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Abstract

Twenty-two years have passed since the "father's quota" in 1993 was supplemented as a part of the Norwegian paid parental leave scheme exclusively reserved for the father.

This is a relatively new situation as men traditionally have not recently been associated with the role as main carers for young children. This thesis aims to explore fathers' experiences of being in paternity leave and how they shape this time together with their child. Expectations and understandings of what it means to be in paternity leave play a role in how the fathers construct, coordinate and experience their leave projects. Influenced by ethnography this study focus on fathering practices from fathers' perspectives through logbooks, interviews and daddy blogs.

With point of departure from social constructivism, drawing on social studies of children and childhoods and gender studies, this study aim to give a qualitative analysis of the on-going processes within a group readily associated with the paternal leave model as they form their fatherhoods on paternity leave.

The study does not take measure of the care these father's exercise, but rather explores how these fathers' understandings of children, childhoods and fatherhoods shape their intentions of the paternity leave and on how they perform fatherhood.

Keywords: care-practices, fathers, fathering, paternity leave, rationality of care, social constructivism.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Some years ago my home was a temporary construction site and two carpenters arrived early in the morning. The oldest was probably in his early fifties, and the younger one somewhere in his mid-twenties. They were working alongside each other, now and then exchanging a few sentences about the youngest worker upcoming paternity leave. The oldest and quiet one worked / focused for some time before stating *“I don’t think we had the same possibilities when my kids were born....I think mmm..or not the same options so to speak”*. When asking his colleague about what he was planning to do during time in leave the colleague responded; *“I haven’t decided it all yet, but I am definitely going to do it in my own way, you know, on my terms”*.

Though I had retreated to the kitchen a few steps away I was pulled into the rather slow conversation as I brought them coffee, when offered to voice my opinion on the topic. I had to confess I found it quite interesting especially since paternal involvement and paternity leave still is a topic for debate both at home and in public. Fathers are expected to take their turn as primary carers for their children during paternity leave and be emotionally present fathers, I was and am still wondering, *how* this is done practically is subsequently dependent on how this engagement is interpreted and negotiated in the different contexts of fathering.

The conversation above was still in my mind when choosing a topic for my master study, and I had not come across studies that looked at this phenomenon from the perspectives of the fathers.

When starting to read more systematically I realised that there has undoubtedly been a change in the structural conditions when it comes to the possibilities for men taking part in early child-care. Secondly there has been a change in meaning and conduct of fatherhood: (Brandth & Kvande, 1997:11; 2015:121) In the Nordic countries one can see a growing consensus of a move from a fatherhood defined by a role as a working man, a breadwinner whose engagement is primarily outside the home, towards a fatherhood that is defined by involvement through a family-oriented engagement and a practical hands-on childcare (Brandth and Kvande, 2003).

The conversation had made me curious about how contemporary fathers themselves define paternal leave and how they practice it. What does this arrangement imply to fathers? What

do these fathers perceive as significant as they mould their care practices in everyday life within the frames of a time-restricted period like paternity leave? What do they experience as everyday challenges as they enter leave? Is paternal care displayed as something distinctive and do fathers understand and perform their leave and care differently from mothers? Are men expected to make it a time of their own particular practice? Do they experience special expectations of how to perform leave? And would logs and blogs provide information about everyday life that is not as easily communicated through interviews alone?

Twenty-two years have passed since the "father's quota" in 1993 was supplemented as a part of the Norwegian paid parental leave scheme exclusively reserved for the father.

Scandinavian countries are regarded as leading the way as an example with their stated political and public desire to equate the genders as caregivers for children (Gislason and Eydal, 2011). This is a relatively new situation as men traditionally have not recently been associated with the role as of main carers for young children. As stated by Morgan (2011) *".. in modern and late modern societies, the practices of care have been especially identified with 'the family,' this identification is strongly shaped by ideological and political considerations."*

There has been a normative change in our culture regarding what is acceptable care for children as well as who is regarded as capable of exercising approved childcare. Leira and Saraceno (2008) describe how childcare became a matter of state involvement as it, through family policy regulations, became a contributory factor in the construction of children's and families' lives.

By earmarking a part of the paid parental leave arrangement for the father, men were invited and encouraged to spend more time caring for their young children. Some would claim they were pushed to take parental leave due to the implicated element of force in the structure of the leave as the weeks intended for the father in principle are not transmittable to the mother. This signifies that the father's weeks of leave will be lost if he does not use them.

1.1 Previous research

With the introduction of a more equally distributed parental leave arrangement along with a father's quota, men's involvement and their time as main carers for children have increased only in the course of a few decades. Today this is more or less an established phenomenon.

This has made fatherhood and fathering a continuous focal centre for much research since the very start of the Norwegian paternity leave by a few main contributors (Brandth & Kvande 1997, 2015; Ellingsæter & Leira, 2004). It is now a focal centre of multiple fields of research paying attention to topics like the father's impact on children's development and mental health, the shaping of fatherhood(s), gender equality and men's relation to work and family life. How care is performed in paternity leave has been looked at most often from interviews of either one or both parents. Brandth & Kvande 1997, 2015; Farstad & Stefansen, 2015; Aarseth, 2011). In addition paternal care has a history of interpretations in terms of deficiency, compared to what mothers do, or, occasionally in a positive light, viewing fathers as competent more than as parents in the making. To be an equal parent does not necessarily imply sameness in how one practices parenthood, even though, the father's care has often been measured against the mother's approach to care.

Through my studies within the sociology of children and childhood I found little in depth research on how paternity leave was performed on a day-to-day basis, and how these strategies formed this limited time of fatherhood/childhood.

The fact that paternity leave has existed for almost a generation implies that many of those becoming fathers today have grown up and lived their childhoods with a more equal parental leave arrangement as part of structural and cultural guidelines for parenting practices.

Likewise there has during this period been a gender crossover where men have had to enter a landscape of care dominated by women, and women have increasingly built their careers outside the domestic spheres (Statistics Norway, 2013). As a result of this contemporary trend fathers and mothers represent another generation of parents that is more gender equal than generations before them.

Fathers pushing prams is a usual phenomenon and taking leave as the family is extended by a new-born has become more or less a matter of course for those entitled. However, fathering is performed and understood in multiple ways, paternity leave and fatherhood is therefore not a novel field of research by any matter. It has been looked at from many perspectives such as

class¹ (Stefansen and Farstad, 2008, Aarseth, 2008), and from a gender perspective (Brandth and Kvande, 1997, Lorentzen, 2012, Olsen, 2000)

Research has been looking at patterns of the type of person whom is more likely to make use of the leave, and how it is used. This is related to class, ethnicity, family relation and work situations of both parents. Paternity leave and parental leave are time-limited and intense periods. Especially paternity leave, one might say considering the amount of attention it has received, is imbued with certain expectations of paternal involvement in the child's life. Hence it represents a significant change in how a part of childhood is structured, and such has become an interesting topic for childhood studies.

The formation of the paternity quota, has been accused of favouring a 'rationality of caring' closely linked to what is labelled the Norwegian ethnic middleclass family (Hennum, 2010). Hennum points at how governmental politics lean on 'parental ethnotheories', culturally initiated perspectives of child development, which in turn make the basis of specific modes of upbringing (Hennum, 2010, p.8).

These structural, social and cultural changes where men have increasingly participated in 'hands on' childcare over the last two and a half decades has resulted in extensions of both the concepts of masculinity and fatherhood (Olsen, 2000) and is connected to terms like "new men" and "new fathers". These terms have been used to describe men for almost two generations. Though they are hardly new anymore, the terms implies an understanding of a cultural and practical move in masculinity and fathering as well as parenting as gendered practices, - at least in parts of society. Holter (2012) points at how a large study² in 2007 found that gender equal attitudes did not necessarily coincide with gender equal practices. On the other hand the study found a strong correlation between gender equal practices in the family and the income of the father's partner. The same correlation was also found in relation to the level of fathering.

Research studies on time use also show how mothers still spend more time on children and domestic work (Kitterød, 2002). One can assume that fathers form and define fatherhood differently from how mothers define motherhood, and that they are given different meaning in

¹ Middleclass is here understood as *educational* middleclass, with education equivalent to academy or university degrees.

² A representative survey with 2800 respondents, including 350 variables (Holter, 2012)

the social and cultural discourse surrounding approved parenting, expressed through daily life practices and social medias.

LaRossa (1988) questioned whether the image of an increased involved fatherhood had developed simultaneously with the actual practices. Informed through normative ideas of culture and family policy structures we are presented with a template of approved fatherhood. The father is at least theoretically more often regarded as an equal parent and care practitioner to mothers (Dermott, 2008, LaRossa, 1988). Multiple expectations for men to perform (well) both as carer and careerist might place them in the squeezed position between home and work which women have experienced as “double workers”. How fathers navigate between different expectations and tasks is therefore interesting to explore.

Whereas motherhood historically has a long tradition of being displayed and discussed and regulated through daily life, conduct and different contemporary media such as books and films (Gillis, 1996, Lorentzen, 2012) likewise paternity leave and fatherhood has become a growing part of the Norwegian family and gender discourses. Fatherhood is discussed through public medias and research concerning equality, family politics, masculinity, or in relation to ‘children’s best interest’³. Although internet became commonly available in the same period as the fathers’ quota, mothers first made use of the possibilities the internet offered, of a more personal communication. Likewise are baby/mother forums and mummy blogs frequently used for communicating about motherhood and both own and other mothering practices. Sometime, though not as commonly, fatherhood and care practices are shared through social media by fathers themselves offering insight into a relatively new phenomenon. Thus it makes an interesting research information resource to explore.

1.2 Aim of the study

A trigger for why this field caught my interest is how everyday life on leave was presented to the Norwegian dad blogs. The blogs were mostly in the shape of logbooks, descriptions of what was done during their day along with the fathers' descriptions of how they had experienced the events. This representation of fatherhood and specifically the detailed paternity practices gave a different insight from a lot of the research around the fathers’ quota approached the field. Hence the log approach of displaying fatherhood made me curious about

³ The ‘child’s best interest’ is a contested concept which will be further explained in chapter three.

father's concrete practices, about how fathers are practicing fatherhood during leave and whether they see it as the same or different from mothers' leave practices. If different, how are these differences emphasised? I wanted to know more about how these practices, experiences and accounts are communicated both through interviews and social media like blogs where men present and discuss being in paternity leave as well get a picture of how leave is performed on a daily basis. One of my assumptions has been that knowledge about how this time is spent and practiced from a day-to-day perspective can generate a broader understanding of how fathers' and children's everyday life are structured and approached during a limited period of life such as during paternity leave.

As mentioned above, there has been a shift in perspectives on fatherhood as well as parenting practices, with fathers expected to engage more in childcare (Korsvold, 1996) and acceptance and encouragement of fathers to take a more significant role in their children's early life (Eydal and Rostgaard, 2015). Looking at fathers' concrete practices together with narratives of paternity leave can provide a possibility to understand the innovation of contemporary paternal care.

As by exploring fathers' narratives of paternity leave and written logs providing information of their practical use of the leave, my aim with this study is to highlight contemporary fathers' own accounts of their day-to-day constructions of paternal leave.

The topic for this research intrigued me because the importance of the father spending time with their young children is emphasized in the forming of the father's quota. Hence how these fathers approach the leave, what they prioritize and why they prioritize what they do when constructing the days with their child becomes relevant.

“ Family practices consists of all the ordinary, everyday actions that people do, insofar as they are intended to have some effect on another family member” Cheal, 2002 as cited in (Morgan, 2011)

This study applies this definition of family practices and regards fathering practices as equivalent to Cheal's wording 'family practices' when it looks at father's practical approach and accounts of how they are forming everyday life during paternity leave. How parenting is practiced in daily life described by narratives along with daily records, fathers' care activities

and experiences of paternity leave, as a space to construct fatherhood is the focal centre of this study. This left me with a broad question:

What does performing fatherhood mean while on paternity leave with very young children in contemporary Norway?

