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Gender and the Social Democratic Welfare Regime

A comparison of gender-equality friendly policies in Sweden and Norway

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Introduction – gender-equality friendly policies¹

Why are some countries so much more generous in their support to women and men's possibilities to reconcile employment and parenting? What account for the different approaches to policies that are gender-equality friendly? The term gender-equality friendly policies refer in this article to policies that enable women and men to combine labor force participation with parenting. Policies such as parental leave and public childcare belong to this category. We have chosen to use the concept gender-equality friendly policies instead of the more common concept women-friendly policies (Hernes 1987) because we like to get away from the focus on women and stress the importance of a perspective that acknowledges the importance of the relational aspect of gender.

In a sense gender-equality friendly policies belong to the broader category of social policy, but they also intersect with civil rights policies, taxation policies and active labor market policies. Gender-equality friendly policies do *not* support the traditional division of labor between women and men. On the contrary, they support women as well as men to abandon their traditional roles and identities by, for example, encouraging women's labor market participation and men's care work. In addition gender-equality friendly policies do not discriminate against single parents or same sex couples. In most welfare states working mothers have more substantial care obligations than working fathers, but working mothers also have better care leave rights than working fathers. Gender-equality friendly policies affect not only the material situation of families with children, but also influence women and men's decision to seek employment or primarily focus on care taking. These policies shape gender relations, structure political conflict and participation, and contribute to the formation and mobilization of specific gendered identities and interests (Hernes 1987; Gordon 1988; Piven 1985; Orloff 1993).

Although gender-equality measures in the area of social and labor market policies are crucial for determining the poverty level for families with children, and the organization of care work, as well as influencing women's labor force participation (Gustafsson 1994), and fertility rates (Esping-Andersen 1997), few scholarly efforts have gone into explaining their origins. Recent work show that in countries where women are highly organized in social democratic party-affiliated women's movements as well as in independent women's organizations, and where the social democratic parties govern, we can observe highly developed gender-equality friendly policies (Huber and Stephens 2001, see also Bergqvist 2001, Mahon 1997 and Mahon & Michels 2002).

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When comparing countries across welfare state regimes such as the U.S. and Sweden one is struck by the great differences in policy measures. For example, the U.S. has 12 weeks unpaid parental leave limited to employees in companies with 50 employees or more.² In Sweden all parents have since 1974 been granted substantial parental leave rights. In 1998 it included a flat-rate cash benefit during 15 months for all parents, while employed parents had the right to an income-related leave benefit for 12 months plus a three months cash benefit (see Table 5 for Sweden and Norway; O'Connor *et al* 1999 for liberal welfare regimes).

This article analyzes the gender-equality friendly policy development in Norway and Sweden with a focus on parental leave and public childcare. Since the beginning of the earlier part of the twentieth century, Sweden has been on the forefront of developing public policies aimed at altering unequal gender relations and it is considered the ideal-typical Social Democratic welfare state regime (Esping-Andersen 1990). Denmark, Finland, and Norway are also grouped under this regime type which is characterized by its highly de-commodifying and universalistic programs, commitment to and dependence on full employment, and social rights to benefits based on citizenship. Egalitarianism is a fundamental value and benefits are comparatively high and primarily financed by taxes.³ When including gender-equality friendly policies into the analysis a different clustering of the Scandinavian countries occurs. Feminist researchers argue that an inclusion of these kinds of public policies challenges Esping-Andersen's regime types. They consider Norway as a deviant case within the Social Democratic welfare state regime, due to its slow development of policies that strengthen women's labor market participation (Leira 1992; Skrede 1993; Sainsbury 1996; 1999; Gornick et al. 1996; Ellingsaeter & Hedlund 1998). While investigating Norway's past 'exceptionalism,' and what made Norway turn around in the 1980s, as well as examining the factors which account for Sweden's faster development in the same policy area, this article sheds light on forces for change in welfare state patterns.

This article attempts to point at possible mechanisms behind the divergent outcomes in Sweden and Norway in public childcare provisions and parental leave policies. Which political actors have been important in influencing the policy making process, formulating policies, and pushing for legislation for parental leave and public childcare provisions? Which ideas, reforms, and

² The Family and Medical Leave Act passed in 1993 (O'Connor *et al*, 1999).

³ The two other regime types often referred to in the welfare state literature are the conservative and liberal welfare state regimes. Whereas the conservative regime, of which Germany is the prototype, relies on social insurance schemes and is characterized by its generous transfer payments, the liberal regime is distinguished by its means-tested assistance and modest universal cash transfers or modest social-insurance plans. The United States, Canada, and Australia are examples of the latter regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

agencies have influenced policy formulation in the two countries? Has there been a convergence during the last decade?

Drawing mainly on secondary analyses of social policy provisions and gender relations, we analyze the policy development by examining social mobilization, political agenda setting and legislative outcomes. We focus on the political struggles leading to and surrounding these policies in order to get a greater understanding for which political actors were important in influencing the policy-making process and policy outcomes, as well as which ideas, reforms and agencies were present to affect the same. We mainly cover the post-war period, although the pre-war period is also briefly examined. The main aim of this article is to describe differences and similarities between Norway and Sweden, which can help us, identify the most important factors behind the divergent outcomes. The two countries are similar on factors that are thought to influence the historical development of their welfare states such as the role of organized labor and left party strength (Esping-Andersen 1985; Korpi 1989; Stephens 1979), constitutional structures (Huber et al. 1993; Lijphart 1984), etc., making a 'most similar nation' research design (Ragin 1987) particularly fruitful.

We organize the article as follows: first, we present the framework of gender regimes, second we look at the crucial pre-war period when Norway and Sweden choose different paths in relation to women as mothers and workers. Third, we examine the gender-equality friendly policy development in the two countries during the 1960s and the 1970s, a period of policy divergence and discuss several factors that may help explain this divergence. Fourth, we turn to the 1980s and the 1990s, and ask if the two countries are now in a process of policy convergence. Lastly, follows a discussion and conclusion.

Gender policy regimes

Much of the recent feminist literature on the welfare state employs a provider model framework, in which social- and labor market policies are considered in terms of their support for the male breadwinner model versus the individual model (also referred to as the dual-earner model) (Sainsbury 1994; 1996). These models are premised on the idea that gender relations are embedded in public policy legislation, and analyses focus on examining the different effects and influences that various social policies may have on the formation and the maintenance of the division of labor between the sexes.

Recently Sainsbury (1999) has introduced a scheme of three gender policy regimes. The gender policy regimes are presented in Figure 1. Here she introduces a third category in between the male breadwinner regime and the individual earner-carer regime, called the separate gender roles regime. In contrast to the male breadwinner regime where married women's social rights are via their husbands the separate roles regime give mothers their own care rights. As in the

male breadwinner regime, separate gender roles are emphasized, but in contrast to the male breadwinner regime the “principle of care also erodes the importance of marriage for women’s entitlements, so that social rights encompass unmarried mothers” (p. 79). The individual earner-carer regime differs from the other two as it is based on a gender ideology where women and men are seen as equal in their roles as parents and providers. “Both sexes have entitlements as earners and carers, and policies are structured to enable women to become workers and men to become caregivers. Social rights and tax obligations are attached to the individual rather than the family” (p. 79).

Thus both the separate gender roles regime and the individual earner-carer regime could be seen as women-friendly as it for example includes a paid component to caregivers. However, only the individual regime fits with our concept of gender-friendliness in the way it promotes shared gender roles. The framework of gender policy regimes will be used in our analysis of differences and similarities between the two countries during different time-periods.

