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LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON? THE TRANSMISSION OF VALUES, FAMILY PRACTICES, AND WORK-FAMILY ADAPTATIONS TO SONS OF WORK-SHARING MEN

This article explores egalitarian patterns of work and household responsibility as transferred from one generation to the next using a father-son approach. The fathers participated in an experimental study, referred to as the Work-Sharing Couples study, in Norway, during the first part of the 1970s. In this study, both spouses worked part-time and shared household and childcare responsibility equally. An analysis of the interviews done with the sons indicates that egalitarian patterns that are established in one generation do not necessarily transfer to the next generation. The sons, who are today themselves the fathers of young children, were found to live in “neo-traditional” work-family arrangements, although, to a large extent, they identified with their fathers and expressed egalitarian attitudes. These findings challenge the assumption that greater participation by men in childrearing in children’s early years will have a lasting effect on future gender relations.

Keywords: fathers and sons, work-family balance, intergenerational transmission, gender equality

Over the last few decades there has been a strong research interest in fathering as part of men’s lives and as a tool in changing gender relations. In popular discourse and in policymaking, the topic of fathers and sons in particular and the role of men in the socialization of boys are high on the agenda. One of the implicit assumptions in this area

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is that greater participation by men in the daily care of their families will have a lasting effect on future gender relations; the egalitarian family patterns, once obtained, will be transferred to the next generation. This article presents the results of a longitudinal follow-up study of the sons of parents who participated in a Norwegian experimental research project, initiated by the founder and leader of the Norwegian Family Council, Ola Rokkones and led by the Norwegian sociologist Erik Grønseth. This project examined gender equality in the family in the 1970s and was referred to as the Work-Sharing Couples project. In this study, both parents worked part-time¹ and shared domestic work and care (Grønseth, 1975a, b, & c).

Today, the sons are themselves the fathers of young children. This follow-up study explores the young men's experiences growing up in the families of the work-sharing experiment and their current work-family adaptations, or arrangements, with the goal of investigating the extent of intergenerational transmission.

The article starts with a discussion of relevant literature, and then presents the Work-Sharing Couples study, and finally, the design and method for this follow-up study of the original participants and their children thirty years later. The findings are presented through two cases, and followed by a discussion.

A large and growing body of research and theory on fathering has provided new insights and new and more fine-grained conceptualizations of fatherhood, father involvement and fathering practices (Doucet, 2006, Featherstone, 2009, Lamb, 2010). Nevertheless, according to Devault, Milcent, Ouellet, Laurin, Jauron, and Lacharite (2008), with respect to paternal involvement, the individual history of fathers has received relatively little attention. Some studies support the hypothesis that fathers are more likely to be involved if they had a positive relationship with their own fathers in childhood, while other studies support the hypothesis that involvement is greater among fathers who compensate by being more present in the lives of their children than were their own fathers.

Following the introduction of a paternal quota of parental leave in some of the Nordic countries, men's use of parental leave has been a major focus in research and policy-making (Bekkengen, 2002; Brandth & Kvande, 2003; Haas & Hwang, 2009; Lammi-Taskula, 2006; O'Brien & Moss, 2010). Less attention has been paid to men's general adjustments to work and care as part of their fathering practices (but see Dermott, 2008), and there are few longitudinal, life course and intergenerational studies. Brannen and colleagues, however, analyze fathering in a life course perspective and across four generations (Brannen, Moss, & Mooney, 2004; Brannen & Nilsen, 2006),

¹ In the 1970s, as women entered the labor market in increasing numbers, part time became an option for many women, while for men, part time was highly unusual. In 2008, 43 per cent of women and 13 per cent of men worked part-time (Statistics Norway, 2009), a high share, compared to other OECD-countries (Lohne, 2005). However, patterns of work and care remain gendered. Men work part-time to a lesser extent and for different reasons than women, and fathers still tend to work more than full time (Kitterød & Kjeldstad, 2006). Full time work was 40 hours a week in the 1970s. Today it is 37.5 hours a week.

focusing in particular on the work-care adaptations of fathers within a wider family and societal context.

Studies of families with highly involved fathers in the 1980s, found a number of positive effects in terms of child developmental outcomes. Lamb (2010) points out that these findings should not be taken as proof of a simple, direct effect of father “presence” in the family, as was often previously assumed, in contrast to a corresponding idea of the negative effects of father “absence.” They may rather be understood as the outcome of several factors. Among them are positive intra-familial and couple dynamics due to the fact that these were families that actively strived to obtain an egalitarian family pattern, and father involvement was seen as important by both mothers and fathers. Along with many of the other contributions in the fifth edition of *The Role of the Father in Child Development* (Lamb, 2010), Lamb’s own contribution reflects a general shift toward more relational and holistic perspectives within contemporary research on fathering.

Drawing on Belsky’s (1984) ecological parenting model, Devault et al. (2008) have developed a parenting model based on the following dimensions: individual history, co-parental history, and professional history. In their study of young fathers, they found that the quality of the relationship with their own mothers as well as support from their children’s mother seemed to have an impact on father involvement.

Owing to recent developments in the theory and research on the sociology of childhood as well as in developmental psychology, traditional theories of socialization have been replaced by the interpersonal paradigm. The interpersonal paradigm emphasizes the relational, interactive, and reciprocal relations between the generations (Bråten, 2007; Sommer, 2003). These changes in perspective are reflected in family studies in which the focus has shifted from seeing the family as a simple unit of socialization, toward studying family practices and intimate relations (Gabb, 2008; Jamieson, 1998; Morgan, 1996). Studies of familial relationships have shifted from focusing primarily on dyadic parent-child relations toward perceiving and studying families as dynamic, holistic groups (Sommer, 2008). There is a renewed interest in connecting the micro-processes within families to the macro-level outcomes; studies of specific mothering and fathering practices have proved important for grasping how some aspects of the micro-dynamics of family life contribute to the reproduction of class (Reay, 2005).

