

The Persistent Problem of Gender Inequality in the Twenty-First Century: Why Sweden's care and leave policies are not the panacea

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Key Terms: *Gender inequality, welfare state, economic incentives, citizenship, childcare, leave policies*

Introduction

In most advanced societies, women's well-being is still considerably less than men's when examining the number of hours women work, their labor market status, and their earnings relative to men (Eurostat 2008,2009; OECD Statistics). European women, on average, contribute double the number of hours of unpaid work (Eurostat 2009, p. 43).¹ Working women in Nordic countries including Sweden, "spend the most time caring for their children (around 16 hours per week), which is double the amount of time spent by men on childcare" (Eurostat 2009, p.46). However, the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women is so large that even the Nordic countries "still excel when compared to other country groups, where men spend on average only 4 to 5 hours on childcare" (Eurostat 2009, p.46). Countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in which men contribute less time to home production — domestic chores and childcare — are adopting Sweden's family policies to enhance women's participation in the labor market and increase fertility rates. Studies show that states, like Sweden and other Nordic countries, with more egalitarian views on gender roles have higher Women's Labor Force Participation Rates (FLF) and higher Total

¹ Unpaid work is time devoted to domestic chores (i.e. laundry) and childcare.

Fertility Rates (TFR) (de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2007, 2011; Englehardt and Prskawetz, 2002). Sweden typically ranks number one on indexes measuring egalitarian views on gender roles and is widely regarded as a paradigm for pro-women nation-states because of the *relative* ease Swedish women have balancing care and work (Wernet 2008; Korpi 2010; Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006; Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2009). High ranking states like Sweden tend to follow an “earner-care model” that facilitates women’s participation in the labor market and motherhood by encouraging men’s home production and providing generous provisions of affordable, quality childcare (Korpi 2010, 21; de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2007, 2011; Eurostat 2009).

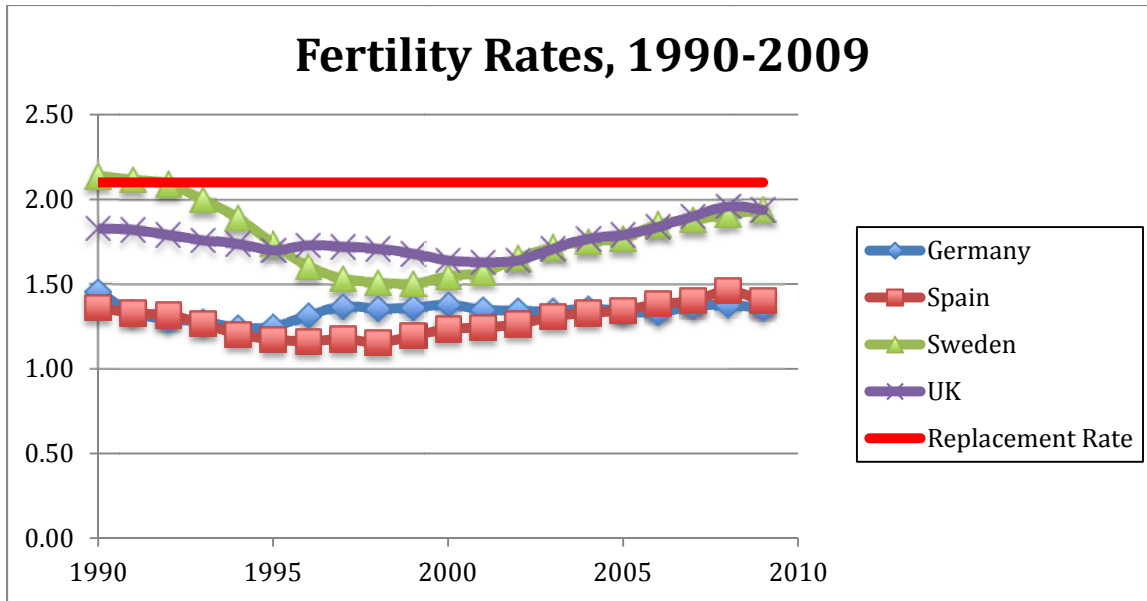
OECD countries that score lowest on gender equality indexes tend to support a breadwinner model in which women are more exclusively responsible for tasks related to home production and men are more exclusively responsible for tasks outside the home, such as participation in the labor market; this bifurcation of labor is also characterized as a division between paid and unpaid work (Korpi 2010; Wernet 2008; Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2009). States with less egalitarian views tend to have faster declining TFRs and lower FLFs (de Laat and Seville-Sanz 2007; de Laat and Seville-Sanz 2011). The falling fertility rates in OECD countries with traditional gender views acts as an economic incentive for a revision of their work-care balance between men and women.

Welfare programs, such as pay-as-you-go pension systems are unsustainable with fertility rates falling below the replacement rate of 2.1 children in almost every OECD country (de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2007, 2011; OECD Statistics). Low fertility rates, ceteris

paribus, lead to lower old-age support ratios.² Projections indicate that fertility rates and old-age support ratios will continue to decline, placing a greater financial pressure on states to expand their labor force, and is even causing Sweden to revisit its policies to promote full employment (refer to figures 1 and 2) (Social Insurance Report 2008). To put into perspective the importance of fertility rates, Spain's old-age support ratio will decline by over three times the amount Sweden's will by 2050 due to differences in fertility rates alone (Esping-Andersen 2009, 83). Women's increased fertility not only increases old-age support ratios, *ceteris paribus*, but their participation in the labor market adds to state revenues through taxes (Bacchi 1999, p.135). Thus, even states, such as the United Kingdom (UK), which have relatively high fertility rates and a less rigid attachment to the breadwinner model than "lowest-low fertility countries" like Spain, still have an economic incentive to adopt Sweden's family policies in an effort to raise revenues and reduce poverty (OECD Statistics 2012; Esping-Andersen 1999). The *2006 OECD Employment Outlook* found that "In several countries one full-time worker does not suffice to prevent above-average risks of poverty incidence," and that "Only the presence of a second earner in the family reduces substantially the likelihood of being poor in all countries" (OECD Employment Outlook 2006, p.168).

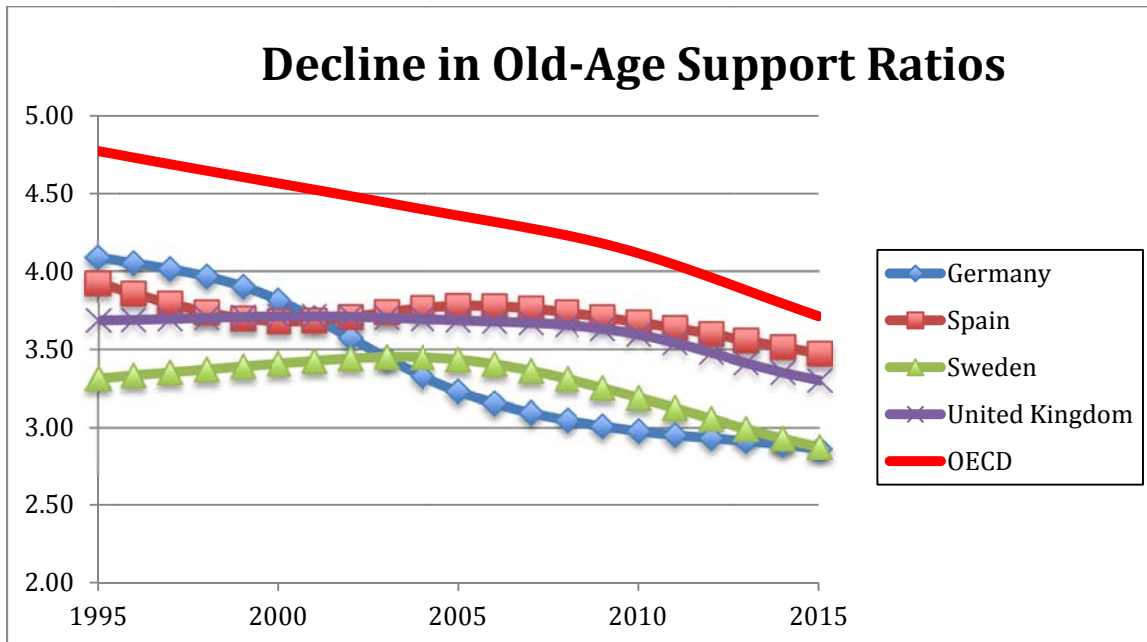
Figure 1

²The old-age support ratio is the number of working age people (20-64) for every person of pension age (65+) (OECD Statistics).



Data from OECD Statistics

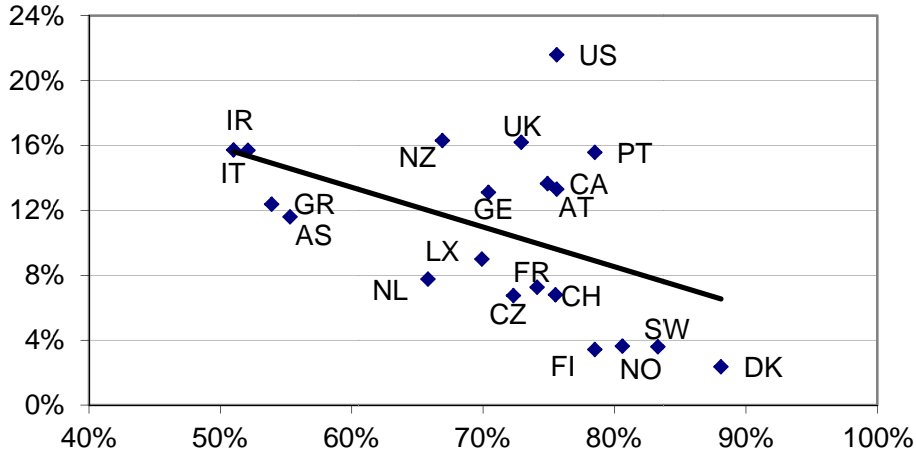
Figure 2



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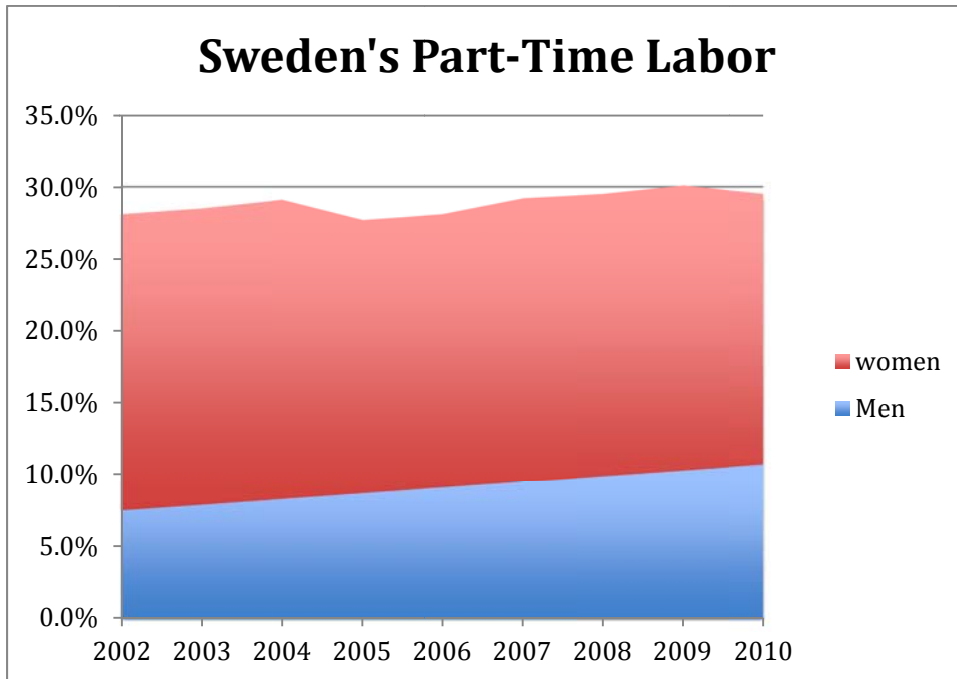
Significantly, women who fall within the care-giving age cohort (25-54) are most likely to be working in Nordic countries and have the lowest child poverty rates (data from 2002 OECD survey listed in figure 3). Women's employment rates and earnings are cited as important factors in explaining female's slightly higher poverty rates throughout Europe (Eurostate 2008, p.91). Women's employment rates and earnings are also tied to children's financial security, especially in lone parent families (most lone parents are women) (Eurostat 2008, p.91). Thus, an explanation for the relatively high child poverty rates in the UK is women's difficulty to participate in *full-time* labor relative to Swedish women and to maintain employment when they have a child (see figures 4 and 5) (OECD Statistics). The percentage of Swedish lone parents living in poverty is fourteen percent less than the EU-25 average of 34 percent (Eurostat 2008, pp. 92 and 195). According to Lynn Prince Cooke, "cross-national comparisons revealed that policy support for *maternal employment*, not just generous welfare transfers, was a more effective strategy for reducing child poverty" (2011, p.123). Sweden's support for maternal employment increases women's economic independence, which in turn reduces children's risk of poverty (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 51). State's dependency on women's employment to reduce child poverty rates and increase state revenues without lowering fertility rates explains the strong economic incentives driving OECD countries to turn toward Sweden for social policy solutions (OECD Statistics; Orloff 1993). The shift towards women's employment to resolve social issues outside the strict purpose of promoting gender equality is not a new phenomenon and it has serious implications for the future well-being of women in terms of their relative autonomy and economic security within states.

