

# Challenges to the Welfare State

Family and Pension Policies in the Baltic and  
Nordic Countries

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## 2. Family support systems in the Baltic and Nordic countries: an explorative overview

**Jolanta Aidukaite**

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks very closely at differences and similarities in family support arrangements among the Baltic and Nordic countries. This is important for at least two reasons: First, family support systems have experienced significant reforms in the Baltic states over the last 30 years (Aidukaite 2006; Ainsaar 2019), as well as in the Nordic countries (Grødem 2014, 2017), where ageing of the population, increasing migration and family deinstitutionalisation have led to policy reforms. Second, the Baltic states reformed their family support systems by copying and learning from the Nordic ones (Aidukaite 2004; Trumm and Ainsaar 2009). However, until today, after 30 years of reforms, there are very few studies that review how Baltic and Nordic countries compare to each other. A previous study (Javornik and Kurowska 2017) showed that there is a great variation within and between the Baltic and Nordic cluster in their parental leave policies and how they create opportunities for equal parental involvement and employment. This chapter seeks to further contribute to the debate on the Baltic and Nordic comparison. It aims to document public policies directed towards families in different socioeconomic and ideological welfare state settings.

The study is guided by two empirical questions: How do Baltic and Nordic countries compare to each other? What are the differences and similarities, and what could be learned from them? The focus is on support to families with children. Specifically, it looks into work–family reconciliation policies (parental leave policies, childcare services) and financial support policies (cash benefits, tax allowances). These policies are the most important for increasing female labour force participation, improving reconciliation in work–life balance, increasing gender equality in childcare and reducing child poverty (see Hobson 2018; Korpi 2000; Nieuwenhuis et al. 2019; Yerkes and

Javornik 2018). Moreover, a few elements (expenses of long-term care and the state's constitutionally imposed familial obligations) of elderly support are reviewed too, as they are becoming increasingly important in the era of ageing. While systematically comparing family support policies among Nordic and Baltic countries, we look for similarities and differences not only between two clusters – Baltic and Nordic – but also within each cluster.

For this study, the latest comparative Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data on family policies are being used. Additionally, the Eurostat data are occasionally employed when the OECD data are incomplete. To illustrate differences and similarities in family support systems, Saraceno's (2017) typology, based on the familialisation–defamilialisation dichotomy, is being applied in this study, though not systematically. It is used to illustrate major differences among Baltic and Nordic countries. Additionally, the outcome indicators are examined, such as maternal employment, child poverty, gender pay and employment gap to grasp a broader picture of family support system performance in the Baltic and Nordic countries from a comparative perspective.

This chapter is arranged as follows: First, a theoretical background is discussed, followed by an examination of major features of the Nordic and Baltic family policies. Then, the analysis of the family support systems is carried out based on policy analysis and statistical data. Finally, concluding remarks are offered.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: FAMILIALISATION–DEFAMILIALISATION CONTINUUM

Family policy is understood as a broad field of social policy; it refers to government provisions (benefits and services) that contribute to family wellbeing, including health care, education and housing policy (Hobson 2018; Wendt, Mischke and Pfeifer 2011; Wennemo 1994). Provisions of care services and tax benefits and the transfer of benefits to families with children directly affect their immediate living conditions and possibilities, especially for mothers to take part in employment and social life. This study utilises the terms 'family support system' and 'support system for families with children'. By the latter we mean work–family reconciliation policies and financial support policies. It has been agreed in the scientific literature that reconciliation policies consist of policies facilitating parental employment and carer opportunities, usually for mothers, as well as gender equality within the family, as noted. These include maternity leave, parental leave, paternity leave policies and childcare services. Financial support policies for families with children consist of tax deductions and various benefits for such families (see Esping-Andersen 2009; Javornik 2014; Korpi 2000; Lohmann and Zagel 2016; Nieuwenhuis et al. 2019; Yerkes

and Javornik 2018). By the family support system, we mean not only the support systems for families with children, but also elderly care services and other provisions reducing the family's burden to take care of its dependent elderly.

Over recent years, researchers have developed typologies of familialisation/defamilialisation to understand differences in family support systems across countries and/or to measure variations at the policy level, as both familialising and defamilialising policies can coexist in a single country (see Esping-Andersen 2009; Leitner 2003; Lohmann and Zigel 2016; Saraceno 2017; Yin-Nei Cho 2014). It has been widely agreed that well-developed and widely available public childcare services (or those provided by the market or voluntary sector), as well as generous paid maternity, parental and paternity leaves, with a strong attachment to the labour market, ensure defamilialisation. Flat-rate cash payments that support family care at home and underdeveloped childcare services have familialising effects. The paid paternity leave, reserved for the exclusive use of fathers, clearly has defamilialising effects as it promotes gender equality in child-caring responsibilities and equal division of unpaid work at home (Leitner 2003; Lohmann and Zigel 2016; Yin-Nei Cho 2014).