Case studies of multigenerational families, intergenerational relations and the micro-processes involved in intergenerational transmission have provided invaluable insights, empirical as well as theoretical, into core social processes, such as social stratification, social change, and mobility. They have also added to the old discussion of the relations between structure and agency (Bertaux & Bertaux-Wiame, 1997; Büchner & Brake, 2006; Krahn & Büchner, 2006). A major focus of these studies, which draw on Bourdieu’s (1990) concept of habitus and Giddens’s (1984) theory of structuration, is how to reconcile structure and agency, macro and micro, and how ethnographic detail may contribute to the big picture. Their analyses demonstrate the nonlinear, reciprocal, and relational character of intergenerational transmission and the importance of the active acquisition of specific elements of the family heritage and its subsequent transforma-

tion and appropriation by each generation. The appropriation and reformulation of family heritage in each generation involves adjustments to personal characteristics, likes and dislikes, and changes in the social structure.

Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) illustrate this multifaceted process in an analysis of the slow upward mobility in the lineage of craftsmen of five generations. Krah and Büchner (2006) analyze the intergenerational transmission and transformation of religious practices into cultural and academic capital over three generations. These in-depth, one-case analyses demonstrate how micro-level studies may illuminate macro-level processes such as social change over time and social mobility.

THE WORK-SHARING COUPLES STUDY

This paper is based on a longitudinal follow-up study of the original couples who participated in an experimental research project, the Work-Sharing Couples project in the early 1970s, and their now adult sons. The project design was based on both spouses working part-time and sharing child-care and domestic work; the aim of the arrangement was to promote more egalitarian family relations and a more fulfilling family life.² Alteration of men's approach to work and family was the key tool of change in the original project. In the follow-up study, the men were also found to have had a key role in initiating and implementing the arrangement in their families (Bjørnholt, 2009a, 2011).

The original project aimed not only at promoting more equal relations within the participating couples; it was also expected that these more egalitarian family patterns would be passed on to the children who were brought up in these families. This may seem naïve in retrospect; on the other hand, the idea of producing lasting effects on gender relations by interventions in the family still underpins policies and welfare state reforms. The concept is exemplified by Norwegian fathers' quota of parental leave, introduced in 1993, as a non-transferable part of paid parental leave reserved for fathers (Brandth & Kvande, 2003).

The work-sharing couples belong to birth cohorts of the 1940s. Bengtsson (2001) points out that this generation was the one to express most clearly the profound changes in gender relations and gender subjectivities that took place in the post-World War II period. According to Bengtsson (2001):

The experiences of young people who were born in the 1970s may be interpreted as a first manifestation of how a sample of parents of the 1940s generation realized these changes with respect to gender and gender relations, and how these changes have been taken up by their children. (p. 195; translation MB)

²The father-son study is part of a follow-up study of the work-sharing couples with particular focus on intergenerational transmission, which was carried out at the University of Oslo 2007/2008 and funded by the Research Council of Norway.

As an experimental group in which egalitarian gender relations were actively pursued, the work-sharing couples represent a particularly interesting case for studying the intergenerational transmission of the changes in gender relations that took place in this generation. The experiences of children growing up in these model families are of particular interest for studying how, and to what extent, these changes in gender relations have been experienced, and how they have been passed on to, and taken up by, the next generation.

In this article I will explore how, and to what extent, the egalitarian family practices of the work-sharing couples have been passed on to their adult sons and appropriated as part of the family heritage.

DESIGN AND METHOD

A follow-up study of the work-sharing parents was done during 2005 and 2006, and fourteen of the original sixteen work-sharing couples were interviewed. Table 1 provides an overview of the past and current studies involved. The couple interviews with the work-sharing parents covered topics concerning individual as well as couple biographies, and the biography of each of the work-sharing fathers was obtained through analysis of couple interviews. Methodological and epistemological issues relating to the use of life-course interviews and couple interviews are presented and discussed in further detail in Bjørnholt (2009a). For the father-son study, seven sons were interviewed in 2007. The criteria for selection from the adult sons of the original work-sharing parents were that first, his parents had remained married (11 of the 14 couples interviewed);³ second, he had formed his own family and had children below school

³ The majority of the work-sharing couples, twelve of the fifteen couples that were traced, had remained married (Bjørnholt 2009a). In the fifteenth couple, the husband was dead and the widow did not want to participate in the follow-up interview, but brief information was obtained when she was contacted.

Table 1
Overview of Data and Sample

Project	Design and method	Sample
Work-Sharing Couples project	Action research study Mainly questionnaires	16 couples
Work-Sharing Couples 30 years later 2005-2006	Longitudinal follow-up study Retrospective, biographical couple interviews	14 couples (15 traced)
Men as change agents work-sharing fathers and their sons 2007-2008	Intergenerational follow-up study Fathers' biographies constructed from analysis of couple interviews Individual interviews sons	14 fathers 7 sons (5 included in this analysis)

age; and finally, he was cohabiting with the mother of his children. Five of the seven sons who were interviewed met all these criteria, and these interviews provide the primary data sources for this paper.

For the group of five sons, the sons' age during their parents' work-sharing period ranged from three months to seven years. The duration of their parents' work-sharing

Table 2
Sons' Age at Inclusion and Duration of Parents' Work-Sharing Arrangement

Measure	Knut	Anders	Gunnar ^a	Ole	Nils ^b
Son's age at inclusion (years)	0 ^c	0	5	0/7 ^d	3
Duration of work-sharing (years)	4	2(6) ^e	3	3	1.5

^a This case is not presented separately in this paper, but an in-depth analysis of this case is provided in Bjørnholt (2009b). "Gunnar" shares many commonalities with "Knut," the "comfortable neo-traditional" case presented in this paper.

^b All names are fictitious. In contrast to the first three, the last two, "Ole" and "Nils" are not presented separately, neither in this nor in other papers, but they are part of the data from which the two cases presented in this paper are drawn.

