

TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING. Studies in the economic life of women in interwar Sweden. (Publications of the Department of Economic History, School of Economics and Commercial Law, Göteborg University, no 90)

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Studies of the emerging economic roles of women have been dominated by the Anglo-American discourse. Female experiences of economic life in these countries are often interpreted as universal. This dissertation argues that institutional arrangements particular to specific societies generate different outcomes. It is argued that the specific Swedish historical context shaped the economic lives of Swedish women in ways decisively different from the Anglo-American experience.

Trying To Make A Living investigates the influence of demographic conditions; such as rising nuptiality and falling nativity, for generating processes that encouraged the emergence of Swedish women into full economic citizenship as articulated through increased female market participation.

Using gender as a central concept and drawing on a quantitative approach to analyse primary archival materials, the study focuses on how demographic change affected gender conditions in the contested terrain of the labour market, as well as the institutions governing it. The dissertation finds general support for the instrumental role of demography in generating processes that challenged the gender order and by extension the division of labour, however the strength of these processes varied in time and place and among specific categories of women.

KEYWORDS: collective agreements, demography, discrimination, economic growth, gender, gender order, income, institutions, interwar years, labour market participation, occupations, standard of living, Sweden, trade unions, women.