



University of Bergen

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**Comparing education systems
and welfare in Norway and Poland**

**Report 1
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to cover the Norwegian and Polish education system with emphasis on kindergarten and primary school. I will also cover relevant welfare arrangements and related public attitudes. The structure of the report is twofold. First, I describe the structure of kindergartens and primary schools in Norway and Poland, thereafter I cover relevant welfare arrangements and related public attitudes.

1.2 Education in Poland and Norway

Education and skills play a critical role in fostering social progress (OECD 2014a: 13). Education is one of the most important ways to combat inequality, poverty, and to spur the development of a knowledgeable population. Education and formal skills is becoming increasingly important in the shift towards knowledge-based societies in the majority of advanced capitalist welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1999; Taylor Gooby 2004). On one hand, it is important at the macro level for countries to have a knowledgeable population in an increasingly knowledge-based economy. On the other hand, education is increasingly important at the micro level for the individual, in aspects such as social, economic and political integration in society. The amount of total government expenditure aimed towards education is an important indicator for the priority of education in a country. Measured as a total percentage of government expenditure, Norway allocated 15.3 percent of their total expenditure to education in 2010, while Poland allocated 11.4 percent (World Bank 2015a)¹. These percentages show that education is highly prioritized in both countries.

Research has shown the importance of children's first years for development of cognitive abilities, performance in education, labour market attachment, marginalization, crime and deviance (Duncan and Gunn-Brooks 1997; Heckman 2006; Esping-Andersen 2002, 2009)². In this regard, discussion of "investment" strategies have become more widespread. The argument for investing more in children at an early age is twofold³. On the one hand, investing more in children might alleviate social problems, thus on the other hand, a consequence might be less expenditures aimed toward tackling social problems at later stages in the life course. In 2010, Norway had a public expenditure of 21.1 percent per pupil (as a percentage of GDP) at primary level, compared to 27.1 percent per pupil in Poland (World Bank 2015b)⁴. In "Towards a Social

¹ World Bank 2015a: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GB.ZS>

² For a list of more papers on early childhood research, see <http://jenni.uchicago.edu/papers/earlychildhood.html>

³ «Pre-school» years or the age between 0 to 6 years is a common reference (Esping-Andersen 2009).

⁴ World Bank 2015b: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.PRIM.PC.ZS>

Investment Welfare State?” (2012: 1), Morel, Palier and Palme describe the trend toward more investment in education, particularly at early stages as a policy-shift from “repairing” policies toward “preparing” policies. This shift is part of the development towards the knowledge society, paralleled by a policy logic based on “social investment”. According to the authors, this perspective might form a new social policy paradigm. Related ideas are already “spread across the international community at the level of international organisations such as the OECD, UNICEF, EU, and the World Bank”. The core point is preparing “... individuals, families, and societies to adopt to various transformations, such as changing career patterns and working conditions, the development of new social risks, population ageing and climate change, instead of simply generating responses to “repair” damages after markets fail or existing policies prove inadequate”. Thus, a relevant nuance of the notion of “social investment” as with the notion of “new social risks” is that it might potentially lean too heavy on “adopting people to the market, instead of making people more independent of it” (Crouch and Keune 2012). With this in mind, I will now turn to describing attributes of the education system in Poland and Norway.

The education system in Poland and Norway⁵

Everyone has the right to education in Poland and Norway. In Poland it is the Ministry of National Education which is responsible for nearly the whole education system, while in Norway the main responsibility lays at the Ministry of National Education and Research (Eurydice 2012: 12; Regjeringen 2014a). Education is free in public schools in both countries, this also applies to higher education in public universities or colleges (Eurydice 2011; Regjeringen 2014a)⁶. Yet, one distinction is that education is compulsory to the age of 18 in Poland in contrast to in Norway, where education is compulsory up to the completion of secondary school when normally people are 16 years. However, this is paired with a right to education for people between 16 and 19 years. In both countries, increased social risks of marginalization in the education system and in the labour market amongst young people is recognized by the implementation of the *youth guarantee*. In Norway, the youth guarantee was implemented in 2009, and secured labour market measures for young people between 20-24 unemployed for six months or more (Regjeringen 2008⁷). In December 2012, a youth guarantee measure concerning young people between 15-24 years was developed at the EU level. 550 million euro were allocated to Poland in this regard. From 2012 onwards, the youth guarantee

⁵ I have added two illustrations of the education systems in Norway and Poland to the appendix.

⁶ Regjeringen 2014a: <https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/ansvarsomraader/id611/>

⁷ Regjeringen 2008: <https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/aktuelt/ny-ungdomsgaranti/id531244/>

in Poland secures labour markets measures for young people under the age of 25 who have not been in education, employment or training in four months or more⁸.

Kindergarten

Norway

In Norway, kindergartens is a universal offer for families with children between one and five/six years⁹. By the end of 2013, 90 percent of children between one and five years attended kindergarten, 92 percent had an arranged time of 41 hours or more per week (Statistics Norway 2014). According to Aksel Hatland (one of the most well-known welfare-researchers in Norway), kindergartens have been one of the largest growth areas in the Norwegian welfare state over the last twenty years. In a historical view, the amount of children in kindergarten have grown from 8500 in 1963 to 287 200 in 2013. The number of employees have also grown, from 1200 in 1963 to 93 600 in 2013 (Hatland 2011; Statistics Norway 2014a)¹⁰. As Hatland emphasises, this growth culminated in 2008 when Stortinget¹¹ legislated a new right in the kindergarten law stating that every child between one and six years have the right to go to kindergarten. From originally being a selective measure aimed towards disadvantaged children, the kindergarten has become a universal service. As one can see in figure 1.2.1, there has been a large overall increase of kindergartens from 1988 to 2013.