The aim of this study is to gain insight into the following objectives:

- To explore how fathering practices are practically constructed in the everyday life of father and child during leave.
- To explore how the fathering practices are communicated
- To explore father's communicated intentions of taking paternity leave
- To explore the fathers' experiences of being on leave?

1.3 Research question

This thesis takes an ethnographical inspired approach to explore:

What does performing fatherhood mean when being in paternity leave with very young children in contemporary Norway?

By focusing on father's understanding and intentions of the leave and their concrete practices, this study focuses on these men's experiences of paternal leave. By looking at these practices logged by the fathers in this study along with their narratives this study, drawing on perspectives from the social studies of children and childhood and gender studies, seek to explore how daily life in leave is moulded in different situations and locations.

1.4 Clarification of the term paternity leave

In this text and in my research question and research objectives I use the concepts paternity leave, or just leave. How these are used and how I understand these will here be explained. In this study the term *paternity leave* and *leave* is sometimes used instead of the father's quota about the specific parts of paid leave entitled the father, to make the text flow better. When referring to fathers at home using parts of the sharable paid parental leave, the term *parental leave* is used. Chapter four in this text will describe which type of leave the participants in this study chose within this context.

1.5 Organization of the thesis

This master thesis consists of five chapters. This chapter provides the introduction to the study and why this particular topic became the focus of my thesis. It also presents the objectives of the study and the research question that makes the study's point of departure. Chapter two draws up a contextual and historical frame of contemporary parental leave, with an emphasis on the paternity part.

Writing about care and family practices within the paternity leave needs to include several factors that influences both understanding and practices of fatherhood at a historical, normative and structural level. Thus these factors will not be leap-frogged but briefly elaborated on in the background chapter as they make the backdrop of the parenting practices of this study.

Chapter three is a theory chapter which describes the theoretical perspectives and terms derived from the extensive research on paternity leave and fathering this study builds its understanding upon. Chapter four accounts for the methodology of the study. This chapter describes and explains how the empirical work was approached and designed. Furthermore it describes how the research was conducted, and how the analysing process has been performed. Then follows a description of challenges prior and during the research, my own role and ethical considerations are also discussed here. Chapter five describes and discusses the data found and used in this study.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND

Paternity leave has increased since it in 1993 became a part of the paid parental leave arrangement. This study aims to explore how father's form and experience time in paternity leave in Norway today. Paternity leave is a part of the paid parental leave arrangement, which is one of the family welfare benefits in Norway, which makes it is necessary to emphasize the context in which the paid parental leave arrangement, which the paternity leave is a part of, has been formed.

The historical context is essential to highlight, as it is the cultural path men and woman paved for what is pictured as contemporary fatherhoods. To contextualise the topic of this study this chapter start with a historical perspective of fathers in the family before focusing on three paramount factors related to the shaping and making of the paternity leave. This is done by presenting the *factors leading to the development of father's quota*, secondly by presenting the different *intentions* with the quota, whereas the third part describes how policy has made the quota's *dualistic form* in terms of being both a right and a tool for change. The final part of this chapter gives a short description of the contemporary regulation and structure of the paid parental leave scheme.

2.1 Parental leave in Norway

By restructuring the parental leave into a tripartite consisting of a mother's quota, a father's quota and a sharable part, the state became a supplier of terms through guiding rules on the division of care within the family (Johansen, 2011). Therefore one might imply that the state by innovative changes at macro level facilitates for innovative practices at a micro level. Thus breaking the way for a more equal earner model (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2004).

The term "father's quota" earmarked one parent, underpins the social political expectations and importance of the fathers presence and participation in children's early life, as well as, like mentioned in the introduction, referring to the 'mild force' implied by the fact that the father's quota can in general not be transferred to the mother. If the father chooses not to use his exclusive part of the parental leave this means the weeks reserved for him and the child will fall away and the total parental leave will be shorter. Fathers right and plight to parental leave for four weeks in 1993, popularly referred to as the "father's quota", has since then been gradually increased and decreased according to the different governments points of view. In

2013, 68,5 % of the fathers entitled the father's quota took use of the whole quota or more (Statistics Norway, 2015).

2.1.1 Parental leave: the history

Paid parental leave was originally established as a maternal leave concerning mother/child's health and welfare, initially drawing on a medical perspective. In 1909 a six weeks obligatory birth leave for mothers was introduced funded in the concern of mother/child's health. In 1915 the six week leave was enlarged with two weeks leave prior to birth still of medical reasons. The leave was further enlarged to twelve weeks paid maternal leave in 1946 providing economy as a second perspective. It remained a maternal leave until 1977 when an eighteen weeks parental leave was introduced and included equality as a third perspective by entitling the father to use twelve of them (NOU 1996:13). The initial intention was now to secure women's access to the labour market. This freedom of choice concerning whom to take the parental leave did not change the traditional pattern of early childcare to a large extent. It was first with the introduction of the four week paternity quota in 1993 one can see an increased paternal participation in early childcare (Statistics Norway, 2012).

2.2 Paid parental leave in 2015

This part will first explain and describe the duration and availability of parental leave in contemporary Norway. Secondly the flexibility of the leave and patterns of use will be described.

2.2.1 Availability and duration

Paid parental leave is one of the Norwegian family policies welfare schemes reserved for parents who are a part of the economically active population. Parental leave is three-parted in a mother's quota, a father's quota and a sharable part. A brief overview of how paid parental leave is distributed is presented in the table below. Today as for children born after 01.07.2014, the total parental leave is 59 weeks when choosing 80 % coverage, and 49 weeks if choosing 100% coverage. Both mother's and father's quota is ten weeks. In 2014 according to Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV, 2015a), 59 524 entitled paternity benefits were distributed.

Criteria to be entitled leave

There are several criteria to access the different parts of paid parental leave. One must apply for the parental benefit, which the father's quota is a part of. To be entitled to the father's quota, both parents must have had pensionable earnings in six of the last ten months prior to the benefit period and the income above half of the national insurance basic amount (G). In families where the mother has not accumulated parental benefit, the father can apply if he has accumulated independent right to such. If he has earned an independent right to parental benefit, he is entitled the sharable part of the leave, but not the father's quota.

Amount of leave (weeks)	2011 01.07 - 2013 30.06	2013 01.07 – 2014 10.06	2014 after 01.07
Total time of leave with 100% reimbursement	47	49	49
Total time of leave with 80 % reimbursement	57	59	59
Mother's quota	9	14	10
Father's quota	12	14	10
Sharable part of leave 100% reimbursement	26	21	29
Sharable part of leave 80% reimbursement	36	31	39

The table above show an overview of the paid parental leave arrangement for parents with children born after 01.07.2014 when both parents have accumulated rights to parental leave. Numbers derived from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV, 2014, 2015b, 2015c).

2.2.2 Flexibility of the leave

The sharable part of the leave, the father's quota and four weeks of the mother's quota can be used continuously, or distributed over a longer period of time. This is done in accordance with employer and Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV, 2015b). Today most women use their part of the leave continuously, whilst one out of four men choose graduated parental benefit shifting between works and being in leave over a longer period.

2.2.3 Patterns of use

Research on the paternity leave has revealed that most fathers entitled to the leave use the paternity leave arrangement (Statistics Norway, 2012a). The amount of outtake of the leave is strongly correlated to education and income of the fathers and mothers. The same correlation is seen in which parents who express most support of the arrangement (Statistics Norway, 2012b; Stefansen & Farstad, 2008) Nevertheless the parental leave is made quite flexible in its formal structures, thus it can be deployed very much according to the individual family or parent's preferred outline. A family might choose different structures for their leave at different occasions according to their current situation and priorities.

Middleclass dominate regarding which fathers are more likely to extend their leave in addition to the father's quota. They are using the sharable part of the parental leave and it is in this group women are more likely to have higher education and preferences to pursue own career.

2.3 Men in the family- historical perspective

Historically the gender and parental roles have been quite divided in Norway. Parental leave has generally been a time of early life care where the child has been together with the mother. The last decades however a focus on fathers role and importance in the family as well as in children's early life has received a growing acknowledgement and acceptance in Norway. There has been a shift from complementary gendered roles towards a more compatible pattern within the families (Brandth et al., 2013, Ellingsæter and Leira, 2004). Lorentzen (2012) points out that historically men's role in families has been important both in terms of economy and upbringing. Lorentzen also highlights how the 'absent father' spending more time out of the home is closely connected to how motherhood and the idealisation of the domestic sphere as a feminine domain in the late 1890's displaced fathers onto other arenas outside the house along with the industrializations demand for labour lead to a restructuring of the household (ibid). At the same time being a family man was of significance in order to receive important roles in the public sphere. Being a father was a paramount part of men's social status.

Traditionally men have been regarded as breadwinners and women situated at the core of the family -at home. Today the picture looks somewhat different, starting with changes in the 1970', where Norway today has one of the largest female working stock in Europe (OECD, 2004). Accordingly in 2013, the amount of the female population with higher education was

33 per cent against 27 per cent of the men (Statistics Norway, 2014). This has resulted in a structural and socioeconomic change both within the family and society. Family welfare policies such as the parental leave and the implementation of paternity leave in 1993 was a response to these changes (Brandth and Kvande, 2003)

Early life relations and upbringing, that traditionally have been associated with the domestic sphere and especially women, became politicized through the new division of the paid parental leave system (NOU 1995: 27). This is mirrored in how parental leave is regulated by the government, stating that a growing amount of the total leave should be reserved for the father (Johansen, 2011, Ellingsæter, 2011, Hennum, 2006). The move towards a more gender equal childcare through state interventions has also effected a rearrangement in responsibility for the child. From being regarded as primarily the mother's responsibility, the child became a joint responsibility between parents and state. Norway, like most Nordic countries in the 1970`s implemented family welfare policies making children`s welfare changed from being a family matter to be a family-state responsibility (Johansen, 2011).

Nevertheless main carers for children have been and still are women. It is still not equilibrium between the genders when looking at who uses the sharable parental leave, or time used on childcare. Even after Norwegian women joined the work force, they have been seen as the natural and prime caregivers. This can be seen as one of the main reasons behind the low amount of fathers taking the major part of the sharable leave (Olk, 2009).

To assert that the paid leave arrangement is part of all Norwegian children's early childhood is to exaggerate, since not all children are granted the right to have their father in paternity leave. Anyway, there are a growing proportion of Norwegian children who have their father as the main caregiver for part of their early childhood. The total amount of men making use of paternity benefit has almost doubled in the last decade. (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, 2015a)

2.3.1 New family patterns

At the same time as more fathers take part in early childcare there is a pattern of fewer men becoming fathers (Ellingsæter et al., 2013). According to Lorentzen (2012) people tend to seek equal relationships, that is, partners matching their own social class. With a growing number of educated women, there is a lack of men to match their social status and at the same

time there are increased recirculation of the men who are regarded as “suitable” partners (Ibid).

Furthermore, family constellations have altered as alternatives to the nuclear family have emerged, and there is an increased rate of family break up in families where the parents are not married (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2004). This fact impacts the parent-child relationships and level of contact with their parents. Still most children in broken families primarily live with their mother as main carer, though one can see a move towards shared residence after family breakup in Norway. A Danish study (Ottosen, 2014) suggests correlations between family breakups and ‘men’s paternal involvement’ in the children’s early years such as paternity leave as *possibly* related. This, Ottosen explains might be connected to a normative expectation of father’s involvement and family orientation. Those fathers that do not side with these norms run the risk of being regarded as not giving support to the family project and as such face an increased danger of family breakup.

2.4 Policies as guideline for attitudes and practices

During the last decades a growing focus on fathers role as an important factor in the family as well as in children’s early life has received a growing acknowledgement and acceptance. This has resulted in a rising awareness displayed through politics, research, public debates and media, further leading to a more proactive legislation to increase the possibilities for the father to be at home with the child (NOU 1995:27; NOU 1996:13).