Concepts of familialisation and defamilialisation allow the capture of variations in familialism–defamilialism among different countries and also within a country in different family policy domains. As far as is known to the author, there have not been any previous studies that attempted to analyse the differences and similarities in family support systems in the Nordic and Baltic countries through the defamilialism–familialism dichotomy. There are many useful familialisation–defamilialisation typologies (see, for example, Leitner 2003; Lohmann and Zigel 2016; Yin-Nei Cho 2014). For this study, we stick to Saraceno's (2017) typology, as it synthesises many previous ones. It looks into the public provisions, and the state's and the market's roles in providing services, and also how, by law, the state prescribes the care and/or financial responsibilities along gender and intergenerational lines. In this chapter, the ambition is to not only look into family and care support provisions for families with small children, but also to look at how the constitutions of the Baltic and Nordic countries prescribe elderly care and financial responsibilities to families. Saraceno's (2017) typology is particularly useful in this respect, as it is designed to capture family support system arrangements, including elderly care. Saraceno delineated five types/patterns of familialism/defamilialism: familialism by default, prescribed familialism, supported familialism, supported defamilialisation through the market and defamilialisation through public provision.

According to Saraceno (2017), familialism by default, also defined as unsupported familialism, happens when there are no, or very limited, publicly

provided services for family care (childcare and elderly care) and/or financial support for needy family members. Namely, it means that state support for families, whether it is services or financial provisions, is very limited. Familialism by default can translate into defamilialisation through the market when individuals and families use their own private resources to buy market care or other services. By ‘other services’, Saraceno means education services, and health and old age insurances that are not provided by public policies.

Prescribed familialism happens when civil law imposes care responsibilities and/or financial obligations within the family.

Supported familialism is found when the state supports families through direct or indirect (via taxation) financial transfers to help them uphold their financial and/or caring responsibilities. There is a disagreement among social policy scholars whether defamilialisation occurs only via public provisions and/or via market-provided services too. For instance, Lohmann and Zagel (2016) claim that only public policies can be considered as defamilialising. Others (Esping-Andersen 2009; Korpi 2000; Leitner 2003) state that defamilialisation can occur either through public or market provisions. Saraceno (2017) joins the latter group, distinguishing between two types of defamilialisation: supported through the market and/or through public provision. However, in both cases the state plays a vital role in funding services.

Supported defamilialisation through the market occurs when the state provides income transfers (cash benefits or tax deductions) to families to help them buy services on the market, or when the state (or local government) out-sources public money to fund the provision of services via the market instead of providing them directly (Saraceno 2017).

Defamilialisation through public provision appears when the state supports the individualisation of social rights offering generous and universal entitlements to public services, granting at least minimal protection in all social risks, and providing work–family reconciliation policies that decrease a family’s burden of responsibilities and dependencies for care. The care services are widely available and publicly administered and financed by the state or local governments. In each country one can find a mix of these five types/patterns. However, some patterns may prevail over each other (Saraceno 2017).

For the purpose of this study, it is particularly useful to apply Saraceno’s typology as it allows for the coexistence of familialism and defamilialism at the same time. This is especially helpful for analysing countries that are still in flux, such as the three Baltic states. Previous studies (Aidukaite 2006, 2016, 2019; Ainsaar 2019) revealed that family policies in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have undergone numerous reforms since the 1990s. Many changes were implemented over the 30-year period, and there were no coherent political views, at least in Lithuania, on how family policy should be reformed and which direction it should take.

It has to be stated that the familialisation/defamilialisation typologies are ideal types and do not exist in a pure form in real life. Their constellations can change over time, and the mix of different types can coexist within one country. Therefore, we do not seek to systematically apply the typology, more so to better illustrate and understand differences and similarities among Baltic and Nordic countries.

Before moving into the analysis of family support policies in the Nordic and Baltic countries from a comparative perspective, major features of ‘Nordic’ and ‘Baltic’ family policy will be presented.

## FAMILY POLICY FEATURES OF THE NORDIC AND BALTIC COUNTRIES

### **Family Policy Features of the ‘Nordic Model’**

Family policies in the Nordic countries have developed consistently over time, placing great importance on gender equality and individualism and putting emphasis on providing public services instead of cash benefits (Grødem 2017; Leitner 2003). The Nordic family policies, with some variations, are also characterised by universal child allowances, weak pronatalism, the relatively good economic position of single mothers, income equality among families with children and a high level of female income from paid work (Hiilamo 2002a, 2002b).

Hence, the Nordic model exhibits a high degree of defamilialism, with well-developed public services for children and elderly. Gender equality has been a cornerstone of the family policy in the Nordic countries. In support of gender equality, the Nordic nations developed work–family reconciliation policies to facilitate female labour force participation and ensure gender equality within a family by incentivising fathers to take parental leave. However, recent literature (Grødem 2017; Tunberger and Sigle-Rushton 2011) suggests that Swedish (and also Norwegian) family policy models started to show signs of re-familialisation. Cash benefits for home care have become available, providing more choices for families to arrange their childcare responsibilities in a more nuanced way. However, they became predominantly used by migrant families. Other class and ethnic divisions began to appear in family policy. A recent study (Ma et al. 2019) showed that better-educated fathers, those living in metropolitan areas and surrounding suburbs, as well as Swedish-born fathers, were using parental leave more than young fathers, low-income earners and foreign-born fathers. In Sweden, recently introduced compensation for private childcare increased inequalities in childcare as the compensation was mainly used by higher-income families. Yet, the marketisation of childcare services increased divisions between Swedish- and foreign-born children, as

private childcare services are predominantly used by Swedish-born parents. Immigrant parents have been less likely to have their children in private childcare arrangements (Sainsbury 2018). The evidence suggests that Nordic countries might be deviating from the ‘defamiliarisation by public provisions’ model, as marketisation of public services is increasing (Therborn 2017) and some forms of re-familiarisation have appeared (Estevez-Ave and Hobson 2015). This makes it even more interesting to explore family policy arrangements through the familiarisation–defamiliarisation dichotomy.