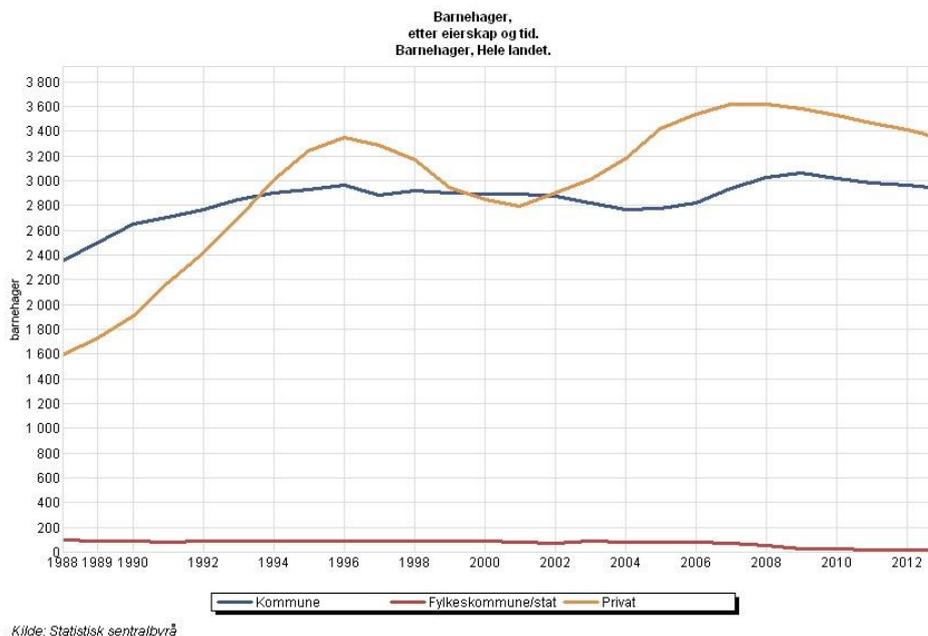
⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1090&langId=en>

⁹ Children start primary education the autumn of the year they fill six.

¹⁰ Statistics Norway 2014a: <https://ssb.no/utdanning/statistikker/barnehager>

¹¹ The Norwegian parliament.

Figure 1.2.1. Public and private kindergartens 1988-2013



The increase in kindergartens has been important for parents' ability to reconcile work and family. Even though this is an important aspect of the development, it is not a part of the legitimization of the expansion of kindergartens in Norwegian law. In fact, work-life balance is not even mentioned in the comprehensive laws regarding kindergartens. The first paragraph in the Norwegian law of kindergartens states that the aim of kindergartens is to “attend to children’s need of play and care, and promote learning and formation”. Thus, kindergartens should promote the intrinsic value of childhood and lay the foundation for a good adult life (ibid.: 154). Hatland argues that the latter point is important, and backed up by recent research showing that kindergarten can have positive long-term effects on children’s learning and education, integration regarding ethnic minorities, and development of mental health (ibid.: 155; NOU 2009: 10, chapter 9 and 16)¹². Another important dimension is, as Esping-Andersen argues, that universal day care provided by the public sector helps even out social disadvantages related to social background. He argues that day care centres (and “after school” programs in primary school) reduces the “uneven distribution of cultural capital among families ... simply because much of the cognitive stimulus has been shifted from the parents to centres that do not replicate social class differences”. Thus, day care of uniform, high pedagogical standards lead to children from disadvantaged families benefiting disproportionately (2004: 308).

¹² NOU 2009: 10: <https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/nou-2011-10/id645250/>

Poland

In Poland, kindergartens is a universal offer for families with children between three to five/six years (2.5 years might be allowed in some cases) (Eurydice 2012: 26). According to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of the 23 of December 2008, some of the main aims of pre-school education¹³ is following¹⁴:

- Supporting children in their development of talents and shaping of intellectual skills necessary for coping with everyday life and further education.
- Building a system of values, including recognition of good and evil.
- Shaping emotional resistance, improving social skills, creating conditions for playing and learning of children with different physical and intellectual abilities in one group.
- Introducing children into the world of aesthetic values and development of self-expression through music, drama and visual art.
- Shaping a sense of belonging in a community, in a family, peer group, national community.

The Ministry of Education introduced one year of obligatory pre-school education for all five year-old children in 2011/2012. Thus, the age of commencement of compulsory education has been lowered from six to five. This is part of the gradual lowering of the age of commencement of compulsory education in primary school from the age of seven to six, starting in 2014.

Most kindergartens are open 9 hours a day, five days a week. During opening time, the activities are a mix of organized activities and spontaneous play. Organized activities tend to be longer for five and six year-olds. A new core curriculum has been developed in recent years, which recommends that “one fifth of the total time should be devoted to play, one fifth to outdoor activities, one fifth to educational activities, and the remaining two fifths teachers ought to devote to care and organisational matters” (ibid.: 27).

¹³ This presentation concentrates on kindergarten but pre-school can also, as they do in Poland, include pre-school classes in primary schools (*oddziały przedszkolne*) and other pre-school settings such as pre-school units and pre-school centres (Eurydice 2012: 25).

¹⁴ This presentation is based on points in Eurydice’s report (2012). For the extensive list, see page 25 of the report.

