

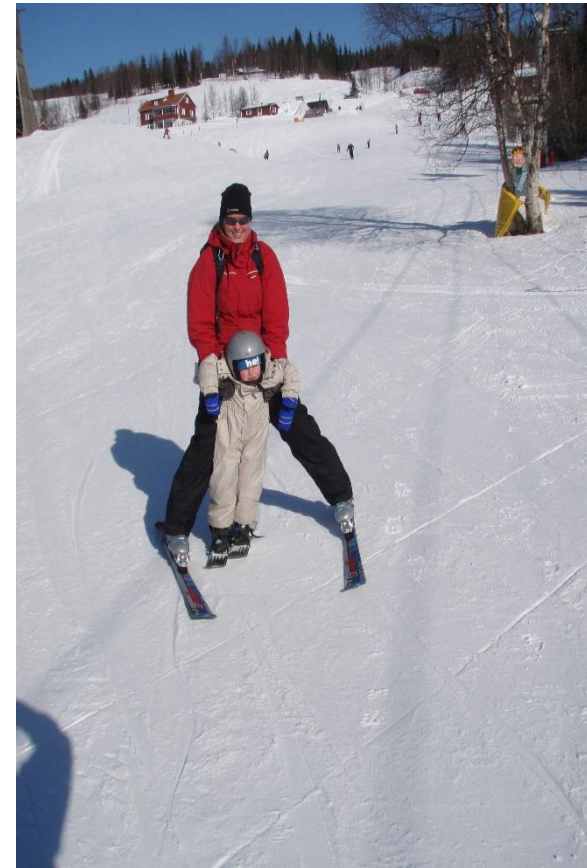
Parental leave in international comparison

Webinar Hamburg 28 August 2019

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Comparing parental leave systems

- Comparing legislation
- Comparing use
- Comparing consequences



Sources for comparing

- Different databases such as Annual reports from International Network for Leave Policies & Research (www.leavenetwork.org)
- Internationally comparable surveys (GGS, ESS)
- Weigh comparability in detail versus a large number of data points, also over time

International Network on Leave Policies & Research

LP&R

You are here: [► Faculty of Social Sciences](#) [► International Network on Leave Policies & Research](#) [► Introducing the Network](#)

Introducing the network

The international network on leave policies and research, consists of over 60 members, all of whom are experts on leave issues and who come from 43 countries across the world. Members bring not only expertise to the network, but great commitment and enthusiasm, enabling the group to grow and flourish without any regular source of external funding and to provide a unique forum for exchange, dialogue and collaboration on issues of care, employment and gender.

An international leave policy review, with country updates and cross-national tables, is produced yearly ([report 2018](#)). The review is a unique policy and academic resource, widely used by academics, students and organisations.

Introducing the Network

History

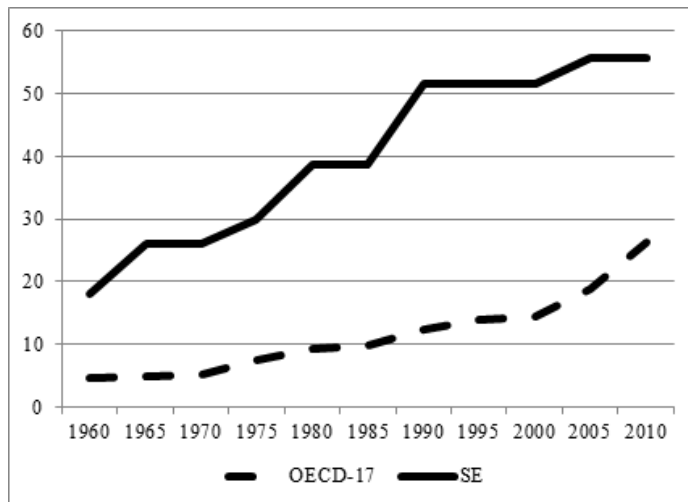
Contact

International Network on Leave
Policies & Research
[Contact Persons](#)

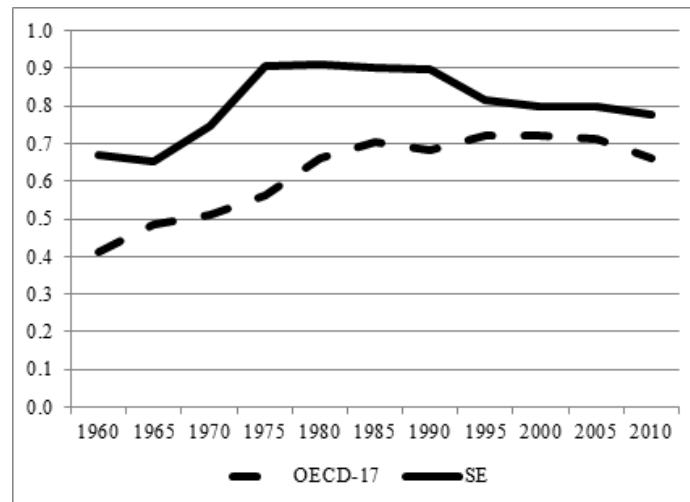
Comparing legislation

Source: Social Policy Indicators database (SPIN)

