

Father-inclusive family policies: challenges and recommendations

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Fatherhood in flux

- Fathers – new cultural scripts from ‘father right’ to ‘father love’?
- Fathers in crisis- unable to care or provide cash?
- Behaviour- increase in care time/ increase in residential separation (Gershuny, Lamb)

Paternity leave and men's use of parental leave

Policy

- *Paternity leave* a statutory entitlement to enable a father to be absent from work for a period of time when a child is born.
- *Parental leave* a statutory entitlement to be absent from work after initial early maternity and paternity leave.

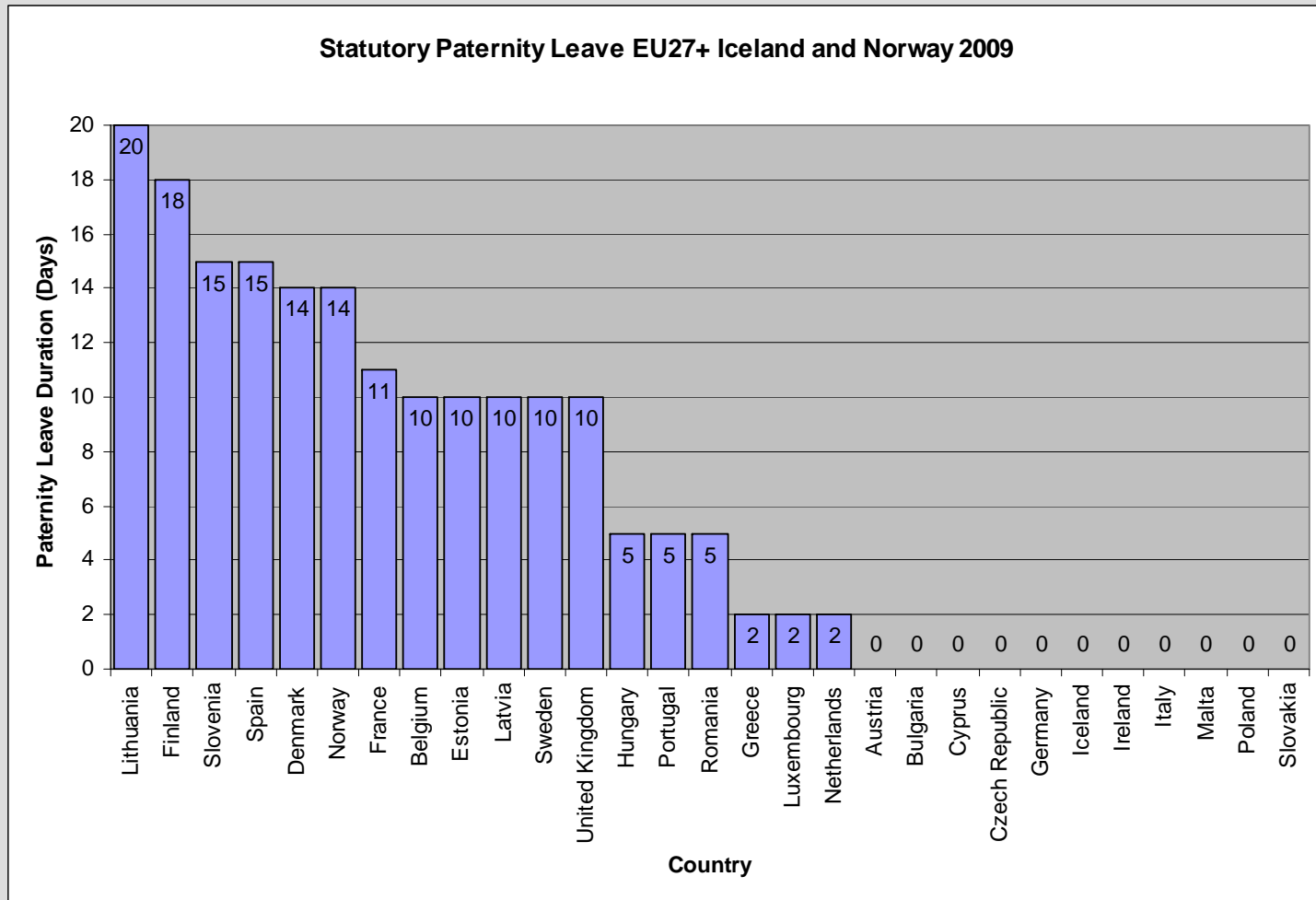
Goals

- Work-family balance; gender equity, child-development, fertility etc
- Macro/ distal context to enhance *paternal availability* to infant with the potential for direct *paternal interaction* (Lamb, et al 1987) and financial *paternal capital* (Pleck, 2007)

*“Real men aren’t
afraid to take
paternity leave.”*



Paternity leave provision



Source: Moss & Fusilier, 2009; Moss & Kortinus, 2008; EU 2007a; Anxo et al., 2007; Plantenga & Remery, 2005.

Cultural attitudes to paternity leave across EU

- Signal of commitment, family togetherness and personal identity for younger cohorts.
“constitutes a statement to the outside world that this family in particular, is to be understood as a forum of mutual understanding”.
(cross-national study Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania and Malta, Callus, 2005)
- Culturally normative and popular. Shorter than parental leave *“not as emotionally charged”* (Lammi-Taskula, 2007).

Parental leave- dimensions

- an individual or family entitlement
- length
- payment
- flexibility

Policy experimentation to increase paternal use

- **Penalty** for not using: use it or family lose it (e.g. Norway)
- **Incentives** to use: bonus payment, time
 - Finland : 12 ‘bonus’ days if take 2 weeks (for father)
 - Germany: 2 months extra paid ParL if father takes 2 months of ParL (for family)
 - Portugal: 15 days ParL at full earnings if taken immediately after MatL (otherwise unpaid) (for father)
- **Compulsion**: 5 days paternity leave obligatory in Portugal
- **Systems** radical reform **Iceland 3+3+3 (80% income)** “natural experiment” *Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave Bill* 2000,