The structure of paid parental leave in Norway today is modelled upon equality among genders and what is regarded as the best interest of the child. In this way the state through its structural regulation, became a supplier of practical and policy terms since it prepositioned the family’s options of care division within the home.

Norway are along with the other Scandinavian countries both within research and politics regarded as representing one of the best and most developed models regarding state welfare arrangements and gender policy (T. Korsvold, 2007). One part of this welfare model is family welfare benefits such as the parental leave. Farstad (2011) argues that political aspects of the paternity leave touches three major areas in society namely work, family and ideology.

The initial political aim was to preposition increased gender equality in work both outside and within the home by restricting some of the parental leave exclusively for the fathers. Secondly the paternity leaves were intended to function as a tool in negotiations with employees and

partner about taking leave. A third aspect of the leave was to position the father as an *equal parent*.

“The de-familialisation of childcare, through increased public responsibility, has influenced the conceptualizing of care as work and responsibility, right and plight, moral, reason and emotions” (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2004).

There have been a variety of reasons for the making of the paternity leave. These ideas are justified from different perspectives and some of them might appear as being contradictory. In Johansen's analysing of family policy documents from the time prior and shortly after (the years 1987-1995) the fathers quota was established, Johansen (2011) argues how men's orientation towards and the amount of time spent on work and career is formulated as a problem to achieve equality among men and women. Feminist movements have argued for recognition of the unpaid work within the domestic sphere (Doucet, 2006).

Not only is men's time spent a problem, also their strong orientation towards work and lesser orientation towards childcare and domestic responsibility is voiced as a problem concerning attitudes, morality and responsibility. How fathers and fathering practices have been constituted through a deficit exposition is pointed out by Hawkins and Dollahite (1996). In her research Johansen further concluded how the quota's function in terms of a policy tool is approaching women and men differently. Men, she argues, are expected to direct more attention to the home and such alter the demands and expectations connected to the 'average employee' (ibid). Simultaneously and conversely, women are supposed to adjust to these same norms to represent employee 'characteristics' such as continuity in the workforce (Johansen, 2011). Regulations through laws and family welfare benefits, such as the father's quota, in this way become a tool for balancing the uneven gendered division in both the domestic and the labour force. These aspects imply that the father's quota operates as both structural and normative guidelines through policies implying where the line of moral conduct is drawn.

Governmental arguments for increased paternal engagement are dualistic. As Hennem (2006) argues the state promotes paternity leave from both a perspective of gender equality and economic growth on one side, and a moral responsibility connected to the best interest of the child on the other. The quest for a change towards an increased paternal participation in the family was brought along in the media more or less parallel to women becoming an increased proportion of the national working stock. Aarseth, argues how the demand first emerged as a response to the altered family patterns, and secondly as a media promoted stereotype.

”The cultural image of the new man in Nordic media representations, as well as in Nordic gender research, denoted a demand for increased domestic participation (...) one could say that the new man appeared in Norway in the early nineties more as an egalitarian new man than a consumerist.”(Aarseth, 2009)

The way paternity leave acts like a moral guideline is further described by pointing at how fathers in particular are used as ‘governmental agents’ by turning them into tools used to pilot the population towards the direction regarded as the common good by this strategy. Johansen (2011) states that:

“Management of management is all about how the State indirectly controls the population and their actions, to pave the way for individuals to make the right choices. This happens by seeking to influence individual and common attitudes and understandings based on knowledge, morality and responsibility, as well as by defining the problems, goals, norms and ideals.” (My translation)

According to the governmental objectives of a more gender-equitable parenting, policy changes have been made to secure children’s welfare and right to receive care from both their parents (Eydal and Rostgaard, 2015). This is in line with the national politics that facilitate and underpin these expectations by leaning on two main stances namely a) give both parents equal status as carers and b) the best interest of the child of having access to and constructing relations with both parents (Brandth & Kvande, 2003, Hennum, 2006). At the same time the arrangement ensures better possibilities for more equality regarding work and career as the mother has an option not to give up work for a long period of time.

A perspective of psychosocial character regarding the ‘child’s best interest’ was included when law stated the importance of securing the possibility for the important early attachment and contact between children and *both* their parents. Hennum (2010) points out how the government’s choice of knowledge the initiatives used to promote father’s increased involvement in early childcare lean on, gives due weight to a perspective which is more in accordance with one group (middle class) in the community.

Another central aspect is how the Norwegian welfare state through the different welfare professions is a part of producing this knowledge, when it at the same time holds a function as disciplinary authorities to adults (parents) (Hennum, 2010). The father’s quota was influenced by an intention to increase men’s participation due to the view that lack of paternal involvement would be potentially harmful to the children. Men’s role as competent and important carers for young children gained attention and acceptance through both a

perspective of equality among genders as well as through the child perspectives on which the state built the arrangement. Hence the child-father relationship is emphasized in the formation of the paternity leave. When the paternity quota was implemented as a part of the parental leave scheme it was one of the benefits of contemporary family welfare policy, yet the only one focusing on the benefits of gender equality in childcare.

Despite it being referred to as the “father’s quota” it does not imply that this time is for the child and father only. It is not required that the mother have to be at work or any other activities during the father’s quota. The family is free to decide how they want to spend the weeks reserved for the father.

2.5 Contemporary fatherhood as a social innovation

As mentioned in the introduction, contemporary men take an increasing role in children’s early life primarily due to the parental leave politics in Norway. They have come to spend more and more time in the child’s early life during the last three decades (Brandth et al., 2013). Thus there has been a visible change in parental practices during the first years of childhood. Those who become fathers today have with the parental leave scheme gained access to a ‘landscape’ and practices traditionally dominated by women. One can argue that this paternal entry to a sphere the fathers historically has been distanced from, has led the way in the direction of a change in traditional family and care practices. Accordingly fathers today are more likely to form their fatherhood and fathering practices differently from how their fathers did (Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015) thus moulding their own practices in line with the expectations and demands of their time. Likewise father’s practical engagement in their children seems to have increased in pace with the extension of the father’s quota (Kitterød, 2012, Brandth and Kvande, 2003).

Fatherhood is constructed and reconstructed and Holter (2007) claims one might regard it as a social innovation. Lorentzen (2012) argues that it is more concrete to claim that fathers have been child-carers throughout history, and what we see now is a renewal of the paternal care.

2.4.1 Fatherhood in public debate

The enlargement of the father’s quota of the parental leave can be seen as a statement on how equality between genders, fatherhood and early childhood is conceptualized in parts of a political and cultural discourse in Norway. Ellingsæter (2011) points out how normative ideas (values) and cognitive ideas (practical orientation) contribute to form the discourse in which

the parental leave is constructed and understood at a political level. From a social constructive perspective these discourses give resonance at a subject/micro-level. Children, childhood and family are commonly accepted as inseparably related. At the same time is childhood closely related to concepts of care and upbringing. Historically discourses on how childhood is constructed have differed, and still differ and are still being debated. With the father's quota early childhood is changed towards being an arena where both parents are expected to take responsibility.

Throughout history, conceptualization and construct of both fatherhood, motherhood and childhood has differed and hereby represents changing ideas (Cunningham et al., 1996) (Montgomery et al., 2003, Montgomery and Woodhead, 2003). Scholar's interest for fatherhood and fathering as a part of social studies of gender, equality and family research has expanded during the last decades of the 20th century. It may look like the father is the new parent in the scope just like motherhood has been the focus of education, politics, advertising and instruction books and films during history (LaRossa, 1988). However motherhood *today* is not questioned publicly in the same way. It is moreover treated as something that comes naturally (Miller, 2010). In contrast, Miller argues, fatherhood is debated and promoted as something characteristic. An interesting counterpart is Ellingsæter (2005), who questions whether there is a renewed moralisation of motherhood emerging.

Fatherhood in the public debate is influencing our *conception* of a 'new culture' of a reformed fatherhood and fathering. We might talk about a democratisation of knowledge in society, as an increased amount of people is more likely to get higher education. At the same time knowledge is made available to a greater extent through different, easily accessible media. Fatherhood is still receiving much focus both by the state and the media, which makes the issue a hot potato. It is highlighted in contemporary television programs, public flyers at health care centres and even through handbooks targeting first time fathers informing them about the impact they have on their child's development and welfare. This makes the rhetoric of modern fatherhood, knowledge about children and factors influencing child development easily accessible. Likewise the expert information the state use as guiding directives are at large commonly available. Contemporary fathers are often talked about as pioneers on fathering even though most men with young children today experience paternity leave as a common practice.

Together this knowledge and expectations one might claim outline a publicly preferred template for fatherhood and fathering on which contemporary men are supposed to shape their practices and understanding of how to be a father. Proper fathers are expected to spend time with their children, be emotionally connected, involved and practically competent in their care towards their children. These expressions chalk out a rather homogenous perspective of fatherhood and fathering on either what it is or moreover what it ought to be. A perspective, which has been developed based on the ideas of proper motherhood? This way cultural and structural factors interconnect and make some of the corner stones of the *idea* of what it takes to make “the new/good father” and how a man can perform approved fatherhood in contemporary Norway.

Even though paternal care is preferred and encouraged, much of the arrangements surrounding childcare and being in parental leave is centred round the mother-child constellation. Mothers are normally shortly after birth invited to join social initiatives such as maternal postnatal groups⁴ or health related activities intended for mother-child. This type of social organisation and activities with a gendered key sign are not developed to the same extent regarding fathers on leave.

This chapter has contextualized the study within the history and background of the paid parental leave in Norway. Further this chapter has described the intentions of the quotas, its dualistic form and the present paid leave arrangement availability and duration. The main theoretical perspectives and current discourses surrounding children, childhood and fatherhood which inform both the making of the father’s quota and contemporary modes of upbringing, make the base of this study and will be presented in the next chapter.

⁴ Post-natal group are arrangements inviting parents (still mainly directed toward mothers) in parental leave from the local area to meet for socialization and sharing of experiences.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL APPROACH

This chapter deals with significant concepts and the theoretical perspectives from which this study derives its understanding. The study is inspired by ethnography, and the purpose has been to acquire insight in and an expanded understanding of the factors that influence how the leave as a care project is practically approached by the fathers in this study. My study has as its point of departure from perspectives derived from the social studies of children and childhood, gender studies and social constructionism. Fatherhood and paternity leave have grown to be a substantial field of research within Norway in particular. This research has provided the field with terms and knowledge that this study uses as a point of departure when exploring fathers shaping of their time in leave. Brandth & Kvande's (1997) concepts of *involved fathers* versus *distant fathers* along with Stefansen & Farstad's (2008) *strategies of care* are used as focal glasses when analysing the data. As this study has been an exploratory research process working with the empirical data the concept of *rationality of care*, which will be described in chapter five, emerged and was used as a supportive concept in the analysing process. Due to how contemporary understandings of children is still being heavily informed by developmental psychology and socialization theory, and such make some of the cornerstones in the formulation of the parental leave these will be briefly presented in this chapter. By including these theoretical perspectives, I aim to analyse the phenomenon from a different position than has previously been done.

By merely focusing on gender or class in a study exploring how everyday is shaped in paternity leave, for instance, one might neglect the impact of negotiations and challenges fathers are facing in the day-to day care. Fathering practices are performed in a space surrounded by discourses of approved fatherhood, masculinities, and not at least of what Foucault (Hennum, 2010; Montgomery & Woodhead, 2003) described as 'truth regimes', the knowledge on which one argues to be of the 'best interest of the child'. How 'the best interest of the child' can be interpreted in different and overlapping terms, such as from both a developmental perspective as well as in a rights perspective is, as an example, found in the articles of the Conventions on the Rights of the Child (articles 3.1, 3.2, 5 and 7.1). These articles emphasises both the child's right's and its 'needs' from a physiological and psychological perspective (OHCHR, 2015). Though Johansen, (2011) argues, that the negative consequences that paternal absence might cause the child, have received more

attention in the policies of the fathers quota than the focus on the child's *right* to the company of both parents.