To sum up, the family policy model of the Nordic countries has been experiencing transformations; it is especially failing to integrate immigrants into established family policy practices and norms. The ageing of the population and lack of care workers are transforming elderly care services (see Kallioma and Kangas 2018; Kvist 2018; Schon and Heap 2018). Outsourcing of elderly care to private providers compromises the quality of care (Estevez-Ave and Hobson 2015). However, it is still the most defamilialising family policy model in the world. The most distinguished feature of the family support system is its emphasis on gender equality and commitment to providing services instead of cash benefits for child and elderly care.

### **Family Policy Features of the ‘Baltic Model’**

Family policies in the Baltic countries have undergone dramatic reconfigurations over the last 30 years, especially in the earliest part of the 1990s, right after the collapse of the communist regimes (Aidukaite 2006, 2019; Ainsaar 2000, 2019). The Baltic states have gone through many reforms that have been described by a number of studies (see, for example, Aidukaite 2006; Javornik 2014; Rajevska and Romanovska 2016; Stankūnienė 2001). Estonia and Latvia have been more consistent in the development of their family policies since the 1990s compared to Lithuania. They developed universal family support systems, providing benefits to every child irrespective of its social background, while at the same time benefiting those active in the labour market by providing earnings-related benefits. The Lithuanian family policy has been developed rather inconsistently. The means-tested benefits have been an important part of the financial support for families in Lithuania, together with earnings-related benefits. In all three Baltic states, the emphasis was placed on financial support, while services have not been so well developed (Aidukaite 2006, 2016). The general reforms’ paths have been observed from defamilialism (the Soviet system supported maternal employment through well-developed childcare services) to familialism (the period from 1990 to 1996 saw a massive decline in childcare services); and from familialism to defamilialism again (the period from 1997 and onwards when emphasis was again placed on policies encouraging a mother’s employment), with, however,



some coexistence (or elements) of familism at the same time (Aidukaite 2016).

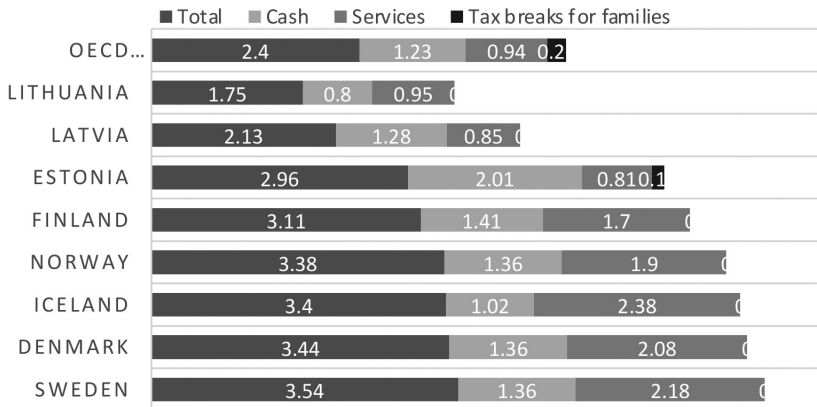
Nevertheless, the three Baltic states have developed different types of familism/defamilism. Javornik (2014), focusing on parental leave and childcare policies (from birth to mandatory schooling age), attributed Lithuanian systems as supporting defamilism as states seek to incentivise women's continuous employment and active fatherhood through parental and paternity leave policies and available public childcare. In Estonia, the state appeared to support explicit familism, with emphasis on familial childcare and gendered parenting. The Latvian system was recognised as maintaining implicit familism, as the state leaves parents without public support.

To sum up, family support systems in the Baltic states can be characterised by different types of familism and defamilism, and inconsistent development since 1990, at least in Lithuania. Services in all three Baltic states are less developed than income transfers.

## ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SPENDING ON FAMILY BENEFITS

Public spending on welfare programs is an important indicator of the state's commitment to ensure an adequate safety net for its population. Therefore, we start our analysis by reviewing public spending on family support. The OECD data offer the opportunity to review public spending on the family in three categories: child-related cash transfers to families with children, public spending on services for families with children, and financial support for families provided through the tax system. As expected, the Nordic countries spend remarkably more on support for families (see Figure 2.1). The OECD average is about 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) being spent on family benefits, while the Nordic countries exceed 3 per cent, making them the highest spenders in the world.

