

The Family in Norwegian Society

Norwegian Life and Society

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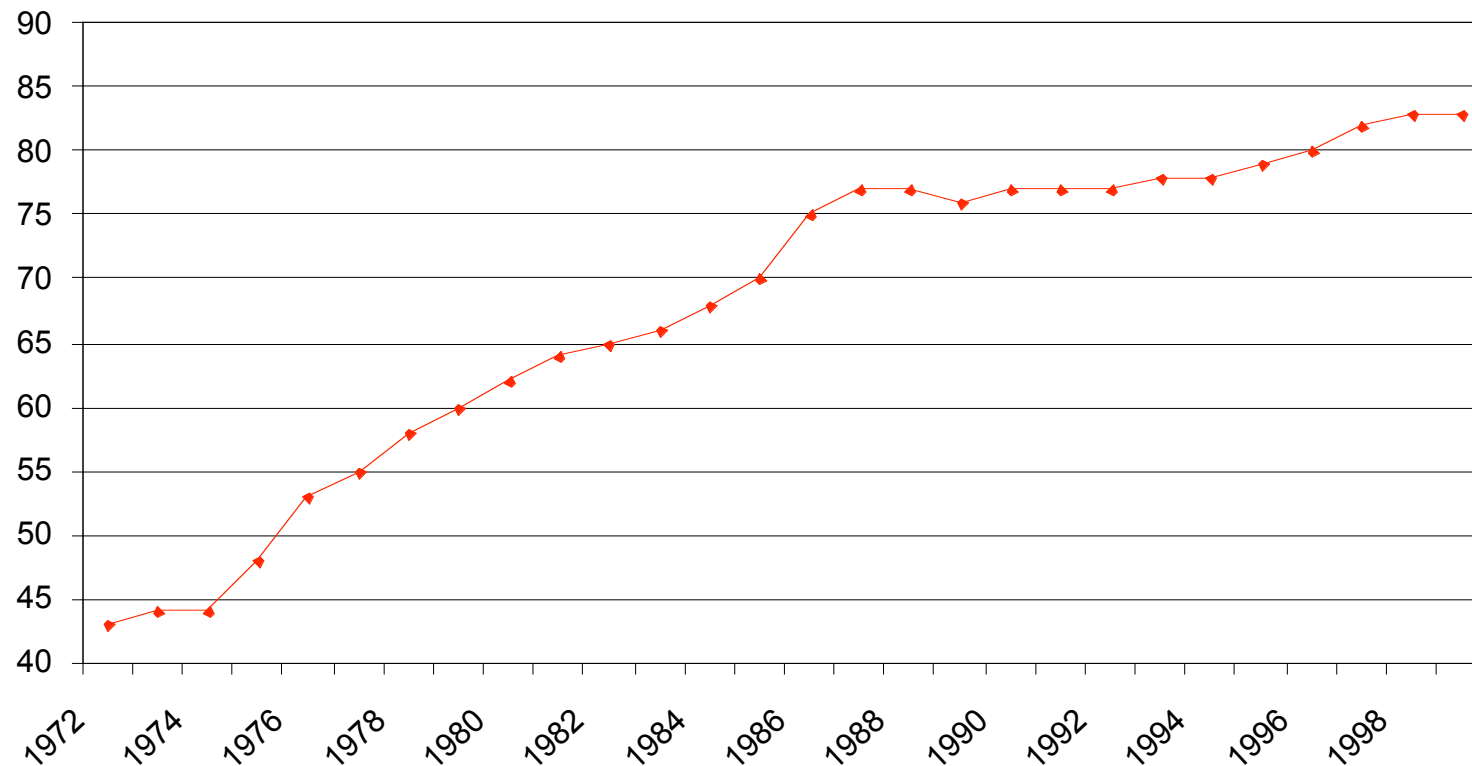
'The family' - what family?

