



The Nordic Welfare State and the Family Institution from the 20th Century

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ABSTRACT

The Nordic countries are seen as countries with good welfare systems and these welfare systems did not just come into existence but went through a process which affected the major institutions in these countries with time. This article is a literature review which reflects on relevant social changes to the family as an institution in the Nordic societies mainly Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark from the 20th century onwards. The study relied on secondary sources of data as a point in the comparative analysis of the family policies and policies for gender equality on the family models. In analysing the data for this study, journal articles, books and statistical reports from credible sources were used. The article highlights on whether Nordic family policies and policies for gender equality are based on a specific family model. Touches a little on the biopolitics in the Nordic countries and how biopolitics is done in the Nordic countries. Lastly, the articles also stresses on the new challenges that come up as a result of changes in family policies and gender policies. Findings from this article show that, the Nordic welfare system and policies are not solely based on a family model but also on gender equality. Limitation to this article is that some sources to this article were not current but relevant and can be related to the current issues concerning gender studies and Nordic welfare system. Further studies can be made on how the government and its policies control the family institution.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A Family is a kind of association which provides for the rearing of children and certain human needs such as love and care and is related by blood or through adoption [1]. The Family system can be grouped into two, which is the nuclear family system and the extended family system. The nuclear family system consists of the father, mother and children while the extended family system consists of the father, mother, children, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces.

The Nordic countries consist of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Finland. The Nordic societies consider family as persons who live in the same household and bonded by marriage or of parent or child relationship [2]. In the Nordic societies, the family is a social institution with a number of features and its responsibilities include reproduction. The family is a stable structure, and for centuries, the family is usually the first point of contact for socialisation and serves as the means for communicating with other institutions in society.

The Nordic family policies and policies for gender equality aim to reconcile work-family reforms. Essentially, the family policies aim to enable men and women to participate in the labor market and provide care for their children as well [3]. This article describes the existing Nordic family policies and policies for gender equality and presents how the policies are able to facilitate the movement between work and family life. The main focus of this study is to show whether or not the family policies and policies for gender equality are based on a specific family model.

This article discusses the relevant social changes to the family as an institution in the Nordic societies from the 1900s, family policies in the Nordic countries and as it is based on a specific family model or not, gender equality policies and if it is based on biopolitics and challenges of these policies to the policies itself. The essay concludes by arguing that changes comes with problem and most of the Nordic family policies and policies for gender equality are based on the dual earner model.

2. RELEVANT SOCIAL CHANGES TO THE FAMILY AS AN INSTITUTION IN THE NORDIC SOCIETIES FROM THE 20TH CENTURY ONWARDS

Any change of the system of a country, being it social or political, even the slightest one, has its impact on the family institution, and it should be stated that nowadays the latter does not change much but rather enters a completely new state inclined to fundamentally ruin our traditional insights of this institution [4]. This change can be seen in the Nordic societies affecting family institution, that is, the roles members of the family play and the function it performs in the society.

From the early parts of 1900s to the late 1940s, the Nordic countries were argued to be in the Male breadwinner regime and the family model between these periods was mainly the male breadwinner model/female housewife model [5]. According to Sainsbury [6] the male breadwinner regime had policies favouring men in everything including marriage as an institution since they were heads of the family and everything including benefits were directed to the men. This system gives different responsibilities and duties to men and women. It can be argued that the family model during this time was the male breadwinner model where the man was the breadwinner or the earner and woman was the carer. The main family type here was the nuclear family [5]. There was segregation in this family model. The man was the head of the family and the domestic labour or work which the women did was unpaid. Care of the children and husband was left to the mother or wife. Families relied on the husband's work earnings for survival, and earned family wage which was given to the husband was enough to support children and housewives who performed domestic duties [5]. This affected women's social rights and status in the society. Children had the role of helping their parents especially the mother at home. This provides a normative representation of the proper family, that is the accepted family, regardless of the number of lives that did not fit in this pattern.

