

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, age 25-66: 78,8% (Men 85,1%) (AKU 2016)
- High maternal employment & ~~high~~ fertility
- Fertility 1,62 (2017) Lowest fertility ever. Steady decline from peak in 2009 (1,98)

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

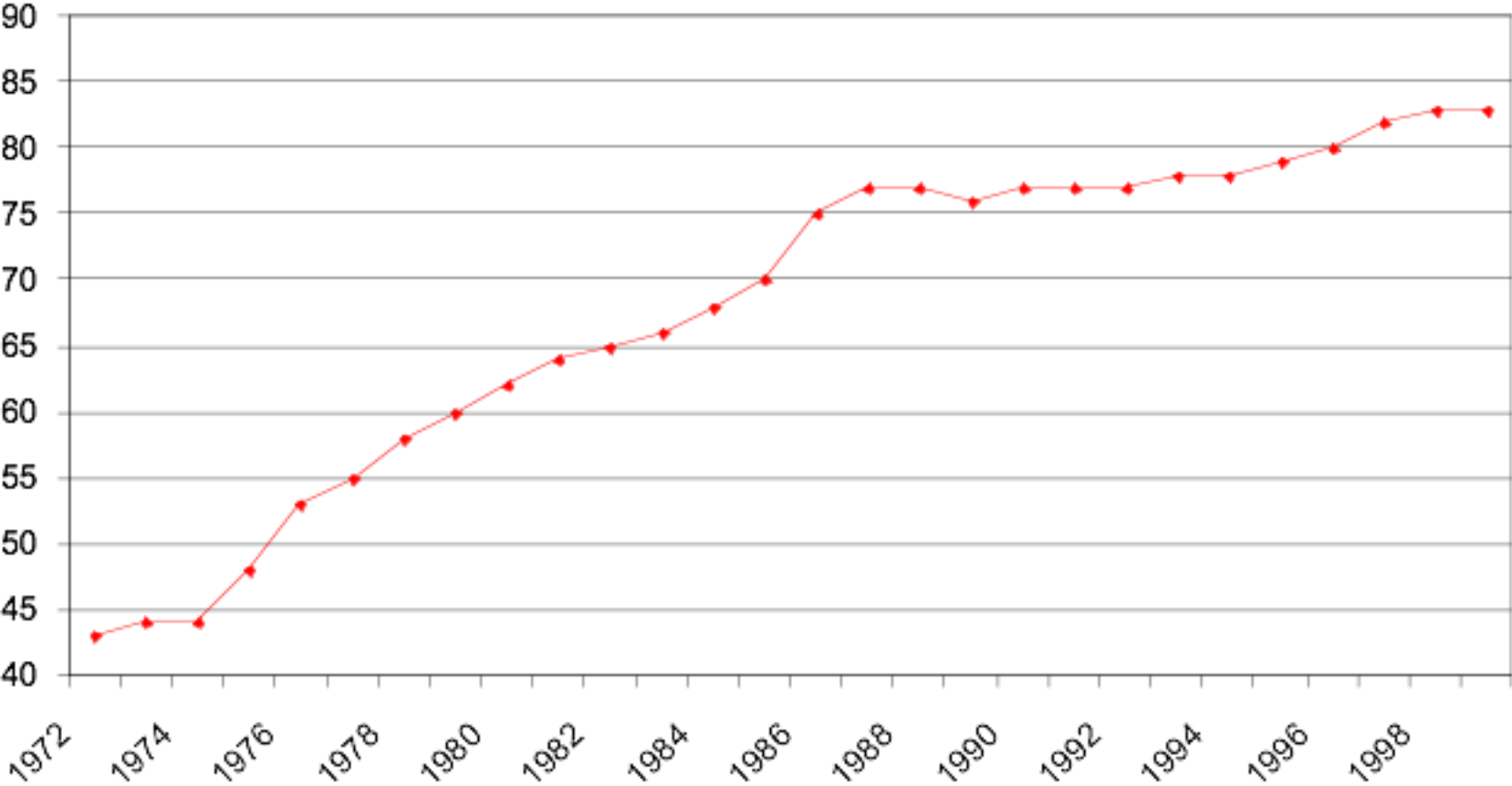
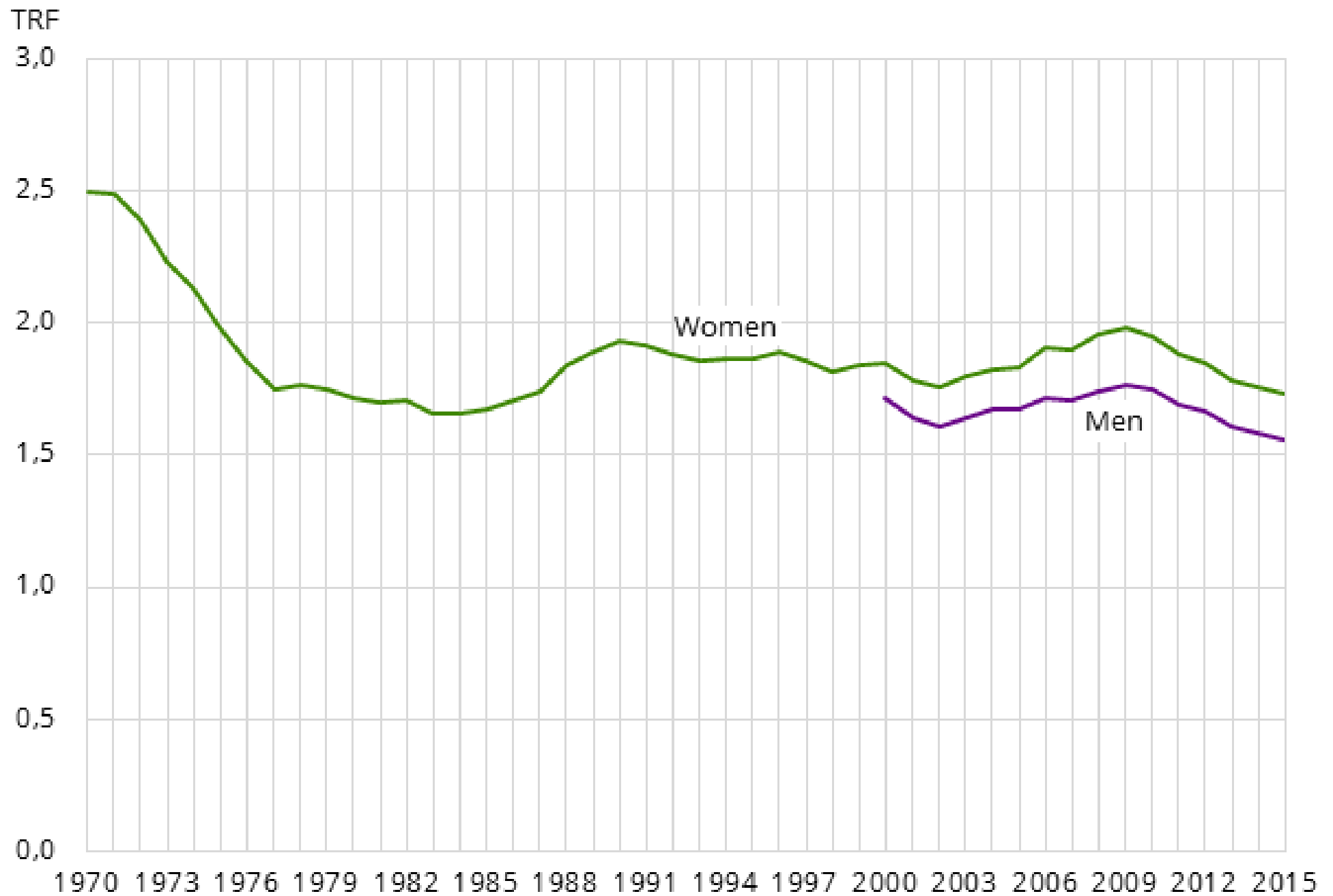


