

University of Washington Tacoma

UW Tacoma Digital Commons

Gender & Sexuality Studies Student Work
Collection

School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

Fall 2019

A Nordic Progression: Making Way Toward Gender Equality

Rachel Y. Thorsness

University of Washington Tacoma

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gender_studies



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Thorsness, Rachel Y., "A Nordic Progression: Making Way Toward Gender Equality" (2019). *Gender & Sexuality Studies Student Work Collection*. 42.

https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gender_studies/42

This Undergraduate Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at UW Tacoma Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gender & Sexuality Studies Student Work Collection by an authorized administrator of UW Tacoma Digital Commons.



BY: RACHEL THORSNESS

A NORDIC PROGRESSION: MAKING WAY TOWARD
GENDER EQUALITY



The Nordic countries frequently top the list of the 144 countries in the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap Support.

HOW DID THESE 5 NORDIC COUNTRIES GET THERE?

- **Subsidized childcare promotes economic growth:** Childcare is available to all children regardless of family social status or financial situation.
- **Shared leave promotes equality:** Both mothers and fathers are entitled to take paid paternal leave. This has encouraged parents to divide leave time equally. Fathers in the region spend more time on parental leave than the average in the rest of the world.
- **Equal representation in the workplace:** Multiple policies have been launched to encourage equal opportunities at work.
- **Flexible work schedules:** Having a flexible schedule to successfully combine work and family life.

HERE ARE SOME FACTS:

- The Nordic countries have replaced the male breadwinner model with the dual-earner model.
- 74% of women in Nordic countries work.
- 61% of those with higher education qualifications are women.
- In the Nordic Region, ensuring that both parents are able to combine work with raising a family is a policy priority. Both mothers and fathers receive paid paternal leave from work.

Source: Knowledge hub: The Nordic Gender Effect at Work.

EVEN THOUGH WAGE DISCREPENCIES IN NORDIC COUNTRIES STILL PERSIST, THEY ARE CONSISTENTLY DECLINING.

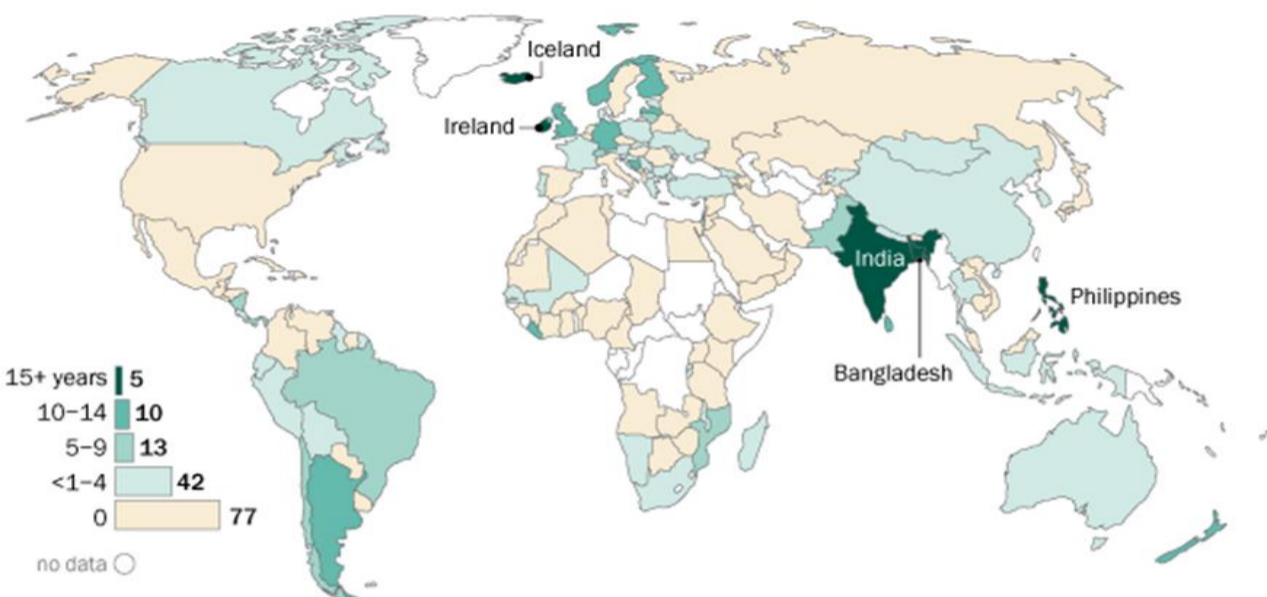


All Nordic countries have closed over 80% of the gender gap. Iceland has closed 87%

