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Different?”

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**Nordic child care policies**

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Research

- Based on results of a Nordic project (supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers) conducted with Ann-Zophie Duvander, Berit Brandt, Johanna Lammi-Taskula and Ingólfur V. Gíslason
- Also based on previous projects on child care policies and publications by GBE & TR, both active in *REASSESS* (Nordic centre of excellence in welfare research- supported by NORDFORSK)

# Outline

- Child care, short historical overview + most recent development
  - Day care services
  - **Cash for care** - what Sipilä et al (2010) call the newcomers in the history of social policy - as these schemes are less well accounted for in recent care research therefore discussed in length
- Overall differences and similarities among Nordic countries – tensions or harmony?
- Can the differences be explained with different political pattern and governments?

# Goals of the Nordic child care policies

- The argumentations have mainly been of two quite different kinds:
  - to promote children's well being and becoming
  - and to ensure gender equality and increased female labour force participation
- Last decades also:
  - to increase fathers participation in care
  - and to increase choice

# Recent changes in the child care policies

- Nordic child care policies have been portrayed in the literature as policies that are one of the corner stones in the Social Democratic welfare model, a closer look reveals **hidden tensions** and debates as well as **new policy development** which seemingly go against the goals set by the Nordic countries

# Nordic policies on gender equality

- “The Nordic gender equality project”
- Formal co-operation on family law between the countries started in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which declared an explicit basic equality between husband and wife, father and mother
- The Nordic Council in 1952 a forum for inter-parliamentary partnership between the five Nordic states
- 1987, the national ministers responsible for gender equality have worked together in the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality

# Paid parental leave

# Early Education and Care - day care services



# From institutions for few- to preschool for all

- 1960s and 1970s: The Nordic gender-equality project encouraged women's participation in the labour market in which all the **countries developed extensive policies in order to enable equality** among both men and women
- Public day-care services: Denmark first to address day care in legislation (1964), followed by Finland, Iceland and Sweden (1973) and later Norway (1975)
- Services based on universal principles, and heavily subsidized and regulated by the public sector. Local authorities gained great autonomy regarding the volume of day care
- In spite of these similarities different levels of provision can be observed

# Development in the 1990s and onward

- During 1990s and into the next millennium increasing volumes of day care – public and institutionalised childhood
- More focus on the educational aspects of day care
- Socialisation and integration – the day care institution as the bearer of cultural values and promoter of language skills
- Mainly institutional care, but some family day care for the smaller children

## Nordic countries, children in day care 2009 - Per cent of age group

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
0 years	15.1	0.9	7.2	4.4	0.0
1 year	88.0	29.0	67.5	69.8	49.5
2 years	92.4	50.3	93.8	85.8	90.9
3 years	97.6	67.1	95.3	96.1	95.0
4 years	97.5	73.5	95.7	97.0	97.7
5 years	95.1	77.1	91.4	97.9	98.0

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook, 2010, table 4.3.

# Cash for care

# New discourses

- In last decades there have been voices questioning if starting day care at an early age is really in the best interest of the children
- Such voices have been raised by individuals, both experts and citizens, and by political parties, usually right of the centre
- The discourses as well as the political outcomes differ between the Nordic countries, but in 2011 in four out of five Nordic countries schemes of cash for child care for young children have been enacted into law in order to facilitate family care of children beyond the parental leave
- In all cases low payments for care of children under age of three in their home- mainly used by mothers



# Finland

- Legislation in 1985
- Since 1990 parents of all children under age of three – right to **choose** between either day care or home care allowance
- State scheme, same amount for all
- In 2011 315,54€ with one child (10.8% of AW) + possible supplements
- In addition: Municipalities might also provide local supplements

# Finland: Number of parents with home care allowances in 2007 and 2010

	2007	2010
Home care allowances number of recipients	65.320	65.578
Benefit paid to fathers	3.3%	3.9%
Total number of children under 3	76.480	78.490
% of all children under 3	58	57.6

