

# **Swedish Child Care and Parental Support Programs – A Defense**

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## **Abstract**

This essay argues that Sweden's parental support and child care programs have had a positive effect on gender equality and economic growth. This claim runs counter to the expectations of some of the proponents of rational choice theory and feminism. While neither endorsing nor criticising these theoretical perspectives, this paper attempts to show that from these very vantage points, the claims that gender equality and economic growth have been harmed by Sweden's parental support and child care programs is erroneous. This paper draws upon case studies, comparative research and statistics to arrive at this conclusion. It details the arguments of those who object to the efficacy of the aforementioned programs (in terms of their effects on economic growth and gender equality) and then proceeds to show that in fact, these programs are net positive contributors to the previously mentioned stated aims. Of course, these programs can probably be improved, although this is an area left to future research.

## **Keywords**

Sweden, child care, parental support, gender inequality, economic growth

## **Word Count**

9,045

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## **1. Introduction**

### **The Subject and Problem to be Addressed**

The Swedish welfare state has been upheld as a model for other countries to emulate since the publication of *The Middle Way* in the 1920s.<sup>1</sup> Ever since that time there have been numerous critics and admirers of this system. However, criticism from those who ascribe to rational choice theory on the one hand, and feminism, on the other hand, has intensified. Specifically, some critics utilizing the techniques of rational choice theory through an economic framework contend that the Swedish welfare state has hindered economic growth.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, some critics utilizing the techniques of feminism, leave the impression that the Swedish welfare state has hindered the cause of gender equality.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this paper is to examine the veracity of these claims with regard to the Swedish parental support and child care programs. Further, this paper shall defend the claim that Sweden's parental support and child care programs have had significant and positive effects on economic growth and gender equality and that these effects outweigh their disadvantages, albeit with room for improvement.

### **1.2 The Type of Essay**

This paper is of a certain type, namely one whose intention is to defend a claim. It has previously stated that claim (and after the motivation, terminology, theoretical framework and methodology are detailed as well as the description of the programs themselves) it shall proceed to defend that claim by providing reasons that support that claim. Therefore, it differs from an essay that is structured around the testing of a hypothesis wherein a tentative intuition is advanced, examined and then clarified, or an essay in which a research question is posed and then explored before subsequent conclusions are drawn. This style, namely the defense of a claim, has been chosen so as to ensure maximum interest as well as increased focus on the substantive problem that is to be addressed.

### **1.3 Structure of the Essay**

This paper shall be structured in a deductive logical fashion in an effort to prove the aforementioned claim. However, before it is possible to enter into the specifics of this argument, certain details deserve to be noted regarding the motivation underlying this essay's creation, the definition of key terms, the theoretical framework used, the methodology used and, of course, a brief description of what the Swedish child care and parental support programs are actually like. This shall be done momentarily. Once this has been accomplished the main argument shall be articulated. First, the alleged reasons why Sweden's child care programs harm economic shall be articulated before it is shown how these programs actually enhance economic growth. This same process shall be completed with regard to Sweden's parental support programs. Secondly, the purported reasons why Sweden's parental support programs harm the cause of gender equality shall be articulated before it is shown that, in fact, these programs enhance gender equality. This same process shall be completed with regard to Sweden's child care programs. Finally, the argument having been established, this paper shall note those areas in which future research would be welcome, in light of what has been said.

### **1.4 Purpose, Motivation and Limitations of Essay**

The claim that will be defended in this paper is borne of specific motivations and subject to certain limitations. As mentioned, the Swedish welfare state has recently come under attack not simply from those to the 'right' of the political spectrum who invoke a rational choice theoretic understanding of society, but also from those to the 'left' of the political spectrum who invoke a feminist theoretic understanding of society. This first group has criticised Sweden's welfare state for retarding economic growth, while the latter group has criticized Sweden's welfare state for exacerbating gender inequality. The novelty of this double-edged, 'two-fronted' attack aroused this author's interest. The Swedish welfare state has always been criticized, particularly by those to the 'right' of the political spectrum, but now it is being subjected to an assault from both sides of the political spectrum.

Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to examine the validity of the claims that the Swedish welfare state hinders economic growth and gender equality with respect to Swedish

parental support and child care programs. Specifically, the claim to be defended is that Sweden's parental support and child care programs have had significant and positive effects on economic growth and gender inequality and these effects outweigh their disadvantages, albeit with room for improvement.

Swedish parental support and child care programs constitute a central component of the Swedish welfare state. Consequently, if critics of the welfare state can be answered in this policy area, then their argument is substantially weakened. This essay does not purport to generalize its findings from the field of parental support and child care programs to other aspects of the Swedish welfare state, but rather, it is content to let its findings in this field speak for themselves and to allow those with an interest in pursuing the question further with respect to other fields to do so. This author has limited the scope of this essay to the aforementioned policy area in the interest of in-depth analysis which requires fewer factors to consider.

Within this policy area, this author is concerned exclusively with adults. This decision could be seen as arbitrary but it is not unmotivated, given the importance of fewer factors to allow for greater analysis. Parents are the subjects of interest, and the dual focus of this essay (on economic growth and gender equality respectively) captures most of what is important about Sweden's child care and parental support programs, insofar as they affect parents. One limitation of such an approach is that it only addresses these programs' effects on children in a peripheral sense, namely, insofar as the effects that these programs have on children in turn affect adults. Further, it should be noted that adult women are the particular focus of this essay since the decision to work or to stay at home is most keenly felt by women because they are, as a matter of social reality, the ones most often primarily charged with taking care of children. This statement is merely descriptive and not a validation of the existing gendered division of labour in any sense.

### **1.5 Definition of Terminology**

A prerequisite to examining the effects of Sweden's child care and parental support programs is an understanding of the key concepts that shall be employed. It is to this task that this paper turns at present. It should be noted that this paper does not purport to provide comprehensive definitions of these terms, since that task is beyond the capacity of this author.

