

CHALLENGES OF LEAVE POLICIES AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Vilnius, Lithuania

*Does longer PPL translate into more equal
work and care?*



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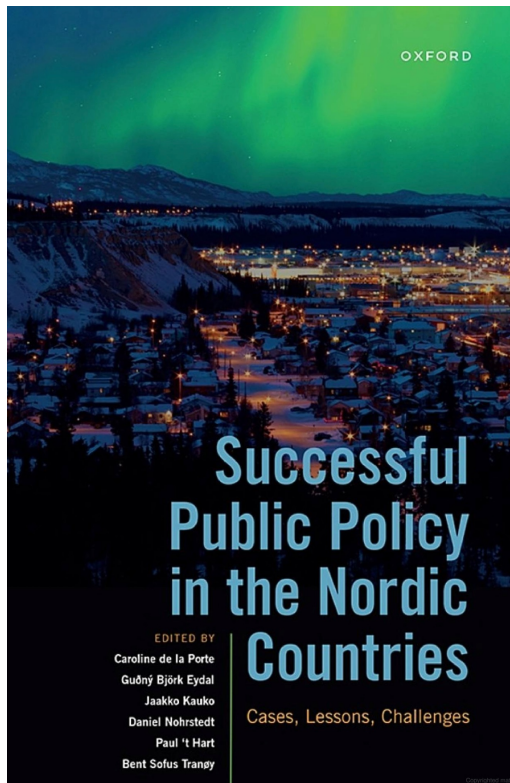
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Scouting for successful policies



- “In fact, detailed academic case studies of public **policy successes** have been comparatively **rare** worldwide. This has started to change very recently ... as scholars begin to recognize the **importance** of not just counting but **understanding government’s positive accomplishments** ...” (Howlet et al. 2020)
- An international project lead by Paul ‘t Hart
- Chapter 18: *Paid Parental Leave in Iceland: Increasing Gender Equality at Home and on the Labour Market Through Paid Earmarked Parental Leave*, Ásdís Aðalbjörg Arnalds, Guðný Björk Eydal, and Ingólfur V. Gíslason

Analytical framework of
the presentation



Hart et al.

I. Programmatic assessment: Purposeful and valued action	II. Process assessment: Thoughtful and fair policymaking practices	III. Political assessment: Stakeholder and public legitimacy for the policy
<p>A well-developed and empirically feasible <i>public value proposition</i> and theory of change (ends–means relationships) underpins the policy</p> <p><i>Achievement</i> of (or considerable momentum towards) the policy’s intended and/or other <i>beneficial social outcomes</i></p> <p>Costs/benefits associated with the policy are distributed equitably in society</p>	<p>The policy process allows for <i>robust deliberation</i> about and <i>thoughtful consideration</i> of: the relevant values and interests; the hierarchy of goals and objectives; contextual constraints; the (mix of) policy instruments; and the institutional arrangements and capacities necessary for effective policy implementation</p> <p>Stakeholders overwhelmingly experience the making and/or delivery of policy as <i>just and fair</i></p>	<p>A relatively broad and deep political <i>coalition</i> supports the policy’s value proposition, instruments and current results</p> <p>Association with the policy <i>enhances the political capital</i> of the responsible policymakers</p> <p><i>Association with the policy enhances the organisational reputation</i> of the relevant public agencies</p>
IV. Temporal assessment		
<p>Endurance of the <i>policy’s value proposition</i> (i.e. the proposed ‘high-level’ intent and commitment underpinning its rationale and design, combined with the flexible adaptation of its ‘on-the-ground’ and ‘programmatic’ features to changing circumstances and in relation to performance feedback)</p> <p>Degree to which the policy’s programmatic, process and political <i>performance is maintained over time</i></p> <p>Degree to which the policy confers <i>legitimacy on the broader political system</i></p>		

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Organization of my presentation



1. Icelandic PPL
(Processes/Politics)
2. Programmatic assessment: Did the policies reach its dual aim to ensure children with care from both parents and enhance reconciliation of work and care?
3. Endurance?
4. Discussion: Iceland in the Nordic context



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Picture by Johan Bavman with curtesy
<https://www.iohanbavman.se/swedish->

Twofold aim of the PPL act

- , “...to ensure children’s care from both their fathers and mothers
- ...to enable both women and men to co-ordinate family life and work outside the home”
- The Act on maternity/paternity and parental leave nr. 95/2000



From 3+3+3 to 6+6



	First parent	Second parent	Joint rights to be used as the parents wished	Transferable rights
Original law in 2000	3	3	3	
Extended to 10 months in 2020	4	4	2	
Extended to 12 months in 2021	6	6	-	1.5 month each parent

All parents included and high flexibility



- Mothers obligated to take leave first two weeks after birth, but leave can otherwise be used **as parents like** during the 2 years after birth + they can take leave simultaneously
- Both parents are entitled to paid leave **regardless of custody/family form/gender/residency etc.** but the custodial parent must give consent for the access to the child
- Only in cases of **one (solo) parent** the parent is given the **right to all 12 months** (and in exceptions like if the other parent in prison, in hospital etc.)
- **Financed** the birth leave fund that is financed by an insurance levy from employers (in total 5.4%, but 0.65% are paid to the birth leave fund)
- Universal for non-working/students, but 80% of previous wages for working parents
- From 2000-2004 no income ceiling but in 2004 relatively high ceiling implemented- cut during crisis and still not fully restored