Figure 1. Three gender policy regimes.

Regime attributes	Male breadwinner	Separate gender roles	Individual earner-carer
Ideology	Strict division of labour Husband=earner Wife=carer	Strict division of labour Husband=earner Wife=carer	Shared tasks Father=earner-carer Mother=earner-carer
Entitlement to social benefits	Unequal among spouses	Differentiated by gender role	Equal
Basis of entitlement	The principle of maintenance	Family responsibilities	Citizenship or residence
Recipient of benefits	Head of household Supplements for dependant	Men as family providers Women as caregivers	Individual
Taxation	Joint taxation Deductions for dependant	Joint taxation Deductions for dependants for both spouses	Separate taxation Equal tax relief
Employment and wage policies	Priority to men	Priority to men	Aimed at both sexes
Sphere of care	Primarily private	Primarily private	Strong state involvement
Caring work	Unpaid	Paid component to caregivers in the home	Paid component to caregivers in and outside the home

Source: Sainsbury 1999, table 3.1 p. 78.

The Pre-war Period

In the early years of the twentieth century the legislation in the two countries differed in their approach to women as mothers and workers. Norwegian women won civil, political and social rights earlier than their Swedish counterparts. These early rights were often targeted at women as mothers or wives rather than as workers or individual citizens. However, the introduction of paid maternity rights shows that eligibility could be based on a combination of motherhood and labor market status. In 1909, working mothers received the right to paid maternity leave in Norway, which in 1915 was extended to married women irrespective of their labor market status. The rights also included free medical treatment (Seip and Ibsen, 1991). Despite a long period of political debates and women's agency in favor of maternal insurance Swedish women did not receive similar rights until the 1930s. A universal maternal leave legislation was introduced in 1954 (Abukhanfusa 1987; Kulawik 2000).

Norwegian women also gained universal suffrage earlier than Swedish women did, in 1913, while Swedish women had to wait until 1919. The earlier mobilization of women in Norway was probably a result of the Norwegian fight for independence from Sweden. The union between Sweden and Norway prevailed between 1814 and 1905. (Raaum 1999; Sainsbury 2001; see Table 1).

Several authors point to the importance of this period in shaping a strong mobilization of Norwegian women in favor of maternalist concerns. Women's claims were often based on their role as mothers rather than their role as citizens. They emphasized women's domesticity and morality as well as supported rights for unmarried mothers. Thus, they favored separate social rights for women. Their strategy led to an early political recognition of the responsibility of the state and public authorities for mothers and children with different needs. In contrast, equal rights feminists did not gain much influence over social policies in Norway. In Sweden, equal rights feminists had a stronger position in women's fight for political and social rights, but women had to wait longer for any improvements. This early divergence between the two countries shaped the historical legacy for future policy directions (Nagel 1995; Sainsbury 2001).

In 1925, the two countries again took different paths. Sweden introduced a law that granted women (almost) the same rights as men to employment in the civil service, while Norway introduced a curtail decision on married women's employment opportunities. The curtail decision in Norway, Skrede claims, was the other side of the coin of the union movement's success of negotiating an 'industrial wage,' or 'family wage,' upon which the male breadwinner model is premised. The effect of the curtail-decision on married women's (or unmarried women's) employment opportunities, in terms of dismissal rate, or not being

hired, does not appear to have been great overall,⁴ but it was of great symbolic and ideological significance in terms of supporting and maintaining a breadwinner ideology (Skrede 1984, 1993; Leira 1992; Ellingsaeter 1995).

Women's weak position within party and unions early in the inter-war period may partly explain the extent to which the male breadwinner norm took a stronger hold in Norway than in Sweden, and its persistence through time. In addition, there was no consensus among Norwegian women on the issue of employment and on women's 'proper' role in society (Ellingsaeter 1995).

Moreover, in Sweden outspoken resistance towards married women's work was prevalent and the law on women's employment rights in civil service led to a renewal of this debate. Even though several members of parliament suggested restrictions on married women's work, no majority was in favor of this and the debate died out. During the unemployment and population crisis in the 1930s the question of married women's employment again became salient. In contrast to Norway and to the debate in Sweden in the 1920s, all the women's organizations in Sweden in the 1930s "including the National Housewives Association, defended women's right to work on the basis that it was a citizenship right" (Hobson & Lindholm 1997:486).

Women's organizations certainly played an important role when the Swedish Riksdag decided to embark on a path which differed from Norway. In Sweden, the debates not only resulted in no restrictions on married women's right to work, but also in anti-discrimination legislation passed in 1938. Law prohibited the firing of married and/or pregnant women, or single mothers. The work most crucial in influencing the parliamentarians and the leadership in the social democratic government was done by the so-called *Kvinnoarbetskommittén* (The Committee on Women's Employment). The composition of the committee, five women and two men, was noticed both in the national and international context. Furthermore, all the women were well known for their strong political and social engagement for women's rights and they were highly in favor of married women's right to work. Member of Parliament, Kerstin Hesselgren, was appointed as the leader of the committee and the important position as secretary was given to Alva Myrdal. At the outset, one of the two men in the committee was in favor of a curtail-decision (Frangeur 1998).

The social democratic ministers, Ernst Wigforss, Minister of Finance and Gustav Möller, Minister of Social Affairs, stood behind the appointments. At about the same time, Möller also appointed the members to the better known Population Committee; amongst them was Gunnar Myrdal.⁵ According to the

⁴Female teachers, however, were greatly affected (Skrede, 1984, 1993).

⁵ The population issue, which had been put forward by Alva and Gunnar Myrdal in *Crisis in the Population Question (Kris i befolkningsfrågan)* published in 1934, was very salient at the time. The Myrdals took advantage of the fear of population decline by putting forward

historian Renée Frangeur, separating the two committees contributed to giving an economic rather than social perspective on married women's employment. By "placing it under the Ministry of Finance, the Committee on Women's Employment was given a certain legitimacy which would otherwise not have been the case had it been part of the population issue, as was demonstrated by similar political debates and legislation in, for example, Denmark, Germany, and, in part, the U.S." (Frangeur 1998, 247, authors' translation). Frangeur likens Wigforss's action to separate the committees as a coup made in alliance with the women's movement (1998, 363).

When *Kvinnoarbetskommittén* put forward its report in 1938, the issue was no longer about restricting married women's right to work. The women majority in the committee had managed to rephrase the problem. Instead of framing the issue in terms of a conflict between employment and marriage, the issue was reformulated to how society could support employed women's right to marriage and motherhood (Frangeur 1998).⁶

In sum, early on women's movement in Norway stressed the difference between the sexes as important in the fight for social rights and protection for mothers. This resulted in an early social policy development in accordance with criteria found both in the male breadwinner and separate gender roles regimes. The development of maternal rights came later in Sweden, but during the 1930s there was a break-through of social policies supporting mothers. During this period Sweden established a regime type similar to the separate regime with some elements from the ideology of equal rights.

Divergence in the 1960s and 1970s

During the 1940s and the 1950s several measures were taken in Norway and Sweden in terms of supporting families with children, but to a lesser extent in terms of supporting working mothers. Unlike the U.S. and the U.K., the two countries had not experienced a large-scale entry of women into the labor market during the World War II. In 1950, around 90 percent of all married Norwegian women were not registered in formal employment (Leira 1993). In both countries, a family cash benefit (*barnbidrag*) was introduced, which went directly to the mother. Only small improvements in maternity leave policies took place in Norway. In Sweden, a universal maternity benefit was introduced in 1954, which also included an income replacement for working mothers. Public support to

recommendations for social reforms (such as government subsidies to families to make it more affordable to raise children), public works, and public housing (Hatje, 1974).