Length of parental leave

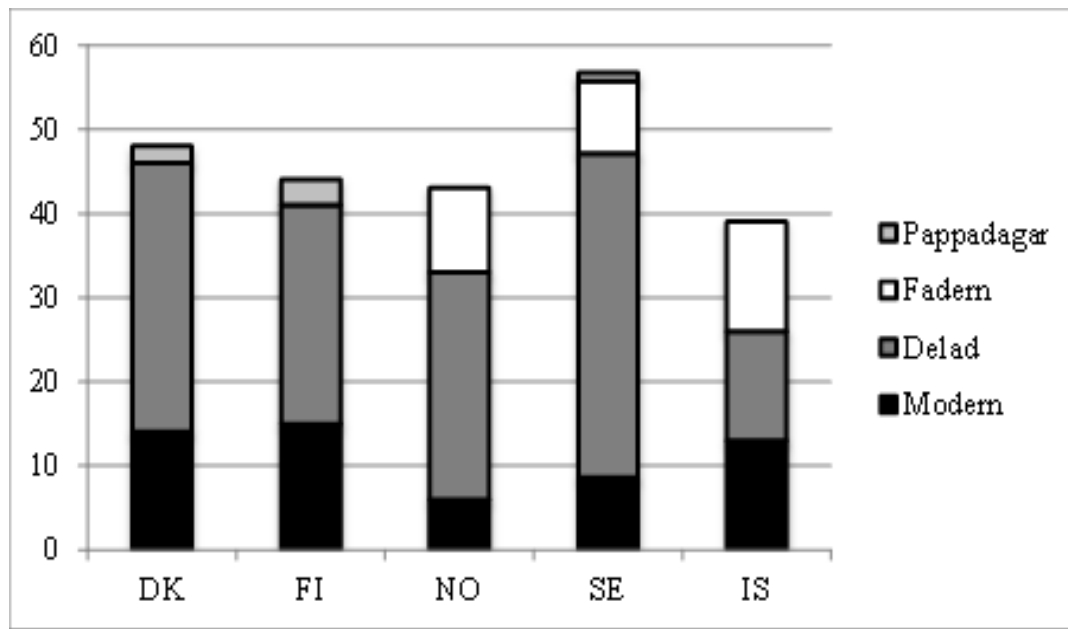


Replacement level of parental leave



Length (weeks) for different parts of parental leave 2010

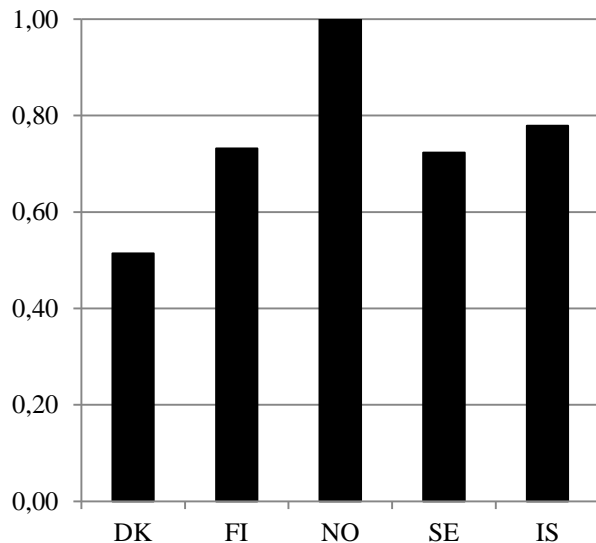
Reserved for mother, shared, reserved for father, paternity days



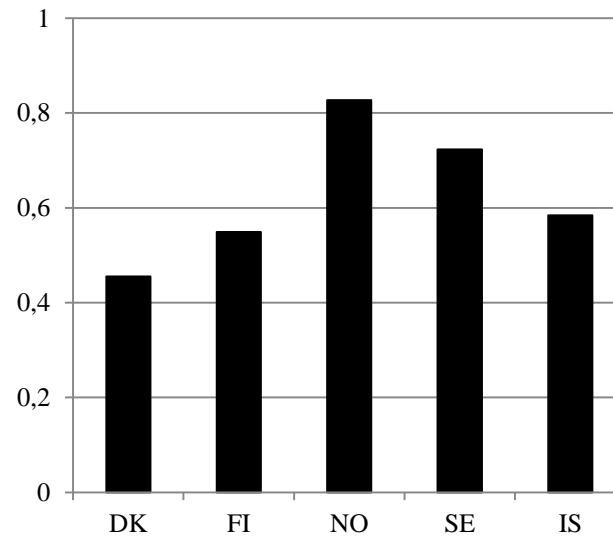
Definitions matter!

Replacement as share of industrial workers' wage

During leave



During first year



Deal with detail!

Country	Summary of leave	Total amount of post-natal parental leave available to family <i>excluding</i> childcare leave (months)			Type of leave entitlement (leave only, not incl. payment)	Incentive for father to take	Flexibility
		Total	Paid	Well paid			
Australia ¹	● ●	24.0	4.7	✗	Individual; transferable	✗	7b
Austria ²	● ● ●	► 24.0	(► 14.0 incl. 2 bonus to 35 incl. 7 bonus)	(► 14.0 incl. 2 bonus)	Family	Partnership bonus if parents share equally (60:40)	1; 2; 3; 5; 7b
Belgium	● ● +	8.0	8.0	✗	Individual; non-transferable	✗	1; 2; 5; 6; 7a
Brazil	✗						
Bulgaria	● ●	12	12	✗	Family	✗	4
Canada ³	● ● ●	8.1 to 14.5	8.0 to 14.0	✗	Family	✗	3; 7a
Québec	● ● ● ●	7.4	7.4	5.8*	Family	✗	3; 5; 7a
China	✗						
Croatia ⁴	● ● +	8.0	8.0 to 16.0	✗	Individual; partly	Additional 2	1; 2; 5; 6; 7a

¹ Australia: An individual can take a second 12 months of Parental leave subject to employer agreement, but the maximum period of leave is 24 months per family. The leave period of 12 months is an individual entitlement; but the payment is a family entitlement. Fathers entitled to additional two weeks flat-rate payment if they take leave.

² Austria: Since 2017, there is either the income-dependent parental benefit (80 per cent of earnings for 12 to 14 months) or a flexible payment scheme ('Childcare benefit account'), where parents can distribute an overall sum of about €15,449 (if both parents participate, the other parent has to take at least 20 per cent of the overall duration) or €12,366 (if only one parent participates) over a specific time span.