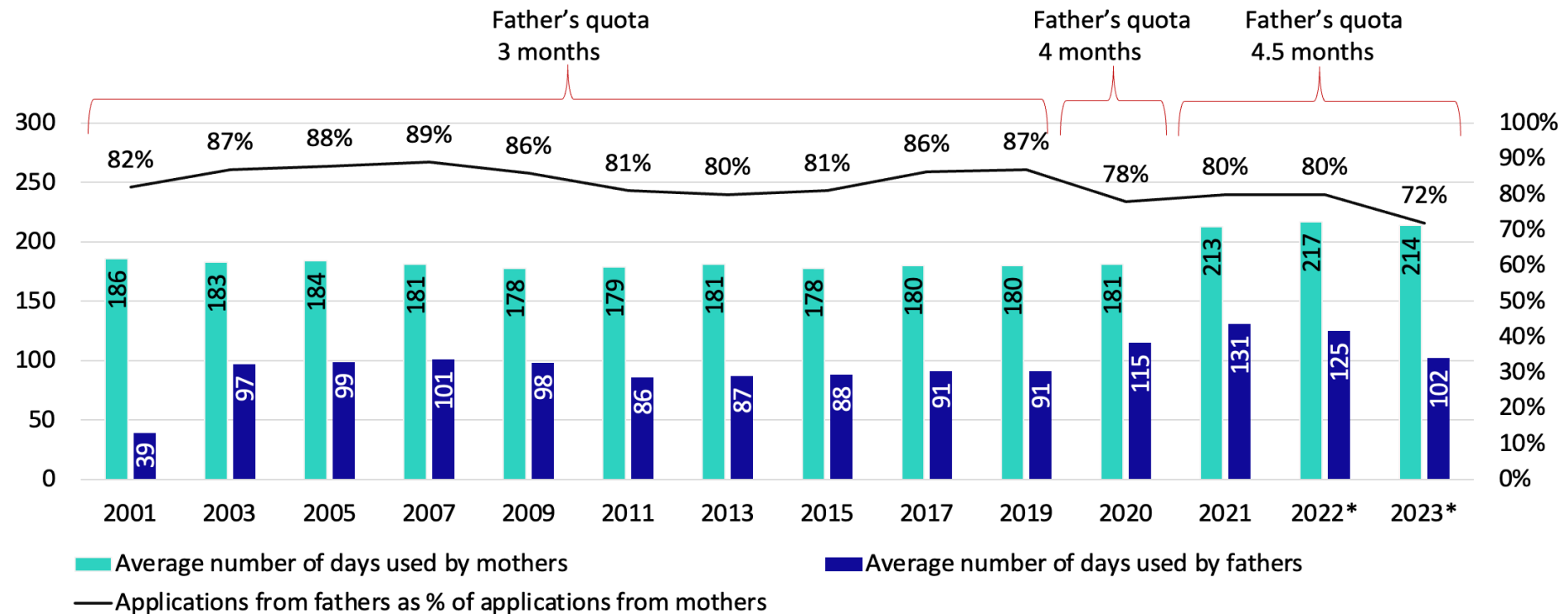


Successful process and politics?

- ✓ Thoughtful and fair policy making and stakeholders experience the making of the policy as **just and fair**
- ✓ High level of **legitimacy**: Political coalition support for the policy value proposition, instruments and current results
- ✓ Association with the policy enhances the **political capital** of the policymakers

2. Programme: Did the policies reach its dual aim, to ensure children with care from both parents and enhance reconciliation of work and care?