⁶ Furthermore, several 'family policy'-measures were introduced in Sweden during this time. For example, maternity benefits covering about 90 percent of all mothers, free maternity and childbirth services, housing program for families with several children including subsidies and interest-subsidized construction loans (Olson, 1986).

childcare in both countries was very limited. Thus, there were no great differences during this period between the two countries in policy outcome within the two policy areas. However, women's position within the labor market and their political mobilization in the two countries were undergoing changes resulting in different approaches in Norway and Sweden to female employment and gender-equality friendly policies in the 1960s and 1970s.

Increases in women's participation in the labor market and the issue of childcare

In the 1960s, there was a shift in both the Norwegian and Swedish governments' limited support for childcare to a somewhat greater effort to expand childcare provisions (Gunnarsson 1993; Leira 1992). However, no real expansion of childcare was implemented until the 1970s in Sweden and even later in Norway. In Sweden, married women had begun to join the labor force in unprecedented numbers already in the late 1950s and 1960s and the demand for childcare greatly increased. Women's total labor force participation in Norway was only 36 percent in 1960, whereas in Sweden the figure was 50 percent. For Swedish women with children under the age of seven, participation increased from 35 percent in 1964 to 50 percent in 1970, and to 60 percent in 1975 (Hinnfors 1992, 42). In Norway, a similar development occurred about ten years later (Leira 1993).

In 1960, less than two percent of the pre-school children (ages 0-6) in Norway were in some kind of day care (Leira 1992). The situation in Sweden was not better. In 1965, only 25,000 children or about three percent of all Swedish pre-school children were in public childcare. At the same time, nearly 200,000 mothers (36 percent) of pre-school children were employed (Bergqvist & Nyberg 2001). Childcare provisions were mainly left to private institutions or informal arrangements. This means that many mothers with young children, especially in Sweden, entered the labor market before public childcare became available. Thus, public provisions were not the main factor for attracting women to the labor market.

Although the extent of childcare provisions in the two countries did not differ greatly, the ideological orientation did. In Sweden, public childcare provisions were more oriented towards the demands of production and the need for families to reconcile work and care. In Norway, the main orientation was part-time care and socialization of children (Leira 1992; Ellingsaeter 1998). In Sweden, the first public provisions of childcare were developed as a mean to aid working single mothers needing to engage in paid employment. They later came to include even married women. In contrast, Norway followed another path by introducing a state-guaranteed cash transfer for single mothers in the mid-1960s making it possible for them to take care of their children at home (Leira, 1993, 60).

In 1975, both Norway and Sweden introduced national childcare/pre-school acts, but with very different outcomes. In Sweden, the national act led to a substantial increase in the provision of childcare, while the implementation in Norway was much slower (Tables 6-8). Furthermore, women's labor force participation was still lower in Norway than in Sweden (Table 4). The dual-earner family ideology had taken a stronger root in Sweden than in Norway.

Gender equality and parental leave

The tax system is of importance for the kind of provider system privileged by the state (Sainsbury 1999, chap. 6). An important reform behind the early institutionalization of a dual-earner norm in Sweden was the introduction of separate taxation. The issue of separate taxation, while first brought forward by the Liberal Party reflected changing attitudes towards gender relations (Eduards 1991). The Tax Reform Act of 1971 provided better institutional preconditions for gender equality, as also married women then were viewed as breadwinners. In the earlier tax system, spouses' incomes were jointly taxed at a more favorable tax bracket than single tax filers, but this was only favorable if the two spouses did not work full time. Thus, it provided disincentives for the dual-earner family forms. With the new system, spouses were often taxed separately, and the economic disincentives built into the earlier system were abolished (Haas 1991; Hinnfors 1992). Norway did not take the step to fully individualize taxes. Instead, it made separate taxation an option. Joint taxation, however, is still important (Sainsbury 1999, 195).

Another step towards the dual-earner norm has been the introduction of parental leave legislation. In 1974, Sweden extended maternal rights to include income replacement to the father; a new parental leave insurance replaced the maternity leave legislation. It was then up to the parents to decide who would take the leave when a child was born or adopted and for what period, or how to share it. While the Parental Leave Act of 1974 allowed either parent to take a leave after the birth of a child, it not only embraced the idea of the dual-earner family, but also the idea that the father can and *should* care for children (Bergqvist 1999). While having the support of the Social Democratic Party, trade unions, and influential social scientists, the parental leave policy "fitted in well with the concern for the low birth rate, an interest in preserving women's employment opportunities, and a new concern for men's liberation" (Haas 1991, 383).

Parental leave legislation was instituted in 1978 in Norway, four years after Sweden had done the same. Although the wage replacement rate was 100 percent, there were many more restrictions to the leave in Norway compared to Sweden, which prevented fathers from taking advantage of it. The father's eligibility depended on the mother qualifying for earnings-related benefits, and

her employment record determined the benefit level of both parents. If she worked part time, this affected the father's benefit negatively. Furthermore, fathers could only claim benefits if the mother returned to work or studied full time (Sainsbury 1996).

Towards an explanation of differences between Norway and Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s

Why was the shift of greater government responsibility taking place in Sweden and not in Norway at the time? How did these changes come about? Which factors influenced the development of different gender-equality friendly policies in the two countries? Here we will discuss several factors that may have influenced the divergent policy development in the two countries. First we look at the general economic and welfare policy framework at the time. Second we look at the political party configuration and the dominating ideology. Third we analyze the importance of women's mobilization.

Economic and welfare state policies

Women's employment is an important determinant of the expansion of public social services, and there is an interactive effect of this factor and social democratic governance on public delivery of welfare state services (Huber and Stephens 2001). The difference between the countries in female employment and economic policy, and the possible consequences of the particular economic policy for the different approaches to gender roles, may help to account for the countries distinct development of gender-equality friendly policies.

Several researchers point to the growing Swedish economy in the early 1960s and its labor shortage, and after the mid 1960s, the great expansion of the public sector as driving forces behind women's mass entry into the labor market and the necessity to expand childcare. Haas, for example, claims that instead of recruiting foreign workers (whose assimilation was perceived to be problematic), women were encouraged to enter the labor market (Haas 1991). Gunnarsson also states the labor shortage as one, among several factors, which may help explain the expansion of public childcare in Sweden. The cost of living increase made the dual-earner model financially necessary, according to Gunnarsson. This in turn explains the efforts to "create a comprehensive support system for families with young children, a system designed to enable mothers and fathers to work outside the home..." (Gunnarsson 1993, 497).

Norway also experienced a labor shortage during the 1950s and the 1960s, but in contrast to Sweden, married women's employment was not encouraged. Norwegian childcare policies have not conceptualized married women and

mothers as ‘labour’ (Leira 1992). Skrede claims that the ‘family wage,’⁷ which the Labor Party and unions supported, anchored the male breadwinner ideology in fiscal, industrial, and housing policies in Norway, thus, this may have slowed the development of public child care. Several measures were taken by the Labor government during 1945-1960 that reinforced the male breadwinner model, such as a housing policy which ensured moderately priced housing, even for low-income families, through subsidized loans, low interest rates, and the access to regulated credit (Skrede 1984; 1993).

Thus, the two countries pursued different economic policies and responded to the shortage of labor in different ways. The view on women’s employment becomes important for what kinds of social policies that are introduced. Norway’s development has more similarities with the separate gender role regime while Sweden moves in the direction towards the individual earner-carer regime.

