feminist Approach." *Social Problems* 38(1):34-53.

This cross cultural study delves into the subject of persisting gender inequality in regards to the household division of labor. The choice to compare the US with Sweden was to reflect the influence that progressive legislation might have on household attitudes gender equality. They examine the impact that work prestige, income and hours available have on who does what in the home. When comparing the results from the two countries, there are both significant differences and similarities. And although Sweden seems to have progressed thanks to its laws and policies, gender still proves to hold high connotations in terms of the home.

Carlson, Allan. 2005. "Sweden and the failure of European family policy." *Society* 42(6):41-45.

Carlson offers a little heard if not drastic view on the European attitude towards family and work practices. He argues that “radical feminism” has taken hold in Sweden and that it is as fault for falling fertility rates in the country. The push towards making it is easier for mothers to work and an egalitarian workplace will ultimately lead to the extinction of a new generation. He goes on to champion America as the most successful modern country in terms of if family values.

Evertsson, Marie and Magnus Nermo. 2004. "Dependence within Families and the Division of Labor: Comparing Sweden and the United States." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(5):1272-1286.

This article examines the gendered division of labor from the 1970s-2000 in both Sweden and the United States. These two countries are compared due to the large percentage of employed women within the respective countries. Evertsson and Nermo note that while women have taken on more of a role in the workforce, men have not expanded their role nearly as much into domestic and care work. While Sweden relies on public policy for solutions, the United States allows the market to provide solutions. The authors conclude that the relative resource-bargaining perspective best explains the reasons for the

inequalities in the gendered division of labor in Sweden, while the doing-gender approach best explains the inequalities in the United States.

Galtry, Judith. 2002. "Child Health: An Underplayed Variable in Parental Leave Policy Debates?" *Community, Work & Family* 5(3):257-278.

Galtry's article looks at parental leave policies in the context of the physical health of infants. She closely examines Sweden and the United States to see how these two countries balance gender equality and the health of infants. Increased parental leave is found to improve the health of the child because it facilitates breastfeeding, which is found to be very beneficial to infants, and it reduces the amount of time that children are exposed to diseases within a daycare facility. Sweden grants a significant amount of parental leave, after the birth of a child, thus facilitating the improved health of the infant. When compared to Sweden, the United States is seen to be significantly lacking in policies, with the exception of FMLA, that allow quality parental leave.

Gornick, Janet C. and Marcia K. Meyers. 2003. *Families that Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. 1st ed. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

In this book, Gornick and Meyers study countries that are economically similar to the United States and observe how they handle the family-work conflict in contrast to the U.S.'s solutions. The authors articulate two specific reasons for the book; they want to improve child development, and they want gender equality within the workforce and labor market. To achieve their goals they introduce an idealistic, utopian model known as the Dual-Earner Dual-Carer society. Within this model, men and women are to equally share both paid and unpaid labor. This book provided the framework for my understanding of the family-work conflict. Sweden is a country studied within the book, and it is recognized as a leader, in the westernized-world, in the balance for gender equality and child development.

Haas, Linda and C. Philip Hwang. 2007. "Gender and Organizational culture: Correlates of Companies' Responsiveness to Fathers in Sweden." *Gender & Society* 21(1):52-79.

Haas and Hwang use this article to look at how organizational culture effects paternal leave time in Sweden. The authors go into the study suggesting that organizational culture competes for loyalties with the family, and is a host to very competitive workplaces that discourage the use of leave time. After studying 317 fathers from 6 organizations in Sweden, the authors conclude that the Swedish workplace is quite supportive of paternal leave. Sweden is a very egalitarian country, and the efforts by the government to encourage the use of paternal leave have been successful. Masculinity does not dominate Swedish organizational culture, thus facilitating fathers' use of paternal leave.

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This article presents the authors' study of the organizational culture of Swedish companies and the effect on men's parental leave patterns. They found that the workplace atmosphere

has a great influence on if men take leave, and if so, how much. Such attributes include the company's commitment to caring values, the company's level of 'father friendliness,' the company's support for women's equal employment opportunity, fathers' perceptions of support from top managers, and fathers' perceptions of work group norms that reward task performance vs. long hours at work. This study was conducted through survey responses of 317 men, therefore it provides reasonable assumptions of men's attitudes and feelings.