Figure 3.



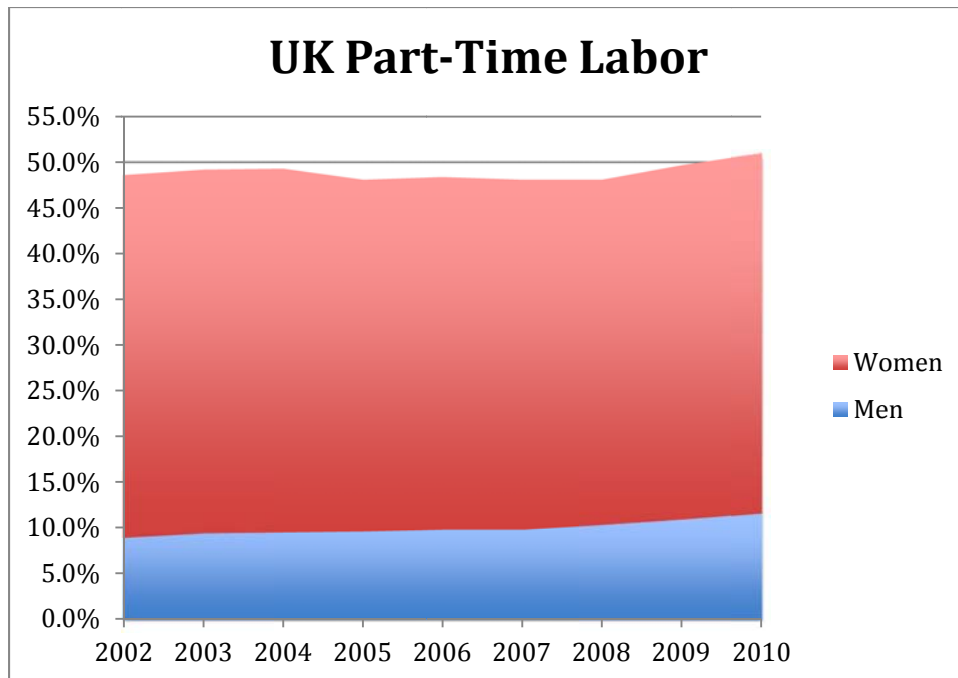
OECD Figure 19. Poverty among children and employment rates among mothers, 2000. The y-axis represents the percentage of women employed aged 25-54 with at least one child and the x-axis is the percentage of children living in poverty.

Figure 4



Data from OECD Statistics

Figure 5



Data from OECD Statistics

Purpose

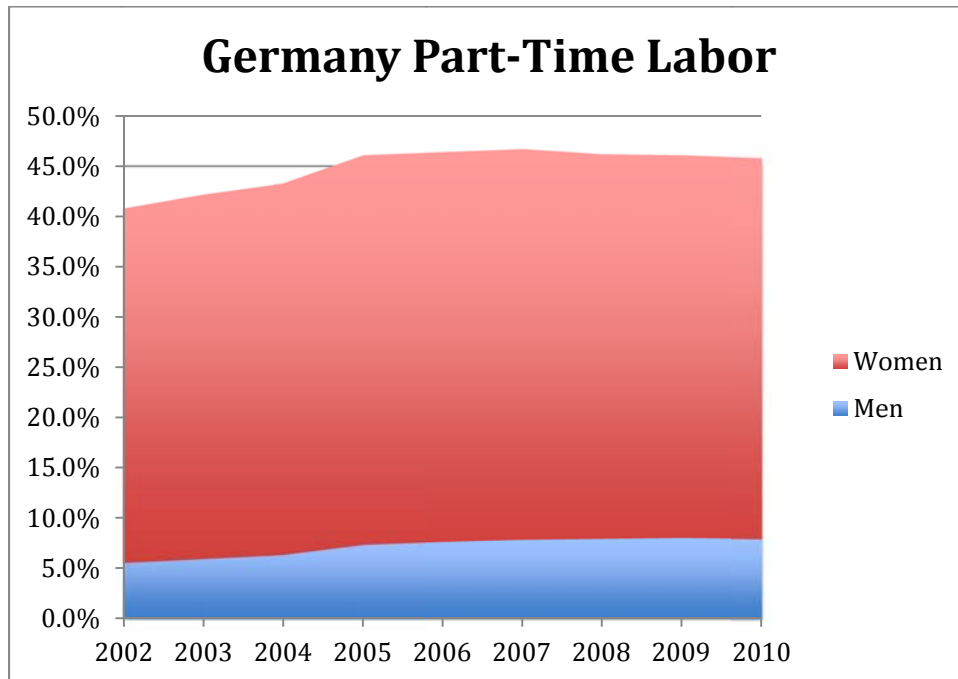
The aim of this study is to analyze the effects of states' social policies on gender equality, specifically focusing on the leave and care policies of Germany, Spain, the UK, and Sweden. For the purposes of this study, gender equality refers to women's freedom to choose different work-care arrangements and obtain financial independence and security relative to men's ability to do so. There are a host of factors that influence state's decisions to maintain or alter women's work-care responsibilities. States varying conceptions of "citizenship," the obligations citizens have to the state, are based on a mixture of "intrinsic traditionalism" and "functional traditionalism" (Young 1995, p. 536). The former refers to the influence of "past practices, [and] the precepts of religion, or the commands of some other authority [i.e. political parties]" and the latter refers to the importance of promoting particular behaviors at a given time that sustain the state (Young 1995, p. 536). Literature

on gender equality widely acknowledges the importance of the intrinsic-functional traditions reinforcing gender roles for states. Studies often cite shifts in political parties, with socialist parties tending to favor greater gender equality compared to liberal and conservative parties (Cooke 2011). Studies also cite religious traditions, another influence of intrinsic traditionalism and economic incentives, and an influence of functional traditionalism (Cooke 2011; Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999, 2009). States with strong Catholic traditions tend to have a more rigid notion of gender roles for men and women, rigid meaning women are more exclusively in charge of home production and men are more confined to their role as breadwinner (Cooke 2011; Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999, 2009).

The growing need for women's employment has become an important long-term aim of social policy. The *Presidency Conclusions* for the Barcelona Council 2002 states: "Full employment in the European Union ***is the core of the Lisbon Strategy and the essential goal of economic and social policies*** (emphasis added: Barcelona European Council 2002, p. 10). Understanding the host of factors influencing states' reasons for affecting women's and men's work-care arrangements is vitally important for comprehending women's current predicament in society, particularly as it concerns the labor market. In the twenty-first century, it is still true that in all countries women earn less than men, work more hours overall when counting paid and unpaid labor, have a higher concentration of employment within certain sectors (i.e. health and education), are less likely to be in

managerial positions, and are more likely to work part time (refer to figures 4,5,6, and 7 for the male-female part-time ratios) (Eurostat Commission 2008, 2009).⁴

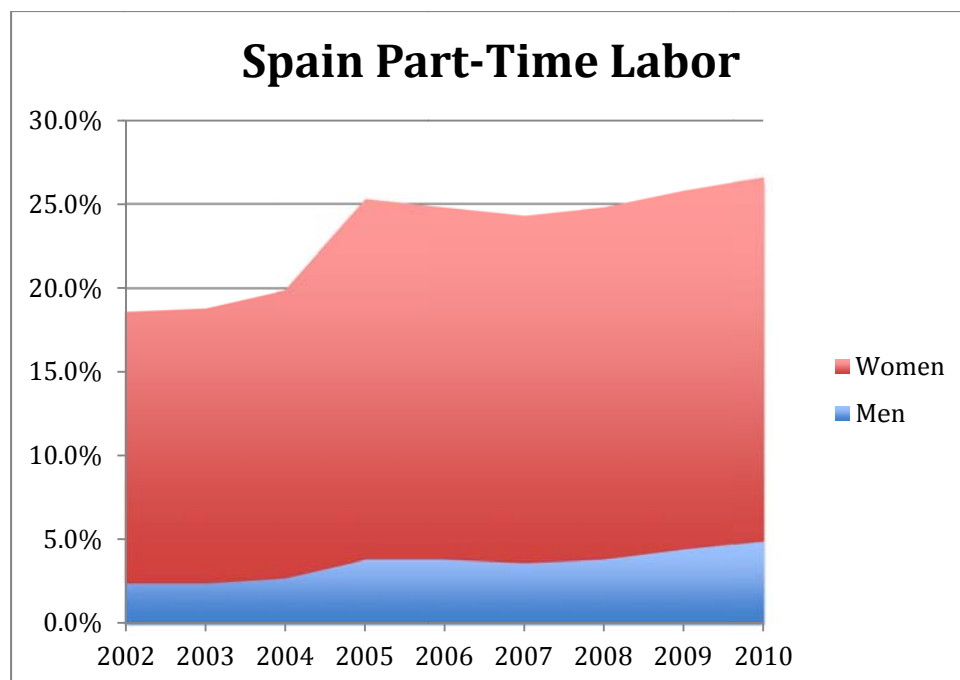
Figure 6



Data from OECD Statistics

Figure 7

⁴ Lithuania is the only country listed in the European Commission's statistical report on *The* 2004, which have a sample population that includes people not employed in the labor market (Eurostat 2008, pp. 43 and 168). However, the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2005, only includes people who were employed at the time of the survey (Eurostat 2009, p. 39; Eurostat 2008 time use guidebook, p.7). Thus, it is of the employed population of men and women that women are more time poor across welfare state regimes.



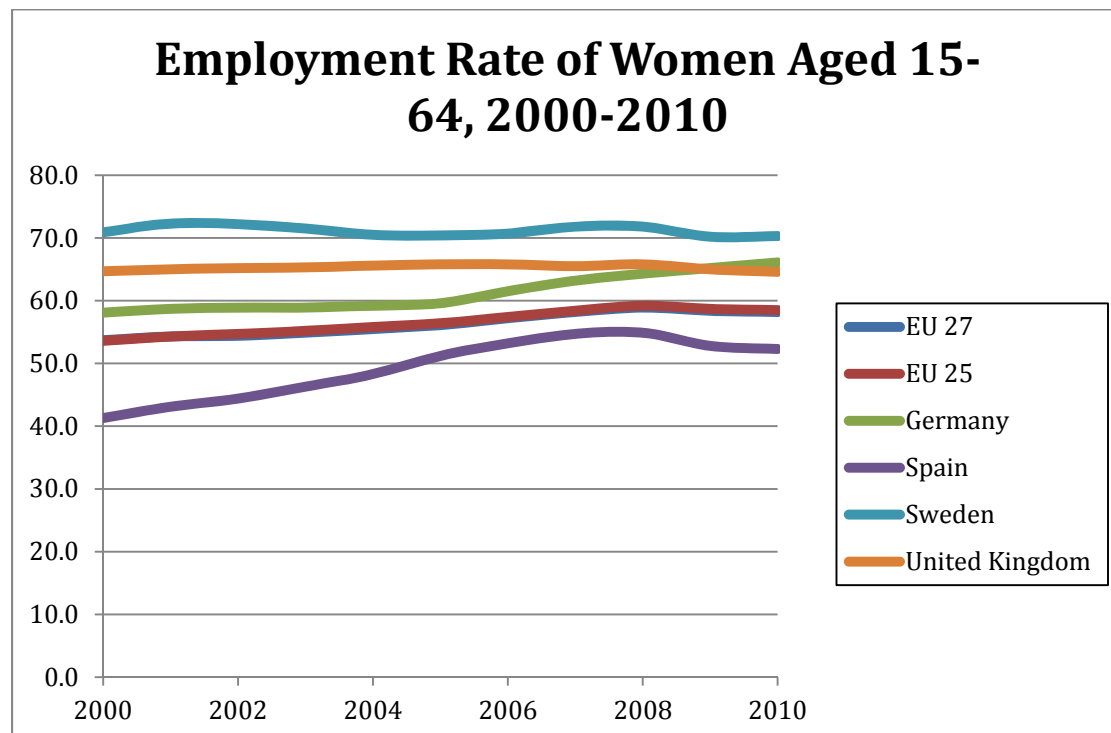
Data from OECD Statistics

Political parties' and policy makers' claims of promoting "gender equality" are falling grossly short of that goal. It is too simplistic and inaccurate to claim that some countries have greater gender equality because there are mixed levels of success when looking at the gender employment gap and the gender wage gap, as well, as other indicators of gender equality (refer to figures 8 and 9). The structure of this paper highlights what I argue are the most important factors that explain women's work-care arrangements, their autonomy, and their economic security within society. The first section highlights the role of economic incentives and how they have increased women's employment, but have limited success with promoting gender equality as an end in itself. Secondly, I define and explain how states' constructs of citizenship reinforce social norms that either encourage or discourage traditional gender roles. The third section establishes a model for thinking about the ways social policies, women's work-care balance, and

women’s well-being — their autonomy and economic security — are linked in order to aid readers’ understanding of the policy analyses section.

