

Gudny Bjork Eydal, Professor
Faculty of Social Work
University of Iceland
Oddi, Sturlugötu 3,
101 Reykjavik,
Iceland
Phone number: +354 5254258
E-mail: ge@hi.is

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Title: Paths, policies and families: The history of Icelandic family policies

This paper addresses the main characteristics of family policies in three policy areas: Family law, child-care and family benefits. The paper applies both historical and comparative perspectives as the outcomes of the Icelandic policies are compared to outcomes in the other Nordic countries. The main question of the paper is if the Icelandic policies are inline with the policies in the other Nordic countries. The paper draws upon previous research of the author et al.

The main conclusion is that family law, in all the Nordic countries, has developed in quite similar way not surprising considering the formal co-operation among the countries in this field. The paper concludes that the aims of the child care policies in Iceland have been comparable with the aims of the other Nordic countries but that nevertheless there has been less public support provided in the case of Iceland, e.g. in 2014 Iceland provides 39 weeks of paid parental leave while all the other countries provide a year or more. In regards to family benefits, Iceland has chosen a different path by providing families with income tested child benefits. The family benefit system is fragmented and the goals of the system are not always clear nor in line with other policies. A case in point is the system of child maintenance that was constructed in 1946.