



- **Care policies in Nordic countries-  
challenges and continuity**
- **International Network on Leave Policies & Research – 16th  
Annual Seminar**

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# Context

- Nordic care model: Encompassing and relatively expensive 'public service model', about one year **paid parental leave** + extensive **child care services**, facilitating gender- and social equality
- But also **cash for caring** for child (CFC) at home, which often go under the radar in research. CFC schemes have been established in some forms all five Nordic countries, but in last decade important policy changes in SE and NO
- Features of CFC:
  - Providing parents with **a low benefit**. Requires shorter or longer spells of labour market breaks, often without any associated labour market rights

# The paper asks...

- If the uniqueness of the encompassing public service model favouring *gender and social equality been* maintained or have there been fundamental changes to the institutional features of the Nordic child care model in last decade or so?

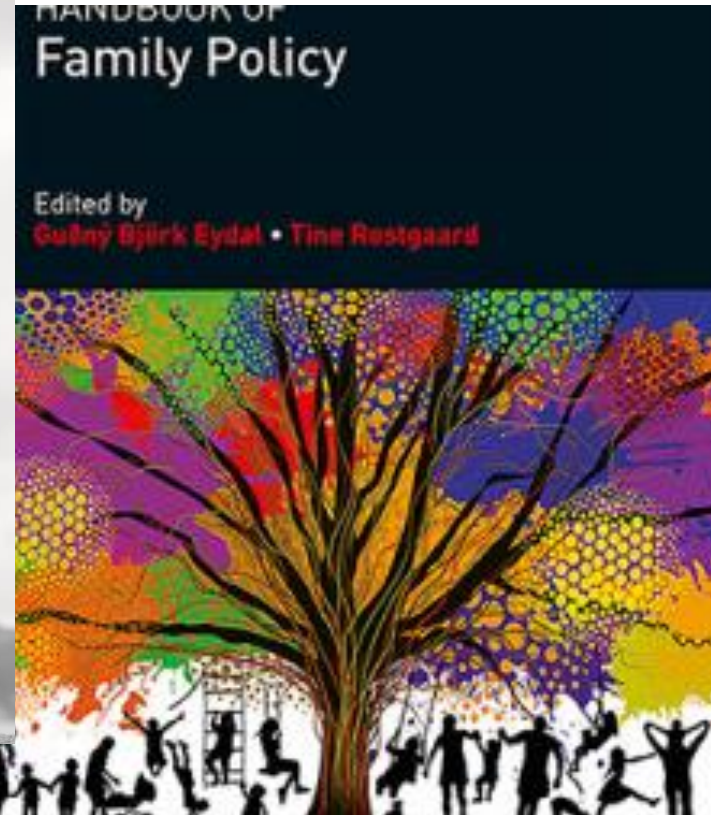
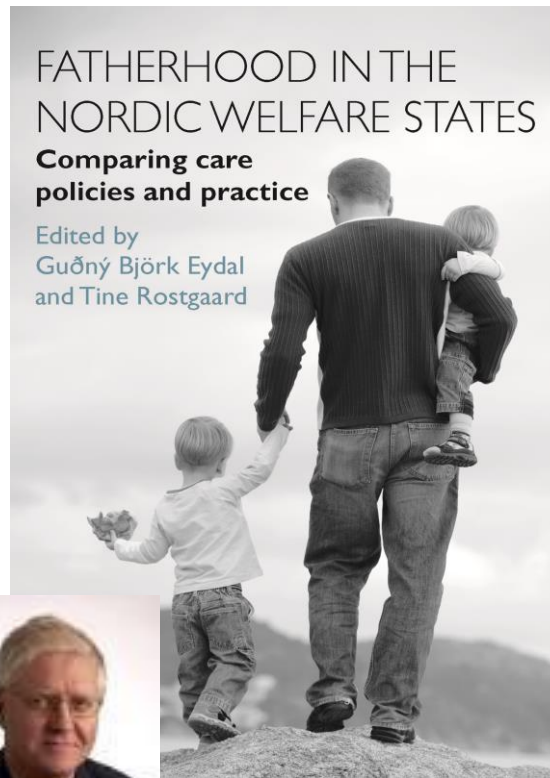
# Re-visited theme 😊

Eydal, Gíslason, Rostgaard, Brandth, Duvander and Lammi-Taskula (2015). *Trends in parental leave in the Nordic countries: Has the march of gender equality halted?* Community, Work and Family



- Eydal and Rostgaard (2011) *Gender equality re-visited. Changes in Nordic child care policies in the 2000s.* Social Policy & Administration
- Does parental leave lead to gender equality? Experiences from the Nordic countries
- Ann-Zofie Duvander, Guðný Björk Eydal, Berit Brandth, Ingólfur V. Gíslason, Johanna Lammi-Taskula, Tine Rostgaard (2019) in Moss, Duvander and Koslowski (eds.) *Parental leave and beyond*

# Draws upon previous projects





# PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

# Institutional elements supporting gender and social equality in parental leave

\*All Nordic countries: by 2019 still generous payments during leave  
9-15 months leave periods + specific father's quota (except DK)

\*Policy changes reflect expansion, except for the case of Iceland that did make cuts in the benefit level after 2008 but is restoring and extending

