

**A new father's role?
Employment patterns among Norwegian fathers
in the 1990s¹**

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1. Introduction

In most Western countries the family model of a sole male breadwinner is in full retreat. In Norway, as in the other Scandinavian countries, this retreat has during the last decades been made possible by the introduction of a variety of work-family policies aimed at supporting flexible solutions for parents in combining family responsibilities and income producing work. In these countries, as Ellingsæter (1999a) points out, the work-family tension arising from the erosion of the male breadwinner model has been modified by state policies.

In much of the Norwegian public debate on the family during later decades, a symmetric family of two workers-carers has been an implicit ideal (Knudsen and Wærness 2001). Still, during the 1970s and 1980s reconciling work and family life was mainly defined as a typical feminine dilemma, and the political concern was to make it easier for mothers to combine paid work and family care. The 1990s however, represent a shift in Norwegian work-family policies, as political priority was gradually given to increasing fathers' participation in family work. In 1986 a Government Commission on the role of men was appointed, and the commission came to influence Norwegian public opinion and policies considerably during the 1990s. The commission especially put the role of men as *fathers* on the political agenda, focusing both on the fathers' duties and their rights to spend time with, and care for, their children (NOU 1991:3). In the following years several initiatives were taken to encourage the active involvement of men in care activities. Hence in Norway as in the other Scandinavian countries, the concept of the "caring father" was politically institutionalised well before it was made a political topic in other countries (Leira 2002). However, as we shall see in this paper, there is still a considerable distance between ideals and reality. The male breadwinner model is still far from replaced by a gender equal breadwinner model.

2. Focus on fathers' working hours

Whereas mothers' employment patterns are continually monitored through the national Labour Force Surveys (LFS) and various analyses of these (for instance Statistics Norway 2001, Jensen 2000, Ellingsæter and Wiers-Jensen 1997, Kjeldstad 1993 and 1991), fathers' working hours have been less systematically studied in Norway. Hence, in spite of much focus on the so called "new father's role" during recent decades, information on possible alterations in fathers' employment patterns is sparse. One reason for this is that it is more complicated to identify fathers than mothers in the Labour Force Surveys because complete information on the participants' household members is not registered. However, by linking data on biological and adopted children from the Population register on the Survey data, it is possible to identify fathers with children at different ages. In this paper we discuss possible changes during the 1990s in employment patterns and working hours among married/cohabiting fathers with children 0-15 years of age.² We look at contractual/usual working hours as well as actual working hours, and we differentiate between fathers with children at various ages. As many of the family policy reforms in the 1990s were directed particularly at parents with very young children, we focus especially on fathers with children 0-2 years of age. The topic of this paper is fathers' labour market behaviour. But as the labour market participation of mothers and fathers are strongly interlinked, we also want to make some comparisons with the development for mothers.³ The tables are presented at the end of the paper.

² Employment patterns and working hours among single mothers and fathers based on the same data linkage, have been analysed in Kjeldstad and Rønsen 2001.

³ Gender differences in Norwegian parents' labour market behaviour are discussed in more detail in another paper from this project (Kitterød and Kjeldstad 2002).

The paper is organised as follows: In the next section we give brief account of some of the family policy reforms in Norway during the 1990s. In section 4 we mention some key issues regarding men's and women's labour market behaviour in Norway and point out some of the regulatory aspects in the Norwegian labour market. Data and definitions are accounted for in section 5, while the empirical analyses are presented in section 6. Finally, the results are summarised and discussed in section 7.

3. Family policy reforms in Norway in the 1990s

There have been only few and insignificant changes in the general working time and vacation regulations in Norway during the 1990s. However, in the field of family and gender policies, many important reforms that might affect parents' time use were implemented during the decade. It is not our intention to assess effects of single reforms in this paper, but some knowledge of the most important reforms might serve as useful backdrop for the empirical analyses.

The parental leave schemes in Norway were substantially increased during the 1990s, and the total length of the parental leave now adds up to 52 weeks with 80 percent wage compensation, or 42 weeks with 100 per cent compensation. In connection with the extension of the parental leave in 1993, a fathers' quota was introduced, reserving four of the compensated weeks for fathers. The intention of this "mildly coercive" measure (Brandth and Øverli 1998) was to promote fathers' participation at home, both during the four weeks of leave, and in the longer run. Whereas fathers' leave entitlements previously were partly dependent on the mother's employment and earnings prior to delivery, fathers have recently acquired more independent rights. Furthermore, a time account scheme was introduced in 1994 in order to make possible more flexible uses of the parental leave. In 1998/99 a "cash for care" reform was launched, implying that parents with small children (1-2 years of age) who do not use public childcare, will get paid in cash an amount equivalent to the state subsidy to a place in the services. The aim of the reform was threefold, namely that parents should be given the opportunity to spend more time with their children, to give families a real choice in relation to the form of care they want, and to provide greater equity between families with respect to state subsidies received for childcare, regardless of the form of care used (St. prp. no. 53 (1997-98)). The "cash for care" reform has been extremely disputed. The opponents fear, among other things, that it will result in a more unequal division of labour among parents, as a likely outcome might be that many mothers, but few fathers, will reduce their working hours.