3.1 Use of the term discourse and clarification of concepts

Taking a social constructionist perspective, parenthood and thereby fatherhood and fathering are similarly all regarded as created and recreated in a socio-cultural historical context.

Fathering is thus like childhood performed within a specific historical and social landscape.

'The making and breaking of childhood is itself a continuing and changing social activity in which people themselves – men, women and children are created, facilitated and constrained' (James and Prout, 1997). How time of childhood constructs and is constructed by time in childhood, -how fathers act upon and within different frames that construct time of childhood is the base of this study.

This study has its point of departure in *fatherhood* and *fathering practices* during paternity leave. The term *fathering* is in this text understood as the *concrete practices, the doing that constitutes the concept of fatherhood*, which is understood as a *discourse*.

Montgomery (2003: 47) defines discourses as

".. a whole set of interconnected ideas that work together in a self- containing way, ideas that are held together by a particular ideology or view of the world. (..) each of which draws upon its own particular knowledge-base, works from its own particular set of assumptions, offers its own explanation of 'how the world works' and incorporates its own set of values and ethics"

Hence, neither fatherhoods nor childhoods can be understood as static or singular state but, rather continuous constructions and reconstructions. Child perspectives, fatherhood and fathering are in this text understood as important theoretical and analytical concepts. To approach childhood and fatherhood we need to start by looking at these as concepts.

The term *father* can embrace several types of paternity and can be linked to various forms and relationships, such as stepfathers, biological fathers, social fathers (Marsiglio et al., 2000).

Thus in this study the fathers consist of a group of men one might say represent the conventional heterosexual nuclear-family fathers. They are married or in a relationship, living together with their child or their children.

In this study I understand the concept of *fatherhood* as described by Hobson and Morgan as 'the cultural coding of men as fathers' (Hobson, 2002). In line with social constructivism the study is not referring to one objective picture of fatherhood but rather fatherhoods and different interpretations of a hegemonic ideal picture of the involved and engaged father, (Stefansen & Farstad, 2008), that is perceived as model for the Norwegian paternity leave arrangement.

Fathering is referred to as the *practice* of fatherhood. I understand it as what the father's do, their strategies and practical conduct of doing fatherhood; what Marsiglio, Day & Lamb (2000) refer to as paternal involvement, displayed through cognition, emotions and action.

An important focus of this study is to analyse how discourses of fatherhood and ideas of what is good for the child influence fathers' navigation as they are performing their time in leave. The fathering practices and discourses are seen as reciprocal. Gillis (1996) explains this in terms of 'the families we live with' the actual families we live in and our practices. The 'families we live by', Gillis refers to as our cognitive maps, our ideas of what it means to be a 'proper' family, initially influencing each other both ways.

This changing perception and constitution of fatherhood, childhood and children are within post structuralism and Foucault's work interpreted as constructed through self-containing discourses, and includes agency (James and Prout, 1997). Agency refers to how people act in relation to current discourses. Questions about what childhood and fatherhood are, the definition of them and how they ought to be, has been the focus of discourses. Such, discourse can be described as the moral compass that constitutes and is constituted by practices. Ideas of childhood and the best interest of the child can be seen as well as political presented standards and as cultural standards that inhabit different meaning across subcultures within society.

“ The poststructuralist perspective, therefore, with its recognition of the mutually constitutive aspects of power/knowledge and its insistence that subjectivity is multiple, dynamic and constructed through discourse, also moves beyond the traditional agency/structure debate. Power is located very much at the level of the everyday” (Lupton and Barclay 1997:p. 11)

Discourse, as Foucault described it, is readily connected to a certain relation of knowledge and power (Hennum 2010). Discourses are influencing peoples' practices and attitudes, but are also influenced by practices and attitudes towards the knowledge they represent. This is

done in terms of whether they are acknowledged or rejected to the benefit of other discursive truths. Whilst different discourses can exist simultaneously some grows to be more powerful than others and becomes what Foucault called regimes of truths.

Morgan (2011) argues that we need to look at fatherhoods in plural, and at the multiple fathering practices. Further he claims to see these practices in relation to the wider picture of society. This interplay of discourse and power produces and reproduces the changing mode of fatherhood and keeps the discourses moving.

As this study is looking at fathering practices within paternity leave, different discourses surrounding fatherhood and fathering practices seemed a relevant point of departure. Morgan (2011:p. 68) argues how 'Discourse constitutes the context of constraints within which family practices are conducted'. Applying this view, discourses are not fixed or static entities, but fluid and reflexive competing *sets* of knowledge or truths about a phenomenon. They work like cognitive frameworks of what proper fatherhood is or should be. In this study this is what it means to do 'proper' fatherhood during paternity leave. Discourse of fatherhood also implies constituting the child within contemporary fathering and child perspectives.

3.2 Perspectives of children and childhood

According to (Ariès, 1982) childhood is a modern, western invention and defined as a distinct period of the human life course. At the turn of the 18th century western societies underwent both structural and cultural changes affecting all segments of human life course.

In short technology, demographic changes, medical advances, impact from psychology and implementation of elementary schooling all played parts in a new structure of childhood. The new rapidly extended knowledge and increased focus on the future prospects were intriguing. Both within sociology and psychology a growing interest of the child emerged whereas the child representing the future, eventually became an *object* of research.

The early studies leaped from thoughts typical of its time, where the child was *objectified* and studied in terms of being on its way to becoming a fully developed (adult) individual (Lee, 2001). These positivistic perspectives on children's development dominated and to a large extent still dominate disciplines like biology, psychology, medicine and some sociological venues, (Jenks, 1982, Rogers, 2003, Speier, 1976). It emphasizes the child as a human *becoming*, objectified, and regarded as a universal child, with natural needs and prepositions.

It is to a large extent this positivistic view professionalism still leans on when making decisions regarding childcare (Hennum, 2010). Three of these theories about development spring from different perspectives, yet all are influencing how children are understood and how children are approached both within child care policies, education and upbringing. One such example is article 5 in the Conventions on the Rights of the Child, as well as in a state policy (St.meld. nr. 29 (2002-2003)). In the latter the child's right to both parents is stated, then followed up by an argument about how more knowledge about children and parents in the new era would help to make accurate (family) policies. Then, further, stating how the child will be at the center of this politics building on knowledge derived from pedagogy and psychology.

John Bolwby's attachment theory, Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development and Lev Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural learning will be briefly presented in the next sections.

3.2.1 Bolwby's attachment theory

John Bolwby (1907-1990) developed his theory of attachment by observing how young children in hospital reacted when they were deprived of contact with their parents. He found that these children reacted on the deprivation of their close carer in ways that signalled loss of security and utter distress and concluded that young children had an intrinsic need of attachment and closeness to a primary carer (Woodhead, 2003). This view is still dominant in the discourses in contemporary Norway and is underlined in the making of the paid parental leave arrangement making sure the child can be cared for by his or her parents the first year of his or her life. This view is also deeply embedded in the different pedagogic and psychology professions guiding the Norwegian Child Welfare Service (Johansen, 2011).

“What is believed to be essential for mental health is that an infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother-substitute- one person who steadily ‘mothers’ him) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment” (Bolwby, 1953:13 in Woodhead, 2003:105)

Bolwby underlined the importance of a close relationship, a bond between the child and its carer, which need not be the mother of the child, but someone who provides for the child's welfare in an equally efficient manner.

3.2.2 Theory of cognitive development

The biologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) with his theory of cognitive development founded one of the most influential theories concerning children's development that even today embosses our educational system and how we approach childcare (Woodhead, 2003). Piaget belonged to the positivistic research tradition, and his theory regarded the child as an adult to be. The child's way towards adulthood was to encompass four developmental stages Piaget related to take place in an interconnected biological and mental growth *within the child*. In each stage new cognitive skills had to be absorbed and processed before it was integrated as a part of the child's cognitive skills and ready for the next stage. The child did not just grow into new mental competence but did his/her learning through play and exploring his/her environment and as such actively builds up her cognitive toolkit until the child finishes the fourth stage fully cognitively developed.

3.2.3 Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning and development

Being interested in how children learned and developed, one of Piaget's contemporaries Vygotsky did not focus on the universal child as a natural process, instead he suggested taking on a sociocultural approach. Vygotsky argued how the child had to be viewed as a social actor influenced by the cultural and social context they were exposed to in that particular time in history she/he lived in. (Woodhead, 2003). This view applies a different approach to development by placing development as an external determined process. The child's starting point for development is in this view dependent on his/her surroundings and which discourses these are guided by.

Social constructivism (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) and social studies of children and childhood started as a response to these dominant theories about children's research (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998).

3.3 Social studies of children and childhood

Social studies of children and childhood evolved as a critique and response to the positivistic view (James & Prout, 1990) that for so long dominated research on children and childhood. This approach has gained terrain and gradually challenged though not conquered (ibid) the other established positions. With the introduction of sociology of childhood (James & Prout, 1990, Qvortrup, 2002) a growth in both quantitative studies, ethnographic and qualitative

research within plural disciplines have focused on the lived lives and everyday life experiences of children, as well as the structures they act upon. This research has challenged the global ideology of childhood in several ways as it has uncovered a plurality of childhoods proving they are not experienced or lived in a homogenous way.

Ultimately their research has provided a broader understanding of the differences in childhoods throughout the world and how and why work is part of it.

Social studies of children and childhood constitute children within the field of sociological research from three positions, sociologies of children, deconstructive sociology of childhood, and structural sociology of childhood (Alanen, 2001). This study focuses on the deconstructive sociology and structural sociology that are working with childhood as a social category at a macro-level. From this structural stance children and childhood are perceived as a structural category, which is inflicted by adult-made systems and processes the children have scarcely no decisive impact on (Qvortrup, 2002, 2009). These structures can be seen in relation to what Lenski, Nolan & Lenski (1995) describe as systems of social institutions of society, where the systems are here described as “durable answers to important and persistent problems”(ibid) that interrelate to each other and can be found in different forms in all societies. Family politics and economics, the culture of child care such as parental leave can be seen as such a “durable answer” that is supposed to by structure ease and control the lives of the society and its citizens, including children and adults. These sociocultural systems together inhabit the role of structuring the society. According to Giddens (James & Prout, 1990) these structures are the limits and horizons for human agency and the discourses that form their life-worlds.

A widely quoted description of the approach on children and childhood by James and Prout (1990: 8) claims;

“Childhood is understood as a social construction. As such it provides the interpretive frame for contextualizing the early years of human life. Childhood, as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither a natural nor universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies”.

Ideals of care are related to different norms of roles and cultural expectations of what the child needs. Social constructionism involves a critical attitude to the fact that knowledge is static and objective. To choose this approach means that one does not accept knowledge as obvious, but rather an approach, representing a rather exploratory attitude considering

knowledge as contextual and fluid, without neglecting the biological aspects of a child. 'The immaturity of children is a biological fact of life but the ways in which this immaturity is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture' (Prout & James, 1990:7).

Taking its starting point in valuing the child, its cultures and social relations as subjects of research rather than objects of research, (James, Jenks & Prout 1998) children's and childhood role and place in research has been expanded. Thus it should be noted that the various approaches coexist, with social studies of children and childhood as an alternative approach.

When constructions of childhood are described by James & Prout (1997) as on-going historical processes they point at how multiple factors are intertwined, here structure and agency can be seen as different sides of the same coin. They define time of childhood as a period of the human life span, as a time of the aging, a constructed stage. This time concept, they claim, are interwoven with time in childhood, which is defined as the multiple ways in which childhood is controlled, by constructions and constrains. These may be of cultural/religious, political, demographical or economical sort.