Parental leave take-up, before and after the extension of the leave

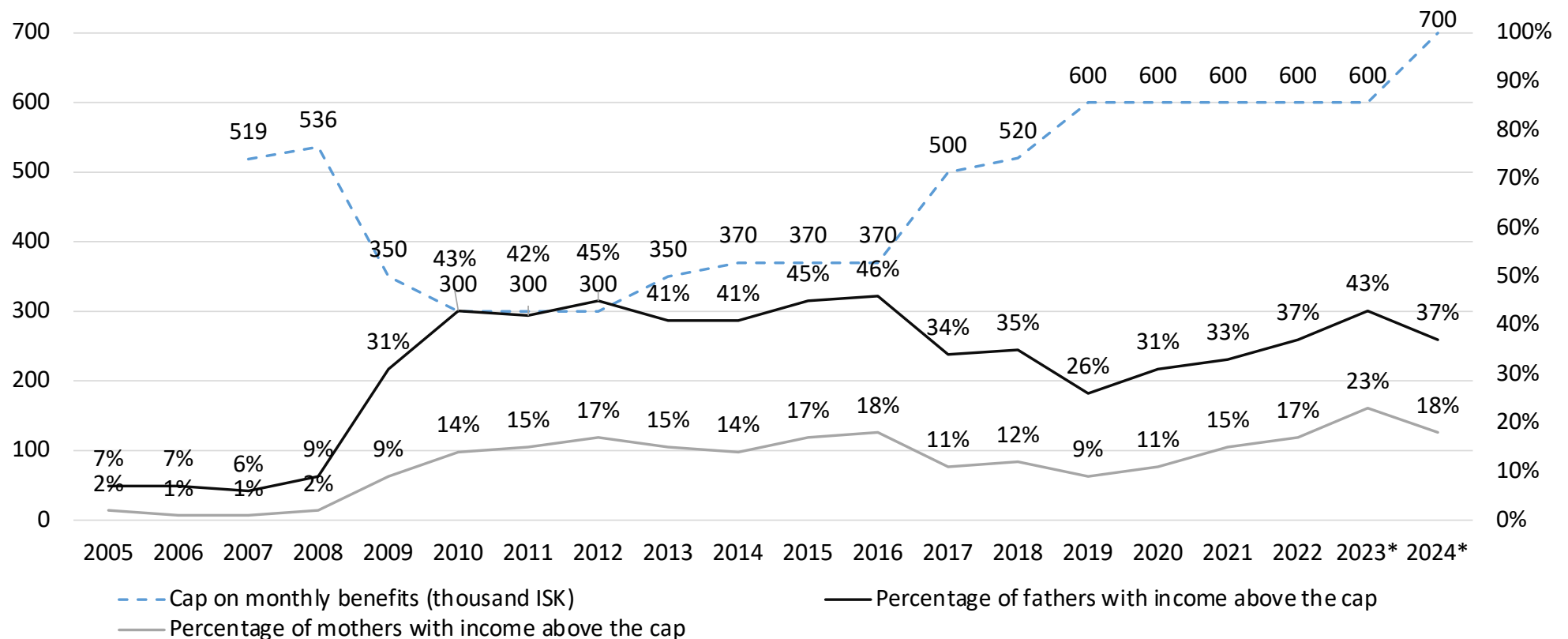


*Numbers for 2022 and 2023 are preliminary

Statistics from the Birth Leave Fund

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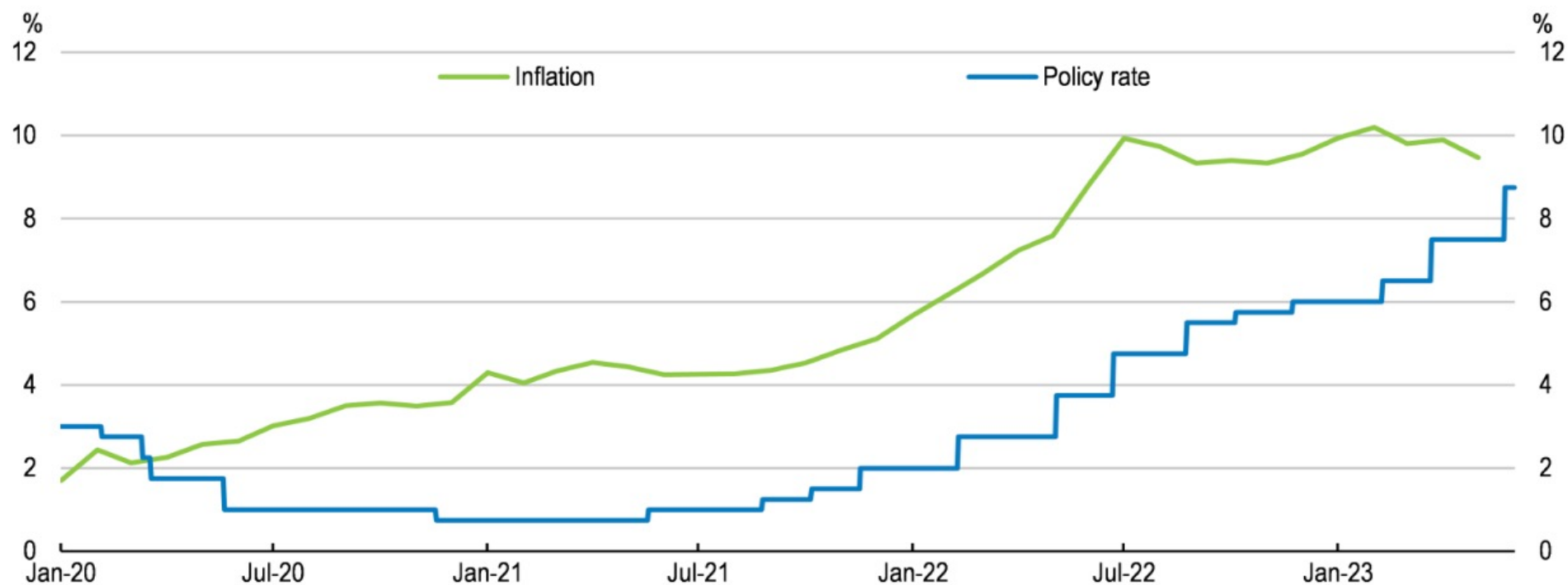
Fathers' take-up is associated with the cap on parental leave benefits



