



# Reserved paternity leave in a political vacuum

A normative study of Danish gender equality politics based on the perspective of fathers' rights



## Master thesis

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# Appendixes

Attached on USB stick.

## **Appendix 1:**

Coding of two transcribed debates in Folketinget.

Folketinget, 2005: B66 Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om at øremærke 12 uger af barselsorloven til fædre

and

Folketinget, 2014: B48 Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om mænds/medmødres ret til barselsorlov

## **Appendix 2:**

Table of codes



# Abbreviations

DF = Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party)

EL = Enhedslisten (The Red-Green Alliance)

KF = Det Konservative Folkeparti (the Conservative People's Party)

R = Radikale Venstre (Danish Social Liberal Party)

S = Socialdemokraterne (Social Democrats)

SF = Socialistisk Folkeparti (Socialist People's Party)

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis



# Resumé (EH + IL)

## **Øremærket barsel i et politisk vakuum**

### **Et normativt studie af dansk ligestillingspolitik med udgangspunkt i fædres rettigheder**

**Formål:** I Danmark er ligestilling en kerneværdi. Danmark har i lang tid været set som et land, der i høj grad er ligestillet. Over tid har dette dog ændret sig, og Danmark falder i dag ned ad ranglisten over ligestillede lande. Samtidig med at vores nordiske naboer indfører ligestillingsfremmende lovgivning, såsom øremærket barsel til fædre, står Danmark tilbage i kulissen og hviler på laurbærrene. Dette speciale har til formål at identificere hvilke faktorer, der kan være grunden til, at der ikke bliver indført ligestillingsfremmende lovgivning, såsom øremærket barsel til mænd, i Danmark. Faktorerne, som vi vil undersøge, er historie, diskurs, normer og lovgivning. Udgangspunktet er, hvorledes ligestillingslovgivning historisk set har haft til formål at sikre kvinders rettigheder, og hvordan dette påvirker ligestillingspolitik i et nutidigt perspektiv, hvor fraværet af fokus på mænd og fædres rettigheder er udtalt.

**Teori og metode:** Vi tager udgangspunkt i historisk institutionalisme, hegemonisk maskulinitet og kritisk diskursanalyse. Ved hjælp af disse teorier og metoder beskriver, analyserer og diskuterer vi de empiriske fund. Vores analyse består af to separate dele, henholdsvis process tracing analyse og kritisk diskursanalyse. Gennem process tracing analysen, som anvendes sammen med historisk institutionalisme, undersøges historien og lovgivningen, som identificeres som en del af faktorerne. Gennem den kritiske diskursanalyse identificeres hvilke diskurser og normer der kan være styrende faktorer. Endeligt holdes de to analyser sammen for at give et samlet billede.

**Resultater:** Diskurs og normer er i et dialektisk forhold, der influerer på, hvordan dansk ligestillingslovgivning udformer sig. På samme tid ses, hvordan stiafhængighed former lovgivningen, og der ses en uvilje mod at ændre kurs og inkludere mænds og fædres rettigheder. Den styrende norm er ideologien bag liberal feminisme og de hegemoniske maskulinitetsidealer, der i modsætning til den moderne ligestillingsfeminisme i høj grad sigter mod at sikre individet lige muligheder, frem for lige rettigheder, og overlader implementeringen af ligestilling til familiernes frie valg. Samtidig er de offentlige myndigheder ubevidst med til at opretholde stereotype kønsroller, og dette er i sig selv med til at forme de normer, hvorefter danske familier vælger at fordele barselsorloven mellem mor og far.

**Emneord:** øremærket barsel, køn, kønsroller, ligestillingspolitik, dansk politik, maskulinitetsstudier, ligestillingsstrategi



## 1.0 Introduction (EH + IL)

*“Any serious shift towards more sustainable societies requires gender equality”* (United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, 2012: 14).

In June 2015, we celebrated the 100th anniversary for women’s right to vote in Denmark. The newspapers were full of articles and stories about the feminist movement, the history of the struggle of women’s rights, and how this struggle is still ongoing. It seemed that feminism had rediscovered its power, and gender equality again would be put on the public debate agenda. With all these strong female voices, we started to wonder where the male voice was to be found in all this: Where was the men’s movement, the male research, the men’s organizations and the focus on men’s rights? Puzzled about why the male perspective is represented to only a very small degree in the gender equality debate and how sometimes the issue of men’s rights is discussed from a feminist perspective, we decided to conduct research within the area of men’s rights and masculinity.

Gender equality is a core value within Danish society, and while Denmark has a long history of being progressive in terms of gender equality, it has started to fall behind in this area. Over a period of 10 years Denmark has dropped from 8th to 19th place on the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2016: 158) which measures gender equality on variables such as wage equality, female labor force participation and female representation within politics (World Economic Forum, 2016: 4). A vast amount of academic research confirms that a more equal division of the parental leave between mother and father will have a positive effect on these variables so it is perplexing why politicians are not taking action in light of the information presented by the Global Gender Gap Index. As our introductory quote suggests, if a country wants to become more sustainable, attention must be paid to gender equality. During the times that attention is actually paid to gender issues, it is usually a topic discussed from a woman’s perspective, not focusing on men’s rights or equality; although Danish fathers currently only take a very small percentage of the total parental leave available. A more equal division of parental leave could be ensured by introducing reserved paternity leave, as the other Nordic countries have done. Incidentally all four also rank the top four positions on the Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2016: 10).

The overall topic of this thesis is the lack of reserved paternity leave in Denmark. Despite a vast amount of academic research confirming that increased paternity leave has a positive effect on gender equality and economy, Danish politicians refuse to initiate the increase by introducing laws on reserved paternity leave. The consequences of this refusal are multiple

and stretch from Danish society into the private sphere of the household environment. Often the area of gender equality is polarized and depicted as either being solely about women's rights or reactionary men's rights. The starting point of this research will involve examining gender equality from a male perspective. However, it is important to stress that focusing on one side of the debate does not rule out the other, as men's and women's rights are interconnected rather than oppositional. When it comes to reserved paternity leave, one aspect is the rights of the father. This change, however, will result in better opportunities for the mother as well, for example, in relation to the labor market, which will ultimately lead to a higher degree of gender equality. As men's and women's rights are not opposed but intertwined, benefit to one group benefits the other group as well.

## 1.1 Research question (EH + IL)

There is a lack of political will to enforce reserved paternity leave even though Denmark is dropping down the equality index, and research demonstrates that reserved paternity leave will have a positive effect on enhancing gender equality. Why is this so? How are gender equality strategies viewed in Denmark, and are these perceptions the reason why reserved paternity leave has not been enforced? Or is it a structural problem? Do the existing norms play a role in this?

### 1.1.1 Problem statement (EH + IL)

1. The problem is that Danish fathers take very little parental leave and this has negative consequences for general gender equality within Danish society.
2. The academic response to this has been widespread research showing the positive implications, within all aspects of society and the private sphere, if Danish fathers took more paternity leave. The political response to this has been hesitation, restraint, and hereafter neglect. This could be a sign of fear, a result of devaluing the importance of the father's role, dismissiveness towards gender equality in general, a matter of norms, or it could be because all Danish political parties carry a liberal ideology of noninterference in the private sphere.
3. The (political) outcome is that Denmark is ranking lower in international comparisons on gender equality. Fathers' rights are violated and women's opportunities are limited as a result. This thesis contributes to explore the discrepancy between the outcomes found in academic research and the political hesitation towards following these recommendations. This leads us to the following research question:



***Which factors can be identified as relevant in explaining the lack of gender equality enhancing legislation, such as reserved paternity leave, in Denmark?***

Gender equality is a central value within Danish society and the welfare state model, both in terms of political ideology and Danish self-perception. Denmark has a history of being socially progressive, and internationally recognized, in terms of gender equality. This international recognition directly influences the cultural self-perception of Danes, who view themselves favorably within the field of gender equality. In a Danish context, it is considered both equality of opportunity and equality of outcome (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 277 & Bloksgaard, 2009: 14). As Danish equality policy, has conducted a unilateral focus on women's rights, with female participation in the workforce and financial independence as the goal, no focus has been given to the concept of men's rights. In contemporary Danish society, this goal has more or less been met, with 76.6 % of all women, compared to 82.4 % of all men, being part of the workforce in 2016 (Danmarks Statistik, 2016). There is a danger that when the mission is fully accomplished, there will no longer be a need to discuss gender equality at all in Denmark. And certainly not to talk about gender equality in terms of men's rights, or if the rights of fathers are being suppressed in a Danish context through the tradition of solely focusing on women's rights in the public gender debate.

The Danish case is interesting because of the discrepancy between the self-perception of gender equality as a core societal value and the mission accomplished attitude; while in reality, Denmark is lagging further behind many other countries on the international stage when it comes to gender equality. Whether this is due to Danish resentment towards law-enforced equality and coercion or nonexistent public debates on certain gender issues, such as the absence of focus on fathers' rights and equality remains to be seen. It is commonly known that laws serve as a fast track towards gender equality, yet no Danish government has so far dared to adopt laws reserving more parental leave for fathers.

Figure 1.1: Concepts used throughout the thesis

Concepts used throughout the thesis
<p><b>Parental leave</b> in a Danish context is divided into two separate legal terms; <i>barselsorlov</i> which is the leave following the birth (2 weeks for fathers, and 2 + 12 weeks for mothers) vs. <i>forældreorlov</i> (32 weeks, which can be shared by both parents). Forældreorlov follows barselsorlov.</p>
<p><b>Reserved paternity leave</b> covers the concept of earmarked leave for fathers, also called father's quota. It is "<i>an individual, non-transferable entitlement to a number of weeks of parental leave based on the 'use-it-or-lose-it' principle</i>" (Rostgaard &amp; Lausten, 2016: 277). The aim is to encourage fathers to take up more of the common parental leave.</p>
<p><b>Gender equality</b> in a Danish context has been viewed as a power struggle due to the patriarchal structures in society which suppress women. When speaking of gender equality, it is important to distinguish between the equality of opportunity and the equality of outcome for men and women. In this thesis, the focus is on equality of outcome for men and women.</p>

## 1.2 Facts about paternity leave (EH + IL)

At the moment, two weeks parental leave are reserved for the father, 14 weeks for the mother and an additional 32 weeks can be shared. Fathers with longer education and/or higher paid jobs in general tend to take more leave, but the mother's education and income level also has a positive correlation with longer paternity leave (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 296).

In Denmark, fathers only take 7.5% of the total parental leave (FIU, 2014: 4) but studies show that Danish fathers have a desire to prolong their leave. It is well-documented that longer paternity leave has a positive impact on the following: the bond between father and child, the family relationship in general, improvement in the father's health (Olesen, 2017), equal share of unpaid household work between father and mother, better opportunities for the mother to pursue her career, equal pay (Justesen, 2011), equal retirement savings (Jepsen, 2011), fewer divorces (Oláh, 2001), and better outcomes for the father in case of divorce (Tholl & Gaardmand, 2012), etc. In addition, a Danish report from 2011 shows a positive correlation between a father's uptake of paternity leave with early paternal involvement in a child's life, the father's participation in general care and household work, as well as a diminished risk of dissolved families (SFI, 2012: 146-147). Despite these well-documented facts, the issue of reserved paternity leave is still under the political radar of Danish policy makers and through this research, we wish to explore why these facts do not inform political debate.

### 1.3 Gender politics in Denmark (EH + IL)

The public gender equality debate in Denmark does not form a topic of general importance, and the path followed by the government focuses solely on women's financial independence rather than other aspects of female emancipation, masculine equality, or fathers' rights. The liberal view on family politics is that politicians should not interfere which may explain why the topic is not attracting a lot of attention in public debate. Since 2005, a proposition for reserved paternity leave have been presented 6 times in the Danish parliament. Each time a great majority has rejected it. When it comes to parenthood, obviously, there are some structures that hinder equality. Why is this and what are the structures? Are they influenced by the stereotypical view of men and their role in society? Or is the liberal discourse overruling everything?

The motivation behind the Danish parental leave scheme is to reconstruct gender definitions and gender relations (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 277). In Denmark policies of gender equality are considered of symbolic value and are not institutionally rooted. Laws ensuring equal rights (i.e. reserved paternity leave) become politically problematic when the public perceives this type of policy as being coercion (Rostgaard, 2016: 297). To conduct gender politics in Denmark therefore requires risk willing politicians.

While the focus has solely been on female participation in the labor market and economic emancipation, some people might say that the mission is accomplished, and gender equality has been reached. In other words, there has been a political strategy that has been followed, and now that the goal has been reached, no further actions or measures need to be taken. If this is true, then the institutionalization of gender equality in a Danish context is an obstacle with regards to legislating reserved paternity leave. Our first hypothesis therefore is that the institutionalization of the Danish gender equality policy scheme can be identified as a factor, or barrier, that hinders introducing reserved paternity leave.

### 1.4 The social construction of gender (EH + IL)

When taking a closer look at fatherhood in a Danish context, it becomes apparent that there may be some problematic structures. From a normative point of view, existing structures within society create very strong norms. The normative, or social, construction of the male gender in Danish society might also be a factor for consideration when examining why reserved paternity leave has not been introduced in Denmark. From the moment, a child is conceived, the male role in parenthood is devalued and the father is often excluded from an early point. For example, when the expectant mother goes to healthcare appointments, a

chair for the father is not provided, nor is he included in the conversation with the healthcare professional. When the mother has to go into the delivery room to give birth, often no precautions have been made to make the father feel included in the situation. When it comes to parental leave, once again, no considerations are made toward the father. During childhood, information from the public system regarding the child(ren), are predominantly sent to the mother, and it is also the mother who receives the child benefit from the state into her bank account. In the end, one might wonder if this is a problem at all as it does not seem to be vocalized in the public sphere. At least not by the fathers, but maybe their own concept of fatherhood has been formed by suppressive structures without their knowledge. All of these above-mentioned scenarios might place the father in a stereotypical gender role, in which the male is the primary provider and the secondary caregiver. Our second hypothesis therefore is that a hegemonic masculinity ideal is the ruling norm, and therefore may be a factor contributing towards the lack of reserved paternity leave. By the hegemonic masculinity ideal, we mean the ideal that is defined by R.W. Connell. The hegemonic masculinity denotes a cultural form of dominance (Bloksgaard et. al. 2015: 153-154), and it lays out a normative form of masculinity which requires men to position themselves in relation to the hegemon (Ekenstam, 2004: 3-4).

## 1.5 Case study (EH + IL)

The case study concerns Danish gender equality politics in both a historical and contemporary setting and the lack of will to enforce instruments that secure a higher degree of gender equality. More specifically, focusing on reserved paternity leave in Denmark. The timeline of gender equality politics goes a long way back but the area of concentration for this thesis is the time period from the 1960's and until the present day.

The contemporary family pattern has evolved over time as a family can consist of differing numbers of people, of the same or of different genders. However, research on the advantages of reserved paternity leave primarily focus on the conventional family structure of two heterosexual people, a mother and a father. Due to these data limitations, the case study will focus on families where the father lives together with a female partner or wife rather than on dissolved families or less conventional family structures.

In terms of variables which can have an effect on Danish gender equality politics, three have been left out; the media, EU and the labor market. The media is often referred to as the fourth power, and is therefore a very important factor when it comes to politics and decision making. However, in this particular case study, the intent is to focus solely on the political

scene and the relevant actors within it. While the media plays an important role in terms of discourse and norms, that is a study within itself and therefore the focus is on existing norms rather than how they are formed by the media.

Labor market partners have also been excluded from the study. In Denmark, many labor agreements, including aspects of parental leave, are negotiated by the unions. This leaves parents with different possibilities regarding parental leave depending on the agreement under which they are employed. The overarching provisions on parental leave, are however a political issue decided upon by the Danish government. The basis parental leave scheme is what all parents have in common and it is this scheme, implemented by the law, which will be the focus of the study.

EU (and previously EF) influence has over time played an important role in Danish legislation concerning gender equality. A number of verdicts from the EU court has forced Denmark to change the national legislation. In the spring of 2017 a new suggestion from the EU concerning a father's right to four months paternity leave in all member countries is also being debated. While interesting, the EU influence has been excluded as the intent of this study is to focus solely on a Danish political and historical context.

## 1.6 Structure of the thesis (EH + IL)

The research question will be used as a guide throughout the thesis to explore which factors can be identified as relevant in explaining why reserved paternity leave has not been enforced in Denmark. The research will begin from the premise that legislation creates norms, but also that norms inform legislation. Therefore, these two areas will be explored separately and combined in the end.

This introduction will be followed by a literature review and an explanation of how the research conducted in this thesis fits in the existing research. Then we will move on to a historical introduction to the institution of Danish gender equality policy, and how changes through time have influenced its current state. Chapter three introduces the theoretical framework, methodology and research design. This is followed by the analysis which will contain distinct explorations of norms and legislation which will then be combined to create an overview. The first portion of the analysis deals with institutionalization in which process tracing, and the application of historical institutionalism will be used to identify why the parental leave scheme is in its current state. The second part of the analysis will focus on the

normative and discorsal aspects. This will be conducted with inspiration from Fairclough's CDA and Foucault's concepts of power, knowledge and silence.

At the conclusion of these two distinct analytical processes, the findings will be merged in order to provide a more comprehensive explanation for the lack of gender equality enhancing legislation. Finally, the thesis will present comments, conclusions and a critique of the research design and methodology.

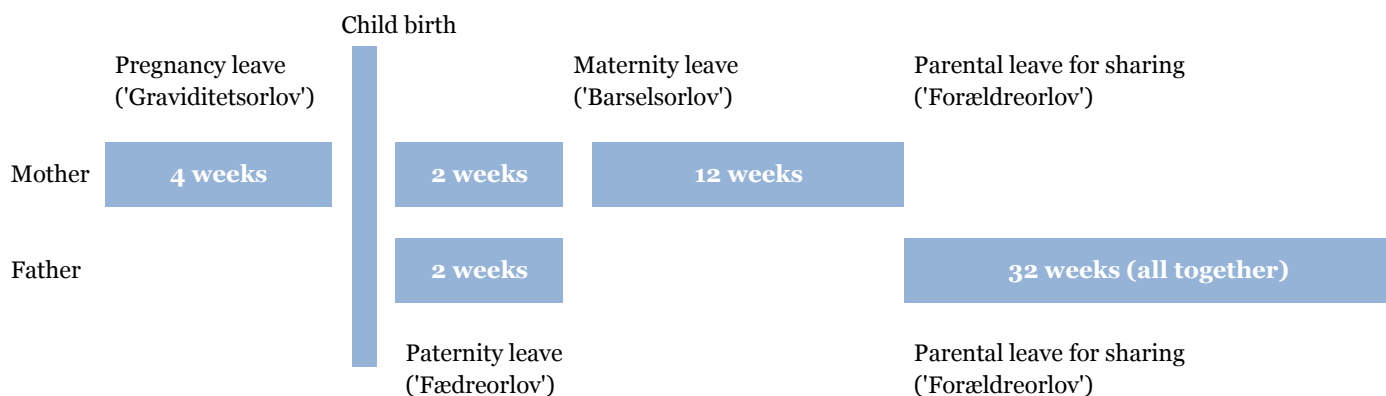
## 2.0 Historical introduction (EH)

This chapter presents an outline of the history of parental leave, which is included to provide a basic starting point, as well as an understanding of the scheme in Denmark. The history of parental leave is also essential in understanding the institutionalization of the concept. The historical outline of the parental leave scheme will be accompanied by instances in which attempts have been made to introduce reserved paternity leave. This will be followed by arguments in support of reserved paternity leave. The section will conclude with an examination of why gender equality is a core value in Denmark.

### 2.1 The history of parental leave in Denmark (EH)

Danish parents currently have the right to take parental leave. The mother can take 4 weeks before giving birth, 14 weeks after giving birth, while the father can take 2 weeks after the birth. This is followed by 32 weeks that they can split between the parents (Danmarks Statistik, 2015: 39). But the road to obtaining these favorable conditions has been long. This chapter will give an overview of how Denmark has arrived at its current position. Below is a figure showing the legal parental leave scheme as of today, for employed parents<sup>1</sup>.

Figure 2.1: Current parental leave scheme



Source: [www.borger.dk](http://www.borger.dk)

The parental leave scheme has seen a lot of changes throughout time. Through state-controlled regulation, there have been changes in the obligations and rights, as well as identifying which groups are entitled to parental leave (Borchorst, 2003: 44). The first time the state started to regulate parental leave, was in 1901 with The Factory Law (*Fabriksloven*) when it became mandatory for women to rest for 4 weeks after giving birth. But this law only

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.borger.dk/-/media/borgerdk/Dokumenter/Udbetalingdanmark/Barsel/Barselsdagpenge-folder-pdf.ashx?la=da>

applied to women employed in industrial or construction companies with five or more employees. And women could even be exempted from the rule if they could present a doctor's note that said the work was not of danger for the mother or the child (Borchorst, 2003: 44). Among others, the Danish Women's Society (*Dansk Kvindesamfund*) put pressure on the government, so that money from 1915 social benefit funding for the needy, was used to pay maternity benefits for mothers 10 days after giving birth. (Borchorst, 2003: 44).

During the 1930's, Denmark was the subject of social reforms. Prior to the reforms, a great deal of groundwork, including maternity benefits was laid out as part of the reforms. In 1929 the Ministry of Social Affairs set up a committee to consider the benefits regarding birth and maternity leave (Borchorst, 2003: 44). Studies showed that in general, women in Copenhagen went to work during the 4 weeks of rest, while more women in the provinces availed of their 4 weeks of rest after giving birth (Borchorst, 2003: 45). After their findings, the committee proposed that the mandatory period of rest should be reduced from 4 to 3 weeks but more effort should be put into enforcing compliance. In addition, the funding should be increased and come from public health insurance, rather than from the benefits for the needy (Borchorst, 2003: 45).

The suggestions from the committee were partly accommodated. Together with the social reforms came the Law of National Insurance (*Lov om Folkeforsikring*) of 1933 in which the amount of maternity benefits was raised, and access to it was widened (Borchorst, 2003: 45). The women that were now covered by public health insurance, also received the right to economic compensation for 14 days, as opposed to the 10 days prior (Borchorst, 2003: 45). A decreasing birth rate caused big concern in the middle of the 1930's. A population commission was created, whose purpose was to reverse the population curve. This gave room to creating a new political sector, the field of population and family policies (Borchorst, 2003: 45). As Sweden was more advanced on these issues, the commission sought inspiration there with the overall aim of securing better living conditions for the general population. Through this contact, it was suggested that Denmark take on a more qualitative approach concerning population policy. (Borchorst, 2003: 45). The Population Commission then accommodated a committee to explore birth and maternity leave issues. It was proposed that married women be prohibited from work. The rationale being the high unemployment rate, and the thought that women would perhaps give birth to more children if they were not allowed to work. But instead of supporting the proposal of prohibition, the committee suggested public services for motherhood should be improved, and that there should be a motherhood benefit (Borchorst, 2003: 45-46).