In Norway, family policies and gender equality policies have been closely intertwined, and the family policy reforms implemented during the 1990s were meant to serve a mixture of purposes. Important objectives have been to facilitate more flexible adjustments between work and family for both mothers and fathers, to ensure more freedom of choice between various child care arrangements, to enable parents to spend more time with their own children, and to encourage a more equal sharing of income producing work and family work among mothers and fathers. As far as gender equality is concerned, it has been maintained that some of the reforms might work in opposite direction. Whereas the father's quota encourages fathers to increase their contribution in family work, the "cash for care" reform is more likely to cement a traditional gender division of labour (Leira 1998).

Several analyses have been undertaken in order to evaluate the possible effects of the reforms. By and large, the father's quota is seen as a success, in that the great majority of the eligible fathers utilise the "mandatory" weeks (Brandth and Kvande 2001, Brandth and Øverli 1998). However, rather few take more than four weeks of leave, except from a couple of weeks off after the birth of the child (The National Insurance Association 2002). Hence, in most couples mothers take the bulk of the parental leave. The "cash for care" reform has been thoroughly assessed regarding outcomes in various areas (Baklien et. al 2001). Special attention has been paid to possible changes in parents' employment patterns, but alterations have been more carefully analysed for mothers than for fathers (for instance Schøne 2002, Håkonsen et. al. 2001, Knudsen 2001, Rønsen 2001, Hellevik 2000, Langset et. al. 2000). Various data sources and methods give somewhat different results, but it seems safe to

conclude that at least in the short run, the reform caused a significant, but fairly modest, reduction in mothers' employment, whereas fathers' employment was hardly affected.

4. Labour market regulations and labour market participation in Norway

The Work Environment Act in Norway regulates the daily and weekly working hours. Maximum ordinary working time is 40 hours weekly or 9 hours daily. However, according to collective agreements in all industries and sectors 37.5 hours per week is standard working time. Overtime is regulated to be maximum 10 hours a week as a rule, 25 hours during 4 successive weeks, and 200 hours a year. The Work Environment Act gives several exceptions from the principal rule of maximum 40 hours. Some special occupations have more liberal rules, and work at particular hours is regulated by more strict rules.

The Work Environment Act states an individual right to reduced working hours due to medical, social and other important welfare reasons. The employer is obliged to comply the need of the employee - or otherwise prove it will be of great inconvenience for the company. This right to reduced hours is widely used by mothers in order to reconcile paid work and care for children. During the 1980s part time work in Norway underwent a process of normalisation in which working conditions and behaviour of the employees changed. The proportion of employees with short part time work decreased, job security for part time workers improved, and part time workers increasingly became union members (Ellingsæter 1995, 1989). Today part-time arrangements in Norway bear few signs of marginality (ibid, Bjurstrøm 1993). In addition The Work Environment Act states that employees with responsibility for children 12 years and younger are entitled to leave during children's illness: 10 days per year per employee with one child and 15 days with more children.

On an international scale, Norway has a quite high employment rate and a fairly low unemployment rate. In the population 16-74 year of age, employment rates are still somewhat higher among men than among women, but the gender gap is narrowing (Bø and Molden 2000). Historically, Norwegian women were recruited to the labour market somewhat later than women in the other Nordic countries, but by the end of the 1990s they had caught up with Sweden and Denmark (Kjeldstad 2001, Ellingsæter 1999b). During the 1970s Norwegian women entered the labour market in large numbers, but it was first and foremost those without small children who took up paid employment in this decade. In the 1980s employment rates increased also among those with small children (Kjeldstad 1991). In the 1990s mothers' employment continued to rise, and we also witnessed a shift towards more full-time work and less part-time (Kjeldstad and Rønsen 2001, Jensen 2000, see also table 7 in this paper). In spite of increasing full-time work, Norwegian mothers still have substantial higher part-time rates than fathers. Hence, the shared work family practice still remains largely a female adjustment.

As far as fathers' working hours have been the issue in Norway, the focus has been more on long hours than on part-time work. In the 1980s, analyses of the Level of living surveys showed that a significant number of fathers had weekly working hours far exceeding normal hours, and that such arrangements were increasing (Ellingsæter 1991). More recent surveys indicate that such arrangements became slightly less common in the 1990s (Kitterød and Roalsø 1996). As these analyses were based on relatively small samples and a less detailed registration of working hours than what is done in the LFS, the conclusions are somewhat uncertain. Hence, analyses of fathers' working hours based on the LFS are needed in order to enhance our knowledge of possible changes in fathers' labour market behaviour.

As Norwegian and Nordic women have a fairly high employment rate, it may seem like a paradox that the labour markets in these countries are among most gender segregated of the western world (Kjeldstad 2001, Neramo 1999, Anker 1998, Melkas and Anker 1998). This is mainly due to the large female dominated public sector of the Nordic countries, and is a result of the welfare state monetising women's traditionally unpaid work. Also, however on a smaller scale, there are certain sectors of the

economy which are still strongly male dominated, in private sector, especially in some traditional manufactory industries. Whereas national differences in gender patterns of work hours are largely influenced by historical and cultural traditions (Ellingsæter 2001, Pfau-Effinger 1998), *within* country differences between women's and men's work hours in many instances are structured by occupational and company cultures (Abrahamsen 2002). Abrahamsen finds for instance that the norm about the "normal worker" and the "normal working the hours" is less strict in female dominated than in male dominated occupations. Whereas employees, mainly women, in female dominated occupations hold, and are encouraged to hold, a variety of working hour arrangements, the norm of the worker in male dominated occupations, both men and women, is full time or more. The particular time culture at male dominated working places is often characterised by extensive hours, and part time-work being punished with regard to promotion and payment (Ellingsæter 1999b). Still, qualitative studies of fathers' uses of the improved parental leave schemes in the 1990s show that many of today's fathers reflect actively on how to practice their fatherhood and whether and how their working hours should be adjusted to their parental responsibilities (Brandth and Kvande 1999).