*Preliminary numbers for 2023 and 2024

Inflation is persistent

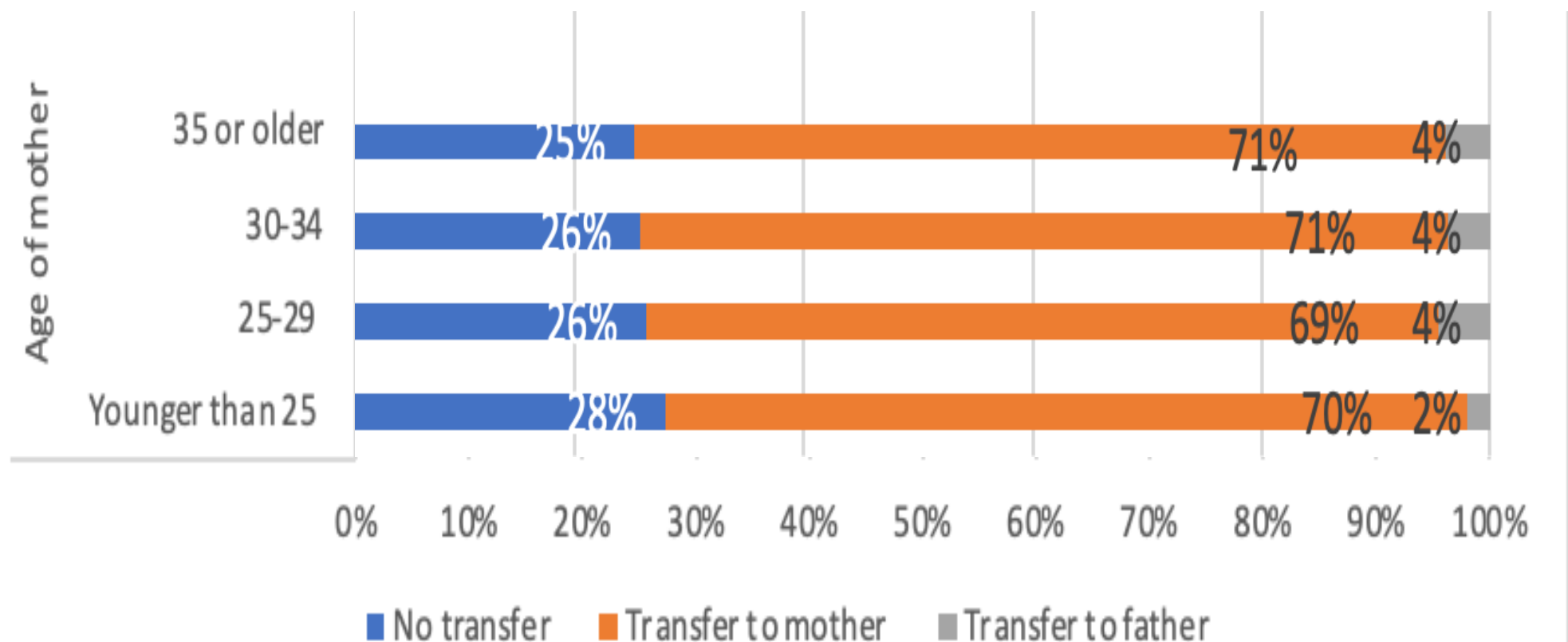
Consumer price inflation and key policy interest rate



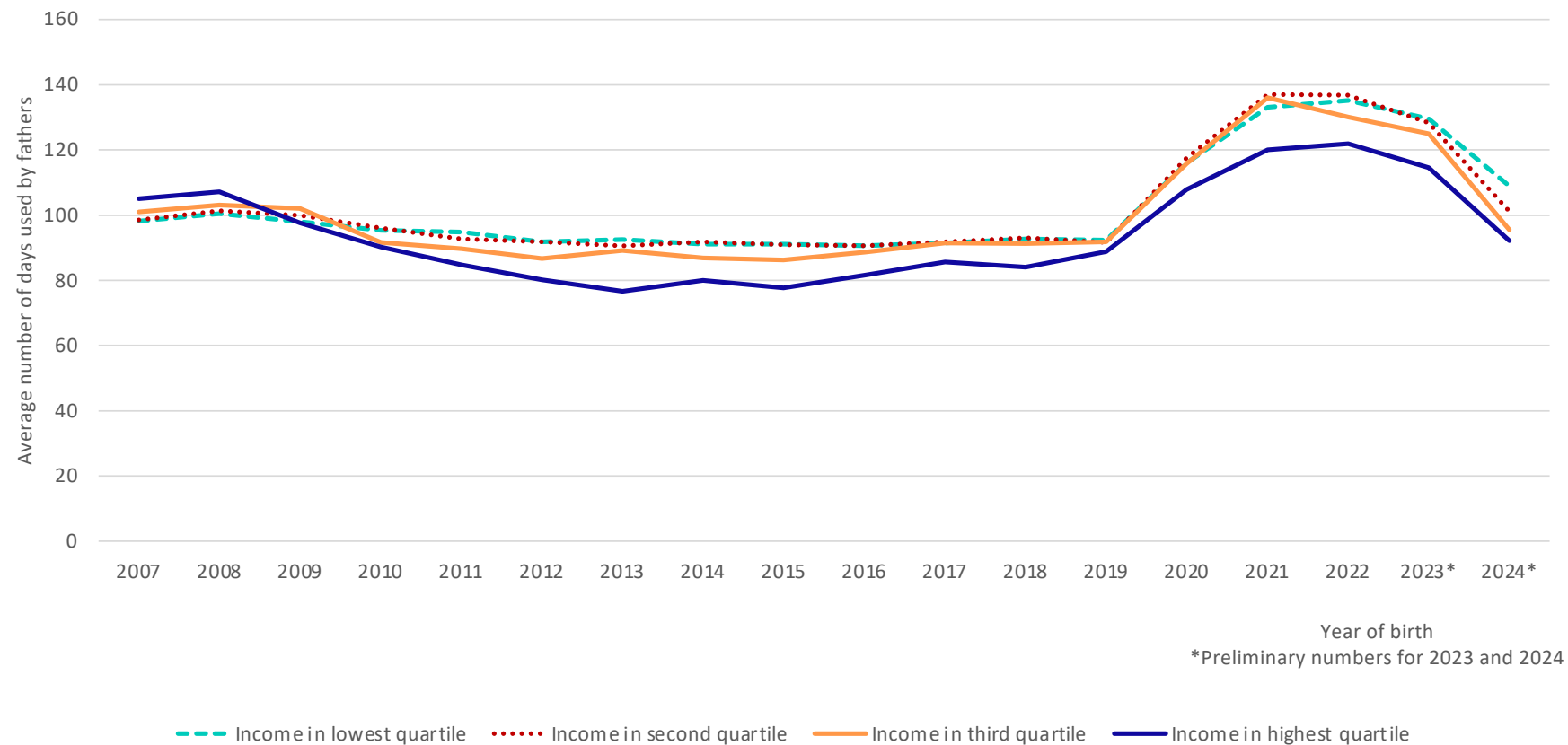
Note: Inflation refers to national headline consumer price inflation.

Source: Central Bank of Iceland; OECD, Consumer Prices database.