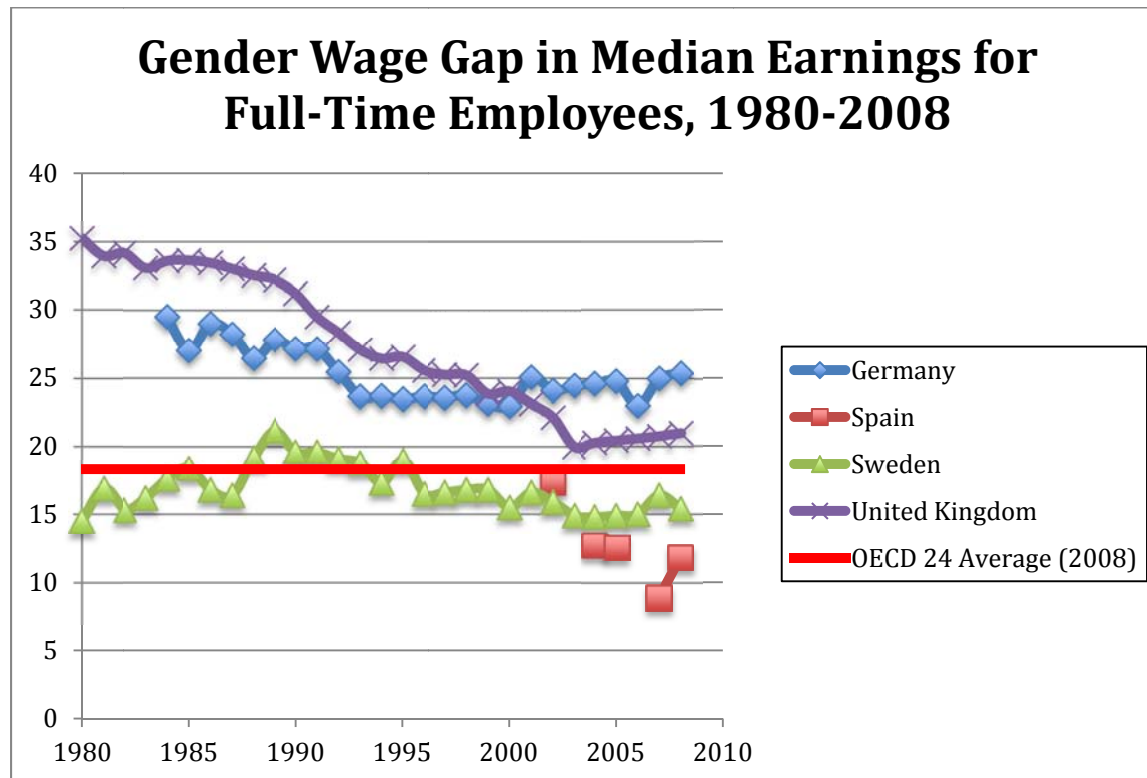
This study focuses on the effects of leave and care policies in Germany, Spain, the UK, and Sweden. Leave and care policies are distinguished as two of the most important social policies affecting women’s and men’s work-care arrangements (Bacchi 1999; Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2009; Bihagen and Ohls 2006, p. 40; Social Insurance Report 2008). The states included in the study represent a distinct mix of state-market-family relationships called welfare regimes that Esping-Andersen classifies (1990). At the end of the analysis, I will conclude that none of the states’ care-leave policies encourage men to contribute equally in home production and that they all penalize care in the labor market either in the short-term and/or in the long-term.

Figure 8



Data from Eurostat Database

Figure 9



Data from OECD Statistics

Economic Incentives

Economic incentives have been at the base of every major, durable shift in states' division of paid and unpaid work between men and women. State's social policies did not start to have a discernable impact on gender inequality throughout most of the twentieth century (Korpi 2010, p.20). Until the late 1960s, welfare states did not break down barriers to women's employment, and incentives for men to take on more home production did not exist until the 1990s (Korpi 2010, 20). Instead the "welfare state was everywhere

premised on *familialism*" (Esping-Andersen 2009, p. 80). Familialism was based on the idea that families could survive on the "family wage," the wages of a single earner, with benefits from the state to offset women's unpaid care, including pension plans that offered additional support to married couples (Orloff 1993, 319).

Sweden broke away from the breadwinner model in the late 1960s and more so in the 1970s along with other Nordic countries when the labor market was "tight" and women were needed as a "cheap source of labor to maintain economic growth" (Bacchi 1999, p. 135; Elman; Stetson and Mazur 1995, pp. 240-241; Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006; Esping-Andersen 2009, p. 80; Williams 2000, p.51). In tandem with a stronger need for women in the labor market, Sweden implemented a series of "family friendly" policies by expanding day care provisions and making child-leave policies available for both sexes (Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, pp.161-162). These policies put Sweden on course to be in an advantageous position decades later. Sweden's "defamilialization" of its welfare state would not only buffer it from the large drops in fertility experienced in the lowest-low fertility countries like Spain and Japan, but as mentioned earlier it would also coincide with lower poverty rates (de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2007, 2011; Social Insurance Report 2008). Sweden's poverty rate has been steadily below the OECD average; arguably that is due to women's and children's greater financial security apart from men's wages (de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2007, 2011; Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, p. 151).

The positive effects of Sweden's policies on maintaining a sustainable welfare state and economy did not become evident until the 1990s (de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2011, p.

89).⁷ A reversal in the cross-country correlation between women's labor force participation rates and the total fertility rates occurred in the 1990s and has persisted since (de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2011, p. 89). Consequently, "familialism" has become "counter-productive to family formation and labour supply"; this reversal coincides with the spike in states' interest in policies addressing "labor activation and work-family balance policies" starting in the 1990s "and into the twenty-first century" (Esping-Andersen 1999, p.70; Cooke 2011, p. 106).

Constructs of Citizenship and Gender Equality

States are increasingly reexamining their construction of "citizenship," otherwise regarded as civic duties because, as discussed, their attachment to the breadwinner model leads to a dual loss in the form of extremely low fertility rates and "repressed female employment" (de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2007, 2011; Esping-Andersen 2009, p. 81). The economic factors pushing states to change their conceptions of citizenship should concern policy makers, feminists, and lay persons interested in gender equality.

Gender equality is not a simple area to evaluate because of the debate between competing feminist camps on what constitutes equality. Some feminist argue that states achieve gender equality when their conception of citizenship assumes an equal division of paid and unpaid work between men and women, known as the "sameness" feminist perspective (Williams 2000, p. 218). Under the sameness perspective, women receive no

⁷ The state and the economy benefit from women's higher fertility rates and employment, but the state and the economy also have the burden of maintaining a large public sector, which Rosen argues takes away resources for material production in the private sector (Rosen 1997).

special treatment because of their sex— their biological differences. Sweden’s policies are regarded as “gender-neutral” because they allocate benefits irrespective of sex in their provision of parental leave and have a pension and tax system that operate off an individual scheme, treating men and women the same (Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, p. 161; Bergqvist, Blandy, and Sainsbury; Outshoorn and Kantola 2007, p. 237; Elman; Stetson and Mazur 1995, pp. 242-243). Feminists belonging to the “difference” perspective argue that the state should give women special treatment to accommodate “women whose lives are framed by caregiving” (Williams 2000, p. 218). In line with the difference perspective, Iris Marion Young states:

Most relevant to the citizen status of mothers, dependency work makes a vast and vital social contribution. As already mentioned, most carrying for children, sick people, old people, and people with disabilities is performed unpaid by women in the home...A just society would recognize dependency work as the significant social contribution it is by giving those who do it decent material comfort. (1995, p. 551)

A concern that difference feminists share is that “sameness feminists are content with formal equality” and are not focused “on equality of results” because they place the same conditions on men and women “as if one sex held no power over the other” (Williams 2000, p. 218; Elman; Stetson and Mazur 1995, p. 243). Young notes in her comments that women do a disproportionate share of unpaid work because of their traditional role as “caregiver.” Furthermore, it usually makes more financial sense for couples to have the women take leave because they earn less than men (Wernet 2008, pp.63-64; Eurostat 2009, pp. 41-47; Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2009, pp. 1-2; Eurostat 2009, pp. 97-100; Gambles, Lewis, and Rapoport 2006, pp. 65-66; OECD Statistics).

Women's role as caregivers penalizes them when they enter the labor market because their employment records center around the number of children they have and the ages of their children, resulting in gaps in their employment history (OECD Family Database, Charts LMF1.2.A and LMF1.2.C). In every OECD country, women are more likely to take up parental leave, which disrupts their work schedule, disadvantaging them in the long-term and the short-term (Eurostat 2009, pp. 41-47; Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2009, pp. 1-2). Women's disproportionate share of unpaid work results in a long-held dilemma faced by women, known famously as the "Wollstonecraft's Dilemma" (Korpi 2000, p.142; Korpi 2010, p. 20). The crux of the dilemma is that participation in the labor market in industrialized nations provides citizens with vital power resources, but women cannot compete at an equal level with men in the labor market because of their role as caregivers (Korpi 2010, p. 20). If countries devise gender-neutral policies without recognizing the "double shift" women take on with their unpaid work then they end up *more* time poor (Eurostat 2009, p. 41).

The Wollstonecraft Dilemma can be broken down with a mini analysis of the problem gender-neutral policies tend to cause. Gender-neutral policies encourage women's full-time participation. Full-time participation is preferential, *ceteris paribus*, because part-time work in almost all OECD countries comes with lower hourly wages, [less upward mobility, and]...less job security," collectively referred to as the "part-time penalty" (OECD Employment Outlook 2010, pp.220-221). Since women already do a disproportionate amount of unpaid work, when they take on a comparable share of paid work to men, i.e. full-time work, they end up *more* time poor than if they only worked part-time (Eurostat 2009, p. 44). In sum, full-time work makes women more time poor, but

gives them greater economic independence and security. Thus, women's double shift and the Wollstonecraft Dilemma are linked to each other in that the former is a symptom of the latter.

The Wollstonecraft dilemma is not the only concern that divides feminists when devising policy approaches for ameliorating gender inequality. Difference feminists are concerned that "A focus on access to paid labour as liberation also collapses all the many difficulties women face, in the realm of personal harassment and violence, to a common base of economic dependence" (Bacchi 1999, p. 132). However, a sameness feminist might argue that once women have enough power resources in the labor market then they can pursue greater equality in other areas. Due to the discrepancies in what constitutes gender equality, there is no one method for evaluating welfare states' progress, such that it appeases all perspectives. Although sameness and difference feminists have different views on gender equality, their perspectives are not mutually exclusive and their methods differ far more than their aims (Williams 2000, pp.217-232). Criticisms brought up by both feminist perspectives make contributions by highlighting the areas that require special emphasis when evaluating how "women-friendly" social policies are, namely women's ability to choose a work-care balance that does not come with a time penalty, i.e. less leisure time, or a wage penalty, i.e. financial stagnation and/or hardship (Orloff 1993, p. 304). It is also important to be mindful of women's ability to work in safe environments, where claims of sexual harassment and sex discrimination are taken seriously.

Social Policies Impact on Care, Work, and Power Resources

There are two principal ways social policies affect women's autonomy and economic security (see figure 10). The first is the balance of work and care they promote. For instance, policies can encourage a more equal share of unpaid and paid work by incorporating incentives for men to take on more home production. Social policies can also reduce women's care burdens by redistributing some of it to the state (Esping-Andersen 2009). However, when the state formalizes care by making it a public program or encourages its expansion in the private market, it is usually poor women who fill those positions, creating deeper class divisions and reinforcing traditional gender roles at the lower socioeconomic status (SES) levels (Bacchi 1999, p. 133). However, states that do nothing to reduce women's care burden make it more difficult for women to take on paid work (Eurostat 2009, pp. 41-47). And policies that ignore or take for granted women's disproportionate share of home production create a wider schism between men and women by not compensating women for all their unpaid labor. Meanwhile, women's unpaid labor benefits the state in material ways since they rear the next generation of citizens. Women's unpaid labor also benefits men because it allows men to spend more time in paid work and reduces the time they have to devote to unpaid work (Williams 2000; Eurostate 2009, pp.41-47).

Ultimately, women's disproportionate responsibility over care, and more generally home production, hinders them in the labor market. Firstly, employers may be more hesitant in hiring or promoting women if employers determine women have greater demands to meet unpaid obligations (Williams 2000, p.15). Similarly, women will be restricted in their choices in the labor market if they know they have to shoulder a greater burden of unpaid work. Ultimately, women's disadvantage in the work force also reduces

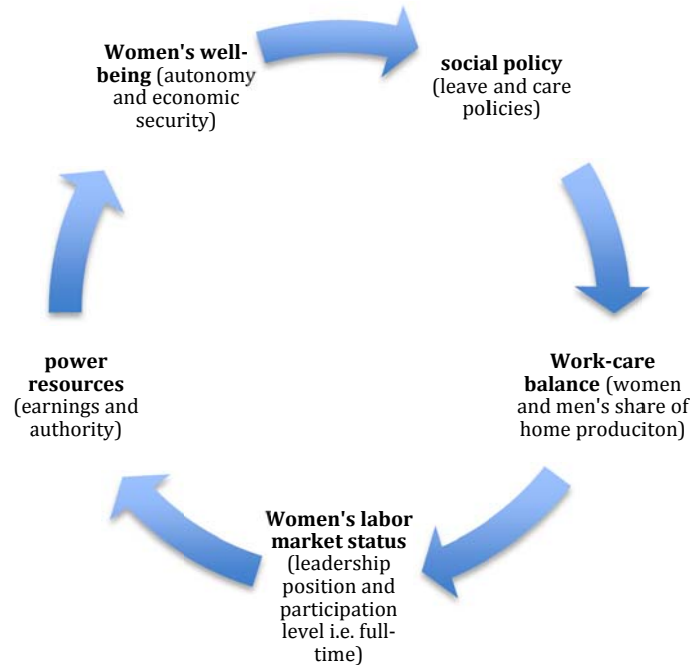
their relative share of power resources, identified as “economic resources, labour power and political power” (Korpi 2010, p. 15). Power resources are important because they are the leverage that determines how societal goods are divided (Korpi 2010, p. 15).