Primary school

Norway

Primary and secondary school is compulsory and free for children and youth between 6 and 16 years. Primary school lasts from first to seventh grade, and secondary school from eight to tenth grade. A guiding principle is the unitary school system (*enhetsskolen*) which entails a philosophy stating that all children and youth should take part in a common knowledge-, culture- and value-foundation. From first to fourth grade, the subjects are more open and spacious, giving room for wonder. From fourth grade, teaching becomes more organized, and in fifth and seventh grade, the contours of the subjects become more distinct¹⁵. The subjects in the Norwegian primary and secondary school are following:

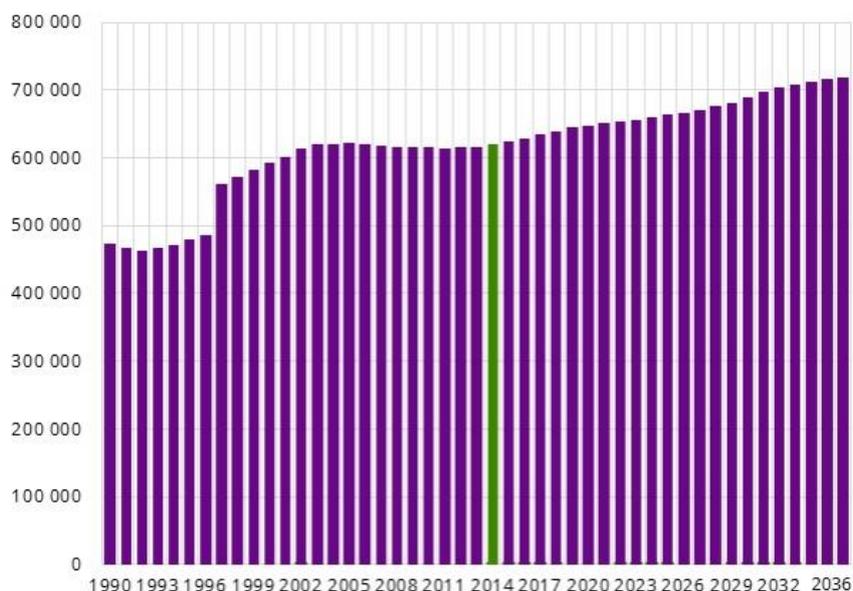
- Christianity and other religious and ethical views
- Norwegian
- Mathematics
- Social science
- Art and handicraft
- Natural science
- English
- Foreign language (2 and 3)
- Music
- Food and health
- Physical education
- Compulsory additional subjects
- Class- and pupil council work
- Free activities

The subjects with most hours is Norwegian, followed by mathematics. Children in first to fourth grade have the right to free help with home assignments. The right to primary education entails all children that stays in the country for more than three months. Every pupil with another first language than Norwegian has the right to Norwegian training as well. In addition to this, every municipality should have “free time arrangement” (*SFO*) for pupils between first and fourth

¹⁵ This description and following list of subjects are gathered from Cappelen Damm’s teaching aid, developed with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Education:
<http://introbokmal.cappelendamm.no/c26375/artikkel/vis.html?tid=26500>

grade (UDIR 2013). In Norway, there was 2,886 primary schools with 618,996 pupils in 2014¹⁶. Figure 1.2.2 shows the development of children in primary school from 1990 to 2014, and also includes prognosis to 2036.

Figure 1.2.2 Development in children in primary school, 1990-2036



(Source: Statistics Norway)

In accordance with the development of the public/private mix of kindergartens, private primary schools have increased by approximately 100 since 2002, and public schools have decreased by 545 in the same period. Private schools now make up 7.2 percent of the total of primary schools in Norway. However, pupils attending private primary schools only amount to 3 percent, which is low compared to the OECD average of 11 percent. From 2013 to 2014, pupils receiving education in first/mother language, bilingual and specially arranged training declined by 1,900. The largest group receiving this type of training was Polish, Somali and Arabian children (Statistics Norway 2014b)¹⁷.

Poland

Children start primary education the year they turn seven (exceptionally a year earlier). The structure of the education system has changed in recent years due to the reform launched in 1999 and implemented in 2004/05. Instead of compulsory education covering eight years primary education, primary education now lasts six years divided into two three-year cycles.

¹⁶ 2,678 public schools with 598,560 pupils, 208 private schools with 20,436 pupils.

¹⁷ Statistics Norway 2014b: <http://www.ssb.no/utdanning/statistikker/utgrs/aar/2014-12-12>

The first stage – early school education – includes grade one to three, while the second stage includes grades four to six (Eurydice 2012: 31). From 2009 and onwards, a new core curriculum has been implemented. The new core curriculum states that the main aims of general education are as follows¹⁸:

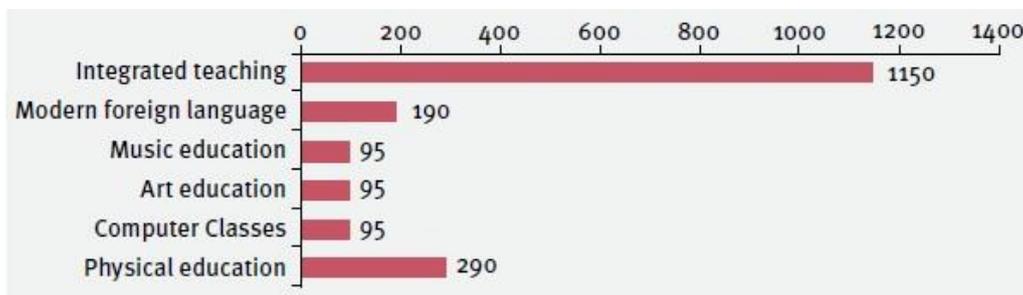
- Acquire basic set of information/knowledge on facts, theories and practice in topics and phenomena close to pupils’ experience.
- Acquire skills related to use of knowledge and information in carrying out tasks and solving problems.
- Develop attitudes related to efficient and responsible functioning in the contemporary world.

To combat inequality, pupils from families with low income are entitled to different types of benefits such as financial contribution for purchase of textbooks, financial grant for extra-curricular activities, school grant for pupils in a particularly difficult situation (ibid.: 32).