Transferring weeks? (2022)



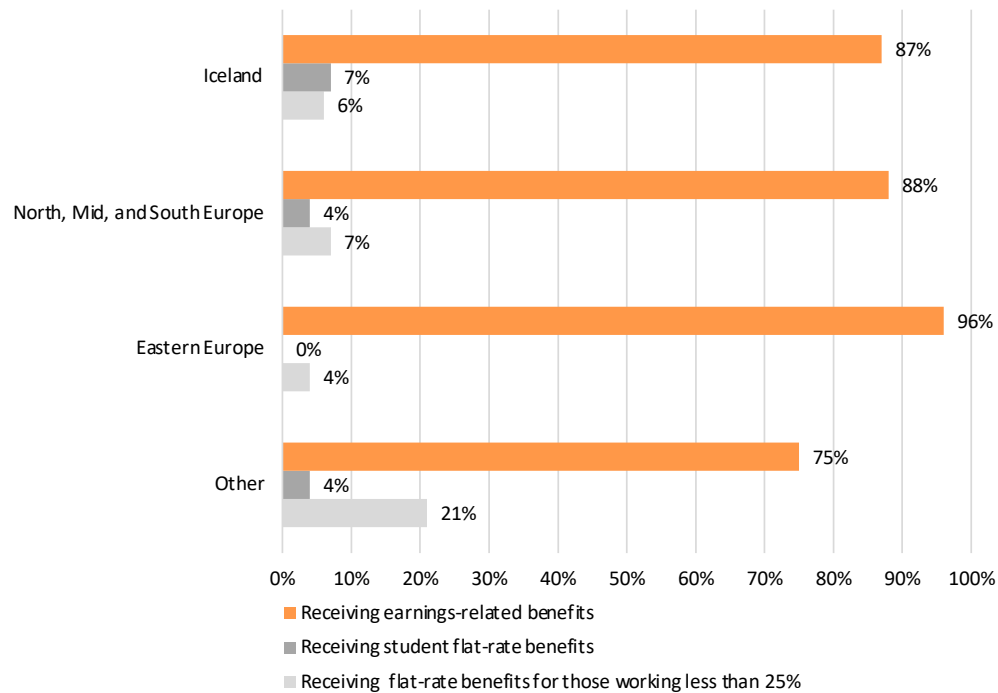
Leave use of fathers by income



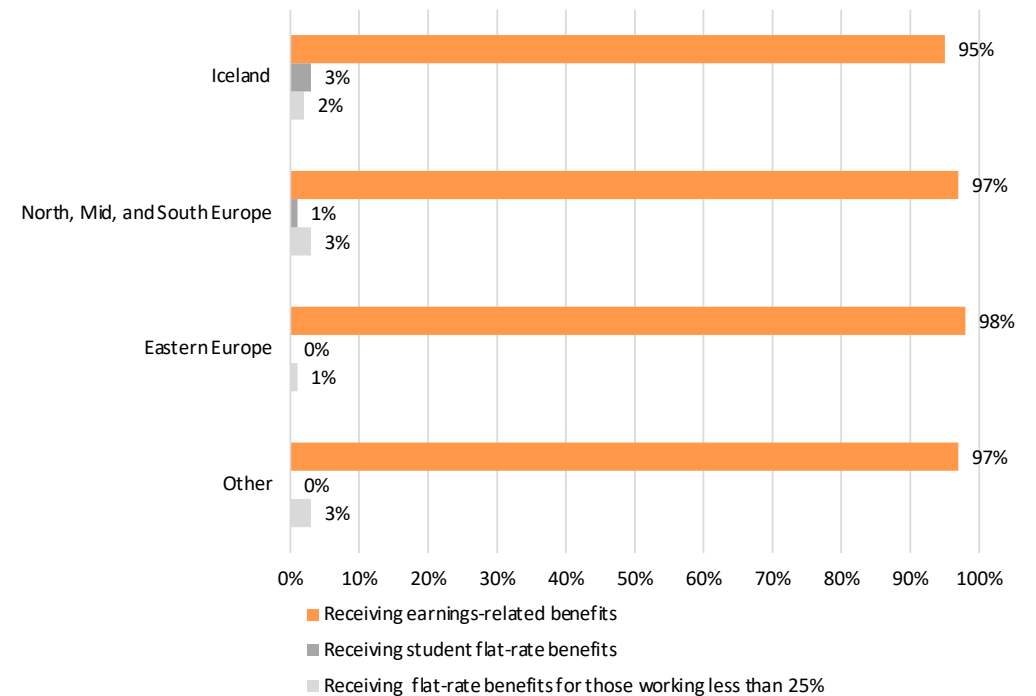
Eligibility and country of origin

- Statistics from the Parental leave Fund, 2019

Mothers



Fathers

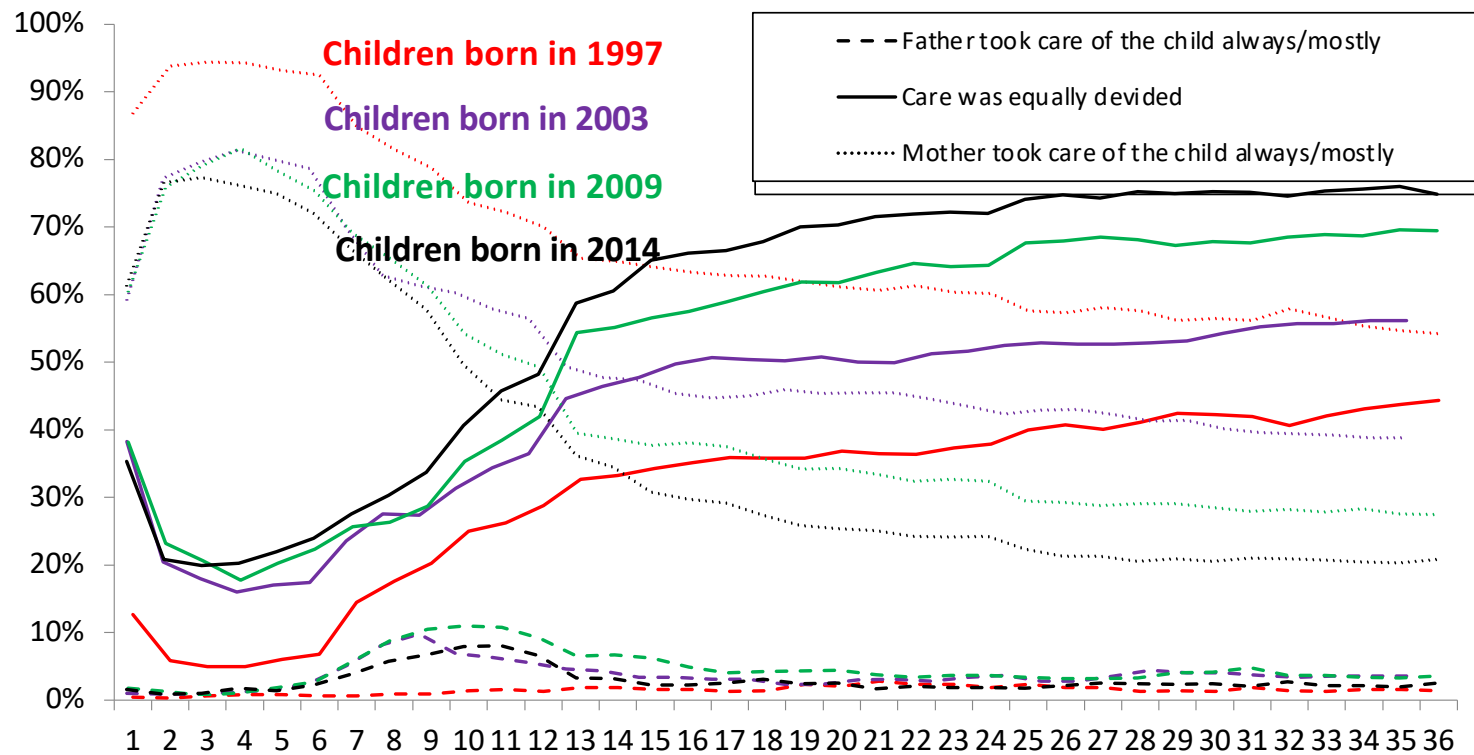


Repeated surveys: Equal right to earn and care

New survey:

Round	2001	2007	2014	2018	2023
Data collection method	Mail survey	Mail and web survey	Web survey	Web survey + data from BLF	Web survey + data from BLF!
Population	Parents of first-borns in 1997	Parents of first-borns in 2003	Parents of first-borns in 2009	Parents of first-borns in 2014	Parents of all children born in 2019 and 2021
Responses	890	874	1218	944	3729
Response rate	57%	56%	63%	57%	46%
Why?	Last cohort before law	Father's quota fully implemented	2008 economic crisis	A decade from full implementation	Extension of the leave

The division of care between married / cohabiting parents during the day



Is there a relationship between length of paternity leave and involvement in care?