³ Canada: A supplement is payable to low-income families taking Parental leave, increasing payment to 80 per cent. There are significant regional variances in leave between jurisdictions. Since 2017, a longer-term (61 weeks), lower-benefit (33 per cent) Parental leave option is available.

⁴ Croatia: In the case of twins or other multiple births or for the third and every subsequent child, parents are entitled to leave until the child(ren) is 36 months old at 100 per cent of earnings; the ceiling for the period from 12 to 36 months is lower than for the first six months of Parental leave.

Use of parental leave

- Can different sources be used in same study?
 - Surveys with different sampling
 - Survey and register data
- Can different time points be used?
- What does parental leave mean in different contexts?



Comparing use, Surveys

- Comparative surveys (GGS, ESS, Labor force surveys etc)
- Problems
 - Sample size and selection
 - Comparable questions
 - Response rate

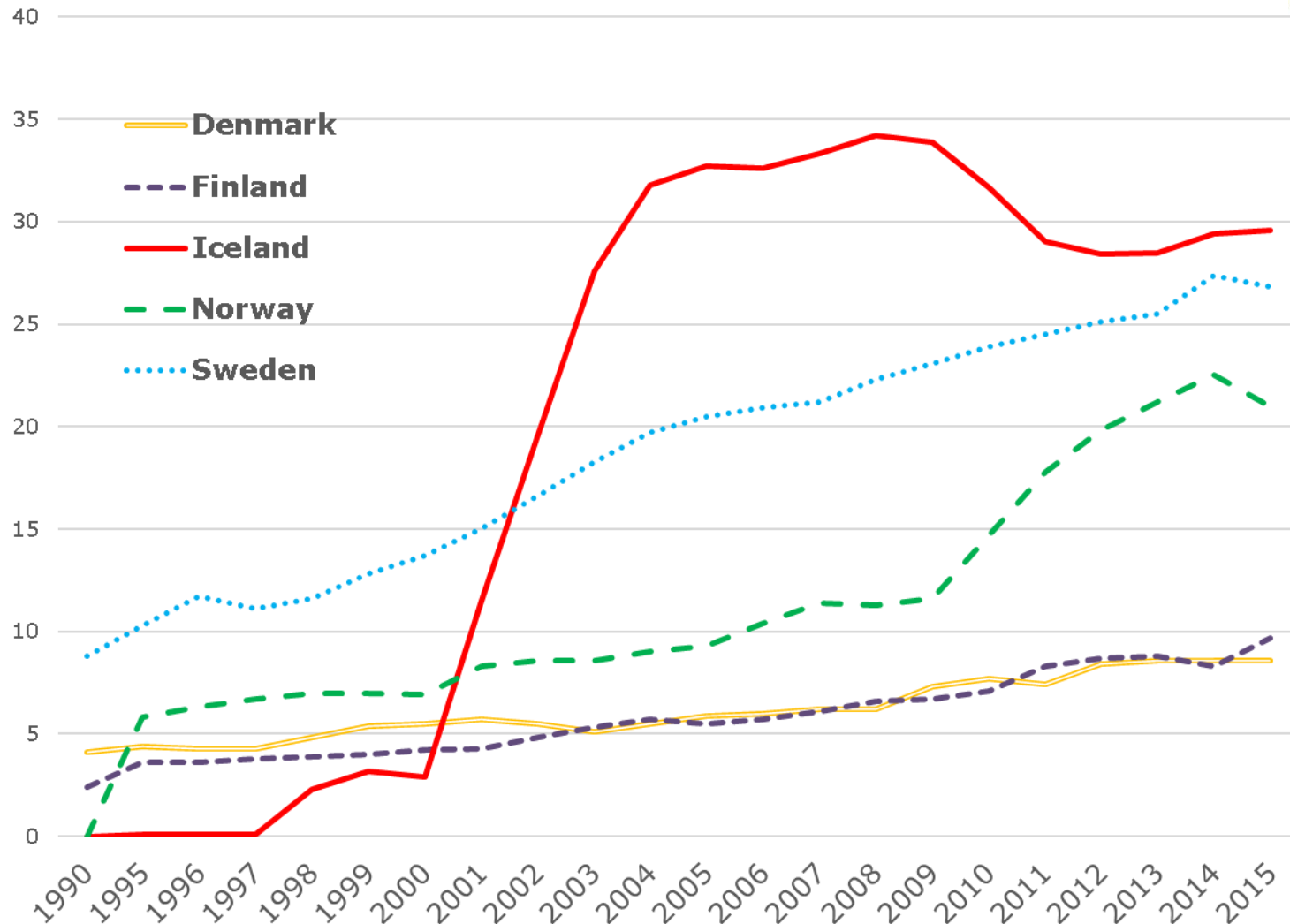
Register data

- Advantages
 - Whole population or random LARGE sample
 - Official statistics
 - No subjective responses
- Problems
 - legislation differ
 - reporting may differ
 - eligibility may differ

Examples of hard decisions

- Measure time (2 years?)
- Continued family dynamics (childbearing, dissolution)
- Eligibility (exclude Norwegian non-eligible fathers?)
- Quota of different length