Control over power resources is important for assessing a person’s autonomy, defined as the ability “to make choices about one’s life and to act on those choices without having to obey others, meet their conditions, or fear their threats and punishments” (Young 1995, p.548). Power resources create greater independence for those who have a substantial share. For example, if a person has no control over power resources then she has no leverage, and therefore little to no say in how societal goods are allocated or valued. Furthermore, it is likely that whoever has a substantial proportion of power resources will also have greater autonomy and economic security. For instance, women’s share of political power is important because “when women hold positions of power, women’s rights and privileges will be more likely to be both provided and protected” (Wernet 2008, p. 65). Women’s share of political power will not be analyzed in depth within this paper due to space constraints and in an effort to focus mainly on the effects of social policies on women’s autonomy and economic security.

The second principal way social policies impact women’s autonomy and economic security is through their effects on women’s relative earnings and position in the labor market. It’s mainly through the cyclical relationship between care, work, and power resources that social policies have an impact on women’s wages and position in the labor market. The following is a breakdown and explanation of the main components of the aforementioned cycle. Women contribute more to home production, and earn less than

men in part because they cannot fit the “ideal worker” model due to the time they devote to unpaid work (Williams 2000, p. 41). Women’s home production also makes them less competitive for executive positions that require long hours. The labor market is a source of power resources. Power resources work such that “designs or structures of ...distributive institutions [i.e. the labor market] are likely to reflect the interests of dominant groups” (Korpi 2010, p. 16). Since women are less likely to hold executive positions they will become more vulnerable to discrimination. Male managers may refuse to hire women because they prefer men. Also, men may be less accepting of employees taking parental leave, which would further enforce a male norm in both the work place and traditional gender roles. In sum, women’s current greater share of home production disadvantages them in the labor market. Ann Shola Orloff adds that “Women’s inferior status in the work force means that women are disproportionately disadvantaged when benefits reflect work-related inequality” known as the “gender hierarchy” (1993, p. 314). States’ social policies effects on the work-care balance and subsequently on women’s wages and positions in the labor market is central to addressing gender inequality (refer to figure 10).

Figure 10



Comparison of Welfare State Regimes' Care-Leave Policies

I will compare four states that represent an interesting mix of state-market-family relationships. The types of social policies welfare states implement vary depending on their assessment of the appropriate intersection between the public and private spheres in interfering with social issues, such as the work-care balance. Gosta Esping-Andersen has developed a widely used typology that thoroughly addresses the “general debates” taking place between welfare states on the “funding of public services, and the place of ‘private enterprise’” (Bacchi 1999, p.130; Esping-Andersen 1990). Esping-Andersen’s typology examines the state-market-family relationship by measuring two dimensions of welfare states’ policies — their degree of de-commodification and stratification (1990). Welfare states de-commodify workers when, “citizens can freely, and without potential loss of job, income, or general welfare, opt out of work when they themselves consider it necessary” (Esping-Andersen 1990, p.23). Stratification refers to the “status differentiation”

precipitated by welfare states' allocation of benefits according to citizens' occupations within the labor market (1990, p.55). Esping-Andersen's typology, along with other comparative analyses on social policies, is criticized for overlooking the welfare state's "effects on gender hierarchies" (Orloff 1993, p. 314). The gender hierarchy refers to women's inferior position within the labor market and the disadvantage women face when social provisions are based on status and tenure within the labor market (Orloff 1993, p.314). Esping-Andersen's policy analysis within "three worlds of welfare" focuses on pensions, unemployment benefits, and sick pay, all of which are contingent on paid work (Orloff 1993; Esping-Andersen 1990; Allan and Scruggs 2006, p.57). Korpi adds, "typologies largely neglect the role of social services, which are of special relevance for gender inequality" and Esping-Andersen concedes, "The original 'three worlds' typology focused rather one-sidedly on income maintenance" (Korpi 2000, 142; Esping-Andersen 1999, p.87). Although Esping-Andersen's oversight of the gender-hierarchy causes him to overlook arrangements *within* the family, it does not lead him to fall short of his promise to "find qualitatively different arrangements between [the] state, market, and the family" (Esping-Andersen 1990, p.26). The flaws within Esping-Andersen's typology are inconsequential to the aim of this paper, which seeks to evaluate welfare states' effects on the work-care balance according to different state-market-family models for welfare production.

Esping-Anderson identifies three regime types that have distinct state-market-family relationships (1990, 1999). Each country analyzed in this study fits or loosely fits into one of these three regimes. It is important to recognize different types of regimes or models of welfare production because it contextualizes states' policy approaches to social

issues. For instance, states with a strong emphasis on publicly provided benefits tend to have a populace that is more accustomed to paying higher taxes to fund a larger welfare state, versus a state that is adverse to a large welfare state. Therefore, the underlying dynamics of the state-market-family relationship influence states' approaches to addressing social issues, including the ever-important work-care balance between men and women. This study analyzes the most pertinent social policies affecting the work-care balance in four countries, as previously mentioned. First, Germany and Spain represent the corporatist regime, which is "typically shaped by the Church, and hence strongly committed to the preservation of traditional family-hood" and provides benefits according to "class and status" (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 27; Esping-Andersen 1999). Germany and Spain are the only two countries I analyze that belong to the same regime type. Spain adds to the comparative analysis because critics claim it and other Southern European countries belongs to a fourth regime type referred to as the "Mediterranean regime" because of their especially strong reliance on familialism (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 90; den Dulk and van Doorne-Huiskes; Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette 2007, p.43). Significantly, their exceptional reliance on familialism is cited as a contributing factor to the "extremely residual nature of Southern Europe's social assistance" since the traditional family is presumed to be the primary source of "social aid" (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 90). Although Esping-Andersen's findings show that the degree of familialism is not significantly distinct from other countries belonging to the corporatist regime, his data indicates notable differences pertaining to the lack of affordable childcare in Spain, an issue germane to this analysis (Esping-Andersen 1999). Ultimately, the purpose of including Spain in this study is not to dispute Esping-Andersen's "three worlds of welfare," but rather to enrich the

analysis by incorporating a country that has an arguably distinct welfare state structure because of its traditionally high reliance on familialism.

Next, the UK represents the liberal regime, in which “[modest] Benefits cater mainly to a clientele of low-income, usually working-class, state dependents...circumscribed by traditional, liberal work-ethic norms” (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 26). Lastly, Sweden is an exemplar for the social democratic regime, in which the state takes on a large role in securing benefits and redistributing resources to “promote an equality of the highest standards” (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 27). For the aforementioned countries, I will proceed with an individual analysis of the impact maternity leave, paternity leave, and parental leave (collectively referred to as leave) and the availability of child-care services have on the work-care balance.

A host of other important policies affect the work-care balance including: allowance for part-time work, telecommuting, job sharing, flextime, compressed workweeks, and elder care arrangements (Williams 2000, pp. 85-86). However, leave policies and provisions for affordable childcare are the most important policies affecting the work-care balance. The European Commission’s findings show that “The household structure, and particularly the presence of children, is closely linked to time use” and cites that “The allocation of time between work and domestic tasks varies considerably when children – young ones especially – are present in the household” (Eurostat 2009, p. 39). Intuitively the link between women’s employment and childcare is stronger than the link between women’s employment and elder care because children are more exclusively reliant on their parents for primary care, whereas a large share of the elderly have spouses to provide care

(Eurostat 2009, p.77). In many European countries, including Germany, Spain, and Sweden, spouses provide the majority of care to elderly people with health problems and disabilities (these findings come from the Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) for 2004, which did not include the UK) (Eurostat2009, p. 76-77). Although flexible work schedules are an important determinant of women’s labor force participation, especially the availability of part-time work, flexible work schedules arguably reinforce traditional gender roles (Orloff 1993; Rosenfeld and Birkelund 1995; de Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2007, 2011; den Dulk and van Doorne-Huiskes; Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette 2007, p. 46). In fact, flexible work schedules are not practical for all professions. For most OECD countries, part-time employment comes with a “part-time penalty” that disproportionately affects women with the only advantage of greater flexibility, which facilitates women’s disproportionate share of unpaid work (OECD Employment Outlook 2010).¹¹ Lastly, a strong focus on flexible work schedules, particularly part-time work undermines one of the goals set out by the Barcelona European Council in 2002, which “Holds that **full employment** is the essential goal of economic and social policies” (emphasis added: 2002, p. 46). Ultimately, this paper will evaluate different welfare states’ leave policies, provisions for childcare, and how their recent changes affect the work-care balance that greatly dictates women’s autonomy and economic security.

Leave and Care Policies

Germany

¹¹ The part-time penalty refers to the average lower salary, job security, and upward mobility part-time workers have compared to full-time workers (OECD Employment Outlook 2010, p. 221).

In Germany, mothers' compensation for maternity leave and parents' compensation for parental leave is funded through insurance programs and employers; there is no statutory provision for paternity leave (Ray 2008, p. 13). Women's eligibility for maternity leave is flexible (refer to figure 11). Women qualify "for a maternity allowance ('Mutterschaftsgeld')," if they are enrolled "in a statutory insurance program for at least 12 weeks" (Ray 2008, p.13). Insurance programs are open "to women who are employed, receiving unemployment benefits, or in an *educational program*" (emphasis added: Ray 2008, p.13). The length of maternity leave is 14 weeks and is fully paid with a wage replacement rate of 100 percent; the state and the employer cover the expenses (Ray 2008, p. 13, Eurostat 2009). Since women's leave is fully paid during the entire duration, the full-time equivalent (FTE) is the same as the length of the leave, 14 weeks (Eurostat 2009, pp.86-87).¹² Additionally, Germany's maternity leave does not have an earnings' ceiling, so even women with high earnings will receive 100 percent compensation (Shore 2010). Germany is the only country in this study that does not have an earnings' cap on its maternity reimbursement rate, which may actually make it less women friendly (OECD Family Database, Table PF2.1B). The generous benefits for women and the lack of benefits for men make it more costly for employers to hire women, since employers start to compensate for maternity leave when women's wages are above €13 per day (Shore 2010; Ray 2008, pp. 13 and 26).

Figure 11

(A) maternity leave, (B) paternity leave, and (C) parental leave

¹² FTE is an "indicator that expresses the...leave in an equivalent number of working days that are fully paid" (Ibid.).

	Germany	Spain	Sweden	UK
Statutory	(A) Yes (B) No (C) Yes	(A) Yes (B) Yes (C) Yes	(A) Yes* (B) Yes* (C) Yes	(A) Yes (B) Yes (C) Yes
Eligibility for full benefit *(EMP stands for employment requirement)	(A) Flexible (B) N/A (C) EMP	(A) EMP (B) EMP (C) EMP	(A) EMP (B) EMP (C) EMP	(A) EMP (B) EMP (C) EMP
Length (weeks)	(A) 14 (B) 0 (C) 156	(A) 16 (B) 2.1 (C) 156	(A) 14* (B) 10 (days)* (C) 68	(A) 52 (B) 2 (C) 26
FTE (weeks)	(A) 14 (B) 0 (C) 34.8	(A) 16 (B) 2.1 (C) 0	(A) 11.2 (B) 1.1 (C) 44.5	(A) 12.8 (B) .1 (C) 0

Paid	(A) Yes (B) No (C) Yes	(A) Yes (B) Yes (C) No	(A) Yes (B) Yes (C) Yes	(A) Yes (B) Yes (C) No
Men's take-up rate (2005)	(C) 5%	(C) <2%	(C) 42%	(C) about 10%
Daddy quota	Yes	No	Yes	No
Count time towards tenure	(A) No (B) No (C) No	(A) No (B) No (C) No	(A) No (B) No (C) No	(A) Yes (B) Yes (C) No

Data from the OECD Family Database on Parental Leave Policies, the Eurostat 2009 Report, the ESWT 2004-2005 report on Parental Leave in European Companies, and data provided by Sweden's Department of Labor *See footnote 26

Compared to maternity leave, parental leave is less generous in its compensation, and has an FTE of 34.8 weeks but a total length of 156 weeks or three years (Eurostat 2009, p. 93). The duration of paid parental leave is one year and the replacement rate for wages is significantly lower "at 67 percent of the worker's usual wage" (Ray 2008, p.14). Parents "must take the first two years immediately after the child's birth or adoption, and may postpone the third until any time before the child's eight birthday" (Ray 2008, p. 14; OECD

Family Database, Table PF2.1.E). Germany's parental leave policy added an incentive for fathers to take leave in 2007 by offering an additional two months of paid leave if fathers took them, bringing the total paid parental leave to 14 months (Ray 2008, p. 14; Ray Gornick, Schmitt 2009, p. 16; OECD Family Database, Table PF2.1.E; Bennhold 2010). Germany's "daddy months" are modeled after Sweden's parental leave policy (refer to the section on Sweden) (Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2009, p. 16; Bennhold 2010). By 2009, German fathers' up-take of parental leave jumped to 20 percent from 3 percent (Bennhold 2010).