Rather, it is hoped that this paper shall provide sufficiently correct definitions for the purposes of this paper. Firstly, it is necessary to define ‘rational choice theory’. Rational choice theory encapsulates many different theories.<sup>4</sup> This essay shall focus on the extent to which it is a theory that privileges individual self-interested choice as the means through which an individual maximizes their utility,<sup>5</sup> as is the view commonly undertaken in economics texts. A central concern of economics is with economic growth which in turn can be succinctly defined as “the expansion of the national income—the total production of goods and services of a country over a given period.”<sup>6</sup>

The other theoretical approach that shall be examined is that of feminism. Feminism encapsulates many different meanings,<sup>7</sup> yet for the purposes of this essay the focus shall herein be on feminism as a theoretic perspective. Feminism contains both descriptive and prescriptive aspects.<sup>8</sup> Descriptively it often seeks to point out that many of the traditional distinctions between men and women are not natural but rather socially constructed.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it often involves prescriptions to eradicate gender inequalities and improve the situation of women. For instance, it has traditionally been thought that women were inherently superior at child care but recent research appears to point only to a biological link in the form of breastfeeding for which the advent of bottles has eliminated the need for constant physical proximity.<sup>10</sup> A central concern of feminism is with redressing gender inequality. Gender equality as defined by *Statistiska Centralbyrån*, and as herein understood, encapsulates both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension<sup>11</sup> so as to ensure that women and men shall have equal power to shape society and their own lives.<sup>12</sup> Quantitatively it requires an “equal distribution between women and men in all spheres of society, such as in education, work, recreation and positions of power”<sup>13</sup> and to roughly approximate “(the ratio, 40 percent women to 60 percent men (or vice versa)”<sup>14</sup> while qualitatively it requires that “the knowledge, experiences and values of both women and men are given equal weight and used to enrich and direct all spheres of society”<sup>15</sup> so as to ensure economic equality, an even distribution of influence, power and household work and unpaid care.<sup>16</sup>

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This paper tries not to use a theoretical framework per se. Instead, it merely takes rational choice theory and feminism as given, (in the limited sense as defined herein) and attempts to examine the validity of rational choice and feminist attacks from their own perspectives. The nature of the ‘truth’ that is thereby gained is necessarily conditional. Therefore, this paper does not intend or attempt to defend, or, especially, denigrate the contributions of either rational choice theory or feminism. It does not attempt to be normative. It does not presuppose the correctness of the rational choice theory, nor that of feminism, nor their subordinate goals of economic growth and gender equality respectively, rather, it seeks to show that if one’s goals are to achieve greater economic growth on the one hand, and gender equality on the other hand, then Sweden’s parental support and child care programs cannot be held at fault. Admittedly, even such an undertaking could be challenged on epistemological and ontological grounds.<sup>17</sup> This author concedes this point. This essay is conditionally valid, in that it assumes that there is such a thing as an objective reality that can be ascertained. It is not within the scope of this essay or capacity of this author to resolve philosophical problems that have been contemplated for thousands of years.

## **1.7 Methodology**

This paper draws on the work of political scientists and economists conducting case-studies and comparative studies in the form of journal articles and books. It has also made some use of the Statistics Bureau of Sweden<sup>18</sup> and has attempted to gather the most current research and the most highly regarded research on Sweden’s child care and parental support systems. This author has made reference to specific case-studies since such studies better capture a country’s idiosyncracies<sup>19</sup> and are more reliable when differences between countries are large. However, the comparative approach adds perspective and permits generalizability, and for these reasons it has been utilized as well.<sup>20</sup> It is this author’s hope that this ‘hybrid’ approach, wherein both comparative and case-specific methods are used, will result in ‘the best of both worlds’, by capturing the advantages of both perspectives.



One further methodological point is worth noting. This paper attempts to establish causal links and is thereby embroiled in the controversy surrounding causation. This author is aware that mere correlation does not imply causation<sup>21</sup> and that causal links could be inversed. For instance, rather than child care causing women to enter the workforce, (as shall be argued) it could be the case that because women entered the workforce it was necessary to provide child care. (Although such an explanation does not make much sense as children cannot be left alone). Alternatively, it could be the case that women have entered the workforce because of other reasons, other than the provision of childcare, such as a desire for equal status or increased family income.

The studies that are referenced have taken these compounding variables into account, and have ‘controlled’ for them using the most sophisticated multiple regression techniques available. Consequently, these studies attempt to see what effect the provision of child care, for instance, has, holding all other factors constant, so as to attempt to isolate that factor’s effect. These details will be made explicit throughout the essay, as the need arises. Suffice it to say that the authors of these studies do not purport to establish conclusive causal links. Instead, these authors assign a degree of probability to their claims. As such, this paper’s argument, based as it is on inconclusive material cannot claim to be conclusively valid, but rather, likely, on a balance of probabilities. Therefore, child care and parental support programs are not herein claimed to be sufficient causes for economic growth or gender equality, but rather contributory causes.<sup>22</sup>

## **2. Description of Child Care and Parental Support Services**

The studies mentioned above focus on Sweden’s child care and parental support services. Child care in Sweden is readily available and enrolls 84% of children over the age of one.<sup>23</sup> It is provided publicly (albeit with private options) and paid for mostly by public subsidies. It is also educationally-oriented and provided locally<sup>24</sup> yet mostly homogeneous in terms of quality.<sup>25</sup> All of this comes at a price, amounting to 2% of Swedish GDP.<sup>26</sup>

Parental leave was first introduced in 1974<sup>27</sup> and has grown increasingly generous and expensive. It is paid for through general tax revenues.<sup>28</sup> Parental leave entitles both parents to split up to 360 days of leave between themselves, with a further 60 days reserved for each parent<sup>29</sup> which are lost if not taken.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, jobs are guaranteed by law for the first 18

months after the birth of a child.<sup>31</sup> Parents are entitled to 80%<sup>32</sup> of what they were earning in the 240 days prior to when they first took their leave up to a maximum of 390 days, after which point, parents are reimbursed at a flat rate for the final 90 days.<sup>33</sup> Finally, multiple births entitle the parents to an extra 180 days of benefit for each child.<sup>34</sup>

### **3. The Main Argument**

#### **3.1 Argument that Child Care Programs Harm Economic Growth**

Having detailed the nature of child care and parental support programs it is now possible to assess their effects. Herein the material collected and the results of the research will be described, analyzed and presented as part of the argument of this essay. This paper now examines the claims of those who believe that child care harms economic growth using a rational choice perspective. Firstly, it should be noted that the provision of high quality childcare is extremely expensive, employing 9 percent of those in the public sector<sup>35</sup> and costing twice as much as a first year of schooling.<sup>36</sup> The total costs amount to 2% of GDP,<sup>37</sup> which is more than what the entire Swedish agricultural sector contributes to GNP and equal to that of the chemical industry.<sup>38</sup> This expense may be larger than it needs to be owing to the "control problems and "soft" budget constraints generally encountered in government-run enterprises,"<sup>39</sup> according to Sherwin Rosen.