Share of benefit days used by fathers in the Nordic countries



Source: Nordic council of Ministers 2016

Other problems

- Access
- Combination of registers



Consequences of leave

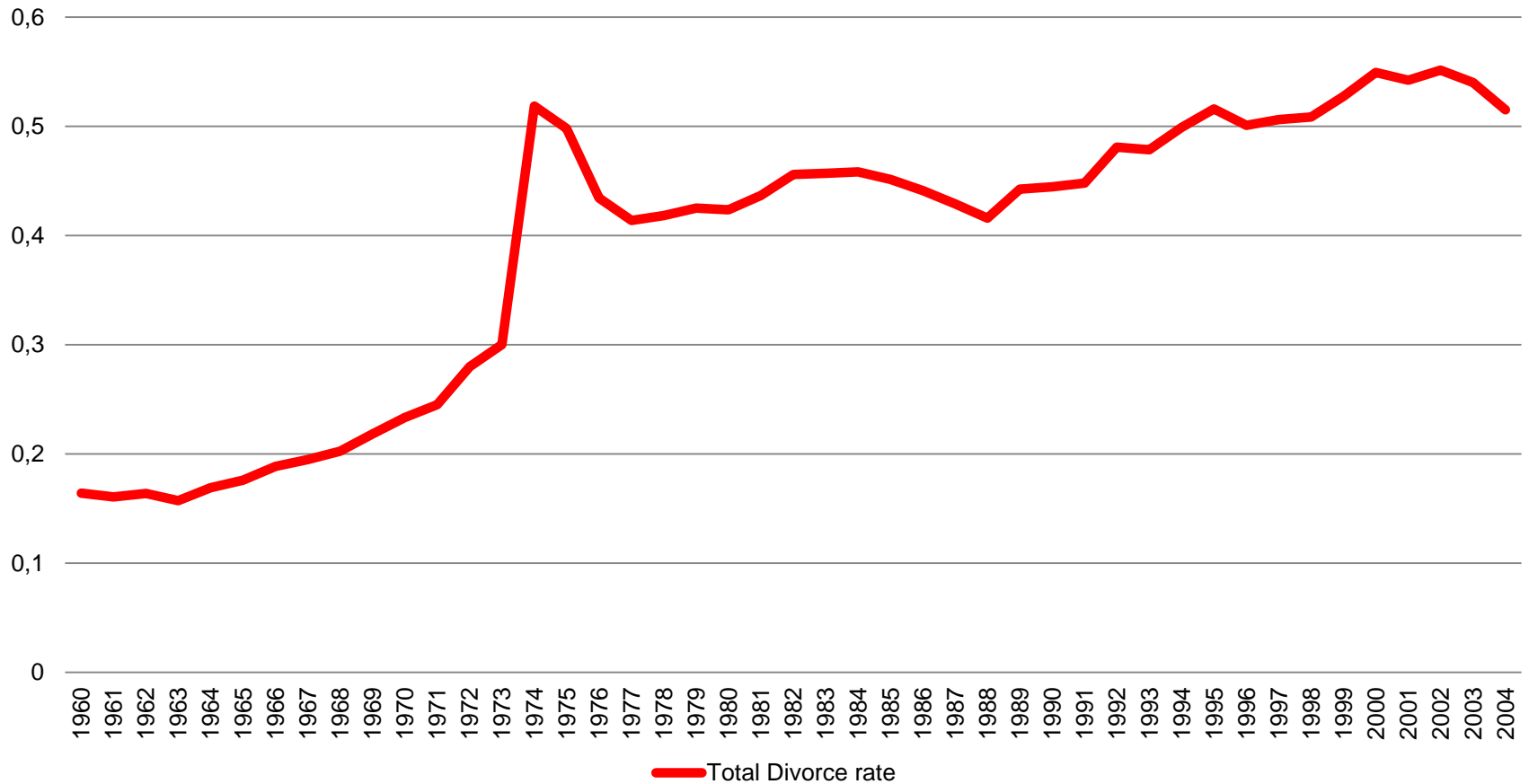
- Can we measure effects of policy?
 - Associations or causality
- Example of studies of impact of policies



Basic issues on policy influence

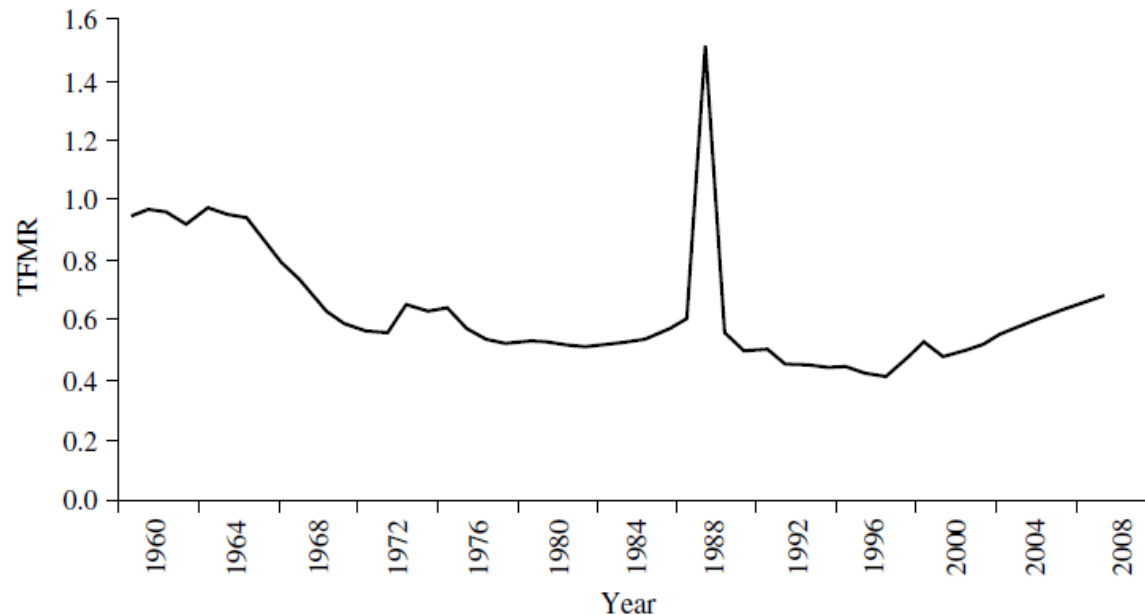
- Can policy change behaviour?
- Limits to policy's influence on society
- Direct and indirect policies
- Policy type: whip or carrot?
- Trends in policy focus
- Slow or fast implementation of policy
- Who is policy directed to?