The years 1987-1993 were characterised by economic recession in Norway and unemployment rates were fairly high on a Norwegian scale. As men more often than women work in private sector, they were more severely affected by the economic downturn. Consequently they had higher unemployment rate than women. Among parents however, the unemployment rate of mothers exceeded the rate of fathers throughout the decade (Kjeldstad and Rønsen 2002). This is mainly associated to the particularly low unemployment rate of fathers. Male unemployment is more a youth and old age phenomenon among men than women in Norway. Thus the employment rate of fathers of young children has been steadily low.

5. Concepts and definitions in LFS

Concepts and definitions in the Norwegian LFS are in accordance with recommendations given by the ILO.⁴ Data are collected by telephone interviewing, and the sample comprises 24000 respondents each quarter. People are asked about their relations to the labour market in one specific week. The reference period is one week each month.

Employed persons are those who performed work for pay or profit for at least one hour in the survey week, or who were temporary absent from work because of illness, vacation, permission leave etc. Conscripts are classified as employed persons. Persons engaged by government measures to promote employment are also included if they receive wages. In table 1 in this paper we look at employed fathers and differentiate between those being *temporarily absent*, and those *at work*, which means that they actually performed some income producing work during the reference week.

Contractual/usual working hours refer to the weekly number of working hours according to the work contract. Absence from work because of illness, holidays, parental leave etc. is not subtracted, and overtime is not included. Employees, whose contractual working hours vary from week to week, give information on the actual survey week as well as the average of their contractual working hours per week. In this paper the average numbers are used. For employees without an agreement on working hours, for self-employed and for unpaid family workers, data on their usual weekly working hours are used (average during the last 4 weeks). For those having more than one job, working hours in all jobs are included in the figures in this paper.

We differentiate between fathers with contractual/usual working time 1-19 hours per week (short part-time) 1-36 hours per week (long part-time), normal full-time work (32-40 hours), working hours 41-49 hours per week, and 50 hours + per week. The general rule is that contractual/usual working hours below 37 hours per week is counted as part-time. However, if the contractual working hours in the

⁴ A more detailed documentation of the Norwegian LFS is given in Bø and Håland 2002.

profession are less than 37 hours, employees are classified as full-time workers even if they work less than 37 hours. Hence, the category capturing normal full-time work is labelled "32-40 hours" in this paper.

Actual working hours refer to the number of hours actually worked during the reference week. Overtime and other extra work is included, and absence because of illness, vacation, parental leave etc. is excluded. In this paper we differentiate between six categories: Temporarily absent the whole reference week, working 1-19 hours, working 20-36 hours, working 37-40 hours, working 41-49 hours, and working 50 hours or more.

The various measures for employment and working time in the LFS serve different purposes and may also give somewhat dissimilar pictures regarding fathers' working hours. As entitlements and rights are often based on the contractual working hours, knowledge about people's contractual arrangements is important. However, actual working hours give a better description of how fathers really spend their time.

In order to be able to define groups of married/cohabiting fathers and mothers in the data, information on biological and adopted children from the Population register is linked on the Survey data. We do not have information on other children in the household. Hence, persons without own biological or adopted children in the household, but living together with a partner's children, are not included in the analyses in this paper. In this project, information on whether people are married or cohabiting or not, is fetched both from the survey and the register. In some cases (about 5 per cent of all parents interviewed in the LFS) there is inconsistency between these sources. These persons are excluded from the analyses in the following.⁵

The figures presented in this paper are based on large samples. The sub-samples of married/cohabiting fathers with children in the various age groups presented in the tables vary between 2000 and 4000 in the years under study.

6. A Labour Force Survey analysis of fathers' employment in the 1990s

Increased employment and some more temporary absence

During the second half of the 1990s we saw a slight increase in the employment rates among married/cohabiting fathers in Norway, - a development that is in consistency with the economic recovery during the period (table 1). In 2000 94.5 percent of the fathers with children 0-15 years of age were employed, and this was 1.1 percentage points more than in 1991. There are only minor differences in employment rates between fathers with children in various age groups. Interestingly, it seems that those with the youngest children (0-2 years) had the highest employment rate in 2000, and also experienced the most significant increase throughout the 1990s. However, the percentage of fathers in this group that actually was at work during the reference week remained rather stable during the decade, about 82 percent, whereas there was a significant, albeit modest, increase in the proportion being temporarily absent. In 2000 13.3 of the fathers with very young children was temporarily absent from work, and this was 3.1 percentage points more than in the beginning of the 1990s.