Figure 2. Total fertility rate



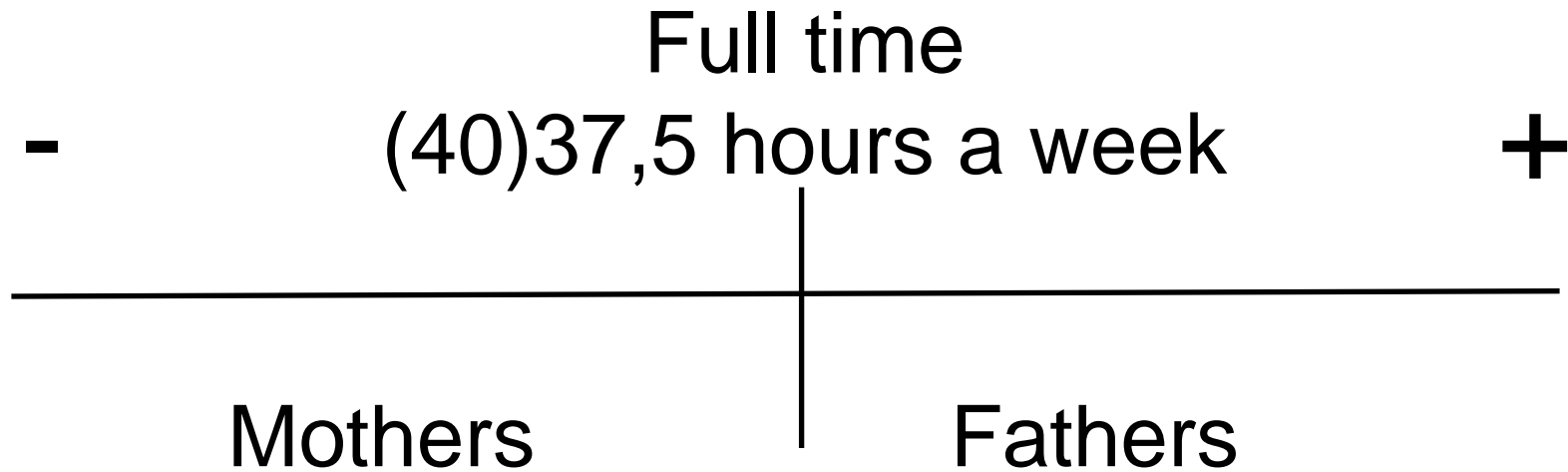
Older mothers; smaller families

- Age first birth 28,9 years in 2015. (2003: 27,9 years; 1990: 25,5)
- Three children or more: 30,7% (of women 45 year old) 2015: Down from 34,8% in 2005.

Gendered patterns of work and care

- 36,8% of women work part-time (31% of mothers with children below 16). Increase full time: in 2004: 43% worked 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

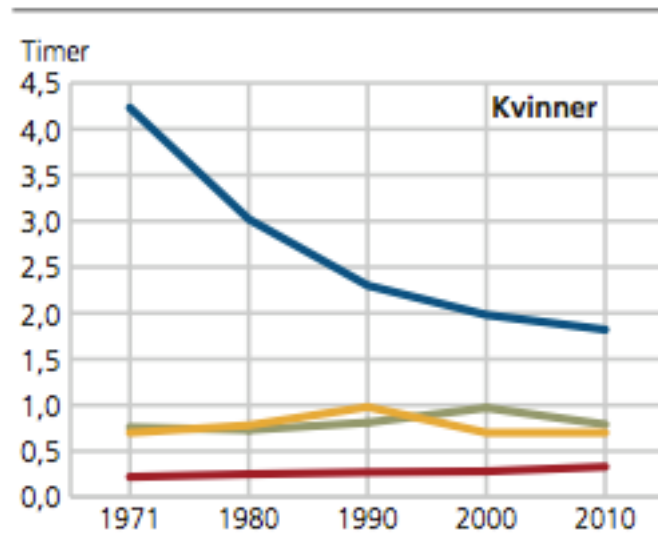


Sharing of household work

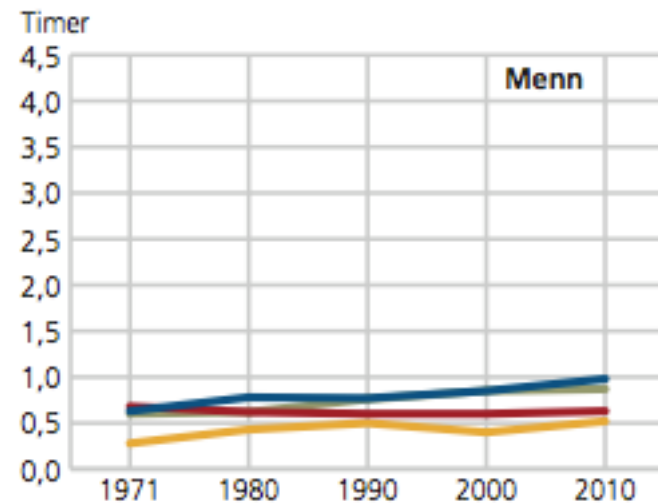
- Substantial reduction of women's household work 1970-2000.
- Increase in men's share.
- Gendered pattern in sharing of household work, childcare shared more equally
- Paid domestic work is not common, but increasing

Time spent on different types of household work by women and men 16-74 years, 1971-2010 Average per day, hours.

