

Comparing Leave Systems in the Nordic Countries

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- Level of benefit
- Take-up of leave by mothers and fathers

Introduction

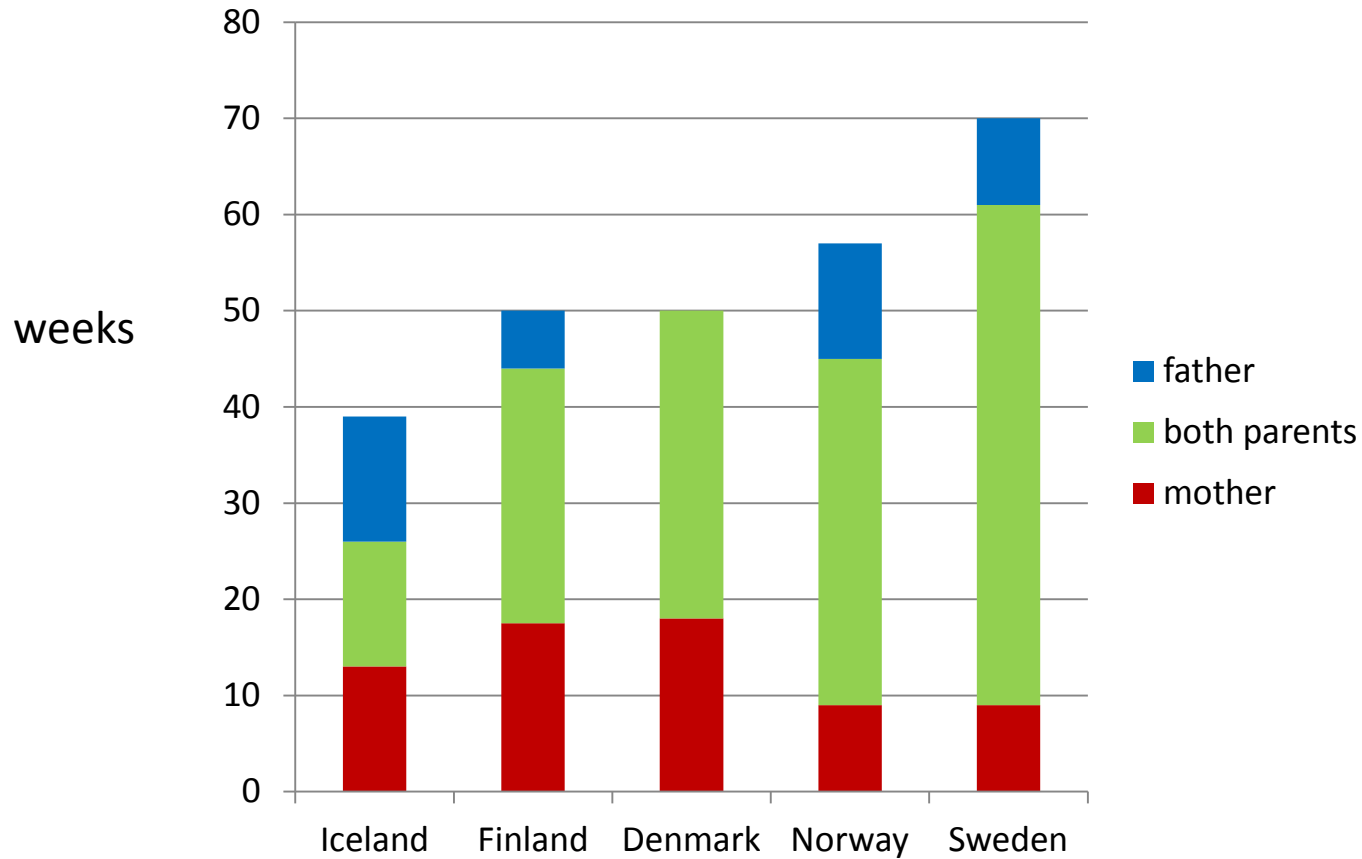
- In the Nordic countries, the reconciliation of paid employment and family life has been supported by the welfare state since 1960's. This may be one secret behind the high fertility rates.
- Fathers were first given rights to parental leave in 1970's. During the past two decades, fathers have been in the focus: father's quotas have been introduced to the leave schemes and campaigns designed to encourage fathers to take more leave.
- In principle, the leave legislation is based on an idea of shared childcare responsibility, as well as (almost) equal capability of both parents to take care of a child.
- In all countries, the employment rate of women is high and full-time employment is common. Still, the take-up of leave is not equally divided between mothers and fathers: mothers use majority of leave days.
- The unequal sharing of parental leave has negative consequences for women's position in the labour market as well as men's position in the family, especially in case of parental separation.

History of parental leave schemes in the Nordic countries

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Father's quota
Denmark	1960	1984	1984	1997-2002*
Finland	1964	1978	1985	2003
Iceland	1946	1998	1981	2001
Norway	1956	1977	1978	1993
Sweden	1955	1980	1974	1995