(Rowley, 2018)

Most of the world's nations have never had a female leader

Years served by female heads of state or government, 1964-2017



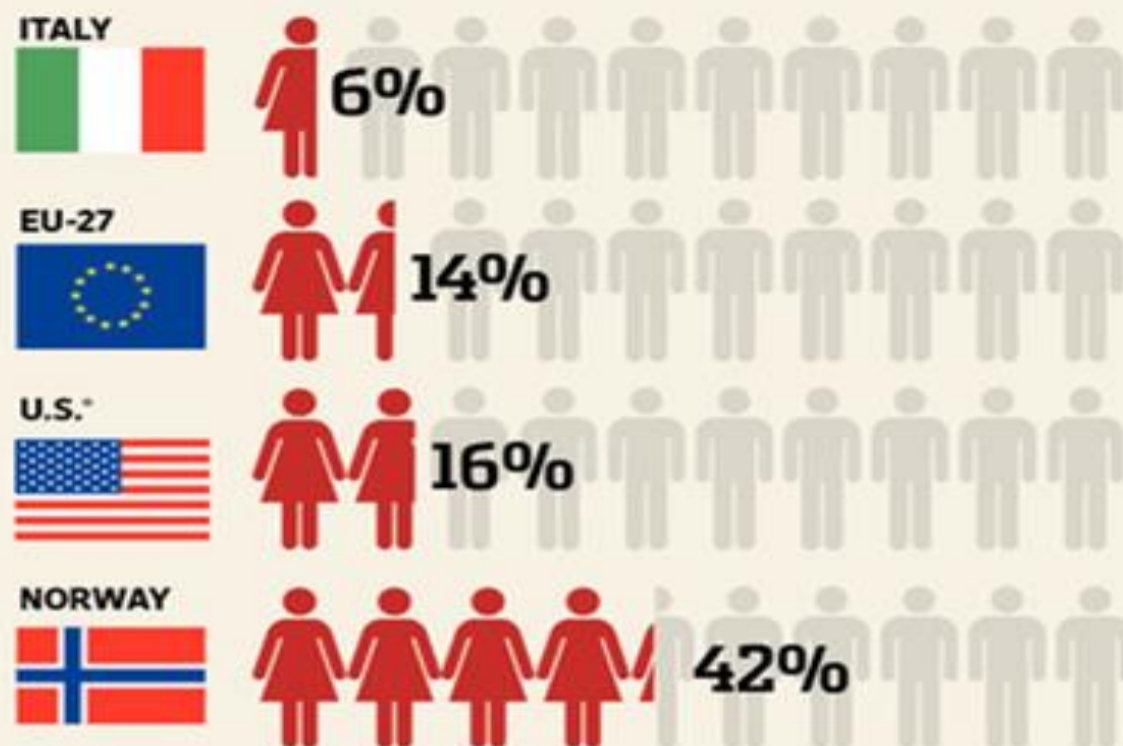
Note: Figures are through March 8, 2017. The data are limited to heads of state and heads of government, excluding figurehead leaders and monarchs. Data available only for the 146 countries included in the World Economic Forum's 2014 and 2016 Global Gender Gap reports and the Marshall Islands. Included in the <1-4 years category are Austria, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Canada, Ecuador, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Macedonia, Madagascar, Mongolia, Portugal and South Africa, each of which had a female leader for less than a year.

Source: World Economic Forum calculations, Pew Research Center analysis.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Female Representation

Percentage of women on the boards of the largest listed companies in January 2012



