

Family Policy

Sweden in a Comparative
Perspective

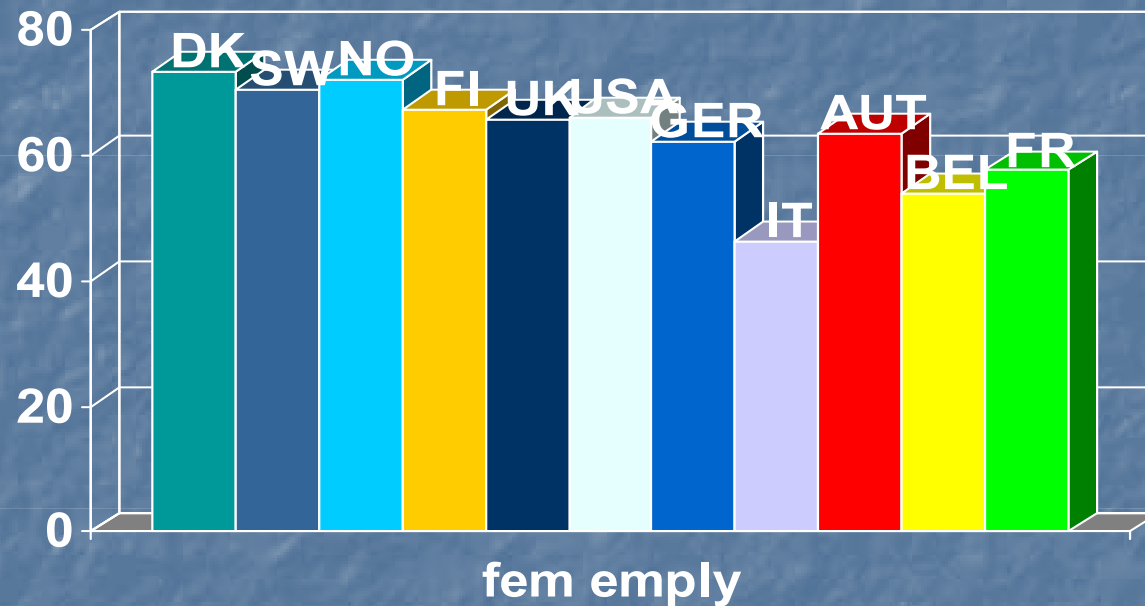
Outline

- Fertility crisis and tendency toward equality
- Swedish model
- Liberal experiences
- Some comparisons