^c The parents who started work-sharing during the child's first year started between the age of three months (after maternity leave) and one year; sometimes the leave was extended with holiday or unpaid leave, and they did not always remember the exact age of the child at the time they entered the arrangement.

^d The parents were work-sharing for two years, starting when he was an infant. When he had a third sibling in 1981, the parents returned to work-sharing for one year.

^e Anders' parents worked part-time and cared for him and his older brother at home for two years, one year before and one year during Anders' first year but both continued to work reduced hours for four years after Anders started in kindergarten at the age of one year. Taking the duration of the fathers' part-time work as a measure, the duration of their work-sharing period was six years.

arrangement ranged between one and a half and six years, which is in the lower half compared to the group of work-sharing parents as a whole, which ranged from one and a half to thirty years, and in which seven years was the average duration (Bjørnholt 2009a). Table 2 provides an overview of this information for each son interviewed.

A thematic content analysis of taped and transcribed interviews was adopted within a conceptual framework inspired by Devault et al. (2008), but modified and extended to fit this study (see Figure 1). My analysis is similar to Devault et al.'s with respect to the emphasis on individual history, relationship to partner, and the relation to paid work for fathering. It differs in that my conceptualization of professional history and couple history are both part of individual history, while at the same time closer to, and part of

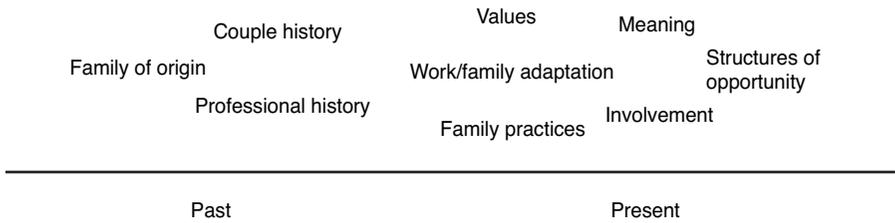


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

the present. Searching in particular for intergenerational transmission from family of origin I further identify values, family practices, and work-family adaptations, rather than focusing on fathering in isolation. In addition to aspects of meaning and personal involvement, I take into account contemporary structures that offer opportunities for parenting and for fathering in particular. In the time that has passed since the sons’ upbringing, the Norwegian welfare state has developed to provide a very different context for work and care than the one faced by their parents. In particular they now provide extensive rights to paid parental leave, including a father’s quota, and generally available, publicly sponsored child-care facilities. In the 1970s there was three months maternity leave, and childcare facilities were scarce or lacking. At the time of the interviews with the sons, parental leave was 54 weeks at 80 percent wage compensation, or 44 weeks at 100 percent, up to a ceiling of approximately EUR 50,500, or fifty thousand, five hundred euro. The father’s quota was 5 weeks. Both parental leave and the father’s quota have since been further extended. In order to discuss how egalitarian work-family arrangements in families of origin are passed on to the next generation, these changes in the structures of opportunity for parenting must be taken into consideration.

Sons of Work-Sharing Men

The arrangements for work and for care of the home and children in the work-sharing couples’ families revolved around the equal sharing of paid and unpaid work, with a strong emphasis on the sharing of domestic work. The work-family arrangements of the sons deviated from the radical work-sharing model of their parents. At the time of the interview, the sons of these nontraditional parents were found to be living in or opting for what could be seen as “neo-traditional”⁴ work-family arrangements; they were

⁴ I use the concept “neo-traditional.” Thereby I mean a pattern that differs both from a traditional, male breadwinner model, as well as from a fully egalitarian dual earner model. The “neo-traditional” model is modern in that breadwinning and care are shared, but it is also tradi-

working slightly more and their wives slightly less outside the home, and their wives were doing slightly more and the men slightly less domestic work and childcare.

However, the adult sons dealt emotionally with their current work-family adaptation in different ways. While some seemed to be at peace with their actual work-family adaptation, others expressed feelings of conflict. They pointed out the gap between their current, rather traditional, work-family adaptation and their own egalitarian attitudes and family ideals, with reference to their own family of origin. From these differences in attitudes toward their current work-family adaptation, I distinguish between a “comfortable neo-traditional” pattern and an “uncomfortable neo-traditional” pattern, and I have chosen “Knut” and “Anders” to illustrate these two patterns.

THE “COMFORTABLE NEO-TRADITIONAL” ADAPTATION: KNUT

Family of Origin

Knut’s parents participated in work-sharing for four years. Like the majority of the work-sharing men, Knut’s father had from an early age been socialized in terms of helping out at home, and he took the initiative to start work-sharing. His explanation for choosing this nontraditional adaptation is twofold: he partly felt that the children needed him to contribute actively, and he wanted his wife to have a job and a career. He also wished to avoid perceived potential relational difficulties because of different educational levels; he is highly educated, but his wife did not have much formal education. During the work-sharing project they were found to be among the most equally sharing couples, a fact the father referred to during the follow-up interview. After the work-sharing period, he worked full-time and like the majority of work-sharing men he was successful professionally and held management positions. Knut’s mother took further education in a health/caring profession and alternated between part-time work and staying home during two periods when they lived abroad. In these periods they had servants who did the housework and she was highly engaged in extra-familial activities, such as music. Today she runs her own business as a self-employed consultant in the field of health care services. Her husband actively promoted and supported her education, and in the interview said he was very proud of her achievements.

After the work-sharing period, Knut’s mother had more responsibility for domestic work, and there was some conflict over this because the father was working long hours. In the interview with the parents, they claimed to have an egalitarian pattern of sharing of domestic work today. He cooks more and even boasted of his skills in domestic work, and they both agreed that she dislikes domestic work and is not as good at cooking. They both had a positive evaluation of the work-sharing experience, which they thought had contributed to a sense of partnership. He also thought it was impor-

tional in that there is a gendered division of the main responsibilities for breadwinning and care. The concept was introduced by Poloma and Garland (1971) in a study of dual-earner couples.

tant for the children's development that he took an active part in their upbringing, especially for one of Knut's siblings, who at that time needed particular attention.

