

Gender equal family policy and continued childbearing in Iceland, Norway and Sweden ^[1]

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Abstract

Nordic family policies aim to promote a gender equal division of childcare and economic responsibility. In this study we ask how the use of parental leave is related to subsequent childbearing in the Nordic countries. The major arguments for why fathers' participation in parental leave use would increase fertility are that it would ease women's work burden at home and thus improve the compatibility of childrearing and female employment, and that it may also stimulate fathers' interest in children. Using data covering the total population in Iceland, Norway and Sweden, we consider cross-national variations in the relationship between fathers' parental leave use and continued childbearing. Our results show that the risk of second births is higher when the father uses parental leave after the first birth, while the risk of a third birth is lower in this group in Norway and Sweden. We conclude that the two-child norm is closely connected to the norm of fathers being engaged in child rearing, but it is not fully gender equal in the Nordic countries.

Region: International ^[3]

Tags: gender equality ^[4]

social policies and programs ^[5]

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