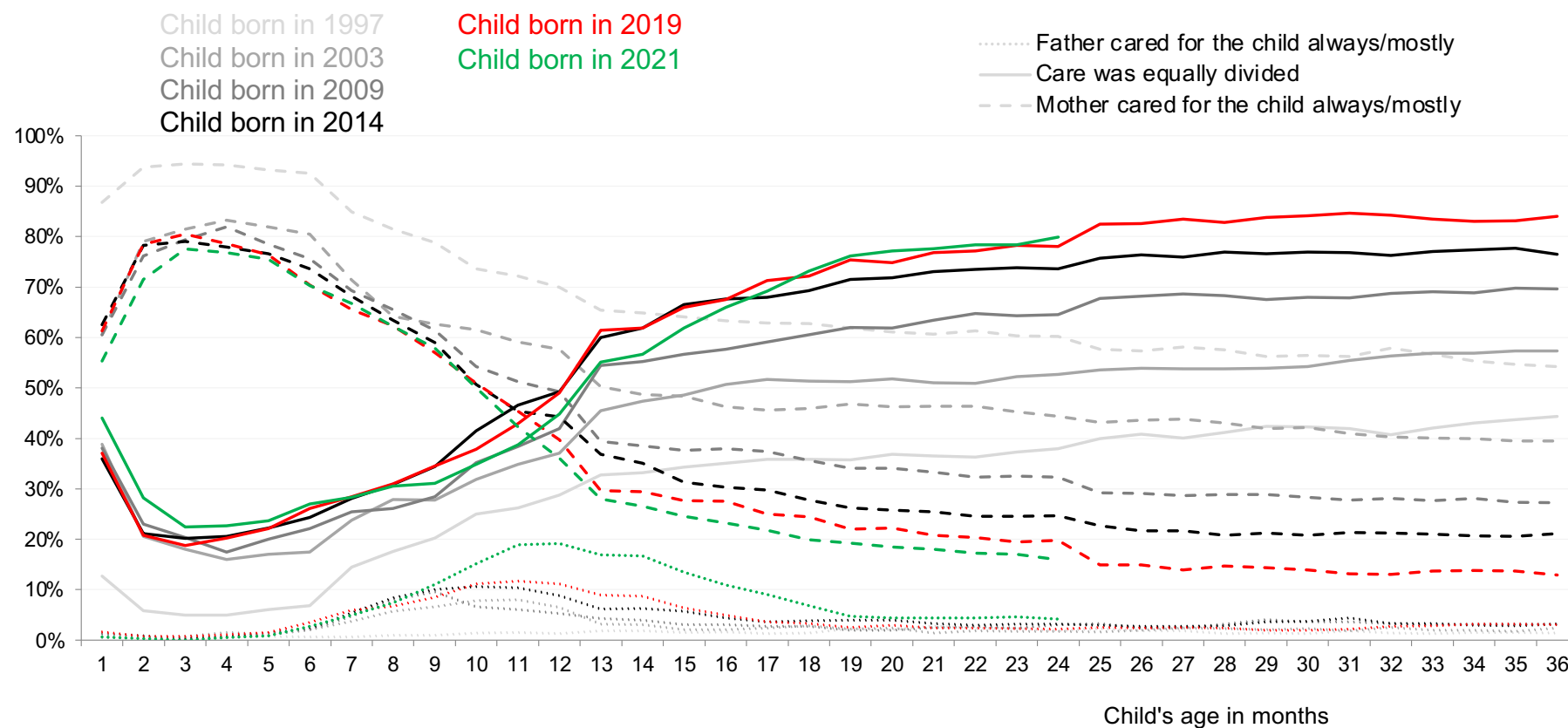


- The results from these studies show that there is a significant difference between the involvement of fathers in the daily care of their children depending on how long paid parental leave they take; the longer the leave, the higher involvement of fathers during the first three years



Division of care between parents

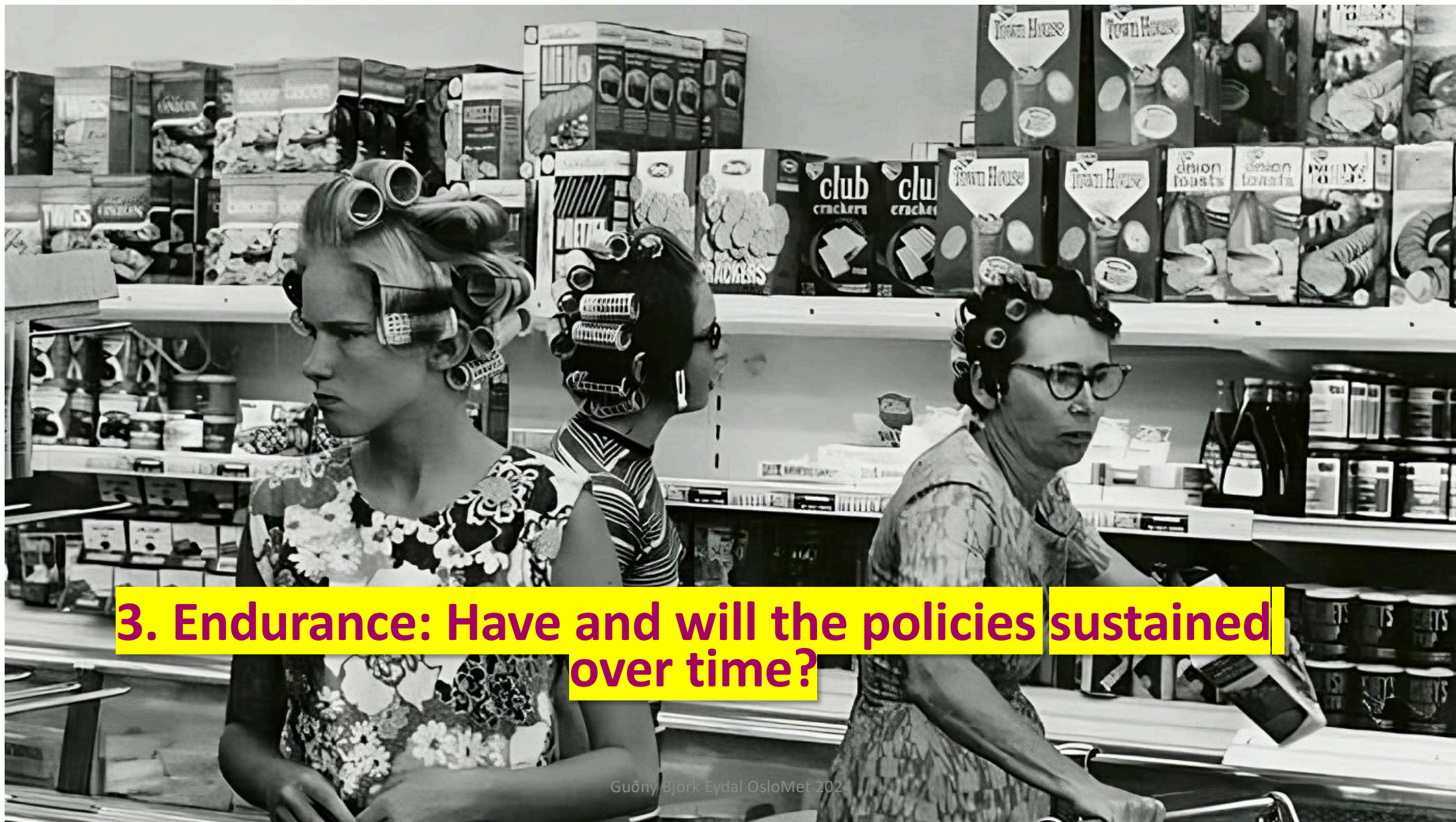
- married and cohabiting parents with one child



Programmatic success?