Overall, women are substantially more likely to take leave because of the generous compensation for maternity leave, the lack of paternity leave, and the comparatively low level of compensation for parental leave. The main reason European fathers cite for not taking parental leave is its "insufficient financial compensation" (finding provided by Eurobarometer Survey 59.1, 2004) (Eurostat 2009, p. 99). Thus, long parental leave policies coupled with low levels of financial compensation are likely to reinforce women's role as primary caretakers because men's higher earnings "create strong incentives" for women to take leave (Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2009, p. 9). Germany's parental leave payments are referred to as a "parental wage" because parents can be employed and receive payments "as long as they are not employed for more than 30 hours a week"—inevitably encouraging women's part-time work (Eurostat 2009, p. 95).

The recent addition of daddy months to Germany's parental leave policy indicates a shift towards policies that encourage men to contribute *more* to home production. However, daddy months are not a panacea for encouraging men to split home production

evenly with women, especially considering the take-up rate of parental leave for men in Sweden was still only 42 percent as of 2005 and in 2008 men only took approximately 20 percent of all leave days (refer to figure 11) (Establishment Survey on Working Time (ESWT) Parental Leave in European Companies 2004-2005, p. 10; EUROPA).

Leave policy is an important area to consider because of its affects on the work-care balance between men and women. Germany has already demonstrated that reimbursement rates, length of leave, and incentives for men's leave influence men's and women's take-up rates of parental leave (Ray, Gornick, Schmitt 2009). However, leave policies are only one side of the equation. Ultimately when both parents are working and men are more likely to work full-time at higher wages, provisions for childcare services become extremely critical for women's ability to choose between full-time or part-time work. The use of childcare services skyrockets for couples that either have two full-time workers or one full-time worker and one part-time worker, by as much as ten times the rate of couples with only one person employed (Eurostat 2009, 72).¹⁵ In summary, leave policies can reshape gender roles by encouraging men to spend more time at home and contribute more to home production, whereas childcare services allow families, namely women to rely on a third party to transfer care responsibilities when neither parent is in an optimal position to provide full-time care. The most important time to offer childcare for women's labor market participation is when children are young (ages 0-2) (Eurostat 2009). Germany's formal childcare provisions for children 0-2 is severely less developed than it is for children three and older (OECD statistics). Germany places a strong emphasis on

¹⁵ The rate for childcare goes up by a factor of 10 in the UK and by a factor of 5 in Spain and Germany (Ibid.)

education with its pre-K programs, which explains why 85.6 percent of three-year-olds and only 17.8 percent of children under three are enrolled in childcare and why the FTE for kids under three in care is only 14 weeks (refer to figures 12 and 13) (OECD statistics; Esping-Andersen 1999, p.55). Traditionally, Germany offers very little in the way of subsidies for childcare services, and the low percentage of children 0-2 in childcare services indicates this is still the case (Esping-Andersen 1999; OECD Statistics).

Figure 12

Childcare Enrollment 2008				
Country	Under 3 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
Sweden	46.7%	88.6%	91.8%	93.0%
United Kingdom	40.8%	82.4%	97.3%	98.8%
Spain	37.5%	97.6%	98.7%	99.3%
Germany	17.8%	86.9%	95.4%	95.8%
OECD-27 AVG	28.2%	68.8%	85.6%	91.1%
OECD AVG	30.1%	59.7%	80.0%	91.8%

Data from OECD Statistics

Figure 13

	Percentage of children (0-2) in formal care or pre-school	FTE	Average hours of attendance per week
Sweden	47	51	33
United Kingdom	41	22	16
Spain	37	35	28
Germany	18	14	23

Data from OECD Statistics

Spain

Spain offers statutory maternity leave, paternity leave, and parental leave (refer to figure 11). Maternity leave is 16 weeks with an FTE of 16 weeks. Similarly, paternity leave is fully compensated but its maximum length is 15 days (OECD Database 2010, Table PF2.1.D; Ray 2008, p. 26). Social security insurance funds and employers share the cost burden for compensation. To qualify for fully compensated paternity or maternity leave, fathers and mothers have to “be currently employed, self-employed, or receiving unemployment benefits, and must have made social security contributions for at least 180 days in the seven years prior to taking leave, or 360 days in their entire working life” (Ray 2008, p.25-26). However, if parents are younger than 21 years old then they “are exempt from these requirements” (Ray 2008, p.26). A distinctive feature about Spain’s maternity/paternity policies is that employers must guarantee two half-hour feeding breaks, but only women are guaranteed compensation for the breaks (Ray 2008, p. 26).

Two of the most important features to note about Spain’s parental leave policy are that it is long, with up to three years of full-time leave, and that it offers no compensation, thus an FTE of 0 weeks (Eurostat 2009, p. 95, Family Database 2010, Table PF2.1E; Ray 2010, p. 27). Long leave and no compensation are characteristic of policies that enforce traditional gender roles, since women, who typically have lower earnings in relationships, will have a strong financial incentive to take the leave and at a length that further detaches them from the labor market (Orloff 1993). Not surprisingly, the take-up rate for parental leave by Spanish men is less than 2 percent (refer to figure 11) (ESWT 2004-2005, p. 10). Women can take leave while working part-time, so they do not have to stay entirely out of

the labor market, but part-time work has not always been readily available in Spain and comes with the part-time penalty (de Laat and Sevilla Sanz 2007, 2011)

The underdevelopment of family services, including childcare services and subsidies for affordable care, is why some policy analysts place Spain in the Mediterranean regime, as noted earlier (Esping-Andersen 1999; den Dulk and van Doorne-Huiskes; Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette 2007, p. 43). Celie Valiente draws the following conclusion on Spain's advances in the area of childcare:

In Spain, the public provision of child care has increased steadily in the past quarter of a century. However, because this provision has relied on an education rationale, the existing centers cannot provide child care for employed mothers since they operate like preschools with short hours, frequent holidays, and long summer breaks...The Spanish case shows that while the expansion of preschool is positive, it has limited benefit as comprehensive child care. (2003, p. 290).

Valiente's statements *may* be dated because Spain currently has a high percentage of children younger than three enrolled in childcare in addition to its consistently high percentage of children in pre-K programs (refer to figure 13) (OECD Statistics; Eurostat, p. 59). In fact, parents pay roughly on-third of childcare fees; this is especially true for parents who live in Madrid, because the municipality and the regional government each cover "one third of each childcare place" (Eurostat 2009, p. 60). Placing possible regional disparities aside, paying roughly 33 percent in parental fees for childcare is comparable to Denmark (a state renowned for generous family services) where parents pay *up to* 33 percent of childcare fees (Eurostat 2009, p.60). More significantly, Spain has a higher percentage of women (53%) than in Sweden (29%) returning to work after parental leave who do not reduce their hours (ESWT 2004-2005 Work-life Balance, pp. 37-38). The relative proportion of Spanish women not cutting their hours is even more significant

when considering an equivalent number of Spanish women work full time due to Spain's traditionally low availability of part-time jobs and lack of family services.¹⁶

Consequentially, a comparison between Spain and Sweden on the number of women who return to work without reducing their hours is meaningful, since both countries have a relatively equal share of female, full-time workers (roughly 80 percent for both countries, refer to figures 14 and 15) (OECD Statistics). The number of women in Spain who are not cutting their hours and who are maintaining full-time work after leave seems to indicate Spain has become more generous with its care provisions. However, Esping-Andersen points out the following finding dating back to the 1990s, when the number of children under three in childcare was extremely low:

Blanchet and Pennec (1993) provide one method of estimating the intensity of the trade-off. For the EU nations, they calculate an 'incompatibility coefficient' for three different levels of potential trade-off: up to 2 children combined with *any* employment; 2 + children combined with *any* employment; and 2 + children combined with *full-time* employment. In the first situation, it is clear that the Nordic approach is very effective. Denmark's incompatibility score is almost zero, moderately high in ...the UK, and very high in ...Germany...If we turn to the toughest combination, however, we discover that Spain, Portugal, and Greece are the best performers." (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 69)

There are different theories as for why the incompatibility coefficient for women balancing the toughest combination of care and work is lowest in Spain despite its traditionally high degree of familialism and lack of family services. One theory mentioned by Esping-Andersen considers the high number of women who are self-employed as the reason why women may have an easier time balancing work-care responsibilities (Esping-Andersen

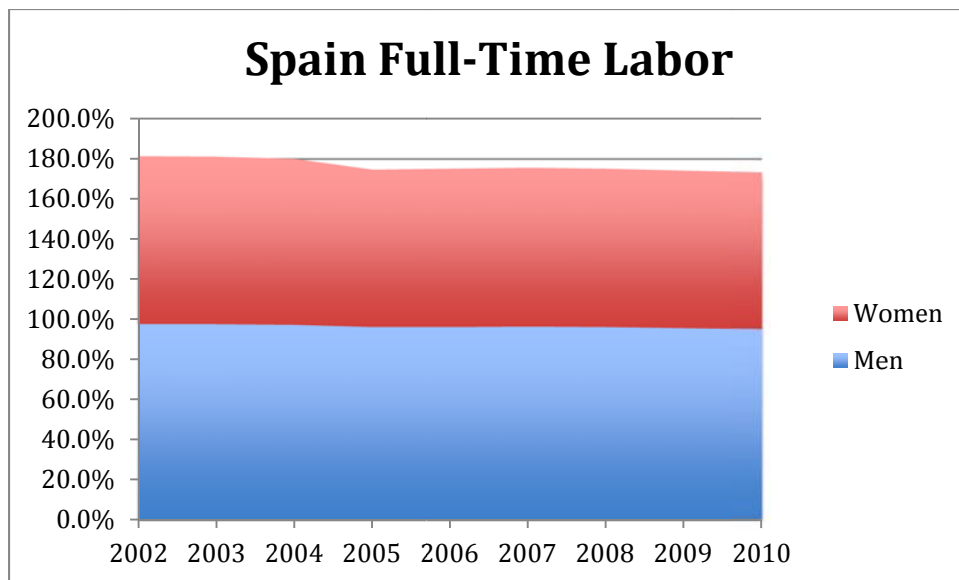
¹⁶ There was a "lack of incentives...to create part-time work up until the 1990s" and "*it was driven by employers' rather than parents' need for flexibility*" (emphasis added: Valiente 2003, p. 290; Cooke 2011, p. 125; den Dulk and van Doorne-Huiskes; Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette 2007, p. 46).

1999, p. 69). The answer to this conundrum is likely rooted in multiple factors working simultaneously. Paula Adam's analysis on the topic provides a meaningful insight into the "puzzle" (1996).

The polarization of the Spanish labour force between insiders and outsiders affects the overall mobility patterns of husbands *and* wives. It divides husbands into a core of permanently employed (insiders) and a stratum of mobile, rotating outsiders. It is in this context that I understand married women's behaviour. Married women in an "insider household" are less likely to be mobile than women in an "outsider household." In the former case, childbirth is likely to result in permanent exit among the a priori non-participants. In the latter case, childbirth is *less* likely to result in permanent exit among the a priori non-participants. In contrast, long run participating women [including women who have ambitions of staying in the labor market over the long term] are much less affected by husband's insider-outside status *and* by childbirth. (1996, p.320)

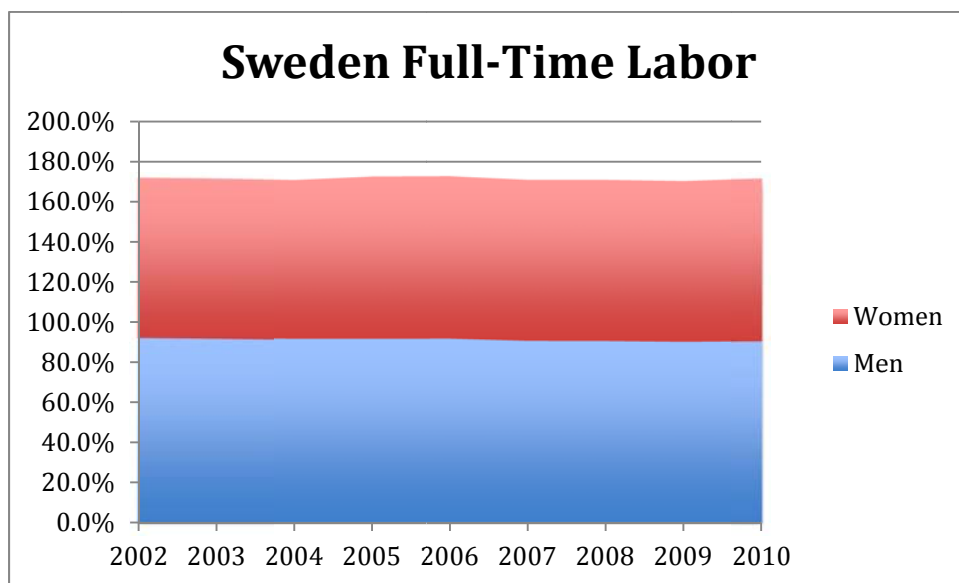
Women in Spain have been traditionally discouraged from working due to "its later modernization and the conservative Roman Catholic elements embedded in policy until Franco's death in 1975" (Cooke 2011, p.11). Consequently, a significant share of women who enter the labor market stay in the labor market because they have relatively lofty ambitions, i.e. the "long run participating women," and find full-time labor in part because the options for part-time labor are limited (Cooke 2011, p. 11). Women's traditional exclusion from the labor market is partially mitigated by their labor market aspirations. Thus, women's labor market aspirations explain their superior position in the labor market in Spain. Women's greater ability to balance care with full-time employment may also be reflective of women's higher earnings in Spain because studies show that the more women earn, the more men contribute to home production (Esping-Andersen 2009; Social Insurance Report 2008, p.15).