Knut is the youngest of three children. He was four years old when his parents stopped work-sharing, and does not remember this period of his life; he rather remembers that his mother was a stay-at-home housewife during the two periods they were abroad. He recalls that he participated in domestic work from an early age, and that they had routines for the sharing of duties in his parental home. When they had returned home the second time in his early teens, and both parents returned to work, he had to cook and clean regularly and was paid for this. It was mostly his father who checked to see if he had done his homework, but did not do so very meticulously. He has good relations with both parents, but thinks his mother was, and still is, more approachable if there is something he needs. As a child he felt his mother was emotionally closer to him:

But it is something special with mother. And probably the chance of getting comfort was greater with her, and a little more understanding. But I was not afraid to put the same requests to my father.

Today this has changed:

Now it has perhaps turned the other way round that I speak more with my father than with my mother. The fact is that we have both [...] (I have) followed in his footprints, to see it that way, so professionally we are closer than (I am) with my mother. [...] But I don't have any problems with my mother at all.

The fact that he chose the same education as his father Knut presents as the result of an independent choice, based on an assessment of his strengths at school, rather than as a process of modeling himself on his father.

Professional History

Knut has studied economics. He has been working in the same insurance company, within which he has moved sidewise and has held different positions, since he graduated. He enjoys his work, with the exception that he thinks working in an office all day does not provide enough exercise and physical challenges.

Couple History

Knut met his wife, Mari, at a friend's party; she was the one who took the initiative to start a relationship, and later on to cohabit. She also proposed to him; which she did publicly during a show on a boat-trip. Jokingly he said that in this setting, surrounded by hundreds of animated women, who were dancing during the song in which she proposed to him, he did not have much choice other than to say yes or walk the plank. He felt comfortable with her taking the initiative, though, and says he knew relatively early on that they were a good match.

When it turned out that they could not have children of their own, his wife was the first to suggest adoption, while he was more reluctant, and would rather have tried other possibilities, but he did consent to adopt.

Work-Family Adaptation

When they finally had their one-year-old adopted daughter, he says his wife was determined to have a large share of parental leave, which he found convenient. For the first two months, he stayed at home as well, combining holiday and parental leave. After two months at home, he felt ready to get back to work. This he partly explains with reference to their job situation; he had recently moved to another department and he thought it was easier for her to take leave.

Owing to their daughter's perceived special need for attachment, they prioritized staying home together in the beginning, and restricted contact with grandparents and other relations in order to smooth the adjustment for the child and to be present together so that she could get to know them and attach to them as her parents. They also decided to take care of her all by themselves in the first period, not leaving any caring task to others.

We combined leave with holiday in order to stay at home, both of us, during the first months, in order to facilitate attachment, that she should understand that these two people, they are my mummy and daddy and you will not get rid of them. So we were very careful that we were the ones to feed, to lift her up, we were the ones to comfort and the ones to change nappies and do intimate care, and the others in the wider family would have to accept this.

In this extract, he reveals a caring attitude and speaks in a common parental voice, much how his father spoke in retrospect of his reasons for joining the work-sharing project. While the father took the radical step to work part-time for as long as four years in order to realize the kind of family he wanted, the son's adaptation, combining holiday and parental leave to stay home together with his wife for two months, was of a more temporary kind.

At the time of the interview his wife was staying home on parental leave, and she took a greater responsibility for the housework. He expected to take a larger share later on, when he was to stay home with the child for a couple of months when his wife returned to work. Before they had a child they shared domestic work more equally, even if there seems to have been a gendered pattern in the sharing of indoor and outdoor tasks, as illustrated in this extract:

Maybe she took a larger share, but if so, this was because I was busy with maintenance tasks outside. Neither of us has ever sat on the sofa and put our feet up while the other applied the vacuum-cleaner.

He draws a parallel with his family of origin, recalling that his parents shared cooking, his father doing fifty percent or more. However, the rest of the domestic work was his mother's duty, even though she did not like it, and he draws a parallel with conflicts over domestic work in his parental home and his own family:

She (Knut's mother) showed with her body language that ironing, for instance, was not among her favorite tasks. One should of course distribute tasks, this is also similar to what we are into, I will not say that we struggle with (it), but these are problems that arise between us as well. And in this respect it is, I would not say sensible, but perhaps more expedient that the man takes the out-of doors things [...] and, of course, there are likes and dislikes.

What has been transmitted here is not the egalitarian arrangement that the parents had during their four years of work-sharing, in which they were sharing very equally, but their more traditional arrangement in the following years, in which his father took on management positions and his mother alternately stayed home as a housewife and worked part-time, taking a greater share of domestic work. This model was not seen as ideal, by the parents, who had actively striven to share equally by participating in the work-sharing project.

The son did not see the model as ideal either, and in the interview excerpt above makes the connection between conflicts over domestic work in his parental home and in his own family. The slight discomfort he reveals does not, however, emerge as an important source of distress; he rather refers to this as a (somewhat deplorable, but normal) matter of fact. This is perhaps an illustration of how elements of the family heritage, some of which do not belong to the most celebrated and admired parts of family culture, are transmitted more or less unconsciously as givens.

According to Knut, his wife's job is not an easy one, and he thinks she takes too many of her troubles home with her. At the same time he thinks it is important for them individually and as a couple that she works:

We generally agree that she ought to get another job. I think she should have a job, this is good for both, to be in a job and to get other impulses than those you get at home, to put it that way, I think this is important. [...] But, as Mari herself said the other day, should it be 100 percent, 80 percent or 50 percent, or if we both should reduce a bit, who knows?