-----, 2000. "Programs and Policies Promoting Women's Economic Equality and Men's Sharing of Child Care in Sweden." Pp. 133-161 in *Organizational Change & Gender Equity: international perspectives on fathers and mothers at the workplace*, edited by L. Haas, P. Hwang and G. Russell. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

This article highlights the two "hot topics" of Swedish work-family policy: encouraging women into paid employment and promoting men's equal involvement in home and child care. The Swedish government policies support these aims, based on the broader ideological goals of gender equality and children's wellbeing, which have been a major focus of Swedish policy for several decades. The authors discuss the degree to which work organizations and unions sustain or impede these general goals through policies, practices, or general attitudes in the workplace. For many organizations, although their actions support these goals, they are not necessarily carried out for the same reasons (aiming toward gender equality or for children's wellbeing). Although a majority of women work outside the home, they are concentrated in the public sector and in part-time positions. It is important to recognize that even with government support, it is hard for individuals to realize a dual-earner/dual-carer family model without the support of their workplace.

Hallerod, Bjorn. 2005. "Sharing of Housework and Money among Swedish Couples: Do They Behave Rationally?" *European Sociological Review* 21(3):273-288.

The Hallerod article take a theoretical approach in examining how Swedish couples, with children, share household work and economic resources. This study is similar to the Evertsson and Neremo article because they both use similar theories of resource bargaining and of doing-gender in examining the sharing of work and money between Swedish spouses. The data is from Swedish couples in 1998. Hallerod finds, in her analysis, that her hypothesis, based on theoretical models on economic rationality, is not supported by her data. She finds that the ability to avoid housework relates to the ability to access money. Essentially, the gendered division of housework and money is not purely economic rationality.

Henz, Ursula and Marianne Sundström. 2001. "Partner Choice and Women's Paid Work in Sweden. The Role of Earnings." *European Sociological Review* 17(3):295-316.

This study looked at the connection between spouses' labor-market participation, earnings, and division of household tasks. They found that the earnings of dual-earner married couples are likely to be positively correlated (and this connection even strengthened over time), while there was less significant correlation among the earnings of cohabiting couples. However, married mothers were less likely than cohabiting mothers to return to full-time

employment after maternity leave. It is also interesting to note that this study found an increase in cohabitation over time. The authors recognized strong work incentives among Swedish women, based on their unlikelihood to leave the job market and their great earning potentials as independent from spouses' earnings.

Klinth, Roger. 2008. "The Best of Both Worlds? Fatherhood and Gender Equality in Swedish Paternity Leave Campaigns, 1976-2006." *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, & Practice about Men as Fathers* 6(1):20-38.

This article discusses the government paternity leave campaigns as a step in promoting the dual-earner/dual-carer family model in Sweden, showing the trends over a 30-year period. It follows the idea that, in addition to government policy reforms, general attitude change is necessary in order for the population to fully adopt this egalitarian model. The campaigns from 1976-2001 "tried to create a social position acceptable to men," showing that fatherhood did not decrease masculinity. While blurring the distinctions between male and female spheres and responsibilities, this method also reinforced a difference between masculinity and femininity. "An important rule of the game has been to develop and communicate gender policy in a way that is not threatening to men." These earlier campaigns focused on the opportunity of paternal leave, rather than the duty. The later campaigns in the early 2000s showed a change in gender relation perspective, encouraging parents to share childrearing responsibilities equally. "Parents were approached as though it is natural and self-evident they will share the parental leave equally."

Lewis, Jane and Gertrude Astrom. 1992. "Equality, Difference, and State Welfare: Labor Market and Family Policies in Sweden." *Feminist Studies* 18(1):59-87.

This article relates to how public policy in Sweden promotes gender equality that is unseen in most western countries. Whereas other countries' public policies view women as mothers and wives, Sweden does not make this same distinction. Although progress is recognized, the authors are quick to point out that Sweden still has many flaws within its system. Domestic labor is still divided unequally, job segregation exists, and, despite the changes for women, it is argued that the position of men in Swedish society has not changed. Sweden's policies may actually force women into the workforce rather than allow them to choose domestic labor. Choice is seen as being compromised.

Meyersson Milgrom, Eva M. and Trond Peterson. 2006. "The Glass Ceiling in the United States and Sweden: Lessons from the Family-Friendly Corner of the World, 1970-1990." Pp. 156-211 in *The Declining Significance of Gender?* New York: Russell Sage.

Barriers to women's advancement to top levels of their respective professions are known as "glass ceilings". This chapter, from a book, examines what the barriers are to women's advancement by studying the United States and Sweden from 1970-1990. The authors discover that there is a "frozen pipeline", in both countries, of qualified female candidates for the top positions. Essentially, women are slowly accruing the years necessary to be experienced enough to gain positions within the top ranks, and this pipeline is expanding. Another phenomenon found within Sweden was the occurrence of age discrimination, only

among women, while men of similar ages continue to advance in their fields. Finally, the unequal division of domestic labor is seen as a final point that holds back women in gaining the social capital necessary for advancement.