Figure 14



Data from OECD Statistics

Figure 15



Data from OECD Statistics

Due to the complexity of Spain's policy outcomes on women's work-care balance, I will close this section with a brief overview and a comparison with Germany's policy outcomes.

Although, Spanish women's level of participation in the labor market has increased over the last decade, it still remains relatively low at 52.3 percent (refer to figure 8) (Eurostat Database). This finding indicates that Valiente's statements are not entirely outdated, if at all, because Spanish women's persistently low employment rates reflect potential barriers to women's employment. Furthermore, the FTE for childcare services for children 0-2 in Spain was only 22 weeks as of 2008 (refer to figure 13) (OECD statistics, table PF3.2.B).

In summary, there are more children under the age of three in childcare services than there were in the 1990s. However, they are still not receiving the level of care needed to allow women to enter the labor market comparable to the rates of other countries in this study (Esping-Andersen 1999; OECD statistics, Table PF3.2.B). Other factors than just care provisions or subsidies are driving women's participation in the labor market. Most notably, Germany's FTE for childcare is even lower than Spain's, yet it has a higher overall employment rate of women, yet another conundrum interfering with a simple explanation for women's care-work levels that should not go unnoticed (refer to figures 8 and 14).

Another important distinction between the female labor market participation rates in Germany and Spain is that women who opt for employment in Germany are more likely to be working part-time than women in Spain (refer to figures 6 and 7) (OECD Statistics). Instead of making matters more complex, women's higher rates of full-time labor in Spain may actually lead to an explanation for women's overall lower labor market participation rates. In Spain, women's labor market participation has been so strongly discouraged and that in combination with a low availability of part-time jobs explains why it is primarily

women with long-term employment aspirations that *enter* the labor market and that *stay* in the labor market. Women not entering the labor market may still be affected by “the official doctrine of the dictatorship [that] defined motherhood as women’s main duty....and affirmed that the role of mother was *incompatible* with others, such as that of waged worker,” which would suggest that traditional gender roles are not vestiges left behind by a waning ideology, but rather is an ideology that lives on in the subconscious of women, and arguably society (Valiente 2003, p. 288).

German women may not be as deterred from entering the labor market considering its mixed history on embracing traditional gender roles with the unification between West and East Germany in 1990 (Cooke 2011). Prior to unification, “East Germany was forced to adopt a Stalinist constitution that demanded the employment of all adults, supported by a broad range of policies enabling women to combine motherhood with paid work,” and post unification “East German women’s employment patterns continued to reflect the socialist legacy despite the region’s high unemployment rate” (Cooke 2011, pp.10 and 133). In fact, “the family policies in the former GDR in many respects resembled those of Sweden” (Gustafsson et al. 1996, p. 230). East Germany implemented work-care friendly policies “under pressure from low birth rates...to combine work and family,” because women were needed to fill an employment shortage that the West Germans filled with immigrant laborers (Gustafsson et al. 1996, p.230; Cooke 2011). Spain’s and Germany’s care-leave policies demonstrate the robust effects a state’s ideology has on gender roles even decades after drastic changes are made in political leadership. In Spain, the leadership switched from “a right-wing authoritarian regime that actively opposed the advancement of women’s rights and status” to the democratically elected “*Partido Socioalista Obrero*

Español” that facilitated the creation of the “*Instituto de la Mujer (IM)* or the Woman’s Instiute” (Valiente; Stetson and Mazur 1995, pp.221-222). After the Berlin wall fell, Germany inherited a mixed history of promoting women’s labor market participation and their traditional role as full-time caregivers. However, even in East Germany, women still did most of the housework and took primary responsibility over child rearing (Cooke 2011). Furthermore, Germany’s recent implementation of daddy months and their link to inducing higher fertility rates demonstrates the effects that economic incentives have on states’ policies.

UK

The UK has statutory maternity, paternity, and parental leave (refer to figure 11) (Ray 2008, pp. 29-31; OECD Family Database, Table PF2.1.B, Table PF2.1.C, Table PF2.1.D, and Table PF2.1.E). Maternity and paternity leave are paid through employers, who are compensated for the majority of the cost at 92 percent for both Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) (Ray 2008, p. 30; OECD Family Database, TablePF2.1.B and Table PF2.1.D).¹⁸ Maternity leave has a length of 52 weeks and a FTE of 12 weeks because the reimbursement rate is below 100 percent and covers the first nine months, whereas SPP offers the same levels of benefits, its length is only 2 weeks with an FTE of 1.8 (Eurostat2009, pp. 87-88; Ray 2008, p. 30; OECD, TablePF2.1.B and Table PF2.D).¹⁹ There are two distinctive features in the UK’s maternity leave that are female

¹⁸ Small businesses are reimbursed 100 percent for SMP and SPP (Ray 2008, p.30).

¹⁹The reimbursement rate for the first nine months of maternity leave and for the entire length of paternity leave is 90 percent of earning and the maximum SPP is € 117.18 a week, so fathers with wages greater than 90 percent of the maximum payment will suffer a financial loss in taking leave (OECD Family Database, TablePF2.1.B and Table PF2.D).

friendly. For the first 26 weeks of leave or what is called Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) “seniority and annual leave continue to accrue;” however if women take leave for greater than 26 weeks they are no longer guaranteed “their previous position, but only a similar one, upon return to the workplace” (Ray 2008, p. 30). Although the OML covers only half of the total leave period, it nevertheless mitigates the gender hierarchy by not penalizing women’s pension plans for the *entire* period they are allowed to take leave (Orloff 1993, p. 314). Additionally, women in the UK can “take up to 10 ‘Keep in Touch’ days, during which they perform contract work for their employers, and which are paid separately from maternity benefits” (Ray 2008, p. 30). If it were not for the 10 “Keep in Touch days” women would have to take their maternity leave continuously (Ray 2008, p. 30). The UK’s maternity and paternity leaves, like Germany, Spain, and Sweden are not equal in length, which places a higher care burden on women. Some may argue women deserve to have more time off because they are “different,” but looking from an agency viewpoint, it is more significant that both sexes are equally allowed to take maternity/ paternity leave for a similar period of time. The discrepancies between maternity and paternity leave are not disconcerting simply because they are different, but rather deserve scrutinizing in how they are different and to the degree that they are different. Thus, when viewing mothers and fathers as individuals, the leave policies are not fair because, men, who may potentially want to care more for their children will not have the same economic incentive or time to stay home with their children, and thereby places pressure on women to take on the task of primary caregiver. Orloff’s quote on the adverse effects of reinforcing traditional gender roles through states’ policies is also applicable to men.

In sum, relations of domination based on control of women's bodies in the family, the workplace, and public spaces undermine women's abilities to participate as "independent individuals" — citizens — in the polity, which in turn affect their capacities to demand and utilize social rights. The ways that states intervene — or refuse to — are critical to women's situation.

To somewhat compensate for the higher demand on women's care, the UK's policy at least does not double penalize women because it counts half of their maternity leave towards their tenure. Furthermore, the UK is very generous with covering SMP and SPP so employers are not as strongly discouraged from supporting women's and men's decisions to take leave. The next section goes on to discuss parental leave.

Parental leave in the UK is 13 weeks and can only be taken 4 weeks at any given time until the child is five years old (Ray 2008, p. 31). Most importantly, parental leave is unpaid, so its FTE is 0 weeks. The combination of the flexibility with which parents can take the leave and that it is unpaid are likely to encourage women to stay in the labor market *marginally*, since they are restricted to taking leave 4 weeks at a time and because men are less likely to be able to afford to take leave. The OECD's findings show that it takes two earners to significantly diminish a family's risk of falling into poverty, and that men are still more likely to be full-time workers, which makes it less feasible for men to give up a month's worth of wages. For these reasons and because the UK's parental leave does not have "daddy months" or a "daddy quota," the Center for Economic and Policy Research's (CEPR) comparative analysis of parental leave policies for twenty-one countries, including Sweden, Spain, and Germany found that the UK scored lowest on the Gender Equality Index of the four countries and only came ahead of seven of the twenty-one countries (Ray, Cornick, and Schmitt 2009, p. 15). Sweden came in first and was only one point away from having a perfect score, Spain was ninth, and Germany followed closely behind in tenth

place (Ray, Cornick, and Schmitt 2009, p. 15). Countries earned one point if they provided incentives for fathers to take leave, i.e. a “daddy quota,” up to five points for a high wage replacement rate (the index component where Sweden lost a point), and up to nine points for “the portion of leave available for fathers and/or reserved exclusively for fathers” (Ray, Cornick, and Schmitt 2009, pp. 14-15). The UK’s low score for its parental leave policy is reflective of women’s marginal position within the labor market. Women in the UK are more likely to work part-time than women in Germany, Spain, and Sweden (refer to figures 4,5,6, and 7). Although a relatively high number of women participate in the labor market, 64.6 percent as of 2010, women are relatively worse off in the labor market, which is reflective of the UK’s higher than average poverty risk for lone parent households at 37 percent in 2005, the EU-25 average for the same year was 32 percent (OECD Statistics 2010; Eurostat 2008, p. 195).²⁰

In summary, the structures of maternity, paternity, and parental leave have exacerbated gender inequality because women are far more likely to take up leave, meaning women are “seduced into staying at home, thus injuring their employment careers” either with a disrupted work history or part-time work (Kremer 2007, p. 141). A brief historical analysis of the UK’s care policies further elucidates women’s current predicament.

From 1997 to 2010, with the New Labour Party at the helm, family policy was steered in a new direction — increasing childcare provisions and raising tax allowances — away from the previous political agenda of the Conservatives, who *strictly* maintained

²⁰ In the UK, nine in every ten lone parents is a mother (BBC article 2007).

Becker's equilibrium — fathers fulfill the role of the provider and mothers the role of the caregiver (Kremer 2007, p. 111; Esping-Anderson 2009, p. 10; Campbell and Lewis 2007, p. 5).²¹ The growing pressures of globalization, ageing, and the rising level of poverty, explain why the New Labour Party adapted policies that encouraged women to enter the paid labour market, making their primary initiative to achieve economic security and subsequently to promote gender equality (Campbell and Lewis 2007, p. 20).

Problematically, sometimes the former aim (economic security at large) conflicted with the second aim (gender equality) in cases such as “the ‘Mrs. Philips’ dilemma – should this woman be viewed as the wife of a rich man or as an individual without beneficial ties” (Kremer 2007, p. 250). In areas of contention between securing economic security for the nation and gender equality, the state *further* showcased what its priorities were, and more importantly the “ideas of care” that it either promoted or hindered in the family (Kremer 2007, p. 239).²²

Increases in childcare provisions and information on childcare were made available through programs like the New Deal Plus for Lone Parents and tax reforms, such as the Working Tax Credit (WTC) (Waldfogel, 2010; Featherstone 2004, p. 21). I will enumerate the effects of each of the policies mentioned and then continue to discuss the Child Tax

²¹ Although in 1998 the UK's Government Green Paper, *Supporting families*, declared that “marriage provides the most reliable framework for raising children”, revealing the government's residual preference towards informal care, it is significant that between 1995 and 2000 the percentage of children (age 0-3) using state-subsidised childcare quadrupled from 2 percent to 8 percent, proving the New Labour's policies diverged to some extent from the Conservative's *strict* adherence to Becker's equilibrium, as increases in childcare allowed more women to participate in the labor market (Lewis 2006, pp. 246-247; Kremer 2007, p. 156; Carling, Duncan, and Edwards 2002, pp. 7 and 19)

²² Ideas of care within the context of this essay refers to the combination “of the concepts of culture and care” (Kremer 2007, p. 239).

Credit (CTC), which was geared toward providing incentives for *informal* care—care provided by the parent in most cases. At the end of this section, I will illustrate what these programs reveal about the types of ideas of care the state supports and the effects this has on their promotion of gender equality.

The New Deal Plus for Lone Parents was meant to serve as comprehensive and demanding version of its predecessor the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) (Waldfoegel 2010, p. 49). Initially, the NDLP was meant to prepare lone parents (a growing proportion of the population) for work without requiring that they a) join the program and b) work or be “work ready” (Waldfoegel 2010, p. 43-44; Griggs, 2010). The program neither improved economic security for lone mothers nor increased gender equality, since a very small portion of lone parents (10 percent) participated and it did not clearly inform lone parents of “the availability of child care support” (Waldfoegel 2010, pp. 44 and 49). An evaluation of the program that was conducted in its first three years found that “Childcare was the most quoted barrier to work; the factor most mentioned for lone parents not wanting a job; and for deciding not to participate in the NDLP” (Finch and Gloyer 1999, p. 2). Furthermore, the failure of the NDLP placed more pressure on the government to encourage lone parents to enter the paid labor market because “70 percent of British lone mothers on benefits... [were] poor” (Kremer 2007, p. 125).

The implementation of the New Deal Plus for Lone Parents made it more feasible for the government to require more stringent work demands on lone parents because of the “package of support [that] was guaranteed” by the program (Waldfoegel 2010, p. 49). Consequentially, under the Working Families’ Tax Credit (WFTC) “gains from work relative

to nonwork increased” and the government increased the provision for childcare from 70 pounds to 135 pounds (Waldfogel 2010, pp. 55-56). In sum, the government made it more of a “genuine” option for lone parents (90 percent mothers) to enter the workforce and escape poverty by increasing their access to higher quality childcare- a sine qua non for lone parents to be comfortable with leaving their children to participate in the paid labor market (Featherstone 2004, p. 21; Finch and Gloyer 1999, p. 2).

