

# Shorter full time: 6-hour day



## Combining work and family

*Initiative für ein Neues Normalarbeitsverhältnis*

Rosa Luxemburg stiftung

2018-04-27

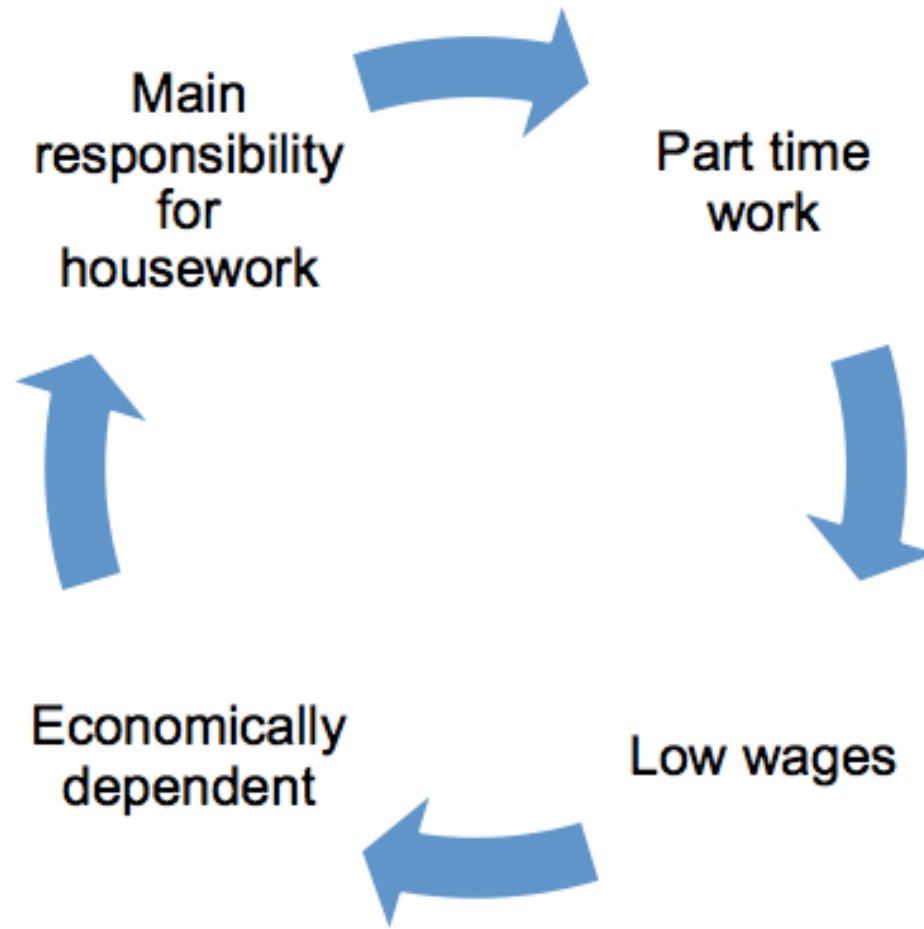
Ana Süssner Rubin, Swedish Left Party