Significant changes occurred prior to the 1930s, the Nordic countries where the social democratic party was representing the working classes and the centrist party was representing the farmers

formed a stable parliamentary association and which lead to institutionalisation of the Nordic Welfare Model [3]. This was the beginning of a new regime which Esping-Andersen [7,8] classifies as Social Democratic Regime. This regime created reforms in light of social equality and justice, this was the main basis for change in all the five Nordic countries [9]. This regime did not really cause a significant change to family in its early stage, but it was seen that women's social rights were recognised, and they started participating in the labour force and the male breadwinner model was being compromised. For instance, Finnish women were the first to enter into labour force during the 1950s, followed by Sweden and Denmark in the early 1960s [3]. In Norway as at 1945, 4.7 percent of the members in the parliament were women. The male breadwinner model was still in dominance, but roles of women had slightly changed where they were not seen as carers alone, they could be also seen as breadwinners especially in situations of single mothers and mothers in divorce. Here, policies were not oppressing women but were in favour for all and benefits were not restricted to men in general but to all providing you are working.

It was not until the early 1970s that there was a massive change in the regime where it moved to individual earner carer regime where the family system also change massively to dual earner model. Borchoost [10] states that, "the family model in which the male is the breadwinner had already been dismantled in the 1960s and 1970s. Childcare facilities with high coverage and generous parental leave schemes that include fathers have facilitated and reconciliation of work and family, and the countries adapted to dual earner family model relatively early". The Dual earner family model is the type of family model where both the mother and father had shared roles and obligations leading to equal rights [6]. Both have the opportunity to become breadwinners and carers at the same time. There was nothing like the family head since social rights and tax obligations were based on individual levels and financial burdens of the family relied on both parents. This was through policies based on decommodification and defamilialisation.

Decommodification is recognising individuals or families in a country have social rights, which should be met, while they also have some obligations to perform. As at this point women were given the social right to work and to

encourage work life balance among them. Sümer [6] as cited by Esping-Andersen (1999:51) defined defamilialisation as, "the degree to which households' welfare and caring responsibilities are relaxed via welfare state provision or via market provision". In the Nordic societies, these responsibilities are relaxed on the state and state provide this in relation to citizens or individuals participation to the labour force.

All these changes mentioned can be concluded by arguing that the relevant changes to the family as an institution is the quest for women's social rights, involvement in the labour force, social equality and justice, gender equality and to neutralise care within the family in the Nordic countries through policies.

3. FAMILY POLICIES IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

These are schemes that have been set up for the family in order to target the wellbeing of a child. In a world where the labour market involves both men and women, there is high decommodification and defamilialisation. Children, in this case, must also be considered. Therefore, the family policies are put in place to ensure proper care for the children with the involvement of the parents. This follows a debate among the Nordic countries on whether children are better taken care of in the home or in the subsidised child care services that have been provided by the state in ensuring participation in the workforce for both genders. With the rise of the dual earner family model, the family policies have been set in order to ensure a work life balance, thus those who participate in paid work outside the home should be able to balance their lives in the home, which benefits them and the children who are the main target beneficiaries for the family policies. This section discusses the Nordic family policies and considers whether they are based on a specific family model.

4. PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental leave is a set of days given to an individual off from work, in order to attend to parental responsibilities such as childbirth and childcare. Mother's maternity leave, and father's paternity leave are the two types of parental leave. Parental leave schemes were introduced to solve women's problem of care work while working and to give them chance to work again after childbirth. Later in the 1970s and 1980s fathers were also granted parental leave [10]. In

Finland fathers were granted parental leave in 1978 for two weeks which was later expanded to three weeks in 1993 [10]. In most of the Nordic countries, in the interests of protecting the mother and the child during last periods of pregnancy and after child birth maternity leave was introduced in the mid-1950s to early 1960s [10]. Maternity leave has been part of policies since women started participating highly in the labour market. Sweden was the first Nordic country to institutionalise parental leave which you are being paid and made this entitlement to both parents and Norway followed up in 1978 [11]. This kind of leave is given to both men and women while being paid 80% -100% of their salary with their job entitlement. For instance, the law on parental leave in Norway is that 100% salary is paid for 49 weeks or 80% salary for 59 weeks [12]. It is to be divided between both parents, with some restraints as to how much a mother must take and how much a father must take. This has made work enjoyable for both men and women. This has made it easier for women on maternity leave because they still have their job secured with salary, additionally, it has brought men closer to their families through participation in domestic work.