This expense is significant if Rosen's accusation that this money is expended without any actual increase to GDP resulting is to be believed.<sup>40</sup> He points out that "(i)n Sweden a large fraction of women take care of the children of women who work in the public sector to care for the parents of the women who are looking after their children" and then rhetorically asks "(i)f Swedish women take care of each other's parents in exchange for taking care of each other's children, how much additional real output comes of it?"<sup>41</sup> His claim is that child care subsidies, despite causing women to enter the labour market, essentially amount to 'cross-hauling'. In other words, "(t)hey cause women to work outside the home, but there is a sense in which all of it is work in someone else's home, not in the material goods sector. Women work for each other for taxable pay needed to help finance the subsidies that induce them to work for each other in the first place, rather than remain working for themselves, "self-employed," in the tax sheltered,

nonmarket household sector.”<sup>42</sup> He claims that “(i)n many ways and at least in the aggregate, government-provided services replace what would have been purchased in other, more decentralized ways and without the associated tax burdens”<sup>43</sup> such that the implicit price of household goods is thereby reduced and therefore an inefficiently large amount of household goods are produced at the expense of material goods.<sup>44</sup> It follows then, according to Rosen’s analysis, that child care subsidies do not stimulate economic growth because they do not result in any real increase in output because activities that were previously provided through the market or at home are now simply being provided through the public sector.

The fact that these subsidies have to be provided through taxation, in turn, harms economic growth in a variety of ways. Firstly, they harm economic growth due to the deadweight loss of taxation which reduces the work incentive for both the taxed and the recipient of tax expenditures. For those who are taxed, the imposition of a new tax for the purposes of providing a child care subsidy to someone else diminishes their incentive to work since they will not receive as great a reward from working and so they may fail to work as much as they otherwise would absent the tax.<sup>45</sup> The recipient of tax expenditures also encounters disincentives to work since they have less need to do so now, owing to their increased real income from the benefits they receive.<sup>46</sup> Taxation also hinders economic growth owing to the cost of administering the tax in question.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, child care subsidies funded through general taxation can also restrict economic growth owing to the ‘moral hazard’ problem. Namely, the ‘consumer’ of government services does not have to pay the full costs of the good that is consumed, and therefore is likely to over-consume the good in question.<sup>48</sup> In the case of child care provision, parents have been found to be “prepared to accept a lower day care productivity than non-parents because day care provision relaxes the constraint on their desired labour supply.”<sup>49</sup> Conversely, the “chief virtue of decentralized markets is that the individual pays the full social cost” of the good being consumed.<sup>50</sup> Yet, in the case of Sweden’s child care subsidies market forces do not determine the allocation of resources.<sup>51</sup>

### **3.2 Refutation of Aformentioned Contention and Argument that Child Care Programs Enhance Economic Growth**

It would appear to be the case that child care programs harm economic growth. In fact, this is untrue. Presently, this essay shall argue that child care programs enhance economic growth by operating from the same rational choice perspective as Rosen and drawing upon numerous empirical studies. It shall be argued that Swedish child care programs increase the labour force participation of women, increase the likelihood of having children and contribute to child development and thereby contribute to economic growth. After this has been accomplished it should be simple to demonstrate the flaws in the argument articulated in the previous section which denounce these child care programs.

The main reason why child care programs enhance economic growth is because they help women to enter the labour force. It should be noted that there are many reasons for the increase in female labour force participation, ranging from changed demographics, gender roles and economic realities,<sup>52</sup> as well as expanded opportunities, stagnant male wages,<sup>53</sup> the change to personal taxation rather than ‘income-splitting’ taxation<sup>54</sup> and an increased and female-dominated public sector.<sup>55</sup> However, the empirical research indicates that the provision of child care programs have played a significant role.

Firstly, it should be noted that children make women much less likely to work.<sup>56-57</sup> This is because the presence of children makes work less enticing and staying home more enticing.<sup>58</sup> In addition, women are less likely to work because child care is itself akin to a tax on a woman’s wages, because it costs money, and therefore their incentive to work is reduced.<sup>59</sup>

The extent to which children reduce the likelihood of women working has been encapsulated in the notion of the ‘child penalty’. In essence, the child penalty “compares employment rates between mothers within the same country who differ only in terms of the presence of young children—that is, between mothers who have similar demographic characteristics, face similar labour-market conditions, experience similar social and cultural norms, and so on. The child penalty, therefore, controls for other, non-policy factors that influence cross-national employment variation.”<sup>60</sup>

According to research by Gornick et al, “(t)he largest child penalties are found in the United Kingdom, where the presence of an infant is associated with a remarkable 45 percentage point decrease in the probability of employment (for the hypothetical 35-year-old mother); the presence of

a preschooler is associated with a 31 percentage point decrease.”<sup>61</sup> She also found child penalties in the countries of Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States.<sup>62</sup> In the United States, for instance, the presence of an infant is associated with a 22 percentage drop in the likelihood of maternal employment, while a preschooler still reduces the likelihood of employment by 15 percentage points.<sup>63</sup> Conversely, no child penalty was found to exist in Sweden. This was also true of Finland and Denmark.<sup>64</sup> She found that in those countries with well-developed policies whose aims were to encourage female labour market participation, such as Sweden, there was indeed heightened female labour force participation.<sup>65</sup> However, in those countries characterized by a lack of policies there was also a lack of female labour force participation. In fact, according to her regression, 66% of the variation in child penalties is a result of the presence or absence of policies that encourage the employment of women.<sup>66</sup>

The price, availability and quality<sup>67</sup> of child care determine their use. Inexpensive, available and quality child care makes staying at home less attractive and reduces the effective tax on a woman’s wage.<sup>68</sup> This should result in greater labour market participation by women, especially since these programs’ operating hours are intended to coincide with women’s working hours.<sup>69</sup> This prediction is confirmed by the survey of empirical research conducted by Gornick et al.<sup>70</sup> As Rosen noted, “...subsidizing any economic activity increases its output.”<sup>71</sup> This is especially pronounced in the case of child care, for which the demand in countries without extensive public provision, like Canada, has been found to be relatively elastic.<sup>72</sup> For instance, according to a labour supply model employed by Powell to examine the case of Canada, (whose accuracy can be attested to by its having successfully predicted the current female participation rate) she found that full subsidization would increase female labour force participation in Canada by 17 percent.<sup>73</sup> In Sweden, inexpensive, available and quality child care has contributed to the labour force participation of women, which, in turn, stimulates economic growth.