This change might have to do with the improved parental leave schemes in the period, and perhaps also with prevailing social norms of more active fathering, and might indicate that having small children increasingly affect the labour market behaviour of fathers. However, both the level of, and the increase in, fathers' temporary absence is far below that of mothers (table 7). In 2000 as much as one in three mothers with children 0-2 years of age was temporary absent from work, and this was an increase of 8.3 percentage points since 1991. This reflects the fact that, in Norway as in most other

⁵ This differs from what is being done in the regular reports from the LFS, where the classification of people as married/cohabiting is based solely on information given in the interview.

countries, mothers are still the primary leave users. Among parents with very young children we see huge and rather persistent gender differences in both employment rates, temporary absence from work, and percentages actually at work. Due to an increase in mothers' employment during the 1990s, the gender gap in employment rates became slightly reduced in the course of this decade. Yet, the gender difference in the proportion actually at work among parents with very young children remained fairly stable. In 2000 the proportion of fathers actually at work was still 41 percentage points above the proportion of mothers.

Hence, the redefinition of the father's role in Norway to comprise more active involvement in family life is not reflected in the employment rates of the 1990s. However, the modest growth in temporary absence among fathers with very young children shows that rising employment during the economic upturn in the second half of the decade did not imply more fathers actually at work. This might be seen as a signal of an enlarged family role among Norwegian fathers.

Contractual/usual working hours: Little part time, but decreased long hours for fathers

Changing cultural norms towards more active fathering have not resulted in more part-time work among Norwegian fathers. In 2000 still only about 4 percent of the employed fathers with children 0-15 years of age had a contractual part-time arrangement, and there was almost no increase to be seen during the 1990s (table 2). Also among fathers with very young children part-time work is rather rare. Accordingly, part-time adjustment in the labour market is still a far more common strategy among mothers than fathers in Norway. In spite of somewhat reduced part-time rates in the 1990s, approximately 50 per cent of the employed mothers had contractual part-time work in 2000.

The vast majority of Norwegian employed fathers, about 77 percent, have ordinary full-time work (32-40 hours per week), and such arrangements became somewhat more common in the course of the 1990s, with an increase of approximately 5 percentage points. However, long weekly hours still represent a rather common option among fathers. In 2000 some 18 percent of the employed fathers had contractual arrangements exceeding ordinary full-time work, and this is far above the rate for mothers, where only some 4 percent have such agreements (table 7). Nevertheless, there was a slight decrease in long-hours arrangements among fathers in the 1990s, and it was first and foremost the very long working hours (50 hours per week +) that became less common. Hence, if the new father's role has affected fathers' contractual working hours, the outcome is not more part-time work, but somewhat less long hours.

The average number of contractual working hours among Norwegian fathers is presented in table 3. In 2000 the average for all fathers was 39.7 hours per week, but the level was somewhat lower for those with very young children than for those with older children. As can be seen from table 2, this is not due to more part-time work in this group, but to less long hours among those with children below 3 years of age. If we look at all employed fathers, the reduction in average weekly working hours in the 1990s was fairly modest, only 0.7 hours. However, it was somewhat more pronounced for those with very young children, than for those with older children. This might indicate that young children increasingly impact fathers' working arrangements so that very long contractual hours are gradually being chosen away during the children's early infancy.

Actual working hours: Declining averages among employed fathers

People's actual working hours may differ from their contractual hours either because they work less than agreed upon, or because of extra work or overtime. Table 4 shows that Norwegian fathers did reduce their time spent on income producing work somewhat in the course of the 1990s. However, considering the intense focus on the new father's role in the period, and also the improved leave schemes for fathers, the change in actual working hours is fairly modest.

Both for fathers with very young children, and for those with older children, there was a development towards more fathers working less than weekly full-time and fewer fathers working long hours. Whereas fairly few fathers have contractual part-time work, quite many actually work reduced hours

during the reference week, and such adjustments became somewhat more widespread throughout the 1990s. In 2000 about 19 percent of the employed fathers worked 1-36 hours in the surveyed week, and this was 4.5 percentage points more than in 1991. The decrease in long hours actually worked is in accordance with the trends in contractual/usual working hours, and is also consistent with results from level of living studies in Norway. It was first and foremost very long hours that became less common among fathers throughout the 1990s. In spite of this decrease, long actual working hours are still quite widespread among fathers. Approximately 30 percent of all employed fathers worked more than 40 hours a week in 2000. This was almost 8 percentage points less than in 1991, but still it is a great deal higher than the proportion of fathers formally holding such arrangements, and also far above the level among mothers. Only 8 percent of the employed mothers worked more than 40 hours a week in 2000, and the proportion stayed almost unaltered during the 1990s (table 7).

The enhanced opportunities for parental leave during the 1990s could give reason to expect more temporary absence among fathers. However, the changes in this respect are fairly modest, and also a great deal smaller than what is found among women. Only 13 percent of the employed fathers with children 0-2 years of age were temporarily absent from work the whole reference week in 2000, and this was only 2 percentage points more than in 1991. In contrast, as much as 46 percent of the employed mothers with very young children were temporarily absent in 2000, and this was 8 percentage points more than in 1990. Again, this reflects the fact that mothers continue to take the bulk of the parental leave period, and that fairly few fathers make use of more than the four "compulsory" weeks. It is also somewhat surprising that temporary absence is not particularly more common among fathers with very young children, than among those with older children. As the opportunities for paid leave are best during the child's first years, we would expect most temporary absence among those with the youngest children.