# Work - paid and unpaid



# Womens circle of inequality



# Gender inequality

## **Part time jobs**

- 32 % women
- 10 % men

## **Parental leave**

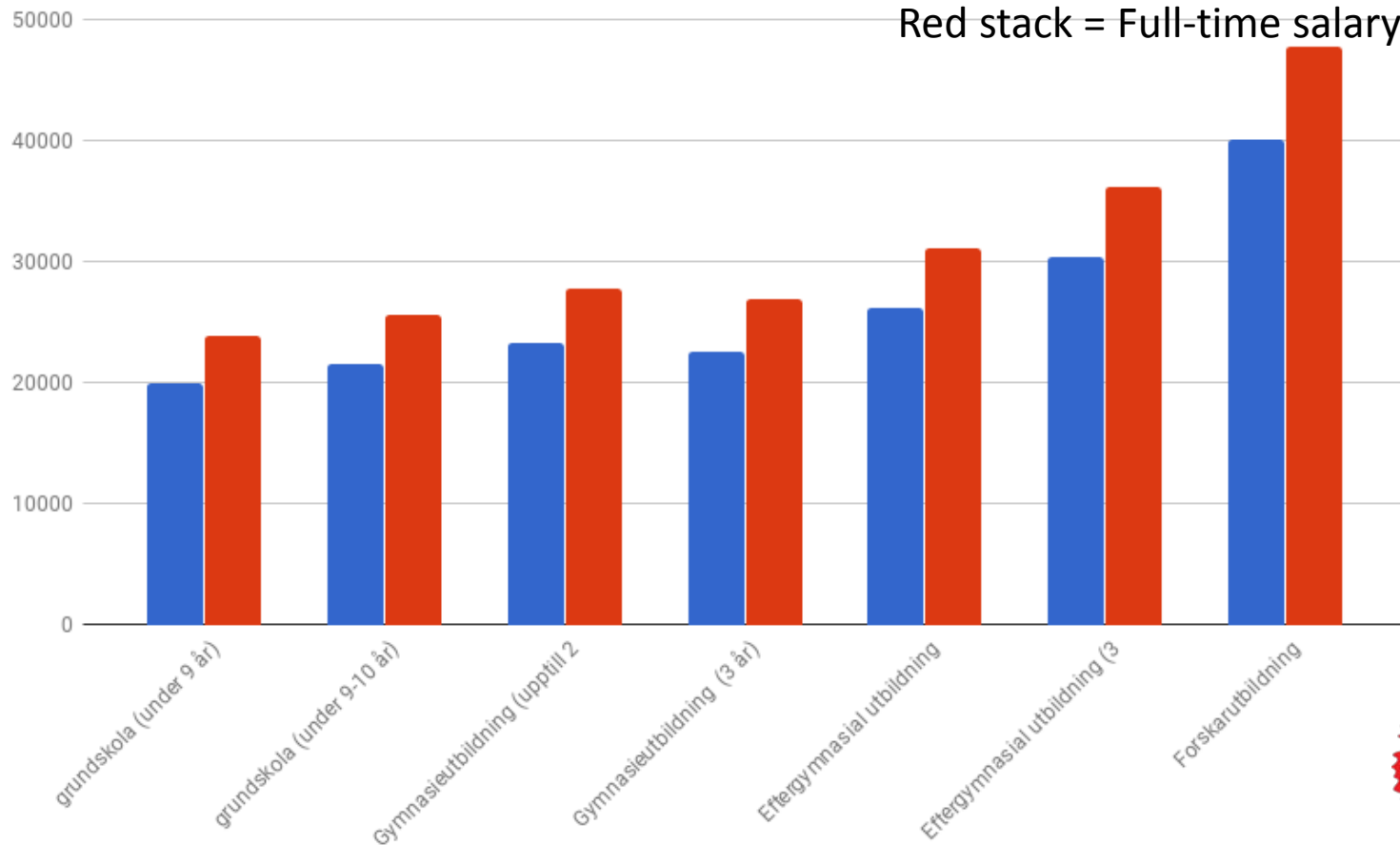
77 % women

- 23 % men

# 6 hours working day transforms part-time to full-time.

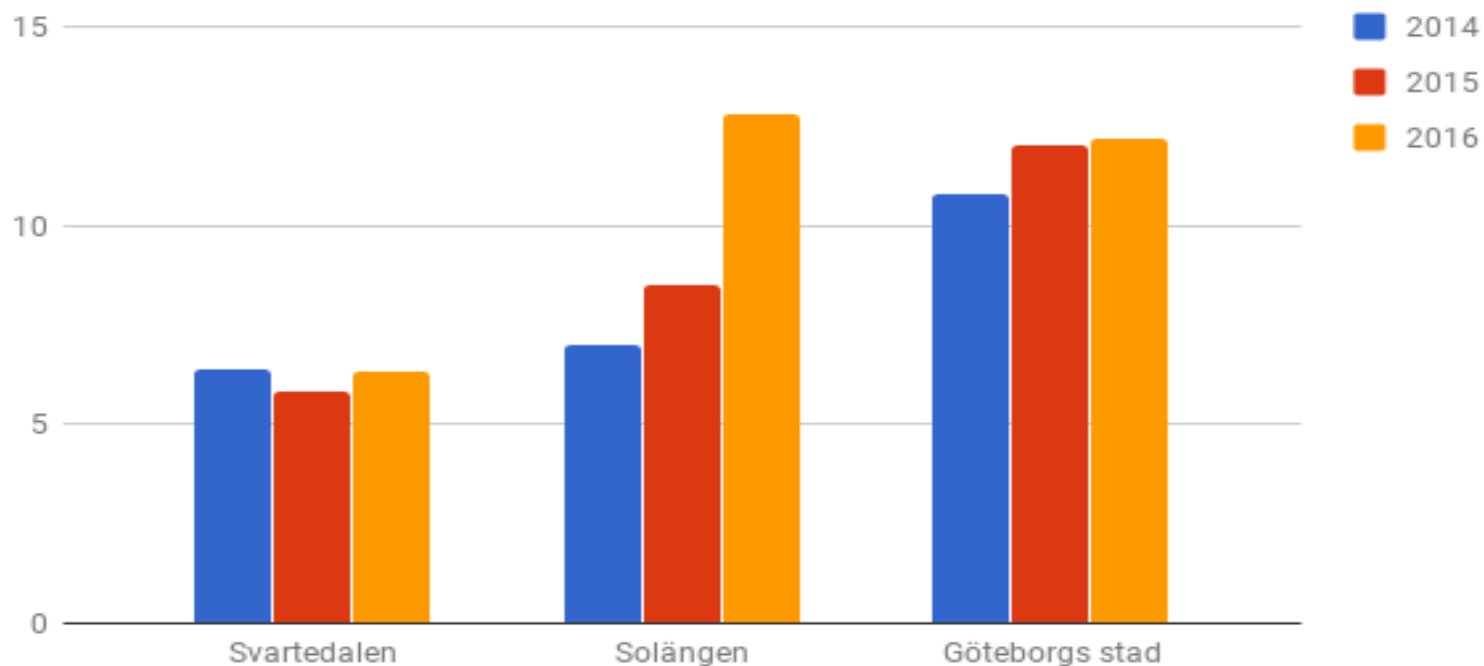