Source: European Commission

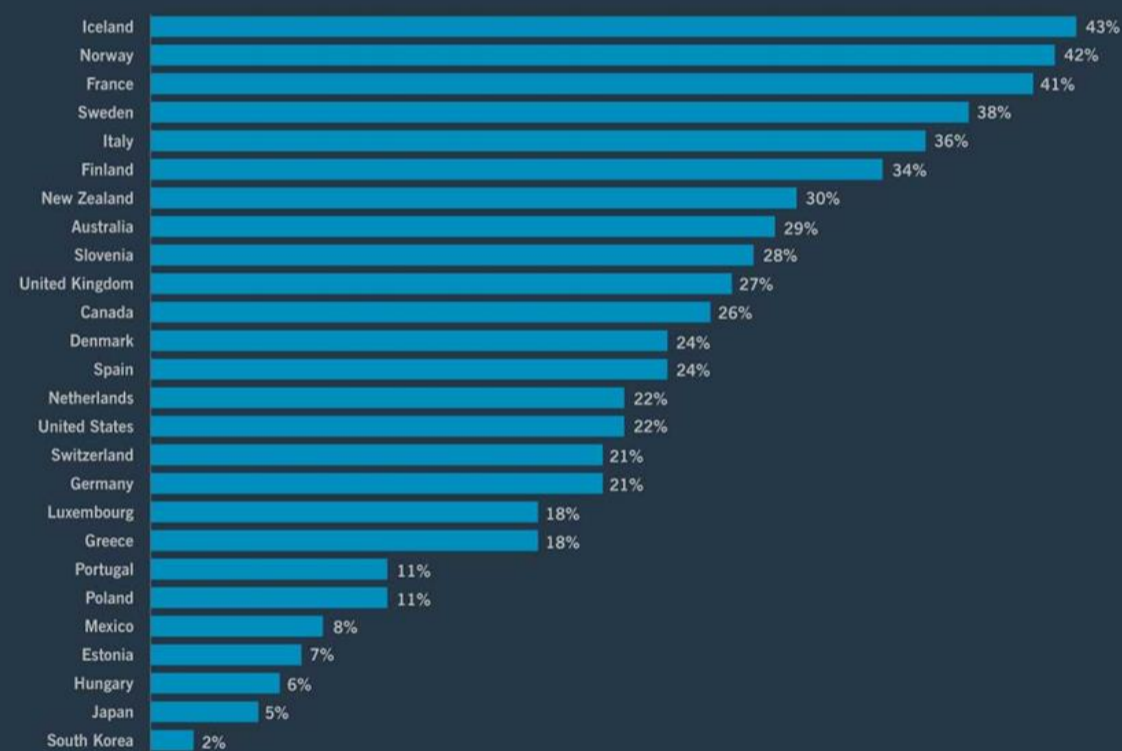
* Last data available is from 2010

NORDIC VS. THE UNITED STATES

- The World Economic Forum (2018) ranked The United States 51st in terms of gender equality.
- In Denmark, more than 78% of women ages 18-24 are in the labor force, compared to only about 69% in the United States.
- When more men take paternity leave, it will help eliminate bias and normalize parenting in the workplace. **The U.S. still does not have mandatory parental leave.**
- In Iceland, companies and organizations with at least 25 full-time employees must obtain government certification proving their pay policies are based on factors such as education, skills and performance, not gender. The United States does not.
- Nordic families with children spend **approximately 10% of net income on childcare**. In countries where childcare is significantly more expensive, it is not always economically viable for both parents to go out to work. In the U.S. it is 26% of income.
- In the 2003 Swedish Election, more than 45% of the parliamentarians who were elected were women. This contrasts with the United States where women only hold 14% of congressional seats.

