

## Summaries

Maria Sjöberg

### **The Social Subordination of Women – A Problematic Story On Power, Inheritance, and Marriage in Pre-industrial Society**

On the basis of the social subordination to which women were formally subjected by law, and the findings of previous research regarding power relations between the genders in practice, the question formulated here is: How were men's power-creating and hierarchically ordered relations perpetuated? Through this I also want to answer the question of how women's social position was systematically retained and constantly recreated. Having observed that land was the most important power resource in society – it was the conditions attached to land ownership that placed the freehold farmer in a different class from the nobleman – the continuing discussion is confined to the legal regulations concerning inheritance and marriage. In a society where the land market still largely lacked other forms of transfer than those resulting from inheritance and marriage, this limitation is justified. The fact that I deal only with what was prescribed by the law in these matters is a restriction that can also be justified. The law expressed norms, an ideal. Whether or not the law was obeyed, the norms say something about what was aspired to at a general level. The provisions of the law are regarded here as the tools offered by society so that the prevailing power relations between genders and classes could be perpetuated.

If the rules were obeyed, then the men had at least normative support for the transfer of their power-creating relations from one generation to the next. This support, however, is not explicitly stated in the law on inheritance. Women, it is true, inherited only half as much as men did, but they could still inherit land. The inheritance laws, however, required marriage both forwards and backwards in the lineage, and it was in marriage that the power constellation between the genders was shaped. It is well known that the married woman was not legally competent and lacked juridical authority. A factor of interest here is that she lacked the right to administer property which she had inherited. This right fell instead to her husband. I would therefore claim that women mediated material power resources to men, but that these resources, because of the formal subordination of women, could become a means for creating power only in the hands of the men.

The social function of women and men in society's power relations was thus manifested in marriage, the main role of which was to produce heirs and manage inherited land. That was why marriage was the institution that could distinguish illegitimate heirs from legitimate ones – and the legitimate heirs were those acknowledged by the father. This was how the father's authority was maintained. As in the case of what applied to land, it was the man that was responsible for the direct heirs, while the woman here too was only an intermediate link.

Marriage was thus a condition for legitimate heirs to be able to fulfil the requirements of inheritance law. Birthright should also be associated with the right of inheritance, which originated in the restrictions attached to inherited land, which guaranteed the survival of the lineage. If the societal function of the inheritance laws was geared to the future and hence the directly reproductive aspect, the right of birth was indirect, to keep the land within the lineage of the legitimate heirs.

Marriage, inheritance, and birthright jointly shaped the societal perception of kinship in its property-transferring sense. That is why this construction of gender also preserved

and reproduced classes in pre-industrial society. When power relations in society are analysed, then class should not be opposed to kin, as has previously been the case. Instead, the two should be analysed as a coherent construction resting on shared conceptions. The conception that most obviously pervaded property-transferring kinship, and hence also class, was that of the different social functions of the genders in the societal organization. Although property was transferred along the lines of both genders, the women in every generation – because of their formal subordination – lacked the possibility to be anything more than a mediator of power. In other words, the woman conveyed concrete power to the men in her lineage, to those who could authorize the inherent power potential of the resources.

Finally, I consider an old question in historical research: whether class and gender should be treated as parts of different power systems or parts of a shared system. Since it has been shown how class relations such as the men's power-creating relations with each other had the potential to be perpetuated – through inheritance and marriage – it is also evident that this required the woman to be socially subordinate to the man. This clarifies how power relations *within* the class were dependent on the power relationship between the genders. In particular, however, the significance of marriage indicates that the power relationship *between* the classes also rested on this gender order.

This question certainly needs more discussion than is possible here, but if the formal subordination of women is related to the hierarchical order between men, which constituted the classes in this society, then we obtain yet another possibility to see that this subordination was something other than the result of chance. If the social subordination of women is to be perceived as creating meaning, however, scholars must be seeking to analyse – not evaluate – power relations in society. In this respect I believe that the question of how the men's power-creating relations with each other could constantly be perpetuated has brought us a step further. If this can lead to a continuation of the discussion, then yet another ambition has been realized.

