Short Paper: Swedish Daddies

The ability to take time off with a new baby, foster child or adopted child without fear of losing your job is important. Many organizations today now recognize that employees should not have to make a choice between focusing solely on their career or having children and building a family. This requires integration of work and family roles. No employee should lose momentum in their career because of the necessity of taking time out of the workforce for a biological child, adopted child or foster child placement. This activity asks that you explore the legal and ethical implications of work/family integration.

Begin by reading *Case 9.5: Swedish Daddies* on pages 360-362 of your textbook.

Next, read and reflect upon the following in preparation for composing a case analysis:

* Should special organizational arrangements be made for workers who wish to combine career and child rearing? If so, identify the steps that companies can take to accommodate parental needs more effectively.
* Does a firm have an obligation to give employees the flexibility to work out the particular balance of career and family that is right for them? Or does this go beyond the social responsibilities of business?
* Can paid parental leave make sense from a business point of view?
* Can paid parental leave make business sense if viewed through the lens of an ethical theory or theories?
* Consider the need to create an organizational policy to address this issue. What would a policy need to look like to support your view of the ethical situation?

Then, develop your case analysis using the following five sections:

* **Section 1: Introduction and situational analysis**. Describe the ethical dilemma, giving appropriate background information. The term “dilemma” implies that there are pros and cons to various options, even if some are clearly more socially acceptable than others. This is also where you do your situational analysis – identify factors related to the individual(s) involved (consider the readings from this module), company and managerial practices and policies, external factors such as economic pressure, and any other aspects of the situation that you believe helped create the dilemma. Do not tell the story of the chosen case, instead spend time on pulling out the relevant points that form the main thrust of the ethical dilemma.
* **Section 2: Stakeholder analysis**. Identify the key stakeholders and how they are potentially impacted by the various options in the dilemma. Note that stakeholder analysis is particularly pertinent to the consequentialist approach, and that one of the challenges is in estimating positive and negative impacts on relevant stakeholders. Do the best you can, looking at both good and bad consequences for each stakeholder group. Make sure you summarize the overall situation and come to a conclusion about the greater good.
* **Section 3: Analysis based on ethical theories**. Analyze the ethical dilemma using a relevant theoretical perspective, including, but not limited to ,cultural relativism (how it relates to cultural norms – what society would view as acceptable, as well as what is legal), teleology (looking at consequences and acting for the greater good), deontology (duties and principles), and virtue.
* **Section 4: Conclusion and recommendation**s. Up to now, you have been analyzing and comparing options. Here is where you pull together the different threads of your analysis and determine whether or not the company or individual did the right thing. Also, make recommendations about what should have been done. Make sure your justifications clearly flow from your analysis. Make managerial and policy recommendations that would help avoid similar ethical dilemmas in the future and provide guidance to help those facing a similar dilemma.
* **Section 5: References**. List at least three sources (other than the articles provided, your text, or the case article) where you located additional information about the company and the associated ethical dilemma(s).

**General guidance**: Include a title page, and label the five sections. Your paper should be 2 to 3 pages in length, not including the title and reference pages. All citations should be in APA 6th Edition format. Double space your paper, and use Times New Roman, 12-point font, with one inch margins.

CASE 9.5Swedish Daddies

Years ago, the famous economist Paul Samuelson quipped that “women are just men with less money.” He was referring to the financially dependent position of women at that time, when they were unlikely to be employed outside the home and, if they were, were likely to earn substantially less than men. That has now changed for the better. Although women have yet to achieve full equity at the highest levels of business, they constitute nearly half the U.S. workforce, and their pay is not so very far behind that of men. Moreover, with the decline of manufacturing and the growing importance of the service sector in today’s economy, brain power matters more than brawn. Here women can compete as well as men, and they have proved their value to employers over and over again. In fact, they now outnumber men in professional and managerial positions. And with women continuing to graduate from college at a higher rate and in greater numbers than men, their future looks bright.