Moreover, as Lindert has noted, women have an elastic supply of labour whereas men have an inelastic supply of labour.<sup>74</sup> This means that men tend to work regardless of the wage rate, whereas women are very susceptible to wage rates.<sup>75</sup> Lindert goes on to point out how “virtually all of Sweden’s employment growth between the 1960s and the early 1990s consisted of jobs for women.”<sup>76</sup> The fact that child care programs played a significant role in securing this outcome is confirmed by the empirical research and theoretical models previously cited. As of 2005, 88% of women work in Sweden<sup>77</sup> whereas on average in the rest of Europe excluding Nordic countries only 75% of women did so.<sup>78</sup>

Yet, not only does child care support ensure that women do not permanently exit the labour force, it also ensures that their careers are not interrupted. The importance of ‘human capital’ to modern, skill-based economies is immense, and much of that ‘human capital’ is, in the contemporary environment, developed on the job itself. Interruptions to continuous employment jeopardize this asset in the eyes of the employer. Child care support prevents the depletion of this resource, and helps women to secure increased pay and more promotions than would be the case if their careers were interrupted for lengthier periods of time. The resultant preservation of human capital thereby helps foster economic growth.<sup>79</sup>

In addition, child care programs have been shown to be beneficial for children. Since better developed children are likely to be more productive workers, this is also good for economic growth. It has been known for some time that the most important years of a child’s life occur before they have reached the age of five.<sup>80</sup> Further, a high degree of stimulation is necessary to ensure proper development.<sup>81</sup> No doubt some people are excellent parents and would offer the best care imaginable for their child. However, others are not experts. This does not mean that they do not love their child, but rather, that they are not the best at this particular task. In truth, there is little reason to think that they should be. Child care provides extra stimulation to children, if, for no other reason than due to the fact that children meet *more* caring adults that way.<sup>82</sup> If child care is of sufficiently high quality then it has been shown to have numerous beneficial aspects for children,<sup>83</sup> including reducing the likelihood of the need for remedial education,<sup>84</sup> while increasing sociability, verbal facility<sup>85</sup> and cognitive competence.<sup>86</sup> After having concluded a survey of studies into early intervention programs Lindert concluded that such programs have “...high returns especially for children of low-income parents...”<sup>87</sup>

In order for child care to be beneficial for children it has to be of good quality. Fortunately, that is the case in Sweden.<sup>88</sup> While it is true that it is difficult to assess the quality of childcare,<sup>89</sup> it is the case that using most measures available there is a consensus that child care in Sweden is of a high quality, owing to the high staff to child ratio, opening hours, space per child and quality of food.<sup>90</sup> Further, despite being administered locally, standards are set nationally, ensuring roughly the same quality of service.<sup>91</sup> Also, it should be noted that the presence of child care allows women to work which in turn increases their resources which should in turn, if anything, have a positive effect on their children as well.<sup>92</sup>

In essence then, child care can be considered, in part, as an investment in children’s human capital, akin to “extending the public school system back to an earlier age of the child.”<sup>93</sup> Given the

aforementioned importance of the early years of a child's life,<sup>94</sup> this investment is likely worthwhile and will lead to economic growth.

Finally, one of the stated aims of Sweden's child care policies is to encourage people to have larger families.<sup>95</sup> The policy has been successful in this respect since, compared to other developed countries, Sweden has one of the highest fertility rates<sup>96</sup> and is above the European average,<sup>97</sup> at around 1.7 children per person who chooses to have children.<sup>98</sup> Given the spectre of an aging population, it is necessary to ensure that fertility remains near the requisite replacement level so as to ensure that Sweden can afford to pay for the services currently afforded to retirees. Absent high fertility or increased immigration, an aging population would impose a significant drag on economic growth. Since child care policies aim to increase fertility which in turn should prevent the aforementioned drag on economic growth, child care programs are, in turn, therefore good for economic growth in this respect as well.

However, given that the section before this present section detailed reasons why these programs may harm economic growth, it is necessary to rebut those allegations in order to fully establish the case that Swedish child care programs enhance economic growth. Firstly, detractors of these programs point to the expense of the program itself. In response to this allegation it should suffice to point out the fact that it does not make a difference whether the government spends a given person's money or that individual does, since all money will be spent. Instead, the problem with taxation lies in its distortionary effects, as Rosen astutely noted.<sup>99</sup> Principally, the presence of taxation reduces the likelihood that there will be a dollar to tax in the first place.

The magnitude of the distortionary effects of the taxation that funds Sweden's child care programs will be assessed shortly. First, this paper shall address Rosen's argument that child care subsidies amount to 'cross-hauling' in that some "Swedish women take care of each other's parents in exchange for taking care of each other's children"<sup>100</sup> such that no real increase in output is thereby attained. However, this argument is not convincing, since by specializing, 'gains from trade' are thereby achieved due to the law of comparative advantage. Moreover it is not the case that one woman looks after another woman's child and the second woman looks after the first woman's aging parent in exchange. Rather, "considerable economies of scale"<sup>101</sup> are realized through the provision of child care. Therefore, female labour force participation is of economic value and does add to economic growth.

It is true that women tend to work in the public sector, such that by providing child care Rosen feared that this freed up labour only to work in the public sector to continue to provide 'household' rather than 'material' goods. As a result, he cautioned that the Swedish system resulted

in an overproduction of ‘household’ goods as compared to ‘material’ goods. Even if this latter claim of Rosen’s is true, this author is afforded the benefit of a thoughtful analysis by Fred Hirsch who found that, on the contrary, owing to the positional nature of most contemporary material goods, they are likely to lead to zero-sum growth (in a paretian sense) and as such would be overproduced as compared to public goods,<sup>102</sup> such as child care.

That being said, Rosen’s most fundamental critique centers around the fact that child care is provided publicly through the use of taxation, which in turn, has distortionary effects. Firstly, with regard to the administrative costs of taxation it should suffice to note that these costs are minor, often amounting to less than 3 percent of the budgets themselves.<sup>103</sup> Instead, this paper shall focus, at present, on the more significant factor, namely the ‘deadweight losses’ of taxation.