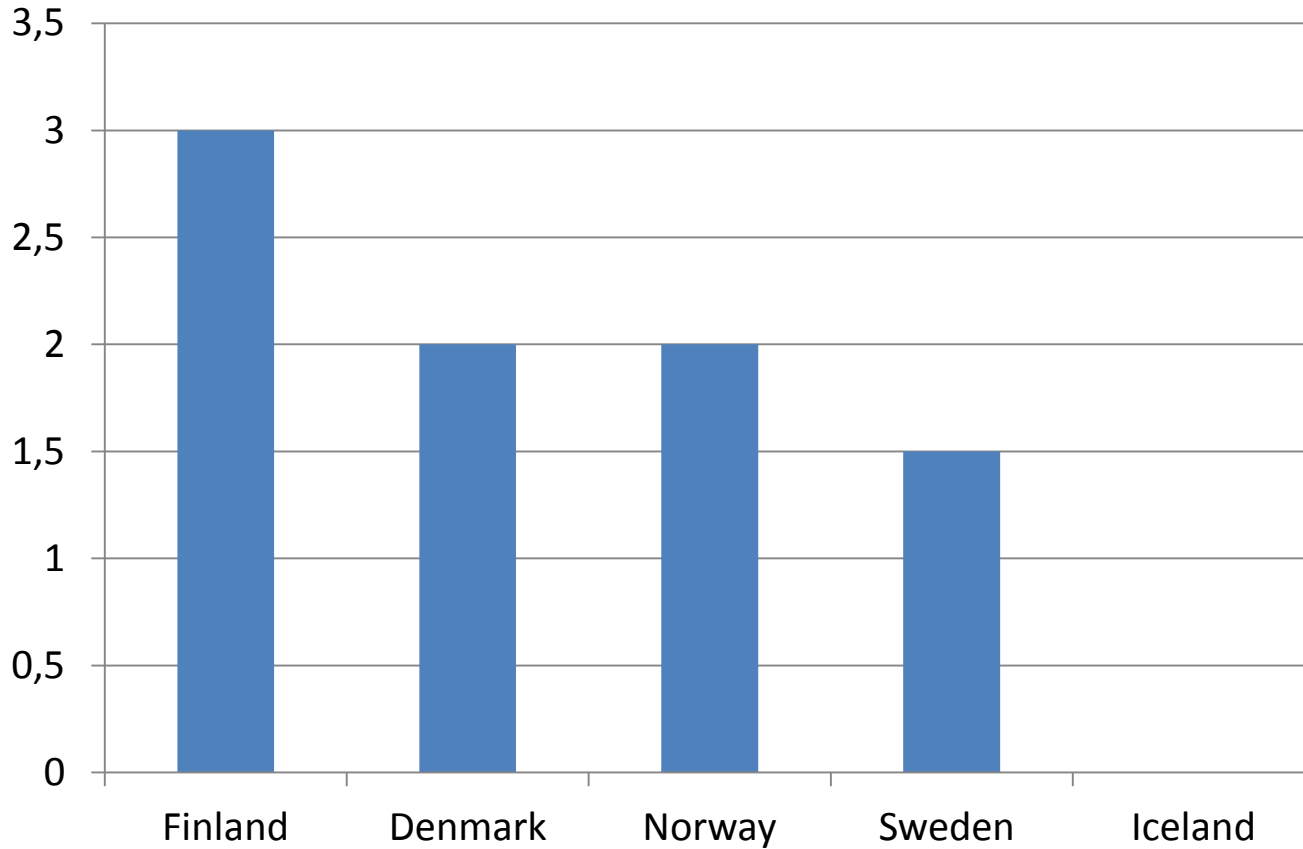
*introduced again in the industrial sector in 2007

Length of parental leave (income-related benefit)