Until 1953, the applicable law was still The Factory Law, where 4 weeks rest after giving birth was mandatory for women working in the industrial and construction industry. In 1953 these terms expanded to include women working in the inventory and warehouse industry (Borchorst, 2003: 46). Despite this expansion, the majority of women were still not able to benefit from the maternity benefits.

From then on, things moved fast. In 1960 the Law of Public Health Insurance (*Lov om den offentlige sygeforsikring*) was adopted (Borchorst, 2003: 46). This was essential to the grounding of the parental leave scheme of today, as now all women were covered by maternity leave provisions (Borchorst, 2003: 46). In 1967 the provisions were included in the Law of Family Allowance and Other Family Benefits (*Lov om børnetilskud og andre familieydelse*) which maintained that women who had been employed 6 months within the past year had the right to unemployment benefits (Borchorst, 2003: 46). Later on, in 1972 the Law of Unemployment Benefits In Case of Sickness or Birth (*Lov om dagpenge ved sygdom eller fødsel*) was adopted, which was a product of the work of the 1960 commission. The funding for unemployment benefits also changed, so now it was the responsibility of the employer to arrange funding for the first 5 weeks of maternity leave (Borchorst, 2003: 46). In 1977 the law was changed again, so that the state had to take responsibility for the funding of the fourth and fifth week of maternity leave. This was also the year where the provision of 4 weeks rest after giving birth lapsed (Borchorst, 2003: 46).

Until this time, the provisions and laws of maternity leave had been regulated through policies and law that also dealt with other issues. But this changed in 1980, when the area of maternity leave got its own law and The Law of Maternity Leave (*Lov om barselsorlov*) was adopted (Borchorst, 2003: 46). Women's rights were then significantly expanded as The Law of Maternity Leave stated that women now had the unconditional right to maternity leave 4 weeks before giving birth, and 14 weeks after. In addition, women's job security during pregnancy and during the maternity leave was better protected (Borchorst, 2003: 46).

In 1984 maternity leave expanded to 24 weeks and paternity leave was included as part of the maternity scheme, thus granting paternity leave rights, as fathers now had the right to take two weeks of paternity leave together with the mother immediately after the birth. In addition, weeks 15-24 could be split between the mother and the father (Borchorst, 2003: 47). Six years later, in 1990, another amendment was made and fathers were now free to take their two weeks of paternity leave at any time within the first 14 weeks after the birth of the child (Borchorst, 2003: 47). In 1991, father's paternity leave rights were made independent

from the employment status of the mother, which meant that the father had the right to paternity leave even though the mother was a student or unemployed (Borchorst, 2003: 47). In 1997 the father's access to paternity leave improved further. Here, two weeks at the end of the leave became reserved for the father. This happened alongside an expansion of the total leave from 24 to 26 weeks (Borchorst, 2003: 47).

The latest change to parental leave was in 2002 when it was expanded to 52 weeks, including four weeks of pregnancy leave. The mother has the right to four weeks of pregnancy leave, and she has an obligation to take two weeks leave after giving birth. A further 12 weeks are reserved for the mother, while two weeks are reserved for the father within the first 14 weeks after the birth. Following this, there are 32 weeks that can be split between the parents as they wish (Borchorst, 2003: 47).

Figure 2.2: Historical overview of the rights to parental leave

	Fathers	Mothers	Shared	Source
1901		4 weeks of leave with the possibility of economic compensation		Borchorst, 2015: 152
1915		Improved economic compensation		Borchorst, 2015: 152
1933		The amount of compensation is raised and the access to compensation is widened		Borchorst, 2003: 45
1960		14 weeks leave with economic compensation at the level of social benefit is secured for all female workers		Borchorst, 2015: 154
1967		Leave with full economic coverage for the majority of female workers		Borchorst, 2015: 154
1980		14 weeks		Borchorst, 2003: 46
1984	2 weeks right after the birth	14 weeks	10 weeks	Borchorst, 2015: 159
1990	2 weeks any time during first 14 weeks after birth			Borchorst, 2003: 47
1991	Right for leave becomes independent of the employment status of the mother			Borchorst, 2003: 47
1994			13-26 weeks leave for child rearing at 80 % of the social benefit	Borchorst, 2015: 159

1997	Extra 2 weeks reserved in week 25 and 26 after birth			Borchorst, 2003: 47
2002	The 2 weeks in week 25 and 26 are abolished	14 weeks reserved for the mother	32 weeks at full level of social benefit	Borchorst & Dahlerup, 2015: 240
2001-2011	S, R, EL & SF support reserved paternity leave from a gender equality point of perspective			Borchorst, 2015: 160
2011	SRSF-government states in their governmental basis that they wish to secure 12 weeks reserved paternity leave			Borchorst, 2015: 160
2013	SRSF-government rejects their own proposal			Borchorst, 2015: 160
Today	2 weeks reserved right after birth	14 weeks reserved	32 weeks	www.borger.dk

(S = Social Democrats, R = Danish Social Liberal Party, EL = Red Green Alliance, SF = Socialist People's Party.

Danish names can be found in the list of acronyms on page 5.)

## 2.2 Attempts of introducing reserved parental leave (EH)

The debate concerning reserved parental has been occurring sporadically in both the media and in parliament for several years. Since 2005, a motion has been proposed six times in the Danish parliament to introduce reserved paternity leave, and all of the motions have been rejected, with a great majority voting against it. Aside from the proposed motions in parliament, one major event relates to the topic. In 2011 reserved paternity leave was a part of the governmental programme. The government of Helle Thorning-Schmidt I, presented the governmental programme on the 3rd of October 2011. The government consisted of the Socialdemokraterne (Social Democrats), Radikale Venstre (Danish Social Liberal Party) and Socialistisk Folkeparti (Socialist People's Party). The presentation on October 3rd came after 16 long days of negotiations between the governmental parties, which resulted in a very much debated governmental programme. A lot of interesting policies were mentioned in the programme, but especially one point is of interest for this paper. It is the point around which this entire paper revolves. After much public debate, somehow it has found its way into the governmental programme that *'the government will reserve up till three months of the paid parental leave to father'* (Regeringsgrundlag, 2011: 65). So, in 2011 the government stated that it wanted to work proactively for the introduction of reserved parental leave in Denmark. Later on, in 2013, the proposition of reserved paternity leave was withdrawn. This

has been the only time that reserved paternity leave have been anywhere near at being introduced in Denmark. Below is an overview of the proposals that have been made in Folketinget.

Figure 2.3: Overview of proposals in parliament on extended reserved paternity leave

	Proposal no.	Proposed by	Proposal for reserved paternity leave	Result of voting
December 15 <sup>th</sup> 2005	B53	SF	3 months	Was not voted for
January 24 <sup>th</sup> 2006	B66	EL, SF, S, R	12 weeks	50 in favour, 60 against
December 14 <sup>th</sup> 2007	B27	EL, SF, S, R	12 weeks	51 in favour, 62 against
November 30 <sup>th</sup> 2012	B35	EL	12 weeks	8 in favour, 104 against
April 8 <sup>th</sup> 2014	B103	SF	12 weeks	Was not voted for
December 19 <sup>th</sup> 2014	B48	SF	12 weeks	18 in favour, 90 against

Source: www.ft.dk

## 2.3 Lack of paternity leave and the overall consequences for gender equality (EH)

A recent study from the Rockwool Foundation, *Rockwool Fonden* (Andersen, 2017) presents the argument that a week more paternity leave for the father will reduce the pay gap between the mother and the father by up to 14,000 DKK. For families, in which the father takes a greater part of the parental leave, the wage gap between the mother and the father will be reduced in two to four years after the birth of the child. And while paternity leave will result in a minor decrease of the father's income, the household income as a whole will actually increase if the father takes more paternity leave (The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, 2017).

In September 2014, the Institute for Human Rights in Denmark published a report, analyzing fathers and paternity leave (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2014) which concluded that reserved paternity leave will contribute to more gender equality within both the family and the labor market (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2014: 13). The report surmises that reserved paternity leave will send out a signal which normalizes fathers taking a greater part of parental leave. In turn, when the father is the primary caregiver for a longer period of time, the child will benefit from having two equally invested caregivers. According to the report, reserved paternity leave will also benefit women in terms of opportunity. Presently, more women are employed in the public sector, while men are employed in the private sector and in management positions to a higher degree. But for the next generation, more women pursue higher education. Reserved paternity leave can then ensure that the women's higher education will be used, and in that way, it will create a higher value for society (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2014: 13). When women achieve a higher level of

education, but spends several years on maternity leave, their educational level will not contribute with value for society.

## 2.4 Gender equality as a core value in Danish society (EH)

It is a commonly accepted fact that gender equality is a core value in Danish society that is promoted within many Danish institutes. In December 2016, The Ministry of Culture published a canon for Denmark (*Danmarkskanon*) specifying ten different values, traditions and movements that are specifically important in Denmark (Kulturministeriet, 2016):

In addition to the welfare society, freedom, and liberality, with one of the point, gender equality is highlighted as one of the ten values. The canon states *‘Danish society is built on equality between the genders. This means that men and women should have the same rights and opportunities. To support gender equality means that no person should have special privileges, or be discriminated against or see his/her freedom as limited because of gender’* (Kulturministeriet, 2016: 4).

In Denmark, *Venstre* and *Socialdemokratiet* are two political parties that have traditionally include gender equality in their political programmes. The *Venstre* programme states that they should *‘continuously work for more equality between men and women...’* (Venstre, 2016: 16-17), while the *Socialdemokratiet* programme states that they *‘will not tolerate discrimination on the background of gender...’* (Socialdemokraterne, 2004: 9). As both parties, have been shifting between being a majority government, they have had a great amount of influence on how Danish society has evolved and the pillars upon which society is built.

### 3.0 Theoretical framework (EH)

The theoretical framework of this thesis is constructed upon concepts found within masculinity theory and from liberal and modern equality feminist principles. Traditionally masculinity theory and feminist theory have been positioned as oppositional due to their differing political ideologies. These particular feminist theories were chosen as the Danish equality strategy seems to have originated from liberal feminism and modern equality feminism acts as a counterpart to put the findings in perspective. Adding masculinity theory to the theoretical framework, provides a tool for analyzing how norms affect the decision-making process in terms gender stereotypes with regards to the male's perceived role in the family. The methodological framework of the thesis consists of two different methods, process tracing and CDA in order to accommodate separate analyses of both institutions and discourse/norms, as factors identified as relevant in explaining the lack of interest in reserved paternity leave in Denmark are the institutionalization of legislation, combined with the gender equality strategy that has been followed.

But before moving on to the theoretical framework, we will present a literature review and clarify how this thesis contributes to the existing research within the area.

#### 3.1 Literature review (IL)

This study differentiates itself from existing literature and studies in the political area of gender equality, because it focuses on gender equality from a male perspective. In this field, it has already been studied how institutions and discourses influence the political area of gender equality, gender roles and the use of parental leave, but so far we have not come across any studies involving the masculine perspective. Within political science research conducted in Denmark, gender has not been a research area that have been explored in much depth. Especially when it comes to the male perspective and masculinity studies. Combining political science and masculinity studies, which are more common found in for example sociology, makes up a completely new area to be discovered. And this is what we will contribute with, through this thesis.

Most studies performed in this area are centered around gender equality from a feminist perspective and focus on women's rights. Traditionally, there has been a tendency towards seeing the male and female perspective as oppositional instead of complementing and supporting each other. However, this study will combine an analysis of Danish gender equality politics with the issue of fathers' rights, also including traditional feminist theory. The inclusion of the feminist theory has been a necessity because of missing masculinity theory within the field of political science. Having a strong and solid theoretical framework

have been a necessity for conducting the analysis of the institutionalization, discourse and norms in our area of research.

Men's rights will in this thesis not be presented as being in competition to women's rights, but the two will be considered as a dialectic relationship, one enhancing the other. This is a very important contribution to the field of gender research, because the majority of the literature treats feminist and masculinity theory as competing concepts.

We will now present the existing literature, which is relevant to our research. The field covers both theoretical work on masculinity, political science studies on gender equality and paternity leave and reports published by NGOs and public authorities. After presenting this, we will elaborate on how our research contributes to the field.

### 3.1.1 Masculinity (IL)

Masculinity studies constitute the core theoretical framework for the thesis. A central theory within masculinity studies is the theory of hegemonic masculinity which was formulated by R.W. Connell (2005), establishing the underlying patriarchal ideal which both men and women adhere to. A study based on this theory was conducted in Denmark (2015) by Lotte Bloksgaard et. al. attempting to establish whether hegemonic masculinity can be identified among Danish men. The study concluded that while hegemonic masculinity was sometimes still present, masculinity was gradually changing. Perhaps most importantly, the study identified a discrepancy between discourse and practice. Another important source in a Danish context is the work done by Danish masculinity researcher Kenneth Reinicke (Reinicke, 2015a and Reinicke, 2015b) which focuses on how the perspective of masculinity and men's rights is absent in Danish gender equality.

While there is not a lot of existing literature on the topic of discrimination of fathers, some reports and articles were located on the topic. The Danish Fathers Association published a report in 2015 and the Human Rights Institute published two reports in 2014 and 2015 on father's leave and parental leave, including an analysis of how municipalities inform parents of their leave options. Discrimination of fathers during pregnancy and immediately after birth is presented in a newspaper article by PhD Else Guldager and John Andersen (2015) and in an interview with Guldager performed by Nathalie Ostrynski (2015).

### 3.1.2 Gender equality and paternity leave (IL)

Different scholars have performed research as contribution to the field of gender equality politics. The primary research within the political field of gender equality is the work of Anette Borchorst et. al. (2014 + 2015), which has contributed to establishing some of the

distinct features identified in Danish gender equality politics and reserved paternity leave. This work rests on the theory developed by Nancy Fraser (1997) identifying three different strategies for politicians to implement gender equality, where Denmark has followed the dual-breadwinner strategy also known as the universal model. The anthology 'Fatherhood in the Nordic Welfare States' by Tine Rostgaard et. al. (2016) also plays an important role with its contribution to the understanding of the unique cases of gender equality in the Nordic countries by providing different perspectives on the rights of fathers in the Nordic countries in a comparative perspective.

Three different studies have been conducted on the positive family effects and the economic consequences of fathers taking longer paternity leave: the Danish SFI report from 2012, the comparative work performed by Livia Oláh (2001) in Sweden and Hungary and the study conducted by Signe Hald Andersen (2017) on paternity leave and the gender wage gap. It has not been possible to identify any Danish research on the economic consequences of the high divorce rate in Danish society. This is in itself an interesting finding, since the divorce rate in Denmark is close to 50 % and this must have huge economic consequences due to the welfare state providing financial benefits to single parents.

### 3.1.3 Our contribution (IL)

The contribution of this thesis lies within the combination of masculinity research and the interests of fathers, which has been implemented into an analysis of Danish gender equality politics with a focus on reserved paternity leave. The method used is a combination of process tracing within Danish gender equality politics and CDA of parliamentary debates on reserved paternity leave. These have been combined in an attempt to identify the norms, institutions and discourses in both parliament and amongst individuals and to explain their origin. This research provides a unique contribution to the issue of how men's rights are handled within gender equality politics and how norms and discourses influence this area. Also, on a different level, we contribute with a new perspective on the relationship between feminist and masculinity studies. It is important to shed a light on how the two areas enhance and enforce each other, and how they should not be seen as two competing areas.

## 3.2 Theories of feminism in connection with Danish gender equality politics (EH)

In order to understand gender equality politics within the Danish political scene, a basic knowledge of feminist theory is essential, as the core concepts characterized by classical liberal feminism and modern equality feminism can be utilized in explaining why gender



equality enhancing legislation has not been introduced in Denmark. We will discover in the analysis that these two core concepts, and the argumentation that goes together with them, are thoroughly connected with the argumentation that is presented in the debates of whether reserved paternity leave should be introduced. Feminism in Denmark has a long history, as liberal democracy has been the hegemonic construction for more than 100 years. Under the original tenements of liberal democracy, the legal right of citizenship only belonged to white men of means, while women, servants, people of color and poor people were not considered citizens. This situation laid the groundwork for women to fight for the recognition of themselves as individuals, persons, and citizens (Dahlerup, 2002: 341). And it is in this first conflict that the liberal feminism has its roots.

### 3.2.1 Liberal feminism (EH)

Liberal feminism is a political philosophy with the vocalized aim of freeing women from oppressive gender roles and achieve sexual equality (gender justice) (Oxley, 2011: 258). This definition, however, can be applied to all forms of feminism. What distinguishes classical liberal feminism from other types of feminism, is that the core focus is equal rights. Classical liberal feminists have a political agenda of gaining equal legal rights, such as the right to vote, equal access to education, etc. (Oxley, 2011: 258). Generally speaking, classical liberal feminists works towards the premise that all women should have the same basic rights as men. In 1869, John Stuart Mill, one of the founding fathers of liberalism, wrote ‘The Subjection of Women’. The book postulated that gender is not important, it should be the effort and work that you put into the society that should determine your status and faith (Dahlerup, 2000). Just as in the classical liberal thinking, it is individual freedom that is ascribed the highest value. The state should only intervene in limited cases, such as securing everyone the fundamental legal right to vote. The liberal feminist advocated that men and women should have the same fundamental rights and that gender equality should be reached by women’s suffrage. When this aim was reached, gender equality would be obtained and the mission would be complete. These beliefs mirror the gender equality strategy that has been followed in Denmark.

### 3.2.2 Modern equality feminism (EH)

After almost 30 years of struggle, women gained the right to vote in 1915. Ironically, when women were finally granted the right to vote, this resulted in a division within the movement, with some women considering this the end of their struggle while others decided this was the foothold for achieving more progress. Should women sit back and enjoy their new-gained rights, and consider themselves accepted as citizens and equal to men? Or was

there further fights to be fought? The feminist movement found itself at a parting point (Dahlerup, 2002: 341-342). On one side, there was the group of liberal feminists stating that now the women were being recognized as citizens, and men and women were equal by the law. On the other side, there were another group of women stating that there still was some problematic underlying structures that were hindering equality. This group were to become the modern equality feminists. The springboard for modern equality feminism is often considered Betty Friedan's "*The Feminine Mystique*", in which a group of suburban housewives experienced desperation and emptiness despite their modern necessities (Dahlerup, 2000). This situation suggested that female suffrage was not sufficient to secure female emancipation, and other structures should be identified as problematic.

Politically, modern equality feminism has its roots in a social democratic tradition (Dahlerup, 2000). According to modern equality feminism, the state should intervene more and function as a security net for women. An important factor in modern equality feminism is that women should have the possibility to gain economic independence. Here the state specifically becomes important as an actor, through instrumental laws and policy creation (Dahlerup, 2000). While having equal opportunities as the goal of liberal feminism, modern equality feminism focus on having equality of outcome as a goal. Modern equality feminism views gender as a social construction in which society maintains certain gender stereotypes, by attributing soft values to women and hard values to men. Such gender stereotypes are viewed as the reason real gender equality has still not been reached (Dahlerup, 2000). In the 1960's the social constructionist approach towards gender roles became more widespread, and socially constructed stereotypical gender roles were seen as the major obstacle in moving towards a higher degree of gender equality. At this time, state feminism, meaning the use of equal opportunity policies, found great support in Denmark.

The view that gender roles are a product of social construction, and that equal opportunity policy-making is a viable solution to equality advancement places modern equality feminist ideology in a position as a competitive theory to that of liberal feminism. While liberal feminism puts the gender equality strategy into perspective, modern equality feminism contributes to the theoretical framework by providing an understanding of the counterbalance, which is invaluable when conducting the CDA, as arguments in favour of reserved paternity leave will be identified, and modern equality feminism will substantiate these arguments.

Another integral part of the theoretical framework is masculinity theory, which will be explored in the next portion of this chapter. Dahlerup suggests that "*Feminism might then be*

*defined as an ideology, the basic goal of which is to fight against male dominance and against discrimination and degradation of women”* (Dahlerup, 2002: 342-343). As the text is more than 15 years old, there have been changes to the conversation surrounding gender politics. However, masculinity studies are still often perceived as standing in opposition to feminist studies. Women’s rights should not be seen as the opposition to men’s rights, but rather as a supplement to one another. Throughout the theoretical framework of this thesis, masculinity theory and feminist theory are treated as a dialectic relationship. As the majority of research on gender equality utilizes feminist scholarship, introducing masculinity studies can deepen the argument, raise awareness of masculinity issues and add another complex layer to the debate.

### 3.3 Theory of masculinity (IL)

Masculinity research studies men as social objects within a gender perspective, analyzing the expectations, ideals and actions which are connected with being a man in a specific society or in a specific culture (Reinicke, 2015b: 435). In contrast to feminist research, masculinity research has never been anchored in any men’s movement, nor does it not bear the same legitimacy within research, and politicians of both sexes are rather uninterested in masculinity research in general (Reinicke, 2015b: 436). Gender equality in Denmark has often been seen from the women’s perspective and as a result feminist studies have been used as social legitimizers.

Historically, the field of masculinity research has roots in Marxism, including the criticism of capitalist society, and the feminist critique of patriarchal power structures. Social power is considered essential to the moral ideology and thought processes of society, as opposed to direct political power and masculinity research is centered around this social power dynamic (Ekenstam, 2004: 3).

#### 3.3.1 Masculinity research in Denmark (IL)

The field of masculinity studies is not often explored within Danish research on gender equality. Traditionally, the field of gender equality has been discussed from a feminist perspective focusing on women’s rights. But the study of masculinity is crucial to understanding and analyzing parental issues as the male perspective cannot be described and analyzed using only traditional feminist theory. This thesis assumes that masculinity can work together with feminism to ensure gender equality and rights for both men and women. According to the Danish masculinity researcher, Kenneth Reinicke, the importance of the men’s role in accomplishing gender equality in a Danish context has been downplayed.