The Political Party Configuration

On the political party arena, not only did the Swedish Social Democratic Party in government shift its philosophy, but also there was a shift in all the five main parties regarding their stance on public policies that facilitate women’s employment. The parliamentary debate in the 1960s on the issue of public childcare reflects the division within and between the parties about policy preferences. Although there were conflicting views on public childcare and family provider models within all the parties, there was no sharp divide between the socialist and non-socialist blocs on the issue. Instead the Liberals sided with the Social Democrats in their support for the dual-earner family model (Hinnfors, 1992).⁸ The Social Democrats were at first split between those who favored the male breadwinner model, thus, subsidizing housewives (through home care allowances)⁹, and those who supported the dual-earner model through public childcare expansion. This split was mirrored even within the women’s wing of the party. The chairperson of the women’s wing of the Social Democratic Party, however, supported the introduction of both a home care allowance and the expansion of public childcare provisions. For some, the housewife model, underpinned by policies such as home care allowance, appeared ideal, as it meant a relief for women from having to engage in heavy industrial work.

The home care allowance had in different forms and at different time’s support from all the parties. The only exception was the Conservative Party, which did

⁷ Wage negotiations resulted in the setting of the industrial worker’s average income as a norm (the male breadwinner model).

⁸ Although they supported it for different reasons: the Liberals for gender equality reasons, and the Social Democrats for class reasons. The idea behind the class argument is that government subsidies such as home care allowances are thought to benefit only those who already could afford to stay home (Hinnfors, 1992).

⁹ Home care allowance is a government subsidy similar to a mother’s wage.

not support government intervention in the sphere of caring, and prioritized tax deductions. Not until 1972 did the Conservative Party come to accept some form of home care allowance, and very reluctantly some form of public childcare provisions (Hinnfors 1992). The Liberal Party as well as the Center Party supported both home care allowance and public childcare expansion, albeit to various extents. The Communist Party, on the other hand, had a more vague position on the issue, yet strongly supported the expansion of public childcare provisions. The Social Democrats, however, abandoned their support for home care allowance in 1972, and instead gave support to increases in public childcare facilities and the introduction of parental leave. Thus, Hinnfors found that all the parties gradually changed their position in favor of stronger public responsibility between 1960-1973.

The political parties' stands on public childcare in Norway were varied, as in Sweden. The Labor Party was the first to support center-based day care for pre-school children, and this was made part of the party program from 1949. Not until 1960 did most of the other parties do the same (Leira 1992). However, the Labor Party itself was divided "over the aims of state intervention, and over the division of labour and responsibility between the state and family" (Leira 1992, 69). Not until 1975, did the Labor Party unite behind the universalist approach, although the modes and the scope of state intervention were still controversial (Leira 1992). The Labor Party and the Socialist Left Party advocated the dual-earner family model, giving support to expanding public childcare. The bourgeois parties, however, supported family policies, which maintained the male breadwinner norm. All parties, with one exception¹⁰ were supportive of increased government subsidies for childcare provisions. However, they differed to a large extent over the type of childcare they supported. Socialist parties (Labor Party, Socialist Left Party, Red Election Party) support full-time coverage, while centrist parties and conservative parties (Center Party, Christian People's Party, Liberals, Conservative Party) advocate part-time coverage and a lower level of coverage (Bratton & Ray 1998, unpublished paper; Leira 1992).

In the Parliamentary debate state-sponsored childcare was primarily seen as "a professional supplement to primary socialization within the family, and provided in the best interests of the child". In contrast to the Swedish case, equality between men and women and the demand for labor in the economy "were not central issues" in the debate (Leira 1992, 83).

The final legislative outcome, the Day Care Act of 1975, gave local governments the authority to decide whether to provide childcare, as well as what forms and what extent of it, even though the 1969 committee on childcare had recommended strict state control and liberal spending on childcare. In reality, this

¹⁰ The only exception was the Progress Party (Framskrittspartiet), a right wing party advocating radical tax cuts.

meant that only the planning of day care provisions was made mandatory, whereas the actual provision for child care was kept voluntary (Leira 1992). Thus, contrary to Sweden only meager provisions resulted.

The issue of whether state-sponsored childcare should be based on Christian values (Protestant Lutheran) was of greater salience in Norway than in Sweden. In fact, this was a heated public debate in Norway starting in the late 1960s until the early 1980s. The controversy was over whether or not religion should be included in the opening paragraph of the Day Care Act of 1975. Proponents for the inclusion of religion argued that a majority of Norwegians support the state church, and consistency in values at home, at day care, at school and church was important for “efficient learning as well as personal security” (Bø 1993, 401). The opponents claimed that the increasing religious heterogeneity in Norway would lead to confusion and insecurity among many children (1993, 401).¹¹ This connection between childcare and religion is unique to Norway, as the issue has not gained importance in Sweden.¹² Religious sentiments have been weak in Sweden, and, thus, a strong fundamentalist religious movement supporting the traditional division of labor between the sexes has been absent (Haas 1991).

Some scholars suggest that religious influence affect social policy development, in particular through Christian Democratic/Catholic parties (Esping-Andersen 1990; Stephens 1979; Huber, Ragin & Stephens 1993; Hicks & Misra 1993; Wennemo 1994). The existence of Christian parties and their participation in government has been shown to influence the kind of family benefit system that becomes institutionalized, as suggested by Wennemo (1994). The combination of leftist and religious parties, Wennemo claims, tends to result in an employment-based system lending support to the traditional family type. The existence of leftist parties, and no religious parties, in government, however, tend to create citizenship-based benefits (see also Gustafson 1994). Wennemo argues that “an important element in the ideology of religious parties is the concept of family wage” (Wennemo 1994, 69). Her data shows that Norway had no religious party in government at the time of the introduction of a family benefit scheme, or during the two years preceding it, but a Christian Party did exist at the time.

Although religious influence is comparatively weak in the Scandinavian countries, religious/cultural differences exist between the countries (see, for example, Sørensen, 1998, and the commentaries on this article in the same volume; Stephens, 1979b). In fact, the influence of the Christian People’s Party (Kristelig Folkeparti) in Norway has been noted as a factor which may account for, or partly explain, Norwegian ‘exceptionalism’ (Leira 1992). In Norway, unlike in the other Scandinavian countries, the Christian People’s Party was

¹¹ The final legislation of 1975 did not include anything on religion. However, the debate continued, and in 1983 the following clause was added: “Public day care shall help to give children an upbringing in accordance with basic Christian values” (Bø, 1993:401).

¹² Day care, unlike schools, has historically not been tied to religion (Bø, 1993).

established comparably early (in 1933) and has held a relatively strong electoral position (Karvonen 1994). Although largely a regional party in West Norway from the start, it became a national party in the post-war era. From then onward, peaking in 1973, the party has played a rather prominent role in Norwegian politics.¹³ In Sweden, the Christian Democratic Party was established in 1964, and it experienced its greatest electoral success as late as 1998 when it received 11.8 percent of the vote. However, the party has played an overall minor role in Swedish politics.