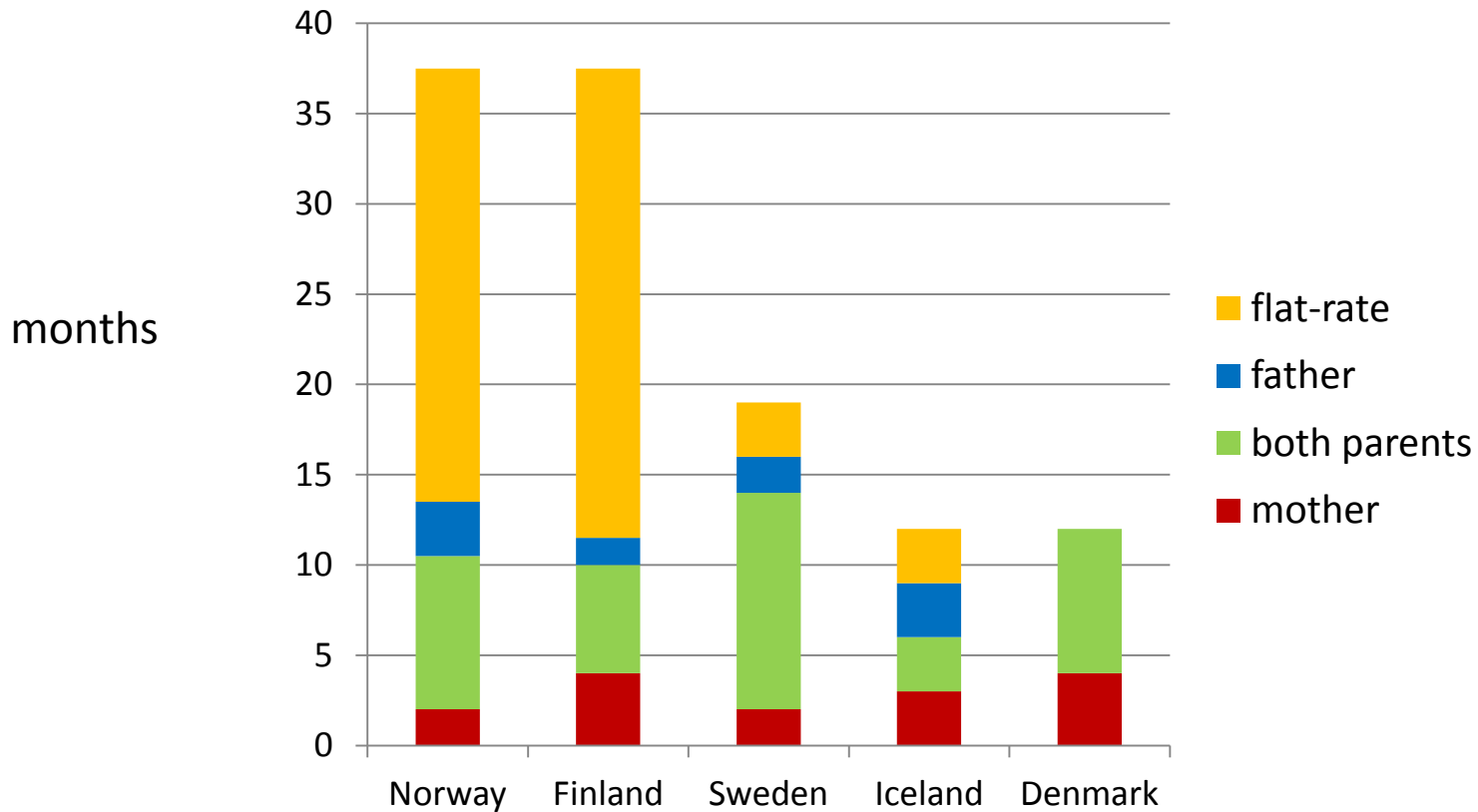


Length of paternity leave

(weeks; taken after birth when the mother is at home)



Length of childcare-related leave (income-related + flat-rate benefit)



Level of benefit

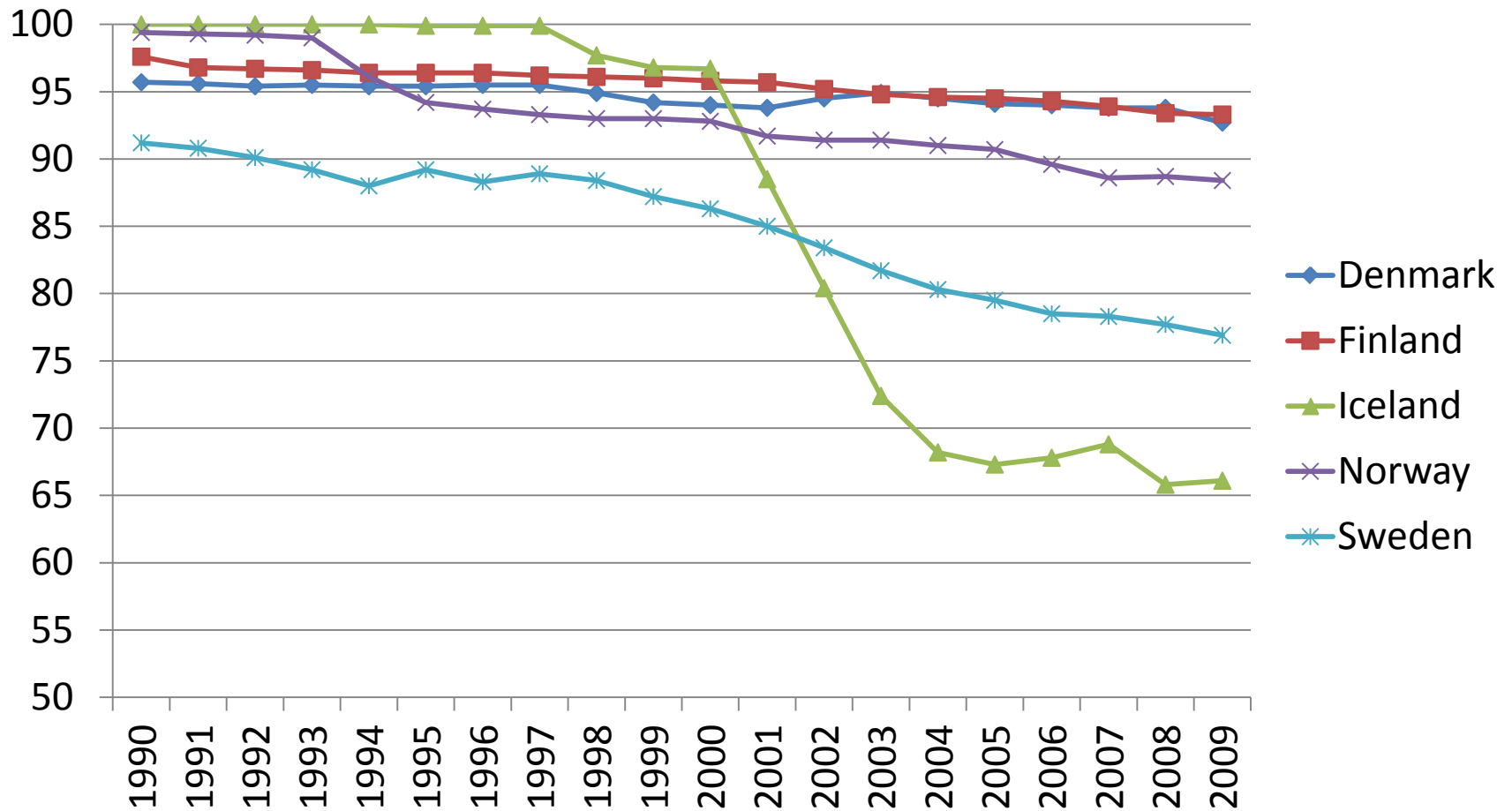
	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
maternity leave	100 %*	70-90 %	80 %	80-100 %	80 %
paternity leave	100 %*	70 %	-	0 %**	80 %
parental leave	100 %*	70-75 %	80 %	80-100 %	80 %
father's quota	100 %*	70-75 %	80 %	80-100 %	80 %
child care leave /flat-rate	-	314 €***	0	3307 NOK (407 €)	3000 SEK (344 €)

* with a ceiling (93 € per day or 490 € per week); full pay according to coll. agreements