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. 2003. *Fact Sheet: Swedish Family Policy*. Stockholm: Government Offices of Sweden. Retrieved 2/25/08 www.sweden.gov.se.

This fact sheet on Swedish Family Policy presents information about government benefits for families with children. Each benefit is outlined with specific eligibility requirements, time limits and monetary amounts (in SEK: Swedish Kroner). The idea of this government support is aimed at reducing disparities between families with children and without, with allowances paid to all children, and additional supplements to families with more than two children.

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. 2007. *Fact Sheet: Financial Support for Families with Children*. Stockholm: Government Offices of Sweden. Retrieved 2/25/08 www.sweden.gov.se.

This fact sheet describes the government financial support for families with children. It is similar to the 2003 fact sheet on Swedish family policy, but with more detail and updated numbers.

Ministry of Industry, Employment, Communications. 2006. *Moving Ahead: Gender Budgeting in Sweden*. Stockholm: Government Offices of Sweden. Retrieved 2/25/08 www.sweden.gov.se.

The Swedish government released this document to outline their plans to fully implement gender equality policies and to describe the logistics of those plans. Today, about half of all government agencies have gender equality requirements, and this document discusses the plan to increase that number; this shows that the governing offices are leading by example. This report presents two unique definitions: gender mainstreaming is the reformulation of policy processes so that gender equality is automatically incorporated at all levels; gender budgeting is the implementation of gender mainstreaming in budgetary processes, which means including gender equality at all levels of the public financial systems.

Moen, Phyllis and Kay B. Forest. 1990. "Working Parents, Workplace Supports, and Well-Being: The Swedish Experience." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 53(2):117-131.

This article reports on a study of the effects of more generous work-family policy on the wellbeing of parents of preschoolers. Although this is an older study, it is important because the sample population is comprised of individuals whose lives were directly affected by the changes in Swedish family policy, back when the current policy was first introduced in the early 1970s. The study compares three cohorts of employed men and women whose oldest child was under age seven in 1968, 1974, and 1981; therefore, one group was before the policy was introduced, one was right as it was implemented, and one was several years after it had been in place. In fact, the study found that over the thirteen years, the gap narrowed

between mothers' and fathers' distress levels (although mothers still experienced greater distress). The decrease of mothers' psychological strains corresponds with the widening of progressive social policy; although the study did not find conclusive evidence of correlation, this observation is still noteworthy.

Morgan, Kimberly J. 2006. *Working Mothers and the Welfare State: religion and the politics of work-family policies in Western Europe and the United States*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

In Chapter 1, Morgan describes the religious foundations of several countries' work-family policies. Sweden experienced a unique early transition to secularization. Although church and state were officially combined in many ways, this "in turn reduced competition over education and the family, enabling the state to more easily assume responsibility for these areas while limiting the growth of a religiously based civil society" (44-45). Chapter 4 in this book discusses the family policies of Sweden and France from 1975-2005. Morgan points out the significant influence that public policies have on individuals' decisions regarding work and family, and vice versa. For example, when Swedish public policy increased incentives for women to seek paid employment, the number of women in the workforce dramatically increased; thus, without women in the home-caretaking roles, there was a greater demand for childcare, and so the public child care system expanded. This chapter also explains various Swedish political parties' positions on child care and family policies

----- 2005. "The 'Production' of Child Care: How Labor Markets Shape Social Policy and Vice Versa." *Social Politics* 12(2):243-263.

This article looks at the childcare policies of France, Sweden, and the United States to see how their respective economies shape childcare. Sweden and France have highly governmentally subsidized social services, but the United States allows many social services to fall to the private market. This has led to highly skilled childcare workers in Sweden and several in France, but the private nature of the U.S. has resulted in significantly lower qualified childcare workers. France and Sweden, especially, have a more socialist tinge on capitalism, whereas the United States has a liberal market form of capitalism. The differing political-economic philosophies have resulted in varying qualities of childcare.

Mueller, Charles W., Sarosh Kuruvilla, and Roderick D. Iverson. 1994. "Swedish Professionals and Gender Inequalities." *Social Forces* 73(2):555-573.