However, if we examine spending according to three categories, the Nordic countries are not necessarily the leaders when it comes to spending on cash transfers. Estonia's spending on cash transfers for families with children (2.01 per cent of GDP) is not only higher than the OECD-33 (1.23 per cent GDP) average, but also higher than any other Nordic country (that ranges from 1.02 in Iceland to 1.41 per cent in Finland) when compared. Estonia is a small country with a population of only about 1.5 million. This shows the state's commitment in Estonia to support families with children. However, support directed to services in Estonia (0.8 per cent) is lower compared to the OECD-33 average (0.94 per cent) and negligible if compared to any other Nordic country. The situation in Lithuania is worse; it spends only 0.8 per cent of its GDP on cash and 0.95 per cent on services. Latvia is in the middle if



Source: OECD Family Database

Figure 2.1 Public spending on family benefits in cash, services and tax measures, in per cent of GDP, 2015 and latest available

compared to Estonia and Lithuania, with 1.28 per cent spending on cash and 0.85 per cent on services. Obviously, the three Baltic states spend more on cash benefits than on services, especially Estonia and Latvia. In the Nordic countries, the opposite is true. The spending on services for families with children is almost twice as large than on cash in Denmark (2.08 per cent), Iceland (2.28 per cent) and Sweden (2.18 per cent). Finland, however, displays more equal spending on cash (1.4 per cent) and services (1.7 per cent). There is no support provided to families with children via taxation in the Nordic countries. The data for the three Baltic states are incomplete; however, all three Baltic states provided support via taxation to families with children in 2015, for which the latest OECD data are available. At present, Estonia's support for families with children is via taxation (EU 2016a). The same is true for Latvia (for details, see EU 2016b). Lithuania abolished support for families via taxation in 2018. Thus, it became more like the Nordic model.

At first glance, it can be said that the Nordic welfare model still holds its major features. One of the major features of the Nordic welfare model, as indicated in the previous sections, is a heavy reliance on services. The public spending patterns on family benefits strongly confirm it. If we try to place the Nordic nations into Saraceno's typology, it is clear that supported defamilialisation through public provisions prevails in Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Norway. These countries spend heavily on services. The spending patterns in Finland are more ambiguous, and we can claim that both defamilialisation and familialisation might prevail at the same time. Estonia's spending patterns

allow us to claim that supported familialism can prevail as the state's spending is heavily concentrated on cash, and little on services. Latvian data suggest that two options can be either familialism by default or defamilialism via the market as the state provides relatively little support for families with children, or supported familialism as the government's support is concentrated on cash benefits. The Lithuanian situation is similar to the Latvian as spending on family benefits and services is relatively small. Thus, based only on spending information, we cannot draw a precise picture for Latvia and Lithuania. Further observations on family support design are needed, which we explore in the subsequent sections.

## EVALUATION OF WORK–FAMILY RECONCILIATION POLICIES

In this section, we examine work–family reconciliation policies, which include parental insurance (maternity, parental, paternity leaves and home-care leave) and childcare services. These are policies for the youngest children, and they are most important for the Nordic welfare state and central for the analysis of the familialisation–defamilialisation dichotomy (Grødem 2014; Sainsbury 2018). The parental insurance will be analysed according to the generosity of entitlement, take-up and statutory replacement rate. The childcare services are assessed by the share of children attending them.

### **Parental Insurance**

The OECD Family Database provides data on entitlements to paid maternity, parental and paternity leaves as well as home-care leave (which might not be paid, but is employment-protected) that can be used by the mother or father until the child is 2 or 3 years old. In all countries analysed, the duration and average replacement rates are quite generous. However, the three Baltic states offer a more generous paid maternity leave in length of weeks and average replacement than the Nordic countries, especially Estonia and Lithuania (see Table 2.1). The duration in Estonia is 20 weeks, in Lithuania 18 weeks, with the average replacement rate in both countries amounting to 100 per cent. The Nordic countries offer a shorter and less generous maternity leave. The shortest maternity leave is found in Iceland and Norway – only 13 weeks. The highest average replacement is provided by Norway (97.9 per cent), the lowest by Denmark (53.6 per cent) and Iceland (59.7 per cent). In between, we find Sweden (77.4 per cent) and Finland (74.6 per cent).

On average across OECD countries, mothers are entitled to 18 weeks of paid maternity leave with about 77 per cent of previous earnings (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Generosity of maternity insurance, 2018

	Generosity of entitlement (length in weeks)	Average payment rate (per cent)**	Full-rate equivalent (weeks)
Estonia	20	100	20
Latvia	16	80	12.8
Lithuania	18	100	18
Denmark	18	53.6	9.5
Iceland	13	68.2	6.9
Finland	17.5	74.4	13
Norway	13	94.2	12.2
Sweden	12.9	77.6	10
OECD average	18.1	76.8* (2016)	-
EU average	21.1	85* (2016)	-

Source: OECD data

\* Statutory replacement rate, 100 per cent of average earnings (per cent)

\*\* The 'average payment rate' refers the proportion of previous earnings replaced by the benefit over the length of the paid leave entitlement for a person earning 100 per cent of average national (2015) earnings. If this covers more than one period of leave at two different payment rates, then a weighted average is calculated based on the length of each period. In most countries benefits are calculated on the basis of gross earnings, with the 'payment rates' shown reflecting the proportion of gross earnings replaced by the benefit.

Parental and home-care leave payment rates tend to be lower than those for maternity leave (OECD 2019). The eligibility and generosity of paid parental leave and home-care leave varies considerably across Baltic and Nordic countries (see Table 2.2). If we examine paid parental leave, Lithuania is closest to the ideal defamilialisation model, as it offers very generous (average replacement 100 per cent) parental leave for one year (44 weeks). The most family-alising parental leave can be found in Finland and Estonia, as both countries offer very long leaves (143 and 146 weeks, respectively) at a low replacement rate (19.2 per cent and 44.5 per cent, respectively). The shortest parental leave is found in Iceland (13 weeks) with the replacement up to almost 60 per cent. Slightly lower replacement rates can be found in Denmark (about 54 per cent) and Sweden (about 58 per cent), with the length of weeks 32 and 42.9 respectively. Norway and Latvia offer 32 weeks of parental leave at average replacement rates of 41 per cent and 52 per cent accordingly.