Hours



Women



Men

— Husarbeid — Omsorgsarbeid
— Vedlikeholdsarbeid — Annet husholdsarbeid

Source: Statistics Norway,'s time-use studies

Summary work and care

- Dual earner model, egalitarian ideal
- High but declining fertility & high level of working mothers, increasing fulltime
- Men's share of domestic work comparatively high
- BUT still 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
- Changes towards more polarized parenting styles?

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)
- Weak male breadwinner model (Lewis)

Welfare benefits for working parents

- State paid parental leave 49 weeks - 15 weeks reserved for fathers and 15 for mothers. Mothers have to start leave 3 weeks before expected delivery. The rest can be shared.
- 2 weeks unpaid leave for fathers at birth (mostly compensated by employer)

Workplace benefits for working parents

- Extensive rights to flexible working hours and 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 kindergarten from 1 year - 87,2% of children aged 1-5 in kindergarten. Rapid expansion in 1-3 year olds in kindergarten.
- Cash-for-care scheme for under two year olds who do not attend publicly sponsored child-care

Financial support for parents

- Universal child-allowance. Not adjusted, gradually less in real terms.
- Comparatively generous transitional benefits for lone parents. BUT reduced period of eligibility&increased conditionality

The promotion of father-care

- Parental leave gender neutral 1978
- First country in the world to introduce 4 weeks paternal quota of parental leave 1993
- Increased to 5, 6, 10 and 14 weeks 2006 -2013. Reduced to 10 weeks 2013. Increased to 15 weeks 2018.
- Consensus–polarization–hegemony

Paternal quota & gender equality

- Cultural effect: normalisation of fathers' participation in the family
- 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#ixzz0yweeB>

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 duty to provide
- 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.