Kekke Stadin

## Did Swedish Women Have an Age of Greatness? The Seventeenth-Century Swedish State and the Construction of Gender

Not only Joan Kelly but also scholars such as Lyndal Roper and William Monter have described the early modern period as an era when the position of women in Europe deteriorated in various ways. At the same time, several Swedish studies have shown that, in practice, the position of Swedish women was relatively strong in this period, at least in the seventeenth century. Eva Österberg, for instance, has found this “deterioration thesis” to be too one-sided and difficult to apply to the Swedish evidence. The present study examines whether Swedish women really did have an Age of Greatness or if, like their European sisters, they saw their situation worsen. This is explored by means of an analysis of the contemporary discourse about gender, especially power relations between the genders. This question is linked to the ambition of the strong state to create unity, as expressed, for example, in a conscious effort to educate and discipline the people. An important tool in this campaign for ideological integration was Lutheran doctrine. At the same time, it was the state, by means of its powerful control over the church, that ultimately dictated the limits for how Luther’s gender construction could be interpreted and applied.

The theoretical point of departure for the study is the scholarly discussion of how the concepts of “gender” and “power” should best be understood and applied in a historical study of early modern times. The intensive debate about the understanding of gender, not least in Swedish research, based on a dichotomization of the categories of biological sex and culturally constructed gender, was beneficial for combating biological determinism, but it can be difficult to maintain on an analytical and empirical level. In an effort to avoid both biological determinism and getting locked in social essentialism, I prefer an outlook in which biology and the notions of male and female that are constantly being created and recreated in the historical context are seen as an interacting, changeable whole. This whole – gender – is better compared to a continuous scale than to a fixed dichotomy. The scale consists of different gender characteristics, with the fairly immutable biological function of reproduction at one end of the scale and highly variable features such as hairstyles at the other end. Between the two extremes there are numerous more or less variable characteristics which are used to define female and male.

Lutheran doctrine, and chiefly its teaching about the three estates of society, is crucial for an understanding of how gender was formulated in Sweden in the seventeenth century. Luther’s Domestic Commandments (*Hustavla*), which described this, had been printed and bound together with the hymnbook since 1544, which made it one of the most widely disseminated publications in the country. This taught people high and low how society was to be organized so as to function best. And here men and women learned their respective tasks in society and how relations between them were to be organized within the household, the basic social unit.

In the first two decades of the seventeenth century, the question of Luther’s Domestic Commandments and how they should be interpreted became a topic of heated debate among Swedish theologians. Long expounding theses were translated from German, and several Swedish authors published works about how best to understand the doctrine or parts of it. Three such works – two translations from German and one Swedish commentary – have been studied in detail for their views of the relation between man and woman. These are the exegeses of the German theologians Aegidius Hunnius and Christoffer Fischer and the Swedish bishop Petrus Jonae Angermannus.

The result of the analysis shows that the relation between the genders remained strictly tied to marriage, but also that these authors expressed a modification of Luther’s demand that the wife should unconditionally submit to her husband. The most important finding,

however, is that there is a clear difference between the German writers and the Swedish bishop as regards power relations between man and woman. Petrus Jonae, much more than his German colleagues, toned down the demand for the woman's submission. According to him, there was good reason to give the woman some authority not only in relation to children and servants but also in relation to her husband. There were situations, even important situations, where the man should obey his wife.

An important reason for his ability to interpret – or reinterpret – Luther in this way is that Jonae, unlike his German colleagues, did not justify the general subordination of women by claiming that it was the unquestionable will of God. For the Swedish bishop, it was man's greater reason that justified male supremacy. There could be exceptions to a gender-related difference like this; there could never be any exception to God's will.

Another distinctive feature of the Swedish writer was his heavy emphasis on mutual love and respect in marriage. Luther's words that "the man shall love and the wife fear", as expressed, for example, in the way that the husband's sole responsibility for agreement between the spouses is replaced by an outlook in which man and wife are supposed to love and respect each other to the same extent, with both having a shared responsibility for ensuring that harmony prevails.

All in all, Petrus Jonae Angermannus paints a picture of relations between man and wife which differed radically from the gender order presented in the Domestic Commandments. The question is whether Jonae was an outsider in this respect, an ideological deviant with no significance for the construction of gender. Was this one of several alternative interpretations? Which interpretation or interpretations were ultimately spread to the Swedish people via the clergy, who were described by King Gustav II Adolf as his chief tool for establishing unity?

To answer this question, sermons preached at the funerals of both women and men have been analysed. These sermons were often printed as obituaries and used as edifying literature, so they reflect an ideal rather than people's actual character and behaviour. The analysis of these sermons shows that, at the start of the seventeenth century, there were several parallel interpretations of the Lutheran doctrine of gender relations, but that Jonae's interpretation became increasingly influential in the course of the centuries. Mutual, joyous love and trust along with shared responsibility for unity and harmony – this was the picture of a good marriage that was particularly emphasized by the Swedish clergy at the end of the seventeenth century.