In order to get a better overview of the aggregate changes in fathers' actual working hours, and also a more concise measurement of the difference between actual and contractual hours, we have calculated the average actual working hours throughout the 1990s (table 5). Employed fathers with children 0-15 years of age worked on average 35.2 hours per week in 2000. This was 2.7 hours less than in 1991, and also somewhat below the average contractual hours of fathers. The decrease in fathers' actual hours in the 1990s was somewhat more pronounced than the decrease in their contractual hours, and accordingly, the difference between actual and contractual hours became a bit more marked.

Despite a certain decrease in father's actual working hours in the 1990s, fathers' time spent on income producing work still far exceeds that of mothers. This is the case irrespective of the age of the youngest child, but is particularly prominent among parents with very young children. Looking at parents with children below 3 years of age, we find that employed mothers actually worked on average only 15.3 hours per week in 2000, while fathers worked on average 34.1 hours a week. For all parents with children 0-15 years of age the figures were 22.5 hours and 35.2 hours for mothers and fathers respectively.

Looking at all fathers: Less time on income producing work despite higher employment rates

Changes in fathers' time spent on income producing work can also be assessed by calculating the average working hours for all fathers, both employed and non-employed. This measurement captures the effects of employment rates as well as actual working hours among the employed. Working hours among the non-employed are set to zero.

Table 6 demonstrates that married/cohabiting fathers with children 0-15 years of age spent on average 33.3 hours per week on income producing work in 2000, and this was 2 hours less than in 1991. Hence, the increased employment rate was outweighed by the reduction in actual working hours among the employed. Fathers with very young children worked on average 32.3 hours per week in 2000, and this was only modestly less than did fathers with older children.

Looking at all married/cohabiting parents with children 0-15 years we find that the gender difference in average time spent on income producing work became somewhat reduced during the 1990s, due to a slight increase among mothers and a small reduction among fathers. Nevertheless, the gender difference was still marked in 2000; the average for mothers was 18.3 hours per week, and this constituted only about 55 percent of the average for fathers. The gender difference is especially pronounced among parents with children below 3 years of age, where mothers' average actual working hours make up only some 35 percent of fathers' average hours. This huge gender difference reflects both the lower employment rate among mothers during the children's early infancy, and the far lower actual working hours among employed mothers than among employed fathers.

7. Summary and conclusion

During the past decades Norwegian authorities have developed work-family policies with the aim of promoting a more equal division of paid and unpaid work among mothers and fathers. Whereas the reconciliation of paid work and family care has often been framed as a typical feminine dilemma, Norwegian fathers increasingly meet expectations of more active participation at home. Whether, and to what extent, this has affected fathers' labour market behaviour has until today been little examined. Mothers' employment patterns are constantly monitored through the national Labour Force Surveys, while fathers' working hours are usually being less carefully studied. In this paper we utilise the LFS, linked with data from the Norwegian population register, to assess possible changes in fathers' employment patterns and working hours during the 1990s. We also comment upon gender differences in parents' labour market behaviour. We look at both employment rates, contractual/usual working hours and actual working hours. These measures serve different purposes and give somewhat diverging pictures of changes in fathers' employment, and also of gender differences in working hours.

Consistent with the economic upturn in the second half of the 1990s the employment rate among fathers increased somewhat and reached almost 95 percent in 2000. However, the proportion of fathers actually at work in the reference week stayed fairly stable, whereas there was a slight increase in the percentage being temporarily absent from work.

Cultural norms of more active fathering have hereto not resulted in more contractual part-time work among Norwegian fathers. In 2000 only about 4 percent of the employed fathers with children 0-15 years of age had a part-time arrangement. The vast majority of fathers have ordinary full time adjustments, but long working hours still represent a quite common option. Nevertheless, we saw a certain decrease in long-hours arrangements during the 1990s, and it was first and foremost the very long weekly hours (50 hours +) that became less common.

Not only fathers' contractual working hours, but also their actual working hours were somewhat reduced throughout the 1990s. In 2000 employed fathers worked on average 35.2 hours a week, and this was 2.7 hours less than in 1991. It was first and foremost very long working hours that became less widespread, whereas putting in a number of hours in the reference week corresponding to part-time or normal full-time became somewhat more common. Looking at the average actual weekly working hours for all fathers, both employed and non-employed, we find a slight decrease in the course of the 1990s, from 35.3 hours in 1991, to 33.3 hours in 2000. Hence, the increased employment rate was outweighed by the reduction in actual working hours among the employed.

Despite a certain reduction in fathers' contractual and actual working hours, and an increase in mothers' employment rates and contractual working hours, there are still huge gender differences in Norwegian parents' labour market behaviour. Part-time work is still mainly a female option, and long weekly hours are mostly found among fathers. Moreover, the substantial amount of temporary absence from work among mothers, compared to the rather modest absence among fathers, reflects that women are the primary users of the enhanced parental leave schemes during the 1990s.