But for many women there is one continuing source of frustration. They often feel forced to choose between mother- hood and a high-powered career. Jobs that offer the hours and flexibility that suit women with family responsibilities tend to pay less, while the most financially rewarding jobs frequently require brutal hours and total commitment to the job. And the higher you go, the rougher it gets. Not only must those who want to fight their way to the top of the corporate world work long, grueling hours, but they are also often expected to gain experience working in different departments and divisions and even in different countries. That tends to rule out women with family commitments. As a result, women with children, especially single mothers, earn less on average than men do while childless women earn almost as much as men. Over the years, some business writers have argued that we should simply accept this fact and that companies should distinguish between the career-primary woman and the career-and-family woman. Those in the first category put their careers first. They remain single or childless or, if they do have children, are satisfied to have others raise them. The automatic association of all women with babies is unfair to these women, argues Felice N. Schwartz, an organizer and advocate for working women. “The secret to dealing with such women,” she writes, “is to recognize them early, accept them, and clear artificial barriers from their path to the top.” The majority of women, however, fall into the second category. They want to pursue genuine careers while participating actively in the rearing of their children. Most of them, Schwartz and others believe, are willing to trade some career growth and compensation for freedom from the constant pressure to work long hours and weekends. By forcing these women to choose between family and career, companies lose a valuable resource and a competitive advantage. Instead, firms must plan for and man- age maternity, they must provide the flexibility to help career-and-family women be maximally productive, and they must take an active role in providing family support and in making high-quality, affordable child care avail- able to all women. In other words, companies should provide women with the option of a comfortable but slower “mommy track.” Although distinguishing between career-primary women and career-and-family women seems reasonable and humane, there’s rarely any mention of fathers or of shared parental responsibility for raising children. The mommy track idea also takes for granted the existing values, structures, and biases of a corporate world that is still male dominated. As authors Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English write, “Eventually it is the corporate culture itself that needs to slow down to a human pace . . . [and end] workloads that are incompatible with family life.” One country that is trying to push things in a new direction is Sweden. Whereas America stands almost alone in the world in not guaranteeing women paid maternity leave, Sweden provides sixteen months paid leave per child, with the costs shared between the employer and the government. However—and this is what is novel—at least two of these months are reserved for fathers. No father is forced to take baby leave, but the leave is nontransferable so it’s “use it or lose it.” And more and more men are using it. In fact, more than eight in ten Swedish fathers now take advantage of parental leave. And some Swedish politicians are arguing that more months—perhaps half of them—should be exclusively for fathers. Germany has now followed Sweden’s lead. In 2007 it began guaranteeing fathers two months’ paternity leave. No country, however, has gone further toward parental equity than Iceland. It reserves three months of parental leave for the father and three months for the mother and allows parents to share an additional three months. In the meantime, the paternity-leave law is helping to redefine masculinity in Sweden. Take game warden Mikael Karlson. A former soldier who owns a snowmobile, two hunting dogs, and five guns, he’s a man’s man. Cradling his two-month-old baby girl in his arms, he says he cannot imagine not taking parental leave. “Everyone does it.” Not only does his wife agree, but she says that he never looks more attractive to her than “when he is in the forest with his rifle over his shoulder and the baby on his back.” Some men admit that they were unsure of themselves at first— the cooking, cleaning, and sleepless nights—but that they adjusted to it and even liked it. One Swedish father calls it a “life-changing experience.”

“Many men no longer want to be identified just by their jobs,” says Bengt Westerberg, who as deputy prime minister helped to bring the law about. “Many women now expect their husbands to take at least some time off with the children.” “Now men can have it all—a successful career and being a responsible daddy,” adds Birgitta Ohlsson, another government minister. “It’s a new kind of manly. It’s more whole- some.” Some also think the paternity-leave law is the reason that the divorce rate in Sweden has declined in recent years. There are, however, stories of companies’ discouraging men from taking long baby leaves, and managers admit that parental leave can be disruptive. Still, by and large Swedish business has adapted, and many companies find that a family- friendly work environment helps them attract talented employees. “Graduates used to look for big paychecks,” says one human resources manager. “Now they want work–life balance.” Many men in the United States would like a better balance between work life and family life, too. But even when paternity leave is an option, men are reluctant to take it. One reason is the attitude of their colleagues and employers, who tend to believe that, for men, work should come first. And, indeed, a recent study has found that fathers who are active caregivers are seen as distracted and less dedicated and that they are more likely than are so-called traditional fathers to be teased and insulted at work, accused of being “wimpy” or “hen- pecked” by their wives. Because of this or because they do not put their jobs first, they earn lower salaries than do men in traditional breadwinner roles.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS1. If you have, or plan to have, children, what sort of balance do you seek between career and family life? Do you believe that the mindset of corporate America is conducive to the type of work-and-family arrangement that would suit you?2. Should the United States require companies to provide paid maternity leave? Should it assist them to do so? What about paternity leave?3. Do companies already have a mommy track, whether they call it that or not? Is the idea a good one? Is it somehow discriminatory against women? Against men?4. Should men be more actively involved in childrearing? If not, why not? If so, what steps, if any, should either business or society take to encourage this?5. Should special organizational arrangements be made for workers who wish to combine career and child raising? If so, identify the steps that companies can take to accommodate parental needs more effectively.6. Does a firm have an obligation to give employees the flexibility to work out the particular balance of career and family that is right for them? Or does this go beyond the social responsibilities of business?7. Can paid maternity or paternity leave make sense from a business point of view, even if it is not subsidized by the government?