Father-specific leaves are usually better paid than parental leaves across OECD countries, especially if they are short. If father-specific leave lasts longer, the payment rate tends to fall (OECD 2019). The data on father-specific leaves are summarised in Table 2.3. By 'father-specific leave' we mean paternity leave (paid leave for employed fathers that can be taken simultaneously together with a mother who is on maternity or paternity leave) and/or paid

Table 2.2 *Paid parental and home-care leave available to mothers, 2018*

	Length (weeks)	Take-up: number of users/recipients per 100 live births, 2016		Average payment rate (per cent)**	Full-rate equivalent (weeks)	Male share of recipients (per cent), 2016
		Women	Men			
Estonia	146	204.3	18.6	44.1	64.4	8.4
Latvia	78			49.8	38.8	Not available
Lithuania	44	106.2	29.3	100	44	21.6
Denmark	32	134.4	49.3	53	17	26.8
Iceland	13	158.9	131	59.7	8.9	45.2
Finland	143.5	145.8	50.9	19.1	27.4	25.9
Norway	78	149.1	96.1	39.4	30.8	39.2
Sweden	42.9	380	314.1	57.4	24.6	45.3
OECD average	35.8	118.2	43.4	47.9* (2016)	43.7	18
EU average	43.7	-	-	49.1* (2016)	35.8	-

Source: OECD data

\* Statutory replacement rate, 100 per cent of average earnings (per cent)

\*\* The 'average payment rate' refers the proportion of previous earnings replaced by the benefit over the length of the paid leave entitlement for a person earning 100 per cent of average national (2015) earnings.

parental leave reserved specifically for the father, which cannot be transferred to the mother or taken simultaneously with a mother who is on parental leave. Only two Nordic countries (Iceland and Norway) have no paternity leave. However, both have generous parental leave reserved for the father, which is longest in Iceland (13 weeks), paid at almost 60 per cent of the average payment rate. Norway has 10 weeks of father-specific parental leave, paid at almost a 98 per cent replacement rate. All other countries have paternity leave ranging from 1.4 weeks in Sweden and Latvia, to two weeks in Estonia and Denmark, to three weeks in Finland; the longest and most generous paternity leave is in Lithuania, lasting for four weeks. The most generous paternity leaves can be found in the Baltic states, paid at a 100 per cent average replacement rate in Lithuania and Latvia, and 80 per cent in Latvia. In the Nordic block, the generosity is a bit lower: from 53 per cent in Denmark and more than 61 per cent in Sweden and Finland.

The reserved parental leave for the father exists in Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Norway, as noted. In Finland, it is up to six weeks, paid at the 62.9 per cent

Table 2.3 Generosity of father-specific leaves, 2018

	Paternity leave (length in weeks)	Take-up: number of users/ recipients per 100 live births, 2016****	The average payment rate across paid paternity and father-specific leave for an individual on national average**	Paid parental and home-care leave reserved for father
Estonia	2	48.9	100	0
Latvia	1.4	-	80	0
Lithuania	4	53.2	100	0
Denmark	2	73.3	53	0
Iceland	0	-	68.2***	13
Finland	3	77.5	62.9***	6
Norway	0	-	94.2***	10
Sweden	1.4	75.3	75.7	12.9
OECD average	1.4	-	68.8* (2016)	6.7
EU average	1.7	-	72.0* (2016)	4.5

Source: OECD data

\* Statutory replacement rate, 100 per cent of average earnings (per cent)

\*\*The 'average payment rate' refers the proportion of previous earnings replaced by the benefit over the length of the paid leave entitlement for a person earning 100 per cent of average national (2018) earnings

\*\*\* Average payment rate for the paid parental leave and/or home-care leave reserved for father

\*\*\*\* Recipients/users of publicly administered paternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid paternity leave per 100 live births, 2016

average replacement rate. In Sweden, it is up to almost 13 weeks, paid at 77.6 per cent replacement rate (see Table 2.3).

To sum up, the generosity (average payment rate) of the maternity and paternity insurance is higher in the Baltic states than in the Nordic countries. This means that the governments in the Baltic states provide greater incentives for mothers and fathers to use them, especially in Estonia and Lithuania. These policies also create an attachment to the labour market, which ensures defamilialism. Finland, Sweden and Norway have parental leave that is reserved exclusively for the father, and it is not transferable in Finland and Sweden. Sweden offers the highest replacement rate for the father's leave, which might create more incentives to use it than in Finland. However, as noted, the replacement rate of maternity, parental and paternity insurance is generally higher in the Baltic than Nordic countries.

The OECD data permit us to look into the take-up rate of the paternity and parental insurance. As noted by a number of authors (Hobson 2018; Javornik and Kurawska 2017; Saraceno 2017), designed family policies do not always

produce intended outcomes. This is especially common for the family policy, as it is most constrained by cultural norms and/or socioeconomic situations.