Stage I – Grade 1 to 3

The purpose of teaching at stage I is to “provide a smooth transition from pre-primary to school education”. Thus, the timetable prepared by the teacher is flexible allowing pupils to influence duration of lessons and breaks. The education process from grade 1 to grade 3 is interconnected, meaning that “knowledge and skills acquired by the pupil in grade 1 will be repeated and developed in grades 2 and 3”. In table 1.2.1 one can see the minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of three years in Stage 1. This serves as an indicator for which areas that are prioritized.

Table 1.2.1 Min. number of teaching hours by subject in the period of three years (Stage I)¹⁹



(Source: Eurydice 2012: 35)

¹⁸ The following points are based on a list presented in Eurydice 2012, page 31-32.

¹⁹ One hour is defined as 45 minutes. Modern foreign language refers to “a language different than the compulsory language taught at school”. Note that both Stage I and Stage II is covered more extensively in Eurydice 2012.

Stage II – Grade 4 to 6

From grade 4 and onwards, the contours of different subjects become distinct. Thus, the Polish and Norwegian education system is quite similar in this regard. As mentioned earlier, primary school in Norway is more “spacious” and freely organized up to fourth grade. Thereafter, subjects become more divided and concentrated. In table 1.2.2 one can see the minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of three years in Stage II. The included subjects also represent the obligatory subjects at Stage II according to the new Core Curriculum of 2008.

Min. number of teaching hours by subject in the period of three years (Stage II)



(Source: Eurydice 2012: 35)

1.3. Childcare and family benefits in Norway and Poland

Child poverty rates in Norway was according to OECD approximately 5 percent in 2010, while child poverty in Poland was between 13 and 14 percent the same year. Compared to the OECD34 average of 13 percent, Norway is relatively far below while Poland is just over the OECD34-average (OECD 2014a). These scores might serve are interesting in relation to the understanding of the well-being and future prospects for the next generation in Norway and Poland. Commenting on the relationship between child poverty and social mobility, Esping-Andersen (2004: 307) notes: “... it is well known that child poverty is strongly correlated with inferior educational and job attainment later on”. Esping-Andersen argues that an explanation for the low poverty rate in Scandinavian countries is not only a result of public income transfers to families or single parents with children, it is also due to public social service provision. “Universal access to affordable day care explains why virtually all mothers are employed and

it is this, in turn, that explains the absence of poverty” (ibid.: 308). Thus, child poverty is not only a warning sign for future prospects for children, it might also indicate problems related to the reconciliation of work and family life. As EU (2015)²⁰ states, the lack of appropriate child care facilities is a continuing challenge for Poland which leads to problems related to child poverty, work-life balance, and low fertility rate²¹. However, being aware of the problem, the Polish government implemented several measures in 2011, which they revised and modified again in 2013. I will list up some of the main points in Poland’s family benefits from EU’s country profile:

- The expenditure on family-related benefits is low compared to other EU countries. According to Eurostat-data, the expenditure rate in Poland amounted to 1.3 % of GDP compared to the EU mean of 2.2 %.
- Despite economic crisis, Poland raised the threshold for family benefits and the number of family benefits were raised in 2012. Currently, family benefits mainly target low-income families, i.e. families where a monthly income per person does not exceed 574 PLN net (ca. € 137). The income threshold is somewhat higher for families with a disabled child, at 664 PLN net (ca. € 158)²². A comparative measure is the minimum wage in Poland in 2013 at 1181 PLN net (€284). The targeting approach is a contrast to universal benefits in Norway. Korpi and Palme (1998) argues that the Scandinavian social-transfer system produces far more effective redistribution than narrow targeting towards the poor. Esping-Andersen (2004) also argues, “targeted benefits towards the poor, as in the United States, are far more likely to produce poverty and welfare dependency traps that are counterproductive for mobility”.
- Child benefit varies between 77-115 PLN (€ 18 - € 27) monthly per child, and this allowance can be complemented by other allowances. Local authorities (*gminy*) administer the allowances and can raise them by using their own resources.
- The employment rate for mothers of children under six was 57.5 % in 2012, compared to the EU average of 59.1 %. However, the employment rate for mothers of children under six was higher than the total employment rate (15 years and older) of 50.2 % in

²⁰ EU 2015: http://europa.eu/epic/countries/poland/index_en.htm

²¹ The fertility rate in Poland is 1.30 (2012), compared to 1.85 (2012) in Norway. World Bank 2015c: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>, Statistics Norway 2015: <http://www.ssb.no/a/english/aarbok/tab/tab073.html>

²² These thresholds were set in 2014.

2012. The gender pay gap was also relatively low at 4.5 % in 2011, compared to the EU average of 16.2 %.

- The combination of low employment rates, lack of childcare facilities, low benefits for families result in a relatively high risk of child poverty: 29.3 % in 2012, compared to the EU average of 28.1 %. The most vulnerable groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, is large families (3 children and more) and single-parent families.

In Norway, family policies have been characterized by larger changes and more principal debates than any other parts of the welfare policy in recent years (Hatland 2011: 148). The developments in family patterns over the last decades developed parallel to a large extension of the welfare state, mainly in health- and social services, where female representation is dominant at 82 % (2009). These services encompasses hospitals, nursing homes for elderly and disabled and kindergartens. The transformation of earlier domestic non-paid care work into a public responsibility with paid jobs is an important part of women's entry to the workforce. In Hatland's words, "the welfare state have become an employment-machine for women" (ibid.: 152-3).