- The nuclear family
- Parenting as the main common responsibility of families
- The nuclear family with children the main target of family policies
- Defamilialized care for the elderly and other dependents

A dual breadwinner/ working mother model

- Women's labour market participation 84%
(age 25-54) (Men 90%)
- Fertility 1,98 (2010)

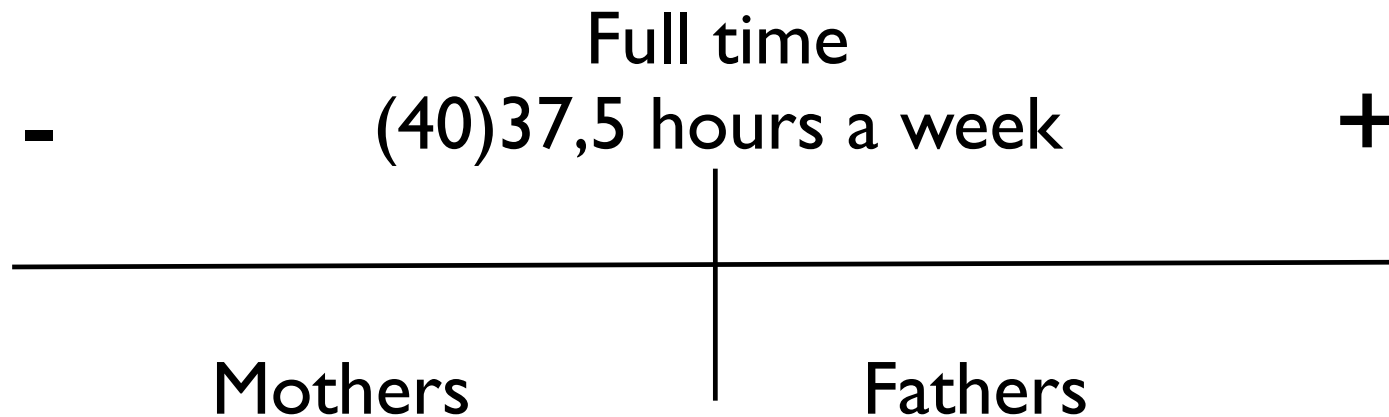
Married women with children under 16 in the labour force, 1972-1999



Gendered patterns of work and care

- 43% of women & above 50% of mothers of children below 16 work part-time
- Long part-time is usual and part-time work is of high quality. BUT problem with involuntary part-time
- Fathers of young children work the longest hours BUT
- Fathers' overtime in decline over the last two decades

Fathers' and mothers' working patterns



Sharing of household work

- Substantial reduction of women's household work 1970-2000.
- Increase in men's share, but only small increase in time spent on domestic work.
- Gendered pattern in sharing of household work, childcare shared more equally
- Paid domestic work is not common, but increasing

Summary work and care

- Dual earner model, egalitarian ideal
- High fertility & high level of working mothers
- Men's share of domestic work comparatively high
- Gendered patterns of paid & domestic work







The invention
of natural
Norwegian-
ness and the
construction of
the nation



Scandinavian style parenting

- Fostering independence
- Fresh air & nature
- Egalitarianism and modesty
- Changes towards more polarized parenting styles? Stronger middle class emphasis on concerted cultivation?

Norwegian families more diverse



With a lot of help from the state

- A social-democratic, universal welfare state model (Esping-Andersen)
- A woman friendly welfare state (Hernes)
- A warm-modern welfare state (Hochschild)

Welfare benefits for working parents

- Paid parental leave 47 weeks at 100% or 56 weeks at 80% benefit - 12 weeks reserved for fathers, 6 (+3 before birth) for mothers
- 2 weeks unpaid leave for fathers at birth (mostly compensated by employer)
- Extensive rights to work part-time
- 10 days paid leave for sick child up to 12 years, 15 for two. 20/30 for lone parents

Childcare and support for parents

- Right to day-care from 1 year - 87,2% of children aged 1-5 in day-care
- Cash-for-care scheme for under threes who do not attend publicly sponsored child-care
- Universal child-allowance
- Comparatively generous transitional benefits for lone parents, but they are being reduced

The promotion of father-care

- Parental leave made gender neutral 1978
- First country in the world to introduce 4 weeks paternal quota of parental leave 1993
- Increased to 5, 6, 10 and 12 weeks 2006-2011
- Further increase? Polarization of debate - tool for gender equality in the family and the workplace or intolerable state intervention?