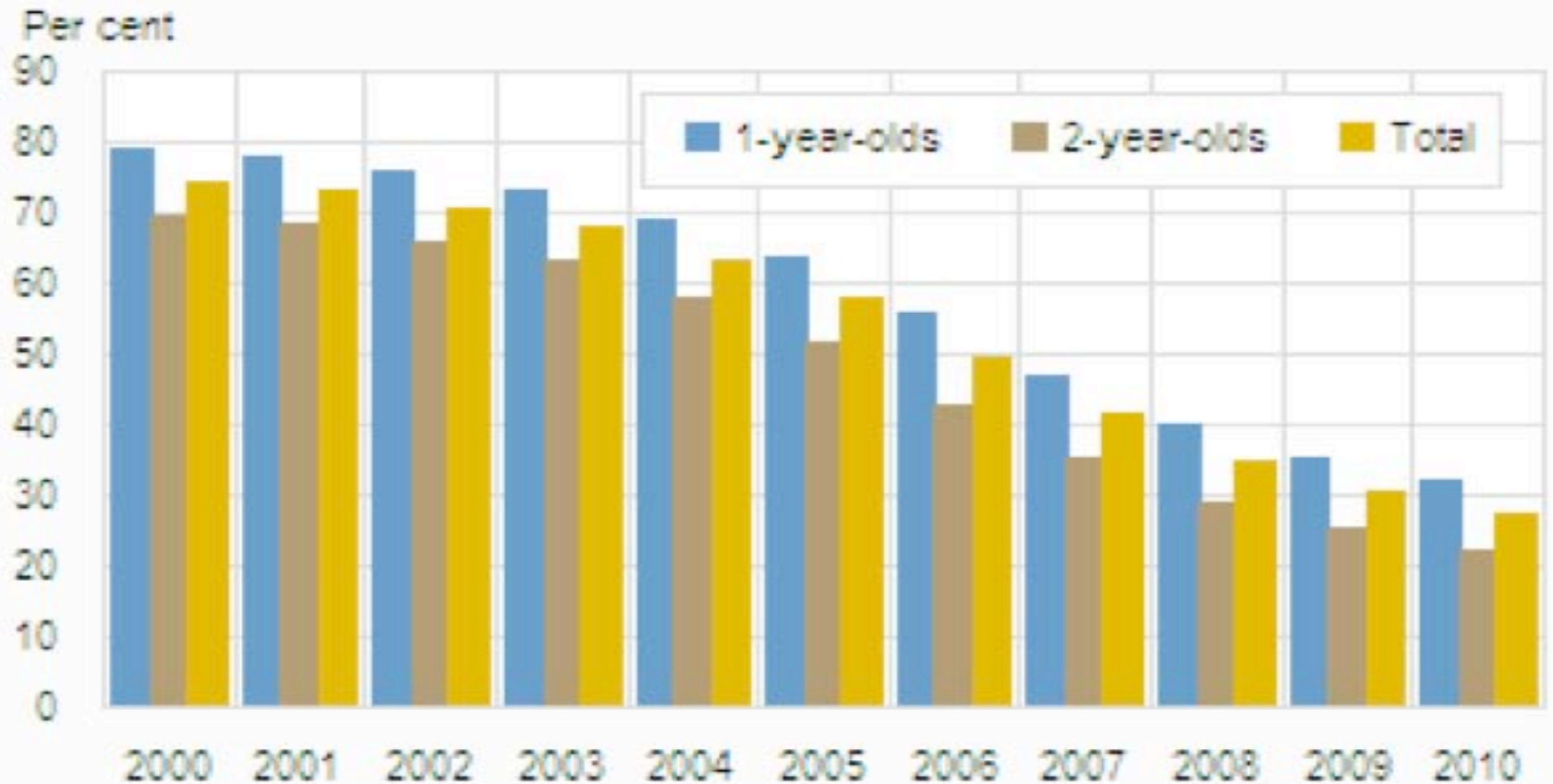


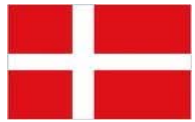
# Norway

- Legislation in 1998
- Goal to increase parental choices, create equality among families with and without day care and to create more time
- State scheme, same amount for all
- In 2011 3.303 NOK with one child (9,4% of AW) but lower payments if child is in part time day care



# Norway 2000-2010: Children receiving cash benefit % of all children





# Denmark

- 1992 cash for care scheme (*Børnepasningsorlov*)
- High unemployment rates -part of active labour market policies to provide some dynamics in the provision of labour by enabling parents of young children to take leave of absence from labour market and stay home with their young children for a period of 26-52 weeks.
- Originally payments were 80% of the unemployment benefit but were decreased to 60% in 1998.
- Abolished in 2002



# Denmark

- 2002 revision of family policy, new schemes
- Aim to increase flexibility and choice:  
Municipalities can pay cash for care
- Copenhagen 2011, 7.033 DKK. (24,8% of AW)
- Highly conditioned, parent can not be employed nor receive benefits that are labor market related and must have applied for day care
- Pedagogical assessment and if the child is believed to benefit more from outside care- no benefits
- In 2004 768 children and in 2008 764 children

# Municipalities in Denmark with cash for care schemes in 2007 and 2011

	n	%
No scheme 2007, scheme in 2011	12	12
Scheme in 2007, no scheme in 2011	15	15
No scheme in 2007 and 2011	44	45
Scheme in 2007 and 2011	27	28
Total	98	100