The Norwegian welfare state have multiple benefits. Economically, the most important transfer is the child benefit. Hatland emphasises that Norwegian families with children under 18 received in total 14,8 billion tax-free kroner through this arrangement (ibid.: 158). In fact, the child benefit was the first universal welfare arrangement introduced in Norway in 1946²³. The purpose is not reducing inequality between rich and poor in itself, but to reduce inequalities between families with and without children. The minimum allowance in 2011 was 11 640 kroner for each child. Single parents get allowance for one more child than they have, in addition to "small-children"-benefit for children under three years. There is also an additional sum added to people living in Northern Norway (Finnmark, Nord-Trøms, Svalbard), where more electricity and light expenditures are expected, and hence, covered. Hatland points out that the child benefits have not been raised according to the general price development since 1998, which practically means that the benefits have been reduced over the last years. However, the government has tried to meet the needs of families with small children by prioritizing expansion of kindergartens (ibid.: 158-9).

An economic benefit that has been quite controversial on a socialist-non-socialist axis, is the cash benefit (*kontantstøtten*). This benefit was introduced by the centre-government in 1998,

²³ Universal in this context emphasises that better-off and worse-off families received the same amount.

with support from the political right party *Høyre*, and the populist right party *Fremskrittspartiet*. This cash benefit is aimed towards families with children between one and three years, who do not make use of publically financed kindergartens. They receive a monthly amount originally equal to the state-subsidy for whole-time place in kindergarten²⁴. The argument for introducing this benefit was threefold: 1) families should have *more time* to spend with their children, 2) families should have *more freedom of choice* regarding forms for care, 3) more *equality* in the transfers the individual families receive for care from the state. Adversaries of the cash benefit have argued that the best form for childcare would be to use these measures to build out more kindergartens instead, and that this benefit could lead to less gender equality, and less single mothers in the workforce (ibid.: 156-7). A comprehensive study was carried out to see the effects, and the results was that more single mothers did not choose away the labour market. The people who benefited was families who did not in the first place have the children in kindergarten (see St.meld. nr. 43). However, the debate has continued, now with more emphasis on integration of immigrant children. Another aspect which has been criticized, is that cash benefits (and child benefits) – according to the EEA agreement – is transferred to children in other European countries when one of the parents work in Norway (Hatland 2011: 158).

Parental benefit is transferred to families who either give birth to a child or adopt a child. From 2011 and onwards the transfer encompasses full pay for 47 weeks, alternatively 80 percent of salary over 57 weeks. The benefit stretches to six times the base amount²⁵. Parental benefit presuppose labour market attachment. To get parental benefit a women must have been in the workforce for 6 of the last 10 months. Women who do not fulfil this criteria, receive a one time amount²⁶. Parental benefit is an important area for gender equality, and is continually and frequently debated. Political right parties argues that the distribution of the parental benefit should be up to families, hence a choice of freedom. Political left parties on the other hand, argues that to change inequalities, one have to resort to tougher means than freedom of choice. Fathers' right to take out a part of the parental benefit was introduced in 1973. However, few men chose to make use of this right. The Brundtland government (*Arbeiderpartiet*)²⁷ introduced a quota for fathers in 1993, stating that four weeks of the parental benefit was reserved for the father, and that this right would be removed if fathers did not make use of it. After this was introduced, increasingly more men made use of this right. 96 percent took out the standardized

²⁴ 3000 kroner in 1998, 3303 kroner in 2011.

²⁵ 475 296 kroner in 2011.

²⁶ 35 263 kroner in 2011.

²⁷ The Norwegian labor party.

period, 20 percent took out more. This shows the effectiveness of quota. Since it was introduced for the first time, the quota has been increased several times. Despite this success in terms of gender equality, the right party (Høyre) and the populist right party (Fremskrittspartiet) still argue that parents should have freedom of choice, and that quotas should be dismantled (ibid.: 160).

The last benefit that will be covered is benefits for lone parents. This is, as Hatland points out, probably the most distinctively Norwegian benefit. Lone parents in most other countries are referred to social assistance if they cannot assist themselves through the labor market. In Norway, lone parents have a distinct benefit that dates back to a mother benefit introduced in Oslo as early as 1919. The widow- and lone mother benefit of 1964 was expanded to encompass divorced, separated and unmarried providers. The rights are the same for women and men but practically women account for over 90 percent of the benefit receivers. Lone parents have the right to a “package” with benefits which altogether guarantee a minimum income of 246 000 kroner (2011) for a family with a child between 1 and 2 years (ibid.: 162-3).

2.4. Results indicating quality of education

In the preceding sections, important features of the education system and the welfare arrangements have been covered. In the following sections, indicators of results of education system along with attitudes covering satisfaction with welfare arrangements will be covered. I start out with indicators relevant for the education system. In this regard the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has become a central reference. First off, what exactly is PISA? According to OECD (2014b)²⁸ «PISA assesses the extent to which 15-year-old students have acquired key knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies». A pertinent question in this regard – which has also sparked academic as well as public debate – relates to what might be considered as «key knowledge and skills» and how should it be measured, however, this is not the place to expand on this issue. PISA focuses on reading, mathematics and science as well as whether students can «extrapolate what they have learned and apply that knowledge in unfamiliar settings, both in and outside of school». The latter point is important because it is distinct from merely reproducing what they have learned. According to OECD this approach also «reflects the fact that modern societies reward individuals not for what they know, but for what they can do with what they know». In the following list, relevant main findings for Poland and Norway is included:

²⁸ To see the details of how the PISA assessment has been carried out, see OECD 2014b, page 3.

- More than 10 percent of students in Norway and Poland are top performers in reading.
- Between 2003 and 2012, Poland alongside Italy and Portugal increased their share of top performers and simultaneously reduced their shares of low performers in mathematics.
- Between 2000 and 2012, Poland alongside Albania and Israel increased their shares of top performers and simultaneously reduced their shares of low performers in reading.
- Poland alongside Italy and Qatar have increased their share of top performers and simultaneously reduced their shares of low performers in science in recent years.
- Across OECD countries, a more socio-economic advantaged student scores 39 points higher in mathematics – the equivalent of nearly one year of schooling – than a less-advantaged student.