Although he vaguely refers to the possibility of both working less than full-time, a more traditional adaptation seems to be the one that he considers more seriously:

If we could afford it, I think we would [...] that Mari would have worked reduced hours, somewhere between 50 and 80 per cent, I guess. And we would have kept our daughter in kindergarten, but maybe not the days when Mari stayed home [...] at the moment, I think I would have stayed in a 100 per cent position, but I think this would have opened up the possibilities to reduce it (his job share) as well,

which would have been fine. But it requires that one has the financial ability to do so.

The last remark is important, as the financial situation in this family is rather strained owing to special circumstances related to their housing arrangement, so there is not much chance of a substantial reduction of working time.

Values and Family Practices

Knut emphasizes the transmission of values and family practices from his parental home:

I think about gender equality and (about) participating and contributing actively at home. [...] it is a little strange for me to talk about it at all, because all through my upbringing it has been a norm that everyone contributes [...] and like this it is here with us today as well. We both contribute and even our daughter who is only two years old, if she finds some litter on the floor, she has learnt to pick it up and put it into the dustbin, this is maybe to push it a little, but still. [...]

He emphasizes the importance in particular of his father's attitude and way of being more than the fact that his parents shared breadwinning and care.

I have got a good deal with me thanks to that situation (in my parental home) [...] I am not quite sure whether I should attribute it to the fact that my parents both stayed home either. I think it also has much to do with the attitude and way of being of my father, he was a little ahead of most men at that time, I believe.

Summary: Knut

Knut may be seen to have reproduced the pattern of work and care which resembles the one he remembers from his parents after their work-sharing period. He seems to opt for a similar, "neo-traditional" arrangement, with his wife in a part-time job and himself working full-time, although vaguely referring to the possibility of both working part-time. He seems to be at ease with a future in such a "neo-traditional" arrangement.

He also seems to have reproduced the participatory family culture from his family of origin, and emphasizes the importance of everyone, not only parents but also children, participating in the work in the home. He appreciated the way he himself was made to participate in domestic work as a child and he also enjoys seeing that his little daughter has internalized the norm of participation in the home.

He also seems to have reproduced the egalitarian and caring values of his father. Like his father he speaks in a common parental voice, with the common family well-being in mind. His wife has had less education than he, and like his father, he cares about his wife's career and well-being and for the couple's relationship. He wants her

to have a job, but he does not emphasize the need to share paid work equally, or the need for him to take an equal part in everyday care of the child. He has chosen the same education as his father, but he presents this as an individual choice, based on his own strengths and interests, and does not attribute this to modeling himself on his father. As a child, he was closer to his mother, but as an adult he speaks more with his father owing to their common professional interest. He attributes his own egalitarian values to his father's attitude and way of being more than to his parents' work-sharing arrangement.

His professional history is one of stability, and he enjoys his work. His couple history reveals that his wife seems to have taken many of the important initiatives and decisions related to them as a couple; in this matter his family differs from his parents, where the father seemed to be the one who took more of the initiatives.

He is an involved father and dedicated to egalitarian values and to sharing domestic work equally, but there is a gendered pattern of task-sharing, which he defends with naturalizing arguments, such as its effectiveness. At the meaning-making level, he further defends their current arrangement, partly with his wife's wish to take most of the parental leave, and his own job position, having just started in a new department. In talking of their future arrangements he refers to her wish to work less, and the poor quality or difficulties in her current job. Welfare benefits, such as parental leave and kindergarten appear as structures of opportunity that facilitate the work-family adaptation they have chosen.

THE "UNCOMFORTABLE NEO-TRADITIONAL" ADAPTATION: ANDERS

Family of Origin

Anders's parents were work-sharing for two years. His father took the initiative to start work-sharing. According to the mother, Anders's father was very well brought up with respect to equality; although he had been raised in a traditional home, with a stay-at-home mother, he was one of the few work-sharing men who had a father who carried out traditionally female tasks, such as sewing. His parents treated him and his sister in the same manner and he had to participate in domestic work from an early age.

After the work-sharing period, Anders' father continued to work slightly reduced hours for four years before he returned to working full-time and has held senior management positions in one of Norway's biggest towns. Anders' mother pursued further education and has also worked full-time or slightly reduced hours, at 80 percent, since the work-sharing study. At the time of the interview, she was a manager in a local municipal unit.

Anders's parents claim to have an egalitarian relationship and claim that the power relations between them are equal. With respect to decisions about home decoration and purchases of home equipment or art, however, she decides and he concurs. On the other hand, Anders' mother would have preferred to have a third child, but his father did not want to and she accepted this. They still claim to share domestic work, although less

rigidly today, and say they no longer need to change two car tires each. However, their sharing of tasks is still egalitarian; he has always been the one who mended clothes and did the washing, which is still unusual among Norwegian men.

Anders is the younger of two brothers. Anders was one year old when his parents stopped work-sharing and he started in kindergarten. He remembers that his parents shared domestic work quite equally, as they cleaned one floor each, shared the washing of clothes, and took turns making dinner. When they grew older, he and his brother also had tasks in the house; they were gradually given more responsibility for domestic work, for which they were paid. Anders' parents established a family council, wherein they met to discuss such matters and to make agreements over domestic work. They even had a protocol whereby decisions on prices and tasks were written down. Anders enjoyed taking part in domestic work, particularly when he grew older.

Anders identifies with his father and has chosen a similar education: "I resemble my father very much, really, in practical things, and in ways of thinking and the like, (I am) quite different from my mother." His identification with his father is to a large extent based on their participating in shared activities from when Anders was a child:

My father is very practical, and has always been very handy, and is outside and fixes things the whole time; so we were allowed to participate from when we were small, play electricians and plumbers and carpenters and so on, and of course that creates bonds, and this is something I have brought with me.