Women's mobilization

One is hard pressed to find any account on Swedish social policy development in the 1960s which does not mention the 'sex role' and 'gender equality' debate. The public debate centered around women's 'double roles' and 'sex roles' and was influenced by two works published in 1962, Eva Moberg's essay "Kvinnans villkorliga frigivning" (Women's Conditional Liberation), and Kvinnors liv och arbete (Women's Life and Work) a joint Swedish-Norwegian social science analysis (Baude 1992; Hinnfors 1992; Jensen & Mahon 1993). Moberg argued that women could only be liberated when their role as mothers no longer were their principal role and she suggested that a break with traditional gender roles was necessary for a 'humane society' (Bergqvist 1998). Men's role also needed to be changed, according to Moberg. She suggested that men should lower their economic expectations and participate in household work and raise children (Haas 1991). The joint social science project placed the changing of traditional gender roles on the political agenda (both the Social Democratic and the Liberal Party made it part of their programs). Many of their goals and visions later became realized during the 1970s, such as the expansion of public childcare provisions, the introduction of paid parental leave and the elimination of joint taxation.

Although the public debate in the 1960s certainly contributed, the policy outcome was a result of compromises and struggles, often involving pressure from women in organizations in the labor market, political parties, and their women's wings as well as the state bureaucracy (in particular, the Labor Market Board, AMS). Furthermore, both unions and employers' organizations encouraged women's labor market participation (Bergqvist 1998; Florin & Nilsson 1999).

Those who demanded public childcare expansion in Norway were not 'strongly articulated' and represented by national organizations or lobbyists.

¹³ The Christian People's party received 10.5 percent of the vote in 1953, and in 1965, 8.1. In the election in 1997 the party received 13.7 percent. In Sweden, the percentage of vote for the Christian Democratic party lingered around 1.5-1.8 percent from its founding in 1964 to 1988, at which time it received 2.9 percent. It has since gained more support (Karvonen, 1994).

“Women’s associations were divided on the issue of day care and mothers’ employment in the mid 1970s, and some of the day care activists advocated day care as relief for the home-based mother, not as a service for the employed one” (Leira 1992, 131). This is in contrast to Sweden, where there was more of a consensus in support for the dual-earner model, and strong pressure from the women’s movement and women’s political party wings for the expansion of public childcare provisions and parental leave. The women’s movement within and outside the established political arena in Sweden put forward demands for changing gender roles and took advantage of the public debate on sex roles.

In fact, the second-wave women’s movement which emerged in the 1970s “radicalized the terms of the 1960s sex-role debate while it also challenged the primacy of class struggle” (Jenson & Mahon 1993, 89) to which the Swedish Social Democratic Party was fully dedicated.¹⁴ The women’s wing of the Social Democratic Party, while influenced by the discourse of the feminist movement began to exhibit greater political independence.¹⁵ The radical socialist feminist movement, Group 8, which was formed in 1971, played a role as an autonomous woman’s group radicalizing the debate. They “reformulate[d] the debate utilizing the unfamiliar discourse of unequal gender power” (Jensen & Mahon 1993, 89).

Within the women’s movement in Norway, there has been a stronger emphasis on the difference between the sexes than in Sweden. Women have also stressed “women’s rights to be represented by women,” and according to Skjeie, the legitimacy of ‘descriptive representation’¹⁶ in Norwegian society has furthered women’s cause (Skjeie 1991, 94). Although Skjeie’s account of women’s mobilization in Norway during the 1970s seems to be inconsistent with Leira’s characterization of the same period, this apparent discrepancy is mainly due to the fact that they examine different aspects of women’s agency. While Skjeie looks at women’s organizations’ effort to *increase women’s political representation* in local and national assemblies, Leira focuses on *women’s organizations’ stands on issues of childcare and mother’s employment* and their lack of unity. Although Leira states that the women’s movement brought ‘women’s issues’ such as abortion on demand,¹⁷ married women’s right to paid work,¹⁸ and access to

¹⁴ During the 1970s, the idea of economic democracy involving co-determination and work environment legislation and worker-controlled investment funds took center stage within the labor movement in Sweden, and “kept a class-based representation of political interests and class identities to the fore” (Jensen & Mahon, 1993:89).

¹⁵ An example is its call for abortion on demand *before* the government commission had completed its report, a rare move for the women’s wing to take (Jensen & Mahon, 1993).

¹⁶ “Pitkin defined a ‘descriptively’ representative body as one that mirrored the (political relevant) characteristics of the represented community, and a ‘substantively’ representative body as one that mirrored the interests of the community” (Bratton & Ray, Unpublished paper:1).

¹⁷ The abortion bill failed to pass by one vote in 1974, but the bill was reintroduced and passed in 1975 and it took effect in 1978 (Leira, 1992). In Sweden, abortion became legal in 1975.

childcare into the public arena, and later onto the political agenda, she suggests that women's agency played a minor role in the political decision-making process of public child care legislation, due possibly to the lack of unity among women on the issue.

Skjeie, on the other hand, emphasizes the 'unusual alliance' towards the end of the 1960s, between women within and outside of the political parties (Skjeie, 1991). What united the women was "the 'common concerns of womanhood'" which also had united them nearly a century earlier in their struggle for suffrage (Skjeie 1991, 93). This concern was based on the idea that men cannot represent women's interests and values, as "women would add new values and new issues to the political agendas" (1991, 232). Thus, women called for greater representation in politics, and the political discourse was often framed in terms of 'conflicting interests' between men and women or 'complementary resources' of the sexes. However, neither argument "specified which experiences were complementary and which interests were in conflict" (1991, 93). Not only did the lack of clarity on this issue make women's demands appear less threatening "to established party priorities and leadership," but the arguments also suited the ideological framework of both the left and the right (the left adopted the 'conflict of interests,' and the right the 'complementary resources') (1991, 93).

While the women's movement has taken an integrationist approach in both countries, their articulation and some of their strategies have differed. Due to a stronger emphasis on women as mothers, the demand for full-time public childcare was less strongly articulated in Norway than in Sweden. The rhetoric of difference, or the ideology of separate natures of men and women, was abandoned within the women's movement in Sweden. In fact, the sex role and gender equality debates in the 1960s and 1970s involving the vision of gender equality in all spheres of life did away with the rhetoric of difference.

As mentioned, Leira claims that women's agency played a minor role in the policy process around childcare. That was not the case in Sweden where liberal and left/social democratic women who represented the "vision of gender equality" were well represented in public committees, in government and parliament. Studies of the parliamentary debates about childcare and parental leave in Sweden confirm that women politicians were very active in promoting their diverse interests. There were actually fewer women in the Norwegian Parliament than in the Swedish. In mid 1970s, when many crucial reforms were made, women's representation in the Norwegian Parliament was 15 percent while in Sweden it was 21 percent. On the other hand, both the Norwegian and the Swedish Labor Governments between 1973 and 1976 had women ministers in charge of social affairs (Bergqvist 1999; Table 2 and 3).

¹⁸ This struggle for the right to paid work was lost as we learned in the section on the pre-war period, and was not fully gained until after the war (Ellingsaeter, 1995).

In sum, the divergent policy development in the two countries may be viewed as a result of a combination of factors. While the political parties played a key role in policy development, the particular policy outcome was a result of a dynamic interaction between women in organizations in the labor market, political parties and their women's wings, as well as the state bureaucracy, and other social actors such as the free debaters and intellectuals. The economic policy pursued and the possible consequences of it to the countries' approach to gender roles also affected the kind of policies that were developed. While both countries experienced labor shortage and public sector expansion, the difference between the countries in female employment influenced their respective policy development. Furthermore, the articulation of women's interests in Sweden were more united over the issue of married women's employment and were also more integrated into the formal political system than in Norway. The kind of consensus reached between the main players in Sweden was not reached in Norway at the time. Norwegian 'exceptionalism', or conversely, the rapid development of a new radical gender model in Sweden, can further be explained in terms of differences between the countries in the strength of religious influence, and in adherence to the family wage ideology. The combination of all of these factors and the interactive effect between some of the variables helped bring about the particular policy outcome in the Norway and Sweden.