Gender is crucial in establishing social life and men are not used to talking about gender or reflecting upon masculinity, as the very practice itself is considered non-masculine. For an individual man it can feel uncomfortable to their masculine identity to interact critically in the gender debate. Masculinity and fathers' rights have not been part of the public debate in the same way as women's rights when it comes to parental leave, as traditionally the debate on men's rights has only focused on custody of the children (Reinicke, 2015a: 25-26).

Reinicke states that for men, gender is both a challenge and a problem at the same time. Many men feel that they are in a situation where they are expected to live up to traditional stereotypical masculine ideals such as breadwinners and seducers, but are also expected to reflect on their masculinity (Reinicke, 2015b: 441).

For many men, it is not natural to be interested in gender equality, since in a Danish context it is considered a fight over power which should be taken away from men and given to women rather than a fight for emancipation where men have something to win as well (Reinicke, 2015b: 441).

In the changing norms of masculinity in Denmark, the strongest message for men has been that of fatherhood and family engagement. According to Reinicke, within the political sphere, the subject of fatherhood has changed from being 'no politics' to being 'high politics' and today more than one political party has demanded reserved paternity leave. Reinicke surmises that no laws have yet been passed in this regard as there is a general hesitation amongst Danish politicians towards forcing gender equality by the means of laws (Reinicke, 2015b: 446). An alternate explanation is that paternity leave is situated within a firmly established norm in which the concept of paternal leave challenges the notion of women as caregivers and men as breadwinners. Therefore, the focus of men's rights in a Danish context is very difficult to introduce into the debate and the focus instead shifts to making parental leave flexible and the free choice is handed over to each individual family (Reinicke, 2015b: 446).

In both Norway and Sweden, state centered male and fathers' councils were established, while in Denmark no such debate has been taking place at the highest political level - maybe due to the fact that gender equality politics in general has not played the same role in Denmark (Reinicke, 2015b: 437).

### 3.3.2 Hegemonic masculinity (IL)

The theory of hegemonic masculinity is the normative form of masculinity which requires men to position themselves in relation to the hegemonic ideal. The concept was formed by Australian sociologist and social constructivist R. W. Connell. Connell's theory draws from Antonio Gramsci's definition of hegemony, with a focus on the interrelation between social classes and how one class claims the leading position in social life (Ekenstam, 2004: 3-4).

Connell places masculinity as an aspect of a larger structure in modern European/American culture. The concept of masculinity assumes that a person's behavior results from the type of person one is; a masculine person would behave more violently, dominating, interested in football, etc. (Connell, 1995: 67). Masculinity exists in contrast with femininity and when defining the term masculinity, and speaking of masculinity, we are 'doing gender' in a culturally specific way with polarized gender character types (Connell, 1995: 68). To Connell, masculinity manifests itself through the manner in which men and women conduct gendered lives and the effects this has on bodily experiences, personality and culture (Connell, 1995: 71). Gender is a way to order social practice and speaking of masculinity is a configuration of gender practice (Connell, 1995: 72).

(Masculine) institutions such as the state, workplace and schools are sites where gender is also configured. The structure of gender within institutions distinguishes relations of (1) power relations - the overall subordination of women, defining a problem of legitimacy, (2) production relations - the gendered division of labor and in connection hereto the gendered allocation of capital and (3) cathexis - sexual desire and men's position of social dominance. Gender is a way of structuring social practice and to fully understand it, it is necessary to 'go beyond' gender and e.i. take both class, race, etc. into consideration (Connell, 2005: 73-76). Connell recognizes more than one masculinity and postulates that there is a hierarchal relationship between differing masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is not fixed, but serves as the dominant form of masculinity in a certain time, context, culture, etc. and is always contestable and mobile (Connell, 1995: 76). It is the successful claim to authority and requires correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power. Hegemonic masculinity configures gender practice that accepts the legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women, but also dominance and subordination between groups of men. For example, the dominance of heterosexual over homosexual men, white over black men, strong over weak men, etc. (Connell, 1995: 78). Few men meet the normative standards of hegemonic masculinity but the majority of males gain from its patriarchal yield through the subordination of women, and the honor, prestige, material and economic dividends, formal power and right to command that goes with it. In this gender order men, will want to defend their position, whereas women will want to change their position (Connell, 1995: 81-82). Both economy, state and global relationships play a role in changes in masculinities and gender relations, as well as households and personal relationships where both men and women play a role in the construction of gender relations (Connell, 1995: 86).

The hegemonic masculinity theory can be used to identify the structures which are at stake in relation to fatherhood and paternity leave and to explain the reticence of Danish policy makers with regards to reserved paternity leave. Hegemonic masculinity denotes a cultural

form of dominance. In other words, it does not involve the use of power or other forms of physical violence. It depends on cultural ascendancy and consent (Bloksgaard et. al. 2015: 153-154).

The theory can be further applied towards current Danish concepts of masculinity in order to analyse how hegemonic masculinity dominates other forms of masculinity that are more consistent with being a caring and loving father, and how Danish family politics might be framed by this same hegemonic masculinity.

### 3.4 Hegemonic masculinity in Denmark (EH)

In 2015 research was conducted to identify the actual normative masculinity ideals within a contemporary Danish context. The research was conducted amongst men with both higher educations as well as lower educational backgrounds and consisted of both a quantitative analysis as well as a qualitative analysis in the form of focus group interviews. The result of the research gives a mixed picture of hegemonic masculinity in Denmark, since ideals related to patriarchal dominance are rejected and men in both groups seem to adhere to more gender equality friendly masculinities (Bloksgaard et. al, 2015: 164).

However, ambivalence, contradictions and ambiguities prevail as older men tend to agree more with the traditional patriarchal masculinity norm in comparison to younger men which suggests that a change in normative masculinity is taking place. (Bloksgaard et. al, 2015: 164).

Still the traditional normative masculine ideals have not completely disappeared and in some ways still regulate men, particularly those who do not live up to the traditional stereotype. A discrepancy between masculinity ideals and everyday life can cause troubles for both the groups of men in the study. It is suggested that the importance of norms and ideals can be overplayed, since the concrete social practices can be restrained by practical social mechanisms. But at the same time the normative change is happening and the 'political correctness' of non-hegemonic ideals is prevailing in the minds of the men (Bloksgaard et. al, 2015: 165-66). The findings from this one study of hegemonic masculinity in a Danish context is being implemented in our analysis of gender equality politics.

## 4.0 Methodological framework (IL)

Having explored the theoretical framework of feminist theory and masculinity theory, the methodological framework will investigate what factors can be identified as relevant in explaining the lack of reserved paternity leave legislation in Denmark. The basic starting point being the premise that legislation creates norms, and at the same time norms create legislation. Norms and legislation will initially both be analyzed separately, but due to their interdependent nature the findings will be combined to form a more comprehensive perspective.

Legislation within the parental leave scheme has a long history and tradition. Inspired by the concepts of historical institutionalism, which will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, it is anticipated that this history could have an effect on the contemporary parental leave scheme.. The method of process tracing combined with historical institutionalism provides a framework for analyzing the historical development of the parental leave scheme and also identifies factors that explain why reserved paternity leave has not yet been introduced in Denmark.

The concept of norms is much more fluent than that of legislation. A qualitative approach will be used investigate the topic as it is not possible to apply quantitative measurements. The CDA is a method developed by Norman Fairclough, who postulates that discourse is created through power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 1992: 12). The combination of process tracing analysis based on historical institutionalism and a CDA regarding norms provide the possibility of an in-depth look at the reasoning behind the dismissive attitude regarding reserved paternity leave.

Process tracing and CDA draws on different ontologies. Initially the combination of process tracing with CDA does not suggest a strong match as the independent variable is set in process tracing method, while CDA is an investigative method, where cause-and-effect relationships between variables are not sought. However, the nature of the thesis requires two very different approaches and in this instance, the process tracing method and the CDA complements one another. To answer the research question, both normative and institutional aspects will be examined. The institutional elements affect how legislation is formed and the normative factors influence the discourse. While these topics exist in a codependent relationship, they are part of two different contexts, and as a result, it is necessary to create a methodological framework that can best serve these disparate elements..

## 4.1 Framework for working with institutionalization (IL)

The thesis hypothesizes that the institutionalization of gender equality politics, demonstrated through the gender equality strategy chosen for Denmark, is one of the factors as to why reserved paternity leave has not yet been introduced in Denmark. Through process tracing it will be determined if a path dependency can be found which will be supported by the theoretical concept of historical institutionalism to create a methodological framework. The framework can then be used to investigate and analyze how gender is institutionalized through gender equality politics and the gender equality strategy by tracing the evidence found in the empirical material.

### 4.1.1 Process tracing and hypotheses (IL)

Process tracing is a method used in qualitative analysis and is defined as:

*“The systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator”*

Collier, 2011: 823

Process tracing can be used to describe political phenomena and evaluate causal inference in small-N research designs. Descriptions of each step of trajectories of change and causation is a key word within process tracing, and attention should be given to both independent and dependent variables, as well as intervening variables if present. Process tracing is conducted by finding diagnostic evidence which can provide the basis for descriptive and causal inference. Finding the evidence depends on prior knowledge (Collier, 2011: 823-24). In the case of this thesis we cover an area with a vast amount of research already conducted within the field of gender equality in a contemporary Danish context, which forms the prior knowledge basis and frames the process tracing conducted in this thesis. Process tracing is a tool for finding causal inference and the focus is on the unfolding of events over time within an area - in this case gender equality politics. To begin with, description of the key steps in the process must be characterized - instead of focusing on observed changes - which in turn forms the basis for analyzing possible changes. Focus is on finding the evidence that address the descriptive task, and in the end identifying the causal chain between the independent and the dependent variable. The intervening variable(s) is the causal chain or the evidence which can prove or reject a hypothesis (Collier, 2011: 824 & George and Bennett, 2005: 206). Process tracing can be used in different forms of causal processes, among them are processes which are path dependent, which means that a case consists of a sequence of events in which some prior events steer the outcome of successive events in a certain direction. This fact must be considered when constructing a valid research explanation by identifying key decision points in a longitudinal case (George and Bennett, 2005: 212-13). In this thesis, the



gender equality strategy that has been chosen is the key decision point. And it has both influenced how gender equality politics in Denmark has developed over time, and how contemporary policy making evolves.

As a means of analyzing Danish gender equality politics, and more specifically the lack of reserved paternity leave, process tracing is implemented as a way of empirically testing the hypothesis and to understand why Denmark has not yet legally implemented reserved paternity leave, even though expert research suggests only positive effects for fathers taking longer paternity leave.

Process tracing is a qualitative method which is used to empirically test whether a theory's hypothetical causality or causal inference can be proved in reality. Process tracing is done by identifying and operationalize the empiric traces or evidences in the empiric material that are caused by the causal connection between a theory's independent variable X and dependent variable Y. The aim is to show how the connection between X and Y looks in reality - not just what effect X has on Y. In process tracing, the factors that connect Y with X are identified and it is evaluated whether these factors/evidences can be observed empirically (Beach & Pedersen, 2010: 215).

Process tracing investigates how or why X impact on Y by looking at the causal process that connects them and the method can be used to understand or explain the causality - not just prove a causality which is the case with large quantitative studies (Beach & Pedersen, 2010: 216).

This is done by using a theory, in this case historical institutionalism and the unique and specific features in Danish gender equality politics and historical institutionalism, and from this deduce the expected factors which influence the causality that connects X and Y, in this case the lack of reserved paternity leave secured by law. It should be stated which empirical observation is expected within each part of the causal process. Afterwards these hypotheses should be critically scrutinized empirically. If the factors can be identified empirically a strength of the causality can be concluded (Beach & Pedersen, 2010: 216-17).

In this thesis, the type of process tracing conducted is the deductive theory testing method, also known as the Sherlock Holmes method. In this type of process tracing, a plausible theoretical explanation on the phenomenon is scrutinized. This is done by first establishing one or more plausible causality chains and thereafter deducing what concrete evidence can be expected to be found for each part of the chain to prove the theory correct (Beach & Pedersen, 2010: 219). In other words, when working with the deductive theory testing method of process tracing, the researcher is interested in investigating whether specific evidence can prove or deny the existence of each individual part of the chain of causality.

These parts are represented by a hypothesis. Process tracing can never prove any hypothesis 100 %, but it can identify the causal relation indicated by the theory and strengthen the hypothesis. Qualitative empirical data used can be interviews, archives, debates, speeches, etc. (Beach & Pedersen, 2010: 220).

#### 4.1.2 Historical institutionalism (IL)

The theoretical framework of historical institutionalism will focus on path dependency to investigate how previous decisions have formed later developments regarding extended reserved paternity leave. (Borchorst, 2015: 147). Historical institutionalism argues that history should be included in the research design since explanations for current phenomena can sometimes be found in the past rather than the present. As certain behaviors or institutions do not evolve quickly, it is not always possible to explain the present with current factors. In other words, the causal chain with independent variables can be shifted over time and this should influence the choice of case (Bischoff & Klemmensen, 2010: 61-62). In the Danish case of gender equality, this means that past decisions have influenced how policy making decisions are conducted in the future. It can be costly to change direction but on the other hand changing direction can also generate unintended consequences and inefficiencies within the institutions (Hall & Taylor, 1996: 9-10).

#### 4.1.3 Institutions (IL)

Institutions are defined as: “the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy” (Hall & Taylor, 1996: 6). As institutions are associated with formal organizations, the rules and conventions that extend from them provide a moral or cognitive template for the interpretation and the actions of the political actors. Institutions play a huge role in political life but are not considered the only causal force in politics (Hall & Taylor, 1996: 7-10). The institutional organization of the political system thereby acts as the primary factor in structuring collective behavior and generates distinctive outcomes or national trajectories which emphasize path dependence (Hall & Taylor, 1996: 937-942). Therefore, the Danish institution of gender equality politics contain distinct national trajectories formed over the course of history. Institutions both constrain individual choice and affect individual strategies but also affect the articulation of individual and collective interests (Thelen, 2002: 92-94). The aim of the process tracing is to examine how these institutions form current cultural perceptions of gender equality in Denmark and why Denmark deviates from other Nordic countries in this regard.

#### 4.1.4 Critical junctures (IL)

In historical institutionalism, the flow of historical events can be divided into: “periods of continuity punctuated by ‘critical junctures,’ i.e., moments when substantial institutional change takes place thereby creating a ‘branching point’ from which historical development moves onto a new path” (Hall, 1993: 10).

In analyzing the origin of institutions, critical junctures are turning points which establish institutional changes. An institution can therefore not only be analyzed by how it is functioning in the present, but focus should also be directed to how processes are influenced by the interaction of events and unfold over time (Thelen, 2002: 97 & 99). Institutions are believed to change at ‘punctuated equilibriums’ occurring after an exogenous shock or an environmental shift which either breaks down the institution or persists - depending on the mechanisms of reproduction that either sustains or changes them (Thelen, 2002: 99-100). In the Danish case of reserved paternity leave the 2002 decision to expand parental leave to a total of 52 weeks was a window of opportunity to expand the amount of time reserved for the father. Instead, the same durable path was followed. A critical juncture could occur if the EU demands reserved paternity leave; however, it is too early to speculate on the effects of this punctuated equilibrium.

#### 4.1.5 The impact on individuals (IL)

Institutions consist of both formal and informal rules, procedures, routines, norms and conventions, which are embedded in the organizational structure of the welfare state, and thereby affect the behavior of individuals (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 279). *“Institutions offer a moral and cognitive pattern for the interpretation of what is the right action, and also influence the identity, self-images and preferences of the actors. Individuals respond strategically to the institutionally given opportunities and constraints in order to maximize the attainment of their individual goals”* (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 279).

In the case of reserved paternity leave, politicians are capable of implementing laws, but it is the voters in a representative democracy that form public opinion. In the Danish case, strong institutions in the welfare state influence both the opinion of politicians and of voters.

Institutions can then constrain both the choice and strategy of individuals, but also in articulation of collective interests (Thelen, 2002: 92).

Therefore, the possibilities and constraints provided by the Danish parental leave scheme are crucial to the decision-making process of the individual family with regards to which family member should take parental leave, the mother or the father. The politics conducted in the area sends a strong signal to parents about what is the right thing to do; mothers are more important than fathers, when 14 weeks are reserved for the mother and only two for the father.

Historical institutionalism is relevant in this instance because of its ability to explain how specific political aims or laws influence the choice of the individual, but also how the social norms of a culture based on historical events and paths.

## 4.2 Framework for working with discourses and norms (EH)

Having laid out the framework which will be applied to the legislation and institutional part, the framework for working with discourses and norms will now be explained. As process tracing and historical institutionalism is relevant for analyzing the legislative and institutional sections, Fairclough's CDA combined with Foucault's conceptualization of power and silence contribute to the creation of a relevant framework for examining with the discursual and normative themes.

### 4.2.1 Foucault, power, and silence (EH)

In order to understand Danish gender equality politics, we need to study the combination of how discourse and power has produced a certain perception within this area. Foucault argues that what we think we know isn't necessarily the truth. It might just be the truth of the time because it is conceptualized through the apparatus (apparatus will be explained later in this paragraph) (Hall, 2001: 76). One of our hypotheses for this thesis is, that the hegemonic masculinity ideal is the ruling gender ideal in Denmark, and is the reason why reserved paternity leave has not been introduced. This is not something that can be investigated directly since it is something normative, and it lays in the sub consciousness. But Foucault presents a theoretical framework that can applied when investigating the things that are not being said, or simply silenced.

Foucault studied discourse as a system of representation. Prior to his time, the term discourse was used only as a simple linguistic concept (Hall, 2001: 72). Foucault examined how rules and practices produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in different historical periods (ibid), as he believed that all social practices entail meaning, and that meanings shape and influence what we do. As a result, all practices have a discursive aspect (ibid.). Foucault argues that discourse constructs the topic, and defines and produces the objects of our knowledge, as well as influencing the manner in which a topic can be analyzed and discussed (ibid.). Foucault historicizes discourse, representation, knowledge and truth (Hall, 2001: 74), postulating that meaning and truth are confined within certain time periods, as the same phenomena will not be found across different historical periods. Later in his career, Foucault studied how knowledge through discourse can be used to exercise power (Hall, 2001: 75), as power functions within an institutional apparatus and its technologies (ibid.). He included a variety of criteria in his conceptualization of the

apparatus, for example; discourse, institutions, scientific statements, morality etc. (ibid.). Foucault argues that there is a linkage between knowledge and power. While knowledge is always a form of power, power is implicated in the question of in what cases knowledge should be applied (Hall, 2001: 76). When knowledge is applied in the real world, it has real effects and becomes the truth. As Foucault argues, what we think we know in a particular period of time, is not necessarily the truth. It might simply be the truth at the time, conceptualized through the apparatus (ibid.) Foucault's regime of truth can also be applied in this particular case. For example, it may or may not be true that equality by law creates gender equality. However, if the majority believes it does, it will then become the truth (ibid.).

In Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, he postulates that silence, or that which is not said, has meaning and contributes to the discourse, power and knowledge dynamic. *"Silence itself—the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers—is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses."* (Foucault, 1980: 27). Foucault defines silence as a part of an overall strategy that functions in relation to words that are actually being said. The CDA integrates the Foucaultian perspective and analyzes both the spoken and unspoken functions in relational elements, and their function as a part of an overall strategy.

Fairclough, one of the founders of the CDA, is inspired by Foucault, and further builds upon his philosophical constructs. The CDA will be informed by the constructionist point of view, in combination with Foucault's thoughts on discourse, power and silence to investigate the norms of society concerning reserved parental leave, and how they are created.

#### 4.2.2 Fairclough and the Critical Discourse Analysis (EH)

The CDA is different from non-critical discourse analysis as it describes not only discursive practice, but also demonstrates how a discourse is created through power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 1992: 12). Fairclough himself sees CDA as both a method and a theory (Fairclough, 2001: 121). As a result, CDA will hereafter be referred to as an approach. CDA is an obvious approach to analyze the ruling norms regarding parental leave and gender equality, as reserved parental leave has been proposed on several occasions and debated in

parliament and the public sphere. Debating a specific topic creates a discourse; a certain way to talk about or understand the world (Jørgensen & Philips, 1999: 9). Fairclough writes in 'Discourse and Social Change' (Fairclough, 1992), that discourse is a social practice, not an individual activity (Fairclough, 1992: 63). This can be directly applied to the normative analysis, in order to explore if the ruling discourse has an influence on the lack of enforcement of reserved parental leave. While discourse influences social structures, it is also maintained and created by those same structures (Fairclough, 1992: 63-64). In essence, while discourse might create social practice, social practice might also create discourse. By extension, according to Fairclough's theory, if the social practice in Denmark has been to undertake a liberal gender equality model, this will create a liberal gender equality discourse. Fairclough stresses that there is no recipe for conducting a CDA, but he operates within a three level model, that conceptualizes discourse (Fairclough, 1992: 72-73). In this model, a communicative event is the object for analysis which will consist of three dimensions; text, discursive practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 2008: 15). It is important not to view the three dimensions as clearly separate units, but as interrelational in nature (Fairclough, 1992: 65). The intent of the analysis is to prove the dialectic relationship between the discursive event, and social practice, and how it reflects the discourse surrounding norms (Fairclough, 1992: 72).

#### 4.2.3 The three-level model of CDA (EH)

In the three-level model of CDA, the three dimensions, or analytical traditions of text, discursive practice and social practice have been combined. The textual analysis is closely linked with the tradition of linguistics, while discursive practice is linked with the traditions of sociocognitivity and macrosociology, and social practice is closely linked with the interpretivist, or microsociological tradition (Fairclough, 1992: 72). In terms of concrete analysis, the textual analysis can be referred to as 'descriptive', and the analysis of the discursive and the social practice can be described as 'interpretive' (Fairclough, 1992: 73).