** agreed in individual or collective agreements

*** + means-tested supplement max 168 € + 60-94 € for siblings under school age

Mothers' share of parental leave use



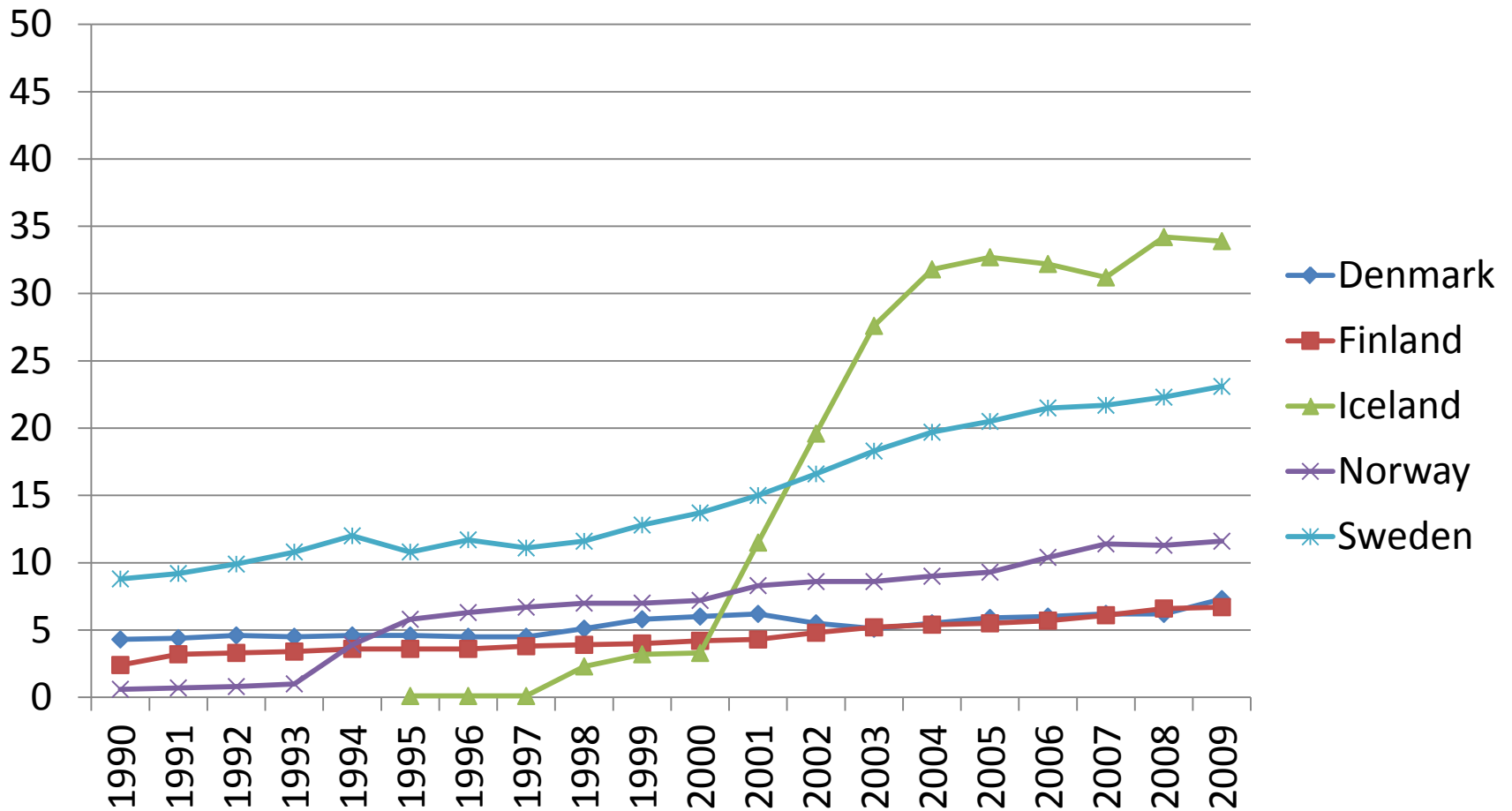
Source: Nososco

Mothers' parental leave use

Mothers use longer leave if....

- 1st child
- Older, work experience, can "afford long leave period"
- Low/middle income
- Public sector
- Large employer
- Extra benefit from employer