Convergence or Divergence?

The more recent developments in the two countries indicate trends toward policy convergence, albeit with qualifications (see Bergqvist 1999; Sainsbury 1999). With great speed, the earlier 'laggard' Norway made headway in the policy process during the 1980s and the 1990s. Our two indicators of gender-equality friendly policies, public childcare facilities and parental leave, expanded in both countries and became more alike. Women's labor force participation, as well as women's political representation also increased and converged (Tables 1-5). Sweden had previously been viewed as the leader with regard to gender equality, but the choice of Gro Harlem Bruntland as the Prime Minister in 1986 put Norway in a new light. With the Norwegian Labor government consisting of almost the same number of men and women, Bruntland's administration laid the foundation for a major change in political representation of women in Norway.

However, recently the picture of policy convergence of gender-equality friendly policies was put in a new light. A Norwegian bourgeois government, led by a Christian Democratic Prime Minister, introduced a home care allowance (*kontantstøtte*) in 1999. This is usually associated with the separate gender regime and it "encourage[s] the traditional gender-differentiated family" (Leira 1998, 366). Next, we will analyze the trends of convergence and again emphasize

the importance of the economic situation, women's mobilization and political party configuration to the particular outcomes.

Women's labor force participation continued to increase in the two countries during the 1980s and during the 1990s it continued to increase in Norway, while it decreased somewhat in Sweden due to the unemployment crisis. In 1997 it was at about the same level in the two countries (Table 4).

Between 1984 and 1995 the earlier large gap between Norwegian and Swedish children in receipt of public childcare decreased considerably. In 1984, 37 percent of all 3-5 year olds in Norway and 58 percent of the same age group in Sweden had a place in public childcare. By 1995, the corresponding numbers was 70 and 76 percent, respectively. However, for the younger age group 1-2 years old the gap remained larger (Tables 6 to 8). Parental leave legislation also converged. In the early 1980s, the parental leave duration in Norway was 18 weeks, increasing twofold by the mid-1990s to 42 weeks at 100 percent wage replacement (or optionally, 52 weeks at 80 percent). In Sweden, during most of the 1980s, the parental leave was 9 months at 90 percent and three more months at a flat rate. Since then it has been extended to over a year, but due to financial strains the wage replacement has been lowered a couple of times during the 1990s and is today 80 percent (Table 5).

In both countries the share of parental allowance days taken by fathers has been rather low, especially in Norway where the fathers right to leave depends on the mothers labor market history. However, in 1993 Norway introduced a father's month exclusively reserved for the father as a measure to encourage more men to use their parental leave. Sweden followed suit in 1995 (Table 5; Sainsbury 1996; Bergqvist 1999). Many fathers in both countries use the possibility to take parental leave for one or two months, but their share of the total number of parental leave days was in 1996 only around six percent in Norway and twelve percent in Sweden (Bergqvist 1999).¹⁹

First, we can thus observe a convergence between the two countries that reflects the fact that Sweden experienced more of a welfare state crisis than Norway during this period, resulting in greater cutbacks in social programs and unemployment. Norway was catching up with Sweden's higher overall spending on social welfare relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and this was happening at a rather rapid pace as the welfare state crisis in Sweden put a damper on moves towards expanding the welfare state. Although Sweden spent more on parental leave as a percentage of GDP than Norway during this time, Norway's total social welfare spending as a percentage of GDP increased almost

¹⁹ In March 2001 the Swedish government decided to increase the length of the parental leave period by one month from January 1st 2002. They also decided that two months instead of one month could not be transferred to the other parent. In practice this means two "daddy months".

ten percent in ten years (from early 1980s to early 1990s). Sweden's increase was three percent for the same period (Swank 1998). Due to its revenues from oil reserves, Norway was in a better financial position than Sweden.

Second, women's mobilization and agency also played an important role in influencing the policy convergence between the two countries. The integration of women into the formal political system has been remarkable in both countries. However, it took place somewhat later in Norway than in Sweden (see tables 1 to 3). Stetson and Mazur (1995) also suggest that women's policy machinery, which consists of "agencies that are established by statute, administrative directive, or political resolution" "to promote equality and respond to women's concerns about maternity leave and child care" (5, 20), has been particularly effective in Norway. By bringing gender issues to the fore and have these issues bear on all public policy areas, as well as increasing women's influence in the policy making process, the Equal Status Council in Norway has been successful during the 1980s.

In contrast to Sweden, the Norwegian strategy has been based on an ideology of difference rather than gender neutrality. The rhetoric has been consistent with Norway's historical legacy of the separate spheres model and has helped bring women into the political arena and gender issues onto the political agendas. As such, the rhetoric of difference utilized by the women's movement in Norway has influenced policy outcomes favorable to women. The quota system, for instance, is an example of this, which introduced positive-discrimination measures and has been used more in Norway than in Sweden. It was first used within the educational system and the labor market, but it has also been used extensively within the political system and public offices (Borchorst 1999, Christensen 1999).

Third, during most of the 1990s social democratic governments have been in power in Norway paving the way for more gender-equality friendly policies. It is obvious that Norwegian social democracy today favors the individual model. The return of a bourgeois government in 1997, with a strong Christian Democratic influence, gave way for more conservative family policies like the home care allowance. Interestingly, this had also happened in Sweden during the last period of bourgeois government (1991-94). During this period the Swedish Christian Democratic Party for the first time was included in a bourgeois government coalition and managed together with the Centre Party to gain support for a home care allowance in July 1994. With the return of a Social Democratic government later that same year the home care allowance was promptly abolished, while the "fathers month" also introduced by the bourgeois government was kept.

Although some differences still persist the overall impression is that a convergence has occurred. Policy legacies and political strategies have differed and in Norway the tension between the separate gender regime and the individual earner-carer regime is stronger than in Sweden. Despite these differences both

countries has institutionalized welfare regimes that are fairly gender-equality friendly.

Conclusion

This article has focused on differences and similarities in the historical legacies and the institutionalization of gender regimes in two countries usually seen as very similar. In comparative analysis Norway and Sweden usually cluster together, but as we have shown there are some significant differences between the countries in how gender has been shaped and in turn shapes welfare state development. In this conclusion, we will refer to the framework of gender policy regimes (Sainsbury 1999), introduced in the first part of the article, to classify the type of gender regime which best describes each country during different time periods. Next, we will discuss the driving forces behind the differences and changes in regime types.

The gender policy regimes are divided into three types; the male breadwinner, the separate gender roles and the individual earner-carer regime. The male breadwinner regime is the most conservative and the individual earner-carer regime is the most supportive of gender-equality friendly policies, which are policies not based on the traditional division of labor between women and men. The separate gender roles regime may be women friendly in the way in which it supports women's care responsibilities, but it does not promote policies that help parents reconcile employment with parenting. Moreover, it is not based on the idea of a gender-neutral universal citizenship, as is the individual earner-carer regime.