Women work on average 84%

Blue stack = Part-time salary  
Red stack = Full-time salary



# Försöket i Svartedalen bröt den negativa utvecklingen.

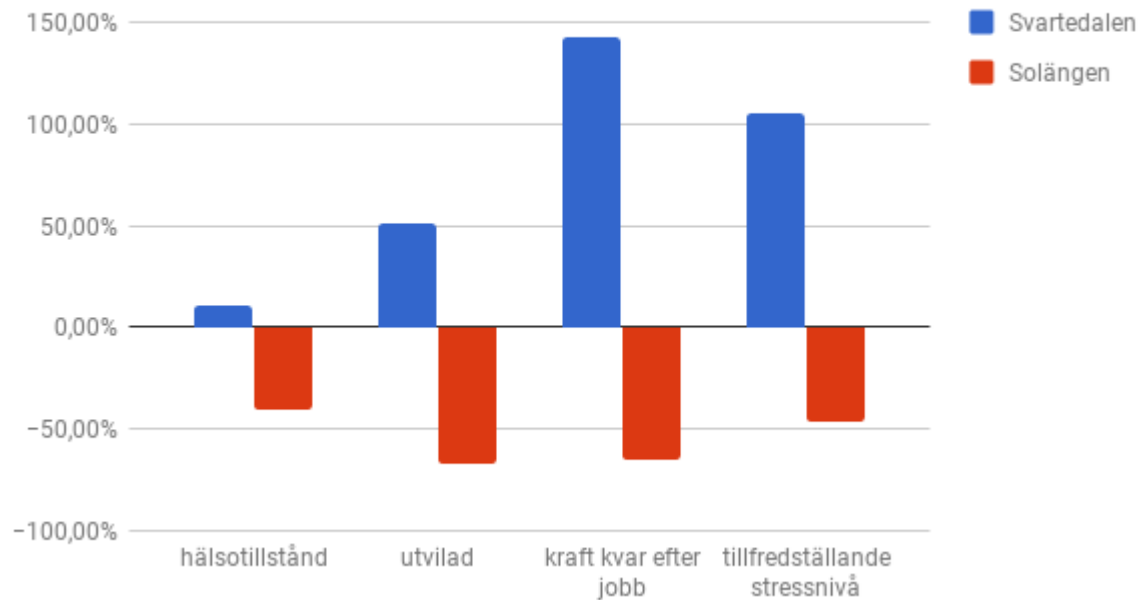
2014, 2015 och 2016



# Health

After 23 months.