Paid leave in Nordic countries, percentage of income and covered weeks, 2019

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
% of income	100	70-90	80	100/80	80
Total weeks	50-64	48	39	47-57	69
- only mother (mother's quota/maternity leave)	18	18	13	15	13
<b>- only father (father's quota)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
- father with mother (paternity leave)	2	3	0	2	2







## Effect of father's quota

\*Over time apparent gendered effect in countries with quota

\*In DK and FIN continues social gradient in fathers' leave up-take

Paid parental leave, % of total number of days taken by men, 2000, 2010, 2015  
+ Policy changes from 2008

	2000	2010	2017	Policy changes from 2008
DK	5.5	7.7	10.1	(Still no quota)
FI	4.1	7.1	10.7	9 weeks quota from 2013
IS	3.3	31.7	29.6	2009: Lower ceiling of benefits – gradually being restored and today nearly same level
NO	7.2	14.7	21.0	Quota reduced from 14 to 10 weeks in 2014 but restored to 15 weeks in 2016
SW	13.7	23.9	27.3	Quota extended from 8 to 12 weeks in 2016 and equality bonus abolished

# Ongoing political debate: Proposals in all five countries on more quota

- Finland: to increase fathers quota
- Norway: to give mothers 3 weeks before birth and 6 weeks after but to split the rest between parents 50/50
- Iceland: 5+5+2 promised by minister of social affairs, committee appointed last week
- Sweden: 5+5+5
- Denmark: re-introduction of fathers quota

# Denmark: No quota but governmental campaign

*Leave- take it as a man!*



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# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

## Early establishment of the full-time child care solution

Especially in DK and also SE, already by early 1990s aimed at social equality- care for all children...

Children age 3-6 years enrolled full time/part time in day care institutions and in family day care, % of all children in the age group, 1993

	Full time	Part time	Family day care
Denmark	54	17	6
Finland	27	8	16
Iceland	14	46	3
Norway	36	24	2
Sweden	49	14	14

# Continued investment in the public service model

\*Continuous increase in ECEC reflecting parents' work situation and PISA/social investment strategies.

\*DK investment across all age groups, FI laggard

\*Budget cuts with restrictions in opening hours and larger child groups, quality of the care questioned...

Children in ECEC, 2000 and 2015 as % of respective age groups

	2000	2015	2000	2015	2000	2015
Age	0 years	0 years	1-2 y.	1-2 y.	3-5 y.	3-5 y.
DK	15	18	77	90	91	98
FI	0	1	35	41	67	75
IS	7	7	59	85	92	96
NO	2	4	37	81	78	97
SE	0	0	60	70	86	96



# Policy changes Denmark

- „From 2019: ECEC attendance mandatory for children aged one year in geographical areas considered vulnerable, i.e. areas with high proportion of migrants who are not active in the labour market...Attendance is 25 hours a week for the child, with a focus on cultural and linguistic learning and integration. Should the parent decide not to enrol the child in ECEC, they will not receive the child benefit. The parents are also expected to participate in learning program of a minimum six hours weekly over three weeks, focused on how best to support the child” (Blocksgaard og Rostgaard, 2019 country report)

# Childrens or parents rights to day care

## Social investment vs gender equality

- Denmark....
- Finland added some restrictions
- Iceland no legal rights but parental position if not considered
- Norway emphasis both
- Sweden some restrictions if parents are not studying/in education



# CASH FOR CARE

# CFC, year introduced, implemented by and goals

	Laws on CFC	Implemented by	Goals
DK	Yes 2002	Municipalities	Choice but highly conditioned
FI	Yes 1985	State (+ municipalities)	Justice between parents Choice
IS	No	-	-
NO	Yes 1998	State	Choice Justice More time
SE	Yes 2008	Municipalities	Choice

# Cash remains politically controversial

- \* Low benefits and 'women's trap'
- \* Agenda of choice, justice/equal treatment and municipal flexibility
- \* Children in need deprived of day care

CFC take up, latest years, and policy changes in years of crisis and beyond

	Take- up	Policy changes
DE	Less than 1% (2009-2016) of under 3s	None
FI	57.6% (2010), to 54.9% (2016) of under 3s	None
IS	n.a, only locally implemented	-
NO	79% of 1-year olds and 71% of 2-year olds (1999), to 25% of 1-year olds (2016)	Restricted to 1 year olds in 2012 but benefits higher in 2014 and 2017
SE	3.9% of all children aged 1-3 or 2.1% of children in municipalities with CFC (2014)	Law abolished in January 2016

# Conclusion

- All the countries have seen proposals of increased quota for fathers (except Denmark)
- **Denmark** provides paid parental leave and extensive day care for young children, thus despite fathers quota a clear sign of political will to support dual earner-dual carer
- **Finland**, provides fathers quota + day care but has taken a different path with its popular CFC-scheme, hence children enter preschool much later
- **Iceland** comparatively shorter leave and day care between 1-2 year olds – does not fully live up to the dual earner- dual carer model
- **Norway** has increased fathers quota and decreased CFC paid only for one year olds- if not for CFC full dual earner-carer model
- **Sweden** abolished CFC and extended father's quota to three months, clear sign of political will to support dual earner-dual carer



Fathers quota months	Day care 1-2 year olds	Cash for care
<b>3 +</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>None</b>
IS, NO, SE	DK	DK, IS, SE
<b>-3</b>	<b>70-80%</b>	<b>1-2 year</b>
FI	IS, NO, SE	NO
<b>None</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>1-3 year</b>
DK	FI	FI



- **Thank you**