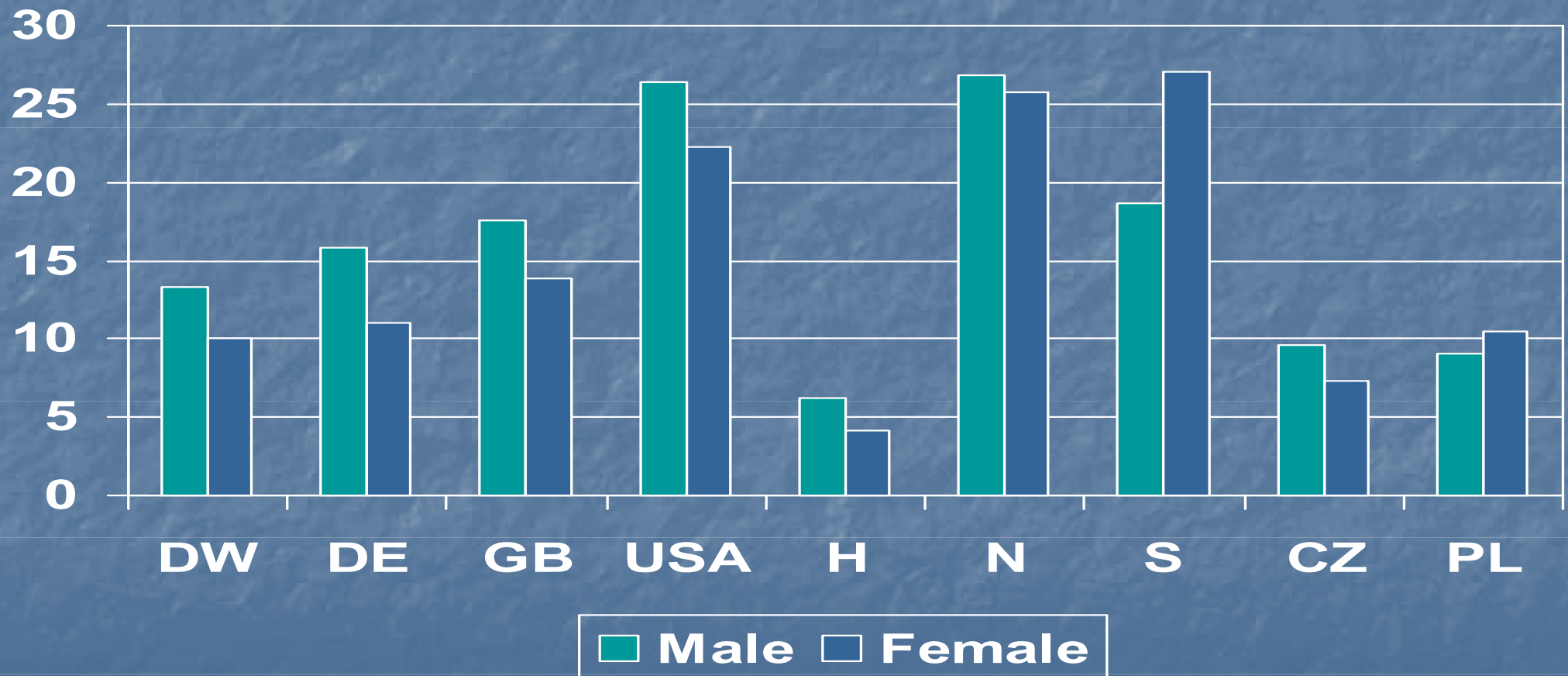
McDonald's incoherence theory

in the industrially advanced countries the conflict between norms supporting high levels of gender equity in individual-oriented social institutions (like education system and labor market) and sustained gender inequality in family-oriented social institutions (in caring and nurturing and household maintenance) has caused fertility rates to drop.