Professional History

Anders started to work very early, in particular when he was still in school. He played in the school brass band and from the early age of twelve or thirteen, he took paid jobs as a music tutor. At eighteen, he started to work at a gas station in the evenings and as a summer job, but he enjoyed the work and stayed there for several years. He was given the responsibility for running the station, promoted to shop manager and continued to work at 80 percent of full-time, while studying part-time (50 percent). Anders now holds a bachelor's degree in business administration. He has further advanced into a management position in central administration at the firm that owns the gas station where he first began. At times, he has been working many hours; he estimates that his work time has been as high as 140 percent. Today he does not work as much, but he still works more than 100 percent, and he estimates that it may be 110 percent. His ideal is to work less, at perhaps 80 percent, but he does not think this is feasible in his current position.

Couple History

Anders and his wife had been married for several years before they decided to have children. The decision to have three children was his wife's preference. He would have preferred two, as in his family of origin, but he says his wife came from a family with three children and she wanted to have three, so he acquiesced.

Work-Family Adaptation

With the first child, Anders worked a lot and did not have much parental leave. With the second, he was studying, and stayed home together with his wife for several months. The youngest child is still a baby, and Anders wants to be an involved father. With the last child, his wife was not eligible for paid parental leave because she had been in college. However, he had been working, and was eligible for paid leave on the condition that she returns to full-time work or full-time study, according to Norway's rules for parental leave.

Faced with this choice, they decided to forgo paid leave, have her to stay home on unpaid leave, and manage to live on his income alone.

We discussed it at length, and really wanted it; at the same time, I felt it was difficult vis-à-vis my employer and she did not want to start working or to study full-time, and I understand that. So then it turned out the way it did.

Anders finds it difficult to find a good work-family balance, and several times returned to a discussion of the contrasts of the rewards of fatherhood versus its more difficult side, as stated here:

I think it is fun with children, and to be a father, but it is tiring, it really is. And with the job I have now, it is very, very challenging, because now I am in a position where in general I work more than normal [...] I am not comfortable with that really, but we have chosen to do it that way.

He was then asked what he thought of his current work-family adaptation, wherein he is the main breadwinner, while his wife takes the larger responsibility for the children.

I had not envisioned it that way at all. I was very against it! I did not want to do it like this; at the same time it was the most reasonable thing to do given that I earn twice her income; that way I earn twice her wages in my time at work, and we get more money per (hour), but of course, I also work more than she would have done, 100 percent. But I want us to share paid work and to share domestic work, but I am also content the way we live now, I think it works well. But it is difficult that we have such different daily lives.

He was asked if that was because she now does most of the housework. Since he was working so much, had she become more of a housewife?

Yes, she does the majority of the housework. We share vacuuming and cleaning and the like, but she is the one in charge. She washes all the clothes, I share in hanging them to dry and I tidy up the kitchen and the like, but she buys the chil-

dren's clothes and has in a way the main responsibility for them, brings them to kindergarten and picks them up the most. And she cooks most of the time.

His wife had been brought up in a more traditional family, and it is this more traditional pattern that is reproduced in their family.

We are rather different [...] we are a very classical couple in relation to gender sharing; I am very practical and take care of financial matters, while she cares very much about detail and interiors and such things. So we are really, as I see it, a rather old-fashioned couple I nearly said, in relation to gender roles, very traditional.

When asked how he felt about that situation, he replied,

For me it is a bit strange, or different from what I first thought, but I think it works very well, I think we have kind of shared things among us and it works well. But there are of course challenges with this kind of arrangement, it is. [...] We have extremely different daily lives. When I come home and have had a lot of experiences, and she, at least nowadays, has been stuck at home [...] and I come home and am tired, and we are very different then, when we meet at home [...] it's a little challenging.

I feel that I could have worked less and been more with the children. I don't like this part so well. I would also prefer that we shared the tasks at home more equally, at times I feel that I do not participate enough in the work at home, even if this is a choice we have made, to live like this. But I get a bad conscience that I do not do more housework. And I was brought up taking part in domestic work, so I feel it is my job too. So the way we have chosen to arrange it among ourselves conflicts with the way I was brought up.

Values and Family Practices

Anders emphasizes the egalitarian values learned in his parents' home, and expresses discomfort concerning their current, more traditional work-family arrangement. Although their work-family arrangement is rather traditional, Anders actively contributes to domestic work and sharing tasks, such as vacuuming, cleaning, hanging clothes to dry, and tidying up the kitchen. At the same time he recognizes that she is the one in charge and that she does the larger share.

Anders' wife seems to have had a strong influence on their family practices in several ways. She is an active Christian and he is an atheist, but he accepts that she is giving the children a Christian upbringing, although he conveys to his children that he does not believe in God, and he thinks the children will be able to choose for themselves when they become adults.

He admits that their different approaches to life are sometimes challenging, but on the other hand, he feels that he and his wife share important life values on a human level. The way he deals with these differences illustrates his caring attitude and dedi-

cation to the common good of the family. For example, even though he does not share her Christian faith, the whole family participates in a Christian family choir. He mentions that, "It's a bit of a challenge to take part in that choir, but it is good for the family, so I will have to endure it, I nearly said."

Although he is uncomfortable with the traditional arrangement, experiences attacks of conscience for not sharing more equally, and worries about the differences in everyday experiences and the environment that result from this pattern, he argues that their current arrangement is the most sensible and even the most natural. He further argues that this pattern fits them best and hints at a possible natural gender order, which he sees expressed even in the two older children, the boy preferring traditionally boys' toys and blue, and the girl traditionally girls' toys and pink, even if he and his wife have tried not to promote such gendered tastes.

There are, however, also topics of potential conflict between him and his wife, one of which is about standards of clothing. They share anti-consumerist values and are happy to use secondhand clothes for the children, but he thinks his wife has a higher standard of what constitutes acceptable clothing than he does. They also disagree over the use of kindergarten; his wife wants the children to have short days in kindergarten, while he thinks they might stay longer. If he is to pick them up and he is running late, his wife may intervene and pick them up earlier. He thinks that in this way she tires herself out, but he thinks she has herself to blame, as it is her choice. He thinks that when he is to stay home on parental leave with the youngest child, he will let the older children stay longer in kindergarten.

