

# **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND COMPANIES' RESPONSIVENESS TO FATHERS IN SWEDEN**

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# Why study Sweden?

- Long-standing commitment to gender equality and child well-being
- Pioneer in offering parental leave to fathers, first in 1974
- Offers universal, nontransferable flexible leave to all parents
- Heavily advertises leave to fathers

# Parental leave in Sweden could

- Promote parents' continuous connection to the labor market and shared parenting
- Challenge assumptions that women are better at childcare and men are indispensable at work
- Compensate parents fairly for caregiving as socially valued work
- Challenge traditional boundaries between work and family spheres

# Parental leave 1993

- Parents had 12 transferable months to share
- ~62% of fathers took leave
- Fathers took 10% of all days taken

# Parental leave 2006

- Each parent had 2 nontransferable months + 9 months to share
- 90% of fathers took leave
- Fathers took 20% of all days taken

# Gender perspective

- Not: Why do *individual men* choose to participate so little?
- Instead: What assumptions and norms in the gendered institutions of family and work discourage men *as a group* from sharing leave equitably?

# Progress report

- Are Swedish companies becoming more responsive to fathers' taking parental leave?
- Are fathers working in private Swedish corporations more likely to take parental leave than before?
- What types of companies are more responsive to fathers and have more fathers taking leave?

# Study methods

- Mail surveys of personnel officers in largest (most profitable) companies in Sweden
- 1993 - 200 companies
  - 80% response rate
  - 90% were 61%+ men
- 2006 - 244 companies
  - 71% response rate
  - 93% were 61%+ men



# Are companies becoming responsive to fathers?

## *Measures:*

- Formal policies and programs
- Support from supervisors and co-workers
- Managerial support (2006)
- Job priority norms (2006)
- Shared parenting ideology (2006)

# Formal policies and programs

<i>Percentage of companies with:</i>	<b>1993</b>	<b>2006</b>
Policy decision to support fathers	2%	42%
Program for white-collar fathers	4%	48%
Program for blue-collar fathers	1%	34%
Recordkeeping of leavetaking	19%	40%
Designated person in charge	2%	7%
Supervisor training	NA	2%
Role models in top management	32%	88%

# Support from supervisors and co-workers

<i>Typical reaction is positive:</i>	1993	2006
• Blue-collar supervisors	10%	30%
• White-collar supervisors	10%	37%
• Blue-collar co-workers	18%	39%
• White-collar co-workers	26%	45%

# Managerial support 2006

## *Percentage agreeing that managers:*

- Are negative toward men's childcare needs 6%
- Allow men to prioritize family if conflict 77%
- Facilitate job change to prioritize family 67%
- Keep men informed while on leave 58%
- Encourage supervisor support of fathers 21%

# Job priority norms

*Percentage agreeing the company stands for the following:*

- Most productive workers prioritize job 13%
- Men should place job before family 14%
- Leavetakers aren't focused on the job 18%
- Overtime is required to advance 48%

# Shared parenting ideology

*Company position on the following statement:*

*Mothers and fathers should spend as much time on childcare -*

Agree completely 22%

Agree 46%

Disagree 24%

Disagree completely 8%

# What types of companies are more responsive to fathers?

*2006 multivariate analyses examined:*

“Institutional factors”-

- Company size, sector, economic concerns

“Gendered substructure”-

- Men’s share of workforce (M=68%),  
men’s share of management (M=82%)
- Company’s adoption of caring values,  
adherence to masculine values

# Independent correlates of company responsiveness

*Significantly related (in declining order of importance):*

- Companies' adoption of caring values (5)
- Women's share of management positions (4)
- Being in the service sector (3)
- Women's share of workforce (2)
- Company's concerns about negative economic consequences of more men taking leave (2)
- Company's adherence to masculine values (1)
- Company's concerns about cost-saving (1)

*Not related:* company size, concerns about productivity



# Are fathers more likely to take parental leave?

*Percentage of fathers  
who take leave in the company:*

	<b>1993</b>	<b>2006*</b>
0%	2%	0%
1-40%	86%	75%
41%+	11%	24%

\*Asked % who took “daddy months”

# Company responsiveness and leavetaking

*Companies' parental leave rate significantly and independently correlated with:*

- formal policies and programs
- managerial support
- support from supervisors and co-workers
- job priority norms
- shared parenting ideology

# What is the trend in leavetaking?

*Percentage of companies indicating that fathers taking leave is:*

	<b>1993</b>	<b>2006</b>
• Increasing	27%	71%
• Steady	66%	28%
• Decreasing	7%	0%

# Company responsiveness and leavetaking trends

*Companies' parental leave trend significantly and independently correlated with:*

- formal policies and programs
- managerial support
- support from supervisors and co-workers
- shared parenting ideology

*Not related:* job priority norms

# Evidence of “win-win” scenario?

- 77% reported: It makes good business sense to help employees manage work and family responsibilities.
- 18% reported: Taking parental leave contributes positively to men’s work qualifications.
- 4% reported: More fathers taking leave likely to have positive economic consequences for the company.

# Conclusion - the good news

- Swedish case suggests that social policies can move corporations toward a more family-supportive and gender-equitable workplace culture.
- Companies are more responsive to fathers in 2006 than in 1993, including more formal policies and programs and more support from supervisors and co-workers.
- Fathers in private companies appear more likely to take parental leave in 2006 than in 1993.

# Conclusion - the bad news

- Less than half of companies have formal policies and programs.
- Less than half report support from supervisors and co-workers.
- Few have someone in charge or procedures to train and encourage supervisors.
- Majority do not agree with ideal of shared parenting.
- Few see taking parental leave as positive.

# Future outlook

- “Implementation gap” will persevere - More fathers want to take leave entitlement but companies are not enthusiastic about this.
- Companies will slowly become more responsive to fathers because of the growing service sector.
- Increased equal employment opportunity for women could enhance companies’ responsiveness to fathers; women’s power is increasing but women’s participation in the private sector is not.
- Resistance to active fatherhood is rooted in the gendered substructure of workplaces.



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