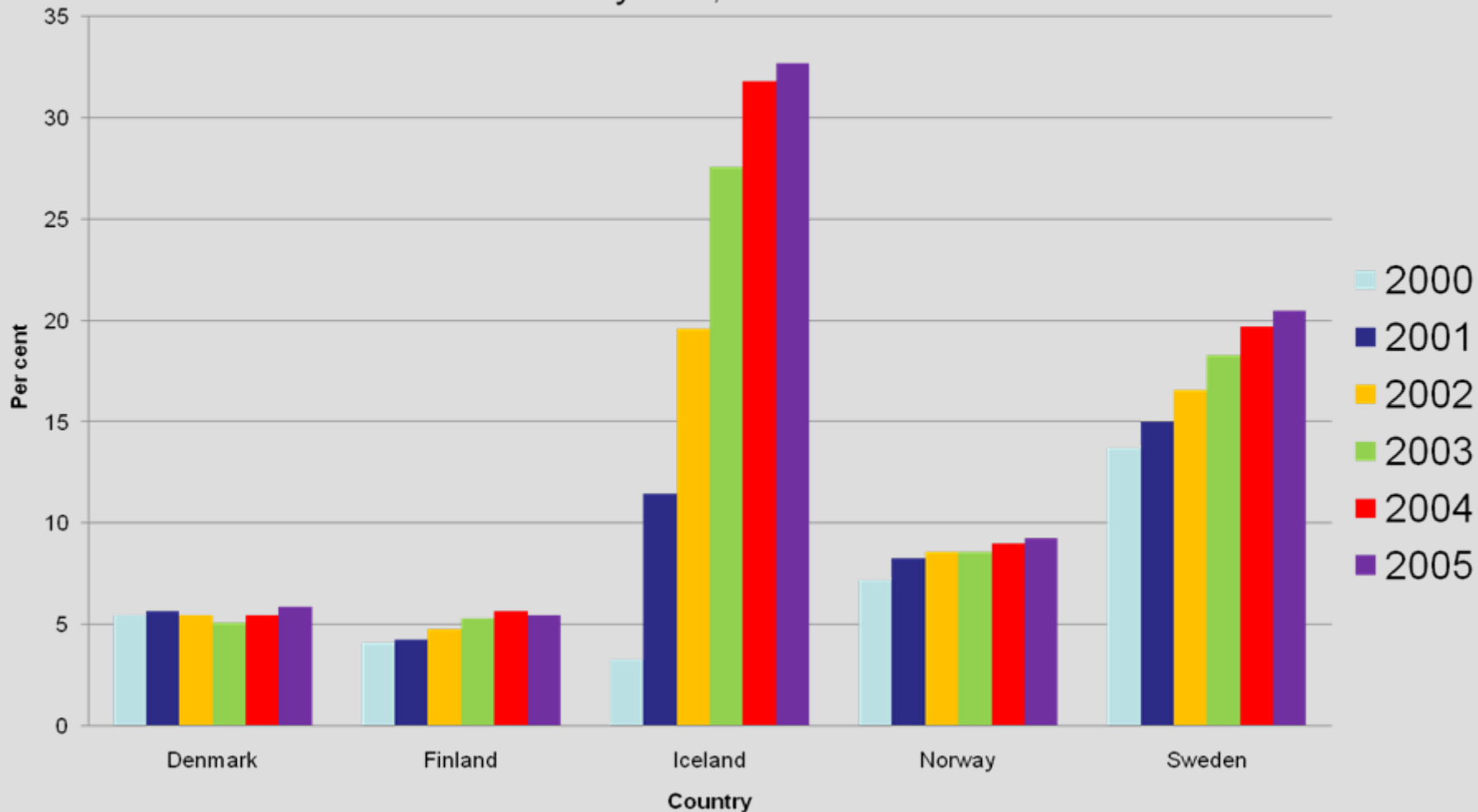
What works?

- Non-transferable individual entitlements
 - Father “branding” (“daddy days”, fathers’ month)
- High income replacement (50% +)

The impact of public policy: Norway

	Percentage of fathers who use leave	Number of weeks of paid parental leave available for fathers*
1988	0.6	16
1989	1.0	18
1990	1.7	22
1991	2.0	24
1992	2.3	27
1993	4.1	29 + 4
1994	45	29 + 4
1995	57	29 + 4
1996	61	29 + 4
1997	75	29 + 4
1998	80	29 + 4

Nordic countries: Percentage of total number of benefit days used by fathers in the event of pregnancy, childbirth and adoption during the years, 2000-2005



Social Security in the Nordic Countries 2005, 2007 (Eydal & Gíslason, 2008)

What do we know about impact of parental leave?

- Job protected paid parental (mostly maternal) leave associated with lower rates of infant mortality, better infant/ child health, and high rates of breast-feeding (Galtry, Ruhm). Largest effect after 10 weeks.
- ‘High’ take-up fathers (20% + of leave days) associated with more engagement with children, more housework and general reduction in work hours (Hass)
- Daddy quota ‘home alone’ fathers report more awareness of infant life ‘slow time’ than fathers having ‘home together’ leave (Brandth and

Impact- benefits of paternal leave

- Paternal leave taking boosts fathers' involvement in care of infant (Tanaka & Waldfogel, 2007; Haas & Hwang, 2008; O'Brien, 2009; Eydal & Gíslason, 2008)
- Improves later parenting outcomes - reading to child at 3 years (Dex, 2007).
- Fertility and couple stability gains (Sweden, Duvander, 2009, 2010)
- Duration matters - 2 weeks

Recommendations

- National bodies should explore systems to recognise and support caring activities by fathers in families, in particular, consider statutory leave provision for fathers at the time of a child's birth (paternity leave) or later, in the early years of a child's life (parental leave).
- Policies should be guided by the emerging comparative evidence on design features which promote paternal utilization.

Parental leave: UK history