In table 2.4.1 relevant findings for Poland and Norway is summarized²⁹:

Table 2.4.1. Results in reading, mathematics and science for Poland and Norway, 2012

	Mathematics				Reading		Science	
	Mean	Top ach.	Low ach.	Ann. change, sc.pts.	Mean	Ann. change, sc.pts.	Mean	Ann. change, sc.pts.
Poland	518	16.7	14.4	2.6	518	2.8	526	4.6
Norway	489	9.4	22.3	-0.3*	504	0.1*	495	1.3*
OECD	494	12.6	23.0	-0.3	496	0.3	501	0.5

(Source OECD 2014b: 5)

Explanation of measures

The annualized change is the average annual change in PISA score points from a country's/economy's earliest participation in PISA to PISA 2012. It is calculated taking into account all of a country's/economy's participation in PISA. Scores marked by "*" refers to measures that are *not* statistically significant. None of the annualized change-measures for Norway is significant. Hence, measures covering this measure are not reliable indicators for

²⁹ To see relevant results regarding "engagement with and at school", "drive" as an indication of motivation and "mathematics self-believe" see OECD 2014b page 19; for "problem-solving" see page 31.

Norway. Top achievers in mathematics refers to level 5 or 6, while low achievers refer to below level 2.

As one can see in table 2.4.1, Poland has better scores than Norway in *all* measures. Not only is the mean score higher in mathematics, reading and science in Poland. The share of top achievers in the relevant measures are higher, and the share of low achievers is lower. In addition, the annual change in score points indicates a strong positive development in Poland. Thus, based on PISA results it is clear that the education system in Poland is giving pupils a good education. Norway fares well in reading, but has some work to do to catch up with the OECD average in mathematics and science.

2.5. Child well-being

In “*Doing better for Children*” carried out by OECD (2009) the focus is on the well-being of children, which is a matter “high on the policy agenda across the OECD”. The study concentrates on child well-being in 30 OECD countries, Poland and Norway is included. In table 2.5.1, main results regarding “comparative policy-focused child well-being” in Poland and Norway is presented. The numbers in the original table in the OECD report is ranked from 1 to 30, where 1 ranks the best performing country.

Table 2.5.1. Comparative child well-being, 2009

	Material well-being	Housing and environment	Educational well-being	Health and safety	Risk behaviours	Quality of school life
Poland	28	22	8	14	20	15
Norway	1	1	16	16	4	2

(Source: OECD 2009: 24)

Child well-being measures the quality of children’s lives. OECD points out that this might sound like a simple concept, however, there is no universally accepted way of actually measuring child well-being in the academic literature. OECD focuses on a multi-dimensional approach which encompasses “multiple, policy-amendable measures” encompassing material as well as physical and social dimensions (2009: 24). The report involves a longer discussion of the understanding of child well-being (see page 23-30). The exact measures used for the presented results in table 2.5.1 are operationalized as follows:

- *Material well-being* is based on a threefold measure: the average disposable income in families with children under age 18 (median family income); relative poverty rate for children under 18; proportion of 15-year-old children deprived of the basic necessities for education relevant to school education (ibid.: 33)
- *Housing and environment* is based on a twofold measure: number of children living in overcrowded conditions; children experience noise in their house and dirt and grime in their local area. Both indicators for children between 0-17 years (ibid.: 37).
- *Education* is based on a threefold measure: PISA 2006 country score for education performance, averaged across reading, mathematics and science literacy test scores; inequality in achievement around these scores using the ratio of the score at the 90th percentile to the 10th percentile averaged across the three PISA literacy measures. The final indicator identifies the proportions of 15-19 years-olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) (ibid.: 40)³⁰.
- *Health and safety* draws on eight indicators organized in line with the child's life cycle. "The first three indicators are for infancy: infant mortality, low birth weight and breastfeeding. The following two indicators report national coverage of immunisation for pertussis and measles by the age of two. Physical activity in mid to late childhood is included in the health dimensions through reporting the proportion of children aged 11, 13 and 15 partaking in at least one hour of moderate to vigorous activity every day in the past week. The final two indicators record mortality rates for children aged 1 to 19, by all causes and by suicide" (ibid.: 43).
- *Risks behaviours* is based on a threefold measure: 15-year-olds who smoke regularly, 13- to 15-year-olds who report having been drunk on more than two occasions, and rates of birth to females aged 15 to 19. It is pointed out that alcohol and drug dependence are associated with poor educational performance. However, "it should be acknowledged that taking some risks may not necessarily be bad, and in some respects are a relatively normal part of growing up" (ibid.: 52).
- *Quality of school life* is based on a twofold measure: the first reports conflicts experienced in school, namely experiences of bullying, and the second reports overall satisfaction with school life. It should be noted that the indicators only cover a narrow age spectrum, children aged 11 to 15 (ibid.: 55).

³⁰ An interesting point regarding gender distribution in PISA achievement is that females score better than males in Poland and Norway. This is based on PISA 2006 data, see OECD 2009 page 41 for more information.

2.6. Public attitudes

Welfare attitudes

European Social Survey (ESS) round four “Welfare attitudes in Europe” is based on public attitudes towards welfare in Europa³¹. Svallfors (2012) has summarized the results in a topline results report. I will point out main relevant findings regarding Poland and Norway. Svallfors points out that one should be careful when comparing attitudes across countries. One should take into account that survey questions are always answered in the contexts which respondents are embedded. In addition, the East-West divide should be taken seriously, so should the historical legacy of communism and current economic hardship in Eastern Europe as well. Even though these are important dimensions, one might question the relevance of economic hardship regarding Poland. As OECD’s Economic Survey of Poland 2014 states: “Poland’s overall economic growth performance has been impressive over the last decade, allowing living standards to converge steadily towards the EU average”. How, and if, this might have affected public support for the welfare state in Poland compared to other Eastern European countries, is not mentioned.