Fathers' share of parental leave use



Source: Nososco

Fathers' parental leave use

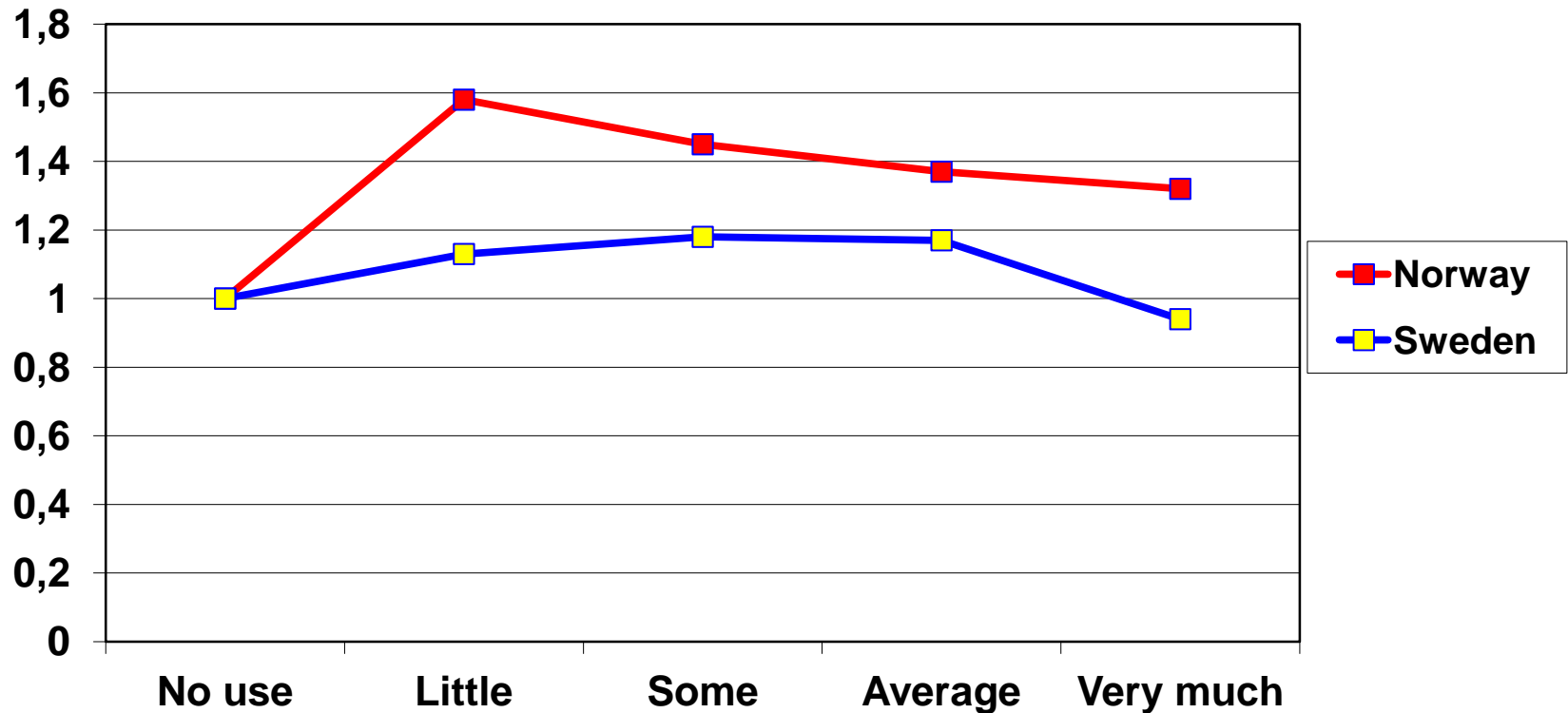
Fathers use longer leave if....

- 1st child
- Legislation facilitates, fathers' quota
- Public sector, female dominated work place
- Other fathers use leave at work
- Extra benefit from employer
- Middle/high income, but not above ceiling(?)
- High education of mother and father

To sum up:

- Considerable variations between the Nordic countries in leave policy
- Variations in leave use among mothers and fathers but also similar patterns
- Hard to compare statistics because of differences in policy and in presenting statistics
- Need of more collaboration for cross-country comparisons!

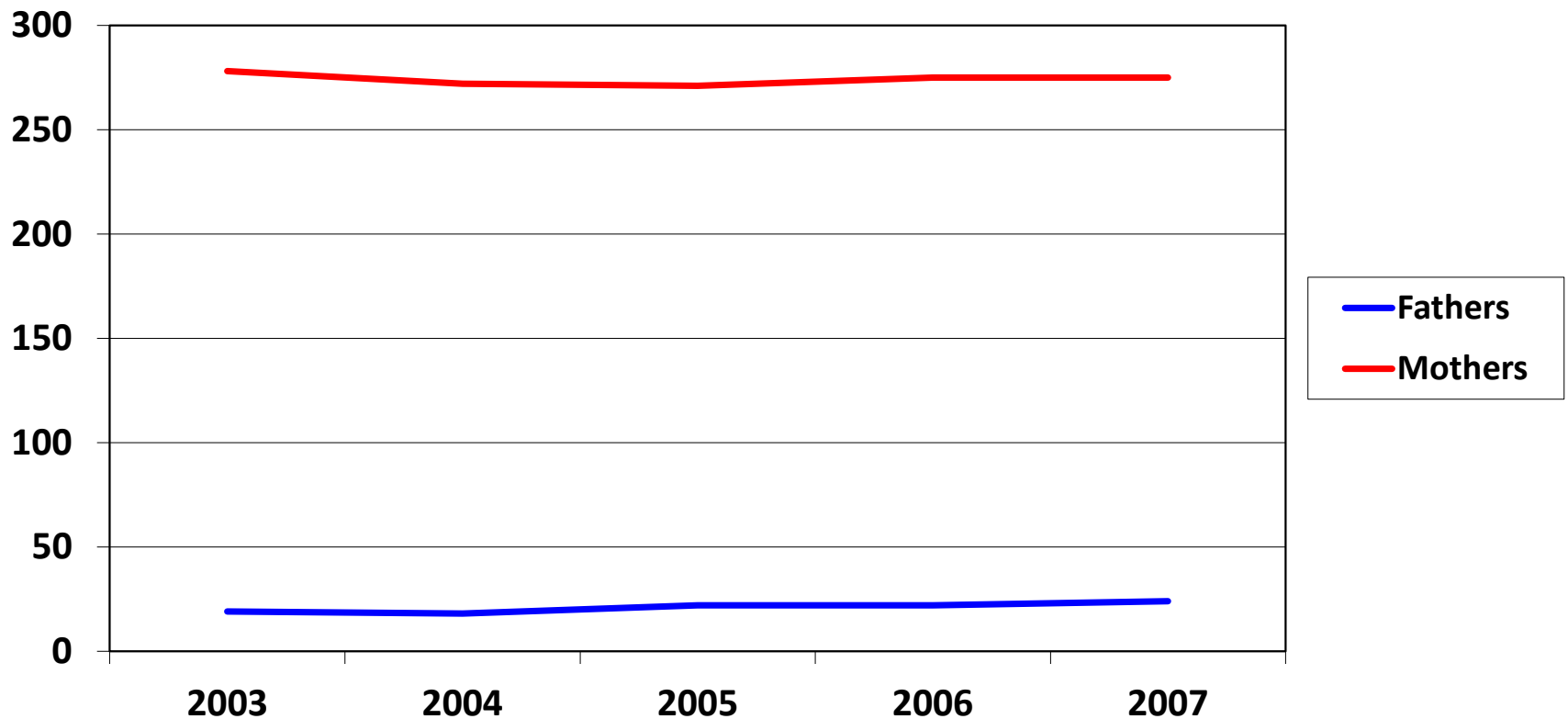
Impact of fathers' parental leave use on the relative risk of a second birth