“The child has been in the cross fire, and a battle has been fought out over what is “in-the-best-interest-of-the-child” or what “the good childhood” ought to be” (Korsvold, 2007:6)

This thinking is in line with H. Hendrick in James & Prout (1997) who refer to the changes in how we conceive childhood as a matter of how time influences the thoughts about childhood. Hendrick claims that the way children are constituted through beliefs, modes of upbringing, and expectations are “rooted in the past and reshaped in the present”.

This is mirrored in the way it is communicated through media where notions of children and childhoods is heavily visualized in art and pictures, and is neatly pictured by Higonnet (1998).

3.4 Masculinity and the discourse of emotional closeness

In line with this study's point of departure gender and how we perceive masculinity and femininity is regarded as socially constructed. Gender becomes something we do, rather than something we are. This implies a need to rethink and analyse how gender as a social category is changing (Brattemyr et al, 2006).

“Fathering and masculinity intersect are mutually constitutive and work to change or reinforce each other” (Brandth 2015:4).

A much-used model of thinking about masculinity is Robert Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. By describing masculinity as determined by cultural and historical attributes Connell (1995) grasps how masculinity and gender itself is produced and displayed through performance. What constitutes a hegemonic masculinity is how it acts according to the different available leading discourses of a preferred 'male template' in its society. This denotes how hegemonic masculinity is seen as a reciprocal part of discourse through the continuous re-construction of hegemonic masculinity practices. Nevertheless one has to be critical to how the ideal and the real are interconnected. The definition of childhood as a distinct social category has influenced the way it is perceived and constructed in Western societies through ideological assumptions and (de) moral discussions on what children and childhood ought to be (Buckingham, 2004, Mayall, 2002). During history the discourses on children and childhood have differed, and with them the way one constructed both childhood and upbringing (Ibid).

As pointed out in the introduction, LaRossa (1988) suggested that there might be a discrepancy between what we think has changed and what actually has changed pointing at the discourse of what then was articulated as the "new father". He argued that the idea of a new involved father was just that, more of an idealisation rather than a picture of reality. The discourse he claimed had changed ahead of actual practices. Hochschild and Machung (2003) a few years later calls the changes in gendered equality as 'the stalled revolution' referring to the changes in women's life which changed rather rapidly from being a housewife to a combined housewife and employee, neither are complemented by sufficient additional changes in the structures of economical working life nor in men's provision at home. Hence making women subject to a double burden, working outside the home and dealing with the majority of the domestic work, including childcare.

In Norway, Brandt and Kvande (1997, 2003) found that men have integrated childcare as a part of contemporary hegemonic masculinity. In their study the men described caring practices that differed from the mothers in terms of weighting play and companionship as most important and such integrated the care in a way that did not alter or feminize their performances as fathers. Still a shift has been made in which men now invest more time with their children identifying themselves with the now dominating ideal of the *involved father*. The involved father represents a turn towards a family orientation approach by an increased practical and emotional participation especially linked to childcare. Lamb (1987) separates

parental involvement into three main features, accessibility, engagement and responsibility that requires the fathers to spend not just time with the children, but also engage in an emotional connectedness towards the child, which Dermott (2008) refers to as *intimate fatherhood*. Here, we are dealing with the rights, duties, responsibilities and statuses that are attached to fathers and fatherhoods, as well as the discursive terrain around good and bad fathers.

Hennum, describes how 'there is a social and cultural recognition about men's movement towards being carers which in English can be described in the terms of 'nurturing and caring fathers' (Hennum, 2006:48 (my translation)) In a study interviewing young men about their thoughts about having children and being fathers, Hoel (2009) found how involved fatherhood was the ideal for the fathers to be. The young men in her study argued how parental competence was socially constructed. Yet contrasting discourses about caring as inherent gendered competences emerged placing fathering within a double discourse. This 'mixed articulation' Brandth & Kvande (2003) between discourses when describing the ideal fatherhood, they point out might imply a change of how fatherhood is perceived and practiced. Hegemonic masculinity has strong connotations to both independence through work and an orientation towards child centred care (ibid). Childhood and parenthood are commonly accepted as closely interrelated. They mutually define each other. Fathers as prime caregivers for young children are rather novel, and can be regarded as a shaping in the making. One can ask if there is a wider understanding that enable fathers to constitute their practices by altering between discourses to form approved contemporary fatherhoods than is the case with motherhood.

However, an overly strong emphasis on work is regarded as a potential danger of producing a *distant father* (disapproved fathering) and would not be in line with the hegemonic masculinity. Hence it would be contradictory to the ideal of the involved father.

3.5 Strategies of childcare

Childcare is much about recognizing and meeting the child's needs. Parents choose strategies in accordance with their knowledge, the discourse they lean on. 'Scientific theories connect with wider discourses about children's needs, especially when research is closely tied to applied issues' (Woodhead, 2003, p.103). Previous research on how class can influence choice of strategies of childcare is described by Stefansen & Farstad (2008). They focus on

childcare as a social practice where cultural values are produced and negotiated. They point out how social class influences how normative and cognitive perspectives form the understanding and use of parental leave as a part of childcare. Stefansen & Farstad (2008) find that what is considered, as middleclass⁵ families are more likely to prefer a tidy trajectory when arranging their 'childcare-projects'. That is, both parents taking part in the parental leave, emphasising their own role as active parts in the enabling and preparing of the child for an individual life on new arenas. In Stefansen and Farstad's interview ellingsæter study the parents in these middleclass families regarded transition to day-care after the leave as optimal when planning their childcare projects. Working class parents, on the other hand, seemed to prefer a form of care that implied that the child was kept as long as possible in the 'safe sphere of the home. A view of the child as in need of protection for 'natural development' to happen was more common in these families.

Halldén (1992) described similar findings, seeing how children can be understood as early as 'project' (projects) and 'verande' (beings). When conducting her study she did not apply the notion of class (ibid) though, there where a divergence between Swedish urban (middleclass) and a rural (working class) strategy of upbringing (Forsberg, 2011). However both studies found two main strategies influenced by different child perspectives, but, (and important to note as Halldén points out) the two perspectives are not considered as two separate and independent approaches of understanding the child. She, like Stefansen and Farstad (2008, 2010), recognizes similarities in which the two approaches are differently weighted in the population yet at the same time as they note that the two child perspectives are intertwined and can appear simultaneously.

Care as a concept can be interpreted and understood from a range of perspectives. According to Leira and Saraceno (2008) it is also a contested concept. Care especially in the English language can be associated with a range of meanings. In Norwegian the word used in this study would be 'omsorgspraksis', which in this particular study refers to the concrete care exercised in the reflexive relationship between father and child in their everyday life.

In the next chapter, I will describe how I approached the study methodologically.

⁵ Middleclass is in this study based on educational level.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

This study looks at how fathering and paternity leave is lived and communicated in contemporary Norway by fathers in parental leave. It is based on qualitative methodological tools using semi-structured interviews and analyses of text through time limited day-to-day logs, as well as analysis of text and visual expressions through what Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) refer to as “virtual ethnography” -data retrieved from Internet blogs. This chapter presents how this study was planned, conducted and analysed, describing the process from the start until the final write-up.

Qualitative research seeks to describe existing subjective phenomena or experiences and aims for an in depth knowledge and understanding of its focus rather than quantitative extended approach. By illuminating considerations, design, methodology, the different tools used, analytical moves and challenges affiliated to the research process I have endeavoured to secure it's transparency. The first part situates my preposition within the parental leave topic, second part outline planning, access and recruitment to the study. The third part describes the tools used. The fourth part outlines transcription and the processing and analysis of the research material whilst the fifth and the last part reflect over challenges and ethical issues during the research process.

4.1 Pre-position of the researcher

The researcher will always bring in the subjective values and be biased by them (Gudmundsdottir, 1996, Saldaña, 2013). An important part of the research must then be awareness and consciousness of which “glasses”, through which the researcher comprehends the world. I concur with Doucet who sums up how reflexivity is what ‘that incorporates reflections on the personal, interpersonal, institutional, pragmatic, emotional, theoretical, epistemological and ontological influences that shapes our research` (Doucet, 2006:48).

Well aware of the fact that I entered a field I did not have much knowledge about, but being a mother and being interested in the topic, I needed to position myself within it, as this study would be conducted in a field of interest and discipline.

McCracken (1988) points out that in any analysis of a social phenomenon, we will use our interpretation kit; accumulated experience consisting of experience, education and imagination as tools for understanding. An awareness and reflection on these personal

prepositions is significant in any research process reflecting on my age, gender, race, class, education, values and what discourses I am a part of and bring into the research process. This along with clarifying my earlier experience within the field of study was important to make the process transparent.

Being a mother starting and expanding our family the last 15 teen years, I have seen the changes in family politics in Norway and the growth and (now) cutbacks in the parental leave arrangement at close without taking part of the extended leaves. Despite the fact that I have witnessed the debate surrounding fatherhood and the parental leave both in media and among friends and colleagues, I had not pondered much upon nor engaged in it, as the paid parental leave arrangement do not include students, such as we where when our first children arrived. Therefore paid parental leave arrangement including the structure and construct of the father's quota was not an issue for us until the birth of our third child. At that time the father's quota was set to six weeks.

The interest for the topic increased as a result of its recent occurrence in different public media together with my on-going studies and education as a child welfare officer and working with children and youth. It was during my academic studies in Childhood studies my curiosity invoked.

Whether the closeness to the field turns out problematic or fruitful depends on the researchers approach to and reflection on her own stance or pre-position to the topic (McCracken, 1988). This implies a continuous attention to own position to the topic. It also entails an awareness of identification or over-identification with the participants. According to Repstad (1993) the continuous demand of reflection makes research an exhausting exercise. Humanistic research often implies topics related to emotions and values. This urge of an effort of self-reflection by the researcher when listening openly to the other also has a moral value (Berger and Bendiksby, 1991). The researcher might not be capable of this in every situation, but needs to be attentive of it to make sure that the participants point of view is not hidden behind the researchers own veil of pre-assumption. This brings us to the fact that the adult researcher has an ethical responsibility in the research and not just entails the researcher as a facilitator in terms of practical factors.

4.2 Planning of the study

The methodological approach of this research is guided by its focus and purpose by previous research strategies within the field and by pending information on the subject. It is not defined within one specific qualitative method, but rather in a triangulated within-methods approach *influenced* by ethnography. Most ethnographic fieldwork is based on communication and observations, (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Allowing different utterances of a topic can enhance a broader understanding of the topic of investigation by depicting it from plural angles (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Ethnography is defined as the study of the way of life of a group of people (Lee, 2001) and has an emphasis on action, people's doings and why they act as they do. Traditionally ethnography has been considered as methods of participatory observation over a substantial period of time. More recent definitions of ethnography opens for a tighter time schedule and more diversity of approaches (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The study is approached with different methods. Firstly I went through research and white papers, looking at how fathering and paternity leave is presented and understood. When deciding how to approach the study practically several issues emerged. Designing the research had to take into consideration the fact that I wanted to see how fathering in everyday life looked over time without intruding on the families and their child (ren). The study had to be formulated so that I would get access to a) the father/child daily activities, b) the father's experiences of their time in paternity leave, and c) how it is structured and constructed.

Aiming to capture a glimpse of fathering in paternity leave, what they did during their days without taking part in it myself, I had to seek suitable methods to provide this information. I also wanted to know the father's experiences of this time, as well as how they think about the paternity leave by asking them to share their activities and experience from their private sphere over a span of time.

Comparing data derived from the different methods could then enable me as a researcher to see if there were disparities or patterns between the findings. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) the research analysis is not a separated part of the total research process. It is a continuous process, from the start with the initial ideas and further into the phase where one gather knowledge and background material, in order to sort out and funnel the research question.