##### 4.2.3.1 Analysis of text (EH)

According to Fairclough the distinction between the textual analysis and the analysis of discursive practice is not very clear (Fairclough, 1992: 73-74). The textual analysis is concentrated towards four different linguistic subheadings; vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure (Fairclough, 1992: 75). Vocabulary deals mainly with individual words, grammar is concerned with words combined into sentences, cohesion focuses on sentence linkage and text structure concentrates on large textual bodies (Fairclough, 1992: 75). Analysis of the vocabulary in other words, is an analysis of the process of naming, or wording, the world. This is an important aspect of the CDA, since wording is often loaded

with values or ideologies. One very clear example from Fairclough is the rewording of 'terrorists' as 'freedom fighters' (or the other way around). Another focus for the analysis could be the use of metaphors (Fairclough, 1992: 77). When it comes to grammar, the main focus is the clause, or simple sentences. Here it is important to note that a clause can be an expression of social identity, social relationships, knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1992: 76). With cohesion, one is looking at how clauses are linked together into sentences. In the analysis of cohesion, attention should be paid to for instance rhetorics (Fairclough, 1992: 77). Finally, when analyzing the text structure, attention should be paid to the architecture of the text. It can give an insight into the systems of knowledge and belief that are the background for the text (Fairclough, 1992: 78). For this thesis not all of the abovementioned concepts will be put in use, since the analysis then will be too linguistic-oriented. But it gives you an idea of how many components, or aspects, can be considered when doing a CDA.

#### 4.2.3.2 Analysis of the discursive practice (EH)

The analysis of the discursive practice brings the analysis into a more interpretive area, as the focus is on the processes of text production, distribution and consumption (Fairclough, 1992: 78). Fairclough operates with additional concepts within the three dimensions in the discursive practice. The concepts of interdiscursivity and manifest intertextuality focus upon text production, intertextual chains focus upon distribution and coherence focus upon consumption (Fairclough, 1992: 232-234).

Analyzing text production is integral to a deeper understanding of the product's creation. For example, a newspaper article might appear to be written by a single journalist, while in reality it was collectively authored. In such an instance, the article is not necessarily expressing the view of the journalist, but more a general expression for the newspaper's point of view (Fairclough, 1992: 78). The concept of interdiscursivity specifies what discourse types are drawn upon in the discourse sample by analyzing if the sample can be characterized in a certain overall manner (Fairclough, 1992: 232). Manifest intertextuality flows between the text level and the discursive practice level of the analysis with the aim being to explore what other material is being drawn upon in the production of the actual text. Discourse representation, ideational meaning and irony can be used as tools for analysis (Fairclough, 1992: 233-234).

Consumption of a text is also an important part of the analysis as texts are consumed differently according to social contexts. The consumption of a text depends on what type interpretative work is applied to it (Fairclough, 1992: 79). For example, will a feature article in a union's magazine be consumed differently than an instruction for assembling an IKEA furniture. They are read differently. Here coherence is an important concept to keep in mind. The objective of looking into coherence, is to pay attention to interpretative implications of

the intertextual and interdiscursive properties of the discourse sample. (Fairclough, 1992: 233).

Finally, the distribution of the text is also important to keep in mind for the analysis. The distribution is closely linked with both production and consumption. Some texts are simple and not meant for a wide distribution. This could be a personal diary entry for example. Other texts are distributed via predetermined canals, and is meant to be distributed to the majority of people. Distribution therefore can be central to the analysis, since it can be used to say something about the framework it is produced and consumed in. Concepts Fairclough here mentions to use for the analysis of the distribution, is intertextual chain. The objective with the intertextual chain is to describe the series of text types the sample is transformed into or out of. Are they for example stable or shifting? Does the sample undergo any kind of transformation? (Fairclough, 1992: 232-233).

#### 4.2.3.3 Analysis of the social practice (EH)

The last and third level is the analysis of the social practice. Fairclough argues that within his three-dimensional framework, the analysis of the social practice takes the discourse and places it in relation to ideology and hegemonic power structures, as the evolution of power relations is seen as hegemonic struggle (Fairclough, 1992: 86).. When looking at the politics of reserved paternity leave in Denmark, it is not enough to analyse the proposition of enforcing law within this specific area. It is also necessary to examine the debate of reserved paternity leave in accordance with the rest of society, relating to gender equality politics in general.

#### 4.2.4 Summary of the CDA approach (EH)

For the second part of the analysis, a CDA approach will be adopted. In the three-level model, the three tiers of the model are closely linked with discursive practice functioning as a link between text and social practice. The model also demonstrates that ideology and culture influence how a text is produced and consumed, and therefore has an effect on the content of the text. This situation also works in reverse, as a text can affect both ideological premises and cultural constructs within society.



## 5. Process tracing and Danish gender equality politics (IL)

For the process tracing analysis, a series of hypotheses will be presented, followed by a causal chain. Afterwards, an analysis of the path dependency in Danish gender equality politics will be conducted, introducing the evidence found to support the hypotheses. The historical institutionalist view on how institutions change - or do not change - over time, is the foundation of the process tracing, which will attempt to illustrate how history has impacted the current state of Danish gender equality politics today, and how, in this case, institutions have not changed but followed a strong path dependency.

### 5.1 Hypotheses (IL)

In this thesis, we have constructed the following hypotheses, with the dependent variable: the lack of reserved paternity leave secured by law, and the independent variable: specific features within Danish gender equality politics. Five secondary hypotheses are identified below with the presumed evidence attached.

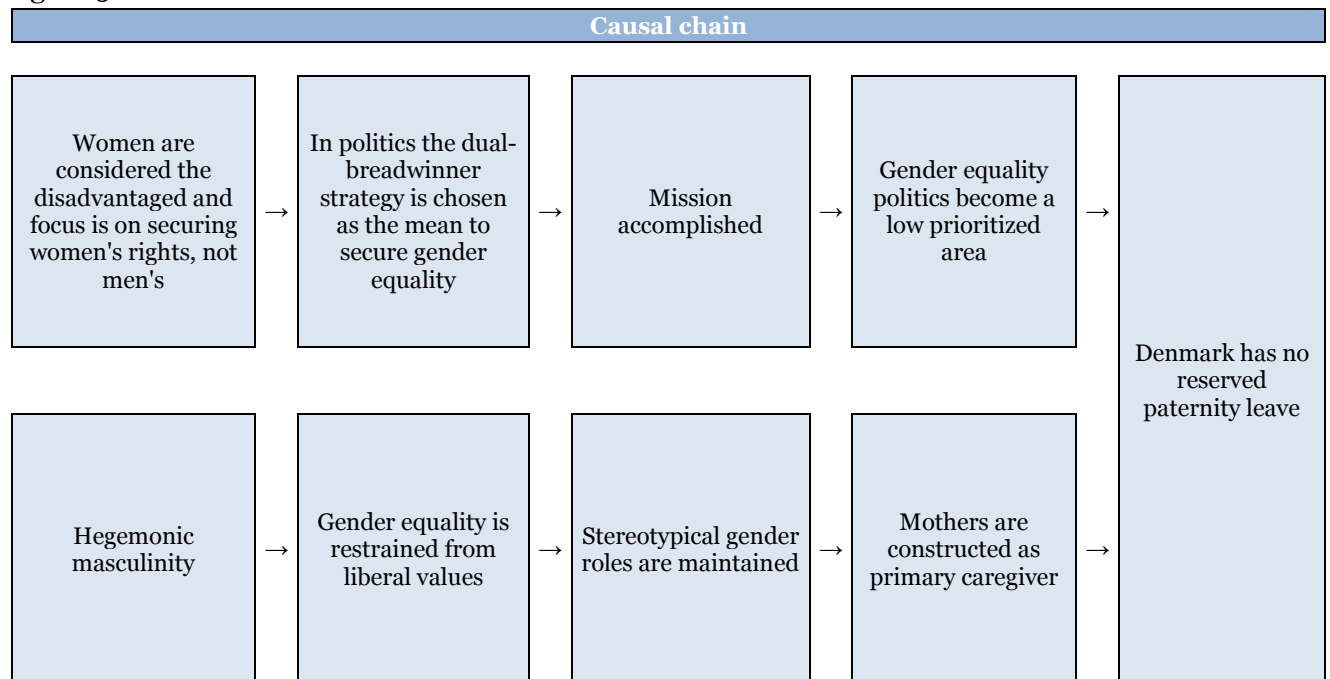
Figure 5.1: Hypotheses for process tracing

Hypothesis	
Dependent variable: Despite recommendations from experts within the field of gender studies, in 2017 Denmark has still not implemented reserved paternity leave by law due to historical traces in Danish gender politics	
Independent variables:	Traces/evidence
1. One sided historical strategy in gender equality politics	Strategy: Dual breadwinner model
	Mission accomplished attitude'
	Denmark moving down on international equality index
2. Gender equality legislation has traditionally focused on women's rights	No active or important 'mens movement' to demand changes
	Men's rights are absent in Danish legislation
3. Public authorities unconsciously constitute old stereotypical gender roles	Communication from public authorities is sent to the mother
	Lack of reserved paternity leave
	Network groups for mothers
	Cash benefits paid to the mother
4. Gender equality politics is a low prioritized area of symbolic value	Discrepancy between discourse and practice
	Family and equality policy are situated within different ministries
	Gender equality does not have its own ministry
	The ministries where the area of gender equality is placed, are low in status and situated low in hierarchies
	National councils appointed to work with gender equality are dismantled
5. Politicians hold on to liberal values within gender politics	Freedom vs. equality
	Liberal economic arguments

These hypotheses form the core of the first part of the analysis and have been developed under the influence of historical institutionalism and the founding premise of social constructivism. The causal chain outlining the path dependency in Danish gender equality politics is provided in the next section.

### 5.1.1 Path dependency and causal chain (IL)

Figure 5.2: Causal chain



The causal chain emanates from the awareness of the patriarchal structures which oppress women. Two parallel paths have historically been followed in Danish gender equality politics from the 1960's until today, resulting in the unreserved paternity leave.

In the 1960's an awareness of female oppression is formed within the political field offsetting a number of laws. A strategy known as the dual-breadwinner model is implemented and followed, with the aim of releasing women from patriarchal structures by making them financially independent. In practice this is done by freeing them from care work and encouraging them to join the workforce. Wage work and economic independence for women becomes the primary focus, leaving men and domestic chores out of focus. In this sense, women are encouraged to become more like men. Gradually a large majority of Danish women join the workforce and with an almost 80 % current rate of participation a mission accomplished attitude towards gender equality takes over amongst both politicians and the general population. With a mission accomplished attitude there is no longer a need to place a value of importance on the field of gender equality, and it becomes a field of only symbolic value. When anyone raises their voice, asking for reserved paternity leave, it is met by an attitude of: What is the problem?

The other path followed is that of hegemonic masculinity, encouraging men to be the breadwinner of the family. This state of affairs is permeated by liberal values in accordance with liberal feminism, as gender equality issues related to the domestic area are ascribed to

free choice. The state will only concentrate on securing equal opportunities; it is up to the individual to choose how to use these opportunities. Both the state and public authorities unconsciously constitute stereotypical gender roles, as the mother is assumed to be the primary caregiver and the father is considered the primary breadwinner. Based on these assumptions, there is no need to reserve paternity leave if both men and women comply with the norms.

In the first part of the analysis where process tracing is conducted, a large variety of historical traces in support of the causal chain are elaborated on. Path dependency points towards a common explanation as to why reserved paternity leave does not exist in Denmark. As the traditional focus on women as disadvantaged and dependency on patriarchal structures and hegemonic masculinity inform cultural attitudes.

### 5.1.2 List of empirical material (IL)

Below is an overview of the empirical material used in the following analysis performing process tracing on Danish gender equality politics and its outcome.

Figure 5.3: List of empirical material

Hypothesis	Empiric material
1. One sided historical focus on gender equality politics	Laws on parental leave
	Statistic from Statistic Denmark
	Global Gender Gap report from World Economic Forum
	Text by researcher Anette Borchorst, 2015
2. Gender equality politics has traditionally focused on womens rights	Relevant laws passed since the beginning of the 20th century on family, gender equality and parental leave
	Reports from Danish Fathers Organisation
	Report from national council working with reserved paternity leave. Council appointed by minister of employment in 2013
	Researcher Kenneth Reinickes work from 2015
3. Danish politicians unconsciously constitute old stereotypical gender roles	Report from Human rights institute
	Report from Danish Fathers' Association
	Study by Tine Rostgaard & Mette Lausten on fathers quota in Denmark
	Newspaper article interviewing PhD Else Guldager
	Study by Mia Hakorvita on the family cash benefit
	Votes in parliament on reserved paternity leave
4. Gender politics is a low prioritized area of symbolic value	Historical review of gender equality's placement in the ministries
	Working paper from a research performed for KVINFO
	Research performed in 2005 by Druckman & Warwick in Europe on status of cabinet posts
	Information on Danish NGO's focusing on mothers and fathers respectively
5. Politicians hold on to liberal values within gender politics	Study by Tine Rostgaard & Mette Lausten on fathers quota in Denmark
	Statistic from Statistic Denmark
	Report from national council working with reserved paternity leave. Council appointed by minister of employment in 2013

## 5.2 One-sided historical strategy in gender equality politics (IL)

When politicians work with gender equality in a welfare state, various strategies can be implemented. Since the strategies focus on different aims, both the outcome and the consequences will vary from each strategy. For the past, several decades, a unilateral strategy has ruled Danish gender equality politics with the consequence being that the rights of fathers have been left out of policy making, and concerns regarding men's and fathers'

gender equality is left out of the equation. The unilateral strategy is described below; followed by differing consequences as a result of the strategy.

### 5.2.1 The dual-breadwinner - or Universal-Breadwinner - strategy (IL)

According to Nancy Fraser, an American theorist and professor in political and social science, three different strategies can be implemented in a welfare state in a postindustrial society to promote gender equality. The strategies are presented in the scheme below:

Figure 5.4: Strategies for gender equality

Strategy for gender equality		Aim	Political solution	Impact on gender roles
1.	Universal Breadwinner or dual breadwinner model	Achieve gender equality by promoting women's employment	Provide day care for the children and secure maternity leave with social benefits	Aim to make women more like men
2.	Caregiver Parity model	Supporting informal care work by elevating domestic labor to parity with paid labor	Caregiver allowances from public funds	Leaving men and women more or less unchanged
3.	Universal Caregiver model	Combine breadwinning and caregiving for both men and women	Reserved paternity leave for fathers	Induce men to become more like women

Source: Fraser, 1997: 51-62 & Borchorst, 2015: 148

Of the three models, it is the universal breadwinner strategy which has been implemented and followed in Denmark from the 1960's and onwards (Borchorst, 2015: 148).

In this strategy the aim is to secure gender equality by promoting women's financial independence through encouraging workforce participation for women. A crucial element in this strategy is to provide daycare for children in order to free women from their unpaid work at home, and to create jobs for women within the care sector. In this model, women are viewed as disadvantaged and the political aim is to bring them up to parity with men, meaning that women should change - not men. This strategy is not concerned with other aspects of gender equality, for example, sharing unpaid housework or women's status in civil society. Instead of involving men in care work, care becomes a responsibility taken over by the market and the state, where employees perform the care for pay. However, this strategy does not take into consideration the domestic responsibilities, which cannot be shifted to the market and the state. This leaves parents with an uneven distribution of unpaid domestic work, since women do most of this work (Fraser, 1997: 51-52).

This strong unilateral focus in Danish politics on gender equality being a matter of financial independence, as well as focusing on women as the disadvantaged, can explain why no focus has been given to the rights of fathers, or of viewing fathers as an important resource in securing gender equality in both the public and private sphere. It is embedded in the strategy, that gender equality should only be concerned with women.

### 5.2.2 Mission accomplished (IL)

In Denmark, the general view on gender equality prevails that has already been achieved. This can be explained by the fact, that the dual breadwinner strategy has dominated Danish gender equality politics. With the very high rate of Danish mothers obtaining wage work today, one can say that the mission has been accomplished. The latest numbers from 2016 show that women in the workforce represent 76.6 % compared to men's 82.4 % (Danmarks Statistik, 2016). Since the strategy implemented in Denmark is not concerned with the gendered division of unpaid housework, the gender divided labor market, the wage gap, the gender differences in retirement savings or the unequal share of parental leave between parents, not much political focus is directed to these challenges (Borchorst, 2015: 164). This situation offers an explanation as to why gender politics is not viewed as an issue of general importance in Denmark. (Borchorst et. al., 2014: 1) and it can be argued, since the mission has been accomplished, there is nothing left to be discussed, least of all the rights of fathers which has been left out of the dialogue from the beginning.

### 5.2.3 International index (IL)

Within an international context, Denmark has traditionally been viewed as a pioneer regarding gender equality, but lately the country has received lower ratings than its Nordic peers and has been by-passed by countries choosing a fast track model towards gender equality for example by implementing gender quotas (Borchorst et. al, 2014: 2).

During the past ten years Denmark, has fallen behind on international rankings on the gender equality index. One of these markers is the Global Gender Gap report which is performed on a yearly basis by the World Economic Forum. In the latest report from 2016 Denmark ranks 19 out of 144 countries, while in 2006, Denmark had a ranking of number eight. In comparison, the other Nordic countries: Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden are ranking respectively first to fourth in year 2016 (World Economic Forum). It has not been possible to identify any strong reaction among Danish politicians towards the Danish ranking, which in itself is interesting, when gender equality is considered a Danish core value.

Reserved paternity leave could be used as an instrument towards enhancing gender equality in both the public and private sphere. However, with the Danish resistance towards securing reserved paternity leave legislation in combination with the mission accomplished attitude, this tendency will presumably continue, moving Denmark further and further down the international rankings.

#### 5.2.4 Summary (IL)

The dual breadwinner strategy has been implemented and followed in Denmark from the 1960's until today, where 76.6 % of women are in the workforce. The strategy is formed by a patriarchal view that women are viewed as disadvantaged and should become more like men in order to overcome this disadvantage. Since the strategy is not concerned with the distribution of domestic work, it leaves women with a bigger workload and leaves men with an unchanged role in both the private and the public sphere. The man is still the primary breadwinner, in average earning more money and spending less time on unpaid domestic labor.

With Denmark's five decade long focus on women's participation in the workforce as the ultimate gender equality goal, it can seem natural that a common attitude in Denmark on gender equality is that the mission has been accomplished. This attitude can be explained by the unilateral focus of the strategy, which constitutes women as disadvantaged and workforce participation as the ultimate marker of equality. This focus fails to consider numerous aspects of daily life and minimizes the role that men play within the family. The private sphere and men's familial roles becomes a zone which is left for the individual couple to negotiate in what is considered a legitimate equality battlefield.

When the mission is considered accomplished and women have become more like men, gender equality and by extension, the rights and role of the father can be considered not worth dealing with. The current resulting effect is that Denmark is being bypassed by numerous countries on the Global Gender Gap index which contrasts with the Danish self-perception of being a pioneer. in gender equality issues

With historic institutionalism in focus a strong path dependency has been identified showing little deviation during the past five decades. Danish gender equality has not veered from the path chosen in the 1960's and in many ways institutions have also not changed. Women have gained economic independence, but in the private sphere the gender roles have not changed significantly. This stagnation can be explained by the absence of exogenous shocks or critical junctures in Danish gender equality politics, but an underlying factor could also be that of hegemonic masculinity ruling the private sphere, maintaining the mother as the primary caregiver and housekeeper, thus preserving a traditionally masculine role for the father as the secondary caregiver.



### 5.3 The focus on women's rights in Danish legislation (IL)

Women are considered victims - men are considered losers and their problems are taboo (Reinicke, 2015a: 28).

According to the Danish masculinity researcher, Kenneth Reinicke, the importance of men's role in accomplishing gender equality has been downplayed in a Danish context.

Traditionally the debate on men's rights has only focused on custody of the children (Reinicke, 2015a: 25-26). Within a political context, men have often been considered a static group acting as an obstacle to gender equality. Only recently have political decision makers started to also see men as gendered individuals created by norms and structures, and as contributing to a more gender equal society (Reinicke, 2015a: 26).

The underlying patriarchal structures have long been used to focus on women's rights, but only has the debate recognized that these structures can also have a negative impact on men, if they blindly try to live up to the stereotypical ideals about what constitutes a real man.

Historically men have focused on their work and their role as the family breadwinner and downplayed the importance of the family and their role as fathers (Reinicke, 2015a: 26-27).

During the last 10 years, a more awareness has been directed towards men's unique problems and challenges; the role men play in gender equality, but also the importance of implementing the masculine perspective in gender equality issues (Reinicke, 2015a: 28).

There is a tendency to approach men's challenges as either being taboo, or being ridiculed as insignificant. As a result, serious debates over men's rights and/or discussing men as a gendered are rare. Attention is directed towards what are considered 'real' equality issues: women's rights (Reinicke, 2015a: 29).

Historically women have had inferior living conditions and less democratic rights compared to men. Therefore debates on gender equality in a Danish context have centered around women's experiences and lived lives, but gender equality debates are not complete without including men's perspectives and rights (Reinicke, 2015b: 452).

Kenneth Reinicke views on leaving men's perspectives out of the gender equality debate, could be explained by the theory of historical institutionalism as a variable with causal effect from the past. The examination of two traces, support Reinicke's premise. The first trace is the fact that Denmark has only one organization representing the rights of fathers. The second trace involves the examination of the actual laws implemented in Denmark concerning family issues, gender equality and parental leave; in each of these cases, the men's perspective is left out or dominated by the women's perspective.

### 5.3.1 Father's organizations in Denmark (IL)

While there are several organizations working with the rights and interests of women and mothers in Denmark that receive state funding, only one independent organization exists which specifically works with the rights of fathers and men's interests in general. 'Foreningen Far' (The Danish Fathers' Association) is the largest of its kind in the Nordic countries and receives around 200,000 visitors per year. The organization was established in 1977 and offers free counselling for fathers around Denmark. The organization is also involved in politics and frequently appears in Danish media (Foreningen Far n.d.). What is remarkable about this organization, in a gender perspective, is that it is the only one of its kind in Denmark - with several organizations of same kind aimed for women and mothers - and that it does not receive any noteworthy state funding. All work in the organization is performed by volunteers and most funding is received from private donations. The organization was also represented in the council appointed by the Ministry of Employment under the former government in 2013 to uncover and analyze issues regarding reserved paternity leave (Beskæftigelsesministeriet, 2013: 2). Of the 22 seats in the council, The Danish Fathers' Association was the sole organization specifically representing men and fathers (Beskæftigelsesministeriet, 2013: 4).