5. CASH FOR CARE

Cash for care is another measure taken by Nordic countries as a family policy. Cash for care is the monetary benefit given to parents of children for the care of the child. A cash-for-care programme gives parents freedom to stay at home with their young children and to provide families the opportunity to decide the type of care they want for their children [13]. Thus, cash-for-care is pro home care, and it is state-funded. Cash for care is usually given to parents with a child between 1-3 years and was given to children who don't use state subsidised day cares in Norway. In Denmark cash for care is granted to parents whose babies are between 6 months to 3 years while in Sweden is between 250 days to 3 years. It was introduced in 1985 in Finland to help support familialism in politics in Finland [10]. In Norway cash for care was introduced in 1998 when the Christian Democrats headed the government. Denmark followed in 2002 and Sweden in 2008. The Nordic countries had different reasons for this kind of program. Denmark and Sweden had a similar reason for adopting this program. Thus, to help parents decide where care of the child should take place. In Denmark dual socialisation is practiced where the primary socialisation is in

the hands of family and the school or local authorities. They wanted to release the pressure of the local authorities due to their high dual socialization [14]. This kind of benefit allows parents especially the mothers because it commodifies their care work by providing them with money. The main aim of this cash for care among the Nordic countries was to create equality among parents who use subsidised kindergarten and who are at home taken care of their children without getting any financial support.

6. SUBSIDISED CHILDCARE FACILITIES

In the Nordic countries, subsidised kindergartens come about as a result of change to the dual earner model in which dual earner couples were craving for child care services. This caught the attention of policy makers who were seeking social equality and gender equality at time in making policies regarding subsidised childcare facilities especially with the kindergartens eligible to all children regardless of your mother's and parents status. In Norway, all children 3 to 6 years old are entitled for subsidised childcare notwithstanding of parents' employment and marital status [15]. This is a way to ensure that both parents are able to concentrate to make a living for themselves, their family and the nation. Havnes and Mogstad [15] states that child care facilities have been expanded over 400 municipalities in Norway. Before the reform that lead to the subsidised care for children and after the reform child care was rationed, with informal care arrangements such as friends of parents, relatives and were sometime left in the hands of the house helps to service the large excess demand. Subsidised Child care policy was institutionalised in the Nordic countries mainly to increase women participation in the labour force. This aim was not really seen since there were not any significant change in the number of women participating during these times and this rather saw a shift from the formal care such as kindergartens to an increase number of children left in the hands of the informal care.

7. CHILD MAINTENANCE AND CHILD SUPPORT

Child support is another policy which the Nordic countries adopted, this was a compensation to the cost of having a child. In the Nordic countries the benefit of child support is non-taxable and autonomous of the parents' other ways of revenue. This way, the benefit which is being

given depends on the country. Norway and Denmark give higher amount depending on the number of parent at home, single parents get a higher amount and depending on the number of children you have. Denmark was also the only country which provides child support depending on the age, aged 0–2 years (16,988 Danish kroner per year), then declining to 13,448 Danish krone for the 3–6 year-olds and lastly to 10,580 Danish kroner for the 7–17-year-olds [14]. In Norway, child support benefit is higher for receivers living in the northern region and on Svalbard. Sweden is quite different, and the benefit is the same with two or one parent and increases with the number of children.

Child maintenance is one thing both parents are considered for in all the Nordic countries, even after parental breakup. The conditions of payment between parents are usually settled when there is a divorce, either by the parents on their own, the court or by the social welfare office. The Nordic countries, the level of child maintenance depends on the amount of money both parents earn in Norway, but the amount is fixed in Denmark. In Norway this kind of procedure takes into consideration who takes the child into custody [14]. In a situation where one parent fails to pay this child maintenance the government sets it and pay and later take it from the parent.