Source: Duvander Lappegard, Andersson,
Journal of European Social Policy , 2010

Danish parents' leave days

Accumulated parental leave days during child's birthyear and following year



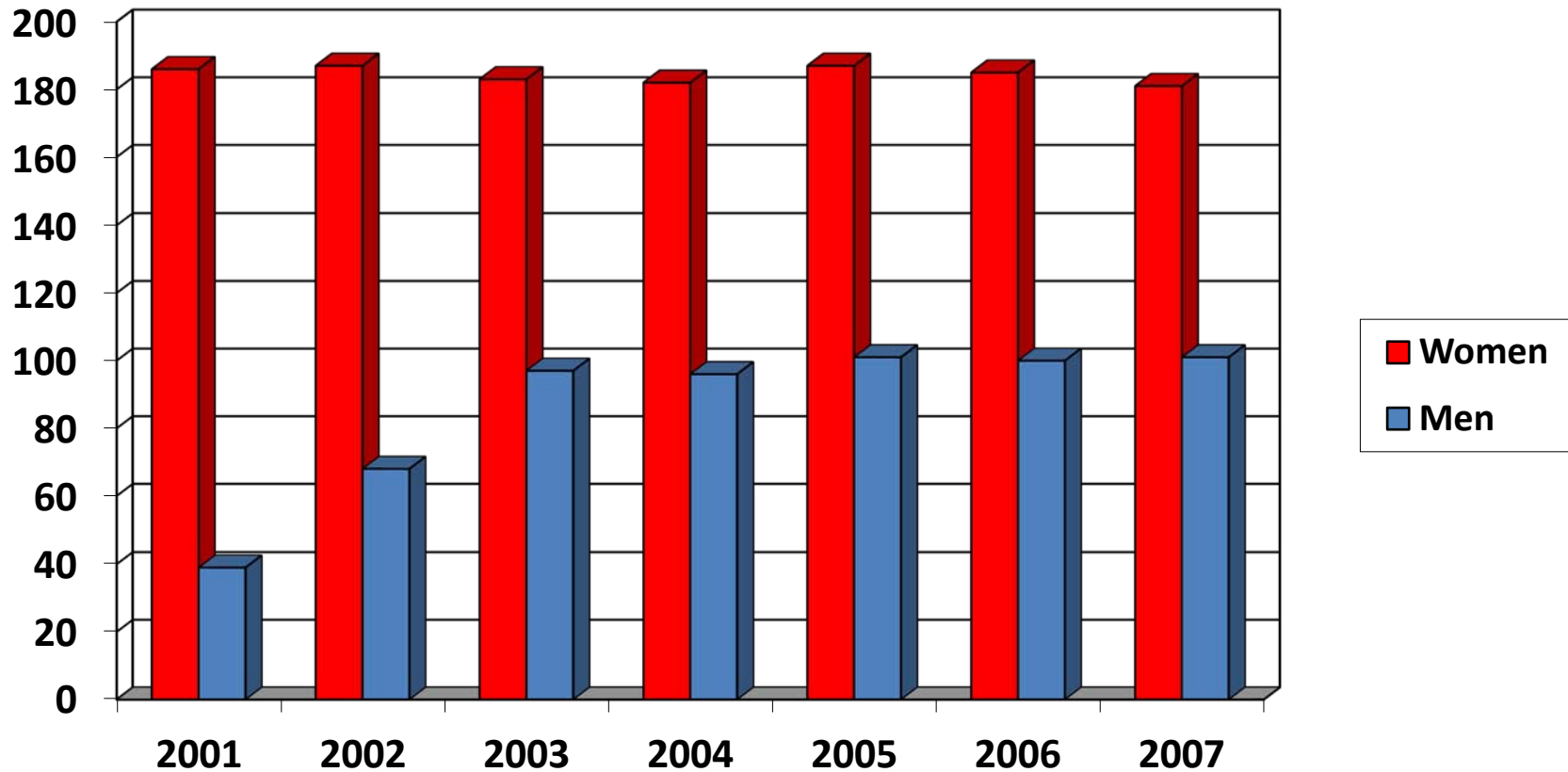
Source: www.statistikbanken.dk

Finnish parental leave use

- Parental leave benefit per day: Mothers: 49,7 Euro, Fathers 69,9 Euro in 2008
- Fathers on leave are more often employed in technical, science, art, humanities, health and social work
- Fathers on leave are less often employed in administration and commercial work and self-employed
- Most used in Åland and least in Lapland

Source: The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (www.kela.fi)