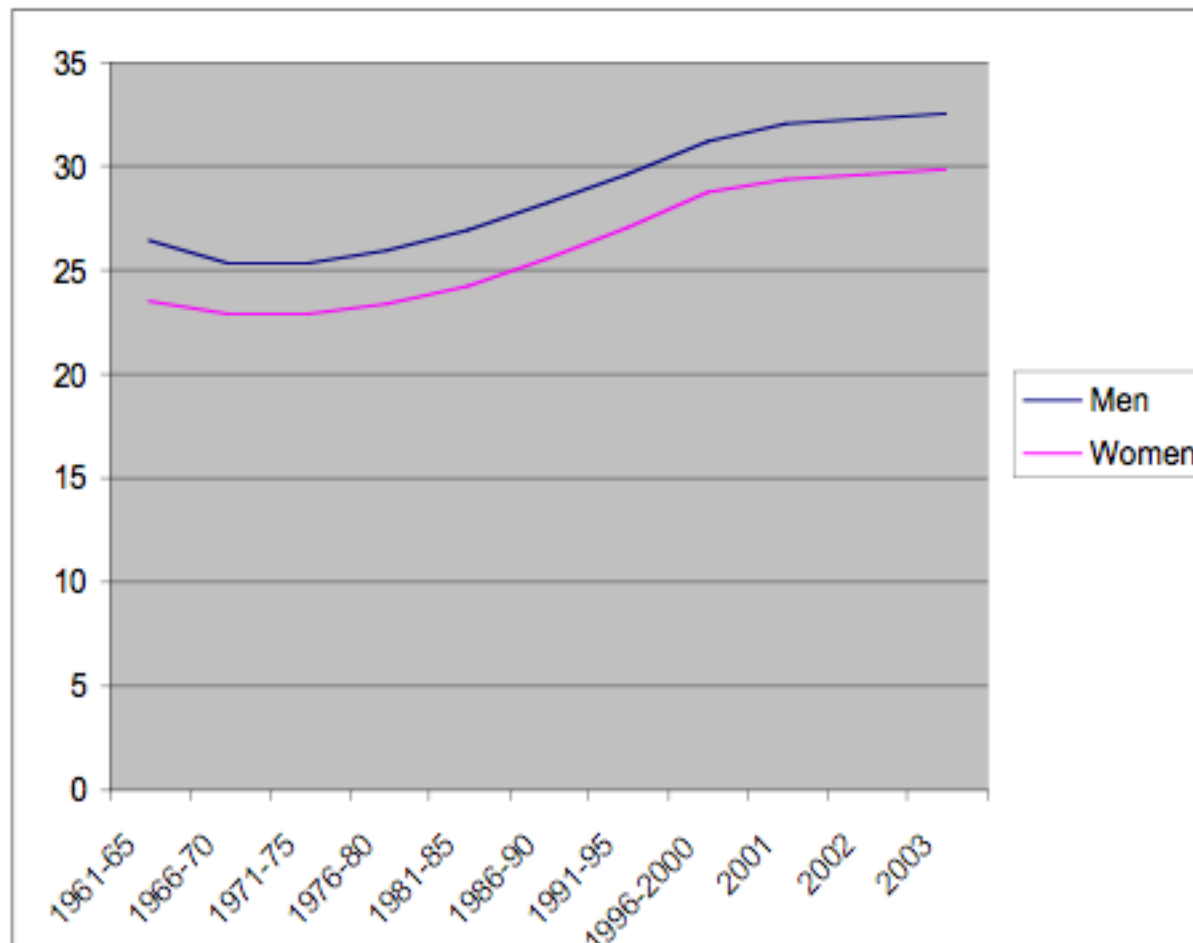
Marriage today

- Anyone over 18 & single is free to marry (16 years with permission from parents and exemption from authorities)
- 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)

Same-sex couples

- Right to adopt
- Female same-sex married couples have the right to assisted fertilization
- The co-mother will then become the legal co-parent
- Surrogacy is illegal