It is true that, in general, taxation imposes ‘deadweight losses’ in the manner described by Rosen. On a general note, the distortionary effects of a tax are determined by the elasticity of the good being taxed. Sweden taxes inelastic goods sharply and elastic goods lightly, meaning that this loss is negligible as compared to less prudent states, like Canada where capital is taxed highly and consumption is taxed lightly. In essence, Sweden’s taxation system is much more pro-growth than those of lower budget welfare states.<sup>104</sup>

More importantly, with respect to the purpose of this essay, is the fact that Sweden’s child care programs expand the tax base due to the labour force participation of women that they encourage and the resulting higher wages that women earn due to their uninterrupted work.<sup>105</sup> This effect offsets the aforementioned distortionary effects of taxation.<sup>106</sup> In fact, child care programs are net revenue generators. Yet while they are net generators for the government’s finances, their effects on the rest of the economy and therefore on economic growth are more significant. Furthermore, Rosen’s preferred method of child care, arranged through private markets,<sup>107</sup> is illusory since the provision of child care must precede women’s employment and not the reverse. The reason for this is simple: many women cannot work unless they have child care services, yet they cannot pay for child care services until they are working. Publicly-funded child care services solves this Catch-22 problem. Moreover, as Rosen concedes “child-care services are expensive and difficult to arrange when few women are working”<sup>108</sup> and, as the research previously highlighted details, those countries that fail to provide child care services also have much lower female labour force participation rates.

Rosen also critiqued the fact that the consumer of child care only pays one tenth of the cost of child care<sup>109</sup> because this would mean that parents would be likely to over-consume this resource since they do not have to pay the full social cost of their actions.<sup>110</sup> Firstly, it should be noted that the private marginal cost of a good only reflects its social cost when there are no externalities. Secondly,



it should be noted that child care has significant positive externalities which in turn ground the case for subsidization. As has already been noted, children will become adults and contribute to society. However, absent the provision of child care, parents must pay all of the costs for this investment in their children despite the fact that society as a whole will benefit in large part from these investments. This in turn “implies that, in the absence of subsidies, there will be underproduction of child care quality, an effect that could more than cancel out any deadweight losses attributable to other price distortions”.<sup>111</sup> Rosen recognized the argument for the subsidization of education but failed to see the analogue with respect to child care. Child care has significant positive externalities “associated both with a child’s development and the continued involvement in paid work by the parents.”<sup>112</sup> As a result, it enhances economic growth.

### **3.3 Argument that Parental Support Programs Harm Economic Growth**

The fact that child care support programs enhance economic growth does not exonerate parental leave programs from the criticism that they harm economic growth. It is to this contention that this paper turns at present. This critique hinges on three factors. Firstly, the subsidization of unproductive work would appear to impair economic growth. This criticism utilizes a simple rational choice theory of human motivation, from which the obvious conclusion is that parental leave policies encourage parents to stay at home rather than to engage in productive work.

Secondly, the parental leave program is an expensive program. Rosen points out that the economic growth of Sweden has lagged behind many of its European counterparts lately and states that “the economics of the welfare state suggests cause for concern about these trends.”<sup>113</sup> As a result, the expense of the parental leave program could be one area that has hindered Sweden’s recent economic performance. Finally, since the parental leave program is financed through taxation it results in the same deadweight losses, administrative costs and moral hazard problems mentioned two sections ago.

### **3.4 Refutation of Aforementioned Contention and Argument that Parental Support Programs Enhance Economic Growth**

It would appear to be the case that parental leave programs harm economic growth. However, this is not the case. Firstly, parental leave enhances economic growth by preventing permanent job exit through increasing parents' attachment to work.<sup>114</sup> To elucidate this point one need simply contrast Swedish policy with that of its contemporaries. Korpi distinguishes between three-models of welfare states, namely those that provide general family support, those that offer market-oriented policies and those premised on a dual-earner model.<sup>115</sup> The dual-earner model provides for generous parental leave, among other things.<sup>116</sup> He goes on to state that the 'dual-earner' model has the highest female labour force participation rates<sup>117</sup> and that Sweden, Denmark and Finland are the only countries who fall into this category.<sup>118</sup> The veracity of these results has been reinforced by similar findings by Duvander<sup>119</sup> and Gornick who have found that the provision of parental leave actually contributes to an earlier return to work than prevails in those countries with less generous parental leave.<sup>120</sup> By effectively preventing mothers from permanently exiting the job market through the provision of generous parental leave with guaranteed job protection, Sweden ensures the continued labour force participation of women, which in turn stimulates economic growth.

Moreover, while it is true that parental leave increases women's attachment to work and is therefore desirable in terms of promoting economic growth, parental leave also, encourages parents to stay at home with their children during their child's initial months. This is, in fact, good for children, who after all, will become productive adults in the future.<sup>121</sup> Swedish policy is specifically designed to restrict the number of child care spots made available during a child's first year and thereafter to make them readily available.<sup>122</sup> This ensures that Sweden achieves 'the best of both worlds' wherein the infant achieves the requisite attachment to his or her parent initially,<sup>123</sup> but then, after this initial crucial period has elapsed and it is no longer imperative that a child remain under the sole custody of their parent, (and it is in fact desirable that they do not do so due to the quality and stimulation provided by child care facilities, as previously articulated) the parents can take advantage of quality child care. Sweden has struck a surprisingly prescient balance.

It would appear to be the case that parental leave promotes economic growth, yet before such a case can be established it is necessary to address the criticisms levelled against it in the previous section. Firstly, the expense of the program is not an issue since it pays for itself by ensuring the continued participation of women in the labour market in the long-run by increasing work-place attachment. Secondly, the administrative costs of taxation are minor. Finally, the ‘deadweight loss argument’ is subject to the same refutation afforded this same argument when applied to child care two sections ago.