Paternal quota & gender equality

- The belief is stronger than the evidence
- Weak evidence of an effect on gender equality in the family
- No evidence of an effect on gender equality in the labour market
- No evidence of an effect on the gender pay gap

Gender equality&involved fatherhood on export



Italian TV-team documenting Norwegian father on parental leave 2010



Behavior: Swapping Family Roles

Monday, Nov. 22, 1971

In the age of Women's Liberation, everyone talks about the inflexibility of male and female roles. In Norway, the government is trying to do something about the situation. An official experiment in equality is intended to shatter the stereotypes of mothers as homemakers and fathers as breadwinners. In the hope of making their marriages happier, a few couples are systematically exchanging roles. Each couple holds a single job, with the husband and wife working alternate weeks. Whichever partner stays home does the housework and looks after the children.

Read more: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,905554,00.html#ixzz0vweeBDOr>

TIME

Wednesday, Sept. 22 & Oct. 18, 2010

**A Crazy 40-Year-Old
Experiment Suggests
Work-Life Balance Is
Possible**

Current family policy and class

- Egalitarian but not classless
- Family practices and family ideals vary with cultural class differences
- The hegemonic, gender symmetrical model fits the white, educated middle class best
- Criticism of middle class model as the basis of family policy from class- and postcolonial perspectives

Marriage in Norway

- Egalitarian partnership model since 1927
- Equal responsibilities of bread-winning and care
- Unpaid work of equal value as paid work
- Women got financial independence in marriage and the right to half of common property at divorce
- Custody: mother presumption 1909-1981

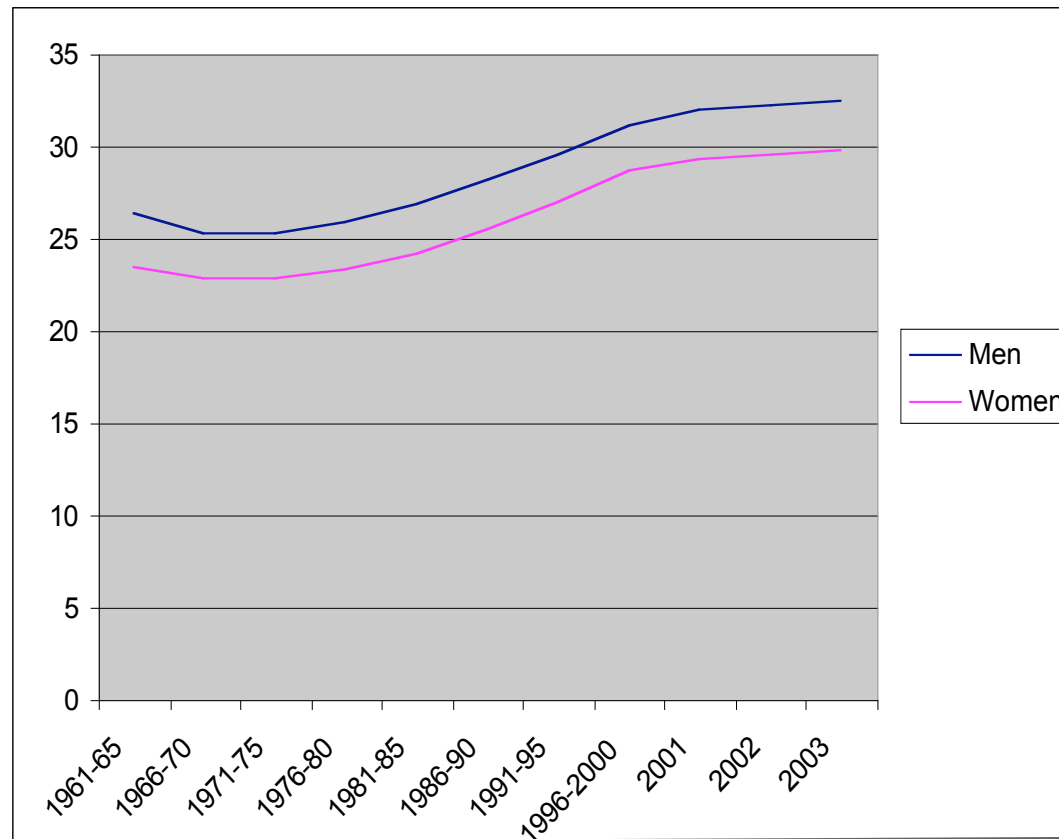
- A modified male breadwinner model - the result of early Nordic cooperation in the field of family law (Melby, Pylkkänen, Rosenbeck, Wetterberg)
- In international comparisons, a weak male breadwinner model is positively related to gender equality and women's rights (Lewis, Ostner)

- However: *imagined equality*, seeing men and women as equal breadwinners and carers ignores the gendered consequences of gendered life-courses.
- Negative financial consequences for women at divorce and over the life course.

