



Fathering alone

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Gro Harlem Brundtland and her
Social-democratic government
introduced the quota in 1993



The new General secretary of NATO

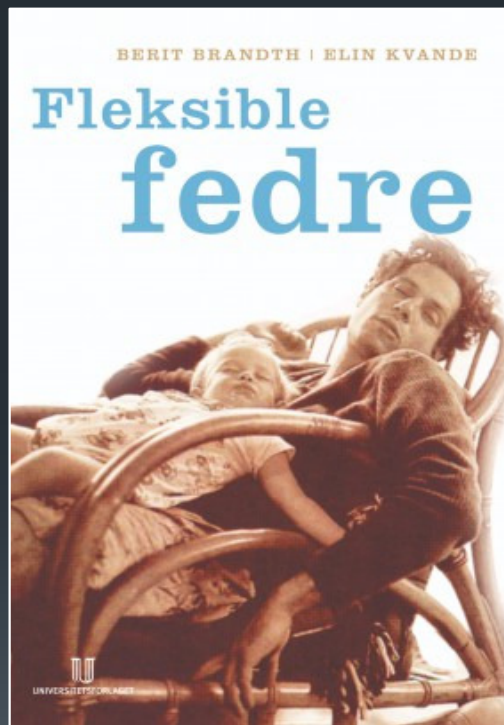




Reasons for introducing the Fathers' quota.

- The child needs a caring father
- The fathers need contact with their child
- Equality between mothers and fathers

The fathers' quota in Norway 1993-2013



2003



2013

Development of the Norwegian parental leave scheme 1993-2013. Number of weeks.

Total number of weeks	Before birth	Mother's part	Sharable part	Father's quota
1993: 52	3weeks	6weeks	39 weeks	4 weeks
2005: 53	3	6	39	5
2006: 54	3	6	39	6
2009: 56	3	6	37	10
2011: 57	3	6	36	12
2013: 59	3	14	28	14
2014: 59	3	10	36	10

Increased quota leads to increase in father's use of parental leave

- From 4 to 78 % during first five years
- Later continuous 90+ percent
- Everytime the quota has been increased (2005, 2006, 2009, 2011), the father's uptake has also increased
- Which means : **More fathers taking longer parental leave**
- Parents positive to the quota



Research Questions

- How these fathers do fathering alone?
- How does being home alone for a longer period of time impact on their care practices?
- How is gender equality in care work affected?

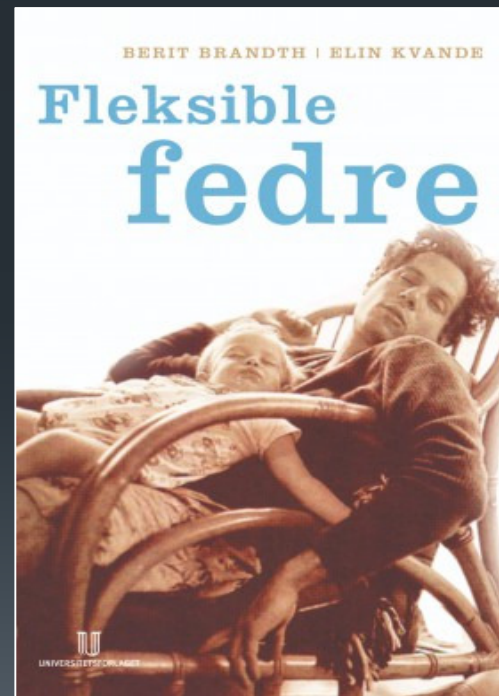


Theoretical perspectives

- Doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987, 2009)
- Undoing gender (Deutsch 2007)
- Social practice, social relations, (Smith 1987, 1996)
- Institutional ethnography (Smith 2005)

The first study (2003)

- The father's quota was 4 weeks





Different care practices:

- **Home alone**
 - - develop care competence
 - -care rationality
 - -slow time
- **Not home alone**
 - - supporter
 - - quality time

The last study (2013): The Father's Quota 10 weeks





Sample and data

- 20 interviews
- 8 home alone on a full time basis
- Conducted in 2012/early 2013
- After the Qouta had become 10 and 12 weeks



Doing care work

- Sure, you think you'll have oceans of time with a pleasant ... and almost boredom. And that's where you go wrong. The funny thing is that I was told by I don't know how many friends who'd been there done that, that "Don't plan. Don't think you'll be able to do redecorating and ridiculous ideas like that, you won't be able to do squat, Steinar. You can't plan loads of projects. Just ... buy a book, you'll have time for that when she's sleeping".