### 5.3.2 Danish law on family, gender equality and parental leave (IL)

Figure 5-5: Important laws on family and gender equality

Laws on family, gender equality and parental leave		About
Before 1922	Forordning af 1763 (Regulation of 1763)	Husband holds full custody of both wife and children
1922	Myndighedslov af 30. juni 1922 (The authoritative law)	Gives women and men joint custody of the child within marriage. Unmarried fathers hold no rights of the children
1925-26	Womens rights within marriage improves	Separate property becomes possible
1960	Børneloven (Childrens law)	Custody of the child is automatically given to the unmarried woman
1969	Ægteskabsloven af 14. juni 1969 (The marriage law)	Ensures unmarried fathers better rights in relation to their children
1972	Lov nr. 280 af 7. juni 1972	It becomes possible for the unmarried father to gain joint custody of the child, in cases where the mother permits this.
1976	Ligelønslov	Equal work, equal pay
1979	Ligebehandlingslov	Prohibits discrimination based on gender in work and parental leave
1980	Denmark joins the EU convention	Recognizes any national court order on custody
1985	Ægteskabslov	Joint custody becomes possible at divorce
1985	Lov om ligestilling	Equal rights for men and women when appointed to jobs in public sector
1986	Revision of law from 1922	Joint custody of children also becomes possible for unmarried parent who separate
1988	Lov om ligestilling	All public authorities are required to work with gender equality within their field
1990	Lov om ligestilling	Equal occupation of seats on public boards
2007	Forældreansvarsloven	Joint custody of all children becomes the norm

Source: Borchorst & Dahlerup, 2015: 234-241 & Foreningen far n.d.

In 1922 an important shift happens in Danish family law. prior to this time, Danish family law had been permeated by patriarchal structures and women had no legal status in either their marriage or over their children. In 1922, a new authoritative law is passed, that shifts the focus over to the rights and status of the woman. The shift is enormous and has influenced Danish family law ever since. From granting all custody to the father before, all

custody is now handed to the mother. This has very slowly started to shift over time and gradually post divorce access to children has become the issue of law. In 2007 the newest law was implemented, which in theory, automatically grants joint custody of the children to both parents after divorce. However, in 2015 only 13% of all children in divorced families have a habitational address at their father's place (The Danish Fathers' Association, 2015: 3).

As previously discussed, the first law on parental leave is implemented in 1903 which secures four weeks maternity leave for mothers. Not until 1984 are fathers granted two weeks paternity leave by law, and then another ten weeks are added to the leave which can be shared by both parents. A law passed by the Social Democratic government in 1998 to reserve another 2 weeks leave for fathers was abolished four years after its creation by the new right wing government in 2002.

The first laws on gender equality in relation to the labor market are completed during the 1970's when many women enter the labor force. These laws are focused on women's rights as workers and employees, securing the same rights as those held by male workers. From 1985 onwards, a series of laws under the name of 'Lov om ligestilling' has focused on prohibiting gender based discrimination and encouraged both the private and public sectors to promote a more even gender distribution when hiring from top to bottom within an organization. With 'Lov om ligestilling' some degree of positive special treatment is accepted to ensure more women have influence and access to higher tier positions.

In accordance with the work by Danish masculinity researcher Kenneth Reinicke a clear pattern of feminist focus has influenced Danish legislation within family law, paternity leave and gender equality in the labor market since the beginning of the 20th century. The empirical material bears clear traces of Reinicke's theory and demonstrates a one-sided focus on women's rights in the majority of laws within the areas of parental leave, and family and gender equality. Laws securing the rights of mothers and female workers have been of crucial importance, but the fact that Denmark's only fathers' organization does not receive significant public funding points to an institutional imbalance. Even though Reinicke states that political decision makers today are more aware of the specific challenges for men, Danish legislation bears few traces of men's or father's rights.

### 5.3.3 Summary (IL)

Men's perspectives have been omitted from the gender equality debate and the importance of men's role in accomplishing gender equality, has been downplayed in a Danish context. The underlying patriarchal structures have historically been used to focus on women's rights, but only recently the debate has begun to examine how these structures can also have a negative

impact on men. However, men's rights and the concept of men as gendered beings are still not yet considered real equality issues.

As a result, only one organization, The Danish Fathers' Association, can be identified as striving for the particular rights of men and fathers, while numerous organizations exist to aid women and mothers. What is striking about this organization, is that despite its size, importance and age, it does not receive any noteworthy state funding. However, the organization is considered credible enough to have been invited by the former government to participate in the 2013 appointed council concerning reserved paternity leave.

A tendency towards viewing women as disadvantaged can be identified in Danish gender and family legislation. From 1922 onwards, women gained custody of the children, and even today only 13% of children within dissolved families live together with their father.

This same tendency can be identified within leave schemes, where mothers have been increasingly granted longer reserved maternity leave since 1903, while fathers were granted two weeks leave in 1984, which since then has not been extended.

In the labor market all legislation has focused on women's rights and presently some degree of positive special treatment is accepted in order to balance the gendered labor market. From an overall gender equality perspective this development has been necessary to secure women and mothers rights that they did not previously hold, but it could be argued that the current approach does not leave room for a discussion concerning men's rights.

The same path can be said to have been followed in this case over the years with a focus on securing women's rights in both the public and private sphere - a natural and necessary development. But following this path has automatically left out fathers and their right to their own children.

## 5.4 The unconscious constitution of stereotypical gender roles (IL)

A report from 2015 by the Danish Fathers' Association points towards several areas where the public authorities perform accepted gender discrimination (Danish Fathers' Association, 2015) which could be said to constitute and maintain traditional gender roles with the mother as the primary caregiver and the father as either the breadwinner and/or the secondary caregiver. The report cites several instances of discrimination, three of which are referenced below as they are thesis relevant:

1. Public authorities automatically send child related information to the mother, rather than addressing it to both parents or to the father
2. Extended parental leave is reserved of the mother, and not the father
3. Most local governments provide family groups for the mother and child after birth, but only very rarely offer actual family groups for both father, mother and child. The

family groups are usually formed and supervised by a nurse employed by the local government (Danish Fathers' Association, 2015: 4-5).

In addition, national research conducted within the area of family life has a tendency towards sending surveys to only the mother in the family, or of only interviewing the mothers. Thereby numerous public statistics are based only on female answers as data about and from the father is simply not collected (Danish Fathers' Association, 2015: 8)

Four instances are presented below in which accepted gender discrimination is performed. This discrimination is not performed at a conscious level, since it would be against Danish legislation, but instead exemplifies how Danish politics contribute to the constitution and maintenance of outdated stereotypical gender roles.

#### 5.4.1 Communication to parents (IL)

A 2015 report from the Danish Human Rights Institute demonstrates how public authorities communicate with parents who have shared custody of their child(ren). The report was created after several judgments were made by Ligebehandlingsnævnet (The Council for Equal Treatment) stating that it is illegal discrimination when local governments send information about the child to only the mother (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2015: 4-6).

Public authorities have a *mainstream obligation* and are obligated to promote gender equality and incorporate gender equality into all planning and public administration (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2015: 8).

Regardless, it is predominantly the mother who receives information from the public authorities, primarily due to either ignorance or technical obstacles, such as the system only allow one recipient of e-mails. However, the report states that 85% of Danish parents wish that all information was sent to both parents (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2015: 31). The Human Rights Institute calls this practice outdated and states that through their actions, the public authorities send an archaic signal that is out of date with everyday life among Danish families and perpetuates the stereotype that men and women have different tasks and roles in society. The concluding point in the report is, that from a gender equality perspective, all public authorities should engage in practice that reflects that a child has two equal parents instead of exercising against equal treatment gender rules (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2015: 5).

### 5.4.2 Lack of reserved paternity leave constitutes norms (IL)

As presented in the historical section, mothers are currently granted 14 weeks maternity leave, while fathers are granted two weeks paternity leave, both of which are reserved by law. All attempts to legally reserve more weeks of the shared parental leave for the father have failed within parliament mainly due to the liberal argument of free choice within the family and the resistance towards governmental coercion. Laws create a strong normative basis which the majority of individuals tend to adopt. This lack of government sanctioned support can be said to influence the choice of parents when dividing the 32 weeks, which can be shared, between them as Danish fathers take up only 7.5 % of the total leave (FIU, 2014: 4).

Figure 5.6: Attempts at introducing reserved paternity leave

	Proposal no.	Proposed by	Proposal for reserved paternity leave	Result of voting
December 15 <sup>th</sup> 2005	B53	SF	3 months	Was not voted for
January 24 <sup>th</sup> 2006	B66	EL, SF, S, R	12 weeks	50 in favour, 60 against
December 14 <sup>th</sup> 2007	B27	EL, SF, S, R	12 weeks	51 in favour, 62 against
November 30 <sup>th</sup> 2012	B35	EL	12 weeks	8 in favour, 104 against
April 8 <sup>th</sup> 2014	B103	SF	12 weeks	Was not voted for
December 19 <sup>th</sup> 2014	B48	SF	12 weeks	18 in favour, 90 against

Source: www.ft.dk

As outlined above, the proposal to secure fathers 12 weeks of paternity leave has been proposed six times during the last 12 years, but has been far from the majority of votes on each occasion, with a decreasing amount of politicians voting in favor of the proposal. Reserving 14 weeks for the mother and only two for the father, indicates that the mother is more important than the father. Leave schemes contribute to the social construction of parenthood and thereby to the conception of what constitutes normal gender roles. Tine Rostgaard and Mette Lausten put it like this: “....*the mere construction of leave policies is thus believed to contribute to newly institutionalized practices and roles as well as norms and preferences, and in this case, thus positively or negatively also affects leave take-up*” (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 279). It has been demonstrated in the other Nordic countries that reserved paternity leave creates the norm that fathers should take leave to care for their baby. It also influences the relations between the parents, when the mother has to ‘give up’ some of her rights (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 280).

When general leave was extended to 52 weeks in 2002, it was a window of opportunity for implementing reserved paternity leave. As that path was not followed and makes it even more unlikely that it will be changed in the future (Borchorst, 2015: 163). With the currently low rate of uptake of paternity leave in Denmark, it can be argued in parliament that Danish men are simply not interested in better rights, and the situation becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### 5.4.3 Formation of network groups for mothers and babies (IL)

In Denmark most local governments offer network groups for mothers and babies after birth<sup>2</sup>. (Danish Fathers' Association, 2015: 5). Until recently, these groups for mothers and babies had been the only public offer available to families with newborn children for networking and counselling, along with receiving home visits from a healthcare practitioner. Recently a few Danish municipalities have introduced a new concept of family groups, including the fathers, known as 'Familieiværksætterne'<sup>3</sup>. The aim of this concept has been to support families with social challenges in pairing them with more resourceful families, but a side effect has been, that the father has been given a more important role in the family due to inclusion in the groups. Some municipalities offer these family groups as a supplement to the traditional groups for mothers, whereas a few others have abolished the traditional groups (Ostrynski, 2015).

Else Guldager, a nurse with a PhD in health and medical science, has participated in the development of the new family groups and provides insight into their creation. Some municipalities have discovered that including fathers in the early childhood development is important and can reduce the level of familial conflict and divorce (Ostrynski, 2015). Research from Sweden shows that small children who have a close, active and early connection with their father, benefit positively in the long run (Guldager & Andersen, 2015).

Traditionally all information about babies has been given from the various health professionals to the mother, who has then passed the information on to the father (Ostrynski, 2015). During the pregnancy, the expectant father does not hold any legal rights to take time off from work to participate in appointments with health professionals. This places the father in a secondary position, compared to the mother, and leaves the father behind from a very early stage of the baby's life, the roles are set even before the baby is born (Guldager & Andersen, 2015). Since Danish fathers do not hold the legal right to extended leave, most only stay at home two weeks after the birth, which is too little time to really get used to the new role as a father and again place them on the sideline (Guldager & Andersen, 2015). It seems like there is a general consensus, backed by the action of the state, about the mother's exclusive rights to the baby during the first year. A right which at the same time keeps the father away from the children (Ostrynski, 2015). It can be argued, that the accepted discrimination of fathers, funded by the state, excludes the fathers from both

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<sup>2</sup> In Danish these groups are known as 'Mødregruppe' and usually consist of 6 mothers from the same local area, who had babies around the same time. The groups are formed by a local healthcare practitioner or nurse employed by the local government who will also participate in meetings on a regular basis (Sundhed.dk, n.d.)

<sup>3</sup> 'Familieiværksætterne' (in English 'Family Entrepreneurs') was developed by an NGO called 'Center for Socialt Ansvar' (in English 'Center for Social Responsibility') and is inspired by the Swedish concept called 'Leksandmodellen' (Familieiværksætterne, n.d.).



knowledge, time with their children, network with other fathers and holds them in a traditional stereotypical male role. At the same time it also keeps the mother in a traditional role in a central position with the main responsibility for the children and the one who knows the best (Guldager & Andersen, 2015).

#### 5.4.4 Family cash benefits (IL)

Another area where the public authorities unconsciously contribute to the shaping of fatherhood, and thereby gender roles, is fiscally, in terms of the family cash benefits available to families with children (Hakorvirta et.al., 2016: 79). In Denmark, the public authorities are challenged by the social changes in partnership formation and parenting practices. The society has moved away from the male breadwinner model to the dual earner/dual carer model, but in some ways Denmark does not recognize the rights of the father in the child benefit system (Hakorvirta et.al., 2016: 92). In Denmark families with children receive a cash benefit every three months from the state. This benefit is automatically paid into the bank account of the mother in cases where both parents live together with the child. This principle of transfer is more in line with the old male breadwinner model and goes against the current situation in Danish society with the dual earner/dual carer model which presumes an egalitarian partnership between the mother and father, who share in both caring and providing for their children (Hakorvirta et.al., 2016: 81). This historical legacy, which leaves the father out of both caring and providing for the child, bears traces from older times when the father was assumed to be the sole breadwinner. The family cash benefit system does not recognize the rights of fathers in some ways and by extension demonstrates that old ideals continue to dominate policy in Denmark (Hakorvirta et.al., 2016: 84). The presumably unconscious practice in this case clearly shows how fathers' roles can be minimized by state action.

#### 5.4.5 Summary (IL)

Based on values from liberal feminism, Danish public authorities currently perform socially accepted gender discrimination towards fathers, which can be said to constitute and maintain traditional parental gender roles. The current tendency is towards perceiving the mother as the primary caregiver and in best case scenarios, the father as the secondary. As cited by The Human Rights Institute, the practice of local governments sending child related post to only the mother, sends an outdated signal about the expected gender roles in the family, as 85% of the parents surveyed, wish post was sent to both parents. While this practice has been judged as against Danish legislation, it is still being practiced today. The political resistance towards reserving fathers paternity leave, while accepting 14 weeks as reserved for the mother, in itself constitutes the normative perception of traditional

gender roles; the mother should be the primary caregiver and is considered of greater value to the family. With law acting as a strong normative institution, Danish parents are expected to conform to these familial norms in which the role of fatherhood is minimized. Fathers currently only take 7.5 % of reserved leave, and this places the father at a secondary position in relation to the children from a very early age in their development, as does the culture of forming network groups for mothers and newborn babies. The role that the health care practitioner has traditionally played in Danish families has unfortunately enhanced the traditional norms, as; visits are paid to the mother, important information is only given to the mother, and the mother is counselled in the network group. In combination, these practices confer upon the mother the title of child care expert, who has to then supervise the father and pass on the information.

The cash family benefits, which are received every three months, are automatically transferred into the bank account of the mother. In this manner, it diminishes the rights of fathers and show how old ideals continue to dominate policy in Denmark.

It must be concluded that these instances of public authority practice have proven very durable. While it is difficult to estimate the impact these norms have on the lived lives of parents, it is assumed to be of great importance.

## 5.5 Gender equality politics as a low status area (IL)

As previously mentioned, gender equality is considered a core value in Danish culture, and is generally viewed as a source of pride amongst Danes. As stated on the frontpage of the Ministry of Gender Equality:

*“Gender equality is a basic value in Danish society. Gender equality ensures that everyone, regardless of gender, has the same opportunities and rights in society. It ensures that women and men, boys and girls have the opportunity to unfold their potential and participate in society.”*

(Ligestillingsministeriet, n.d.)

However, a paradox exists when it comes to the politics of gender equality as it is not considered a legitimate argument within political debate in a Danish context. It is also worth noting, that the political areas of family/children and gender equality are not connected in political negotiations (Borchorst, 2015: 164).

Gender equality has become a subject which is not important to discuss, since consensus maintains that Denmark already holds full gender equality. Gender and equality is not considered a legitimate policy cause and only rarely becomes a topic of political debate during election campaigns (Borchorst et. al, 2014:1).

Gender equality in Denmark is considered an important part of the national history, but at the same time there is a hesitation towards implementing laws to further enhance gender equality, which results in a discrepancy between discourse and practice, as well as, between political objectives and concrete legislation (Borchorst et.al, 2014: 2).

In general, gender equality as a political concern has been absent within the political parties and it is an issue of low priority today. This can be explained because the issue of gender equality was originally formulated from the bottom-up by a strong women's movement which does not exist today (Borchorst et. al, 1999: 287).

Within a Danish context, gender equality policies are symbolic in nature and do not form an ideological foundation constituting an underlying rationale for policy development in Denmark. There is a general consensus of the need for action, but in practice little is being done (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 282).

The following three features of Danish politics are presented as having specific influence on the way gender equality politics are currently being performed in Denmark.

### 5.5.1 The separation of two joint political areas (IL)

In the late 1970's there was a short focus in Denmark on the need to work together in the political areas of family and gender equality. This never transpired and since the 1990's no collective political focus has been given on the joint considerations of family and gender equality as two interconnected areas. Political debates on child care and parental leave are discussed in isolation of each other (Borchorst, 2015: 164).

The consequences of not having a joint policy means that child care is handled by one ministry, parental leave by another and gender equality by a third. As a result, often the focus is not jointly on gender and equality when negotiating the rights of maternity leave, or access to and/or the quality of child care (Borchorst et. al, 2014: 2).

This can serve as an explanation as to why the focus on fathers' rights and the impact paternity leave could have on gender equality is absent from the debate.

### 5.5.2 The placement and status of the gender equality ministry (IL)

The first minister of gender equality in Denmark was appointed in 1999 and until 2001 the portfolio was situated under the Ministry of Building and Housing. Since then, the responsibility has frequently been moved between the changing ministries as shown below:

Figure 5.7: Ministerial portfolio

Ministerial portfolio		Ranking
1999-2001	Building and Housing	20
2001-2007	Social Affairs	10
2007-2009	Welfare	10
2009-2010	Employment	11
2010-2011	Energy and Climate	19
2011-2014	Church	29
2014-2015	Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs	10
2015-2016	Children, Education and Gender Equality	14
2016-	Nordic affairs and Gender Equality	28

Source: Jørn Busch Olsen & Druckman/Warwick, 2015

The late appointment of a minister of gender equality and the constant shuffling of the portfolio indicates the low importance ascribed to the political area of gender equality.

In 2005, Druckman and Warwick conducted research in Western European countries, attempting to establish a cross national rating on the importance and status of cabinet posts, including the policy payoffs which are expected from each portfolio. They reference the difference in portfolio salience across countries, but also establish the understanding of how the prime ministership ranks highest in all countries, followed by finance, foreign affairs, and interior portfolios in differing configurations (Druckman & Warwick, 2005: 33-35). The underlying motivation for the research is to examine how these key government portfolios constitute payoff based on the influence these portfolios exert over policy decisions (Druckman & Warwick, 2005: 17).

What is particularly relevant in this study is the rating for Denmark that has been given to the ministerial portfolios under which gender equality has been placed since a minister was first appointed in 1999 (refer to overview above). In total Denmark holds 31 portfolios with the traditional portfolios ranking highest; first the prime minister, followed by finance, foreign affairs, environment, and then economic affairs. Gender equality which was once included in the higher ranking social affairs, has now been relegated to the portfolio of Nordic affairs, which ranks number 28 out of 31 (Druckman & Warwick, 2005: 37).

### 5.5.3 Dismantling the national councils (IL)

Since the mid 1960's national councils have been appointed to counsel Danish governments, and to process complaints from individuals or organizations on gendered discrimination. KVINFO, which is a self-governing institution working with issues relating to gender and acting as a central gathering point for research and information on equality (KVINFO, n.d. b). The organization is financed partly by public funding but also from private foundations (KVINFO, n.d. a). In the spring of 2017 the government debated if they should stop public funding for KVINFO, in whole or in part in 2018. The Human Rights Institute is also a self-governing institution which counsels government, parliament, ministries and public authorities about issues related to human rights, and publish reports on gender equality. The Human Rights Institute is state funded and serves in an advisory capacity when new legislation is suggested (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, n.d.). In 2015 the institute received 11.3 million DKK specifically reserved for work within the areas of gender, ethnicity, and disability issues (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, n.d.). Ligebehandlingsnævnet (The Board of Equal Treatment) is an independent board returning verdicts on cases about discrimination based on gender or ethnicity both within and outside of the labor market (Ankestyrelsen, n.d.). Below is an overview of the councils which have existed since 1965:

Figure 5.8: The rise and fall of councils

The rise and fall of councils		Abolished	Tasks
1965	Kvindekommissionen	1974	Study women's position in society and make proposals for legislation to promote gender equality (Lous, n.d.)
1975	Ligestillingsrådet	2000	Responsible for gender equality legislation and process complaints in relation thereto (Harding, n.d.)
1982	KVINFO (The government is currently planning to close this institution)	2018?	Administers a library and documents research on gender, equality and diversity
2000	Videnscenter for Ligestilling	2002	To inform about and debate gender equality in order to incorporate gender equality in all public administration
2000	Ligestillingsnævnet	2009	Process complaints about discrimination in relation to gender
2009	Ligebehandlingsnævnet		Process complaints about discrimination in relation to gender, race, religion, political view, sexual orientation, handicap, etc.
2011	Human Rights Institute		The institute is appointed the national centre for gender equality and equal treatment

Source: Borchorst & Dahlerup, 2015: 237-241

No organization or institution is (or has ever been) publicly appointed to work with fathers' rights or gender equality from the male perspective. As the government has a tendency towards closing councils working with gender equality, it is highly unlikely that public funding will be dedicated to this area soon.

#### 5.5.4 Summary (IL)

A paradox exists between perception and reality in terms of Danish values regarding gender equality, as the issue is not considered a legitimate policy cause and undertakes a symbolic rather than ideological status within public debate and political objectives.

It seems natural to combine the portfolios of children, family and gender equality in the cabinet, but historically these issues have been separate, and there was only a focus on joining them in the 1970's. The consequence being that these issues are debated separately in parliament. As the areas are not viewed as interconnected, important aspects can be overlooked; which may explain the absence of focus on the particular interests of men and fathers.