The reduction in fathers' working hours might signal that having children has an increasing impact also on men's labour market behaviour. However, considering the strong focus on the new father's role in the 1990s, and also the improved leave schemes for fathers, the change in fathers working hours must be judged as rather modest. It might well be that reconciling family and paid work is not longer a dilemma for mothers only. It is important to underscore, though, that changes in fathers' labour market adjustments are still far less comprehensive than those found among mothers. Significant as the reduction in fathers' long hours might be, it is still the case that fathers seldom choose part-time arrangements and only rarely make use of more than a modest share of the parental leave schemes.

Undoubtedly, although still the main breadwinners, Norwegian fathers have become far more involved in family work during the past decades. The Norwegian time use surveys show that fathers have increased their time spent on housework and family care quite substantially since the 1970s, when the first study was conducted (Kitterød 2002). However, the Labour Force Surveys show that in contrast to what is the case for mothers, fathers' adjustments in the labour market are mostly done within a full-time contract, or even a contract of long weekly hours, and only rarely result in formal part-time arrangements. Part-time work and extensive use of parental leave schemes still seems to be mainly a female model. Ellingsæter (1999a) argues that short periods of absence from work, as for instance the father's quota, does not question an individual's job commitment in the same way as reduced hours over longer periods do. May be this is part of the explanation why most Norwegian fathers still opt for full-time arrangements in the labour market and make modestly use of their leave opportunities. The strong gender segregation in the Norwegian labour market, and the overrepresentation of men in the private sector, entails that fathers often work in trades characterised by a time culture where reduced working hours and long periods of leave are not particularly welcomed (Abrahamsen 2002). However, time cultures might change as new cohorts of parents enter the labour market. Whether Norwegian fathers will make more pronounced adjustments to family life in the years to come remains to be seen.

Table 1: Percentage of persons employed, temporarily absent and actually at work among married/cohabiting fathers with children at various ages. 1991-2000. Percent

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Change 1991-2000
Children 0-2 years											
Employed persons	92.1	91.5	90.6	90.3	91.8	93.7	93.8	93.8	93.9	95.3	+3.2
Temporarily absent	10.2	9.2	8.7	11.3	11.5	12.6	11.6	12.3	12.9	13.3	+3.1
At work	81.9	82.3	81.9	79.0	80.3	81.1	82.2	81.5	81.0	82.0	+0.1
Children 3-6 years											
Employed persons	93.6	91.1	92.0	93.2	94.9	93.4	94.3	95.3	95.1	94.4	+0.8
Temporarily absent	11.0	8.9	8.0	9.3	9.3	9.8	9.8	11.6	10.6	11.3	+0.3
At work	82.6	82.2	84.0	83.9	85.6	83.6	84.5	83.7	84.5	83.1	+0.5
Children 7-10 years											
Employed persons	94.9	93.5	92.1	93.2	93.3	94.9	95.2	95.2	94.0	93.9	-1.0
Temporarily absent	11.4	10.4	9.2	9.5	9.3	11.5	10.8	9.6	11.9	13.4	+2.0
At work	83.5	83.1	82.9	83.7	84.0	83.4	84.4	85.6	82.1	80.5	-3.0
Children 11-15 years											
Employed persons	94.6	92.4	92.5	93.6	92.1	93.0	93.8	95.1	94.0	94.1	-0.5
Temporarily absent	10.9	9.8	9.7	9.6	9.0	11.6	10.0	9.8	11.9	11.8	+0.9
At work	83.7	82.6	82.8	84.0	83.1	81.4	83.8	85.3	82.1	82.3	-1.4
Children 0-15 years											
Employed persons	93.4	92.2	91.7	92.4	93.3	93.7	94.2	94.8	94.3	94.5	+1.1
Temporarily absent	10.8	9.5	8.8	9.8	9.9	11.4	10.6	11.1	12.3	12.4	+1.6
At work	82.6	82.7	82.9	82.6	83.4	82.3	83.6	83.7	82.0	82.1	-0.5

Source: The Norwegian Labour Force Surveys.

Table 2: Contractual/usual working hours among employed married/cohabiting fathers with children at various ages. 1991-2000. Percent