### **3.5 Argument that parental support programs harm gender equality**

Having countered the contention that Sweden’s child care and parental leave programs harm economic growth by showing that, on the contrary, they contribute to economic growth, this paper now turns its attention to examining the claims of those who believe that Sweden’s parental leave programs harm the cause of gender equality. The first point worth noting is the fact that parental leave is based on labour market earnings. The program purports to be gender-neutral, yet, since the allocation of benefits is determined by labour market earnings, which are unequal, it will thereby necessarily have unequal outcomes.<sup>124</sup> As Johansson notes, “gender-neutral policies can have gender-specific and unequal outcomes.”<sup>125</sup>

In essence, since women earn less than men, it often makes far more sense for women to use parental leave than it does for men to do so. This may be why parental leave is used far more by women than by men.<sup>126</sup> In 2005, women used 80% of the allotted parental leave days whereas men used only 20% of these days.<sup>127</sup> Critics charge that this is a necessary consequence of the flexibility inherent in Sweden’s parental leave which allows for too many transferable days.<sup>128</sup> As a result, men end up taking far less leave than women and this serves to reinforce the pre-existing gendered nature of social and economic life, and in particular the pre-existing gender roles and concomitant inequalities.<sup>129</sup>

Pre-existing gender roles are reinforced since, so long as the majority of parental leave is used by women then employers will continue to treat women and men differently. Women will be treated as a ‘risk group’ and assigned different tasks.<sup>130</sup> The ‘wage gap’ will thereby be reinforced and this will perpetuate the tendency for women to stay home and use parental leave

instead of men, which in turn will reinforce employers' views of women as a 'risk group'. It is apparent then that women are caught in what amounts to a vicious cycle.

This gender-based occupational segregation is not mere conjecture since it is readily apparent. For instance, nursing, child care and office secretaries are composed of 90 percent women whereas well over 90 percent of carpenters and motor vehicle mechanics are men.<sup>131</sup> In fact, the gender equality goal, (from a quantitative perspective of a 40-60 percentage split of members of each sex) is achieved in only five occupations.<sup>132</sup> Women work in different sectors of the economy, for the most part, than men but earn less than men,<sup>133</sup> even when working in a woman-dominated occupation.<sup>134</sup> It seems all too likely that "as long as women take parental leave more often and longer than men, gender specific work conditions in the labour market will likely persist and gender differences in the labour market will be reinforced"<sup>135</sup> such that women will still be considered to be 'primarily' responsible for ensuring the care of children.<sup>136</sup> In sum, Swedish parental leave programs would appear to present significant problems from the vantage point of gender equality.

### **3.6 Refutation of Aforementioned Contention and Argument That Parental Support Programs Enhance Gender Equality**

It would appear to be the case that parental leave harms gender equality. However, this is not the case. In fact, parental leave enhances gender equality. Firstly, it should be noted that women's labour force participation is exceptionally high in Sweden. In fact, "Sweden has the highest rate of women's employment for any age range and therefore over the entire fifteen to sixty-four age range as well"<sup>137</sup> at 80%<sup>138</sup>. Conversely, in 1970 female labour force participation was only 60%.<sup>139</sup> In the 25-34 age range 82 percent of women are in the labour force in Sweden, compared to a participation of 90 percent by men. However, in the 35-54 age range 88 percent of women are in the labour force in Sweden, compared to a participation rate of 92 percent by men. Finally in the 55-64 age bracket 69 percent of women are in the labour force in Sweden, compared to a participation rate of 76 percent by men.<sup>140</sup> The labour force participation rates of women have steadily increased in all of these age brackets while more and more women are also working full-time rather than part-time.<sup>141</sup> However, the labour force participation rate of men has actually decreased from 90% to its current rate of 86% since 1970.<sup>142</sup> These high female

labour force participation rates increase women's well-being, capacity for agency,<sup>143</sup> democratic and social citizenship,<sup>144</sup> political participation<sup>145</sup> and for meaningful life pursuits and diminishes the sexual division of labour.<sup>146</sup> These high rates of female labour force participation are significant achievements. The increase in female labour force participation, as was previously shown, is a result in part of Sweden's parental support programs. As a result, it follows that Sweden's parental support programs promote the cause of gender equality.

Parental leave also promotes gender equality by encouraging men to stay home with the children<sup>147</sup> and thereby diminishes the traditional sexual division of labour. Under the current Swedish system men have been assigned two non-transferable months which they must either use or lose, so to speak. This presents a strong incentive for men to make use of parental leave, at least to this minimal degree.

However, the objections detailed in the previous section shall be addressed presently before it can be said that parental leave enhances the cause of gender equality. The objection that the seemingly gender-neutral policy of determining parental leave replacement levels based on one's previous labour market earnings is gender-biased is not an argument against Sweden's parental support programs per se, so much as against their current structure. Unfortunately the alternative to this policy is not especially clear. Income-splitting would probably be worse for women's gender equality by increasing their dependence on men.<sup>148</sup> Providing a uniform benefit level may be too low and result in job exit, or else a decision not to have children. Alternatively, it may be too high and rife with the 'moral hazard problem' by creating too strong an incentive for people to stay home and have children which in turn would reduce the tax base and worsen benefit levels and therefore women's condition. Absent a superior alternative it is not fair to criticise the status quo. Parental leave has been shown to result in enhanced gender equality and the objection that parental leave is based on previous market earnings has not been supplemented with a viable alternative.

In addition, the objection that men use far less leave than women is also not an argument against parental support programs themselves, but against their current structure. Furthermore, there has been improvement since in 1974, 100 percent of parental leave was used by women whereas 95 percent of parental leave was used by women in 1980 with this quantity declining to 90 percent in 1995, 88 percent in 2000 and finally 80 percent in 2005.<sup>149</sup> The introduction of "daddy months" played a role in securing this outcome and the advisability of increasing their

scope is a subject that shall be treated three sections from now. At present it is sufficient to note that parental leave has increased the amount of time men have spent attending to parenting and as such has promoted the cause of gender equality.

Furthermore, while it is true that the labour force remains sex segregated with only 16% of women working in gender equal sex occupations, this was only true of 7% of women in 1970<sup>150</sup> and programs like parental leave which, as was previously shown, increase female labour force participation thereby increase the likelihood that employers will cease to view women as a risky group, owing to the fact that they are increasingly staying at work.

Finally, it is true that women do not earn the same as men. However, this is a global phenomenon. Women's pay relative to men is very high in Sweden,<sup>151</sup> from an international perspective. Parental support (and child care) programs have helped in this regard. Parental support programs help to reduce interruptions to women's career paths. Gender equality has not been achieved. However, parental leave programs have improved gender equality, albeit leaving room for further improvement as shall be examined three sections from now.

### **3.7 Argument that Child Care Programs Harm Gender Equality**

This paper assessed the effects of the Swedish parental leave programs on gender equality and it will do the same presently with regard to Sweden's child care programs. First, it shall entertain those who criticise Sweden's child care programs by presenting those arguments. In essence, Sweden's child care programs have made women doubly dependent upon the state since they are both employees of state benefits and employees of the state.

