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Volumes

Articles

Special Collections

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Information for Authors

Copyright Information

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Childbearing dynamics of couples in a universalistic welfare state

The role of labor-market status, country of origin, and gender

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Abstract

This article studies childbearing dynamics by labor-market status of co-residing parents in Sweden. We apply event-history techniques to longitudinal register data on the life histories of foreign-born mothers from ten different countries and the partners to these women, as well as to a sample of Swedish-born mothers and their partners. The context is a universalistic welfare state geared towards gender and social equality where formal social rights are largely independent of a person's civil status, citizenship, and country of origin. We investigate the extent to which the associations of parents' labor-market status with childbearing in Sweden differ between women and men and by country of origin. We find that the patterns of association are fairly similar on both of these individual dimensions. As measured by the way the labor-market activity of parents is related to their subsequent childbearing, we find evidence of equality by gender and at least some evidence of integration of immigrants into the dynamics of Swedish society.

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[[Back to previous page](#)]