Although we have mainly covered the period from the 1960s, we have also briefly discussed the earlier decades of the twentieth century. Our historical exposé shows that neither Norway nor Sweden has a legacy of a *pure* male breadwinner regime. Although, in general a male breadwinner ideology dominated both countries, the legislation was not reflective of this. Already during the first decades of the twentieth century we find that Norway acquired characteristics of the separate gender roles regime. Women won social rights as mothers and these rights by and by acknowledged working mothers as well as unmarried and married mothers. Maternal benefits were introduced later in Sweden than in Norway, but with less ambivalence towards working mothers. While during the 1920s and 1930s Sweden entered the path towards an ideology based on equal rights, Norway introduced a curtail decision on married women's employment opportunities.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the two countries developed into modern welfare states with many similarities, but their gender policy regimes continued to differ on some crucial dimensions. While Norway strengthened the dimensions of the separate gender roles regime, Sweden moved in the direction of the individual earner-carer regime. This can be seen for example, in the different approaches

towards working mothers, childcare policies and the issue of joint versus separate taxation. While Sweden individualized taxation in the early 1970s, Norway still allows joint taxation as an option.

The more recent development, we assess, has led to a policy convergence in that both countries promote policies in line with the individual earner-carer regime. Although Norway to a somewhat higher degree still reflects the separate gender roles regime, the two countries are moving towards each other. In the case of the 'daddy month' it was Norway who took the lead. The construction of an individual earner-carer regime is an important and perhaps necessary but not sufficient step towards gender equality. Thus, we like to stress that our conclusion is not that Norway and Sweden have eradicated all kinds of gender based injustices, but that a gender regime that acknowledges women and men as equal individuals with the same rights and duties is a better prerequisite for the improvement of gender equality.

We have not had the ambition to give a complete explanation of all the driving forces behind the differences and nuances in the institutionalization of gender regimes in our comparison between Norway and Sweden. We have mainly discussed three factors of importance for the different paths of development in the two countries; economic situation, political party configuration, and women's mobilization and agency. These factors can be seen as important building blocks towards a model that explains differences and similarities in how different kinds of gender regimes are institutionalized.

Our two country cases show that economic factors do play a role, but that political party configuration and women's agency are even more important to the specific content of social policies. The economic factor has mainly been discussed in terms of women's labor market participation. In Sweden, the increase in women's employment preceded the development of parental leave and childcare services. Then, during the 1970s, we see a positive dynamic process of increases in women's employment and gender-equal policies in Sweden. Despite some similarities between the two countries, in their experience, for example, with labor shortage, this dynamic process did not take place in Norway. However, since the mid-1980s we see an interactive process of increases in women's employment and improvements in parental leave legislation and childcare services also in Norway.

It is obvious in the Scandinavian case that increases in women's labor market participation lead to pressures for social service expansion, but when and how social policies develop is a matter of politics and cannot be understood only by economic forces. Thus, political party configuration becomes important. Given the Social Democratic dominance in both countries we could have expected a more similar policy development. However, social democrats in Norway have been more reluctant than their Swedish counterparts to introduce policies in line with the individual earner-carer regime. The male breadwinner ideals and the

rhetoric of women and men's separate spheres have been stronger among Norwegian social democrats, including the women's groups. In addition, Christian values and the Christian Democratic Party have played a more prominent role in Norway than in Sweden.

The last, but not the least important factor for understanding the former divergence and the current policy convergence is the mobilization and political agency of women. It is clear that equal rights feminism of the Swedish women's movement, already discernible in the early years of the twentieth century, has continued to be the dominant feminist ideology. In Sweden, the economic situation and the public sector expansion since the 1960s were in congruence with the ideology and will of the liberal and social democratic women's movement. During that time, women's representation in parliament and government were also increasing rather quickly. Women became political insiders with possibilities to form political alliances to promote their interests.

In Norway, women's movement has been consistent in its stronger tension between feminists embracing an ideology of gender differentiation and equal rights feminists. However, the Labor governments under the leadership of Gro Harlem Bruntland made moves towards the individual regime. Interestingly, the Norwegian feminists have done this without completely abandon the ideology of gender difference.

Our conclusion is that the political party configuration in combination with women's agency and strategies are crucial factors for understanding differences and similarities in the development of gender policy regimes in Norway and Sweden.

Tables

Table 1. Four institutional thresholds in parliamentary politics – legitimization, incorporation, representation and executive power.

Thresholds	Norway	Sweden
1. Legitimization		
- founding of suffrage societies	1885	1903
2. Incorporation		
Universal suffrage, enacted	1913	1919-1921
3. Representation (Parliamentary)		
1 th election, ordinary representatives	1921	1921
1 th election, over 10 % of representatives	1973	1953
1 th election, over 20 % of representatives	1977	1973
1 th election, over 30 % of representatives	1985	1986
Proportion of women 1998	36%	40%
4. Executive power (Government)		
First ordinary minister	1945	1947
1 th Cabinet, at least 10% of ministers	1965	1966
1 th Cabinet, at least 20% of ministers	1973	1976
1 th Cabinet, at least 30% of ministers	1986	1991
1 th Cabinet, at least 40% of ministers	1986	<i>a</i>
1 th Cabinet, at least 50% of ministers	Never	1994
Proportion of women 1998	47%	50%
1 th Prime Minister	1981	never

Source: Raaum 1999.

a. When a social-democratic government replaced a non-socialist government in 1994, the proportion of women increased from 38 to 50 percent.

Table 2. Government constellation and proportion of women in government.

Norway			Sweden		
Year	Government	% women	Year	Government	% women
1973-76	Labor Party	20	1976-78	Conservative Party; Liberal Party; Centre Party	25
1976-81	Labor Party	25	1979-81	Conservative Party; Liberal Party; Centre Party	24
1981-83	Conservative	24	1981-82	Centre Party; Liberal Party	28
1983-85	Conservative Party; Centre Party; Christian Democratic Party	22	1982-85	Social Democratic Party	25
1986-89	Labour Party	44	1985-88	Social Democratic Party	30
1989	Conservative Party; Centre Party; Christian Democratic Party	39	1988-89	Social Democratic Party	29
1990-96	Labour Party	47	1990-91	Social Democratic Party	36
1996-97	Labour Party	42	1991-94	Conservative Party; Liberal Party; Centre Party; Christian Democratic Party	38
1997-	Christian Democratic Party; Centre Party; Liberal Party	47	1994-98	Social Democratic Party	50
2000-2001	Labour Party	42	1998-	Social Democratic Party	50
2001-	Christian Democratic Party; Centre Party; Liberal Party; Conservative Party	37			

Source: Bergqvist *et al.* 1999, Appendix 1; www.odin.dep.no (Norska regeringens hemsida).

Table 3. Proportion of women in parliament.

Norway		Sweden	
Year	% women	Year	% women
1973	15	1974	21
1981	26	1983	30
1985	34	1986	31
1989	36	1989	38
1993	39	1992	33
1997	36	1994	40
2001	36	1998	43

Source: Bergqvist *et al.* 1999, Appendix 1; www.ssb.no/emner/00/01/10/stortingsvalg/

Table 4. Labor market activity rates of women and men aged 16-64.

	Norway		Sweden		% -difference between Norwegian and Swedish women
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1974★	44,4	77,4	57,1	79,7	-12,7
1977★	51,4	78,7	61,1	78,6	-9,7
1982★	57,3	78,2	66,3	77,0	-9,0
1986★	62,2	77,1	80,0	85,9	-17,8
1990	70,8	83,3	82,3	86,6	-11,5
1995	72,1	82,4	76,1	80,2	-4
1997	75,4	84,9	74,5	79,1	0,9

★ Age 16-74

Sources: Yearbook of Nordic Statistics 1983; 1987; Nordic Statistical Yearbook 1998.

Table 5. Parental leave rights in case of birth or adoption (1998).