Svartedalen och Solängen



# Lowered stress och increased productivity

- After 6 and 12 months. 60 % more activities for the elderly dweller compared to the other
- After 18 months there are 80% more activities at Svartedalen.







# Other swedish examples

**Toyota:** In 2002 Toyota service center went from working eight to six hours with same wage. They implemented the reform to increase the efficiency. Instead of running the machines eight hours, they now run twelve hours. Since they went from eight to six hours they reduced the sick leaves and improved the continuity of staff.

**Ortopedic clinic:** In an orthopedic clinic in Sweden, who earlier had big problems with low continuity of staff and high sick leaves, now implemented 6 hour workday. Now they radically have improved the work environment and shorten the queue to operations as well.

**Kiruna:** Kiruna (a Swedish municipality) implemented 6 hour workday in their elder home care. It lasted for 16 years and got much attention and gave inspiration to many other municipalities to do try the same.

# Argument

- If both men and women work full time, the possibility of an equal division of work in the home increases.
- If men and women share responsibility at home, workers' incentives are reduced to discriminate against women.
- The full-time worker receives better sickness benefit, better retirement and the chance of financial independence.



We  
have  
done  
it  
before



Lördag förmiddag, 1973



Torsdag eftermiddag, 2022

We  
can  
do  
it  
again!

Vi har gjort det förut.  
**6 timmars  
arbetsdag**

1973 förkortades normalarbetstiden från sex dagar per vecka till fem. Innan dess var det helt normalt att arbeta på lördagar. Högern och näringslivet försökte skrämmas med prognoser om ekonomisk kollaps. Men vi lyckades då, och vi ska lyckas igen.



# Manus 6 hour workday

## Bild 1:

- Thank you
- My name is Ana Süssner Rubin and I am chairman of the Swedish left party in Skåne. Today I am going to talk about our 6 hour workday project.

## Bild 2:

- The idea came to us in 2010 for the first time. My party, the Left party, formed a coalition with the Greens and Social Democrats. We decided that we should find a way to initiate a trial with a six-hour workday. For many reasons it took some years for the trial to start. The project started in 2014 and was in full operation in February of 2015.

## Bild 3:

- The first thing we did was to set a number of goals and what we wanted to study under the project:
- Improve the work environment, improve the health of the staff, translate part-time jobs into full-time jobs and to study the public economy effects.
- For us it has been of huge importance to be able to evaluate the trial.
- The project includes detailed study of the trial.
- These goals can be formulated as hypotheses.
  - o Research questions
    - Quality of care
    - Fiscal effects on the public economy

- The effects on the labour market
- Effects on the staff (physiology, work environment and perceived life opportunities)

#### **Bild 4:**

- Then we came down to a more practical level.
- We chose an elder care unit, with sixty employees plus fourteen new employees just for the project - of course they still got the same wage as if they worked eight hours.
- Important from a feminist perspective. Blue collar women in the public sector (high sick leave, early labour market exit, low pensions)
- We decided to have on-going research in order to be able to evaluate the results of the project.
  - o Interactive experimental research design
    - Interventionist with consistent feed back
    - A second elderly care unit with no intervention for reference
- It started in February 2015, and will run for 2 years. Mainly to get a good ground work for the research.
- The cost, for more employees and research, is approximately 800.000 € / year.

### **Bild 5:**

- We now have preliminary results.
- The report showed that the staff is perceived better health, less stressed and happier. Also the overtimes and sick leaves have been reduced.
- Higher resilience against physical and psychological stress
- The healthier and happier staff also gave a positive impact on the elders as well who received better care.
- When we looked at the costs they of course increased 25% because of hiring new staff. But when we reviewed the effects on the public economy we also saw economical benefits. Those benefits was partly due to lower unemployment and partly due to lower sick leave. That negated half the cost. So the actual effect was around 10-12%.

### **Bild 6:**

- Besides from improving the work environment and the elderly care. The project also has worked as an influence of public opinion.

