

Contesting Motherhood in Contemporary Swedish Society: Literary, Medical and Media Narratives

What does motherhood mean today in a society with an advanced but negotiated welfare system? The question is intimately related to notions of gender equality and welfare regimes, and the aim of the project is to examine multiple narratives with Sweden as a case study. The key research question is: "What does motherhood mean in a welfare state within a global context"? The dominant discourse references middle-class, ethnic Swedes and is accompanied by the image of the dedicated mother immersed in caring for her child. It renders invisible other maternity standards that reflect contemporary transformations. Multicultural Sweden exists in a global environment with considerable immigration levels. Factors such as cultural discrimination and diverse family structures need to be recognized. The project involves collaboration between researchers in medicine, literature and gender studies. It will deal with a wide range of sources: literary fiction, life writing, biographical texts, and web-based blogs.

Contact:

Professor Anna Williams

e-mail: anna.williams@littvet.uu.se

Professor Margaretha Fahlgren

e-mail: margaretha.fahlgren@littvet.uu.se