Regarding public support for government intervention (on a low to high, 0-10 scale), Norway and Poland are relatively close. However, public support for government intervention is somewhat higher in Norway. Both countries score between seven and eight, which indicates that Norway and Poland, like the overall picture, support “quite far ranging government involvement in the well-being of its residents”. Interestingly, there is higher support for government intervention in other Eastern-European countries like Latvia and Ukraine than in Poland.

There are differences between Norway and Poland regarding satisfaction with welfare performance (also on a low to high, 0-10 scale). Next to Denmark, Norway – at 6.5 – has the highest satisfaction regarding “opportunities for young people to find jobs” amongst the countries included in Svallfors’ study. Poland – at 3.8 – fares comparatively weak compared to Norway and many other countries in this regard.

Norway has high satisfaction levels regarding “state of health services” (6.0), and “pensioner’s standard of living” (5.8). Poland’s satisfaction levels are somewhat lower at approximately 3.7 for the former and 3.3 for the latter.

³¹ The study is based on 2008-data.

In addition, there are differences regarding “expert judgements and public perceptions of the quality of government”. Norway has a more positive public perception of government quality than Poland, at approximately 5.8 compared to 4.5.

One also sees differences regarding “support for higher taxes and social spending”. Poland’s support scores about 4.4, while Norway scores around 5.6. Svallfors concludes his study by pointing out a strong East-West divide on a range of areas. He also argues that “attitudes towards, and evaluations of, welfare policies tend to be quite stable and slow-moving so we should not expect dramatic changes in the short-term”.

Satisfaction with provision of childcare services for working parents

The frequency table below is based on data from European Social Survey for Poland and Norway from round four, 2008. It is evident that there is more satisfaction with childcare services in Norway than in Poland. The largest share of percentage in Norway is value seven at 20.53, while the largest share of percentage in Poland is value five at 19.27. Looking at the cumulative percentage, one can for example see that the cumulative percent of values up to five in Poland amount to a larger share of the total than in Norway: 57.57 compared to 36.93. This is a difference of 20.64 percentage points. This indicates that a larger share of the respondents in Poland lean toward meaning “provision of affordable child care services for working parents” is bad, compared to Norway.

Table 2.6.1 “Provision of child care services for working parents”³²

	Norway N=1,549		Poland N= 1,619	
	Percent	Cum. Percent	Percent	Cum. Percent
Extremely bad	0.71	0.71	2.16	2.16
1	0.97	1.68	2.78	4.94
2	2.97	4.65	7.35	12.29
3	6.65	11.30	13.65	25.94
4	9.36	20.66	12.35	38.30
5	16.27	36.93	19.27	57.57
6	11.75	48.68	10.38	67.94

³² Based on the variable “cldcrsv”.

7	20.53	69.21	10.50	78.44	
8	18.08	87.28	7.78	86.23	
9	6.91	94.19	2.22	88.45	
Extremely good	2.52	96.71	1.67	90.12	
Refusal	0.19	96.90	Don't know	9.51	99.53
Don't know	3.10	100	No answer	0.37	100

An interesting dimension might be how satisfaction levels is distributed by gender. In table 2.6.2, one can see frequencies for gender difference in satisfaction levels.

2.6.2 "Provision of affordable child care services for working parents" by gender

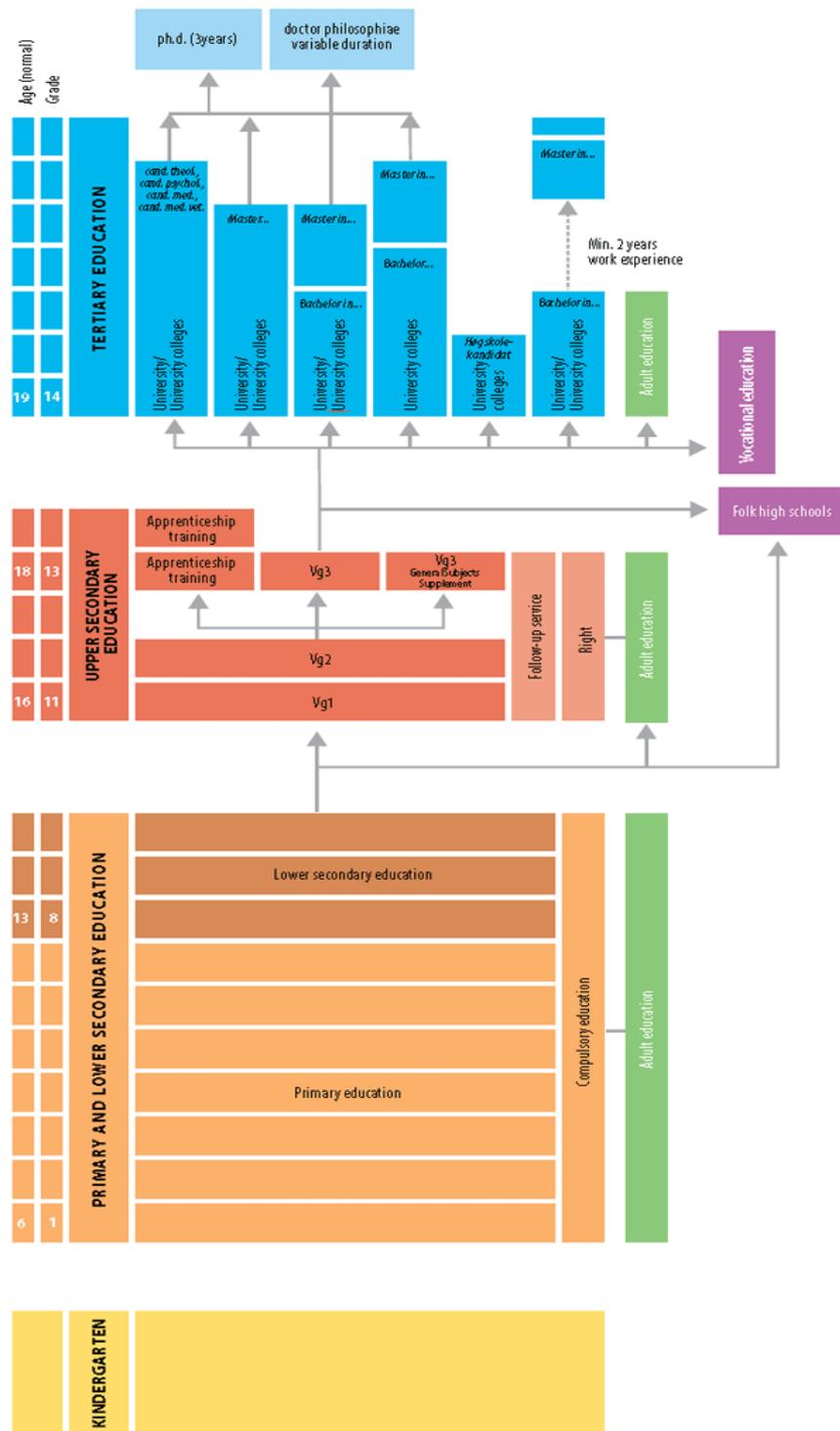
	Norway N=1,549		Poland N=1,619		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Extremely bad	6	5	17	18	
1	6	9	22	23	
2	21	25	58	61	
3	46	57	105	116	
4	70	75	91	109	
5	128	124	138	174	
6	91	91	83	85	
7	168	150	85	85	
8	162	118	59	67	
9	64	43	15	21	
Extremely good	16	23	12	15	
Refusal	1	2	Don't know	78	76
Don't know	28	20	No answer	1	5
Total	807	742		764	855