With Jonae's interpretation taking the lead, a specifically Swedish, "soft" interpretation of Luther's words about gender relations was developed. It was an interpretation – perhaps even a reinterpretation – of the relation between man and woman which, if it was followed, did not lead to less power or authority for Sweden's women. In relation to other women, whether in Protestant or Catholic Europe, Swedish women enjoyed an Age of Greatness.

Monika Edgren

### **Power, Sexuality, and Violence**

#### **The Law, the Courts, and Social Life at Helsingborg Town Court in 1821**

In the historical study of crime there is thought to be a large dark figure as regards rapes, which is explained by the heavy burden of proof and by the fact that the woman in the perception of justice was seen only in relation to the man; this created guilt feelings in the victim, who felt that she had broken prevailing norms. It was only in 1965, however, that the law ceased to differentiate between abuse inside and outside marriage. The law did not protect a married woman from sexual abuse within marriage.

A case of rape – perpetrated by the head of a household against his fifteen-year-old maid – which was brought before Helsingborg Town Court one winter's day in 1821 was therefore unusual. This crime would not have been made visible either if the victim herself had brought it to court. It was the maid's mistress who reported her own husband, for which she had her private reasons. The wife wanted a divorce, which she had the right to demand if the husband had been guilty of such a disgraceful crime as rape.

For a present-day observer, it was an unusual case for two other reasons. It entailed a large number of other legal cases which meant that many people were involved in the court proceedings. The court records therefore give us good insight into people's everyday lives. They show that social and cultural life in the pre-industrial town was shaped by a mental structure that did not draw any clear dividing line between private and public. I call this the open space. One expression of this mental structure is that the court on two occasions was held in people's living-rooms. I also use the metaphor of the open space to analyse power and sexuality.

The indistinct boundary between private and public had its counterpart in the obscure dividing line between the human body and the social body. Rape was not so much a violation of the woman's person as of her place in the social body, to which her honour was linked. The law asserted that women who had been raped had lost their honour, which could only be restored when the law came into action. The sections of the law on rape "gendered" women's bodies and constructed their experiences as wives and daughters, which helped to maintain a gender-differentiated and patriarchal society.



John T. Lauridsen

### “National Socialism“ in Austria, 1904–1926

The essay traces the party-political forerunners of Austrian Nazism back to the Habsburg monarchy, when the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei had been agitating for “national socialism“ since 1904 with its criticism of capitalism, its anti-Semitism, and its demands for social reform, thereby gathering supporters in German- and Czech-speaking regions. The party had its strongest support in the nationally oriented trade unions, with the transport and communication workers as the nucleus. In 1918 the party changed its name to Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei (DNSAP), adopting a party programme which increasingly sought to appeal to the middle classes.

The DNSAP entered the first Austrian republic as a democratic party on the political right wing, but it had only limited, although growing, success in elections. The post-war crisis, however, brought new supporters to the party, which showed signs of a division between the core supporters from the days of the Habsburg monarchy and the active and militant young men from the middle class, who felt let down by the major parties and society, and whose distinctive characteristic was a hatred for the democratic republic and for the social democrats. The development of these two wings of the party would not necessarily have led to a split in the DNSAP unless outside forces had seen an advantage in it.

The force from outside was Hitler’s NSDAP in Munich. Having won his way to undisputed leadership of the NSDAP, Hitler was seeking to influence the related national socialist parties in Austria and Czechoslovakia in a more radical and anti-democratic direction. The instruments for this were the inter-state council which the parties had founded in 1919 and the exercise of direct influence on groups in the parties. These efforts, however, were temporarily discontinued after the unsuccessful Munich *putsch* in 1923, but they were resumed after Hitler was released from the Landsberg prison and refounded the NSDAP. In the intervening period the militants in DNSAP had grown in strength, but without being able to take control of the party. Hitler tried to gain control of the DNSAP through the militants, but the more moderate members held their ground, which finally led to the break-up of the party in 1926. Hitler chose to take over a totally submissive but weak party division in Austria rather than negotiate with an independent DNSAP. From 1926, both the DNSAP and a division of the NSDAP existed in Austria.

This must be seen as an extension of the NSDAP’s ultimate goal, that Austria should be incorporated in Germany. This goal was the first point in the 25-point NSDAP programme, and it was repeated on the first page of *Mein Kampf*, with the addition that it should take place at any price. Part of the price was paid in 1926, with serious organizational consequences for years to come for the newly founded party branches. Another part of the price was paid with the unsuccessful coup in 1934, before the goal was finally reached in March 1938. By then, independent “national socialism“ in Austria was a thing of the past.