



# Nordic Fathers and Parental Leave

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# Nordic Countries

- Five countries with extensive history of cultural, political and economical exchanges
- In recent decades, a revision of family law has taken place in order to better ensure the original goals of family law, to ensure children's rights to parental care
- One of the most important component and latest development in policies on fatherhood is the individual non-transferable rights to paid parental leave – the fathers quota
- Dual earner – dual carer model dominates – one of the main reasons for high labour market participation AND relatively high fertility



# Parental leave

- Originally introduced to protect the health of mothers and babies
- - successful policy
- Later worries that maternity leave has detrimental effects on women's careers in the labour market
- Gender equality in all areas of life was the main motivation for introducing paternity leave and/or making it easier for parents to share parental leave



# Paternity leave

- Paternity leave seems to have several beneficial effects;
- - increased participation of fathers in caring for babies and children
- - positive effects on children's emotional and cognitive development
- - stronger bonds between fathers and their children
- - positive effects on men's health
- - reduced divorces
- Studies on the effects on gender equality show mixed results



# Denmark

- Non-transferable period between 1998 and 2001
- - collective agreements provide fathers with (up to) 8 weeks of non-transferable period
- Paternity leave: Two weeks
- Parental leave: 32 weeks per family – can be extended to 46 weeks
- Compensation: Up to 100% depending on collective agreements
- Uptake (2018): 65.9 per cent of the total number of fathers took leave
- Days (2018): No overall statistics, 32.1 days to 40 days depending on situation, (slow) increase over time



# Finland

- Non-transferable period introduced in 2003
- Paternity leave: 9 weeks (54 working days) – up to 18 days can be taken while the mother is on leave
- Compensation: On average 70% of salary with a ceiling – collective agreements supplement this for the great majority
- Parental leave: 158 days per family
- Uptake: 75% of fathers use paternity leave, 6% use parental leave
- Days: Paternity leave 15 days, parental leave 58 days, (slow) increase



# Iceland

- Non-transferable period introduced in 2001
- 3-3-3 system – nine months in all
- Compensation: 80% of salary with a ceiling
- Extended in 2020 to 12 months
- - Six months for each parent – can be extended to 24 months
- - Each can transfer up to six weeks to the other
- Uptake: 85% to 90% of fathers use their right
- Days: (2019) 92



# Norway

- Non-transferable period introduced in 1993
- Paternity leave: 2 weeks – funded by collective agreements
- Parental leave: 49 or 59 weeks, depending on payment level
- - father's (and mother's) quota: 15 or 19 weeks, the rest can be shared one way or another
- Compensation: 49 weeks at 100 per cent of earnings or 59 weeks at 80 per cent of earnings (with a ceiling)
- Uptake: Paternity leave and father's quota, 89%
- Days: 70% use exactly the number of days only they can use





# Sweden

- Non-transferable period introduced in 1995
- Paternity leave: 10 days
- Compensation: 77.6% of salary with a ceiling
- Parental leave: 240 days x 2, 90 days of each parents' rights are non-transferable
- Compensation: 195 days x 2 are income based (77.6% of salary with a ceiling)
- Uptake: Difficult!
- Days: Difficult but (slowly) increasing, around 30% of available days