Total Divorce Rate in Sweden 1960 - 2004



Council of Europe. 2006. Recent Demographic Developments in Europe 2005. Strasbourg:
Council of Europe Publishing.

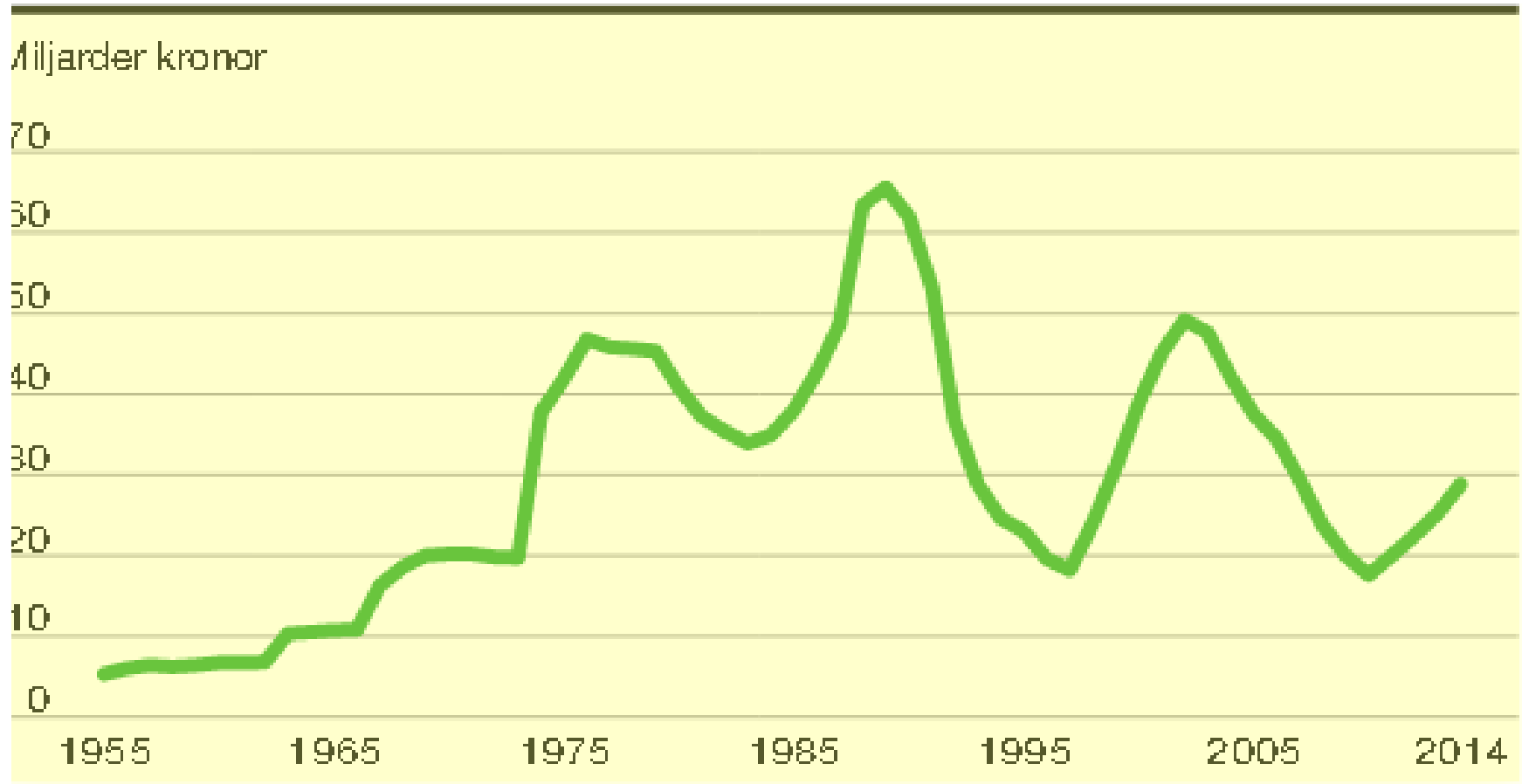
Total first marriage rate (TFMR) for women in Sweden 1960 - 2008



Source: Ohlsson-Wijk (2011:184). Population Studies, Vol. 65, No. 2, 2011, pp. 183-200

Costs in billion SEK for sick leave

source: Social Insurance in Figures 2015



How to measure policy effects? How may policy change individual behaviour?

- Causality through reform studies, natural experiment
- Control for selection, heterogeneity
- Longitudinal studies
- Other approaches: critical junctures
- Comparative studies
- Qualitative studies

How to approach the area of policy outcomes?

- Problem with disregarding aspects that are difficult to measure, for example gradual changes
- Long term trends and development
- Indirect effects
- Interdependencies between various policy areas and other societal context
- Solution: Use various studies and conclude from various sources
- Remember that social science!

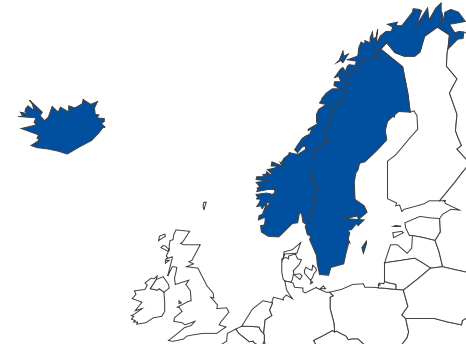
Example of how to study policy outcome:

Parental leave policies and continued childbearing in Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