As employees of the state, women are dependent upon the state. Mostly women work in the child care sector.<sup>152</sup> Further, women tend to overwhelmingly work in the public sector as a whole since fifty-two percent of women work in the public sector, compared to only 19 percent of men.<sup>153</sup> In fact, "over three-quarters of the national job creation between the 1960s and 1990s consisted of the hiring of women in the local government sector alone."<sup>154</sup> Women's employment is "closely tied to Sweden's having the world's seventh highest share spent on public health services, the world's second highest share spent on public education, and the world's highest share of GDP spent on public infant care."<sup>155</sup>

Moreover, women are dependent upon the state as recipients of benefits from the state. Consequently, women are disproportionately exposed and hurt by any cutbacks to the welfare state since it affects them both as receivers and employees. Any cutbacks to the welfare system would negatively harm women far more than it would men. Indeed, there were cut-backs in the 1990s,<sup>156</sup> which, according to Johannsson “brutally exposed women’s dependency on the welfare state.”<sup>157</sup> Johannsson worries that a retrenchment of the welfare state could trigger a relapse into traditional gender roles.<sup>158</sup>

### **3.8 Refutation of Aforementioned Contention and Argument that Child Care Programs Enhance Gender Equality**

The claim that the cause of gender equality is harmed by child care programs is erroneous since these programs promote gender equality. This essay has previously detailed how Swedish women enjoy high rates of pay relative to men, how their labour force participation rate is the highest in the world and how this has decreased the sexual segregation of women and improved their situation. While it is true that the aforementioned has occurred in large part owing to the beneficial impact of Sweden’s parental support programs, as previously detailed, it is also true that Sweden’s child care programs have helped to secure the previously mentioned improvements as well. This is the case because the link between child care programs and labour force participation has already been detailed at length. In essence, those countries in which child care is only available in private markets have much greater pay disadvantages for women than men.<sup>159</sup>

However, it is necessary to examine the arguments advanced in the previous section against the beneficial impact of Swedish child care. Importantly, the arguments previously advanced are not arguments against the welfare state or child care, so much as arguments against not having the welfare state. As such, they are less useful as critiques of the current child care programs since the alternative is not especially clear. Without child care programs women’s situation, as this paper has attempted to show, would likely be worse.

In other words, dependency is unavoidable, since one must be dependent upon either the labour market, one’s family, the state or some combination of these things. There is no alternative. This is also, not necessarily bad. Rather, it is the potential for support to be

withdrawn that is most worrisome. Yet that is an argument against breaking that dependency rather than an argument for eliminating the dependency, which is not possible anyway, since it is impossible to escape from some form of dependency. The problem is not parental support, child care, or the welfare state, per se, it is with the threat of it being dismantled. Again, this is an argument against dismantling it, rather than against the welfare state itself. As a result, this paper happily concedes that child care programs should not be dismantled since that would harm gender equality. However, child care programs themselves enhance gender equality.

#### **4. Possible Improvements and Areas for Future Research**

This paper has attempted to show that parental support and child care programs enhance economic growth. However, it is unclear what the optimal level of subsidization for child care and length of time for parental leave would be. Future research could be conducted into ascertaining how these programs could be optimally designed for the purposes of increasing economic growth.

Furthermore, this paper has attempted to show that the aforementioned programs do not harm gender equality. However, gender-based analysis reveals some shortcomings with the current system, particularly with regard to parental leave programs rather than child care. Men still take more parental leave than women and this has been attributed to differences in relative income, education and attitudes.

Swedish women's income relative to men is high but further increases seem likely to result in a more equitable distribution of parental leave.<sup>160</sup> In addition, the greater the income level of women, the more likely men are to use parental leave.<sup>161</sup> Further, the income ceiling inhibits parents in the upper quadrants of society from taking leave, since lost income is only reimbursed up to \$45000.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, the more educated women or men are, the more likely they are to split the leave equally.<sup>163</sup> Attitudinal resistance explains in part men's low uptake of parental leave since men with egalitarian gender-attitudes are more likely to reduce their hours of work, for instance.<sup>164</sup> Similarly, some work places are more conducive to men taking parental leaves than others.<sup>165</sup> Interestingly, women themselves can impede the taking of parental leave by men.<sup>166-167</sup>



Given the success that accompanied the increased use of non-transferable parental leave days, it would seem to be the case that an increase in the number of such days, relative to the number of transferable days, would go some way towards rectifying the male parental leave deficit.<sup>168-169</sup> This in turn should allow women to work more and therefore earn more. It should also reduce attitudinal resistance<sup>170</sup> to men taking leave from women, other men and employers leading to a virtuous cycle that reduces gender equality.<sup>171</sup> The feasibility of further increases in the number of non-transferable days relative to transferable days is a question meriting analysis.

Unfortunately, there may be a conflict between the goals of gender equality and productivity. Some feminists have argued that parental leave should be universal rather than based on previous labour market earnings so as to enhance gender equality. However, the degree to which such a scheme would impede economic growth through reducing labour force participation by women<sup>172</sup> and the population as a whole<sup>173-174</sup> needs to be seriously considered. An elucidation of this conflict and how best it could be resolved would be of great benefit to this field.

Finally, this essay has attempted to show that one aspect of the Swedish welfare state does not pose a handicap to economic growth or gender equality. It does not purport to generalize its findings from the field of parental support and child care programs to other aspects of the Swedish welfare state, but rather, it is content to let its findings in this field speak for themselves and to let those with an interest in pursuing the question further with respect to other fields do so.

## **5. Conclusion**

Parental support and child care programs have enhanced Sweden's economic growth by drawing into and keeping females in the labour market, and for that very reason, they have also enhanced equality between the sexes. Child care and parental support programs do not inhibit economic growth in the ways detailed by rational choice critics, in fact they enhance economic growth. Furthermore, these programs do not impede gender equality, rather they enhance it. Economic growth and gender equality would be worse in the absence of these programs. That being said, it is conceivable that Swedish parental support and child care programs are too generous from the standpoint of those who seek to enhance economic growth. Further, it is

possible that Sweden's parental support and child care programs could be designed in such a way as to enhance gender equality to a greater extent. These latter points, as well as the extent to which the goals of economic growth and gender equality are irreconcilable are areas ripe for future research. Whether or not economic growth and gender equality should themselves be goals and which of the two should take precedence in cases of conflict between them are political questions beyond the scope of this essay. Assuming that gender equality and economic growth are worthwhile goals, then the implications for Canada and other countries are implicit: increased parental support and the provision of child care seem likely to promote gender equality and enhance economic growth. The precise form that these programs should take is left to future research.