To find useful methods to gain rich information is crucial. Gathering knowledge on how fathering was performed, experienced and communicated in leave demanded methods applicable to generate this knowledge. Furthermore, I wanted to know what paternity leave looked like practically from a day-to-day basis, including perspectives on its construction. To match these criteria three methods were chosen to supplement each other. Blogs, interviews and logbooks were considered as useful tools to provide this information. In this way I would avoid interfering in their life more than necessary and a sense of continuity of everyday life could be achieved. The choice of focusing on the fathers and not the parents as a unit was one hand out of pragmatics, it might seem overwhelming having both parents writing logbooks, and there would be a risk that they regarded the project as too self-revealing. Secondly, I wanted to explore the men's own experiences, and as such underpin the significance of *their* stories and *their* practices as they were the ones doing the paternity leave.

“Display is the process by which individuals, and groups of individuals, convey to each other and to relevant audiences that certain of their actions do constitute ‘doing family things’ and thereby confirm that these relationships are ‘family’ relationships” Finch (2007:67)

Goffman in Repstad (1993) states that any group will form their own life in a way that seems meaningful and makes sense as soon as you get close enough to see it. It is not easy to access a family's private life over time if at all, and least of all in a hectic time with babies and toddlers in the home. It would be too intrusive, and not likely to fit into any family's time schedule. If one would get access to a family over a period of time to observe them, the researcher's presence might be disturbing as well as inflecting the way the family's behaviour and how the days would be structured. According to McCracken (1988) the issue of time and privacy are the two main obstacles for a researcher to access the field she wants to investigate. I wanted their daily life to be as authentic as possible without interfering by my own presence.

4.3 Recruitment and access of participants to log-writing and interview

The sample of informants was small. Qualitative studies are often characterized by being intensive rather than extensive in their objective, seeking in depth information and knowledge (McCracken, 1988; Gudmundsdottir, 1992). The selection of informants were guided by the field of research as well as the access to informants. Purposive sampling is used in most

qualitative research an aimed sampling for informants one consider holds a great amount of knowledge or relevant experience of the topic or field under study.

The intention was to primarily look at fathering within the father's quota. This was extended to include fathers in the dividable parental leave to open up for more informants. Some of the participants where recruited through an information text I posted on the social medium Facebook. The intention was to spread the word of the study to as many as possible and as quickly as possible. This was done twice. Friends and acquaintances functioned as sponsors to spread the word on their Facebook accounts to consider participating in my study. The most fruitful recruitment was through these sponsors that had access to and wanted to contribute with possible participants they knew trough work or personal network. The recruitment was independent of the sponsors being a part of either my immediate or extended network. They provided a lot of contact information to possible participants though quite a few of these tips turned out to be incorrect as many of the fathers already had finished the leave, others were not even about to take paternity leave for a long time. Recruitment from the health care stations was deliberately avoided to prevent the study to be associated with public health care or public family care politics (Andrews and Vassenden, 2007).

The recruited participants were all previously unknown to me except for one with whom I had attended the same school, but not in the same class 20 years ago. He read about the study on social media and contacted me to participate.

Possible participants were contacted by phone or e-mail where they were informed about the study. If interested they then received formal information⁶ via e-mail concerning issues such as privacy, confidentiality, estimated time used and type of information gathering. They also received a consent form to sign. One participant kept in contact via the private text message function on Facebook, texting back and forth on practical issues, and talking about being in parental leave, alternating between formal information and polite informal talk within the same messages when establishing contact.

Internet communication technology (ICT) turned out to be the easiest way to keep in touch when following up the participants. This might relate to the extended use of ICT both in private and work life as well as the sense of distance it gives in contradiction to multiple

⁶ Appendix 1

phone calls, which might feel overwhelming and tiresome. Quite a few of those who was asked to consider participation in the project reported they considered writing a log for three weeks would be too much work for them at the time. Recruitment was reported as closely connected to practical impediments (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Writing logs the fathers communicated was an obstacle to not want to join the study, as it would interfere in an already tight time schedule. Two of those who agreed to participate withdrew from the project because as they said, they realised how they kept forgetting to log and had promised too much. These agreed to participate when they were mid way through the leave, and this made the remaining leave easier.

4.4 Description of the participants

The sample of participants was a small, homogenous group taking their leave within the period between 2013 and 2014. Five fathers wrote logs and four were interviewed with a sound recorder after they had completed the logs. The fifth communicated via mail. All of those that accepted to participate were higher educated (one had studied for four years and the rest more). Considering their educational background they belong to what we might call middleclass in urban Norway.

Father/ Child	Type of leave	Structure of leave	Age of child during log writing	Number of children
Anders/ Anne	Father's quota	Every second day	9 months	1
Bjørn/ Birk	Father's leave	80% over 15 weeks	10 months	2
Geir Tor/ Guro	Sharable parental part	100%	12 months	1
Haakon/ Hannah	Father's quota	Every second week	9 months	1
Eivind/ Eskil	Father's quota and 50% of sharable part	100%	12 months	3
Isak/ Iris	Father's quota	100%	9 months	1
Jon/ Jørgen	Father's quota	100%	9 months	3
Vegard/ Vilja	Father's quota	100%	9 months	1

The five paternity leaves were undertaken at different seasons of the year. The children were aged from 9 months and up to 12 months during the time of the log writing.

Four of the fathers writing log when in the father's quota. One participant wrote the log when in the dividable part of the parental leave as the mother of the child was a student and was not entitled to a paid parental leave. For three of the participants this was their first paternity leave, for the other two it was the second and third. Three of the fathers had chosen flexible outtake (described in chapter two) of the leave called time-account; which gives them the opportunity to stretch the leave over a longer period by alternating between leave and work during the week instead of a shorter, continuous outtake. This means they stretched their leave over a longer period of time, and the child alternated between time with the mother and father. The father in the dividable part of parental leave used it continuously.

4.5 Methodological Tools

This section presents the different practical tools used in this study.

4.5.1 Log/ diary

The informants started by writing logs for three weeks of their leave. The participants were informed about how they could write a log on a day-to-day basis for three weeks, such as writing about their whereabouts and activities and with whom if any they spent time with. They were also asked to include how they had experienced the actual day with their child. The logbooks gave me the opportunity to see the practical construction of their daily life. This includes their whereabouts, what they did, how they solved practical obstacles and the social settings they attended. Secondly their personal comments on the day offered a personal point of view and understanding of their day.

Logging daily activities and writing down feelings and thoughts about the activities and outcome of the day can not only provide practical information but purport to describe daily life construct and hence give the researcher valuable insight or understanding from the participant's personal stance (Denzin, 1989). These log books were self-documenting on request, and not personal spontaneous writings. This could have affected the extent of information given. It should also be reflected upon whether this kind of self-documenting influenced the level of activities during the logging process. At the same time the log is quite intimate as it introduces your everyday activities and life to a stranger. This might be restraining the participants in their sharing.

Describing and summing up the day over a certain span of time gave a glimpse into how father and child's daily life is spent and structured. Writing such logs does take some time and effort and the researcher is dependent on the participant's engagement in it. Follow-up by polite reminders was required. Some of the fathers needed to be reminded of the logging, and reported a later starting date than they first had announced.

If they would wonder about anything related to the logging they had been informed to contact me by mail at any time and ask. This was an opportunity several used. Internet communication provides a swift and direct contact between people, without interfering in their doing. Maybe this made the contact easier.

The participants were contacted by mail some time after they had agreed to participate and were reminded to contact me if there was any vagueness or problems related to their assignment.

4.5.2 Research interviews

Interview as a methodological tool is included in most of social science research (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; McCracken, 1988) and regarded as one of the most important one (Gudmundsdottir, 1996). Interviews are especially used in research trying to capture attitudes, values and feelings (ibid) and have been successfully used in the major research within this field of study (Brandt & Kvande, 2005, 2003; Gudmundsdottir, 1992; Aarseth, 2010). The interview process started with the initial work designing the interview guide. With the field of study as a starting point it formed the guideline of the semi structured interview. Through the work of forming the interview guide made the guide serve as a preparation tool letting me mine for and structure the topics I wanted to investigate. It also became a tool that helped keep the interview on track and remind me what additional questions to ask in the interview situation. Composing the interview carefully leaves room for improvisation along the interview session. This can facilitate a better flow of the dialogue between participant and interviewer.

The interview is a two way structured dialogue that should facilitate exploration of the informant's experience with and perception of fathering within parental leave. This I experienced, as the interview-guide was not followed point-device in a set order rather adjusted at the pace of the interviewee as he often touched upon and elaborated upon issues in my guide and covering every theme without me having to ask for all of them. Sometimes repeating what the informant had said was useful to see if I had understood him right and gave him a possibility to elaborate upon it if needed. Summing up what has been said from time to time can be helpful to make sure one has understood correctly as well as opening up for change or adding (Gudmundsdottir, 1990). Sometimes it was enough just to repeat a word (McCracken, 1988) or a sentence for the interviewee to expand on the topic.

After each logging was completed I contacted the participant to set up time for an interview. This was a time consuming task, as they often needed time to plan for it together with their family. Some interviews was done quite close to the logging, others were done some weeks after.

The interviews were conducted at different sites. Giving them opportunity to choose among café at their place, according to what they found to be the more practical solution. Some interviews were done at their home, others at cafés. The interviews lasted from half an hour, up to an hour and were tape-recorded. The participants were informed that they could call the interview off at any time, but it was me who eventually closed the interview when we had been through all the topics. The interviews always ended with questioning whether there were anything the respondents wanted to add or thought was important to implement. Information was given on the possibility to send a mail or contact me if there would be any information they wanted to be supplemented.

The interviews started after the informants had completed the logging to explore the information from the logs. It also gave room for a broader exploration of how this time had meant to them and how the fathers themselves perceived time in and time of parental leave by elaborating on it.

Time and place of the interviews were decided by the informants to fit their schedule and give them possibility to choose a site they would feel comfortable with. All interviews took place without the partner present. This gave room for the informant to speak unobstructed. On the other hand with the partner present supplementary knowledge could have been presented. Two of the interviews were done at the informants' homes whilst the other two at a café. The interviews started with introduction, as we had never met. The conversation started as informal talk about the site, and whether the child was sleeping or being elsewhere at the time. Then they were told that the interviews would take approximately forty-five minutes. Furthermore they were re-informed about informed consent and the option of withdrawal from the project. Interviews in the participants' own homes took place in the living room. We seated and the interviewees who in advance had been informed about the use of audiotape recorder were asked if they still felt comfortable with audio taping the interview. Both home-interviews were scheduled to a time where the child was present but asleep monitored by a baby call swishing gently in the background. This made us talk a bit lower and made us both aware of the child that made the centre of the study.

The interviews at the café proceeded very similar to the at-home interviews. The main difference was the absence of the child, and the constant audio backdrop from people and music passing by. It was a neutral ground (Repstad, 1996) and fitted with the following

schedule of the informants. We introduced and seated outside picking a rather undisturbed spot with no one at such a close range that they could serve as audience and I ordered soda and coffee for us. Trickiness and fumbling with the audio recorder at the start caused some laugh and made a soft start at the first interview session.

With the theoretical point of departure in social constructionism knowledge is regarded as constructed and we need to be aware of the constant impact of reflexivity. It is relevant to recognize that the reflexivity process also includes the participants in the research process. They, too, are active parts of the waves of interpreting-shaping-reinterpreting. The interview is not a neutral procedure, rather a site where knowledge is produced (Gudmundsdottir, 1996; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; McCracken, 1988). As a researcher I had to be continuously aware of my role in the setting and meaning making, both as potentially facilitator of the information flow between us as well as a disturbing factor restraining the research process. One such factor that I had to be conscious about was my background from social work where different types of communication and interview forms was used as pedagogic tools. The settings in which the interviews were conducted was chosen by the informants so they could feel in control and at much ease as possible.