The use of statutory paternity leave is high in both the Nordic and Baltic countries. Paid paternity leave recipient rates are above 50 per 100 live births – in other words, there are more than 50 individuals claiming publicly administered paternity benefits or using publicly administered paternity leave for every 100 children born (see Table 2.3). In Finland, this rises to above 70 recipients per 100 live births, while in Sweden the rate is a little over 75 per 100 live births. Although the paternity leave is more generous in Lithuania and Estonia, there are many more fathers who took paternity leave (in 2016) in Finland, Sweden and Denmark than in Lithuania and Estonia. In Estonia, the recipient rate for paternity leave is less than 50 per 100 live births, in Lithuania 53 per 100 live births. Thus, despite a greater generosity of paternity leave in the Baltics, the Nordic fathers are more ready to accept father-specific leave than the Baltic fathers.

The analysis of the OECD's latest available data, for 2016, shows that countries that have parental leave reserved for the father (non-transferable) have a greater use rate of parental leave by the fathers, although mothers in all countries are still major users of parental leave. In Iceland, Sweden and Norway, fathers take up to about 40 per cent of parental leave compared to mothers, who take up the rest – 60 per cent. In Finland and Denmark, the gender distribution of users of parental leave is about 20–25 per cent taken by fathers and 75 per cent by the mothers. In Estonia, the share of fathers taking parental leave was slightly above 8 per cent in 2016. In Lithuania, the situation is different. The male share of recipients of parental leave was above 21 per cent; this is higher than the OECD average (18 per cent), but it is lower than in any other Nordic country.

### **Childcare Services**

If we examine the enrolment rate of children from 3 to 5 years old, it is higher in the Baltic states, except for Lithuania, than the European Union (EU) average (about 87 per cent) (see Table 2.4). However, it is lower than in the Nordic countries (as expected), but not dramatically lower. In Latvia, almost 92 per cent of all children from 3 to 5 years old attend childcare and pre-primary education. In Denmark, Iceland and Norway, it is more than 96 per cent. In Sweden, it is about 96 per cent. Finland shows the lowest rate of enrolment if all Baltic and Nordic countries are compared, amounting to only 79 per cent. Lithuania is the second country (after Finland) if all Nordic and Baltic countries are compared, having the lowest enrolment (about 84 per cent) of children from 3 to 5 years old in pre-primary education.

*Table 2.4 Enrolment rates in early childhood education and care services, and proportion of children using informal childcare arrangements during a typical week, 2017 (per cent)*

	0- to 2-year-olds	3- to 5-year-olds	Average usual weekly hours in early childhood education and care services, 0- to 2-year-olds	Use of informal childcare, 0- to 2-year-olds	Use of informal childcare, 3- to 5-year-olds
Estonia	29.1	91.1	34.1	28.5	28.5
Latvia	31.3	93.3	37.7	10.3	17.0
Lithuania	24.8	85.0	-	23.1	25.3
Denmark	55.4	97.5	34.5	1.1	1.1
Iceland	59.7	97.4	37.2 (2015)	18.7	21.2
Finland	31.2	79.5	31.6	1.4	1.0
Norway	56.3	96.9	33.6	6.4	6.4
Sweden	46.6	94.1	31.8	0.3	0.3
OECD average	35.0	86.3	29.5	26.4	28.6
EU average	32.7	87.7	30.2	28.1	30.8

*Source:* OECD data

The differences are much greater if the enrolment rates of children up to 2 years old are examined. In all three Baltic states the enrolment rates for 0 up to 2 years old are lower than the EU (31 per cent) or OECD (33 per cent) averages. Lithuania has the lowest enrolment rate, 23 per cent, while in Latvia (26 per cent) and Estonia (28 per cent) it is slightly higher. The enrolments for children from 0 to 2 years are much higher in the Nordic countries, ranging from almost 62 per cent in Denmark to almost 31 per cent in Finland. If we examine changes in the enrolment rate over time (from 2005 to 2016), it is remarkable that for all three Baltic states for all age groups the enrolment has gradually increased, while for the majority of the Nordic countries it has stayed more or less stable, except for Norway, which also shows a steady increase in the enrolment rate over time. This tells us we might see an improvement in the future in the Baltic states.

In all three Baltic states the proportion of children using informal childcare (care provided by grandparents or other relatives, neighbours and friends for which the provider did not receive payment) is higher than in the Nordic countries. However, variations exist among the Baltic states. Latvia shows surprisingly low informal care use for all age groups. It is only 6 per cent for the 0- to 2-year age group, and only 11 per cent for the 3- to 5-year age group. Estonia



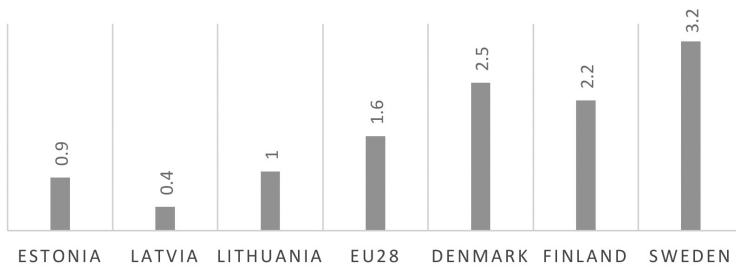
and Lithuania show more or less similar rates, which amount to EU and OECD averages (25–30 per cent). Surprisingly, Iceland shows much higher informal care use than other Nordic countries, which is almost 19 per cent for 0- to 2-year-olds and 21 per cent for 3- to 5-year-olds. In this way, Iceland joins the Baltic cluster and exhibits the same or even higher informal care use for childcare. In the Nordic cluster, the informal care is either non-existent (in Denmark) or less than 1 per cent (in Sweden), or comprises a very small proportion, up to 2–5 per cent (Finland, Norway).