	Norway	Sweden
Year of introduction of parental leave rights including fathers	1978	1974
Maximum number of weeks	42/52	64
-of which, for either the mother or the father	29/39	56
-of which, only for the mother	9	4
-of which, only for the father ('daddy month')	4 (in 1993)	4 (in 1995)
Paternity leave alongside maternity leave	2 weeks	10 days
Compensation level as a % of salary	100/80	80% during 360 days + 60 SEK during 90 days

Source: Bergqvist 1999.

Table 6. Children in Norway and Sweden in receipt of public childcare as a percentage of all children in the age group, 1981.

Age	Norway		Sweden	
	0-2	3-6	0-2	3-6
Daycare center				
- full time	4	12	13	26
- part time	1	23	-	24
Total in daycare centers	5	35	13	50
Child minders	-	-	11	15
Total	5	35	24	65

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook

Table 7. Children in Norway and Sweden in receipt of public childcare as a percentage of all children in the age group, 1993.

Age	Norway		Sweden	
	0-2	3-6	0-2	3-6
Daycare center				
- full time	14	37	23	49
- part time	3	24	-	14
Total in daycare centers	17	61	23	63
Child minders	3	2	9	14
Total	20	63	32	77

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook

Table 8. Children in Norway and Sweden in receipt of public childcare as a percentage of all children in the age group, 1975-1995.

	Norway	Sweden	Norway	Sweden
	1-2 years old	1-2 years old	3-5 years old	3-5 years old
1975	3	17	9	26
1978	6	25	20	37
1981	9	34	31	48
1984	10	41	37	58
1987	12	47	44	65
1990	17	45	53	68
1993	28	46	64	69
1995	36	53	70	76

Source: Blom-Hansen & Henneberg, 1998

Summary

Kerstin Sörensen & Christina Bergqvist (2002) *Gender and the Social Democratic Welfare Regime: a comparison of gender-equality friendly policies in Sweden and Norway*. *Work Life in Transition* 2002:5, National Institute for Working Life, Stockholm.

This report focuses on differences and similarities in the historical legacies and the institutionalization of gender policy regimes in two countries usually seen as very similar. We show that there are some significant differences between the countries in how gender relations has been shaped and in turn shapes welfare state development.

Our historical exposé shows that neither Norway nor Sweden has a legacy of a *pure* male breadwinner regime. However, Norway has always been more reluctant to introduce policies, which encourage mothers and married women's employment. During the 1970s Sweden expanded public childcare facilities and individualized taxation and thereby moved in the direction of the individual earner-carer regime with dual-income families as the norm. Norway continued to promote policies that encouraged more traditional sex roles. However, the more recent development during the 1990s has led to a policy convergence in that both countries, with some exceptions, promote policies in line with the individual earner-carer regime, which we consider more 'gender-equality friendly' than the male breadwinner and the separate gender roles regimes.

The construction of an individual earner-carer regime is an important and perhaps necessary, but not sufficient, step towards gender equality. Thus, we like to stress that our conclusion is not that Norway and Sweden have eradicated all kinds of gender based injustices, but that a gender policy regime that acknowledges women and men as equal individuals with the same rights and duties is a better prerequisite for the improvement of gender equality than gender policy regimes based on ideas about gender differences.

Our conclusion is that the political party configuration in combination with women's political agency and strategies are the crucial factors for understanding differences and similarities in the development of gender policy regimes in Norway and Sweden.

Social Democrats have been dominant in both countries and we could have expected a more similar policy development. However, in Norway the male breadwinner ideals and the rhetoric of women and men's separate spheres have been stronger among social democrats, including the women's groups. In addition, Christian values and the Christian Democratic Party have played a more prominent role in Norway than in Sweden.

In Sweden the equal rights feminism has been the dominant feminist ideology in women's movement. During the 1970s women's representation in parliament

and government were increasing rather quickly and women became political insiders with possibilities to form political alliances to promote their interests. In Norway, there was a stronger tension between feminists embracing an ideology of gender differentiation and equal rights feminists. However, the Labor governments under the leadership of Gro Harlem Bruntland made moves towards the individual regime. Interestingly, the Norwegian feminists have done this without completely abandon the ideology of gender difference.

Sammanfattning

Kerstin Sörensen & Christina Bergqvist 2002 *Gender and the Social Democratic Welfare Regime: a comparison of gender-equality friendly policies in Sweden and Norway*. Arbetsliv i omvandling 2002:5, Arbetslivsinstitutet, Stockholm.

I denna rapport analyseras historiska skillnader och likheter i institutionaliseringen av politiska genusregimer i två länder som vanligtvis betraktas som mycket lika. Vi visar att det finns en del betydelsefulla skillnader mellan länderna beträffande hur relationerna mellan kvinnor och män har skapats och hur dessa genusrelationer i sin tur skapar välfärdsstatens utveckling.

Vår historiska exposé ger vid handen att varken Norge eller Sverige har ett arv från en *ren* manlig enöversörjarregim. Emellertid har Norge varit mer motvilligt än Sverige till att på politisk väg uppmuntra mödrars och gifta kvinnors yrkesarbete. På 1970-talet expanderade Sverige den offentliga barnomsorgen och införde individuell inkomstskatt. Härmed förskjöts politiken i riktning mot den individuella inkomst-omsorgsregimen, vilken har tvåöversörjarfamiljen som norm. Norge fortsatte att föra en politik som uppmuntrade mer traditionella könsroller. Under senare tids utveckling ser vi däremot en tendens till politisk konvergens. Länderna närmar sig varandra och på båda håll följer politiken, med vissa undantag den individuella regimen, som vi anser vara mer ”jämsällldhetsvänlig” än både den manliga översörjarregimen och den genusdifferentierade regimen (separate gender roles regime).

Skapandet av en individualiserad inkomst-omsorgsregim är ett viktigt och kanske nödvändigt, men inte tillräckligt, steg mot jämsällldhet. Vi vill därmed understryka att vår slutsats *inte* är att Norge och Sverige har utrotat alla genusbaserade orättvisor, men att en politisk genusregim som erkänner kvinnor och män som jämlika individer med samma rättigheter och skyldigheter på livets alla områden har bättre förutsättningar för att uppnå jämsällldhet än de genusregimer som grundar sig på idéer om könsens olikheter.

Vår slutsats är att partipolitisk konstellation i kombination med kvinnors politiska handlande och strategier är de avgörande faktorerna för att förstå skillnader och likheter i de politiska genusregimerna i Norge och Sverige.

Socialdemokraterna har dominerat i båda länderna och vi skulle ha kunnat förväntat oss en mer enhetlig genuspolitisk utveckling. Det manliga översörjaridealet och retoriken om kvinnors och mäns separata sfärer har, emellertid, haft ett starkare fäste inom den norska socialdemokratin, vilket även gäller bland kvinnogrupper. Dessutom har kristna värderingar och Kristelig Folkeparti spelat en mer framträdande roll i Norge än i Sverige.

I Sverige har likarättsfeministerna dominerat kvinnorörelsen. Under 1970-talet ökade kvinnorepresentationen i regering och riksdag förhållandevis snabbt och kvinnorna fick tillträde till det politiska beslutsfattandet och kunde bilda politiska

allianser och befrämja sina intressen. I Norge fanns en starkare spänning mellan en kvinnorörelse som omfattade en ideologi om genusdifferentiering och likarättsfeminister. Arbeiderpartiet gick emellertid under Gro Harlem Bruntlands ledarskap in för att stärka en genuspolitik i enlighet med den individuella regimen. Intressant nog har norska feminister kunnat göra detta utan att helt förkasta ideologin om könsskillnader.

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