The interviewing of the fathers were done by semi-structured interviews where the topics was set. However, the sequence was more random, depending on the direction of the conversation. Sometimes the men talked about the next topic without me having to ask for the information. This occurred more in the interviews where the 'flow' in the interview was more apparent. Another reason could be the very open introductory question that allowed the fathers grasp what immediately came to their mind and elaborate from that. At one occasion I had to reformulate the question because it was too open and the participant asked what I meant. The original question was: 'to be in leave, what did that involve for you?' whereas I than reformulated it the 'when you think about your time in leave, what do you associate it with?' Probably not much more narrow that question either, but it pointed out that what this dad connected to his leave was interesting to me whatever his answer would be, and made the interview flow again. And the reformulation gave the informant more time to think. My overall impression was that the fathers opened up and described their everyday lives with the pleasures and the challenges it involves, without romanticizing it.

4.5.3 Internet blogs

Internet has become an integrated part of the modern western world; it arrived for common use in 1993 it has become a major part in both private and public life (Buckingham, 2003). Internet communication technology (ICT) functions as a social space where information can be gathered in forms of texts as well as intercommunication in online discussions (Tingstad, 2007; Markham, 2005). This implies that access to information and the possibility to spread information provides an opportunity to construct oneself as a father and display fathering and family practices through different means across the Internet is available for huge parts of the population. By realizing and accepting ICT as becoming a part of our (western) social space, make it necessary to recognize it and the possibilities for communication attached to it into account and consideration while doing research. 'Internet technologies have the potential to shift the ways in which qualitative research collect, make sense of, and represent data' (Markham, 2005:794), though we should be aware how we could never prove their authenticity.

Blogs on fathering and fatherhood, daddy-blogs, is a growing phenomenon on Internet. Several of these focus on topics like doing fatherhood within parental leave. Thus it is a resource of information on how they practice fathering, and how they choose to communicate the culture of fathering. I wanted to use them both as comparative readings as well as data resources. Daddy blogs are still not as common as mummy blogs, by far.

Blogs covers many issues emerging in everyday life of a family man. A blog, derived from *weblog* is a fusion of a diary and a log (Hookway, 2008). Most of the blogs are focusing on a narrow topic, posting experiences and ideas by presenting the latest text from the top, often with a thematic menu at one of the sides of the blog page. Each text is called a blog-post or a post. By scrolling downwards you find previous posts, and a comment section at the bottom of each post. Blogs covers many issues emerging in everyday life of a family man. Further this type of communication constitutes a privacy that can be liberating in means of testing/shaping own identity without revealing name and face (Tingstad, 2010; Markham, 2005) As quoted from Markham (2005) 'in technology mediated environments, self, other, and social structures are constituted through interaction, negotiated in concert with others'. This mean that ICT is not limited to being purely a tool as source for information, but rather a social space where meaning and identity are (re) created. According to this statement one could claim that parts of the fatherhood – childhood discourse is constructed and

deconstructed also through online communication and discussions. Choosing online ethnography as one of the methods was based on diverse reasons. First, as already mentioned, internet is a social space that does exist and therefore should be considered in its own right. Secondly was my own position to it as I regard internet as a vital part of the communication arenas people exchange and meanings, and do not perceive it as singularly a social arena but also as a practical tool for research. In this study I have analysed three daddy blogs. I wanted to use blogs because of their log style their specific and spontaneous focus on leave as a topic. Another major reason was how blogs are used to display fathering, and family practices. The blogs were found by Google search. These searches brought me to other blogs and pages, which intermediated several blogs.

The blogs centred around one specific topic, namely being dad in leave where the fathers themselves displayed their way of doing fatherhood. These blogs were also very consistent in their form. They were built up around the daily doings, and formulated as logs or diaries, containing descriptions of activities, accounts on why things ran like they did, and some own experiences about it. My point of departure is that ICT can be researched both on and with.

By using logs and blogs over a longer period of time, one can get a relatively detailed insight into a 'reality' that has previously been brought out through the interview. Following Morgan's (2011) call to look at everyday practices and fathers' cognitive approach to their practices, this method might provide a broader description of the everyday, which might have slipped away in an interview situation, precisely due to the reason that they are considered as a matter of course.

4.6 Process of transcribing

The interviews and the notes taken during the interviews were transcribed. There was a difference in audio quality in the different interviews. Those recorded outside had picked up sounds from the street nearby and functioned as a filter of disturbing noise along with the interview. I considered to filter the noise away with a music technology program as I was offered to be taught how to do it, but came to the conclusion that it would be too time consuming. It was an operation of concentrated focus transcribing with all the blurring sounds in the background, but was solved by turning the sound up and trying to neglect the unwanted fuzz.

Some of the text was oral and informal slang expressions, and informal language. This would be translated to express similar meaning but not direct word-by-word quotes in English to maintain a flow in the text. Some places in the quoted text (...) appear. This indicates that some utterances like 'mmm', 'yeah' have been left out to preserve the flow in the text. The logs were already written, but multiplied in several copies and prepared for analysing. Blog text was printed and copied, pictures were left out of consideration to privacy.

4.7 Processing data and analysing

Narrowing the field of study, reading theory, working with the methodological approach of the research, and performing the research makes the analysing part a concurrent and continuing process alongside and as a part of the other activities. It is not something that happens as a segregated sequence in the research process. It happens as a parallel and as a result of working back and forth to illuminate what we have seen and what we have not found but maybe expected to see. Researchers role as a vital instrument in qualitative research require ability to interact and being systematic (Gudmundsdottir, 1992; McCracken, 1988) as well as persistence and patience. Working back and forth with the data opens for the researcher to discover phenomenon categories regularities and irregularities in the data can be exhausting and maybe blinding for new approaches to see it from. Stepping back from it to get a fresh look can be required (Saldana, 2013). Nevertheless a continuous work with the data is important to keep in touch with it. After transcribing all the data, the logs were connected to the interviews and compared and analysed as a unit both by topic and according to the research questions. Further all the interviews and the logs were together to look for similarities and disparities. This was also done with the logs separately and then compared against the interviews and the logs. Topics that reoccurred were sorted out and the same was done to contrasting themes as well.

4.8 Methodological challenges and ethics

Conducting research that includes asking participants to do a task over a longer period of time was an obstacle in itself, as explained earlier. When logging/diary was introduced as one of the methods to be used several withdrew any interest as they said they were frightened it would be too time consuming and not consistent with their family life. Another issue of concern was to maintain the participants privacy.

As I was interested in Norwegian blogs, as well as blogs written by middle class fathers the selection of choice was narrowed further down. The blogs in this study were displayed as open blogs not password protected and not copyrighted. As these blogs were available on the open internet I made a choice not to contact the bloggers about using them in analysis. It is not required to inform or ask for permission to use open, public information on the internet for research. Those blogs that were marked as copyrighted were left out of the study. The three blogs I chose are not mentioned with names or internet sites in the study. All pictures were left out and the text was not directly transcribed to provide them from being found on the net. Inspired by (Åsenhed et al., 2014) I changed one word with one of a similar meaning to make it less traceable. In hindsight I think I would have done the study differently adding more blogs, and asking the bloggers. Mostly because I find the internet to be an ethical 'grey area' to navigate within. Even if there is an awareness of how private one should let one self to be there, people might not be interested to play a part in research. Moreover, blogs often display others than themselves, such as children, partner and others, and that might be due reason to clarify before taking on research. With that said I feel I have not stepped over any ethical boundaries, and the anonymity of the participants is provided as best as possible. The pictures are a vital part of the visual expression in the blogs as they are placed there intentionally displaying the impression these fathers communicate, yet in this study that was never an issue due to anonymity and privacy.

This study is performed in accordance with the guidelines as stated by the Norwegian Social Service Data Service (NSD), where the study is registered and approved. All the data were anonymized, coded and kept separate from contact data as required. In this study the participants and the persons they mention are given pseudonyms. The text contains no personal information. Some of the quotes are mentioned as first-time father. The participants who wrote logs and interviewed were given written information about the project. This letter contained information about the study being a part of my master in Childhood studies, information about how it would be carried out, time-use, confidentiality, and anonymity. The letter also informed about their right to withdraw from the project at any given time. This information was repeated before starting the interviews, which the participants had been informed about and given their consent to be recorded.

CHAPTER FIVE: DOING FATHERHOOD

This chapter present and discuss the findings concerning how the fathers that was part of this study shaped their paternity leave and what they are communicating about it. This first part of this chapter describes concepts used in the analysis. Further the chapter concentrate on descriptions of how these fathers mould their paternity leave and approach their leave according to:

- *Organising activities*
- *Routines*
- *Prioritizing*
- *Sources of information.*
- *Expectations*

After having presented the main findings and related these to my research question to my research question; *What does performing fatherhood mean while on paternity leave with very young children in contemporary Norway?*

I will interpret and discuss these by means of the analytical concepts of bonding and rationality of care.

5.1 Analytical concepts

First of all I will explain and describe the analytical concepts of bonding and rationality of care used in the analysis and concluding discussion.

5.1.1. Bonding

In this study the concept of bonding refers to the emotional connectedness and mutual knowledge one gains by spending time and experiences together in a close *interrelationship*. Bonding also refers to attachment, a close reflexive relationship marked by continuity and affection that is perceived as a part of intimate fathering (Dermott, 2008), as described in chapter three.

5.1.2. Rationality of care

With the intentions of the paternity leave in mind and from what emerged from the father's narratives, rationality of care as an analytical concept can provide useful and systematic

understanding of how fathers through their own practice and communication display how being a main carer for a young child is a continuous evaluation of different and emerging needs.

“ While the moral subject in the discourse of individual rights looks at moral dilemmas from the stance of the ‘highest moral principles’ and takes right and responsibilities as means of establishing relationships, the moral subject in the discourse of care already lives in a network of relations and (inter) dependence, in which he/she has to find balances between different forms of care: for the self, for others and for the relation between these” (Sevenhuijsen, 2002).

Social psychologist Gilligan’s work with a feministic approach towards an ethics of care became the fertile soil in which feminist ethics of care developed into a separate field of philosophy. It is characterized by a relational ontology (Wærness, 2003), which implies how people are connected to each other through relations and the moral responsibility within these relations. This relational aspect provide an intra-dependence and vulnerability which is what the ethics of care focuses on (Pettersen, 2006; Wærness, 2003). Further Wærness describes a rationality of care, pointing at how conflicting interests might appear within relations when needs do not coincide.

The main focus of the ethics of care is to prevent damage before it occur, and seek a mutual balance between the different interests. Rationality of care is how one approaches these apparently contradictory interests through a reflective process. To succeed, one needs to have knowledge of the participants in the relation as well as knowledge of the context.

Attentiveness and competence therefore becomes important tools during this process.

“As a framework for moral decisions, care is grounded in the assumption that self and other are interdependent, an assumption reflected in a view of action as responsive, and, therefore, as arising in a relationship rather than the view of action as emanating from within the self, and therefore ‘self-governed’ (Gilligan 1987:24 in Sevenhuijsen, 2002:132).

Ethics of care takes place in relations between real people in real situations (Pettersen, 2006). Hence it is placed both within a given relational and situational context. Ethics of care are also most often directed towards close relationships, and as such it becomes relevant for this study of father-child practices in their conduct of everyday life situations. At the same time the arguments used by the state when establishing and expanding the paternity leave as described in chapter two, includes ethics of care as well as discourses of rights and

responsibility. As such fathering practices are dense with ethics of care both at a macro as well as at a micro level.

5.2 Do it yourself (DIY)

This part describes how the fathers in this study organize activities and shape and constitute their leave.

“My wife has been in postnatal group, and had a lot of things to do, one group at the local health care station, one at work. In a way there was always something happening all the time. I imagined it would be hard to find something to do, but it sorted out fairly ok.
(Haakon)

Haakon, tells about his expectations prior to his leave. The narrative is representative for several of the fathers in this study, especially the first time fathers. At the point at which the fathers enter leave of absence the child have become used to a daily routine and shared activities with their mothers. Most often, according to the interviews and blog narratives, these activities are comprised of different mother directed arrangements like post-natal groups.