7.1 Are Family Policies Based on a Specific Family Model?

Although in the Nordic countries family model has changed from the male breadwinner family model to dual earner model in the past decades, policy makers have tried to strengthen it with policies to promote this kind of family model. Paradoxically, some policies promote male breadwinner family model. This is similar to Sümer's [3] concept state familism in which she was arguing that policies in the Nordic countries turn to support the male breadwinner or support the dual earner model. The mentioned family policies in this article are used to explain the paradox of the policies in relation to the family models;

Parental leave especially maternity leave is meant to send the mother for a period of time to give birth and to take care of the child for a period of time. This policy was meant to ensure worklife balance in the Nordic countries. This maternity leave can be compared to Sümer's [3] concepts of decommodification, and

refamilialisation at the same time. Sümer [3] defines decommodification as, "the degree to which social rights permit people to make their living standards independent of pure market forces". As said, when parents are on parental leave they are paid 80% to 100% of their wage depending on the number of weeks they spend in the house and this in turn make them comfortable in working since they don't have to think of the money they will earn and if they will lose their jobs. Refamilialisation on the other hand means policies that backs parental care for kids at household. Parental leave sends parent home especially mothers, that is home care for the child. This is the same with the male breadwinner where mothers stay at home to take care of their children. It can be clearly argued that even though parental leave is meant to encourage work life balance in one or two ways it brings mothers home and leaving the fathers at work. Therefore, it could be argued to be based on the male breadwinner model in which mothers are left home to take charge of the care work.

Also, cash for care can be seen as refamilialisation policy. In all Nordic countries, cash for care is given to mothers to stay at home to take good care of the child. Women or mothers stay home to care of the child and receive this benefit for this kind of care. There is commodification of the home care in such a way that the home is seen as commodity is bought with the benefit of the cash for care by the state. The concept of defamilialisation by Sümer [3] can be seen. Defamilialisation refers to policies that reduce individual's reliance of the family. In this cash for care the mother does not have rely on the father for financial support for the up keep for the family but rather on the state. Looking at it paradoxically it is promoting the stay of women and making the man the breadwinner. The mothers take care function and stays at home where as the father goes to work and is less involve in the care work. This is like the traditional family model, male breadwinner/female housekeeper model, but it has just been modified.

Again, Does the subsidised childcare facilities policy seem to base on specific family model? In my perspective I will say yes. The subsidised child care facilities seem to be based on the dual earner model because it seeks to defamiliarise the family in terms of care. Both parent can work while their child is being taken care of by these subsidised childcare facilities. This puts both parent at the work place.

Lastly, child maintenance and child support policy are both based on the dual earner model. This child maintenance policy seeks both parent to work in order to support the child. This policy can be seen as defamilialisation, as seeks to put both parents to work and the care part taken by the state. Child support policy on the other hand, is supporting the dual earner family system in all ways. It seeks to defamiliarise the family, as in it reduces individual's reliance on the family. In Norway for instance, welfare benefits are based on participation in the labour force [16]. In order to get benefits you need to work for it and its base on individuals not on family. Clearly this policy is based on dual earner model.

8. POLICIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Policies for gender equality emerged in the 1970s after gender was institutionalise in the Nordic countries. The policies for gender equality aim to reallocate status and social power [17]. The Nordic countries were seeking egalitarianism, that is, simply equal rights for all but they realise the kind of equality has not been achieved after decommodifying women. There was still gaps between the men and women and these countries wanted to minimise the gap. In quest for this they seek policies for gender equality which are parental leave (father's quota), gender act, gender equality bonus and gender quota.

