

Compare how the structural functional and conflict theories would explain the gro...

[Family](#)



Sweden VS US in social programs It has been often discussed by the contemporaries, why citizens in Sweden have such kind of favorable social governmental programs. Though the number of Swedish population is much less than in the USA, it is believed that being Swedish or just have a right to live in Sweden is more prestigious than living in the USA (Haanes-Olsen, 1994). A social welfare system is beneficial for the citizens of Sweden. Thus, it is available for Swedish parents to get a paid maternity or paternity leave, or to get the best health care, be protected by sick leave and pensions. For this purpose, it is beneficial for citizens to pay higher taxes in order to leave under more favorable living conditions. Though one may argue that the same benefits are available for American citizens, it should be noted that “parents are entitled to a total of 480 days' paid leave at 80% of a government-determined salary cap between birth and the child's eighth birthday. The parents may split those days however they wish, but 60 of the days are reserved specifically for the father. The parents may also take an additional 5 months of unpaid leave” (Ozawa 2004, p. 3). As far as we can see, parents have not only benefits and advantages of taking care after their children supported by the Swedish government, but they also have some options to make the best choice for their families. Thus, Swedish government governs, but it does not restrict citizen's possibilities and does not obtrude severe regulations on them. This government has reached such incredible results after equal “redistribution, through taxes and benefits, and public services provided by a big state” (Sim 1999, p. 43). Nevertheless, social welfare programs also exist in the US. These are: “the child tax credit, the dependent care tax credit, the tax credit for college expenses, and unpaid

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family leave. Yet, the United States has not developed a coherent family policy, nor is it spending enough to improve the economic conditions of American families” (Sim 1999, p. 45). On the contrary, unlike the institutional approach of America to the development of welfare programs focused on the issues of unemployment, disability etc, and Swedish government is focused on the Swedish families. These are not an “ indivisible unit” for them. A family for Swedish government and any kind of help developed for Swedish families are focused on each parent separately. It concerns allowances paid to a parent who lives with a child, a facilitation of working conditions for parents with children etc. Therefore, it is relevant for American government to reconsider family policies and develop them in a broader context taking into account different factors and not only family income. It is necessary to pay attention to the peculiarities of parental and child’s needs within different families and try to help every member of the family and not only to a child, like the US government has been acting for many years.

Notwithstanding that the number of Swedish population is much less than in the USA, it is believed that being Swedish or just have a right to live in Sweden is more prestigious than living in the USA. To take care and to “ regulate” are quite different things and Swedish government understands this. We see that parents have not only benefits and advantages of taking care after their children supported by the Swedish government, but they also have some options to make the best choice for their families. Swedish government governs, but it does not restrict citizen’s possibilities and does not obtrude severe regulations on them. Swedish government really pays much attention to life of families, their welfare. Therefore, there is a

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necessity for American government to take Swedish social welfare programs as an example. In order to make social programs more beneficial for the citizens, it is necessary to take into account the urgent needs and individual peculiarities of the nation. A voice of a citizen should be heard by the government and be reflected in the policies and social programs of any country. Works cited 1. Haanes-Olsen, Leif. " Far-reaching Social Security Pension Reform Proposed in Sweden." *Social Security Bulletin* 57. 2 (1994): 82+. Questia. Web. 8 June 2011. 2. Ozawa, Martha N. " Social Welfare Spending on Family Benefits in the United States and Sweden: a Comparative Study." *Family Relations* 53. 3 (2004): 301+. Questia. Web. 8 June 2011. 3. Sim, Joann. " Improving Return-to-work Strategies in the United States Disability Programs, with Analysis of Program Practices in Germany and Sweden." *Social Security Bulletin* 62. 3 (1999): 41+. Questia. Web. 8 June 2011.