### **Bild 7:**

- We need to change our attitude and view of work as we see it today.
  - o In Sweden we've had a national government agenda to increase the work hours in the economy. Increasing labour market participation. Quite successfully.
  - o But the backlash seems to be coming already with higher labour market exit through sick leave and early retirement.

- Because the increase in economical/moral incentives wasn't matched by a better work environment rather the opposite.
- We need to change our attitude and look at new solutions and innovations at the labor market.
- We need to think of the labour market not only in short-term economical senses but in how to create a sustainable work life.
- Increasing the amount of labour participation without including factors of the actual work environment and its effects risk being devastating in the long run.
- 

#### **Bild 8:**

- It requires facts, hence we run this project with on-going research to show the effects of reduces working hours.
- For our perspective it about creating a sustainable work life.
- There is bounty of research on economical factors in work life but very little on experimental data on labour studies of care workers.
- We know that care worker leave the labour market early due to bad health and poor work enviroment.
- Feminist scholars also concluded that the effects it has on women's financial status is detrimental. Early retirement leads to lower pensions. Lower pensions makes women as group poorer and more dependent on their spouse. Disempowering women working in the public sector.

#### **Bild 9:**

- Also, that we communicate what is happening in the project, and of course the results. In order to spread good examples and best practice.
- This is a very small trial, but it has opened a door into a new discourse in Sweden. Moving away from just focusing on economical factor and towards a more complete analysis om work life.
- Opening the door to talk about the broader aspects without it being anti-growth or being discarded as an utopian dream.

#### **Bild 10:**

- This trial has been a good opinion-maker and shown that many people wants to improve their working situation as well as their living situation.
- Life is not work and work is not life.
- The opposing political parties have had to accept the fact that this is a serious attempt att looking at a more sustainable work life which has resonated well with public opinion.
- Chainging how we think about work life

#### **Bild 11:**

- And of course the major breakthrough in the international media helped a lot. Magazines like Washington Post or Al Jazeera has great influence.
- The fact that interest from throughout the world has been so massive I think tlles something about work life in general. Not just in Europe.



- Lots of people hunger for a more sustainable work life and is looking for other things in life than a higher increase of real wages.
- It has reopened a discussion if all growth really has focus on increasing capital whether it be wages or profits.

### **Bild 12:**

- It has been over ten similar projects in Sweden.
- Often in sectors with high sick leaves
- None of them with on-going evaluation or research, like the project in Gothenburg

### **Bild 13:**

**Toyota:** In 2002 Toyota service center went from working eight to six hours with same wage. They implemented the reform to increase the efficiency. Instead of running the machines eight hours, they now run twelve hours. Since they went from eight to six hours they reduced the sick leaves and improved the continuity of staff.

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### **Bild 15:**

**Kiruna:** Kiruna (a Swedish municipality) implemented 6 hour workday in their elder home care. It lasted for 16 years and got much attention and gave inspiration to many other municipalities

to do try the same. Unfortunately with no evaluation or on-going research.

**Bild 16:**

We also got indications that several new reforms and projects will start. For instance the city Eskilstuna, Östersund, Skellefteå and others in Sweden will start a similar project as the one in Gothenburg.

**Bild 17:**

We're not finished analyzing the results from this project but we've instituted a fund for the cities workplaces from which they can apply to do work time innovations project for 2017.

We'll probably see an example in Gothenburg with social workers in the upcoming year.

The huge interested shows that there is much to discuss and different way of approaching work time reductions. From a labour protection perspective, a feminist perspective or efficiency perspective. There is huge possibility in European level to learn from each other and what different factors that can be successful in a specific labour market. So the spreading and discussing of good ideas is an important lesson we've learned.

**Bild 18:**

We get many questions about what will happen next. Whether or not we will implement 6 hour work day in the whole municipality.

But for six hours to become the working norm, it requires a decision on national level. We run this project to show that it is possible to reduce the working hours with good results both from a fiscal and social perspective.

I hope we're in the beginning of a paradigm shift about which solutions we apply to labour market problems. Why else would a trial with six hours workday in small city, in a small country in the outskirts of nowhere create such an international stirr.

Instead of asking for more we're asking for sustainability. To make work smart and better not just more.

**Bild 19: (Tänd lampa!)**

Thank you for listening!