The first minister of gender equality was not appointed until 1999 and the portfolio is frequently shifted between different ministries. According to European research from 2005, gender equality is frequently placed within ministries of low importance. A variety of national councils have been appointed throughout the years to work with gender equality. Today, only one publicly administered institution, Ligebehandlingsnævnet, remains, which is a complaint processing service.

The task of counselling government, parliament, ministries, and public authorities about issues related to gender equality, also in relation to new legislation, is outsourced to the Human Rights Institute. Publishing reports on gender equality is another area of their responsibility and the institute does in fact publish reports on fathers' interests and rights in general. In the spring of 2017 it was heavily debated if the liberal government should withdraw public funding to several parts of KVINFO's work. For decades KVINFO has been the most important institution within gender research and knowledge provision and this funding cut would result in closing the core of KVINFO's work.

From the traces identified here, a path dependency can be identified with gender equality being constituted as a low status and low prioritized area. The issue of gender equality does not form an important arena of action which can provide solid solutions to actual challenges and create change. The paradox is that gender equality is considered of central value in Danish culture, but in practice, all knowledge, action, and focus is being downgraded as

insignificant. Little is being accomplished in Danish politics and this signal enhances existing norms to a large degree.

## 5.6 The dominant liberal view (IL)

Today the dominant view in Denmark, among both politicians and voters, is that gender equality already exists and is therefore not worth debating. This can be connected to the the dual breadwinner model, which is the dominant equality strategy followed in Denmark, (Borchorst, 2015: 164). In other words, gender equality is not an issue which raises concern amongst either the public or politicians. In fact most decisions on gender equality policy in Denmark have been met with a strong consensus between the political parties. (Borchorst et.al, 1999: 287).

Whenever the topic of reserved paternity leave is debated in Denmark, the traditional liberal view postulated is that legal interference in this area is seen as state coercion and against the free choice of the individual. The father's portion of the leave is considered a private decision to be resolved within the family unit. Even the Social Democrats adopt this view, which contrasts against their own basic ideology, when opinion polls show how the public perceives reserved paternity leave as coercion (Rostgaard & Lausten, 2016: 285-86 + 297).

The combination of the liberal belief in free choice, an undogmatic left wing that is also opposed to too much top-down steering from above, and the political will of consensus constitutes the current situation of a political vacuum (Borchorst et. al, 1999: 287). Nothing is being done and no one seems to care. Traditionally the debate has been between a left-wing focus on equal rights vs. a liberal focus on equal opportunities, or the free choice vs. the need for gender equality. However, both the left and the right wing are now embracing the free choice argument. Yet these same parties that raise concerns regarding free choice for fathers do not seem particularly concerned about the free choice of mothers. who are reserved 14 weeks of maternity leave.

### 5.6.1 Financial consequences (IL)

Classic liberal arguments against reserved paternity leave often cite the potential economic repercussions for both the private and public sphere. A council appointed by the former government. in 2013 was issued with the following task:

*“Analyze the potential consequences for private and public employers’ economy and the public finances by a change in the take up of leave in the families.”*

(Beskæftigelsesministeriet, 2013: 76)

The council report concluded that if all fathers take the full suggested amount of reserved paternity leave, which is 12 weeks, the total financial consequence for the state would be 200 million. DKK. The economic consequences for each individual family would depend upon which collective agreement the parents were employed under. So the economic situation for the families can be left unchanged or it can decline (Beskæftigelsesministeriet, 2013: 87-88).

However, this liberal argument fails to consider the positive economic consequences associated with increased paternity leave. As previously mentioned, both Danish and Swedish research demonstrates a positive correlation between the father's use of paternity leave and the risk of family dissolution. With the very high degree of family dissolutions in Denmark, and the resulting huge cost for the state, it is remarkable that this positive economic gain has not been taken into consideration when compiling these economic figures. In 2012, the overall percentage of divorces was 46.5 % (Danmarks Statistik, 2013). Research has not yet been conducted in Denmark, but Statistics Denmark estimate that each dissolved family with children cost the state around 70,000 DKK per year in different subsidies and funding. A total estimated cost for the state is around 3 billion DKK per year (Rasmussen, 2005).

### 5.6.2 Summary (IL)

The traditional liberal view on father's quotas as being state coercion, against the free choice of the individual has become dominant ideological stance in Danish society today. Sharing parental leave is considered a choice to be made by the individual family unit. This result is a good example of how an institution informs public perception and how this norm directly affects the use of paternal leave by men. The norm is so strongly internalized that it negates the challenges facing the uneven distribution of unpaid household labor and also constitutes definitions of motherhood and fatherhood along stereotypical lines. With this liberal argument in mind, it would be logical if the 14 weeks of reserved maternity leave was abandoned in the name of the free choice, but surprisingly this argument is seldom heard as gender equality politics is permeated by a resistance towards top-down steering in accordance with liberal feminism.

An additional liberal argument against reserved paternity leave is the negative economic consequences which were analyzed by a council appointed in 2013, the conclusion being that 12 weeks of reserved paternity leave would cost the state a maximum of 200 million DKK annually. However, this liberal argument fails to consider the positive economic consequences as research shows a positive correlation between the take up of paternity leave and the diminished risk of being divorced. The current divorce rate in Denmark is very high



and by extension, very costly for the state due to subsidies and benefits which single parents can claim.

As liberal arguments are not met with relevant counterarguments in the public sphere, the issue is not presented nor examined from all relevant angles and affects the manner in which paternity leave is considered and debated. These omissions contribute to the negative associations regarding reserved paternity leave which both directly influence and affect the lived lives of families with children.

## 5.7 Partial Conclusion (IL)

Many traces have been identified in the empirical material pointing in the direction of an explanation of the dependent variable: Why Denmark holds no legal right for reserved paternity leave. The evidences stem from path dependency of the conducted gender equality strategy, an underlying hegemonic masculinity, or a combination of these two. The variables all seem to be interconnected in a path dependency constituting existing norms leaving institutions unchanged.

When implementing historical institutionalism in the process tracing it becomes apparent that all five hypotheses can be validated. A strong path dependency is characterized within Danish gender equality politics, stemming from the norms of hegemonic masculinity and the perception of women as disadvantaged. Stereotypical gender roles are reinforced with the mother assumed as the primary caregiver, while the father is viewed as the primary breadwinner.

The path dependency leaves no room for the focus on the rights of the father, and this lack interplays with the current situation of diminishing gender equality. Men's rights are constituted against the rights of women instead of viewing the two fields as interconnected and sharing common interests.

The causal chain and the hypotheses are both confirmed through process tracing with historical institutionalism acting as the explanatory factor. Danish gender equality politics follows the path dependency of perceiving women as disadvantaged and securing their rights by law but a paradox exists as these assumptions are based on patriarchal structures, which hold women to stereotypical norms of gender roles.

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn from the traces analyzed above in relation to the hypotheses:

- Since the 1960's gender equality politics has followed the dual-breadwinner strategy aiming to make women economically independent. This very narrow view on gender equality leaves gender roles in stasis and does not include focus on the rights of men

or fathers. The path dependency is strong and no critical junctures have yet to change this path. This incomplete view of gender equality provides the Danish case with certain features, which have been traced in the previous section:

- With the very high percentage of Danish women in the workforce, a mission accomplished attitude has spread on the view of gender equality.
  - The field has been neglected in the political arena and the consequence is that Denmark is falling behind other countries in international comparisons/
  - As gender equality in a Danish context is paralleled with equal opportunities for workforce participation, no focus has been applied to the situation within the private sphere
  - As gender equality, has been reached in Danish public opinion, there is not an impetus do more. Thus, the path of the strategy must be reconstituted.
- 
- Through history, gender equality in Denmark has been centered around securing women's rights, since they are considered disadvantaged. Even today, this seems to be the general point of view when debating gender equality. When focus is shifted to reserved paternity leave, the topic is usually discussed using arguments about women's rights. This constitutes the norm of women as the weaker party, leaving no room for reflection on the interests or rights of men. Traces of this norm can be identified in the fact that:
    - Only one organization working with the rights of men and fathers exists in Denmark and it is primarily funded by private donations
    - Danish law implemented since 1922 on family, gender equality and parental leave is solely concerned with the rights of women
- 
- Danish public authorities enhance stereotypical gender roles, which can be explained by the strong underlying norm of hegemonic masculinity. While it appears to be happening at an unconscious level, it has a huge influence on constituting perceptions of motherhood and fatherhood, as the mother. While the situation is neither legal nor acceptable, it can be traced to the administrative practices of the authorities:
    - Communication about the children is addressed to the mother as the majority of the information provided during pregnancy and post-birth are solely directed towards the mother.
    - Mothers are granted extended rights to maternity leave

- Mothers are offered participation in network groups with other mothers. The father bears no rights to participate in appointments with health professionals and thereby receives all information second hand through the mother
- Family cash benefits are transferred to the bank account of the mother
- In general, gender equality is an area of low importance in Danish politics, and no strong women's or men's movements exist to push for changes. Over time, gender equality has become an area of symbolic value rather than a legitimate policy cause. This contrasts with the Danish self-perception of being world champions within gender equality. Traces of this can be found in the fact that:
  - The interconnected portfolios of children/family and gender equality have always been placed in different cabinets
  - The portfolio of gender equality is regularly shifted around different ministries, but always ministries bearing low status according to Druckman and Warwick
  - The majority of national councils working with gender equality have been dismantled over time
- Danish gender equality politics are increasingly influenced by liberal thoughts about equal opportunities and the importance of free choice. This view permeates the debate both in parliament and among voters and stresses the importance of not forcing equality by law. It is a norm which is enhanced by the unwillingness to take action in parliament.
  - Another liberal trace is that of the financial consequences, which is regularly brought into the debate: Reserving more weeks of paternity leave for fathers is deemed too costly for the state. However, research has shown that prolonged paternity leave increases the pay of women and reduces the gender wage gap, but this fact is seldom taken into consideration. It is difficult to establish where this liberal mindset originates from.

This strong path dependency leaves institutions unchanged which in turn strengthens gender biased norms. It can be argued that these institutionally sanctioned norms constrain the free choice of the individual, even though this is the opposite intended effect of liberal policy. In addition, these traces confirm the path dependency in the causal chain, as these factors are all intertwined and form a self-perpetuating institution of passivity and neglect: The gender equality strategy of the dual-breadwinner model followed in Danish politics forms an important institution of how gender equality is defined, and how equality should be pursued.

Another enduring institution is that of hegemonic masculinity, which creates a normative ideal for fathers to live up to as the breadwinner of the family. This ideal is further perpetuated by laws and the institutional practices of public authorities. Institutions provides a moral or cognitive template for the interpretation and action of the actors and this influence the choices made within the family when dividing parental leave between mothers and fathers. Institutional behavior does not change quickly and the Danish case of reserved paternity leave is a good example of this. Men, however, are taking more paternity leave now than 30 years ago, so the institutions is changing, albeit slowly, as the amount of leave taken by the fathers has been more or less static, at around 10 % over the last 10 years (Danmarks Statistik, 2017).

## 6.0 The dialogue between discourse and norms (EH)

The process tracing analysis has suggested that there is a link between the gender equality strategy that has been adopted in Denmark, and the lack of interest in adopting reserved paternity leave. While the process tracing analysis focused on legal and institutional aspects, the CDA will build further on the foundation that has been created through the process tracing analysis.. This chapter will explore the hegemonic societal discourses in relation to reserved paternity leave. Combined with the results of the process tracing analysis, this will provide a more fully formed analysis of the dynamics contributing to the reserved paternity leave debate (or lack thereof).

### 6.1 Parliamentary debates as communicative events (EH)

The first part of the analysis focused on a historical view combined with process tracing and this second section will continue the traces in the CDA. through the exploration of communicative events over time, to create an image of how the contemporary discourse unfolds.

As politicians are democratically elected and therefore are direct representatives of the general population, the expectation is that parliamentary debates will represent the arguments of the general public. Since 2005 reserved paternity leave have been proposed in parliament six times, leading to five parliamentary debates spread over an eight-year period, which will function as the communicative events for the analysis.

The law-making process in Denmark prescribes that a proposition should be processed three times in parliament before it can be adopted and the initial intent was to incorporate data from all of the debates. As further detailed in chapter 6.1.2, a saturation point was reached when processing and coding data, so the first and the last debate will be focused on during the CDA.

#### 6.1.1 Pre-analysis data processing (EH)

The point of commencement for working with qualitative data, is choosing an analytic approach that can ensure the data be placed in a reliable system. The 1000-pages-question references the challenges of conceiving a system for processing the comprehensive amount of collected material and then using the system to arrive at a valid conclusion. (Jakobsen & Harrits, 2010: 173). Qualitative research is characterized by a wish to say a lot about a little, rather than saying a a little about a lot (Jakobsen & Harrits, 2010: 165). There are no rules about the number of interviews or cases in qualitative research. Rather, the term saturation

point or theoretical saturation is used as guidance for when enough data has been collected. (Bryman, 2004: 403). The term is a component of grounded theory in which data collection is undertaken until the point where further data collection does not contribute any new knowledge (Jakobsen & Harrits, 2010: 165), or no new or relevant data seems to be emerging regarding a category (Bryman, 2004: 305). When working with the pre-analysis data processing, it rapidly became apparent that the saturation point would be reached at an early state. First, a content overview was created by reading through the debates. Inspired by the principles of grounded theory<sup>4</sup>, the data processing was initiated. Grounded theory is a recursive theory concerned with the development of theory from data, in which the data collection and the analysis repeatedly refer back to one another (Bryman, 2004: 401). Coding is the key process in grounded theory, which Fairclough suggests as a method to create an overview (Fairclough, 1992: 230). Coding is the reviewing of empirical data, in this case the debates, and then giving labels to the component parts that have the potential of having theoretical significance to the research field (Bryman, 2004: 402). Generally, there are three types of coding practice: open coding where the data is broken down, axial coding where the data is put back together by linking relevant codes, and selective coding where the core category is selected (Bryman, 2004: 402). Open coding is the approach undertaken in this thesis.

After reviewing all five the debates, the saturation point was reached after going through the second debate. Due to the saturation point, and the excessive amount of data, the CDA focuses on the first debate from 2005 and the last debate from 2014 in order to provide a wider view of the discourse over time. These two debates are the debates that have been processed by coding them for the analysis. We will not get any further into the technicalities of the coding, since the results are not used directly. We only did the coding to create an overview of the data material.

As a practical side note, it is necessary to mention that the debates that will now be analyzed, have been transcribed in Danish. The coding has been done with Danish texts, but for the analysis, the passages used have been translated into English. While concepts are sometimes lost in translation, care has been taken with the translation in order to minimize data loss.

### 6.1.2 Results and overview (EH)

Conducting an open coding resulted in 15 different categories which can be viewed in the appendix. These results are not directly used for the CDA, but have instead assisted in

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<sup>4</sup> Grounded theory as defined by Strauss and Corbin: *'theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship one another'* (Bryman, 2004: 401).

creating an overview for the extensive data material from the five parliamentary debates. The overall topic of all the debates is reserved paternity leave, with the arguments being divided into pros and cons. The pro arguments revolve around the belief that reserved paternity leave will result in more fathers taking a greater part of the parental leave and this will contribute to greater gender equality in several areas. The cons argue that fathers already have the possibility to take their leave if they want to and it should be a free choice for families to divide the leave as they wish. This is a very simplified outline and the following chapter will introduce the discourses actually present in the debate.

Figure 6.1: Overview of arguments in the debate

Supporting reserved paternity leave	Opposing reserved paternity leave
It improves gender equality	It should be a free choice for the families
It makes it easier for fathers to ask for leave within their workplace, and it improves women's position in the labor market	The state should not force families to divide the leave in a certain way
It is the right of the children to spend time with both parents	It can have economic consequences for families
It will help demolish traditional gender roles	

## 6.2 Use of force vs. fathers' rights (EH)

The CDA will follow the three-level model presented by Fairclough: text, discursive practice and social practice. This chapter will begin with the textual analysis. Fairclough does not provide a definitive method for conducting the analysis, but as it is connected with the tradition of linguistics, it can include vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure as analytical tools .

Analyzing vocabulary in a CDA context involves an examination of the wording of the world. An example provided by Fairclough involves using the term freedom fighter vs. terrorist, or sex worker vs. prostitute. In both cases the words describe the same function, but with a negative or positive emphasis put upon the word. By choosing certain words over others, one chooses to depict reality in a certain way, rather than in another way. This contributes to the construction of social identities and social relations (Fairclough, 1992: 76).

When examining the communicative event of the parliamentary debate it becomes clear that the wording here also has a function. A great deal of arguments are presented, but one specific recurring point is that the opponents of the proposal describe reserved paternity leave as the use of coercion. On the other hand, the supporters of the proposal describe it as a right of the fathers, and that it is a question of gender equality. One of the opponents to the proposition is Lars Barfoed, who was family and consumer minister at the time of the debate.

He stated: “*But it is clear that if you **forced** the fathers to go on leave, there would be more fathers who go on leave, that is how it is*” (Folketinget, 2005: 2-3<sup>5</sup>). In another example he states: “*We do not mind **forcing**, neither directly nor indirectly, the fathers to do it.*” (Folketinget, 2005: 5). Force, or the use of power, is generally considered as something negative and unwanted. So, when Lars Barfoed refers to reserved paternity leave as coercion, or as the use of force, he places a negative emphasis on it.

Taking a look at the scheme that the con side advocates, it is promoted with positive wording. The word *flexible* appears several times, when describing why the existing parental leave system should be retained. Lars Barfoed states “*We are in favor of **flexibility** and freedom of choice for families*” (Folketinget, 2005: 2). Flexibility is a positive word, it describes something as being modern and adaptable. So, for the opponents of the proposition, the existing parental leave scheme is assigned positive characteristics in contrast to the negative wording towards the proposal.

Charlotte Dyremose, member of the Conservative People’s Party, is another opponent of the proposal, who with her choice of wording, makes it very clear what her take on reserved paternity leave is: “*We actually think it's an excellent **opportunity**, families have to largely organize **that small matter** themselves.*” (Folketinget, 2014: 14). By referring to the whole parental leave scheme as a small matter, she downplays it. As it is something that is not important. This supports the findings of the process tracing analysis, which shows how gender equality is devalued as a policy area. Also, choosing to describe the existing scheme as giving the family opportunities instead of rights, creates a specific dynamic which will be further elaborated upon during the social practice analysis.

On the other hand, there are supporters of the proposal who frequently use the word rights. Kirsten Brosbøl, the spokesperson of equality for the Socialdemocrats in 2005, states: “*Therefore, there is a need to give men better **rights**.*” (Folketinget, 2005: 7). The word rights describes something that is fundamental. She could have chosen the word opportunities, but by instead choosing ‘rights’, it becomes more serious, concrete and important.

These examples provide us with an insight, that shows what the general picture in the debate looks like. There is the neutral term reserved paternity leave, which simply describes a political instrument, without giving away whether it is something positive or negative. The opponents then charge it with negative connotations, by describing it as the use of force and suggesting that families should have better opportunities for dividing the leave as they wish. On the other hand, the supporters charge it with positive connotations, as something that will provide the father with some fundamental rights.

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that the references Folketinget (2005) and Folketinget (2014) are transcripts and can be found in Appendix 1



Figure 6.2: Connotations

The neutral term: reserved paternity leave	
Supporters:	Opponents:
It gives the father some rights.	Use of force/coercion towards the families.
	Existing scheme creates opportunities.

Fairclough puts emphasis on paying attention to the use of metaphors. *“That is why at many workplaces it takes a great deal of manly courage to kick up the door to the site hut and ask the master for longer parental leave.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 7). Brosbøl here uses the metaphor with the site hut, to make a point. Site huts are more often found in male dominated workplaces such as construction sites, and by using this word she implies that this is a problem at the majority of male dominated workplaces. By using the term manly courage, she refers to the fact that the challenges currently lie in the hands of men, as they themselves have to go and kick the door up, as nobody will do it for them.

Martin Henriksen from the Danish People’s Party also uses metaphor to minimize gender based issues: *“Now you should take care that you do not take things too heavily<sup>6</sup>, but it is true enough, that women in the labor market generally earn a little less than men.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 10). Apparently the things that should not be taken too seriously are gender equality and the gender pay gap as his word choice devalues the scheme, and simultaneously dismisses notion that the gender pay gap is a serious problem that should be fixed. Once again the adjective little to promote his own convictions as there are currently no measures or tables to describe when something is a little or a lot less when it comes to the gender pay gap. However, if you asked a gender equality supporter, he or she would probably say that women earn a lot less.

Özlem Sara Cekic from the Socialist People’s Party supports the proposition, and is the last to speak in the final debate.: *“Fathers must be guaranteed better rights, so that they have a **real** free choice to take paternity leave with their children”* (Folketinget, 2014: 15). Özlem uses the argument, that it is the right of the father to go on parental leave. When she suggests that they should have a *real* free choice, she suggests that the free choice advocated for by her opponents is not de facto free. During several other parts of the debates, it is suggested that there are gender roles that hinder fathers from taking their part of the parental leave,

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<sup>6</sup> This is a metaphoric expression translated directly from Danish. The Danish phrase is ‘tage tingene for tungt’. A more correct translation would be ‘take things too seriously’, but then the metaphor would be lost in translation

and her above statement suggests that there are some structures that hinder the choice to be free.

As vocabulary can direct a certain view of reality, so can grammar. More specifically, when an individual makes specific choices concerning the structure and design of sentences, they are also making choices concerning how social identities, social relations and knowledge- and attitude questions are constructed (Fairclough, 1992: 76).

Anne Grete Holmsgaard, also from the Socialist People's Party, continues the argument: "*No, the proposition is not about the use of force. It is about legal protection of the woman, it is about rights for the father, and it is about rights for the children.*" (Folketinget, 2005: 18).

Cohesion deals with how clauses are linked together into sentences and in this case rhetorical instruments are used to emphasize the argument. By repeatedly starting the clause with *it is about*, a certain flow and rhythm is created in the sentence. which cements the argument, or the point, within the receiver.

### 6.3 Discursive practice in the debates (EH)

While the text analysis is usually more descriptive, the analysis will now focus on the discursive practice which is often more interpretive. But as highlighted in chapter 4.2.4, there are no sharp divisions between the different levels, or dimensions, of the CDA. The analysis has already utilized interpretive device, by suggesting that Özlem Sara Cekic refers to gender roles and that Charlotte Dyremose does not think parental leave is a very important matter, but this section will be extend the interpretive elaboration. When analyzing discursive practice, Fairclough suggests that the processes of text consumption, production and distribution should be included (Fairclough, 1992: 78).