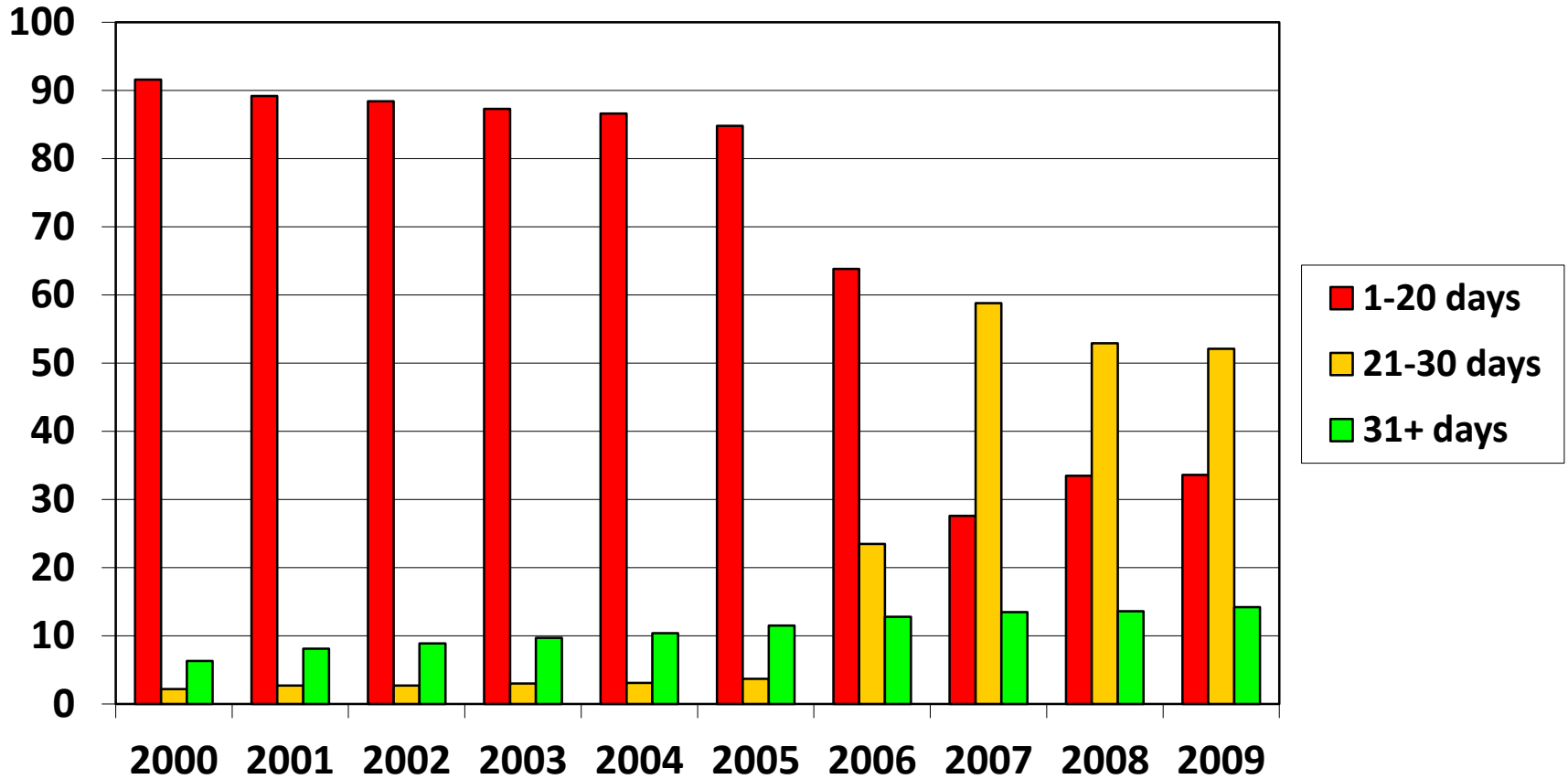
Iceland, average days per parent on parental leave



Source: Childbirth Leave Fund (faedingarorlof.is)

Norwegian fathers leave days

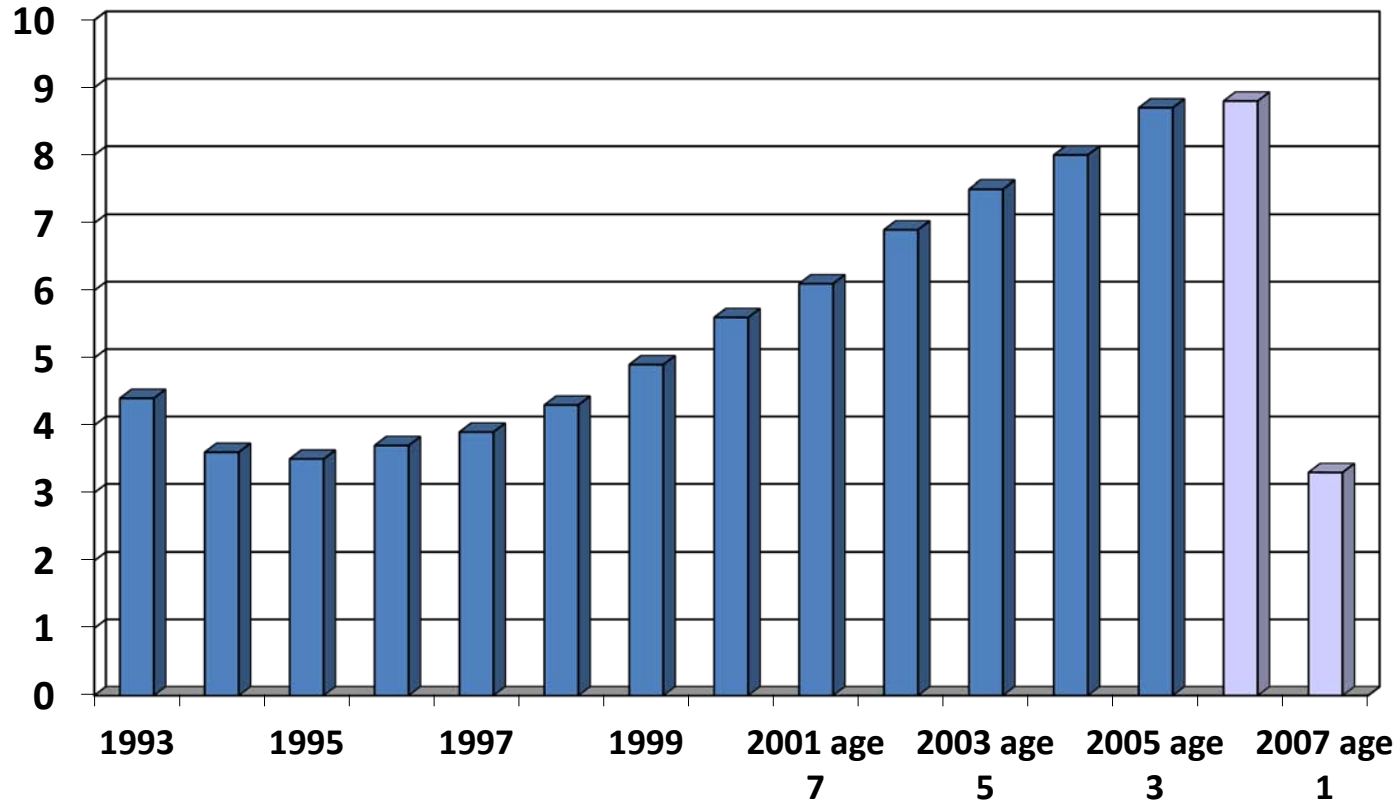
Distribution of days during first 6 months 2000-2009