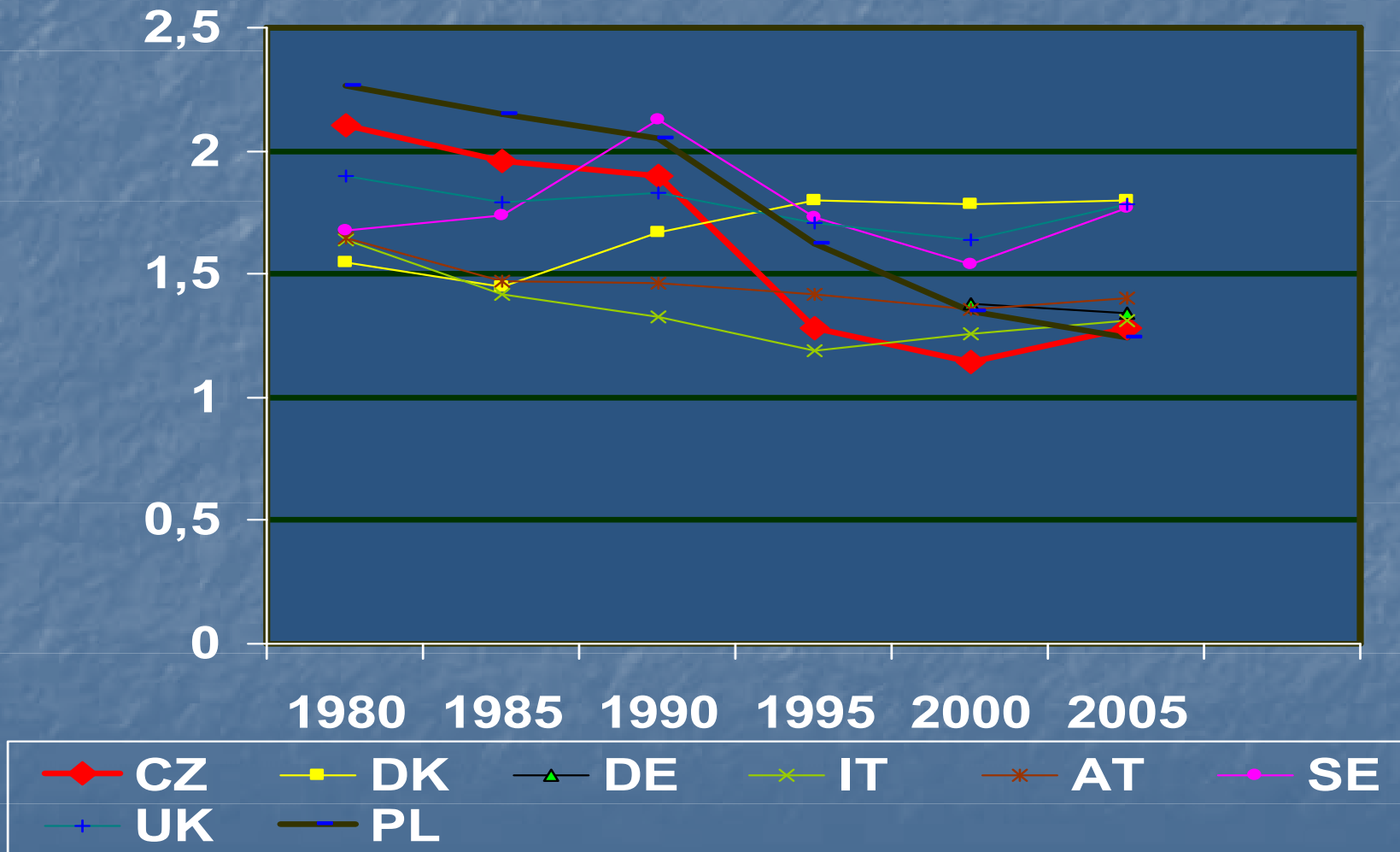
Female Employment Levels



Equality of Education: % of respondents with a completed university education (ISSP 2002)



Low Birthrates (Eurostats)



Moves toward Gender Equality

- EU: gender mainstreaming
- Recommendations of international organizations
- Conservative governments in Germany and Poland (Kluzik-Rostkowska)
- Netherlands: increased support for daycare
- If you want to support the family, there must be a family to support

The Swedish Model

- Access to daycare (no division between 0-3 and 3-6 and no link to healthcare)
- Parental leaves
- Successes
- Problems

Daycare Reforms

- Access to daycare increased
- High quality
- Low on pedagogy
- “Day mammas”
- Parental cooperatives
- Maximum fee introduced

Parental Leaves

- Fathers allowed since 1974
- Insurance based to encourage fathers (80% of income)
- Completely flexible: can divide as like (for example can alternate days, can take 50% of pay and stay at home twice as long, etc)
- Campaigns in 1980s
- Little change