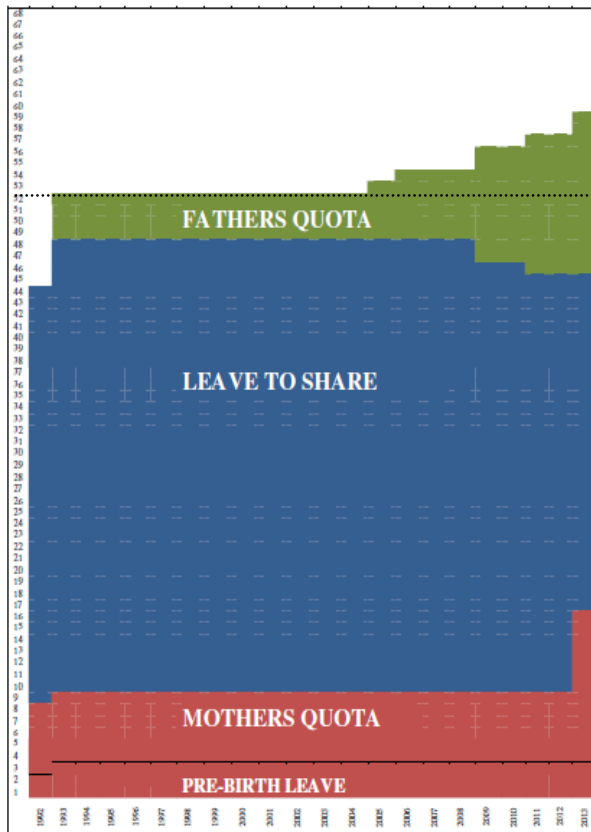


- Connection between parental leave use and fertility
- Comparison between Iceland, Norway and Sweden
- Good comparable, accessible register data on all individuals over time
- In comparison of "similar" countries it is possible to isolate important differences

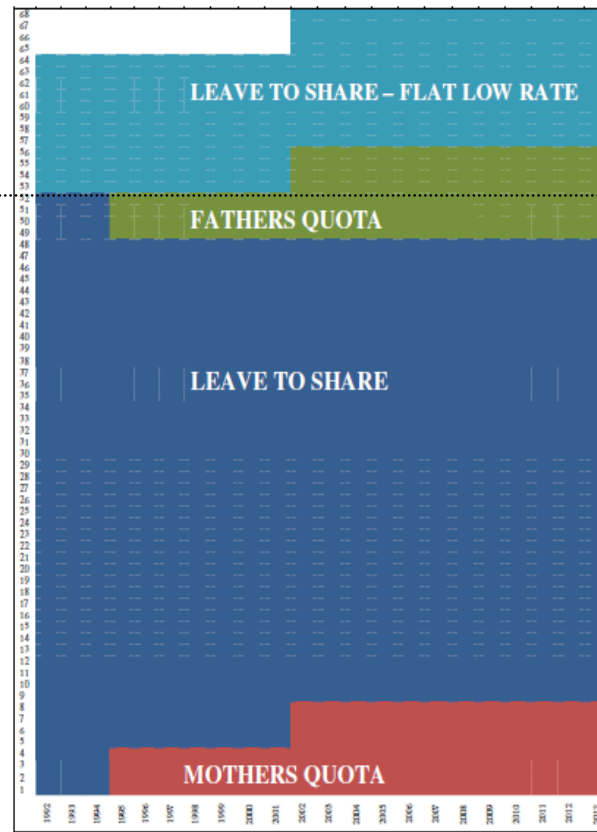
Parental Leave Program in the Nordic countries 1990-2012



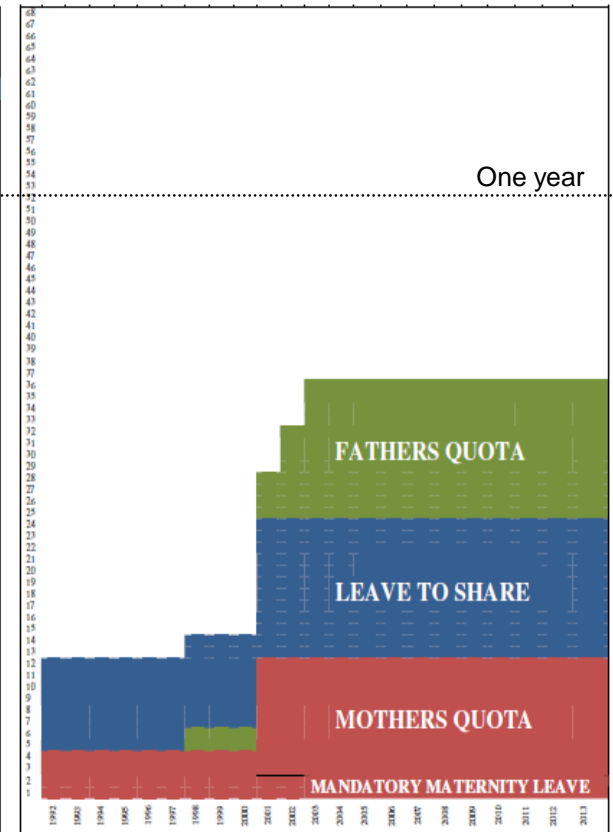
Norway



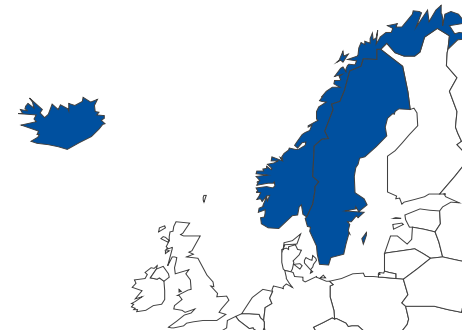
Sweden



Iceland



Research Question

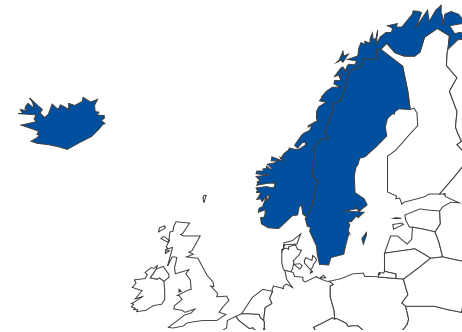


Does father's involvement in childcare has a positive impact on continued childbearing?