## CARE FOR THE FRAIL ELDERLY AND A SEARCH FOR PRESCRIBED FAMILIALISM

As stated by Saraceno (2017, p. 321) and also illustrated by the OECD (2018, 2019) data, on average 70–90 per cent of those who provide care for frail elderly people are family carers, yet the majority of them are women. Thus, highly gendered familialism appears to be the most prevalent approach to caring for the frail elderly in developed countries. Nevertheless, the variation exists among different welfare states.

The ageing of the population puts great pressure on the social protection systems of many European societies. Some countries, such as the Nordic ones, are well equipped to solve frail elderly care issues, while others, including the Baltic states, seem to have a way to go to adopt the increasing needs of the elderly. This is remarkable if we examine public spending as a percentage of GDP on long-term care (health and social components). In 2016, the Nordic countries were in a group of the highest OECD-30 spenders, while Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were at the very bottom among the countries with very poor spending on long-term care. The Nordic countries spent about 2–3.2 per cent of their GDP on long-term care, while for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia these expenses were much less than the OECD-30 average (1.3 per cent), approaching only 0.4 per cent in Latvia, 0.9 per cent in Estonia and 1.0 per cent in Lithuania (see Figure 2.2). The expenditures show that the states in the Baltic countries show little commitment to support their elderly via services. In this case it is worth looking for any traces of prescribed familialism while reviewing the constitutions of the Baltic countries.

Elderly care has been an important part of the family support system in the Nordic countries, while in the Baltic countries it is rarely debated as a family policy measure. In all three Baltic states, the constitutions enforce the family's obligations upon its members. In the Lithuanian constitution (1992), it is explicitly stated that it is the right and duty of parents to bring up their children and to support them until they come of age. The children have to respect their parents and to take care of them in their old age. In Estonia (1992), it is expressed not so explicitly, but clearly that a family has an important respon-



Source: OECD 2018

Figure 2.2 Public spending on long-term care as a percentage of GDP, 2016

sibility to raise its young and care for each other. It is stated in the Estonian constitution that parents have the right and the duty to raise their children and to provide for them. The family is required to provide for its members who are in need, and presumably its elderly too. The Latvian constitution (1922) is more difficult to interpret. However, it is obvious that the state's obligation is to protect the rights of parents and rights of the children. But support is granted only when family capacities are depleted (for example, children left without parental care) or to special families (with disabled children and so on). However, there were no statements that the state should protect its elderly. This becomes a great contract if compared to statements expressed in the constitutions of the Nordic countries. It was not possible to detect any traces of 'prescribed familialism' patterns by reviewing the constitutions of the Nordic countries. For instance, in Finland the state is responsible for ensuring the basic subsistence in the case of old age. The family is mentioned in Section 19 of the constitution, but only to impose the public authorities' obligations: 'the public authorities shall support families and others responsible for providing for children so that they have the ability to ensure the wellbeing and personal development of the children' (Constitution of Finland, 2019).

In the Danish (1953), Norwegian (1814) and Swedish (2012) constitutions, the word 'family' is rarely used, but instead 'citizen', 'person', 'children', 'human dignity' and 'personal integrity' are used. There is no prescribed obligation for children to take care of their parents in old age.

To sum up, when it comes to long-term care expenditures, we find familialistic approaches prevalent in the Baltic states. It can be assumed that this situation is backed up by the 'prescribed familialism' pattern when, according to the constitutions, children are responsible for taking care of their parents in their old age. Nothing like this is prevalent in the Nordic countries.

## OUTCOMES: MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT, CHILD POVERTY, GENDER PAY AND EMPLOYMENT GAP

One way to examine whether family support systems achieve their goals is to look into the share of maternal employment. Maternal employment is high in the Baltic states, higher than in the OECD (66 per cent) and the EU (68 per cent); averages for Latvia are 70 per cent and much higher for Lithuania (76 per cent). Estonia (65 per cent) shows slightly lower maternal employment rates than the OECD and the EU averages. In all Nordic countries, employment rates for women with at least one child are very high, ranging from 83 per cent in Sweden to almost 74 per cent in Finland. However, we should keep in mind that part-time employment is also widespread in the Nordic countries, which helps to increase female employment rates. Part-time jobs are not very popular in the Baltic countries. To illustrate this, we can turn to the latest available Eurostat data for 2017, as the OECD data do not offer complete statistics on part-time employment. In the Baltic states, female part-time employment ranges from 9 per cent (Lithuania) to 13 per cent (Estonia), while the EU-28 average is almost 32 per cent. In the Nordic countries, female part-time employment ranges from 34 per cent (Sweden) to almost 37 per cent (Norway). It is higher than the EU-28 average. Only Finland deviates from other Nordic countries, with only 20 per cent of female part-time employment. Thus, the Nordic and Baltic countries stand first in line in Europe with their very high female full-time labour force participation rate. Even if we find many women working in the Baltic states, child poverty is higher than in the Nordic countries, especially in Lithuania (see Table 2.5). Child poverty in Estonia and Latvia amounts to about 12 per cent, while in Lithuania it is 19 per cent, which is higher than the OECD average (13 per cent). Lithuania is also the only country among the Baltic and Nordic countries in which child poverty is higher than the total population income poverty rate. This shows that family policy or social policy in a broader sense is not well equipped to mitigate poverty among children. In the Nordic countries, child poverty ranges from the lowest, 3 per cent (in Denmark), to the highest, 9 per cent (in Sweden). However, as illustrated by Table 2.5, fertility rates are quite similar in all Baltic and Nordic countries, ranging between 1.6 and 1.9. The gender gap in employment is also very low if compared to the OECD average (about 12 per cent). The highest gender employment gap is found in Estonia (almost 7 per cent) and Denmark (slightly above 5 per cent). The lowest is found in Lithuania (less than 1 per cent) and Sweden (less than 3 per cent).