## 6. Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Stig Hadenius (1999). *Swedish Politics During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, p. 53 (Footnotes have been formatted according to the format suggested in class at Lund University.)

<sup>2</sup> Sherwin Rosen (Jun, 1996). "Public Employment and the Welfare State in Sweden"  
*Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 34, No. 2. pp. 729-740. p. 732

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Stina Johansson and Marie Jansson (1998). "Vocabularies of citizenship and gender: Sweden"  
*Critical Social Policy* Vol. 18, no. 3 wherein it is stated that many welfare state policies that appear to be gender neutral produce gender-biased results. This is doubtless true in many instances, the purpose of this essay is to examine the veracity of this claim with regard to child care and parental support programs.

Also see, Ann-Zofie Duvander et al, (2005) "Swedish parental leave and gender equality – Achievements and reform challenges in a European perspective".

[http://www.framtidsstudier.se/filebank/files/20051201\\$134956\\$fil\\$U8YIJLRAaC7u4FV7gUmy.pdf](http://www.framtidsstudier.se/filebank/files/20051201$134956$fil$U8YIJLRAaC7u4FV7gUmy.pdf) Institute for Futures Studies Issue 11, p. 16, who make the case that parental leave, for instance, places women and men in different categories in the first place since employers know who they should and should not hire.

<sup>4</sup> Mario Bunge, 1996. *Finding Philosophy In Social Science* New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 361.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Government of Canada, "Economic Concepts – Economic Growth" (Accessed May 29, 2007)  
[http://canadianeconomy.gc.ca/english/economy/economic\\_growth.html](http://canadianeconomy.gc.ca/english/economy/economic_growth.html)

<sup>7</sup> Vicky Randall, 2002. "Feminism" David Marsh and Stoker, Gerry (eds.) *Theory and Methods in Political Science* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, p. 109

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 111

<sup>10</sup> Linda Haas, 1992. "Equal Parenthood and Social Policy – A Study of Parental Leave in Sweden" New York: SUNY Press, p. 4-8

<sup>11</sup> Statistiska centralbyrån, 2006. "Women and Men in Sweden - Facts and Figures"  
[http://www.scb.se/statistik/\\_publikationer/LE0202\\_2006A01\\_BR\\_X10ST0602.pdf](http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/LE0202_2006A01_BR_X10ST0602.pdf), p. 5

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 5

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>17</sup> Mario Bunge 1996. *Finding Philosophy In Social Science* New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 77

<sup>18</sup> Statistiska centralbyrån, 2006. "Women and Men in Sweden - Facts and Figures"

[http://www.scb.se/statistik/\\_publikationer/LE0202\\_2006A01\\_BR\\_X10ST0602.pdf](http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/LE0202_2006A01_BR_X10ST0602.pdf), p. 5

<sup>19</sup> Mario Bunge 1996. *Finding Philosophy In Social Science* New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 87

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 32

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 31

<sup>23</sup> Statistiska centralbyrån, 2006. "Women and Men in Sweden - Facts and Figures"

[http://www.scb.se/statistik/\\_publikationer/LE0202\\_2006A01\\_BR\\_X10ST0602.pdf](http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/LE0202_2006A01_BR_X10ST0602.pdf), p. 7

<sup>24</sup> Swedish Institute, September 2004. *Child Care in Sweden*

<sup>25</sup> Bengt-Erik Andersson, Aug, 1989. "Effects of Public Day-Care: A Longitudinal Study"  
*Child Development*, Vol. 60, No. 4. p. 858

<sup>26</sup> Swedish Institute, September 2004. *Child Care in Sweden*

<sup>27</sup> Statistiska centralbyrån, 2006. "Women and Men in Sweden - Facts and Figures"

[http://www.scb.se/statistik/\\_publikationer/LE0202\\_2006A01\\_BR\\_X10ST0602.pdf](http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/LE0202_2006A01_BR_X10ST0602.pdf) p. 46

<sup>28</sup> Ann-Zofie E. Duvander and Sundström, Marianne, (Nov. 2000). "Family Division of Childcare and the Sharing of Parental Leave Among New Parents in Sweden" Swedish Institute for Social Research. p. 4

<sup>29</sup> Försäkringskassan, (2006) "For families with children – parental benefit" <http://www.fk.se/sprak/eng/foralder/>

<sup>30</sup> Linda Haas, (2003) "Parental Leave and Gender Equality: Lessons from the European Union" *Review of Policy Research* Vol. 20, Issue 1, p. 99

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- <sup>31</sup> Sheri Todd, Improving Work-Life Balance – What are Other Countries Doing?” Human Resources and Skills Development Canada <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/pdf/improving-work-life-balance.pdf>
- <sup>32</sup> Ann-Zofie Duvander et al, (2005) “Swedish parental leave and gender equality – Achievements and reform challenges in a European perspective”.  
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- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 5
- <sup>35</sup> Bjurek et al, “Efficiency, Productivity and Determinants of Inefficiency at Public Day Care Centers in Sweden” *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, Vol. 94, Supplement. Proceedings of a Symposium on Productivity Concepts and Measurement Problems: Welfare, Quality and Productivity in the Service Industries. (1992), pp. S173-S187. P. 174
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- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 734-35
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 737
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 740
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 738
- <sup>45</sup> Peter H Lindert, 2004, “Growing Public –Social Spending and Economic Growth Since the Eighteenth Century” New York: Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 228
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- <sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 1
- <sup>55</sup> Duvander, Ann-Zofie et al, (2005) “Swedish parental leave and gender equality – Achievements and reform challenges in a European perspective”.  
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- <sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 122
- <sup>61</sup> Janet Gornick et al, 1996, “Public Policies and the Employment of Mothers: A Cross-National Study” Luxembourg Income Study (LIS): Working Paper No. 140, p. 24
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- <sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 28
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 25
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 25-26
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 26
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- <sup>69</sup> Siv Gustafsson and Stafford, Frank, 1992. “Child Care Subsidies and Labor Supply in Sweden” *The Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Special Issue on Child Care. (Winter, 1992), p. 205
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