Figure 6: After winning the numbers game it's all about power

The countries with the most women in the boardroom

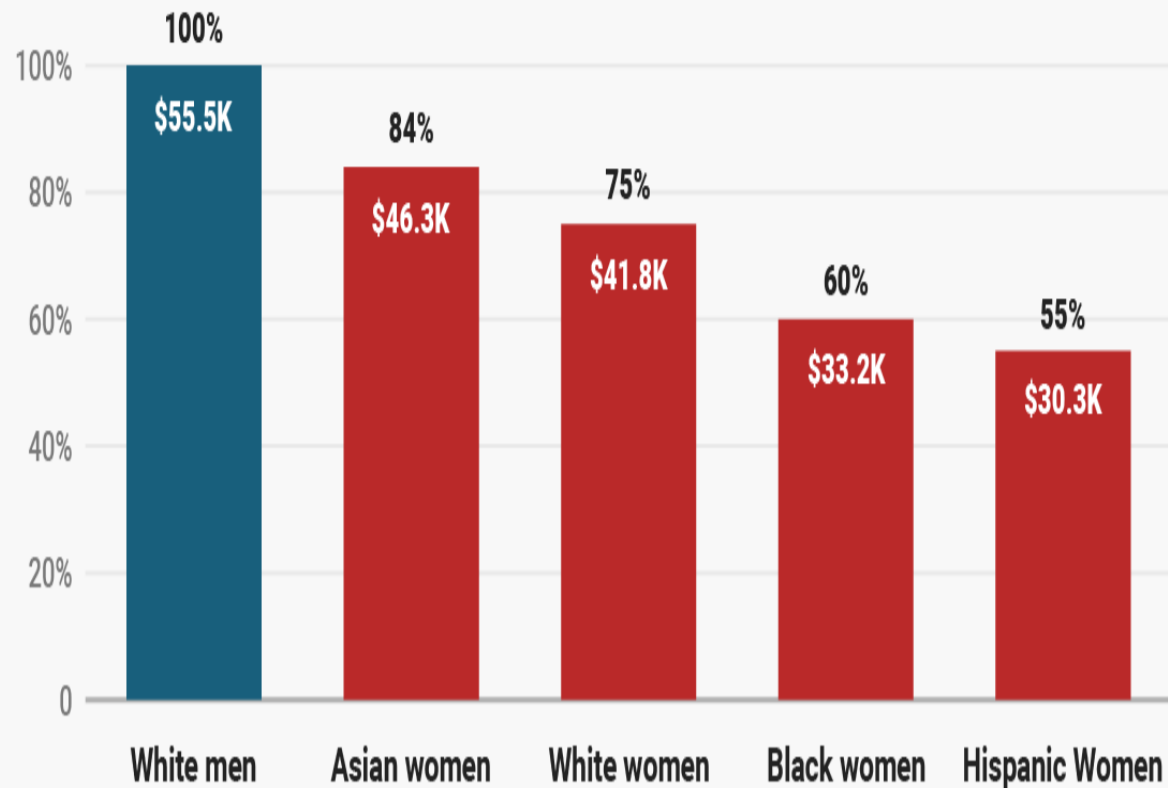


Source: PWC, 2019

Here is a look at nations around the world and females that hold leadership positions. These charts continue to show the discrepancies between Nordic countries and the rest of the world.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE UNITED STATES

WOMEN'S ANNUAL EARNINGS COMPARED TO WHITE MEN'S

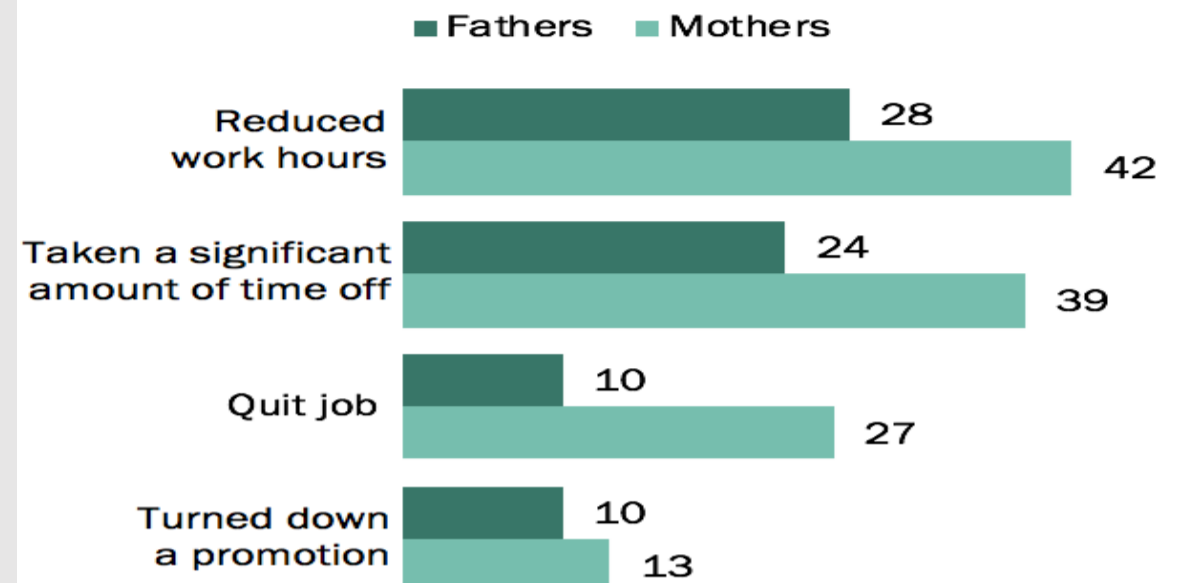


SOURCE: JEC.senate.gov; U.S Census Bureau

BUSINESS INSIDER

Mothers, more than fathers, experience career interruptions

% of fathers/mothers saying they have done each of the following in order to care for a child or family member



Note: Based on those who have ever worked and have children of any age, including adult children.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 7-27, 2013.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The gender gap in The United States continues to persist. Regardless of the narrowing numbers, America falls behind in gender equality in comparison to the northern region. According to the 2016 Census Bureau Data, women earn 81.8% of what their male counterpart earns. Although we have seen a rise in recent history, it seems that only 2% of that rise occurred between the years of 2007 and 2016 (Berman, 2018). As you can see in the data shown above, when annual earnings are divided by race, an even bigger disparity has become apparent. Combined with motherhood, the discrepancies continue.

39% of men DO NOT believe there is a gender wage gap compared to the 83% of women that do!

(Ellevest Team, 2018).