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Change 1991-2000
Children 0-2 years											
1-19 hours	1.3	1.9	1.5	2.0	1.4	1.4	1.6	2.2	2.1	2.2	+0.9
20-36 hours (part time)	2.5	3.1	2.3	2.4	2.8	3.5	3.6	2.6	2.8	2.4	-0.1
32-40 hours (full time)	75.3	76.1	78.1	78.7	77.7	74.7	76.5	78.1	77.4	80.0	+4.7
41-49 hours	8.5	7.6	6.6	6.0	7.2	8.5	8.7	8.2	8.0	7.5	-1.0
50 hours +	12.3	11.3	11.5	10.8	10.9	11.9	9.7	9.0	9.6	7.9	-4.4
Children 3-6 years											
1-19 hours	1.0	1.2	1.3	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.5	+0.5
20-36 hours (part time)	2.8	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.5	3.0	2.9	2.5	3.3	3.5	+0.7
32-40 hours (full time)	72.1	74.9	74.9	76.7	77.3	74.2	74.2	76.1	77.1	76.8	+4.7
41-49 hours	9.3	7.6	8.8	8.0	7.0	8.3	7.9	9.0	8.1	8.0	-1.3
50 hours +	14.8	14.6	13.2	12.1	12.2	13.2	14.1	11.3	10.5	10.2	-4.6
Children 7-10 years											
1-19 hours	1.4	0.9	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.9	1.9	+0.5
20-36 hours (part time)	2.1	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.2	3.1	2.5	2.1	3.0	2.3	+0.2
32-40 hours (full time)	69.8	71.6	74.4	75.2	73.7	70.6	73.8	74.9	73.0	74.9	+5.1
41-49 hours	9.3	8.0	8.3	7.6	9.3	9.4	8.4	8.5	9.3	9.4	+0.1
50 hours +	17.4	16.8	14.0	13.4	13.5	15.6	14.3	13.5	12.8	11.4	-6.0
Children 11-15 years											
1-19 hours	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.0	-0.3
20-36 hours (part time)	2.8	2.7	2.1	1.7	2.1	1.8	2.7	3.0	2.9	1.9	-0.9
32-40 hours (full time)	71.9	74.0	73.2	73.0	75.1	72.4	72.5	71.5	75.0	76.9	+5.0
41-49 hours	8.8	8.8	7.7	8.5	8.6	10.4	9.6	8.2	7.2	7.5	-1.3
50 hours +	15.2	13.5	15.1	15.5	13.1	14.5	14.2	16.0	13.8	12.7	-2.5
Children 0-15 years											
1-19 hours	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.7	+0.5
20-36 hours (part time)	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.9	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.6	0.0
32-40 hours (full time)	72.6	74.4	75.4	76.2	76.3	73.3	74.5	75.6	75.6	77.4	+4.8
41-49 hours	9.0	8.0	7.8	7.5	7.8	9.0	8.6	8.5	8.1	8.0	-1.0
50 hours +	14.7	13.7	13.3	12.7	12.2	13.5	12.8	11.9	11.4	10.2	-4.5

Source: The Norwegian Labour Force Surveys.

Table 3: Average number of contractual/usual working hours among employed married/cohabiting fathers with children at various ages. 1991-2000

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Change 1991-2000
Children 0-2 years	39.9	39.6	39.5	39.3	39.5	39.9	39.5	39.3	39.4	38.8	-1.1
Children 3-6 years	40.7	40.6	40.2	39.9	39.7	40.3	40.5	39.9	40.0	39.8	-0.9
Children 7-10 years	40.9	41.0	40.7	40.2	40.4	40.7	40.6	40.4	40.2	40.1	-0.8
Children 11-15 years	40.3	40.0	40.4	40.8	40.2	41.0	40.8	41.2	40.7	40.6	+0.3
Children 0-15 years											
Children 0-15 years	40.4	40.2	40.1	40.0	39.9	40.4	40.3	40.1	40.0	39.7	-0.7

Source: The Norwegian Labour Force Surveys.

Table 4: Actual working hours among employed married/cohabiting fathers with children at various ages. 1991-2000. Percent

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Change 1991-2000
Children 0-2 years											
Temporarily absent	11.1	9.2	9.6	12.5	11.6	13.4	13.2	12.3	14.5	13.1	+2.0
1-19 hours	2.6	3.4	3.5	2.7	2.7	4.2	5.8	4.9	4.0	4.9	+2.3
20-36 hours	12.8	14.3	13.9	14.3	15.2	14.3	15.7	13.9	15.3	15.6	+2.8
37-40 hours	39.3	40.3	40.0	38.4	40.2	36.1	34.7	37.7	34.7	38.5	-0.8
41-49 hours	15.4	16.8	16.5	16.1	15.2	15.1	15.7	16.4	15.3	13.9	-1.5
50 hours +	18.8	16.0	16.5	16.1	15.2	16.8	14.9	14.8	16.1	13.9	-4.9
Children 3-6 years											
Temporarily absent	12.7	8.8	7.8	9.1	8.9	9.6	9.5	13.0	12.0	12.0	-0.7
1-19 hours	2.0	2.9	2.9	1.8	2.7	3.5	4.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	+1.4
20-36 hours	12.7	11.8	13.6	12.7	14.3	14.9	14.7	13.8	14.5	16.2	+3.5
37-40 hours	36.3	39.2	38.8	40.9	40.2	35.1	35.3	35.8	37.6	37.6	+1.3
41-49 hours	16.7	17.6	17.5	17.3	17.0	17.5	17.2	17.1	16.2	15.4	-1.3
50 hours +	19.6	19.6	19.4	18.2	17.0	19.3	19.0	17.1	16.2	15.4	-4.2
Children 7-10 years											
Temporarily absent	12.0	9.7	8.6	11.6	8.6	12.2	10.1	8.9	12.7	13.0	+1.0
1-19 hours	2.7	2.8	2.9	1.4	2.9	4.1	3.8	3.8	2.5	3.9	+1.2
20-36 hours	12.0	12.5	11.4	11.6	11.4	13.5	13.9	15.2	15.2	14.3	+2.3
37-40 hours	33.3	36.1	40.0	40.6	40.0	33.8	35.4	35.4	36.7	39.0	+5.7
41-49 hours	17.3	16.7	17.1	17.4	17.1	16.2	16.5	16.5	15.2	14.3	-3.0
50 hours +	22.7	22.2	20.0	17.4	20.0	20.3	20.3	20.3	17.7	15.6	-7.1
Children 11-15 years											
Temporarily absent	11.5	11.8	11.6	9.1	9.8	11.3	12.0	9.0	13.9	12.5	+1.0
1-19 hours	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	3.8	4.0	5.1	2.5	3.8	+1.5
20-36 hours	11.5	11.8	11.6	11.4	12.2	12.5	14.7	14.1	13.9	13.8	+2.3
37-40 hours	37.9	41.2	38.4	39.8	39.0	36.3	34.7	35.9	35.4	40.0	+2.1
41-49 hours	16.1	15.3	16.3	17.0	18.3	18.8	16.0	15.4	16.5	13.8	-2.3
50 hours +	20.7	17.6	19.8	20.5	18.3	17.5	18.7	20.5	17.7	16.3	-4.4
Children 0-15 years											
Temporarily absent	11.8	10.6	9.6	10.8	10.6	12.1	11.3	11.9	13.3	12.6	+0.8
1-19 hours	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.4	3.6	4.6	4.0	3.3	4.0	+1.6
20-36 hours	12.3	12.7	12.6	12.4	13.5	14.2	15.1	14.2	14.5	15.2	+2.9
37-40 hours	37.0	39.1	39.3	39.8	39.5	35.4	35.0	36.1	36.1	38.4	+1.4
41-49 hours	16.3	16.6	16.8	16.6	16.7	16.5	16.4	16.4	16.0	14.6	-1.7
50 hours +	20.2	18.5	19.0	17.9	17.2	18.1	17.6	17.4	16.8	15.2	-5.0