Summary: Anders

Anders has internalized egalitarian values with regards to sharing the responsibility for domestic work, and for supporting the family financially, as learned from his parental home. However, in his own family, he lives somewhat uncomfortably in a more traditional arrangement. This model more closely mirrors the values of his wife's family of origin. He is rather ambiguous about this: on the one hand, he would have preferred a more egalitarian arrangement and feels that they ought to share both domestic and paid work more equally. On the other hand, he claims their current arrangement works well, and he does not seem to want to press hard to change their arrangements to a more egalitarian pattern.

Anders identifies with his father, who he feels he resembles, and with whom he has common interests, both from his childhood and professionally. He has chosen an education very like that of his father, and, like Knut, he explains this as an individual choice rather than assuming he modeled himself on his father. When talking of his identification with his father, Anders emphasizes the sharing of traditionally masculine interests and activities, and he does not, like Knut, refer to his father's nontraditional attitudes or the egalitarian pattern of domestic work in his family of origin.

Unlike his own father and also unlike Knut, who predominantly spoke of parenting in a common parental voice, Anders speaks more explicitly of his own experience of being a father and the conflicts between fatherhood and his job. He also emphasizes to

a greater extent the differences in views between himself and his wife on childcare matters. On the other hand, his wife has had the last say as to the number of children and the decisions on childcare. Although he is himself an atheist, he accepts his wife's religious upbringing of the children, and his wife's religious orientation also influences their common family practices.

At the meaning-making level, he explains their current arrangement partly with his wife's wish to stay home on parental leave and partly with the difficulties that would ensue in order to reduce his own working hours, as well as the benefit for the whole family of his higher wages. His professional history is one of stability; he followed his interests to a career in management and seems to enjoy his work.

For Anders' family, the way that the parental leave benefits in Norway are structured was not compatible with their work-family preferences. Therefore, they decided to forgo paid parental leave rather than having him take the leave for which he was eligible and her having to return to full-time work or study. In this case structures of opportunity did not support their "neo-traditional" work-family adaptation, which they chose to prioritize at their own cost. Kindergarten was part of their work-family adaptation, but the use of kindergarten was a topic of conflict between Anders and his wife.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore how adult sons' individual history, and in particular, the egalitarian work-family arrangements of these men's parents in early childhood, have influenced their adaptations to work and care responsibilities when they themselves became fathers. This section will examine how important this particular element of individual history was in relation to other factors that influenced the sons' work-family adaptations, such as relations to work, couple relations, and contemporary structures of opportunity. In this paper, two cases from a sample of five sons who met all inclusion criteria, have been presented at length, illustrating two different orientations found in the total sample.

The total sample is small and the fact that only two cases from the original sample are presented may be seen as a limitation. On the other hand, the in-depth presentation of two cases, rather than a more cursory presentation of all cases is also a strength, allowing to reveal some of the complexity of intergenerational transmission in each of the cases. Regardless of the number of cases presented from such a small sample, findings should be seen as suggestive and not definitive.

At the time of these interviews, the sons of the nontraditional work-sharing fathers were found to live in, or plan for, what appear to be entirely "neo-traditional" work-family arrangements. With regards to the logistical arrangements, there has been no intergenerational transmission at a behavioural level from parents to sons of the egalitarian work-family adaptations. When explaining their current work-family arrangements, the sons mainly drew on pragmatic here-and-now arguments, in which their own work situation and their wives' preferences were the most important factors.

However, family heritage has not necessarily been rejected by the sons. The sons spoke highly of their parents, and of their fathers in particular, as pioneers in changing

the gender order and identified with their fathers' values and ways of being. To a large extent, gender equality was internalized as a part of the family culture that was taken for granted in their families of origin. When the topic was raised in the interview, the response was often that it was strange to talk about something that they took for granted to such an extent.

In addition to egalitarian values, another aspect of the family heritage that has arguably been passed to the sons, consists of family practices that actively foster a sense of duty and the participation of every family member in domestic work. All but one of the sons spoke of their own participation in domestic work in childhood, and emphasized the importance of domestic work. Reay (2005) describes the meticulous work involved in cultural capital being passed on from one generation to the next. While most studies of such micro-processes find that mothers do this work to an overwhelming extent, from the sons' interviews it seems that the work-sharing fathers too, played an important part in the intra-familial work aimed at the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital and domestic skills, but also of more traditionally masculine skills such as maintenance and other out-door-skills.

The sons' interviews reveal that some elements of the work-sharing couples' family heritage, notably egalitarian values and participatory family practices, have been appropriated by the sons, while the egalitarian work-family adaptation of the parents has not been reproduced. This corresponds to Berteaux and Berteaux-Wiame's (1997) and Krahn and Büchner's (2006) conclusions of processes of intergenerational transmission as selective, partial and uncertain, relying on the active appropriation and transformation of the process to fit the individual dispositions and social context of the next generation.

In the time that has passed since the work-sharing project, egalitarian values have come to be shared by a majority of Norwegian men (Holter, Svare, & Egeland, 2009). On the other hand, men's relations to work have remained remarkably stable. The women rather than the men have changed their working arrangements to adapt to parenting. This pattern is consistent with trends in Norway as well as internationally, where women still adapt their working arrangements upon becoming mothers to a greater extent than do men on becoming fathers (Lewis, Brannen, & Nilsen, 2009).

In the interviews, the sons' relations to work and their perceptions of their own work relations and that of their wives, emerged as important in explaining their work-family arrangements. The men's relations to work were stable, they spoke positively of their work, and they indicated a high degree of job satisfaction. Their jobs also seemed to be well-paid, and their working arrangements were, to a large extent, presented as non-negotiable. Their wives' careers and work relations, on the contrary, were presented by the men as less stable, less satisfactory and more poorly paid, and the wives' choice or wish to work less was partly explained by the men as a result of these negative job factors. These differences may reflect structural inequalities in pay, position, and working conditions between men and women in the labor market, which invokes the question of the material basis of gender inequality. Men have been found to have greater flexibility in their jobs (Lohne, 2006), which may make it easier to combine full-

time work and caring responsibilities, while less flexibility in female-dominated professions may lead to women deciding to reduce their working hours to cope with caring responsibilities.