Consequences of individual use of parental leave, two approaches

- Relation between fathers' leave use and continued childbearing (selection possible...)
- The causal relationship: Evaluate the effects of the introduction and expansion of the father's quota of the parental leave program

Expected effects and mechanisms



- Reducing opportunity costs of having children
- Ease women's work and thus increase compatibility?
- Signal fathers' commitment?

or....

- Men become child-oriented or more child-oriented men take leave?

Method

- Couples are observed from first birth to a potential second birth (and third)
- Event history analysis- consider whether something happens and how long it takes for something to happen
- Relative risks



Relative risks of second birth by fathers' use of parental leave

Own calculations, register data 1990s-2009

	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
No use	1	1	1
Up to quota	1,20*	1,16**	1,05*
More than quota	1,30**	1,09**	1,05*

Relative risks of third birth by fathers' use of parental leave

Own calculations, register data 1990s-2009

	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
No use	1	1	1
Up to quota	0,89	0,93**	0,86**
More than quota	1,01	0,96**	0,95**

Alternative more strict method comparing before and after quota introduction

- Norway 1993, Sweden 1995
- Attempt to disentangle causality
- Direct effect, not long term, not gradual, no dispersion in society...
- Major tests that no selection (seasonal variation, planned births, subgroups of parents)
- Relative risk of having another birth after quota compared to before

The impact of the fathers' quota on the risk of continued childbearing. Odds ratios for couples "exposed" to quota

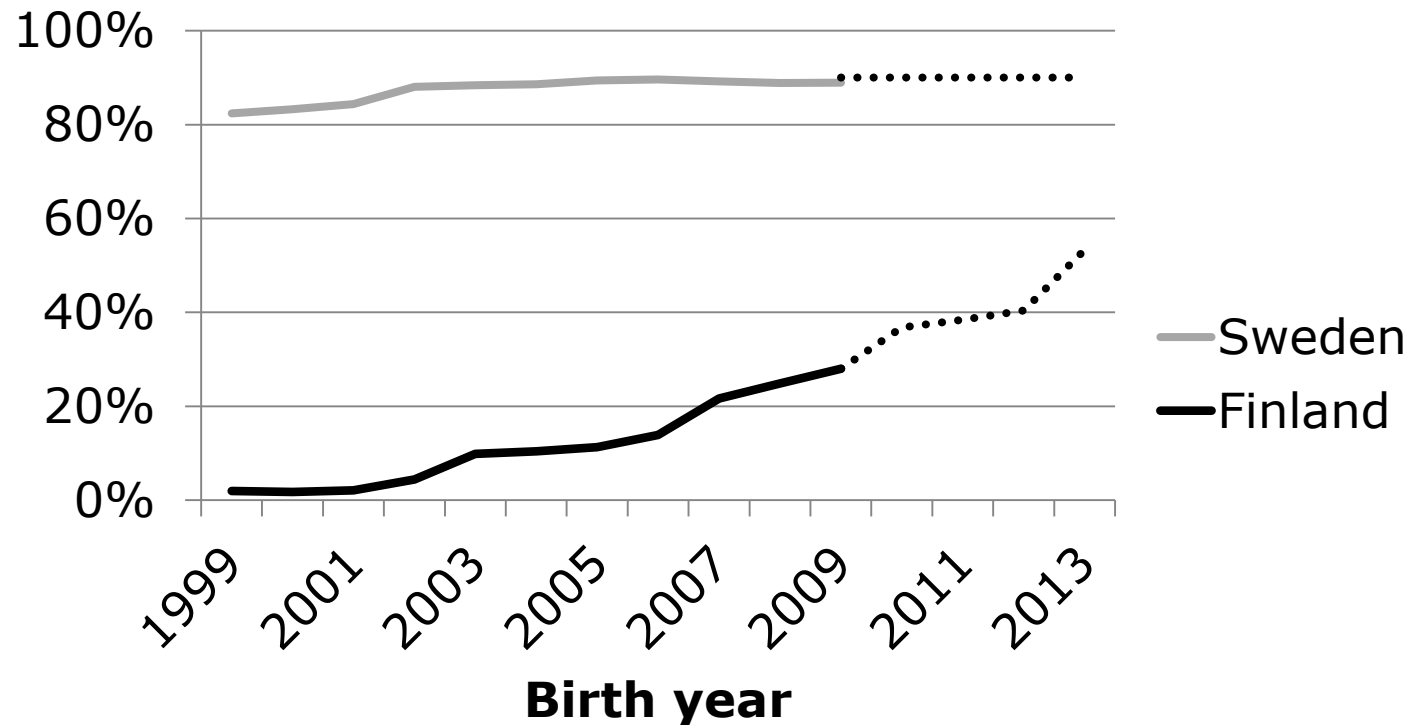
Own calculations, register data, parents followed for 10 years, difference-in-difference approach

	One-child couples		Two-children couples	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Norway	0,99	0,98	0,90	0,94
Sweden	0,94	0,95	1,22**	1,19

