

## Two-generation gender equality study shows career benefits for men

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Couples in a research experiment launched in the 1970s shared the responsibility for home, family and work equally. Now, 30 years later, a follow-up study by Swedish researchers at Örebro University shows that the couples' strive for equality was beneficial not only for the family life but also for the fathers' careers. Despite this their sons, now themselves parents, have not chosen the same path.

"Patterns do not pass on to the next generation as easily as we might have believed," said Margunn Bjørnholt, researcher in gender Studies at Örebro University.

The Work-Sharing Couples project, led by the Norwegian sociologist Erik Grønseth, involved 16 couples all living in Norway. Both partners worked part-time, spent the same amount of time at home and shared the [household tasks](#) equally.

"The participating couples reveal that this has been good for their relationship and for the family as a whole," said Margunn Bjørnholt.

"On top of that the men did not feel that the change has had any negative effect on their work, even though they went against the flow and worked less hours than other men. On the contrary they thought it had been beneficial, because the responsibility they took at home was highly valued in the workplace."

## Positive effects

Margunn Bjørnholt's research shows that the time the fathers spent at home was viewed as management experience. Despite the positive effects for family life and career, however, the follow-up study shows that the second generation, the participants' sons, have not chosen the same kind of life.

They are now parents themselves and live in what Margunn Bjørnholt refers to as neo-traditional families. In these families both parents work and both take responsibility at home. But the woman takes more responsibility for the family and the man focuses to a greater extent on work outside the home.

"Like father, like son is not the case in this instance. The surrounding society, structures as well as social and historical conditions play a decisive role."

Provided by Örebro University

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