Whilst mothers are offered a variety of mother-child activities through health care stations such as post-natal groups or mother-baby workouts, the situation for men seem to be somewhat different. Even though some of them did have the possibility of joining the mothers post-natal social group as she returned to work or school, a majority of the fathers in this study was not offered this.

In Dagbladet ⁷19.02.2015 one could read about a father who before entering his first leave in 2012, found himself wondering what to do in his paternity leave as there where few, if any, activities directed at men in his situation. He challenged himself by joining in on different mother child activities and established a daddy blog (not one of the blogs that are used in this project) to make it easier for fathers to find something meaningful to engage in during their leave. In February, 2015 he challenged some other paternity leave-dads to try baby-carrier ballet, without concern that it might be regarded as more or less a mother –child project.

⁷ Dagbladet is one of the largest Norwegian tabloid daily newspapers.

Nevertheless not all men are likely to copy this particular father`s initiative, and feeling comfortable attending a group primarily aimed at mothers.

Even if the majority in this study did not participate in post-natal groups one of the fathers was an exception as he actively attended one, and also engaged in the turn-taking arrangement of it. This means he regularly was invited and also actively invited the other members to these meetings.

Some of the men mentioned that if they had been offered, they still would not join these groups as they did not feel comfortable with the arrangement, or merely `was not the type` to engage in such. One might reflect whether this is due to gendered preferences. Although this study does not submerge into this topic, mothers are claimed to hold maternal power of care and endure as gatekeepers to the spheres of childcare (Aarseth & Holter, 2003).

“The discussion about care for children is today often tucked into the gender-neutral category of `parents`. The use of this category is undoubtedly a signal about how care is increasingly considered as both the mothers and the fathers responsibility, but that does not abolish the underlying uneven gendered structures” (Ellingsæter, 2005:374) (my translation).

Though Ellingsæter`s topic is about a re-moralizing of motherhood, arguing how different expectations of approved parenthood most often targets the mothers, the quote is quite suitable for the different expectations that do *not* aim the fathers.

The pronounced lack of arrangements directed towards fathers in leave made the government invest in a daddy-app (regjeringen.no, 2013). The idea was to enable fathers to connect and share information on activities in their nearby surroundings and encourage social activities during their paternity leave. However, this app did however not become a great success, and activities aiming at fathers in leave remain scarce. One of the fathers informed how he downloaded the app and later removed it because `nothing ever happened`. It might be argued that the fact that the app did not come with any established activities, but was designed as an information channel for fathers initiated activities, was one of the reasons it did not succeed.

Several of the fathers claimed that their partners became the active part socially during leave due to the different arrangements available. This is not a topic this study is going to elaborate on, but this might illustrate a pronounced difference in the level of social participation, as it

might seem that how one makes use of the time in leave are related to gendered expectations. Further, it may affect fathers' motivations for taking on more leave than the specific gendered allotment.

Considering the differences in how mothers and fathers are approached as they enter leave one might claim that paternity leave can become more of a DIY project than what is the case for mothers, where it seems to be more arranged for more activities. Thus, how the leave is structured and how the content is formed is very much dependent on the fathers own initiative, social capital and competence.

5.2.1. Organizing the day

The fathers in this study took on their leave at different seasons of the year. They also entered their leaves with different backgrounds/previous experiences of paternity leave. Five of the fathers were first time fathers, whereas four of the fathers was in the second or third leave. Common for them all is how they are going to spend time and take the total responsibility for the last arrived family member for a longer period.

Another common factor is how they perform their fatherhoods in a space between multiple relations and expectations.

Paramount, both in articulation of the arrangement itself and the father's narratives, is the focus of the leave as a time for being with the child. A time they themselves construct according to the prevailing circumstances and competences. Time is therefore latitude to these fathers, which they have to relate to as they plan and perform their parental leave.

How the days look like is very much dependent on the overall logistic in the family unit and the child's rhythm. The families have different strategies according to the total need of the family to provide the best possible 'flow' of their days. Usually the mornings are performed according to a pattern they have negotiated with their partner to be the best solution.

The days normally start between seven and eight in the morning. In the families where the mother goes to work or school during daytime the fathers are responsible for the morning care and breakfast. In addition they take responsibility of bringing older children back and forth to school and kindergarten.

In the families where the mother work shifts, an alternation and cooperation on how they are doing the first 'shift' is more likely to appear. When possible, this time is spent together doing errands and focusing on being together, doing joint activities. Hence the mornings and lunchtime becomes 'family time'.

According to the logs and blogs, the fathers and children have most of the daytime from breakfast until dinnertime on their own. After breakfast and nurturing father and child tend to leave the house for different activities such as walking and exercising, whilst other start activities within the surroundings of the home depending on what other projects they are focusing on. Preferably both father and child engage in the activities either as joint face-to-face activities or side-by-side activities adjusted to who's needs are in focus. Father and child engage in activities outside when the child is awake. After these outdoor activities father and child has normally headed home to keep up the nurturing and sleep time. This time of the day when it is just the two of them some of the fathers use to do own homebound projects such as exercising, house projects or work. The allotted time to these activities are normally adjusted and planned by the child's rhythm and coordinated to when the child is sleeping.

"After breakfast and nurturing I work for an hour before I walk with him in the pram for an hour and a half. He sleeps as we arrive our house, and I work for an hour whilst he sleeps. Then I feed him and work for another hour".

Several of the fathers describe how they attend to their child while making dinner or bring their other children from school and kindergarten. This time before the partner and other children come home is also a time for doing household work.

"Feed him, nurtured and dressed him before we went for a walk in the rain for an hour and a half. Then, whilst he was sleeping, I worked for about an hour before we went to the health care station for a routine control. Went back home to feed him (son), and than we walked to attend a meeting. After the meeting we walked back home and I made dinner for the rest of the family".

After their partner has arrived home, they usually favour family time. One father pointed out how his wife missed their child after a whole day at work, that she wanted to attend her as much s possible before the child went to bed. However, when asked about how afternoons look like, they were described as family time.

5.2.2 Fathering practices

All the fathers in the study had been what one could call involved fathers for several months, taking active part in the family. During leave they would have the *full daily* responsibility of their child. When asked about how days in leave was organized, the interviewees narrated about a change of time.

The interviews concerned to how the child became centre for action. The child's routines and sleep became the starting point for further activities. The child's needs became the centre other activities the orbit. This was also found in the logs and the blogs in particular.

An excerpt from one of the logs illustrates how activities are planned as dependent on the child's needs and circadian rhythm:

“Got up with (son) at about 8.30 am. Feed him, played on the patio, and at the greenhouse in the sun for an hour.

Son sleeps for some hours, meanwhile: I get to exercise, and paint a bit inside the house. Make and eat dinner. Then son wakes up, I feed him, rest a bit and then take a run with him in the buggy. Son is very tired so I put him in his pyjamas, feed him. (My) Wife comes home. Son wakes up a bit, but goes to bed at 22 pm. It's been a good day, but I am a bit tired in the end”.

Logs and blogs provide a practical and concrete picture of the every day's content that otherwise might be taken for granted or forgotten in an interview. A pattern occurring in the blogs and logs are how fathers are waiting on the first round of feeding and diaper changing to be done before moving to other activities outside the house. Several describe how food and diaper changing was a practical issue which where nice to have done before they went out for a walk.

Days are often divided in section formed in a pattern by the child's rhythm. It is made up of a time before, during and after sleep. These awake and sleep cycles made up an everyday-cycle within which activities where structured. Further this time-wheel of awake and sleep periods decided when childcare was performed as a primary activity or a secondary activity⁸ (Craig, 2006).

⁸ Childcare as main activity is when the child is it's direct centre, secondary activity is when childcare is performed as part of simultaneous activities.

5.2.3 Child-guided time

An image that appears is how the various practices of everyday are constructed in a span between different focuses. Broadly speaking, one can find that the day is formed around the fathers' activities *with* the children, their activities *for* the children (such as planning the day, preparing for activities, purchasing clothes and remedies the child needs), and the father's *own* activities, pursuing own interests or own work. Examples of activities with the kids are primary care and nurture, meal and companionship where direct interaction is in focus. Activities for kids are more secondary, where other tasks are done parallel to childcare, such as laundry, housework, and practical tasks both at home and outside of the house. When defining some practices as the fathers' own activities, this relates to tasks the fathers themselves has added on individual initiative. These activities seem to be added to times when the child is asleep or at times when these activities are not conflicting with the child's needs and interests. When things have to happen outside of the sleeping time, it is made suitable for the child and does not end up just 'joining the bandwagon'. These activities tend to be constructed as combined father-child activities balanced in a way that both the father and child will be engaged in something that is considered to be positive and rewarding for both parties.

Days are often organized by starting the day at home giving attention to primary activities and preparations for activities outside the house. Several primary activities are also situated in domestic surroundings. These are activities spent on chores suitable for the child to attend, like doing the laundry whilst the child explores the room. The same seems to be the case with facilitating of physical skills like walking and turning from belly to back. These activities are likely to be done at home. One father notes how he must remind himself to remember to practice his child in rolling from back to stomach to enhance his motoric skills. Anders is conscious of spending time arranging for his daughter to practice walking. Their focus on development appears both in logs and blogs and interviews. The fathers do not only accommodate for, but actively practice practical and motoric skills with their children.

Geir describes an everyday activity where the child's need for social activity and development is his point of departure for how the day is planned and solved. He tells how he gets up with his daughter and attends to her at home until she wakes up from her first nap. Then they walk

to a local open day-care centre ⁹ where they engage together in social and pedagogic activities. He plans their days to become as much time *with* his daughter as possible. Because of the required attendance of a parent or carer in the open day-care Geir gets to participate in his daughters activities.

Father-child time where childcare is regarded as a primary activity makes up a substantial part of the day. For some of the fathers, the majority of the daily activities are nevertheless characterized of childcare as a secondary *activity*. This does not imply that the child is a secondary *priority* in any matter, but one or more other tasks or activities are performed at the same time as paying attention to the child. These are activities that are either necessary or time dependent like picking up siblings at day-care, making dinner (Craig, 2006). When errands are done outside the house the father-child activity sometimes takes a bring-along form. This imply that the child is brought with the father on different arenas such as when bringing older children back and forth to day-care, going to meetings or visiting family. Other times childcare becomes a secondary activity like when minding the child when it sleeps while performing other tasks. The fathers talked about exercising and domestic work as well as own work, as convenient to plan to the child's sleeping time.

5.2.4 Father's own activities and the child's in focus

The fathers tell about how being at home with a young child entails a lot of considerations of different needs and interests. Sometimes the fathers have interests and activities they would like to pursue, and normally do alone. Now, as they are on leave they are attending another dependent person most of their time. This mean they have to find new ways of doing own activities or plan them to make them doable. When doing things related to the men's own interests the activities normally entailed exercising or work related tasks. One of the fathers describes how he visits his workplace to be social and to fix things to keep the place running smoothly. 'All the visits have been guided by her (daughter) we don't attend my work place unless it is possible for her to benefit from it and have an enjoyable time'. This father writes how he enjoy these visits, and how it is rewarding because he is able to adjust them to his child's sleep pattern so that she is awake when go there. This father applies a rationality of care to balance his and his daughter's interest so they both can enjoy these visits.

⁹ Open day-care centres are private or public activity provisions directed at children between the age of 0-6 years. No enrolment is acquired, but accompany by a carer is required.

5.2.5 Exercising - one of the social codes of paternity leave

To spend time exercising and to stay in shape stands out as an expectation most of the fathers in this project share. It is a form of activity that takes place outside the house. Outdoors exercising is also a part of the trends in the Norwegian society in general as well as amongst people with higher education, and men in particular (Statistics Norway, 2014b). To stay in shape and walk or run with the carriage is also something that is easy to combine.

“Before the leave of absence I had made up my mind to walk a lot, preferably two walks a day. It went well at the start, when it was six weeks of good weather. