



När män möts som pappor

Fadrandets politik och praktik i det jämställda och
pappavänliga Sverige

av

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract

Tobias K. Axelsson (2019): When men meet as fathers. The politics and practice of fathering in the gender-equal and father-friendly Sweden. Örebro Studies in Gender Research 4.

This thesis analyses how fathering is done and how fathers are constructed through the separate organising of men as fathers in meeting places for fathers on parental leave in Sweden. The study is located within the Swedish gender regime, characterised by its dual-earner/dual-carer model, progressive parenthood and daddy politics, and universally-oriented parenting support, making it a relatively gender-equal and father-friendly society.

Theoretically and methodologically, the thesis draws on a feminist perspective. It uses ‘doing gender’ theory, and is informed by critical realism. The material is based on 25 observations at two fathering spaces, seven semi-structured interviews with fathers, and six policy documents on parenting support. Qualitative content analysis is used to analyse the material.

The findings show: first, meeting places for fathers on parental leave can be understood as fathering spaces. Second, these fathering spaces are child-oriented settings and constitute somewhat of an exception within gender-neutral gender regimes. Third, fathering spaces function as transitional sites in which fathers manage different aspects of responsibility and relations to their own selves, to children, to mothers, and to other fathers. Fourth, three approaches to separate organising of men as fathers are identified: a) anti-separate; b) pro-separate; and c) gender paradoxical. The identified arguments for separate organising can be located along two parallel continua: one that stretches from individual to collective argumentation, and another that stretches from general to gender-specific argumentation.

The thesis contributes to research on childcare and masculinities, and fathers’ experiences of parental leave, and to knowledge about separate organising of men as fathers. It also contributes to research and policy debates on daddy politics and parenting support by critically discussing fathering in terms of autonomy, dependence, and masculinity politics.

Keywords: fathering spaces, men as fathers, gender equality, parental leave, parenting support, daddy politics, autonomy, dependence, masculinity politics, Sweden

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