Source: The Norwegian Labour Force Surveys.

Table 5: Average number of actual working hours among employed married/cohabiting fathers with children at various ages. 1991-2000

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Change 1991-2000
Children 0-2 years	37.3	37.1	37.4	36.3	36.1	35.5	35.0	35.1	34.9	34.1	-3.2
Children 3-6 years	38.2	38.5	38.6	37.9	37.7	37.2	37.1	36.2	36.6	36.0	-2.2
Children 7-10 years	38.3	38.8	39.0	37.7	38.3	36.9	37.3	37.4	36.4	34.9	-3.4
Children 11-15 years	37.9	37.4	38.3	38.9	38.0	36.8	36.8	37.5	36.4	36.0	-1.9
Children 0-15 years	37.9	37.9	38.2	37.6	37.4	36.5	36.5	36.4	36.0	35.2	-2.7

Source: The Norwegian Labour Force Surveys.

Table 6: Average number of actual working hours among all married/cohabiting fathers (employed and non-employed) with children at various ages. 1991-2000

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Change 1991-2000
Children 0-2 years	34.2	33.9	34.1	33.0	33.2	33.1	33.0	32.9	32.6	32.3	-1.9
Children 3-6 years	35.6	35.3	35.6	35.4	35.6	35.0	35.0	34.3	34.7	34.2	-1.4
Children 7-10 years	36.4	36.4	35.5	34.9	35.8	35.0	35.5	35.6	34.4	32.8	-3.6
Children 11-15 years	35.8	34.6	35.4	36.4	35.4	34.3	34.5	35.8	34.2	33.8	-2.0
Children 0-15 years	35.3	34.9	35.1	34.8	34.9	34.3	34.4	34.4	33.9	33.3	-2.0

Source: The Norwegian Labour Force Surveys.

Table 7: Employment, contractual/usual working hours and actual working hours among married/cohabiting mothers with children at various ages. 1991 and 2000.

	Children 0-2 years			Children 0-15 years		
	1991	2000	Change	1991	2000	Change
Employment, % of all (employed and non-employed)						
Employed	66.1	74.4	+8.3	74.3	81.2	+6.9
Temporarily absent	25.0	33.3	+8.3	15.0	19.5	+4.5
At work	41.1	41.1	0.0	59.3	61.7	+2.4
Contractual/usual working hours, % of the employed						
1-19 hours	26.0	19.8	-6.2	26.9	18.3	-8.6
20-36 hours (part-time)	25.7	25.8	+0.1	31.2	31.6	+0.4
32-40 hours (full-time)	46.1	50.7	+4.6	37.8	45.6	+7.8
41-49 hours	1.3	3.0	+1.7	2.4	3.2	+0.8
50 hours +	0.9	0.7	-0.2	1.7	1.3	-0.4
Average among the employed	28.5	30.4	+1.9	28.0	30.4	+2.4
Actual working hours, % of the employed						
Temporarily absent	37.8	45.8	+8.0	19.9	23.7	+3.8
1-19 hours	17.1	14.6	-2.5	20.2	16.2	-4.0
20-36 hours	24.4	22.9	-1.5	32.3	32.1	-0.2
37-40 hours	15.9	13.5	-2.4	19.5	20.1	+0.6
41-49 hours	3.7	2.1	-1.6	5.4	5.1	-0.3
50 hours +	1.2	1.0	-0.2	2.7	2.7	0.0
Average among the employed	17.3	15.3	-2.0	22.7	22.5	-0.2
Average among all (employed and non-employed)	11.5	11.3	-0.2	16.9	18.3	+1.4

Source: The Norwegian Labour Force Surveys.

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