Childcare and family relations

Jappens & Van Bavel (2012), in a study based on analysis of Europeans Social Survey (ESS2) data from 2004-2010, find some interesting results regarding grandparents' self-reported childcare in Europe. There was a large difference in grandparents (55 or older) living together with at least one of their children in Northern and Western European countries, and Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European countries. In large parts of the Northern and Western European countries, co-residence with children was reported by less than 15 percent, compared to 48 percent in Southern, Central, Eastern European regions and Ireland. Jappens & Van Bavel argues that this can influence everyday housework and care provision to and by older respondents (see also Glaser et al 2013; Herlofson and Hagestad 2012).

3. Appendix

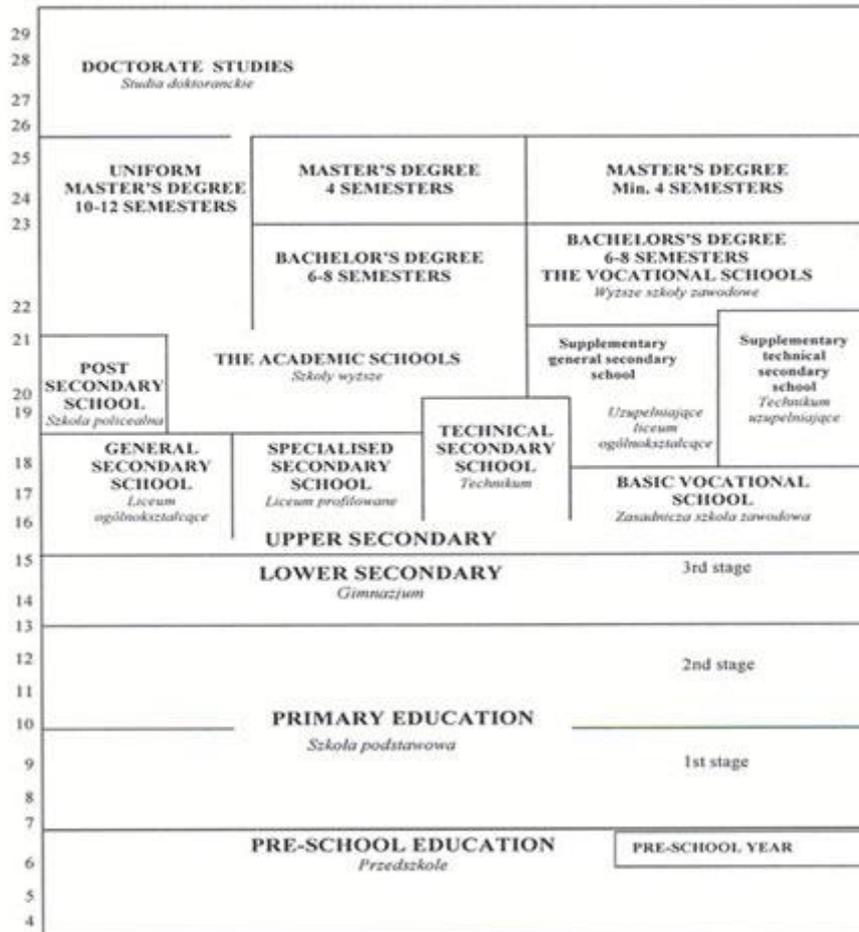
The Norwegian education system³³



³³ <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/up/Norway.png>

The Polish education system³⁴

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM
(to be fully implemented as from the school year 2004/2005)



³⁴ http://www.western-overseas.com/images/poland_education.jpg

4. Literature³⁵

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³⁵ Internet resources has been referred to in relevant places in the text.

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