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



Cohabitation

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

The divorce rate, 1959-2005

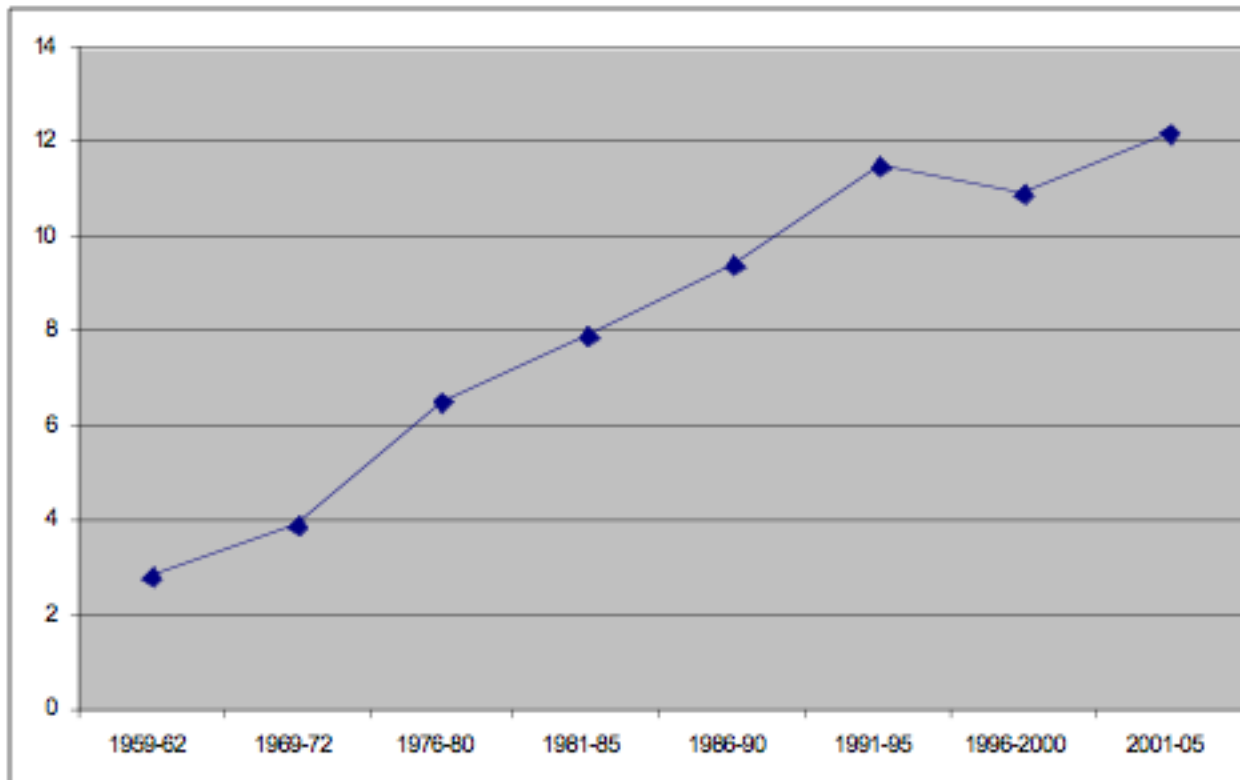
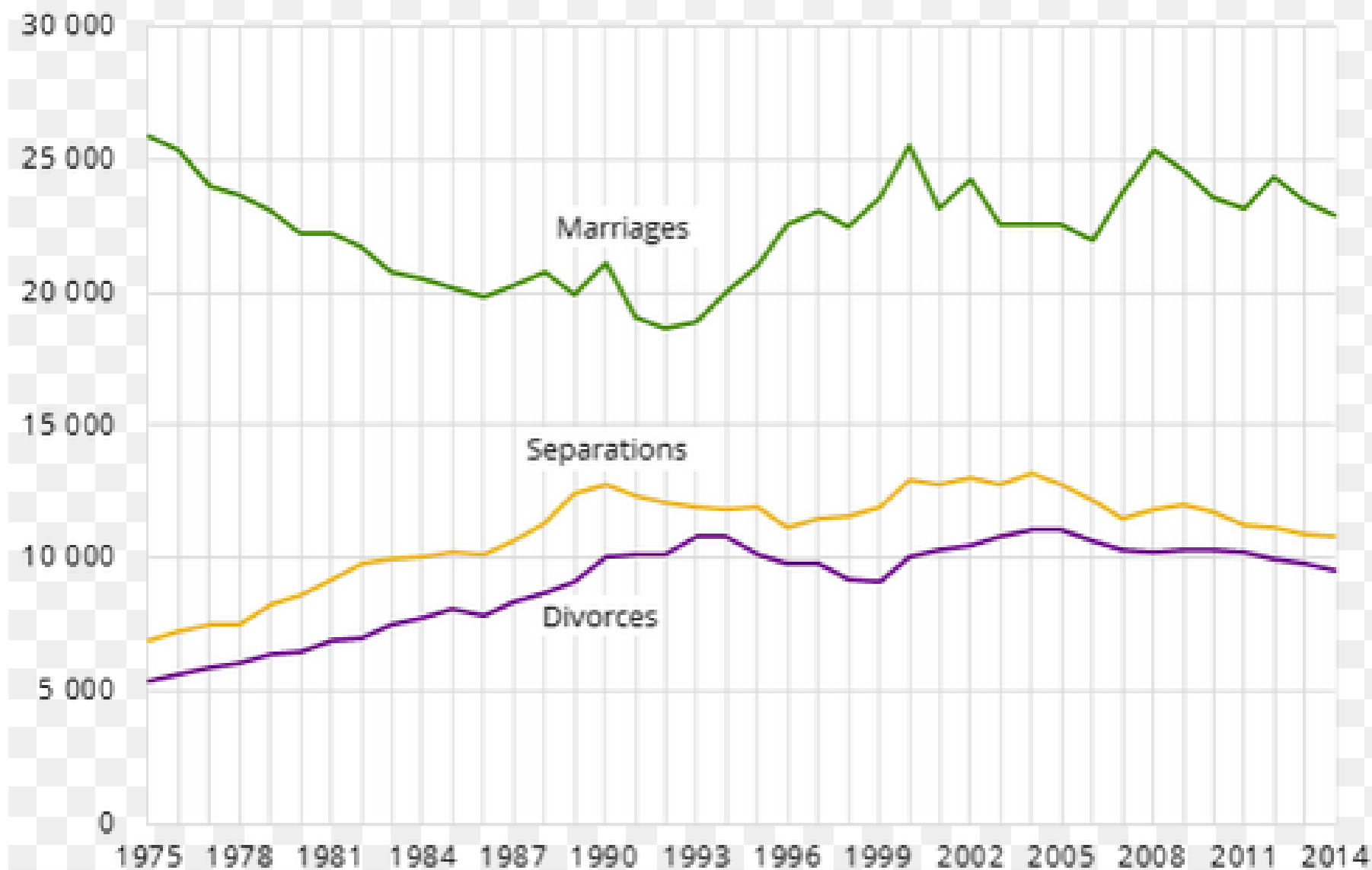


Figure 2. Marriages, divorces and separations¹



¹Includes registered and dissolved partnerships
Source: Statistics Norway.