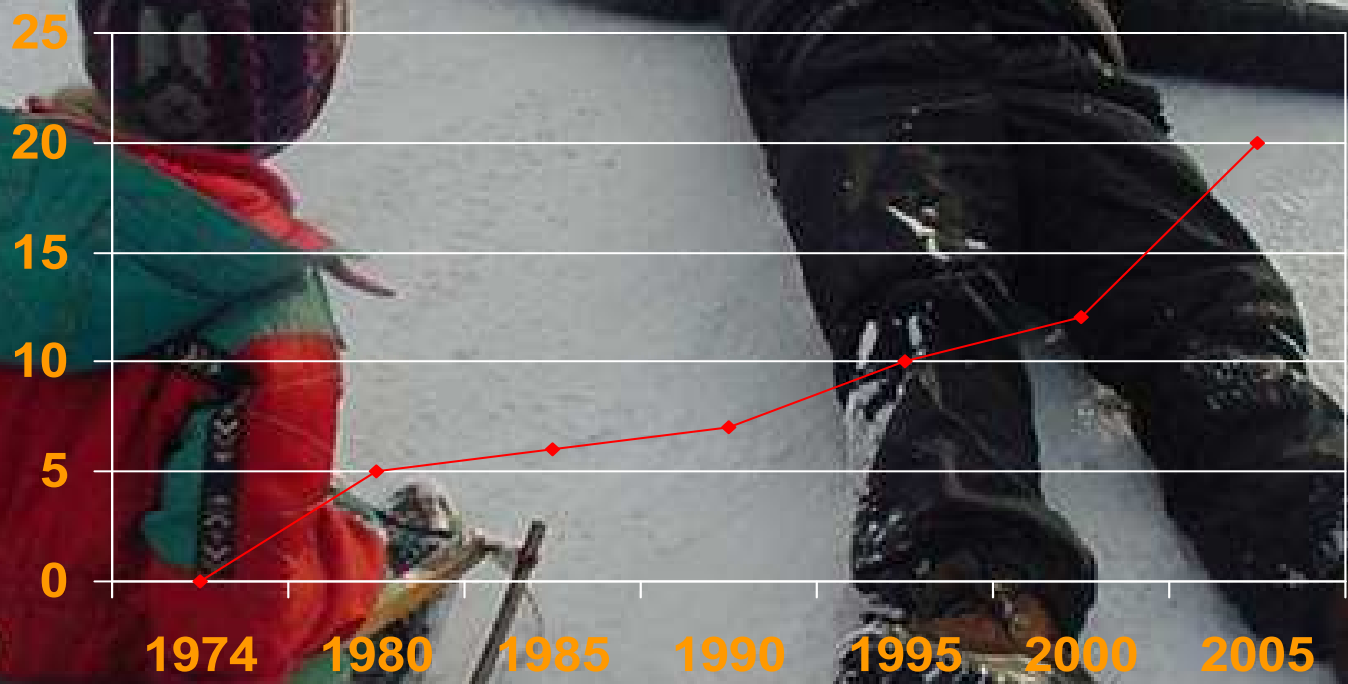
Why so little success?

- Cultural attitudes changed slowly
- Differences in region, education, etc.
- Problems with employers
- Pressure from workplace

1990s

- Center-Right government introduces “pappa month”
- Liberal minister introduced it
- Criticized for being “forced”
- But do not need to take it, you just miss the benefit
- Later the social democrats added another month
- Now officially half the time for each, but the father can sign a paper giving the mother the right to use “his” months (except for the two reserved only for him)

Can Fathers take care of children?



—◆— % of leave taken by men in Sweden



Still not equal

BUT

if the trend continues
by the year 2050 Swedish men will take

294% of the total parental leave!

Why the Success?

- Fathers given support in demanding leaves from their employers
- The second added month not seen as force, because the total time of parental leave increased by one month, so nothing was “taken away” from the mother
- Political consensus on the need for fathers to take parental leaves

Individual or Collective?

- Some argue leaves go against Swedish policies of individual rights
- So fathers should not be able to give away any of their months
- Another suggestion to reserve 1/3 for each and let them share the remaining 1/3 as they wish
- Others say such more infringe upon freedom of choice

Problems with the Swedish Model

- Segregation in the labor market
- Women in the public sector, lower paid jobs
- Less women in managerial positions
- Many more women than men work part-time
- Lack of pedagogy at daycare centers

The Conservative Model in Practice

- Being given up almost everywhere except in the Czech Republic!
- Lowest fertility rates and lowest female labor market participation rates
- Lack of access to daycare for children under 3 big problem
- No incentives for fathers to share in the leave time
- Based on the idea of the "traditional family" although this type of family only existed in large numbers for a short time in history (perhaps 75 years out of around 6 million)

The Liberal Model in Practice

- Relatively high fertility rates
- Relatively high female labor market participation, but lower than social democratic countries promoting gender equality
- More women in top economic positions
- Less people in high political positions (because of electoral system)

Caring under Liberalism

- Mothers have to return to labor market quickly or will lose their jobs (and cannot afford the loss of income)
- USA: in 1990s the courts gave women right to unpaid sick leave
- Often turn to immigrants, who will work for a low wage
- These immigrants often are there illegally
- Lack training for taking care of children

Why more women in top economic positions?