Text production is the first element which will be focused upon. The parliamentary debates are transcribed by staff in Folketinget, and published on their website<sup>7</sup>. When researching the debates, it was discovered that no author is stated in the document or on the website. Therefore the institution of Folketinget produces the debates, although the constituting parts of the sample are a contribution from the members of Folketinget characterized as political debate constructed within a set frame of rules and norms. When viewing the manifest intertextuality it is apparent that a grey area exists between the discursive practice and the text, which spans from what is included in the production of the text to what lies on the surface of the text (Fairclough, 1992: 233). Traditionally, irony to communicate the opposite meaning of what is being said, however, it can also be used to distance oneself from another's statement (Fairclough, 1992: 123). Irony is used several times in the debates. An

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<sup>7</sup> www.ft.dk

example of which, is Martin Henriksen from the Danish People's Party stating: *"I have to admit that I had some thoughts of my own when I read the proposal. I was wondering if you might also legislate whether the man should do the dishes one day, and the woman should do them the next day, but that is perhaps taking it a bit too far."* (Folketinget, 2005: 9). Henriksen creates an ironic distance to the actual proposal by ridiculing it, as he compares legislation regarding the division of parental leave with legislation about the division of domestic work in private homes. The use of irony purports that the proposition is unthinkable and by incorporating it into the text production, it creates a general discourse of ridicule towards the proposition.

Another example of irony comes from Charlotte Dyremose: *"So we think it is excellent that there is no majority for this, and therefore you can also be tempted on this occasion to praise the government for this, which I think is one of the most outstanding breaches of promises that the government has performed."* (Folketinget, 2014: 14). The use of irony here is more to create ironic distance, as Dyremose uses irony to distance herself from the former government<sup>8</sup>. She does this by implying that the government has had several breaches of promises, and therefore the government is devalued. The statement is ironic because a breach of promise is not something positive, yet she states that she is tempted to praise the government. This is stated in an ironic way, as she is in opposition to the government, and therefore a political opponent and it would require a lot before starting to praise an opponent.

When performing a distribution analysis, there is no specific receiver, or target group for the material, but rather, the framework in which the text is produced and consumed in is examined. While the debate took place in Folketinget, and there were probably only the other politicians and possibly some audience members present. But as the transcripts of the debates in Folketinget are freely available to the general public, it is expected that anyone who has an interest in the matter is the target group. As the material is a direct transcript of what has been stated in the debate, the transcripts can be viewed as a direct expression of the opinions of the participating politicians. Within the intertextual chain, the sample does not undergo any transformation, and therefore is stable.

The conditions of material distribution bear the consequence that even though it is a debate between politicians, the speakers are aware that the debate will be transcribed and published. The outcome being that politicians are addressing both, the other politicians as well as the general public. As consumers of the text, it cannot be assumed that readers have access to the reasoning behind the arguments being used, but it can be assumed that there

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<sup>8</sup> She is referring to the government of Helle Thorning Schmidt I (2011-2014), that had reserved paternity leave as a part of the governmental programme, but later dropped it

are some things that are not being said. When politicians speak in a public place like the parliament, they must take into consideration that they will be held accountable for their statements, which results in an interpretive implication for text coherence.

## 6.4 Text and subtext (EH)

For the social practice analysis, the discourse is placed in relation to existing ideology and power. As Foucault states, silence is what one declines to say; it is an active deselection. But Foucault also argues that silence functions with and in relation to what is actually being said, as a part of an overall strategy. After having intensively studied the debates, it becomes apparent that there are two aspects to them - text: what is being said, and subtext: what is not being said. By analyzing the text, inferences will be made regarding sub textual meaning as both aspects are interdependent.

### 6.4.1 Liberal feminism vs. modern equality feminism (EH)

Chapter 3.2 described two different types of feminist belief systems: liberal feminism and modern equality feminism, which will now be connected to the debates. As the social democrat Kirsten Brosbøl outlines: *“I think the debate very clearly shows the difference between the bourgeois attitude towards gender equality and the social-democratic perception of how we can achieve more equality. The schism is whether or not you are willing to take some initiatives that can create change, or you think equality has to be left to the private sphere and therefore accepts the enormously slow progress, which we apparently agree is desirable. I think that is very clear from the debate.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 13-14). Liberal feminism builds on the belief that the both genders should have equal legal rights and the state should play a minimal role, as individual freedom is valued very highly. Within the belief system of modern equality feminism, the state is an important actor, and should function as a security net. through law and policy making.. Of specific importance is the belief that women should be able to gain economic independence. Equal opportunities are not enough, and outcome equality is essential. Gender is viewed as a social construction and stereotypical gender roles are seen as a obstruction to reaching gender equality.

The negative connotation that is being assigned to the concept of reserved paternity leave, describing it as the use of force, matches the belief system of liberal feminism. Opponents praise the existing system, assigning it positive connotations such as flexibility, opportunity and free choice. As previously demonstrated, opponents of reserved paternity leave have used irony to distance themselves from the proposition. Through ridicule, they imply that it is silly, inconsequential and unnecessary. Within the liberal feminism there is a perception

that gender is not important and the effort you make determines your status and possibilities. *“The starting point must be that when we say that fathers should have the opportunity to take leave - which they have received, and it has been rising and more flexible with the government’s proposal - then it is a sign that fathers are given the opportunity to take leave in the same way as the mother.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 4). Lars Barfoed here explains why there is no need for reserved paternity leave as he is referring to the fact that both parents have equal opportunities for dividing the leave. However, the problem is not equal opportunity, it is that workplace norms hinder fathers from taking the amount of leave that they desire. In other words, Barfoed ascribes to liberal feminist ideology and does not accept the premise that norms and gender roles exist as barriers.

On the other hand there are the supporters of the proposal, that assign positive connotations to the concept of reserved paternity leave. Kirsten Brosbøl argues that: *“We believe that with legislation we can break some of the established gender role patterns, which today constitute a major barrier for fathers taking paternity leave. We believe that it will promote a favorable development, as it has done in those countries that have experience with reserved paternity leave, for the benefit of the Danish families with children and for equality in the labor market and at home.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 7). Brosbøl states that certain gender roles create norms in the labor market, and that these norms hinder general gender equality. Reserved paternity leave will help to change the existing gender roles and norms, and enforce gender equality. Modern equality feminism strives to reach gender equality, the ideal being equality of outcome, through law and policy making.

Another example of modern equality feminism is the statement by Eigil Andersen from the Socialist People’s Party. *“Therefore, I would like to ask the spokesperson whether the spokesperson can see a perspective in that the legislation can help move some gender roles in a positive direction towards greater gender equality.”* (Folketinget, 2014: 7). Andersen argues that reserved paternity leave should be enforced because it will change traditional gender roles. Modern equality feminism would approve of the use of reserved paternity leave as a political instrument, as it is an instrument used to move towards greater gender equality.

Briefly summarized, the line of argument followed by reserved paternity leave opponents fits into the system of the liberal feminism, while the arguments of supporters fits into the system of the modern equality feminism.

#### 6.4.2 Subtext (EH)

It has been demonstrated how the opponents and the supporters lines of argument respectively fit within the belief systems of liberal feminism and modern equality feminism.

Moving on to subtext, the focus shifts to the hypothesis that the hegemonic masculinity ideal is the gender ideal in Danish society, explaining why reserved paternity leave has not yet been enforced. The hegemonic masculinity ideal is influenced by the interrelation between social classes, in which one social class (in this case men) claims the leading position in social life. The hegemonic masculinity ideal legitimizes patriarchy, which then guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. In some areas the line of argumentation from the opponents is missing some links. We anticipate that there are some underlying structures, or ideals, that does not show on the surface. In the following, we will test this.

In the beginning of this CDA, Özlem Sara Cekic indicated that the existing system of parental leave does not present families with a real free choice. To continue her quote from the previous text analysis: *“They should not be discredited at work for their choice, but have the right to be a part of their children’s upbringing from the start. Studies show that the tradition of men’s parental leave at work places, has a great impact on men’s choice in terms of parental leave.”* (Folketinget, 2014: 15). Previously she stated that the current division of parental leave is not really a free choice. Now she advocates that there is a problem with the societal norms, as the existing norms hinder fathers from taking parental leave. Anne Grete Holmsgaard, also from The Socialist People’s Party, addresses the norm problematics: *“They (the men) are facing some habits, some norms and rules, that does mean they have great difficulties in breaking through the problems.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 18). She also stresses that the norms are the biggest hurdle which supports the theory that it is the hegemonic masculinity ideal that is the ruling ideal. The dominant position of the male is attained through honor, prestige, material and economic dividends. Therefore, the father should participate in the labor market, and the mother take care of the children; although this sentiment is not outwardly articulated by the opponents.

As mentioned in the process tracing analysis, this area can be characterized as a policy area that is applied only symbolic value. When the leave scheme is being referred to as a small matter, it communicates that it is a topic that is not to be taken very seriously.

As a defense against supporters and their claim that the proposition will improve fathers’ rights, Lars Barfoed raises the question as to whether it is the women’s or men’s equality that is being discussed. *“But when we talk about fathers right to leave, which the government has improved with the scheme we implemented in 2002, one must agree with themselves: Is it the fathers’ equality we are discussing, or is it women’s equality we are discussing? You can see it from both angles.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 4). Viewed from an interpretive stance, it seems that he sees a need to separate gender equality into two categories, while the opposition argues that legislating reserved paternity leave, improves gender equality for both men and women. As Barfoed divides gender into two different systems, this can by extension

imply that his belief system is more traditional. While it is not explicitly stated, he views gender in a stereotypical and traditional way.

The line of argument from the opponents is inconsistent, and this suggests that there might be a hidden agenda. At another point in the debate, Lars Barfoed says: *“But it does not mean that the families themselves choose it. Then it is a sign that there is a majority here in Folketinget that said: We know better than the families themselves, what is good for them, and that is why we say that those fathers should just take the leave, and if they do not do it the way we want, well then we will just take that leave from the children.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 4). But the government already legislates a lot of areas that interfere with the right to free choice for families. A lot of examples for this could be mentioned here. One of them is how the taxation on cars according to how environmentally friendly they are, forces the families to choose the cars that emits the least carbon dioxide. Besides that, according to current legislation, 14 weeks of leave is reserved to the mother. This also decreases free choice, but is not mentioned as a problem for the opponents. Helle Sjelle from the Conservative People’s Party argues: *“As Mrs. Anne Grete Holmsgaard correctly points out, there are already certain types of reservation in the parental leave legislation. We think we should hold onto that, because we for example do not want to deprive the mother of the time needed to recover after birth. We actually think it is quite natural that there is a possibility that you can have maternity leave for a certain period of time.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 13). So, there are some things that do not add up for the opponents. They argue that reserved paternity leave should not be enforced because families should have free choice, reserving a large part for the mother for natural and biological reasons is not seen as problematic. In this instance, the arguments that align with liberal feminism fall apart, which constitutes a sign that differences between genders are recognized and that the ruling perception of gender is that which is formed by the hegemonic masculinity ideal. In this scenario the dominant position of the male is secured as men will gain an economic advantage over women while they are on maternity leave.

The Danish People’s Party also has some problems with inconsistency when it comes to the argument of free choice. *“I have considered the Danish People’s Party as a party that is completely crazy about making demands when it comes to public services, but when it comes to compensation for parental leave, then no demands should be made about securing that both parents take leave. I would like to know, if this is a new line in the question about making demands in connection to public services.”* (Folketinget, 2005: 8). This statement by the Socialist People’s Party’s member Anne Grete Holmsgaard criticizes opponents for not being consistent in their attitude towards making demands before people can access public services. The arguments from the Danish People’s Party, a very nationalistic party, based on traditional values, are very thin, and are not consistent with arguments regarding other

matters. Bearing this in mind, one might assume that the actual goal for them, is to maintain traditional gender roles in society. However, Pia Adelsteen from the Danish People's Party states: *"It is not about millimeter justice, and that everything has to be completely equal. That is not gender equality, because I consider ourselves to be individuals and different. I know there are some who will completely align us and make us so-called gender neutral, which in my eyes is a terrible word. I'm not gender neutral, I'm a woman and I would like to have the right to be that for the rest of my life."* (Folketinget, 2014: 12). Adelsteen acknowledges that there is a difference between the two genders, and that there are certain gender roles, which is a stance that has remained otherwise unacknowledged by opponents of the proposal. This is not to suggest that they do not recognize constructed gender roles, merely that they do not take them into consideration in their arguments. When Adelsteen recognizes that there are certain characteristics that characterize the two genders, then from a social constructivist point of view she also recognizes that there are roles to be filled by a specific gender. Hegemonic masculinity denotes a cultural form of dominance which does not involve the use of power or other forms of physical violence, it only depends on cultural ascendancy and consent. When Adelsteen states that she is a woman, and that there is a basic difference in genders, it is an expression of a cultural belief. As Adelsteen appears to be culturally influenced in her perception of gender, it is not unreasonable to believe that her thoughts and actions are influenced by ideals of hegemonic masculinity, even unintentionally.

The perception of traditional gender roles is also demonstrated by Martin Henriksen, who states: *"It must be up to the father and mother to jointly decide how parental leave will be organized."* (Folketinget, 2005: 9). This statement promotes a traditional family view, in which a family consists of a father and a mother. Opposed to consisting of a same-sex couple. Reading further into this, a traditional family view can also mean traditional gender roles. Of course not all heterosexual couples ascribe to traditional gender roles, but linking this to other statements presented by DF in the debates, it all adds up.

According to Connell, as mentioned in chapter 3.2.3, masculinity manifests through the manner in which men and women conduct gendered lives and the effects this has on bodily experiences, personality and culture. When parental leave is not equally distributed, the result will be that men and women will conduct gendered lives. Connell also emphasizes that the state (amongst others) is a site where gender is configured as a way to order social practice. So when the opponents disregard the existing unequal distribution as something that is not important or essential, and place higher value on free choice, they are contributing to a certain gender configuration. In this case, it is one of hegemonic masculinity. Connell states that the structure of gender within institutions distinguishes production relations.



This is mentioned several times in the debates, that norms within the labor market hinder fathers in taking leave, and that reserved paternity leave will assist in changing the norms. When nothing is proactively done to change these norms, or these norms are not even recognized as a barrier, then the conclusion must be that the lack of parliamentary action with regards to reserved parental leave is an expression of support for the hegemonic masculinity ideal.

## 6.5 Partial conclusion (EH)

The scope of this chapter was to explore hegemonic norms and discourses within parliamentary debates. The analysis suggested that the wording, as well as the positive and negative connotations assigned to the central themes in the debate had an impact on how the discourse was presented. The opponents of the proposition assigned negative connotations to the term reserved paternity leave, which they described as the use of force, or coercion, towards families. The supporters assigned positive connotations to the term, describing it as a right. The discourse of the opponents fit into the belief system of liberal feminism, while the discourse of the supporters fit into the belief system of modern equality feminism. However, one of the largest components of the analysis was the subtextual messages, that which is not being overtly stated. Opponents put a great deal of emphasis on free choice for the families, yet there were no critical standpoint towards the fact that 14 weeks are already reserved for the mother. As Foucault argues, silence is also a part of the discourse and the silence in this case underpins the notion that hegemonic masculinity is the ruling gender ideal.

## 7.0 Problematizing of the field (EH)

While process tracing analysis demonstrates how the history of the parental leave scheme and gender equality politics has led to the current stance on reserved paternity leave, the CDA showed both implicit and explicit societal norms. Laws create norms and norms create laws, so these two separate analyses in fact compliment each other. We will now take a closer look at how. Which will lead us into an elaborate discussion of our research question. In this next part, we will move on to questioning if there is a problem at all.

## 7.1 Comparison of findings (EH)

The findings from the CDA intertwines with that of the process tracing analysis as the process tracing analysis explained why the law is the way it is today, while the CDA provided insight into the hegemonic discourse within the area.

Chapter 5.3 details women's rights within Danish legislation. Women are represented as subordinated, and in need of assistance. In the CDA, the opponents of the proposal do not address fathers' rights and regard the situation as trivial. This complements the findings of the process tracing analysis in which men's problems are not recognized.

Chapter 5.4 examines how stereotypical gender roles are unconsciously constituted. Four different cases (communication to parents, lack of reserved paternity that constitutes norms, formation of network groups for mothers and babies, and family cash benefits) are presented, in which accepted gender discrimination is performed. Each case serves as an example of stereotypical gender roles that are unconsciously constituted by the public sphere. A similarity has been found in the CDA, where stereotypical gender roles are also unconsciously constituted.

In chapter 5.6 a dominant liberal view is identified, which is based upon the premise that gender equality already exists and is therefore not worth debating. A similar finding was identified in the CDA as opponents ascribe to dominant liberal ideology to promote their arguments. In both the process tracing analysis and in the CDA, a dominant liberal standpoint appears to be the main reason why reserved paternity leave has not been introduced.

## 7.2 Difference in gender equality ideals (EH)

Research shows that longer leave for fathers has positive effects on gender equality. As gender equality is considered a founding core value within Danish culture the lack of legislation within the area of paternal leave suggests a juncture between values and practice. The analyses do not suggest a lack of desire for gender equality, but rather that there are simply different beliefs on what constitutes gender equality. Liberal feminism sees gender equality as fully reached when both genders are equal by the law, and have access to equal opportunities. This however presents a paradox as fathers obviously do not have the same opportunities to take up parental leave.

The modern equality feminist sees gender equality as fully reached when women are economically independent, and there are equal opportunities rather than merely access to equal opportunities; resulting in a change to norms and gender stereotypical roles.

The dual-breadwinner model can in this context be seen as a liberal feminist ideal which has been the leading model for the gender equality strategy in Denmark. The CDA findings suggest that liberal feminism is influenced by hegemonic discourse which creates an equal-by-the-law barometer as the goal for gender equality; These two entities are self-enforcing, as, according to the hegemonic ideal and discourse, gender equality has been reached and therefore it is not necessary to enforce laws within this area.

Liberal feminism and modern equality feminism have roots in different political ideologies, and as a result have different conceptualizations of gender within their respective feminist ideologies. As mentioned in chapter 3.2, within feminist liberalism, gender is not regarded as something important, it is simply biological, while gender is regarded as a social construct within modern equality feminism. These differing viewpoints are highlighted in the CDA of the parliamentary debates. Looking to Sweden, which has introduced many initiatives to increase gender equality, it may seem as if modern equality feminism has won the battle, and is the hegemonic ideal there. In the case of Denmark, the problem may be that the majority does not think there is a problem.

The first conclusion must then be, that liberal feminist ideology is the hegemonic ideal in Denmark, which explains why there is no reserved paternity leave legislation but there are gender quotas. But from a liberal standpoint, why is it a problem to force men to take more leave, when it is obviously not a problem to make mothers take 14 weeks of reserved leave? This discrepancy suggests that there is a subtext informing the arguments rather than it just being a case of manifest ideology.

Seen in a historic perspective, legislation was created in 1979<sup>9</sup> that prohibited gender based discrimination at work and in parental leave. Although there is a general perception that gender equality is practiced within Denmark, the legislation is not followed, as 14 weeks are reserved for the mother while the father is discriminated against, which is in violation of the current legislation. This situation creates a discrepancy between the ideology of liberal feminism and how it is practiced by the Danish government.

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<sup>9</sup> Ligebehandlingsloven

In addition, men's and women's rights are often treated as oppositional rather than complementary forces. This is demonstrated in the debates, when Barfoed wants to know if it is women's or men's rights that are being debated. But as the analysis shows, both aspects are intertwined. If the father gains paternity leave rights, the mother (and women in general) gain better opportunities when it comes to the labor market.

### 7.3 Fast tracking gender equality (EH)

Reserved paternity leave is a political instrument that is often referred to as a fast track to gender equality, as is also the case with gender quotas. Both are legislative instruments that drive society to adapt. By extension, the term fast track refers to how law creates norms. By legislating reserved paternity leave, the law will change norms and then the legislation will become culturally redundant, as the norms will have evolved, and gender equality will be reached.

The opposite approach to fast tracking gender equality, is the incremental track (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005: 27-29). Although Dahlerup and Freidenvall apply this concept only to gender quotas, it can also be applied to reserved paternity leave. The concept of the incremental track is, that norms will change over time, so eventually men will take more leave. The fast track concept partially rejects the premise that norms will change over time, or if they do, it will be a very slow process. Therefore legislation is necessary (*ibid.*). Inspired by Dahlerup & Freidenvall, figure 8.1 shows how the two strategies can be perceived within the context of the parental leave scheme.

Figure 7.1: Strategies for reaching gender equality

Strategies for reaching gender equality		
Concept	The Incremental Track	The Fast Track
General perception	More men will take paternity leave and the number will rise over time.	It is necessary for more men to take leave in order to enhance gender equality. Men's portion of parental leave will not necessarily increase by itself.
Problem identification	Paternity leave does not fit into the planning of the family.	Existing norms within the workplace and the family hinders men from taking leave.
Strategy	Encourage fathers to take leave via campaigns, etc. Strong resistance to reserved paternity leave, which is considered intruding on families' free choice.	Active measures such as reserved paternity leave, which will increase the amount of leave taken by fathers. Seen as an instrument to change norms, not as the use of force.

Source: Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005: 29

These differing approaches can be associated with feminist ideology as the incremental track aligns with liberal feminist beliefs while the fast track mirrors modern equality feminism.

## 7.4 Concrete practice vs. normative ideals (IL)

As Bloksgaard et. al. purport in the article '*Masculinity Ideals in a Contemporary Danish Context*', the relationship between ideals and practice form an important perspective with regards to norms (Bloksgaard et. al, 2015: 165-166). The study found that the traditional patriarchal masculinity ideal does not seem to be the ruling ideal for men in contemporary Denmark (Bloksgaard et. al., 2015: 164). Even so, women still take most of the parental leave. The fathers in the study seem willing to take part in parenthood, but there is a contradiction between their ideal and their practice. The men support the idea of gender equality, but their actions are contrary to their stated beliefs when they do not take part in parental leave.

Taking the analysis of institutional and discursal barriers into consideration, a discrepancy exists in the intersection between norms and institutional practice, with regards to the masculinity ideal. Bloksgaard et al. point out that researchers should be cautious of analytically overplaying the importance of norms and ideals, as social conditions and mechanisms may create and control social practice. (Bloksgaard et. al., 2015: 166).