1. 10 facts about gender equality. (n.d.). Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://www.norden.org/en/information/10-facts-about-gender-equality>
This site is helpful in providing facts and statistics to my audience. I was given the idea in these 10 facts on how to compare Nordic countries to the United States.
2. Berman. (2018, October 05). How is the gender pay gap calculated? Retrieved November 14, 2019, from <https://bigthink.com/robby-berman/the-frustratingly-persistent-united-states-pay-gap>
I used this article to break down what the data shows in the United States. To truly understand the discrepancy, I wanted to give background information on all countries before doing the comparison.
3. Carterm, S. (2018, January 09). In the US, unlike in Iceland, it's still ok to pay a woman less than a man-here's why. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/01/09/in-the-us-unlike-iceland-its-still-ok-to-pay-women-less-heres-why.html>
I wanted to give an idea of how Nordic countries compare to the U.S. I wanted to use all five countries in comparison to the United States. I searched each Nordic country individually to pull statistics on how they differ from America.
4. Ellevest Team. (2018). Ellevest Launches 2018 Money Census Report. Retrieved November 14, 2019, from <https://www.ellevest.com/magazine/news/ellevest-launches-2018-money-census-report>
I wanted to incorporate a closer look into the differences in the United States. Along with my comparison of the two regions, I wanted to dive deeper into America and what men and women think.
5. Global Gender Forum. (2018, December 17). The Global Gender Gap Report 2018. Retrieved November 14, 2019, from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018>
The sole purpose of using this report for my project was to state what the United States was ranked in gender equality.
6. Hodgson. (2018, September 06). What the world can learn about equality from the Nordic model. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://sciencenordic.com/economics-researcher-zone-society-culture/what-the-world-can-learn-about-equality-from-the-nordic-model/1458593>
I chose this article to give myself a better idea of what the United States can learn from the Nordic countries. We are a developed nation and it is frustrating that we do not have similar policies that reflect equality.
7. Knowledge hub: The nordic gender effect at work. (n.d.). Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://www.norden.org/en/information/knowledge-hub-nordic-gender-effect-work>
I used this site to explain further on how Nordic countries are closer to reaching equality. It points out some of the key factors that are needed to explain the differences in these Nordic countries.
8. Moore, G. (2011). Fast track in other wealthy nations. In J. Z. Spade (Author), *The kaleidoscope of gender: Prisms, patterns, and possibilities* (pp. 394-397). Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press.
The Gwen Moore reading is what originally brought my attention to the progression in Nordic countries. I can use this article to make comparisons to the United States. It also gives brief descriptions on how Nordic countries differ.
9. Nikel, D. (2018, December 18). Norway ranks second for gender equality. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://www.lifeinnorway.net/gender-equality/>
I used this site to better understand how gender equality/inequality is scored on global ranking systems. I learned that it is scored on four categories. Economic participation and opportunities, education, health and survival, and political participation.
10. OECD. (2018). Is the Last Mile the Longest? Economic Gains from Gender Equality in Nordic Countries. Retrieved November 11, 2019, from <https://www.oecd.org/els/emp/last-mile-longest-gender-nordic-countries-brief.pdf>
This report is beneficial for my visual project because of its break down in the Nordic approach. It shows that gender equity contributes to economic growth. However, as Nordic countries get closer to closing the gap entirely, it seems that the remainder will have very little effect on GDP growth.
11. Rowley, M. (2018, March 09). What America can learn From Iceland about gender equality. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/melissarowley/2018/03/08/what-america-can-learn-from-iceland-about-gender-equality/#486555e36bf8>
I used this article to find facts specific to Iceland. Each of the 5 Nordic countries lead in gender equality. I want to show specific policies about the top 4 to show what needs change in the United States.
12. Zahidi, S. (2014, January 23). What Makes the Nordic Countries Gender Equality Winners? Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-makes-the-nordic-cou_b_4159555
This Huffington Post article is useful in my project for two reasons. It further breaks down education and women. The article states that there is 1.5 women attending a university for every male. This article also speaks of how Nordic countries lead in women who are in parliament.
13. Zalis, S. (2018, October 31). Lessons From The World's Most Gender-Equal Countries. Retrieved November 11, 2019, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelleyzalis/2018/10/30/lessons-from-the-worlds-most-gender-equal-countries/#44044b897dd8>
This is an article published by Forbes. It is useful to my visual project because it talks about specific policies throughout the Nordic countries that contribute to their movement toward gender equality. Policies such as fines for wage gaps, paid mandatory paternal leave, flexible schedules, and affordable childcare all contribute to a closing wage gap. There is also statistics that can be compared to the gender inequality in the United States.