9. FATHERS' QUOTA

Parental leave schemes were made solve women's problem of care work while working and to give them chance to work again after childbirth. This was done to increase fathers' participation in the care work but was unsuccessful, which led to the adoption of the daddy's quota. Norway was first Nordic country to include forced fathers' quota in their policies in 1993, two years later Sweden also followed up with policy. Denmark in 1998 also introduced fathers' quota but later in the early 2000s it was abolished due to weak politisation of it. In Norway the opposite happened, initially fathers were not taken up this kind of parental leave but as years went by they increased in the participation of the fathers' quota and it was extended from four weeks to six weeks [3]. Iceland also this kind of leave but in the early 2000s where fathers were given three months leave, the mothers also three months leave, and the couple three months leave which is divided. The main aim of fathers in involvement in the

parental leave was to encourage the fathers take part in the early life of their children and to be part of the care work. Other reasons include making the child father bond strong.

10. GENDER ACT AND GENDER QUOTA

Women were included in the labour force and politics with measures such as gender quotas in political parties and gender equality act in the work force [17]. These policies were made to promote gender equality by increasing the number of females in politics and labour force. Gender quotas policy instructs political parties to have a certain percentage of females in their political party while gender equality act instructs employers to pick females ahead of males only if they both have same qualification. Norway was the foremost country to present a quota for women on company boards. There was a up to 40 percent increase in the number of women on board as required by law since its introduction in 2003.

All this was done to promote and increase the number of women in the labour force and politics and to promote gendered policies in the country. These policies can be found in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Denmark is not really into this kind of policies.

11. GENDER EQUALITY BONUS

In the Nordic countries there are incentives for sharing parental roles. Gender quality bonus is an incentive given to fathers and mothers who take equal amount of the parental leave. It is normally required that both parents should be working. For instance, Sweden introduced gender equality bonus for children born after 1 July, 2008 [16]. This policy balances work and family life.

11.1 Are Policies for Gender Equality Based on a Specific Family Model?

The initial aim of gendered policies is mainly to balance work and family, to increase women's participation in work force while other reasons include maintenance of fertility rate and to make men part of the care work. All these are to strengthen the dual earner family model which is family model in the Nordic countries [3]. This section considers whether the policies are really based on dual earner model or not Fathers quota, which is part of the parental leave, is based on dual earner family model since it seeks

to bring the father home and take the mother back to work. Fathers quota falls under refamilialisation [3]. This policy helps balance work life and family life.

Secondly, gender equality bonus brings parents back home which also falls under refamilialisation. Refamilialisation is simply explained in its sounds means bringing the family back home together. A family, especially under dual earner is defamiliarised since both parents have to go for jobs separately and the child is likely to go to subsidised kindergarten. The split on its own is a form of defamilialising, however, critically looking at this policy, is evident that is based on the dual earner model. This is because to be eligible for this kind of bonus both parents need to be working and need to be spending time away from the work equally there by promoting women to work indirectly.

Lastly, the gender act and gender quota, formulated through and for gender mainstreaming which is gender specific action Norway employed. It is based on a dual earner family model. This gender specific action also aims to decommodify women not only by moving women out of home but to put women in leadership roles and pair them with men in terms wages and leadership roles. To decommodify women in this case means removing them from unpaid roles in homes and to remove them from a position where they are seen as commodities. Having them in the working industry gives them a sense of power and independence.

12. BIOPOLITICS

In the Nordic countries, there are three main reasons why policies are made for gender equality and politics. First and foremost, policies are made to encourage work force participation, that is, decommodifying women. This is done through gender mainstreaming, gender specific action and decommodification. Secondly, policies are made to ensure work life balance. Lastly, policies are made to maintain fertility rate in the form of biopolitics.

Biopolitics is the dealings between politics and biology, precisely politically driven intervention in the growth or development of a population, the use of biological science to explain human social or political behaviour and environmental policy. Michel Foucault was the first scholar to discuss about biopolitics. Foucault argued that biopolitics and biopower work together with the idea related to power and governmentality [18]. Adams [18]

argued that, Foucault use of biopower and biopolitics was to describe how government uses its power in controlling life and death in a country through population control and maintaining fertility. This is what Foucault refers to as biopolitics of population.