On the other hand, the sons also referred to their wives' own choices as a strong determinant in the choice of work-family arrangements, invoking the question of different "schemes of devotion" toward work and family (Blair-Loy, 2003). The interplay of structural factors such as the gender pay gap and job quality, on one hand, and women's greater adaptation to care responsibilities, on the other hand, needs to be further explored.

The sons presented their working hours as largely nonnegotiable. This contrasts with the relative ease with which their fathers obtained part-time work and the lack of negative consequences for their careers (Bjørnholt, 2010). From the analysis of fathers' professional biographies and other empirical studies of parent's work-family adaptations, Bjørnholt (2010) concludes that workplace obstacles to men's adaptations to care may be overrated. The sons of the work-sharing men, holding egalitarian attitudes while living in "neo-traditional" work-family care arrangements, were exemplary of the contemporary mainstream in which even egalitarian-minded couples often ultimately choose traditional patterns (Wiesmann, Boeije, van Doorne-Huiskes, & van Duik, 2008). The sons do not stand out as special in relation to their contemporaries as did their fathers.

The "uncomfortable neo-traditional" adaptation represents an interesting case: Anders would have preferred to reproduce the pattern from his family of origin, but adapted to the pattern of his wife's family of origin. This adaptation illustrates the uncertain process of intergenerational transmission. Even if there is an heir who identifies with and is willing to adopt a certain aspect of the family culture, the actual transmission of that aspect relies not only on the values of one family, but also on the blending of and competition between traditions that take place in both families.

Over the last thirty years, gender relations have changed profoundly. Despite their more traditional work-family arrangements at the time of the interview and their more traditional expectations of future work-family arrangements as compared with their parents, one should be wary of claiming that the work-sharing couples' sons were less egalitarian than their fathers.

In this respect, too, the "uncomfortable neo-traditional" adaptation represents a particularly interesting case. On the one hand, Anders was ambivalent about the gap between his preferred egalitarian family model and their current traditional work-family arrangement; on the other hand, their arrangement corresponded to his wife's preferred family model, and thus allowed her to reproduce the values of her family of origin. How should we interpret this from a gender equality perspective?

The work-sharing men's sons seem to have chosen strong partners, who in several ways were seen by the sons as the ones who have taken the initiative and strongly influenced their common family lives. In one respect the power relations in the sons' families seemed to be more egalitarian than in their families of origin: while the work-sharing women did not have all the children they wanted (Bjørnholt, 2009a), their

daughters-in-law seem to have had the final say in reproductive matters, such as the number of children and whether to adopt.

These findings beg the question: are we witnessing egalitarian personal relations within “neo-traditional” adaptations? Should such “neo-traditional” arrangements be seen as less egalitarian than the equal sharing of breadwinning and care that was the ideal in the parental generation and which has today gained hegemonic status in Norwegian policy-making? In this respect, the modernization of informal care is important (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). Today, Norwegian women’s relations to the labor market are stable, and adaptations to childbirth and care are of a temporary kind. The relatively lavish parental leave system and subsidized childcare facilities have facilitated the combination of work and care since the 1970s, as have changes in the labor market.

Although a large proportion of Norwegian women, approximately 40 percent, work at jobs classified as part-time, the actual share, with respect to time, of the jobs worked is relatively high (Kitterød & Rønsen, 2010). Owing to collective agreements and a general acceptance of part-time work, working part-time in Norway does not carry the negative implications of less job security, lower job quality, and lack of social rights that it does in many other countries. Norway has also had low unemployment rates, and the extensive welfare state represents stable job opportunities for women in female-dominated professions. Working slightly reduced hours, as many Norwegian women do, thus does not represent a danger of marginalization in relation to the labor market as it does in other countries. Nevertheless, Norway still has a gendered labor market, in which women have lower status than men, both in terms of pay and working conditions.

Even though men, and in particular fathers of young children, work the longest hours, working hours in Norway are low in comparison with many other countries, and fathers of young children have reduced their working hours over the last two decades (Kitterød & Kjeldstad 2003). This could be interpreted as a cohort effect of the gender revolution in the 1970s parental generation. Despite these positive developments, however, the tendency for women to work part-time and for men to work full-time or more has gendered consequences over the life course.

Norwegian family policies are aimed at promoting fathers’ leavestaking, but Anders’ case illustrates the limits of structures of opportunity in shaping work-family arrangements. In this case the family abstained from paid parental leave rather than adapt to the structures available to them, as they were not compatible with the wife’s wish to stay home with the child. Structures of opportunity, such as longer parental leave and childcare facilities, have also changed the context for couple’s negotiations on work and care; women’s greater adaptations to family obligations are privatized, and the gendered frames and consequences of such choices are blurred. Anders and his wife’s differing views on kindergarten may illustrate this privatization. He thought that his wife became exhausted because she preferred the children to have short days in kindergarten; at the same time he added that she had herself to blame, since this was her choice. The question of how long the children should be in kindergarten did not seem to be addressed in open negotiations, but rather depended on the individual parent’s personal choice.

This again may be seen as part of a general change in the discursive climate, in which questions of redistribution and justice are rarely addressed as a part of couples' negotiations on work and care, as found in a recent study on contemporary Nordic couples (Magnusson, 2008). There are also emotional consequences for living in the gap between gender-equal ideologies but unequal practices (Bø, 2008).

The findings in this study challenge the idea that greater gender equality and participation in a family in early childhood will have a lasting effect on a son's future family. The findings of this study further indicate that contemporary concerns, among them intra-couple interaction, and the interrelation of structures of opportunity for work and care, are more important to explain work-family adaptations than are egalitarian arrangements in family of origin.

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