The enactment of the CTC (in 2003) was a momentous reform that simplified the distribution of benefits by combining “all of the various benefits and tax credits... [of]...the various child elements previously provided through the Working Families’ Tax Credit, Disabled Person’s Tax Credit, Income Support, Job Seeker’s Allowance, and the Children’s Tax Credit” (Waldfogel 2010, pp. 69-70).²³ Like the NDLP, the CTC distributes benefits irrespective of the work status of parents; therefore, partially financing informal care (Waldfogel 2010, p. 70). In regards to CTC, Gordon Brown stated “*mothers* who wish to leave work and be with their children at home but have found it financially difficult to do so will find it easier” (Lister 2002, p.525). As Gordon Brown points out, the CTC promotes women’s ability to choose to care for their children.

According to Waldfogel, 100 percent of lone-parent families received the CTC (2008) and roughly 65 percent of couple families (2008) received it, which signifies the vast impact this tax credit has had on British families (Waldfogel 2010, pp. 69-70).²⁴ The

²³ Excluded from incorporation into the CTC was the Child Benefit, a tax allowance directly deposited “...to the main carer (usually the mother)” (Waldfogel 2010, p. 67).

²⁴ The CTC is distributed to single- and dual-earner families irrespective of work status, but is discounted the higher the single or combined income of families (Waldfogel 2010, p. 70). Thus, the higher proportion of lone-parents receiving CTC (100 percent) than couple

CTC promotes equality by directly disbursing the credit to the primary care provider (usually the mother), unlike past tax policies that would give benefits directly to the primary wage-earner (usually fathers) (Waldfogel 2010, pp. 67 and 70). As a result, mothers have *more* financial security apart from men. However, the conglomeration of benefits and tax credits afforded to nonworking and low-wage families reveals that benefits encourage lone parents to only work part-time (namely 16 hours per week) and mothers in couple families to stay at home full-time, given the Marginal Deduction Rates (MDRs) of the benefits and tax credits (Waldfogel 2010, pp. 70-71).

In total, the UK's tax reforms have been somewhat successful in increasing gender equality by raising the number of lone mothers in employment by 12 percent to a total of 57 percent (in 2008), but this is well below "the government's target of 70 percent employment for this group" (Waldfogel 2010, p. 59). Additionally, the share of women working full-time is only 60.6 percent, which is a clear departure from men's working patterns (refer to figure 5) (Anon. 2002, p. 69). Ruth Lister posits, "economic independence has always been a precondition of women's liberation" (Lister 2002, p. 521). Ergo, women cannot achieve gender equality until they have achieved economic independence, and many women cannot achieve either because they work part-time and "make up the majority of low-paid workers" (Cantillon, Marx, and Van den Bosh 2002, p. 7).

The question remains—why has the government not successfully closed the time gap in paid and unpaid work between men and women? The answer to this question

families (approximately 65 percent) demonstrates the higher relative need among lone parents (who are mostly lone mothers) (Waldfogel 2010, p. 71).

seems to be contested as some policy makers have argued, “women *choose* to work part-time” (Campbell and Lewis 2007, p. 10). Conversely, others could argue the idea of care the state chooses to promote maintains gender inequalities. For instance, the government’s 2008 white paper highlights the state’s reinforcement of the “*full-time motherhood*” idea of care (at least for mothers with children 0-1), versus the “*professional*” ideal of care (Kremer 2007, pp. 243-244).²⁵ Kremer astutely notes, “that the ideal of professional care is more likely to result in the highest full-time employment rates for mothers compared to other ideals” (Kremer 2007, p.249). The state could promote professional care by altering the MDRs, so that the more mothers work, the more money they receive. Even though mothers, namely lone mothers, frequently “have a high care ethos” they still admit, “this [not working] was harder than going out to work and juggling childcare arrangements” (Kremer 2007, p. 140; Finch and Gloyer 1999, p. 3). It seems that even the government acknowledges that it has been partially at fault for the low participation of women in full-time employment, with its plan to implement the Universal Credit, which would adjust the MDR so that it would incentivize women to work beyond part-time (Anon. 2010, p. 15).

Sweden

In 1974, Sweden was the first country to “denaturalize child-leave policy” by replacing maternity leave with parental leave; however, the EU 1992 Pregnancy and Maternity Leave Directive required states to have a paid maternity leave of 14 weeks with two weeks of compulsory leave, which required Sweden to subsume the leave time

²⁵ The government’s 2008 white paper has adapted Gregg’s “ladder to work” that distinguishes “...three main groups: those who are ready to work, those who should be making progress toward work, and a small group (including parents with children under the age of one) who should not be expected to work” (Waldfoegel 2010, p.51).

“available at the time birth... into the parental leave scheme” (Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006; Bennhold 2010; Bergqvist, Blandy, and Sainsbury; Outshoorn and Kantola 2007, p. 237; Cooke 2011, p. 127; Eurostat 2009; Social Insurance Report 2008, p.4). Sweden does not technically have statutory maternity leave because “it is not restricted to mothers,” which is a statement taken from the European Commission’s statistical report on *Reconciliation between work, private and family life in the European Union* (Eurostat 2009, p. 90).²⁶ However, within the same report, the European Commission has a chart with Sweden’s maternity leave length as 15 weeks and its FTE as 12 weeks (2009, p. 87). The European Commission does not offer an explanation for these numbers and it is not clear why it has a chart that lists Sweden’s paternity leave length and FTE as 11 weeks and 9.2 weeks, respectively (Eurostat 2009, p. 88). The European Commission’s numbers for length of leave clash with the CEPR claims that Sweden’s maternity leave is 14 weeks and with the OECD Family Database’s listing of 8.5 weeks (Ray 2008, p. 27; OECD Family Database, Table PF2.1.A and Table PF2.1.C). Beside the discrepancies for the length of Sweden’s paternity and maternity leaves, it is clear that all parents are compensated at the same rate through the parental leave scheme for the leave they take, whether it is maternity leave, paternity leave, or parental leave (OECD Family Database, Table PF2.1.C and Table PF2.1.D). Furthermore, the CEPR reports that all parents are eligible for maternity and paternity leave irrespective of job tenure, although compensation is based

²⁶ However, Sweden’s Parental Leave Act does state, “a *female* employee is entitled to full leave in connection with her child’s birth during a continuous period of a least seven weeks prior to the estimated time for delivery and seven weeks after the delivery” (Parental Leave Act). Ergo, figure 11 does have “yes” for statutory maternity leave because women have a legal right to maternity leave, even if its counted towards part of their parental leave. Also, fathers receive 10 bonus days of leave in connection with a birth of a child, and this is counted as statutory paternity leave in figure 11 (Sweden’s Department of Labor).

on tenure (Ray 2008, p. 27; Eurostat 2009). Maternity and paternity's equal compensation and their incorporation into parental leave promotes a high degree of gender equality, since they encourage mothers and fathers to take leave.

Sweden's parental policy, including maternity and paternity leave, has a length of 360 days or approximately 12 months that can be split between parents and an additional 60 days that are reserved for each parent (OECD Family Database 2008/07, Table PF2.1.E).²⁷ The 60 days of leave reserved for fathers is called "daddy months." In 1972, "the Commission on Family and Marriage published" a report that recommended "leave be shared" because women's disproportionate take up of leave was hindering women's position in the labor market (Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, p.162). Two decades later, in 1995 the first "daddy month" was added and in 2002 another daddy month was added (Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, p.162; Social Insurance Report 2008). In 2008, Sweden incorporated another revolutionary idea into its leave policy called the "Gender Equality Bonus" in response to fathers' continually low share of leave, remaining at roughly 20 percent of all leave days (EUROPA). Parents receive the Gender Equality Bonus if their children are born or adopted after July 1, 2008 and if parents evenly split their leave (EUROPA). The more equal the division of leave, the larger their bonus, which can be as high as €275 per month (EUROPA). The bonus is in addition to the compensation parents receive under parental leave.

Parents qualify for parental leave if they worked "at least six months...with their current employer, or 12 months in the last two years" and "parents who have contributed

²⁷ The Swedish Institute's website states that the ten days fathers get in connection with the birth of a newborn baby are "extra days" of leave (Swedish Institute 2011).

to the insurance scheme for at least 240 days receive a higher level of benefits” (Ray 2008, pp. 27-28). The benefit structure is “regressive in time”, so although all 480 days are paid, only the first 390 days are paid at 80 percent for those who qualify (Eurostat 2009, p. 95; Ray 2008, pp. 27-28). The state covers all the payments for leave, so employers are least deterred from encouraging workers to take leave (Ray 2008, pp. 27-28; OECD Family Database 2008/07, Table PF2.1.B). However, when fathers originally took paternity leave under the Parental Leave Act they were referred to as “velvet dads” and studies addressing the work-life balance cite a concern with workplace cultures that deter fathers from taking leave because of long held perceptions of women as primary care givers (Bennhold 2010; ESWT Parental Leave in European Countries 2004-2005, p. 9).²⁸ Overall, Sweden’s approbation for its gender equal leave policy is well grounded because it is highly compensated and includes incentives for fathers to take leave. Conclusively, none of the parental leave policies are without negative outcomes on women’s labor market status including Sweden’s because the large proportion of women in part-time work is seen “as a consequence of the right of parents with children up to eight years of age to be on subsidized partial parental leave” (Bihagen and Ohls 2006, p.21). The next section will explore the foundations of Sweden’s care provisions in an attempt to further explain women’s work-care balance and well-being in Swedish society.

²⁸ Although “A supportive organization culture” is cited as a “main factor” for the “higher take-up rate by fathers in Sweden” for parental leave, Swedish men’s take up rate is low on a objective standard with less than half of fathers taking leave (ESWT Parental leave in European Companies 2004-2005, p.11). Sweden’s Social Insurance Report for 2008 states that men still “often” cite a male dominated work culture as an environment that discourages leave (Social Insurance Report 2008, p.15).

Sweden was one of the first nations to expand family services in the late 1960s (Esping-Andersen 1999, p.55). The Social Democratic party sought to “[institutionalize] the welfare state with its comprehensive policies covering a range of protections and risks and *reaching all citizens*” (emphasis added; Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, pp. 159). The political aims of the Social Democratic Party required expansions in health, education, and care services (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 55). With the large increases in social services, traditionally family services, came the growth in women’s employment (Rosen 1997). Sweden’s “monetization” of the family has allowed for very high provisions of publically provided child care services, which explain why the FTE for children in formal care or pre-school under the age of 3 is 51 weeks (see figure 13) (Esping-Andersen 1999; OECD Statistics). Sweden was able to expand its family services not only because women provided relatively cheap labor, which was preferred to immigrant labor, but also because the lower average number of hours per year in local government jobs made it feasible for women to maintain their role as primary caregivers so that their husbands could still be ideal workers (Elman; Stetson and Mazur 1995, pp. 240-241; Rosen 1997, p. 86; Williams 2000). Williams remarks, “jobs requiring extensive overtime exclude *virtually all mothers*” because women lack the time to be primary caregivers and put in extra hours at the workplace (2000, p.2). She goes on to say that a more equitable society would reduce the overall number of hours for all employees (2000, p.2). However, just as the state was encouraging women’s employment in the public sector in the late 1960s it also discouraged their employment in the male dominated private sector. Barbara Hobson makes the following astute observation on women’s employment in Sweden:

Since the 1970s, women in the Social Democratic Party continuously have sought a shorter working week as a women-friendly policy. However, unions [dominated by a male leadership] have always won out in battles over shorter working days versus longer vacations. (Razavi and Hassim 2006, p. 163)

The combined effect of the large increase in family services and the unions' resistance to women-friendly policies has resulted in Sweden having "the highest level of sex segregation in occupations." Orloff made this claim in 1993 and it is still true in the twenty-first century (Orloff 1993, p. 313). The Eurostat reported that, as of 2005, "71 % of all women" employed in Sweden and the Netherlands were concentrated in six sectors—health care and social work, retailing, education, public administration, business activities, and hotels and restaurants (Eurostat 2008, pp.55-56). The state's high provision of child care facilitates both a high employment rate of women at 70.3 percent in 2010 and women's marginalization in the labor market (Rosen 1997). The positive effect of women's greater ability to participate in the labor market, even if it is concentrated in the public sector, is that it grants women greater economic independence from men (Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, p. 151). In 2000, the OECD found a negative correlation between child poverty rates and women's employment rates at the primary caring ages (25-49) (refer to figure 3) (OECD Statistics).

Swedish women should be envied for their greater economic independence, but outsiders should be cognizant of its costs: the same costs shared by women all over the world—lower wages, less leisure time, and lower upward mobility. In some respects, Swedish women fair worse than women in states that are considered less women friendly in their policies. The wage gap between men and women is larger than it is Spain (Eurostat 2008, p.180). In Sweden, women represent a smaller share of CEOs, directors, and

mangers of small enterprise than women in Spain and Germany (Eurostat 2008, p. 180). To label Sweden the most “pro-women state” is a misnomer because “difference” feminists have a legitimate criticism of their gender-neutral policies as focusing on formal equality and not equality in outcome, or even in agency. Women earn less than men, and men still dominate important sectors of society, i.e. managerial positions in business. Although women in Sweden hold nearly half the seats in parliament and the supreme court, they still hold less power resources in the labor market, where men still dominate by a large margin (Eurostat 2008, p. 67; European Commission’s data on supreme courts 2010).