Marriage today

- Anyone over 18 & single is free to marry
- Only valid if it is freely entered into
- From 2009, gender neutral marriage act:
extension of the right to register
partnership for same-sex couples
(1993)

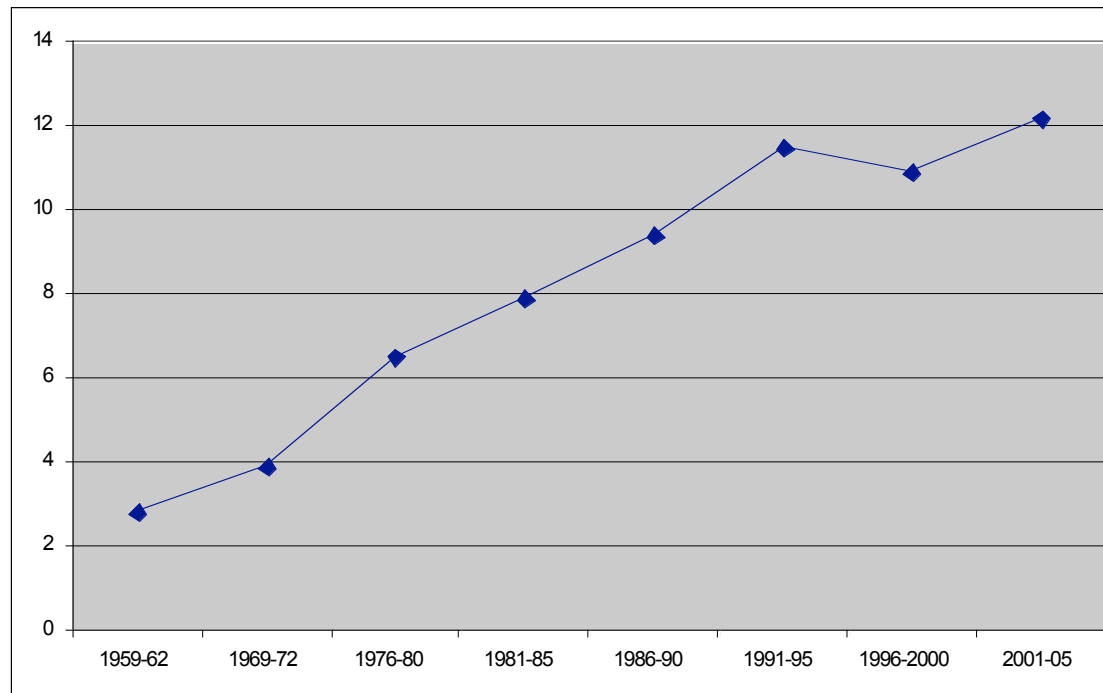
Mean age at first marriage, men and women, 1961-2003 -mind the age gap



Cohabitation

- Cohabitation - a prolonged engagement?
- 55% of children born outside marriage
- Cohabitation less stable than marriage

The divorce rate, 1959-2005



Some family forms are less stable

- It is estimated that almost half of marriages will end in divorce
- Cohabiting couples split up more often
- Same-sex couples are less stable
- Among same-sex couples lesbian couples the least stable