Source: The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (www.nav.no)

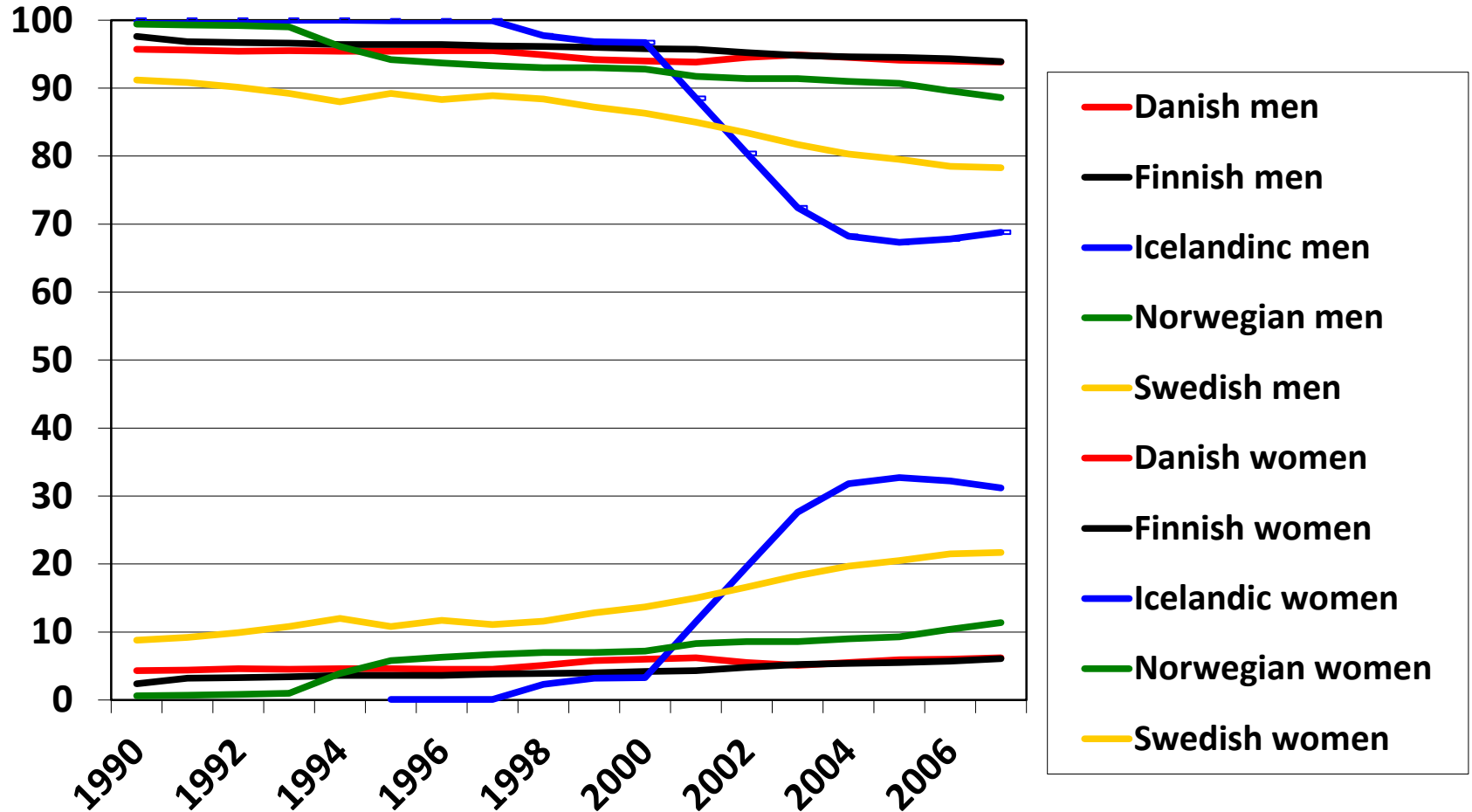
Swedish parents who share leave equally

Defined as 40-60% division



Source: Swedish social Insurance Agency (www.forsakringskassan.se)

Fathers' share of parental leave use



Source: Nososco