Some family forms are less stable

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

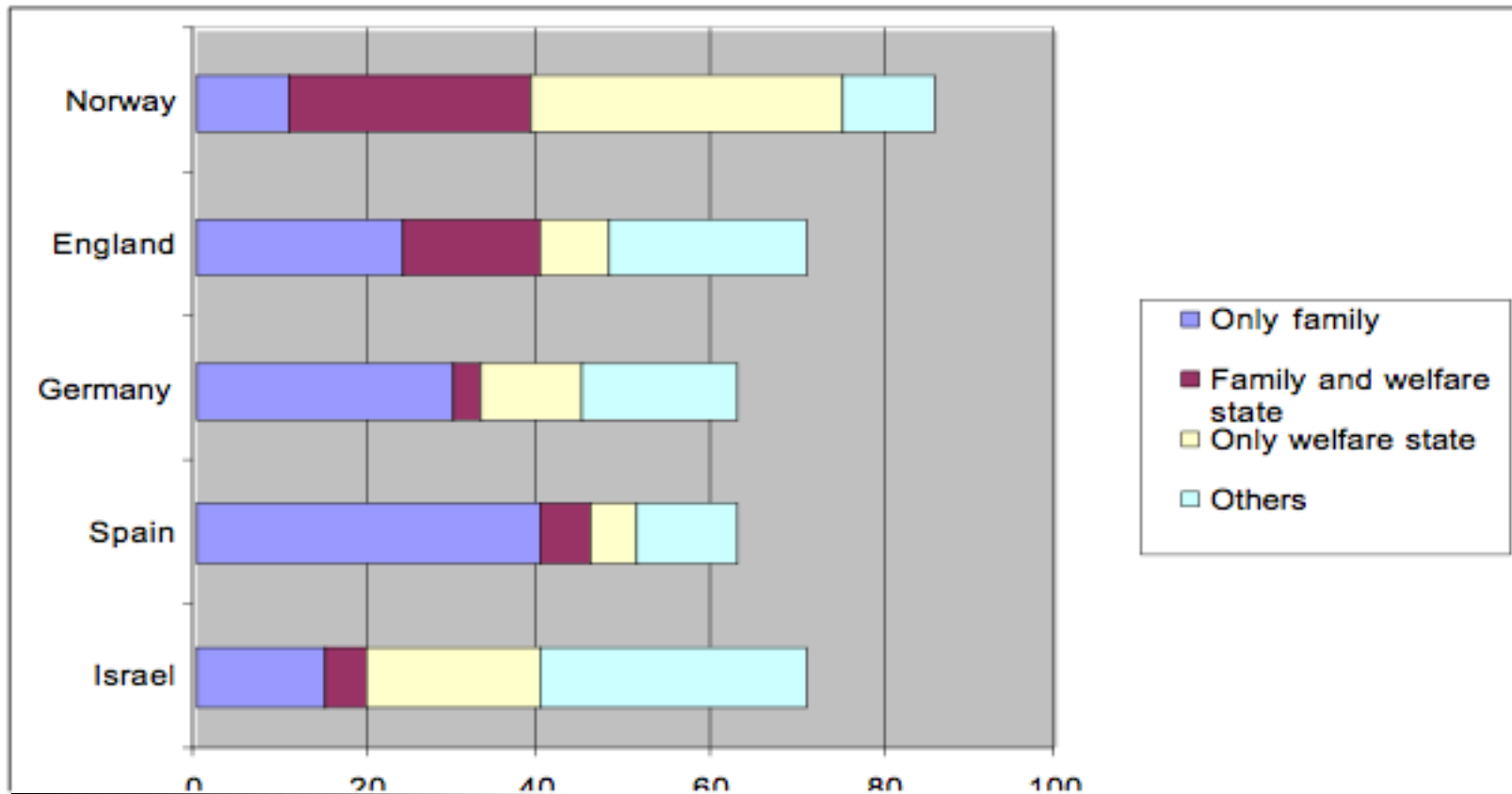
Parenting after divorce

- 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!

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