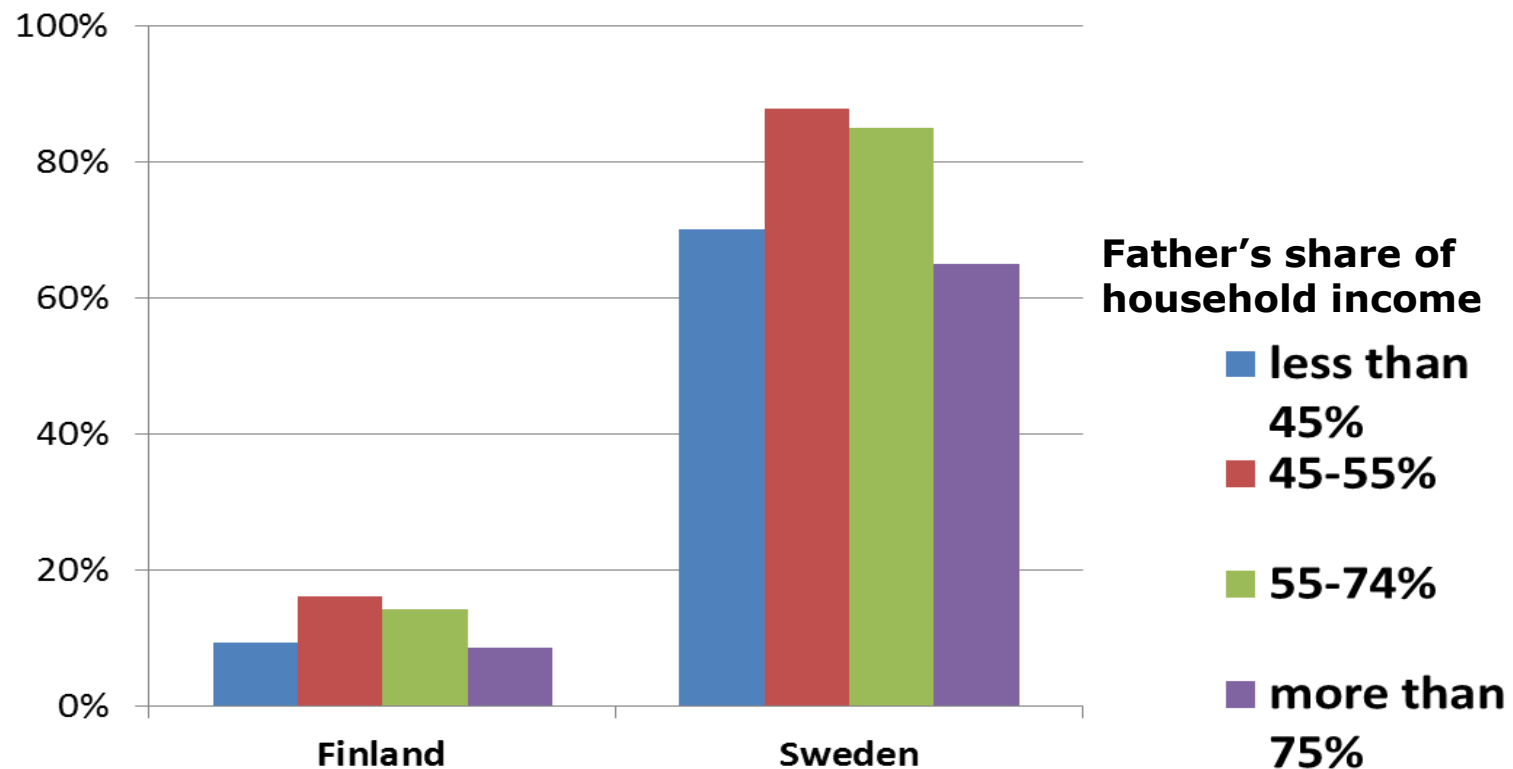
Conclusion

- Nordic family policy developed over long time, sometimes contradicting dimensions
- Outcomes of family policy has to be measured in many ways
- Outcomes of specific policy connected to other social policy and also country-setting
- Difficult, but still important to try to catch effects!

Another example:
**Fathers' crude take-up rates by birth year
1999-2015**



Crude take-up rates by father's share of household income



Change over time

Swedish encouragements for fathers to take leave

1970



2010



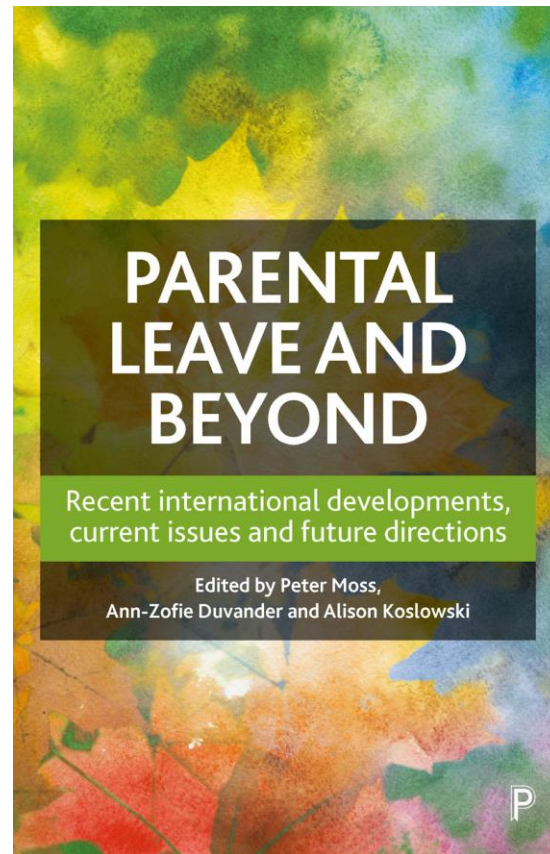
Varmvattnet

Tänk om du bara fick 25 procent av varmvattnet. Så här skulle det se ut om vi delade på varmvattnet på samma sätt som fördelar föräldraledigheten.

How do we approach a “new” situation with “old” policy set-up?

Do we attempt to adapt to economic and technological developments, or
...should we attempt to shape the future to meet ideas of a better life for all?

Assumption: Parental Leave policy builds on relationship to the labour market, but
... low wages, precarious work, low quality work, tension work and care and unsustainable ways to deal with it for environment



Thank you very much for listening!

