

Work-life balance in the Nordic countries and impact upon gender diversity

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In the Nordic countries the society/government is committed to various initiatives regarding work-life balance. These activities can include amongst other things paid sick leave and parental leave, vacation benefits, less-time options and flexible work schedules, health care, and day care for children mainly paid through general taxes. On a wider scale the European Union promotes and encourages its member states to implement family-friendly policies. However, the options to create a better environment for work-life balance vary tremendously across Europe and partly reflect cultural factors, which influence why and how much we work, and who works in the family.

We will discuss the activities found in the Nordic countries that contribute to a work-life balance. We will also explore the hypothesis that countries with better work-life options, such as found in the Nordic countries, have more successful women scientists. The key performance indicator will be a comparison of submission and success rates by women that have applied to the European Research Council (ERC). While work-life balance is an important component of achieving a better working environment, there are likely other important reasons that contribute to the employment and the success rates of women in obtaining research funding.

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