With a goal similar to the "Glass Ceiling" article, this article looks to establish why there are fewer women in supervisor, managerial, or highly paid positions using sample data from 1987-1988 in Sweden. Whereas the "Glass Ceiling" article found that few women had the experience necessary to advance in their professions, this article found occupational segregation to be the main factor. The authors suggest that women typically find employment in different fields than men. Even if women are employed in the same occupational field as men, the authors suggest that there is an inequality favoring men.

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development. 2008. "Sweden." Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Retrieved 2/26, 2008 (http://www.oecd.org/SiteMap/0,3362,en_33873108_33873822_1_1_1_1_1,00.html).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development website will be a tremendous resource, paired with Statistics Sweden, to help provide up-to-date statistics and demographics on Sweden.

Organisation For Economic Co-operation and Development. 2005. *Babies And Bosses Reconciling Work and Family Life Canada, Finland, Sweden and the UK*. France: OECD.

A thorough report of the state of reconciliation between work and family in the four countries. It provides information on family friendly policies as well as economic benefits and incentives that are offered to help ensure that families can work and still be families.

Plantin, Lars. 2007. "Different Classes, Different Fathers?" *Community, Work & Family* 10(1):93-110.

This article looks at the influence of social class on men's understandings of and behaviors towards fatherhood. Plantin approaches his study with the belief that class status does affect understandings of fatherhood, however, he wants to determine how. Statistics show that middle-class men typically benefit the most from the Swedish parental leave system; these men also show the greatest participation in domestic work. The author suggests that policy-makers come from this group, and thus, the government policy echoes these experiences (99). The study showed that both men and women considered their financial situations when deciding how to take advantage of parental leave, especially in working-class families. In general, working-class fathers tended to take less parental leave and maintain a more traditional work distribution in family life. For most of these men, fatherhood was a predictable, expected, and natural event in the course of one's life. On the other hand, for more men in the middle-class group, fatherhood meant a life adjustment that necessarily transformed their self-images.

Stanfors, Maria. 2003. *Education, Labor Force Participation and Changing Fertility Patterns: A Study of Women and Socioeconomic Change in Twentieth Century Sweden*. Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

This book is a very thorough work on Sweden, and it studies socioeconomic change for women in the Twentieth Century in the country. It examines education, labor force participation, and fertility patterns to see how they relate to the evolving Swedish society. A key theme is how men specialize in production while women both produce and reproduce. This book actually ties into several other articles that I have listed within my bibliography, and it will be very helpful in expanding some of the ideas discussed in the articles.

Statistics Sweden (SCB). 2008. "Statistics Sweden." Sweden: Statistics Sweden, Retrieved 2/26, 2008 (http://www.scb.se/default_2154.asp).

This website, Statistics Sweden, is the official, English-version website for the Swedish government's statistics agency (SCB). It is a very detailed and up-to-date site with an abundance of statistics.

Strandh, Mattias and Mikael Nordenmark. 2006. "The interference of paid work with household demands in different social policy contexts: perceived work-household conflict in Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands, Hungary, and the Czech Republic." *British Journal of Sociology* 57(4):597-617.

This article examines the levels of work-family conflict in several different countries, comparing them based on their family friendly policies. Background information shows that when people try to become too involved in work both outside and inside the home, they experience greater work-family conflict; this is more-often observed the case for women. In this study, Sweden is the country that most tries to reconcile employment and household demands through its implemented policies, especially by encouraging women into employment and men into childrearing responsibilities. However, Swedish respondents also reported the greatest levels of work-household conflict, particularly regarding family relations, and especially women. However this is likely to be because Swedish women are more integrated into the labor market, with higher-qualified jobs and longer hours of work, than their counterparts in other countries. In order to explain these results, the authors turn to another previous study finding that people with more traditional gender ideologies experience less work-household conflict than those with egalitarian attitudes (such as those of the Swedes).

Sundstrom, Marianne. 1993. "The Growth in Full-Time Work among Swedish Women in the 1980s." *Acta Sociologica* 36(2):139-150.

This article looks at how Swedish women, in the 1980s, moved from part-time work to full-time work. Public policy changes are recognized as a significant reason for women taking on full-time work. The presence of public childcare facilities and tax reform are the major changes in public policy that facilitated the increase of women in the full-time ranks of the labor market.

Winkler, Celia. 2002. *Single Mothers and the State: Politics of care in Sweden and the United States*. Lanham, MD; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

A comparative study of the lives of single mothers in the United States and Sweden from the 1950's on. Despite being comparative, the work is very Sweden focused and offers a detailed history of events that led to policy changes that effected to single mother. And in a country where interdependency is stressed as a solution to unequal gender practices, Winkler evaluates how actual woman friendly the country is.