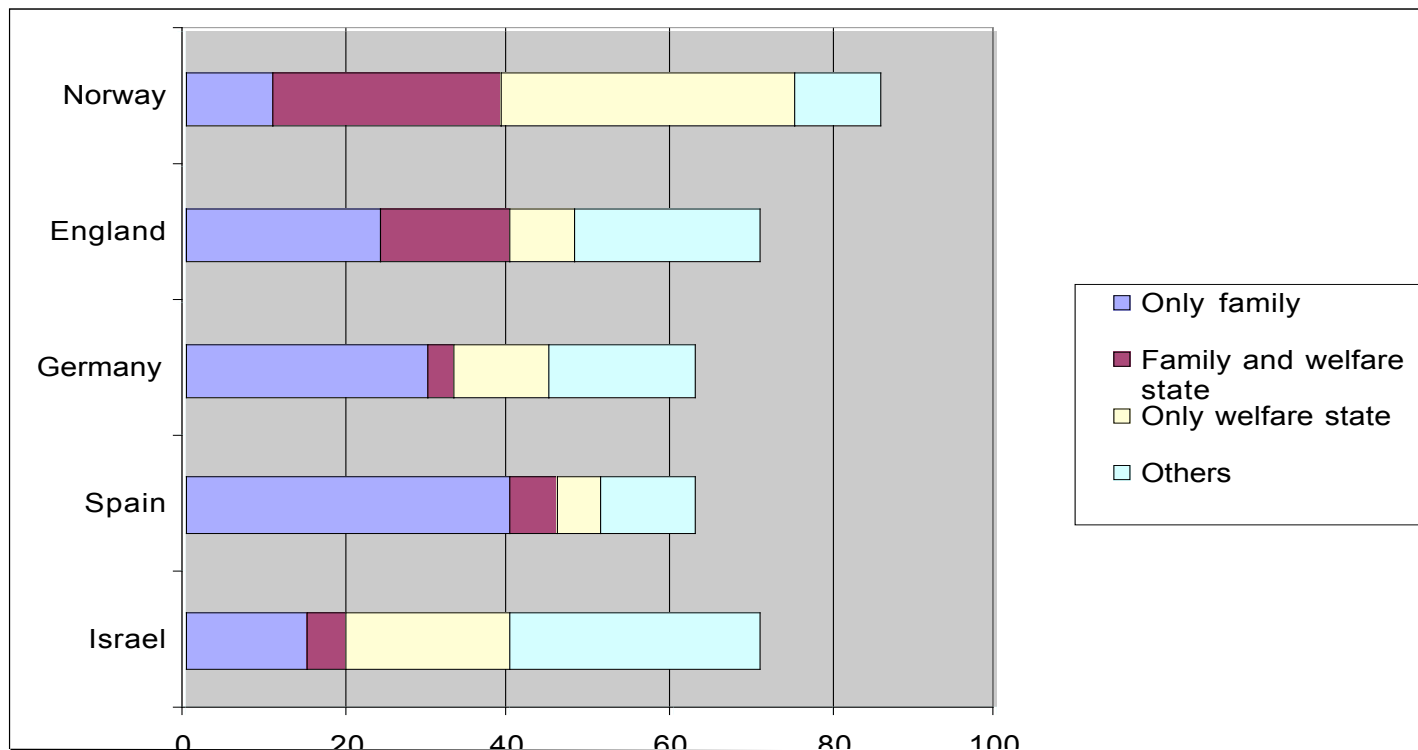
Parenting after divorce

- Shared custody is normal
- Most children live with the mother
- Most children have stable and regular contact with non-resident fathers
- Shared residence arrangements for children are increasing
- Mothers with shared residence arr. are worse off financially than fathers

Family trends in Norway

- Delayed marriages
- Delayed childbearing
- Extended youth period, singledom, cohabitation
- Stable/slightly rising, comparatively high fertility
- High and stable rates of extra-marital birth
- High and stable divorce rates
- Many lone parents, many non-resident parents
- Many adults living alone

Help to frail elderly



Defamilialized care for the elderly and other dependents

- Public responsibility, no legal obligation to care for dependent family members above 18
- Help to live in ones' own home
- Institutional care mainly for the very frail in high age

- De-familialization of care a prerequisite for the high labour market participation (and fertility?) of women.
- Due to de-familialization of care, offering job opportunities in the care sector, Norwegian women do for pay what women in many other countries do for free

- De-familialization does not mean the abdication of families or the handing over of dependents to the state
- Still a lot of formal, informal and financial support between the generations
- Although a public responsibility, claiming and keeping services may rely on the active negotiation and advocacy of family members

Thank you for your attention!

**I hope you enjoyed the lecture
References and suggested readings
in the course website**

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<http://www.margunnbjornholt.no>