An eye-opening experience

- “It is a lot of responsibility too. You have to put them first. before when you were without kids you only have to think about yourself. When I was on leave, your shoulders where always kind of like this (raises his shoulders) because you had to, you had responsibility for this little person. And as soon as mommy came home I could relax, and I didn’t feel that until after maybe eight weeks.
- And we talked about it, and Anne was like now you understand what it was like for me for a year. I was like: “Wow yeah”. So I bought her some champagne and flowers, and said: *“you are a champion”*.



Care work as hard work

- I have a physically demanding job which really wears me out, but I actually get much more tired from being home. The kid demands much more, at any rate when they're so small. You really get tired. Then I think of the mother, who's first got to have the baby, and then stay home all the time. At least the way it used to be. And then they have to prepare dinner before hubby comes home. That was a completely wild division of roles.



Integrating caring, cleaning and cooking

- "However, the amount of work," he says:
- ...can't compare to what you have to do when you have a partner and children. That's how it is ... a whole world of difference! And, you can't understand this before you have children yourself. Before I had children I thought that this would be a "piece of cake", and I couldn't see why people made such a fuss about running a house. I could do it with my little finger along with all the rest.



Care work and housework intertwined

- . "Kids that age usually sleep for three hours maybe... she never slept that long. Maybe one and a half hours, and then I had to [entertain her]. (...) I would start with something [in the house], and then I'd just give that up." What he managed to do was "basically cleaning and vacuuming and stuff like that. And making the dinner when she was sleeping."



Doing embodied emotions

- It was just being with... Seeing her grow, and her
- understanding of English. And everything was just coming, and she just changed so much. And I witnessed her saying her first words, and teaching her how to eat and everything. It was great. She just makes you laugh as well, Mona, she's a great character .
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Continued:

- After a while I think. I saw that Mona didn't understand Norwegian after the fifteen weeks. Because Siri would talk to her after she came home from work, and Mona would be like: 'Huh, what are you saying?' And then I would talk to her and she understood.





Need oriented care

- Yes, like suddenly it was ... she wasn't interested in her mother when she came home from work, and her mother was almost in tears. So then it was like ... it's so nice."



Breastfeeding

- Then I would put on my cross-country skis every morning, and ski with Anna strapped to my body, and I would ski to her mother's workplace in the morning. And when I arrived, there would be a break for breastfeeding, and I would sit and read part of a book for Andrea while she was breastfeeding. Fantastic to have an hour or one and a half hours off in the middle of the busy working day in a day-care centre, where we just sat and read a book and enjoyed being with the baby. And then ... skiing back home. Really nice.



Becoming empathetic

- That's really wonderful. You really go all soft and are touched and proud. Many strange emotions come to the surface in this context. But there aren't so many of these "finally I have managed to procreate" emotions. It's a bit more infinite, sounds a bit tacky, but infinite love. And I get even more emotional over these feel-good stories than earlier. I get a feel for things more in situations others may have experienced. I'm probably getting more empathetic, if that's what it's called? Sympathetic? To the situations of others. And then it's how you understand that he's more important than you are.



Reading the institutional practices

- Care work as hard work
- Experience total commitment
- Eye-opening experience
- Need oriented caring
- Integrate cleaning, cooking and caring
- More equal parenting practices



Fabio from Italy

- Wonderful! It has been very, very nice and a bit frightening at times. Not being home alone with her, but being responsible for something so tiny and frail. I was afraid she would fall down or something. Without being paranoid, but it was a scary thought to be responsible for such a delicate, small baby, really.



Thank you for your attention!