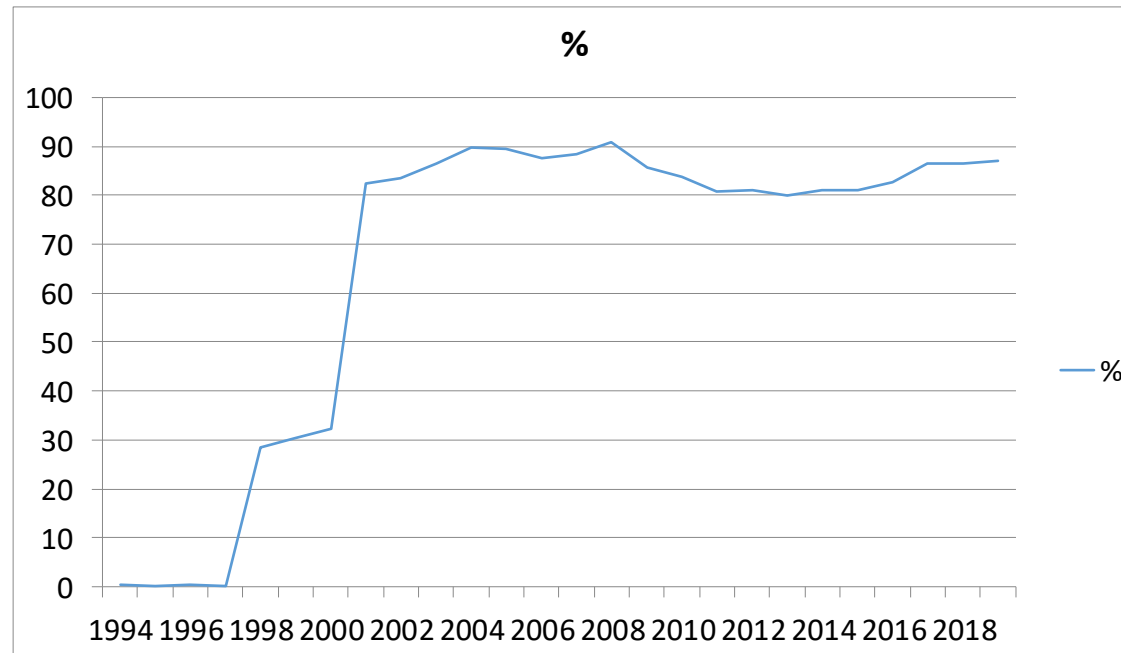


# Who uses?

- Well-educated parents share most equal.
- Relatively safe and stable position in the labour market is important for leave-taking.
- Fathers least likely to use a quota are fathers with long working hours, in managerial positions, or with a partner who works part-time.
- Fathers (and mothers) in highly competitive work use shortest leave.

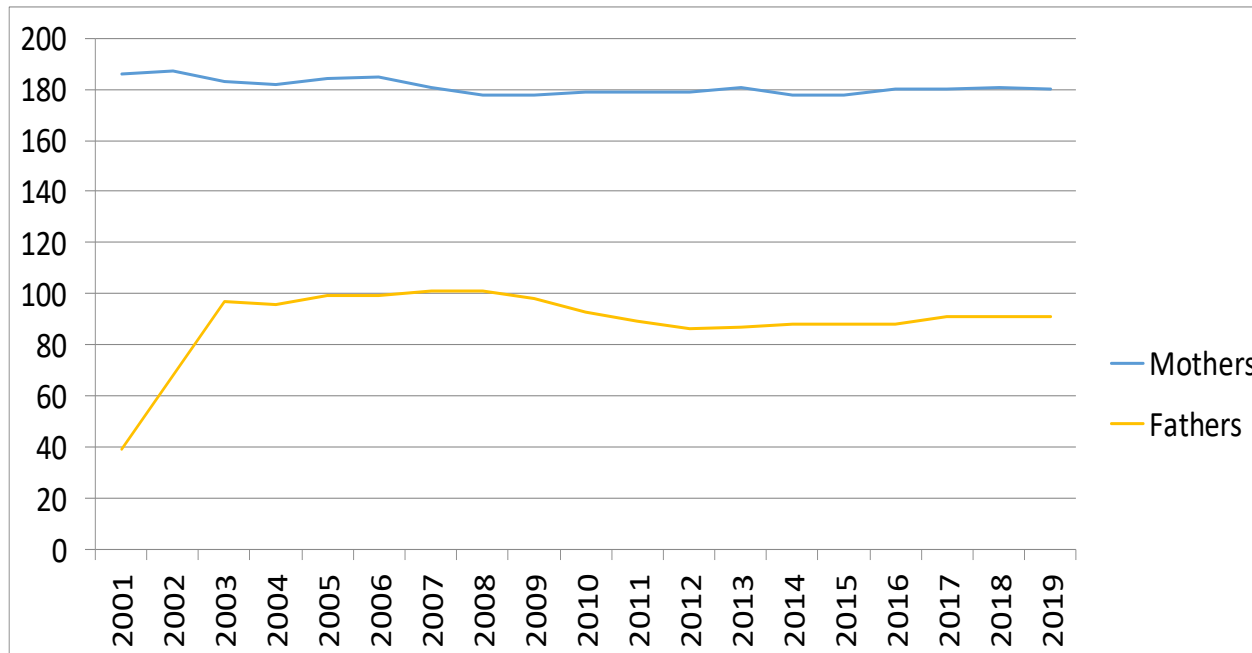


# Icelandic fathers on parental leave 1994 - 2019





# Iceland: Average number of days used 2001 – 2019





# Lessons

- Non-transferable periods are necessary
- - generally fathers use the period that only they can use
- Allowing parents to be at home together increases usage
- High economic compensation is necessary
- - a drop in compensation means a drop in usage by fathers
- Keep it simple!



# Thank you

- and have a fruitful and enjoyable conference