Sweden’s misnomer as a the most pro-women nation state warrants further review because it highlights the limitations of not only gender-neutral leave policies, but more importantly leave policies that ostensibly *encourage* a high degree of gender equality. Even though Sweden’s leave and care policies seem to account for at least some of women’s marginalization in the labor market, it is also the reason why women have gained greater economic independence. Thus, some argue that is women who choose to marginalize themselves, as was discussed in the UK section, and as Williams notes in her book, *Unbending Gender*, some people, both men and women, believe in a “self-select theory” that posits women choose to take on a marginalized position in the labor market because they want to be the primary caregivers (Williams 2000, p.14). In response to the “Self-select theory, Williams’ states the following:

Acknowledging the impact of the second shift makes women vulnerable only if one accepts that claim that women’s “choice” to marginalize precludes discrimination...“Choice” is only a defense against discrimination if women’s marginalization is freely chosen in the same sense that some people choose Mars Bars over Baby Ruths. (Williams 2000, p. 15)

The pervasiveness of sex discrimination and the long history of weak sex discrimination policies in Sweden suggest that Swedish women are not *freely* choosing their marginalized roles in the labor market because sex discrimination acts as a direct constraint on their choices. Hobson makes the following remark on the “constraints” on Swedish women in the work place:

It is no secret that Sweden has had one of the softest laws against gender discrimination in employment among democratic welfare states...*The parameters for claiming discrimination remain highly circumscribed....*Not until Sweden joined the EU was the principle of equal pay for work of equal value introduced in Swedish law....The main employer of women in Sweden is the state (including the municipalities) with nurses, teachers and health-system public-sector workers amongst their employees. The social democratic welfare states offer women a family-friendly workplace, but they also produce a female ghetto of jobs with low compensation in a sex-segregated care sector....The equality ombudsman has lost nearly every case brought before the Labour Court over the last several years. One in particular stands out as it was appealed to the EU Court twice. It concerns wage discrimination of midwives in comparison with male technical assistants; the latter have less education and earn more than 4,000 crowns a month more than the midwives in comparison with male technical assistants; the later have less education and earn more than 4,000 crowns a month more than the midwives....the Swedish Labour Court first argued for the pay differential based on market demand and then for supremacy of collective agreements....***This case makes visible the contradictions in the notion of a women-friendly state: can a women-friendly state be a gender-discriminatory employer?*** (emphasis added: Hobson; Razavi and Hassim 2006, p. 164).

A study by Erik Bihagen and Marita Ohls entitled, *The glass ceiling – where is it? Women’s and men’s career prospects in the private vs. the public sector in Sweden 1979-2000*, finds that the public sector offers less “career opportunities” than the private sector, supporting the argument that women’s higher employment rate (in comparison to men) in the public-sector accounts for their lower upward mobility (2006, p. 40). The study also finds that the “gender penalty” against women’s upward mobility “seems to be largest for women with small children” (2006, p. 40). A study by Lalaina Hirvonen looked specifically

at the effects of an additional child on Swedish women's earnings and participation in the labor market from 1990-2005 (2009). The study found that with an additional child, women's earning and labor participation suffered, but that earnings were more affected than participation (2009). These studies show that women are economically disadvantaged in Sweden and in part because of their responsibility over child rearing and in part because even with their participation in the labor market they earn less. Since women are employed more in part-time jobs and the public sector, they have more difficulty than men in reaching the top tiers in occupational hierarchies. Also, a study as recent as 2008 on the *access to justice in gender equality and anti-discrimination law* finds that the level of compensation for sex discrimination is so low that it "can hardly be described a dissuasive" (Milieu 2011, p. 43). Furthermore, even when men's and women's occupations, age, working times, education and employment sectors are held constant "the overall wage differential [between men and women is still] at 8 percent (Hirvonen 2009, p. 2).

Why women still earn less than men is a multifaceted problem that has been resistant to women's advancement in other areas, such as in the political sphere in Sweden. The reasons why women are still earning less and are marginalized in the labor market are enumerated in the next section.

The Persistent Problem of Gender Inequality

At the beginning of this paper and throughout, there was a strong emphasis on the role economic incentives have in driving states to change their leave and care policies. Economic incentives ostensibly serve two purposes by promoting greater economic

sustainability and gender equality. In order to trace the effects that leave and care policies, as well as their recent changes, have on gender equality, this study relied on the model displayed in figure 10. Germany, Spain, the UK, and Sweden were strategically selected as the case studies for this model. Their distinct state-market-family relationships highlight how a state's reliance on the market and families to resolve social issues affect their strategy for promoting a work-care balance. For instance, in Sweden the state is the primary provider of childcare services because it redistributes social goods to promote greater equality, whereas in the UK the private market is the primary provider of childcare because the state relies heavily on the market to provide social goods, and is less concerned with promoting equality.

The first assumption of the model is that states' care and leave policies affect the work-care balance—men's share of home production versus women's. There is strong evidence to suggest that policies greatly impact women's decision to take leave, and therefore how much they contribute to home production. For instance, in the UK, Germany, and Spain, maternity leave has a higher FTE than paternity leave, making it more economical for women to take a longer leave. However, incentives to encourage fathers to take leave have only been marginally successful. In Sweden, the progenitor of "daddy months," women still take 80 percent of all leave days.

The second assumption of the model is that by encouraging men's home production it frees women's time to devote to the labor market and therefore leads to women's higher labor market participation and position within the labor market. Since states have only been marginally successful in implementing policies that encourage men's home

production this affects how care-leave policies influence women's labor market status. Furthermore, the great variation in women's labor market participation rates and position within the labor market reflect variations within care and leave policies' promotion of gender equality and also point to exogenous factors. For instance, Sweden promotes greater equality in terms of women's labor market participation with generous provisions of care and includes some incentives for fathers to take leave, but it also restricts women's employment in more lucrative sectors due to weak discrimination policies and its encouragement of women into the public sector. Spain provides evidence for exogenous factors affecting women's labor market status since women's higher relative earnings to men is partially explained by women's employment aspirations — women who want to work long-term have less disrupted work schedules after birth despite Spain's less generous care services for working mothers.

The third assumption is that women who have a superior status in the labor market have more power resources, meaning they fair better in terms of their earnings and authority. Firstly, in none of the countries do women have a superior status to men in the labor market or an equal status. In relation to each other, women who participate in the labor market and stay in the labor market longer are more likely to have higher earnings and authority relative to women who do not. Swedish women are more likely to opt out of the labor market after leave than women in Spain and are less likely to be managers and earn as much as men.

The evidence within this study suggests that there is a relationship between women's labor market status and power resources. However, women's participation rates

alone, in other words just looking at the percentage of women in the labor market, are not a strong indicator of women's share of power resources. In Germany, Sweden, and the UK women have a higher participation rate, but they are more heavily employed in part-time jobs that hinder their upward mobility, and therefore their authority and earnings in comparison to Spanish women's participation in full-time work. Also, certain sectors, i.e. the public sector in Sweden, tend to have fewer career opportunities. Therefore, women's high employment rates in these sectors will not be as strongly correlated with holding more power resources. (It is important to keep in mind that some employment is better than no employment even if it is not as lucrative as full-time work or work in the private sector). Thus, it seems that women's employment history and aspirations mainly affect their degree of power resources.

Next, the model assumes that women with more power resources have greater autonomy and economic security. This assumption appears to be strong. Several studies show that women's earnings are positively correlated with men's home production, suggesting that women have greater say in the division of household labor. More earnings would give women more "leverage," but also free men's ability to take poorly compensated leave. Additionally, women's economic independence from employment is correlated with lower child poverty rates, suggesting greater economic security. Lastly, the model assumes that women's well-being affects social policies' ability to impact the work-care balance, bringing the cycle full circle.

Presumably, if women's economic security and autonomy is comparable to men's then the compensation of care-leave policies becomes less important in determining the

work-care balance for men and women, since the opportunity cost of taking leave would be equal. However, the length of maternity leave would still be a factor influencing how long women take leave versus men. Therefore the effects of compensation are only contingently important, whereas the length of leave is always relevant. Significantly, in addition to offering little to no compensation for parental leave, Germany's, Spain's, and the UK's maternity leave policy is longer than their paternity leave. These policies reinforce traditional gender roles in part because women's well-being is less than men's and in part because they discriminate against men's care. Sweden's parental leave policy also reinforces traditional gender roles because of women's lower well-being (lower autonomy and economic security), but it partially mitigates this by offering a high reimbursement rate that lasts for the majority of the leave period. Thus, women do not have to live in poverty while on leave if they cannot rely on a man's wages.

This begs the question, why is there a large wage gap between men and women in Sweden? The answer is multifaceted. Firstly, women are more concentrated in the public sector and part-time jobs. Secondly, Sweden has weak sex discrimination policies. Women's inferior position in Sweden leads to another important question, why gender-neutral policies are not sufficient for achieving gender equality; the reason is the same for why economic incentives are not sufficient for achieving gender equality. Sex discrimination keeps women in the lower tiers of the labor market irrespective of care-leave policies. Economic incentives and care-leave policies work together to promote women's advancement in the labor market: economic incentives increase women's earnings by pushing women into male dominated labor markets and care-leave policies free women to participate more in the labor market.

Across all welfare regimes women are more stratified, time poor, under compensated, and have fewer power resources in the labor market (Eurostat 2008, 2009). Another commonality among states is that as women have been taking on more paid work, men have not taken on an equal share of home production to compensate for women's time loss. States want to encourage more men to take on home production because the cross-country correlation between FTRs and FLFs show that women are having fewer children due to less support from men in the home. Pension systems are unsustainable with fertility rates dropping below the fertility replacement rate. Men's home production in Sweden, albeit objectively low, is comparatively high and curtails the rapidly declining fertility rates, which explains why states with a strong reliance on familialism are turning to Sweden for policy ideas to benefit from the higher fertility rates, as well as the higher tax revenues, and lower poverty rates that are linked with promoting women's employment and men's home production. However, no state has been able to successfully encourage men's home production so that women and men share work equally or even close to equally. Although working men in social democratic states have the *highest average* for weekly hours of unpaid work with 13 hours; the EU *average* for working women's unpaid work across all regime types is 25.5 hours (Eurostat 2009, p. 43).

Men's resistance to taking parental leave is a complicated policy problem. In Sweden, the progenitor of "daddy days" and the "Gender Equality Bonus," men only take roughly 20 percent of all leave days. There are several factors affecting men's decision not to take leave. In Germany, Spain, and the UK leave is not highly compensated, so men do not want to forgo their wages in the labor market to take leave. Significantly, the number one factor that encourages men's leave is "getting more financial compensation during the

period of leave” (Eurostat 2009, p.98). Although comparatively Sweden has a generous reimbursement rate for its parental leave policy, men (and thus their families) still have a greater opportunity cost in taking leave because women earn less in Sweden. The pay differential between men and women is larger in Sweden than in Spain, which counteracts, at least in part, the more “women friendly” aspects of Sweden’s policies. Men’s apprehensions toward taking leave suggests women will always be more likely to take leave so long as they earn less and so long as leave is a penalty against future career prospects.

The Wollstonecraft dilemma represents the double bind women face between their care responsibilities and their labor market aspirations. The crux of women’s bind is that their caregiver role penalizes them in the labor market. If men contributed more to care, among other changes, women would not be so restricted in their choices in the labor market. More women than men across all welfare regimes take on more part-time work because it allows them more flexibility at the cost of the part-time penalty—lower earnings, job security, and upward mobility. Men also face a dilemma, which explains why none of the care-leave policies result in a work-care balance for either men or women. Women are more time poor, but more men are increasingly dissatisfied with their work-life balance (Eurostat 2009, p.49). More part-time workers than full-time workers “have a positive perception of their work-private life balance” (Eurostat, p.49). The bind facing men is that they devote more hours to paid work, which coupled with their higher earnings creates a provider burden on men. It takes two earners to substantially reduce a family’s chances of falling into poverty, so when one of the parents is presented with the task of taking leave it is in the best economic interests of the family for the lower wage earner to

take leave. Even if there was a parental leave policy with an FTE equal to its length, meaning 100 percent reimbursement for lost wages, there is still the penalty of disrupting one's work schedule, which has long-term consequences.

All states' current construction of citizenship inhibits either sex from achieving a work-care balance, whereby men and women can be providers and caregivers without facing a penalty in the labor market. Social democratic states have relied on women's "cheap labor" to expand family services, resulting in women holding more dead-end jobs and lower wages. In Germany, Spain, and the UK family services are less developed, and since their leave policies have little to no incentives for men to take leave, women's entrance into the labor-market is even more restricted. Women's improved status in the labor market is dependent on men taking more leave days, but men cannot afford to take leave until women earn the same as men. The devaluation of work dominated by women is part of the reason why gender inequality persists. Women in Sweden earn less than women in Spain because they are more concentrated in sectors like health, education, and care services that offer less upward mobility. Also, barriers to women's employment in work dominated by men—i.e. managerial positions in the private sector— maintain women's inferior status in the labor market and therefore reduce women's share of power resources (refer to figure 10).

Policy makers seeking to promote gender equality, should not only try to alter men's and women's work-care balance through care and leave policies, but should intervene directly at the "labor market status" phase (refer to figure 10). Strong sex discrimination policies and the revaluation of unpaid work are two important steps to promoting greater

equality. Men will not be willing or financially able to take leave until women have an equal status in the labor market.

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