

Title: Career and family. Does outsourcing household work matter?

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Despite the traditionally generous family policies in Scandinavian welfare states, few new initiatives have been introduced to alleviate the pressures of paid and unpaid work over the past decades. This 'double burden' of paid and unpaid work, particularly impacting women, can impact economic, demographic, and social outcomes. It becomes heavier as societies are faced by an ageing population. Moreover, socioeconomic groups may be affected differently.

The RUT and ROT reforms can be seen as an indirect family policy as they may help to relieve the double burden. These reforms allow tax deductions for outsourced household and maintenance work. Since their implementation – in 2007 and 2009 respectively – they have grown steadily in terms of the number of individuals using the deductions and the cost they incur to the state. Yet, there is little research on their impacts. One study identifies an effect of RUT on women's labor market outcomes. Beyond paid work, we have limited insights into the role of these reforms in relieving the burden of unpaid work and its division across household members and socioeconomic groups.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the characteristics of ROT and RUT users and their outcomes in terms of paid and unpaid work. We examine the distribution of ROT/RUT usage across different socioeconomic and gender groups 2007-2022. We then describe how ROT/RUT usage is gendered differently by socioeconomic status, and compare the outcomes of users and non-users. Our analysis is based on individual-level longitudinal register-based covering all Swedes.