The examination of outcomes of social policy shows that different family policy regimes can produce similar results. The family support systems are clearly most effective in Nordic countries. However, the Baltic states have

Table 2.5 Outcomes of performance, 2016 or latest available (per cent)

	Child relative income poverty rate, 2015 or latest available year (0–17 years old)	Total population income poverty rate	Total fertility rates, 2017 or latest available	Employment rates (per cent) for women (15-to 64-year-olds) with at least one child aged 0–14, 2014 or latest available	Gender gap in employment rates (per cent), 2018	Gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees, 2016
Estonia	12.1	16.1	1.6	65.5	6.7	28.3
Latvia	12.2	16.2	1.7	70.1	3.5	21.1
Lithuania	19.1	16.5	1.6	75.8	1.7	12.5
Denmark	2.9	5.5	1.8	82.0	5.5	5.6
Iceland	7.2	6.5	1.7	-	4.8	9.9
Finland	3.7	6.3	1.5	73.6	3.1	16.5
Norway	7.3	8.1	1.6	-	4.3	7.1
Sweden	9.1	9.2	1.8	83.1	3	13.4
OECD average	13.4	11.8	1.5	66.2	11.1	13.5
EU average	-	-	1.6	68.2	-	12.1

Source: OECD data

experienced similar results in terms of female labour force participation and fertility rates, but there are remarkable differences if child poverty is compared. Looking at child poverty we can clearly distinguish a line between Baltic and Nordic countries, while for other indicators there is no clear distinction. However, we can see a pattern for Estonia. It has the lowest rate of maternal employment among all Baltic and Nordic countries and also has the highest gender gap in employment and highest gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has reviewed similarities and differences in family support policy arrangements among Baltic and Nordic countries. It has sought the answer to the question: How do the Baltic and Nordic countries currently compare to each other in their family support systems?

The findings of this chapter show that the Nordic countries still maintain a very strong foothold in the ‘defamilialisation through public provision’ and/

or ‘market provision’ models. The data have not allowed us to detect how much the state is outsourcing money to private providers; however, the pattern of defamilialisation is very strong. This is entrenched in the family support system design and in the positive outcomes of family policy. The state’s expenses on family policy are the highest among the OECD countries, and the work–family reconciliation policies support female labour force attachment and gender equality in care. However, there exists a variation within the Nordic countries if we study programs and outcomes in more detail. Finland seems to show some signs of a supported familialism pattern as the state is less keen on providing services, putting more emphasis on cash benefits by offering long parental leave. Overall, if Baltic and Nordic countries are compared, the strong defamilialisation pattern prevails in the Nordics. This is entrenched by the state’s commitment to ensuring personal integrity and independence through the constitutional rights.

In the Baltic states the situation is more complex. We find a strong pattern in Estonia of supported familialism as parental leave is long and fathers’ involvement in childcare is low. Latvia falls somewhere in between familialism by default and defamilialisation through market provision as the state’s support is minimal, enrolments in childcare for 3- to 5-year-olds are high and the use of informal childcare is low, signalling that families actively purchase the services in the private market. In many ways, Lithuania seems like it is following a pattern of defamilialisation through public provisions or through market provisions, as it has relatively generous paid childcare leave policies. The fathers’ involvement in childcare is higher than in Estonia and is tending to increase. However, the use of informal care is also prevalent and the numbers of children from 0 to 2 years old attending care services are low. Yet Lithuania entrenches a prescribed familialism by law, as children are obliged to take care of their elderly parents according to the constitution. Thus, for Lithuania we see an unusual pattern of coexistence of defamilialism of public provision, prescribed familialism and familialism by default at the same time.

This chapter advances common knowledge in two important ways. It provides very detailed comparative analyses of Baltic and Nordic countries; very few studies provide such rigorous comparisons. It contributes to a better understanding of how Baltic and Nordic countries compare to each other according to family support programs. It also examines some patterns of prescribed familialism by looking into the constitutions of the Baltic and Nordic countries and expenses for long-term care.

Based on the analyses provided in this chapter, we may claim that the Baltic and Nordic countries converge in their family policy arrangements. One distinctive feature of the family support system of the Baltic countries is the generosity of paid childcare leave policies such as maternity, paternity and parental leave. They are more generous than in the Nordic countries. However,

the advanced paid leave policies (maternity, parental, paternity) in the Baltics are not yet backed up by widely available services.

The distinctive feature of the Nordic family model is emphasis on services and on the father's involvement in childcare. The Baltic states can still learn from the Nordic countries on how to better involve the father in childcare.

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