# Sweden

- 1993-1994 short period of cash for care scheme
- 2008 new cash for care scheme – goal to ensure that families can choose between day care outside or within the family
- Municipalities can choose if to implement or not – 3000 SEK in 2011 for full time care (10.7% of AW ) but not paid to parents that receive benefits

# Take up in Sweden

- In 2009 96 municipalities had schemes, 3.316 applications had been received from 2.964 parents, 88% of the applicants were granted benefits, and of these 90.8% were women.
- In 2010 104 municipalities
- For the first half of the year 2010 1.1% of all children under the age of two were cared for by parents that received cash for care and if only calculated for the municipalities that have such schemes the figure would be 2.1%



# Iceland

- No laws- but from 2006 municipalities have enacted cash for care schemes
- Different names, rules and entitlements
- Goal to bridge the care gap
- Reykjavík: In the case of cohabiting parents, the parents had to divide the payments in line with the rules on the division of paid parental leave, where the mother and father have each three months paid parental leave and additional joint three months.

# Take up in Iceland

- No statistics
- In 2009 11 municipalities and majority of Icelandic children
- In 2011 5 municipalities including both Reykjavík and Kópavogur have abolished their schemes –in both cases left of center local governments instead of the right of the center local governments that enacted the schemes



# Cash for care

	Laws on CFC?	Year introduced	Implemented by	Goals
Denmark	Yes	2002	Municipalities	Choice
Finland	Yes	1985	State (+ municipalities)	Choice (Equality)
Iceland (Rvk)	No	(2006)	Municipalities	Equality Gender equality To close the care gap
Norway	Yes	1998	State	Choice Equality More time
Sweden	Yes	2008	Municipalities	Choice

# In sum:Take up

No comparable statistics available

- Denmark: In 2008 paid with 764 children
- Finland: In 2010 paid to 57,6% of children under the age of three
- Iceland: In 2011: 6 out of 77 municipalities
- Norway: In 2010 28% of children 1-3 years (was 35% in 2008)
- Sweden: 2010 1.1% of children under the age of two

# Childcare policies in the Nordic countries

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
0-1 year	Paid parental leave (50-64 weeks) Day care (17%)	Paid parental leave (44 weeks) Day care (1%)	Paid parental leave (39 weeks) Day care (7%) Care gap- private solutions	Paid parental leave (47-57 weeks) Day care (4%)	Paid parental leave (69 weeks) Day care (-)
1-2 year	Day care (90%)	Day care (40%) Cash for care	Day care (80%) Municipal schemes of cash for care	Day care (69%) Cash for care	Day care (70%) Paid parental leave Municipal schemes of cash for care
3-5 year	Day care (96%)	Day care (72%)	Day care (95%)	Day care (94%)	Day care (97%)

# Tensions in the Nordic childcare model?

- Paid parental leave not debated as such but tensions regarding the father's quota – responsibility of parents or the state to make the choice?
- Day care a public issue in the Nordic countries – but tensions regarding the preferable age of children when starting day care as well as tensions between the pedagogical discourse vs pre school
- Cash for care schemes debated:
  - Cash for care has had consequences for the achievement of the gender equality goal of the Nordic model, the dual carer society since the creation of low benefit cash for care schemes maintains the traditionally gender differentiated family roles and sets the opportunities and position of women back
  - Cash for care also contributes to the creation of new social cleavages: Children of various social classes are now more likely to be cared for in different care arrangements

# Do politics matter?

- Parties left of the center expected to encourage the dual earner/dual carer model as part of the Social Democratic welfare state
- Parties right of the center expected in contrast to support policies that encourages gendered division of labor in line with “traditional” or conservative family policies (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006; Leira, 2006; Ellingsæter, 2011)

# Parties' stand over leave

Agreement across left-right party lines to extend the parental leave

Political disagreement over the introduction of a father's quota and thus whether the state should force one parent (the father) to be more active in parenting

However, this disagreement has not always followed conventional wisdom:

- In Sweden and Iceland the father's quota was promoted by parties right of the centre

# Parties' stand over cash for care

Clearly preference of right wing parties

With national scheme: Enacted by right-wing governments – abolished by left

With local scheme: In Iceland where cash for care is only implemented on local level, in the majority of cases it has been local governments right of the center that have enacted such schemes + abolished by parties left of the center

# To conclude...

Is the development an expression of a new Nordic familism, i.e. a movement to emphasize the value of parental care?

Or does the low take-up suggests that Nordic familism in at least four of the Nordic countries and the call for public support for *well compensated parental leave* and *high quality and subsidized services* that facilitate gender equality rather than low paid cash for care schemes that encourages mainly mothers to stay at home show that the Nordic model is still going strong?



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