- Our studies shows clearly **that parents are dividing the care of their young children more equally** after the law came into effect and fathers take active part in care during the first three years
- and that **parents working hours and labour market participation has become more equal** after the law came into force
- But.... mothers still share the lion share of care + there is a care gap between preschool placement and paid parental leave, most often bridged by mothers....

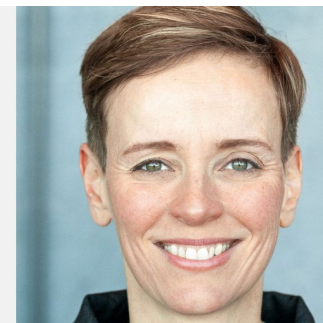
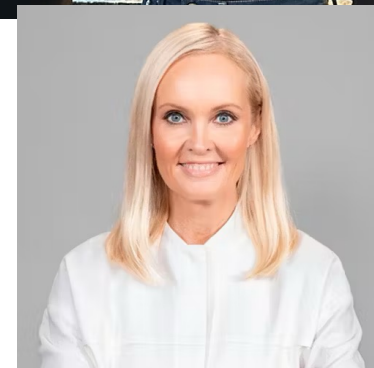




3. Endurance: Have and will the policies sustained over time?



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A photograph of five Nordic flags (Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland) flying on tall poles against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The flags are arranged in a diagonal line from the bottom left towards the top right. The Norwegian flag is on the far left, followed by the Finnish flag, the Swedish flag, the Danish flag, and the Icelandic flag on the far right.

4. Process and politics: Icelandic PPL in the Nordic context

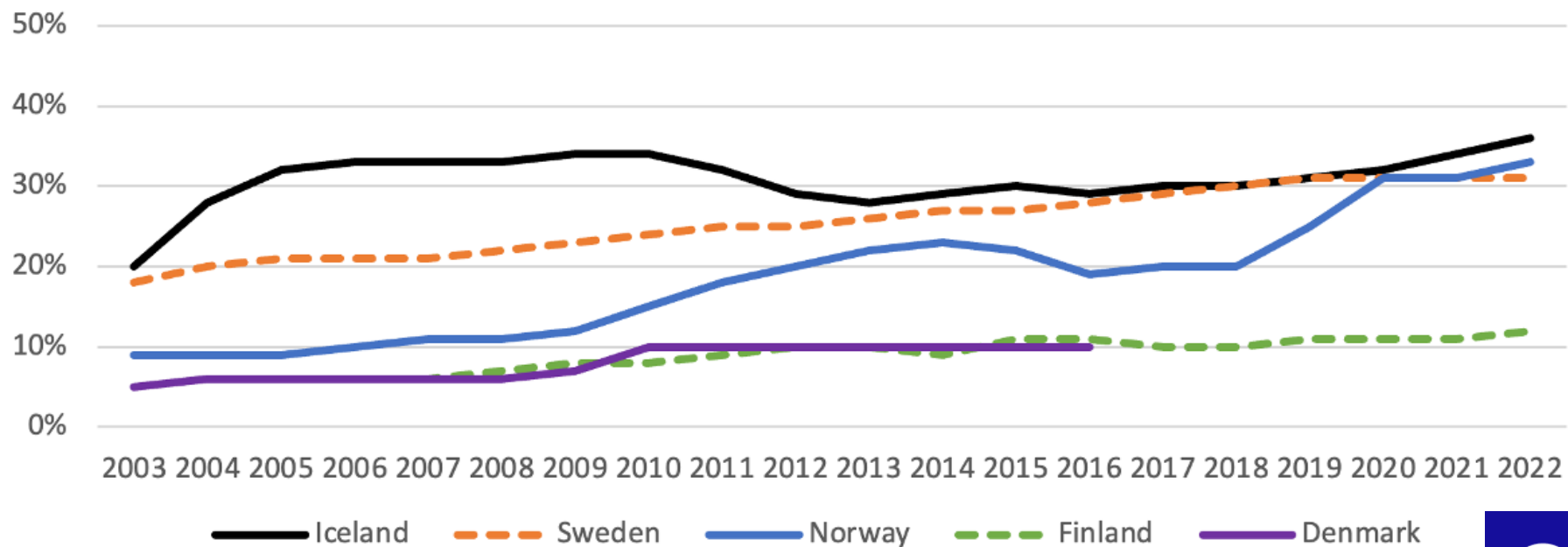
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Nordic countries 2024

Number of weeks	Total	Only father	Father with mother
Denmark	50	8	2
Finland	60	16	3
Iceland	52	18	0
Norway	47/57	15-19	2
Sweden	69	13	2

Percentage of the total number of days used by fathers in the Nordic countries in 2003 – 2022

NOSOSCO, 2024



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Nordic countries and OECD: Public spending on family benefits, enrolment in day care, and total fertility rate, 2018 or last available

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	OECD average
Family benefits % of GDP *	3.31	2.89	3.34	3.28	3.42	2.56
-cash	1.27	1.11	1.03	1.22	1.29	1.35
-services	2.04	1.78	2.32	1.96	2.13	0.98
-Tax breaks for fam.	-	-	-	0.9	-	0.23
Enrolment in ECEC**						
-0-2-year-olds	54.3	36.9	48.8	59.2	47.6	35.9
-3-5-year-olds	97.0	88.4	96.7	97.3	95.2	86.4
Total fertility rate 2023***	1.55	1.32	1.59	1.41	1.52	1.58

*OECD family data base, n.d., Chart PF1.1.A. Public spending on family benefits.

** OECD family data base, n.d., Chart PF3.2.A./PF3.2.E. Enrolment in early education and care services.

***NOSOSCO, 2024

Thank you

Picture by Johan Bavman with curtesy
<https://www.johanbavman.se/swedish-dads/>

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