Reserved parental leave can be regarded as a political instrument, much like gender quotas, which are often viewed as a temporary measure that can be used to speed up the process of reaching gender equality. Reserved parental leave could also be used as a political instrument to speed up the process of reaching gender equality in terms of equal uptake of

parental leave between parents. Upon initially embarking upon the analysis/hypothesis, it was expected that the normative discourse would be a considerable barrier to paternity leave. But taking the observations of Bloksgaard et. al. into consideration, the normative ideals might not be the main barriers; it might be more simple than that. The private economy of the family might determine the division of parental leave. But it may also be normative that the man earns the most money in the family. If that is the case, we are back at square one. But as the Bloksgaard et al; study suggests, even though norms change, concrete social practice does not necessarily follow, or at least not very quickly.

## 7.5 From macro to micro level (EH)

Thus far, the premise explored is that gender roles are created through laws and norms, which are strongly interconnected. This investigation has been viewed from a macro level, with large institutions as the main players. However, on the micro level there exists individuals and families, players that are actually the central focus of discussion. Shifting from a macro to a micro perspective, gender roles influenced by hegemonic masculinity might be very prevalent within the family, so that it is the mother who influences the division of paternal leave. In essence, it might actually be challenges in the private sphere that creates problems in the public sphere. If gender roles within families are stereotypically constructed, then it will result in a transfer of these roles to the public sphere.

When referencing the Bloksgaard et al. study, it may be worth considering the possibility that men and women might have differing ideals of masculinity. While the men in the study were shifting towards a more modern masculinity ideal, perhaps the women themselves might be a barrier for reaching gender equality via parental leave. If women believe the masculine ideal is the type endorsed by traditional patriarchal masculinity, they must by extension, see themselves as the opposite of that ideal, which would encourage women to take as much parental leave as possible. The study maintains that the masculinity ideal type has changed amongst men, and norms have also changed as a result. Yet the liberal discourse regarding freedom of choice for families is stronger than ever. Not many people will admit that they think women should stay at home while men go to work. But they have to be politically correct, and say that fathers should spend time with their children.

Another argument can be found in Reinicke's research which introduces an asymmetry between ideology and practice in modern fatherhood, as cultural norms often change faster than associated behaviors. Modern men in a Danish context are often progressive in their rhetoric but traditional in their concrete actions (Reinicke, 2015b: 447). As the Bloksgaard et. al. study shows, men's attitude towards taking parental leave has changed. But statistics

show that the amount of leave taken does not match up to the rhetoric, which may be a result of cultural norms changing faster than behavior. If this is the case, women may not be the sole barrier or a barrier at all, as suggested in the paragraph above.

## 7.6 Politicizing the gender equality problem (IL)

Lately, the Danish media has reported that the government wants to withdraw financial support from KVINFO (The Danish Center for Research on Women and Gender), a knowledge and development center for gender, equality and diversity. The primary argument for removing the support, is that the work performed by the organization is left-oriented (Bloch, 2017), resulting in the topic of gender equality being politicized. This may become the case in contemporary Denmark, in which gender equality politics becomes affiliated with a particular side, instead of existing as an ideological neutral area. In the Nordic countries there seems to be a different political culture concerning gender equality politics. In Norway, reserved paternity leave was introduced by a right-oriented government, and in Denmark the two weeks of reserved paternity leave was introduced by a right-oriented government in 1984.

Despite of right-oriented governments introducing reserved paternity leave, gender equality politics and feminism are often believed to be connected with socialism in Denmark. This might be another explanation for why reserved paternity leave has not been introduced. Reserved paternity leave might be seen as a socialist proposition, and because of the existing division of power, it cannot be adopted, as is the case for all legislation that is proposed in order to enhance gender equality. This might also explain why gender politics currently exist on a symbolic level instead of bringing the focus to a tangible level of what could benefit society as a whole. A policy area that functions symbolically becomes very dependent on populist measures amongst the population. Populism is considered an important factor in why the government went against their own governmental programme in 2013.

## 7.7 A critique of the hypotheses (IL)

The hypotheses in this thesis have been formed from the viewpoint of historical institutionalism and are founded on a belief that gender roles are constructed by norms. This viewpoint is not universal and without the support of social constructivism, the hypotheses lose their value. A liberal criticism will be conducted below on a few of the traces found during process tracing.

From a liberal standpoint, it can be argued, that if the population is clearly against reserved paternity leave, it is not a problem that needs to be solved. Why should the government

implement laws to solve a problem that does not exist? Fathers and mothers currently have the possibility of sharing 32 weeks of parental leave if they wish. If they do not want to share the leave, it is their free choice which should not be jeopardized or problematized. Changes in gender roles occur and will occur from the bottom-up.

When focus is placed on equal opportunities, instead of equal rights, the construction of gender roles is not recognized and therefore not perceived as something hindering the choices of the individual. Every person in Denmark is given the same opportunities no matter their sex, race or social status, and it is a matter of individual choice how one uses these opportunities. If one does not grasp the opportunities given, it is one's own fault. Women have already used them to join the workforce and have gained financial independence; in this sense gender equality, has been reached and becomes an irrelevant, minor issue. Whether gender equality exists in Denmark is therefore upon the definition and the viewpoint of the individual.

The welfare state is under pressure and there have been cutbacks across most state sectors. The council working with reserved paternity leave in 2013 estimated reserving 12 weeks paternity leave for each father would cost the state a total of 200 million DKK per year. It is fiscally irresponsible to pass a law which will increase public expenses, as smaller generations already have to support a larger aging population. In addition, the financial situation of each individual family must be taken into consideration: If fathers in general earn higher salaries than mothers, and the daily budget is tight, no one can blame parents for making the easy choice with the least financial consequences.

In terms of public communication, mail is addressed only to the mother due to the technical reality of outdated public IT systems. The cost of updating the information far outweighs the benefit of what could be considered a minor case of discrimination. There really is not an issue as at least one of the parents is receiving the mail. And as for the financial benefit, dividing the benefit into two and transferring half to the mother and half to the father would literally double the administrative workload for the same result. It is a matter of priorities, not discrimination.

Denmark moving down on the international gender index does not cause any concerns among right wing parties. Denmark ranks lower due to the low percentage of female leaders in business, the low rate of paternity leave and the wage gap. But Denmark also ranks lower than some African countries which in general are not considered to be gender equal in any way (Richter & Bennike, 2016). The Global Gender Gap report has been widely criticized by



right wing politicians who do not recognize the methods used as valid and therefore do not take the results seriously. But even when the low ranking is acknowledged, from a liberal viewpoint it cannot be used as a means of forcing laws on the public.

Whether organizations working with gender equality receive public funding or not can be reduced to a question of supply and demand: If the work of KVINFO and The Danish Fathers' Association is important enough to the public, the organizations should be able to raise money on their own. It should not be a matter of the state to financially support this kind of work. The Danish Fathers' Organization is considered a controversial organization by some, which serves as another explanation why it does not receive public funding. In Denmark, it is possible for any group of people to form an organization to support their agenda. As there is only one organization focusing on the rights of fathers in Denmark there is obviously not a need for this service. If Danish men and fathers were concerned with the violation of their rights, they would have formed more organizations of this sort.

The situation regarding gender equality is much better today compared to 100 years ago, and Danes should be proud of what has been accomplished. Women have gained economic independence and rights over their own lives, as well as their children's lives. If the mission has been accomplished, and gender equality is no longer an important political area, it makes sense not to allot many resources to this portfolio. Whether there is a problem or not depends on the viewpoint of the individual. However, this standpoint of moral relativism is problematic as it consigns the debate to a political vacuum in which nothing is done, and people end up with the conviction that nothing needs to change, which is a socially precarious sentiment.

## 7.8 So, is there a problem? (EH)

According to liberal feminist ideology and the dual-breadwinner strategy, there are equal opportunities in Denmark and therefore gender equality has been reached. However, modern equality feminism, based on a social democratic ideology does not believe gender equality has been reached. Hindered by norms, there still is an unequal distribution of leave taken by the father and the mother, and reserved paternity leave is believed to be the answer to changing the existing structures.

The argument circles around the concepts of equal rights vs. equal opportunities. Focusing on the topic of reserved paternity leave, liberal feminism would argue against it, because there should be equal opportunities (equality by outcome) for both genders to take leave. The

modern equality feminism would argue for it, because it would give equal rights (equality by law) for both genders. A further divide occurs as liberal feminists believe that norms will change on their own accord over time, while modern equality feminists think social structures should take a more participatory role in changing norms. Until these issues are resolved, there is a long way until reaching majority in parliament.

Aside from the matter of equal rights vs. equal opportunities, there is the men's vs. women's rights debate. Taking on a more poststructuralist feminist approach, where the traditional gender categories of women and men are viewed upon with criticism (Lykke, 2012: 163), one could ask if the categories of men and women in reality contributes to keep people in locked positions of the two genders? The locked positions, or gender roles, which most feminists have the aim of dissolving? To depart from traditional stereotypical gender roles, perhaps the focus should shift from an emancipatory rights-based approach to the deconstruction of gender. Although this seems to be a radical approach, changes in contemporary society suggest that this approach is slowly being adopted in the debate.

## 7.9 Partial conclusion (EH + IL)

Despite differences in both focus and approach, the findings from the process tracing analysis and the CDA were highly compatible. The CDA revealed that opponents of reserved paternity leave do not address the rights of fathers and the process tracing analysis of hegemonic discourse strengthens these findings, as women's rights currently constitute gender equality issues, whereas the men's problems are not recognized. The CDA and the process tracing analysis also detected that stereotypical gender roles are being unconsciously constituted. In both the process tracing and the CDA, the dominant liberal view of the importance of free choice was a recurring theme.

Next on, we discussed if there might be a difference in gender equality ideals. According to liberal feminism, gender equality has already been reached. The strategy of the dual-breadwinner model sees equal opportunities to take part in the work force as the aim, and when this is reached, gender equality has been reached. The other ideal is that of the modern equality feminism, where gender equality has been reached when there is an equal result of outcome. So according to this ideal, gender equality has not been reached. Men's and women's rights are often mentioned as each other's opposites, but as it has been shown throughout the thesis, both of them are intertwined. This led us on to discussing how the political instruments of 'fast tracking' is connected to liberal feminism and modern equality feminism.

Research revealed a discrepancy between behavior and normative ideals. Men support the idea of gender equality, but their actions do not follow their purported beliefs. This may be a sign that the concrete practice will slowly change over time, to bring actions into line with thought. However, if economic concerns are the reason why the father does not take a greater amount of leave, the argument becomes circular in nature and arrives back at the status quo.

At a micro-level, familial gender roles influenced by hegemonic masculinity can be very powerful, with the mothers' norms on the micro level acting as a stronger obstacle than norms of society on the macro level. Over time, the masculine ideal might shift, but both men and women must shift their preconceived ideals in order for progress to be made. Presently, cultural norms appear to be changing faster than behaviors.

In Denmark, the issue of gender equality has been politicized as a matter of left or right, but this has not always been the case. In 1984, a right-oriented government introduced reserved paternity leave. The same degree of politicization is not necessarily the case with other Nordic countries that have successfully introduced similar measures. Politicizing gender equality in Denmark can become problematic and act as a barrier to progress if the issue becomes associated with a specific political party or ideology.

The hypotheses critique was performed from the point of view that social constructivism and norms do not play a role in constituting gender roles. From a liberal standpoint one can ask, why the government should implement a law to solve a problem which does not exist in the eyes of the voters. Families can choose as they wish and if there is a need for change, it will happen over time. Equal opportunities have been secured and women have used these opportunities to secure economic independence. Hereafter there is nothing more to discuss as it is the choice of the individual to use the given opportunities as s/he wishes. It is not worth using state funds to attempt to rectify a situation that is mildly discriminatory at best. Lastly, the individual financial situation of the family informs their opinions and choices of reserved paternity leave. While they might support it in theory, in practice, it must be someone else who makes the change.

## 8.0 Conclusion (EH + IL)

Despite Denmark having gender equality as a core value, several experts pointing towards reserved paternity leave as a political instrument to enhance gender equality in combination with Denmark dropping at a very fast rate on the Global Economic Forums equality index, Danish authorities have still not introduced the gender equality enhancing legislation. Through two individual analyses, two main explanations, or factors were found. The first one being that the liberal feminism is the hegemonic ideal when it comes to legislation. Families should have free choice, and there should be equal opportunities for both genders, with no further interference from the state. Gender is not recognized as an important concept within liberal feminism. The second influence is hegemonic masculinity which is the hegemonic ideal when constructing gender role definition. In combination, these two factors make it very difficult to introduce reserved paternity leave.

### 8.1 Process tracing and path dependency (EH + IL)

The analysis was split into two separate parts, with first the process tracing analysis, followed by the CDA. The process tracing analysis detected a strong and unbroken path dependency in the form of the dual-breadwinner strategy, where the aim has been to achieve gender equality by promoting women's employment. This has created some institutions, or norms, which to a very high degree has created some institutions in the shape of norms, which in a high degree controls both the policy within the area, but also the parents' individual choices within the area. The hegemonic masculinity ideal is an underlying factor that maintains the woman as primary caregiver, and the man as primary provider, which is unconsciously expressed in the public sphere. For example, public authorities only send information to the mother and not the father, and local governments offer family networking groups for the mother and the child, but only rarely include the father. This, in combination with liberal discourse that maintains the right to free choice, becomes a barrier in introducing reserved paternity leave in Denmark. An example of this was seen in 2013 when the government had reserved paternity included in the governmental programme, but it still could not be introduced due to fear of the voter's resistance.

Gender equality policy has historically focused on women's rights, Men are overlooked in this debate as the genders are viewed as oppositional in nature. As equality politics are not conjoined, it has not been considered how rights for men can have a positive influence on women. Additionally, Denmark is viewed as a completely gender equal society, and the issue of gender equality is seen as mission accomplished. As a result, gender inequality is not viewed as a legitimate problem, deserving political attention.

## 8.2 CDA and gender equality debates (EH + IL)

The CDA constituted the second part of the analysis and the findings were an extension of what was uncovered in the process tracing analysis. The aim of the discourse analysis was to explore the hegemonic norms and discourses which characterize the debate surrounding reserved paternity leave. Two debates from Folketinget acted as the communicative event that was the subject of the analysis. The debates were the first treatment of propositions to introduce reserved paternity leave. The first debate was from 2005 and the second one was from 2014. The benefit of the CDA, is that it can be used to connect the discourse to existing social practice, with simple wording underlying fundamental belief systems. Arguments from opponents of reserved paternity leave mirrored the belief system of liberal feminism while arguments from the supporters fit into the belief system of modern equality feminism.

Less explicit, were the hints of hegemonic masculinity as the ruling ideal. Foucault argues that silence is also a part of the discourse, so subtext was analyzed for its effect on the ruling ideal. At one point in the debate, it is questioned why there is no criticism towards the fact that mothers already have 14 weeks of reserved leave. This instance is explained through a stance of biological determinism, which suggests that the hegemonic masculinity ideal might be the ruling norm. As the argument is missing valid reasoning, it suggested that something was not being said, which also forms a part of the discourse. Adelsteen from the Danish People's Party argues that there is a difference between genders, and that these differences should not be changed. While her meaning is not explicit, it suggests an underlying structure of stereotypical gender roles, and of the hegemonic masculinity ideal as being the ruling norm.

## 8.3 Is there a problem? (EH + IL)

The findings in the process tracing analysis and the CDA were similar, as women's rights play a central role in gender equality politics, whereas men's problems are not recognized. Stereotypical gender roles are unconsciously constituted, influenced by the dominant liberal view.

A central discussion is the difference in gender equality ideals. According to liberal feminism, gender equality has already been reached due to equal opportunities for women. The other ideal is that of the modern equality feminism, where gender equality has not been reached until there is an equal result of outcome. These differences make it difficult to discuss the subject, when the importance of the problem and the aim is not agree on.

Men's and women's rights are often mentioned as each other's opposites, but as it has been shown throughout the thesis, how both of them are intertwined and how it would be a big

advantage to publicly discuss them collaboratively. This led us on to discussing how the political instruments of 'fast tracking' is connected to liberal feminism and modern equality feminism, where reserved paternity leave is rejected as an instrument and the incremental track towards gender equality is chosen instead.

We moved on to discussing the normative aspects of the field: A discrepancy between the concrete practice and the normative ideals has been identified. Men supports ideas of gender equality, but at the same their actions show the opposite. This could change over time, but very slowly. At the same time, if economic reasons are behind the fact that the father does not take up a great amount of leave, then we are back at status quo, and time will not make a difference after all.

Another obstacle at a micro-level, for fathers taking up leave, could be that of the mother, rather than the norms. Gender roles within the family can be very strong, and the mother might prefer to place herself in the position as the primary caregiver. The masculinity ideal might shift, but women hold on to hegemonic masculinity ideals, nothing will change.

Moving back to the macro level, we have seen how gender equality in a Danish context is being politicized as a matter of left- or right wing ideology, with reserved paternity leave perceived as a socialist cause, but in broad terms regarded an issue of more symbolic value instead of an instrument to increase the common good in the society. What is interesting is, how it was actually a right-oriented government which introduced reserved paternity leave in Denmark in 1984, meaning that causes can change political view over time.

Finally, we ended up with a critique of our hypotheses assuming if social constructivism and norms do not play a role in constituting gender roles. From a liberal standpoint one can ask, why the government should implement a law reserving paternity leave, to solve a problem, which does not exist in the eyes of the voters. Families can choose as they wish and if there is a need for changes it will eventually happen. Equal opportunities have been secured and women have already gained economic independence. Hereafter there is nothing more to discuss. It is the free choice of the individual how one wishes to use the given opportunities. The economic argument against reserved paternity leave has also been presented, but it can be argued to form an unnecessary cost in times where the welfare state in general cut down on their expenses. Same can be said about the communication from public authorities, which is sent only to the mother. It might be extremely costly to change the IT systems in order to include the father. It could be argued, how public finances spend in an area of low importance to the public can seem irresponsible.

## 8.4 Recommendations (EH + IL)

Stereotypical gender roles still exist in which women are believed to be weaker, while men are considered strong and not in need of the implementation of parliamentary action. As long as this is the dominant view, nothing will change, and men will be left alone to solve their own problems.

If Danish governments do not wish to reserve paternity leave, they should at least work with the general premise that discrimination against fathers and men in general does occur. There is a strong need to equate both the rights of women and men in the political debate in order to secure men and fathers more rights. Perceiving men as the stronger gender ends up having huge implication for themselves - not least in their rights to their children.

Most politicians recognize that if fathers took a greater part of the parental leave, it would have several positive consequences. If politicians do not wish to reserve paternity leave, other measures should be taken in order to contribute to a shift in stereotypical gender roles. Throughout the analysis, signs indicated that fathers would take more leave if gender roles changed. In the process tracing analysis, several instances demonstrated that through institutional practice, the state unconsciously keeps mothers in certain gender roles. An example of this is the mother directed communication from the state which could easily be readdressed to both parents. Another step forward would be to change structures, in order to facilitate the father's parental role, such as making it mandatory for municipalities to offer networking through family groups. In addition, the family cash benefit could be evenly distributed between the two parents. These three suggestions will not suddenly increase the amount of leave taken by fathers, but they might help shift gender roles, resulting in a slow but steady shift towards the distribution of parental leave between the parents. In addition to these changes, massive campaigns might also help speed things up. Or politicians could just introduce reserved paternity leave, which has been proven to enhance gender equality.

## 8.5 A critique of the research design (EH + IL)

The choices of theory and methods for this thesis have some strengths and weaknesses. The CDA has proven itself as a very useful strategy for using norms and discourses to explain gender policy in Denmark. The strength of the CDA is, that it can provide an understanding of how discourse creates social practice, but Fairclough also argues that social practice creates discourse. So, it is not completely possible to state that reserved paternity leave has not been implemented due to the hegemonic discourse regarding political tools for reaching gender equality. It could might as well be that because it has not been implemented, it has

created the ruling discourse. A strength of the CDA is it enables dialogue regarding how the political landscape unfolds itself.

According to Foucault, discourse will change over time, as the same phenomena will not be found across different historical periods. The CDA analyzed parliamentary debates, spanning a decade but a change in the discourse was not detected. This is perhaps due to a shortened time span. Newspapers could have been chosen as the source for the communicative event rather than the debates, which may have provided a much different interpretation. In parliament, the debate follows certain rules, such as turn-taking and politeness. In newspaper articles following the debate, the form might have been more authentic. Overall, the presented arguments would have been the same, as politicians also represent the general public.

The process tracing performed rests on a perception of norms as ruling and gender roles as being constructed. Since norms cannot be measured or proven in the same way as quantitative data, verification is not always easy. The five hypotheses were identified based on prior knowledge, as well as the primary literature and empirical material used in the thesis. Other researchers with different prior knowledge, using other literature, could have identified five completely different hypotheses, which could have been confirmed or rejected. Process tracing can therefore be used to point towards indicators of certain patterns, which could be further elaborated upon in a different study. The five hypotheses represent a limited view of a very broad area. These could have been further elaborated upon, but pragmatic limitations had to be considered.

## 8.6 Further studies of gender equality policy and reserved paternity leave (EH + IL)

It seems that discourse and normative ideals are a central part of explaining why reserved paternity leave has not been introduced in Denmark. One part that has been left unconsidered in this thesis is a comparison to other Nordic countries, which seem so seems advanced in comparison to Denmark when it comes to gender equality enhancing legislation. It would be interesting to apply the CDA methods to parliamentary debates in other Nordic countries prior to the introduction of reserved paternity leave, in order to uncover the normative ideals that inform their equality strategies.

It would also be interesting to study the concept of populism within Danish politics, as this seems to be increasingly important in the Danish political landscape. The importance of



populism is much more in evidence than decades ago, which is perhaps a result of social media providing the population with a faster communication trajectory to politicians. The concept of populism was not taken into consideration very much in this analysis, but it may have a greater impact than one might think.

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## Appendixes (attached on USB stick)

### **Appendix 1:**

Coding of two transcribed debates in Folketinget.

Folketinget, 2005: B66 Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om at øremærke 12 uger af barselsorloven til fædre

and

Folketinget, 2014: B48 Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om mænds/medmødres ret til barselsorlov

### **Appendix 2:**

Table of codes