- EA: women become directors of areas within private enterprises, which in other countries are state jobs, because enterprises must carry out welfare functions
- Greater income equality, so professionals can afford private care
- Nanny tradition
- Cheap immigrant (illegal) labor available

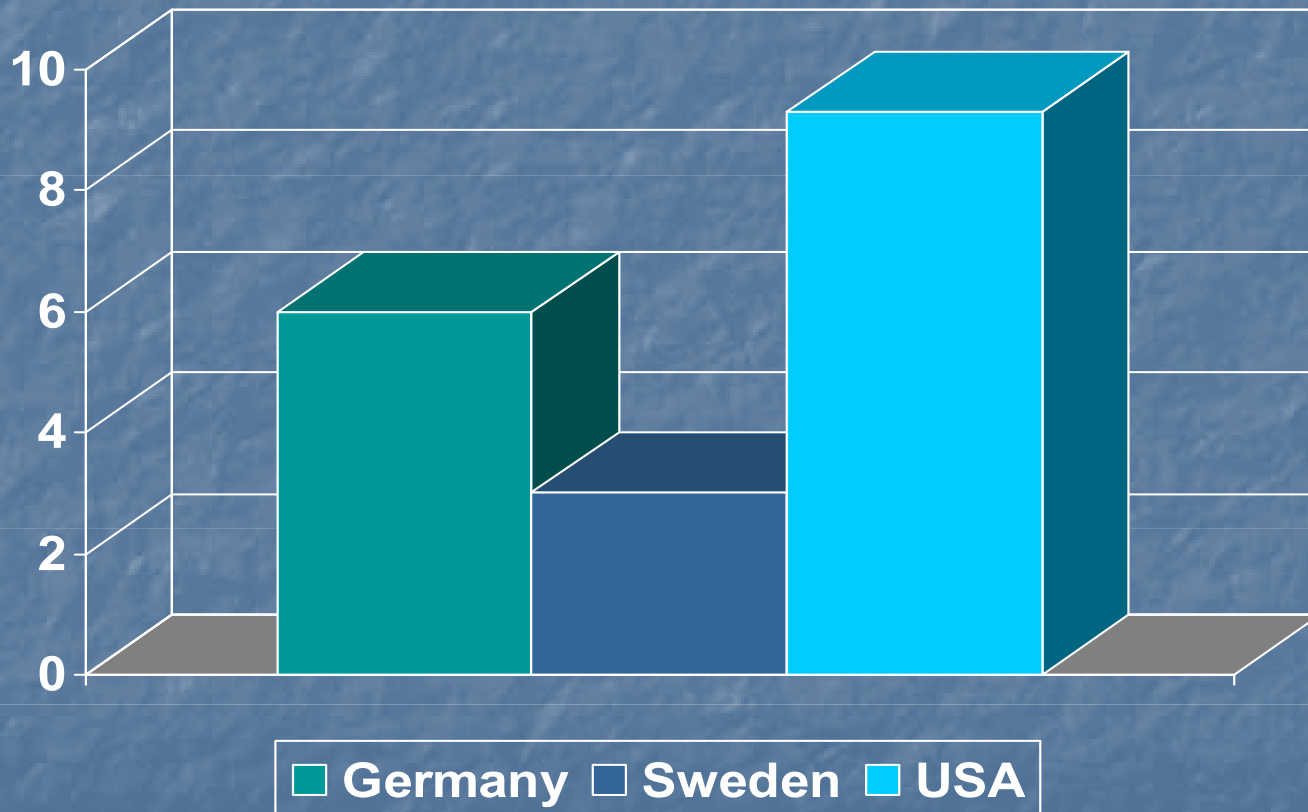
Is there an alternative to using cheap immigrant labor?



Divorce Rates and Childhood Poverty

Country	Divorce Rates (2001)	Child Poverty Rates (2000)
Germany	50.7%	12.8%
Sweden	58.8%	3.6%
USA	47.6%	21.7%
CR	60.3%	7.2%

% of Lone-Parent Households (1996)



■ End of lecture!

