Men and Reconciliation of Work and Family Life
The Danish Case

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The Legislation on Maternity and Parental leave

- In all 52 weeks
- Mothers have the right of 4 weeks before birth giving and the right and duty of 14 weeks after birth giving
- The father have right of 2 weeks after the birth
- The parents have 32 weeks to share
- During these weeks the one parent has the rights of a compensation, which equals unemployment money that for the average wage worker will be approximately half their normal income
The history of Fathers Leave in Denmark

- 2001 the Social Democratic prime minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen campaigned for the Icelandic 3+3+3 model

- The liberal Leader Anders Fogh Rasmussen won the general election 2001 promising Danish mothers a one year leave (before that 6 months)

- 2002 the Current flexible model was decided on, leaving it up to the parents to share 32 weeks between them

- 2009 Helle Thorning Schmidt became the new and first female social Democratic prime minister. She campaigned for a 3 months fathers leave, but withdraw it when she had to join a coalition with the radical left (Margrethe Vestager)
In practice

- Mothers take at least 90 pct. of the full leave
- Many women consider it their own privilege
- Many men don't know how to be on leave with a new-born
- The welfare state does not provide services for young fathers
- There is a social pressure on both women and men to follow conventions
- It is generally considered too expensive for the family, if men take on Parental leave
Collective Agreements make a Difference

- In the Public sector mothers have full salary in 32 weeks
- Fathers can take up to 9 weeks also with full salary
- In the Private Sector it depends on the single contracts or general agreement. But most working mothers will have 32 weeks with full salary
- Since 2006 the employers are obliged to be members of a maternity fund that pays them for giving full salary to both mothers and fathers in some weeks up to a fixed level
Public Daycare

- The Danish State via the municipalities guarantees Public daycare from when the Parental leave stops.

- That will normally be when the child is one year old

- The parents are allowed to take some of the 32 weeks together but that will make the full leave shorter, and then there will often be a problem with daycare

- The there is some system failure in the cooperation between the leave system and the daycare system, in practice not allowing parents to use the leave more flexible
The Total % of Fathers Share of Leave 2007-2013
LO main organisation for workers

* LO fathers in average 23 days
* Funktionærer 42 days
* Academic(AC) fathers 47 days
* Among LO members craftsmen in the building Industry take up the lowest number of days 16 days
LO fathers want to have more days off

- A survey from 2016 shows that a majority of LO members want to have more leave
- 46 pct. want 3 months or more
- Still probably many LO-workers prefer higher pay for more days off
- It is a general policy of the LO that the number of paid weeks for fathers should be higher. Preferably by law
Fathers Days of Leave in Different Professional Groups
Share of LO Fathers wanting more Fathers Leave

Figur 5. Hvor enig eller uenig er du i, at mænd skal sikres bedre rettigheder for at blive motiveret til at holde længere barselsofarlov? (Mænd, LO-målgruppen)

- Helt enig/overvejende enig: 56%
- Hverken enig eller uenig: 22%
- Overvejende uenig/helt uenig: 16%
- Ved ikke: 5%

Anm.: Undersøgelsen er baseret på 1.059 respondenter fra LO-målgruppen.
Since 2002
- A gift for the new father, a backpack with baby items
- Now merely a part of general CSR-policies
- 13 weeks with full salary to the father
- 80 pct. of the fathers use the leave
LEGO

* 12 weeks for fathers with full salary
* Flexible within the first year
* Part of general CSR-policies, in international companies considered a competitive advantage
LEGO Friends
Novo Nordisk

- The father has 3 weeks with full salary during the first 14 weeks, when the mother has full salary.
- After the 14 weeks the parents can share 32 weeks with full salary for one parent, 64 weeks for both with half salary or 40 weeks with 3/4 salary for one of them.
- The parents can prolonge the leave with working part time in the company.
Conclusion

- Fathers should at least have 3 months separately with full salary
- It is a problem that only big international companies are able to have a policy of fathers leave
- The Danish business structure mainly consists of small or middle size companies
- The issue is no longer high on the political agenda
- Today the discussions are on: Queer, sperm banks, mothers getting babies without a father, paper abortion to fathers