In the Nordic countries, Foucault's theory of biopolitics is seen, where the state makes laws and policies to control population and maintain fertility indirectly. It comes in form of legalise family planning schemes and policies like paid parental leave. Paid parental leave was an indirect policy of telling women they can give birth without losing their jobs and at the same time get paid. This policy is to maintain fertility. On the other hand, family planning schemes like abortion and the use of contraceptives were legalised in the Nordic countries to control the population and to prevent poverty [5]. Women's right to demand abortion was legalise in Norway in 1978, Denmark in 1973 and Sweden in 1975 [19]. Again, contraceptive pill was approved in Norway in 1967, Denmark in the mid-60s and Finland in 1961 [19].

13. CHALLENGES TO FAMILY POLICIES AND POLICIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Family policies and policies for gender equality were made to suit dual earner family model after the 1960s and have no way help bring equality among men and women but rather lessen the distance between men and women [20]. These models suffer from some defects and paradoxes [21], that is, these new policies are also creating new challenges for the Nordic countries as well. These new challenges are discussed using these gender equality policies and family policies;

First and foremost, the family policies and gender equality policies have led to high segregation in the labour market. High segregation is the sense that women are dominated in the public sector while men are dominated in the private sector [10]. This further explained as during the 1970s when gender was institutionalised and the whole system had changed from a patriarchy (male breadwinning model) to societal patriarchy especially affecting the private institutions. This can be seen as cause to why the private institutions are employing more men. This private and public institution domination by men and women respectively has caused wage gaps between men and women. Also, gap can be exploited from the fact when women were integrated in the labour market, most of the

institutions who were employing women were shrinking institutions. Shrinking institutions as we know cannot really provide you with good wages to compete with the men in the private sector.

Secondly, these policies do not cut across classes and ethnicities. Nordic model is considered or being in favour of some social class even though policies were put to solve this inequality. These models are seen to be discriminate the ethnic minorities and low-class women [10] because these policies don't favour them in the sense they cannot afford to take their children to subsidised kindergarten. It favours the middle class and working-class parents. Policies like subsidised kindergarten can be seen to be in favour of the middle-class parent and working parents since they able to take their kids there and others are not able to take their kids there. These middle class of people find the policies supporting the dual earner system more than the other social classes. In Norway, this kind of inequalities is associated with the terms gender equality and gender worth [22]. Gender equality is connected to professional participation while the gender worth is connected to respect regardless the gap between man and women and empowerment.

Moreover, Family policies and policies for gender equality has led to women in less managerial role [21]. Policies like parental leave and cash for care as seen mostly taken by women and this allows them to stay home for a longer period. These policies can again be linked to the male breadwinner model where women stay home and take the caring part of the family roles. When the women are home, the husbands or men will be at work giving the men an upper hand over women in terms of managerial roles. The difference between the traditional family system (male breadwinner family model) and dual earner model in this instance is the dual earner model commodifies the care which mothers get money from that while the male breadwinner model did not give money to the mothers.

Lastly, family and gender equality policy have led women taking more part time work and men taking full time work [21]. This is because a lot of women have been taken in different firms in the labour force following gender mainstreaming actions like the gender quota. Because a lot of women have taken up most available jobs, some that do not have access to full time jobs and go for part time jobs. A small percentage of women compared to men exist in most firms, in other words, it means that there is limited slot that are

available for women to get on the paid labour force, leading to more women on part time jobs from which they earn less than what men on full time jobs do [23]. This on its own is clearly inequality of gender. One may say that they are equal because they both have employment and earn wages, yet another would argue basing their fact on how much wages are earned by each and the type of job they have. The goal for gender equality has not been effectively reached in this case as the strategy in itself has brought about the challenge.

14. CONCLUSION

From the above, it can be concluded that changes are made to solve problems and these changes cannot always bring about perfection. Looking at the article, changes that occurred in the Nordic countries from the 20th century onwards mainly on the family saw a move away from the male breadwinner to the dual family model. Policies changes and how it affects the society and the family and how indirectly the policies family roles and practices have been discussed in this easy.

In general, it can be seen that the family policies and gender equality policies are based on dual earner model.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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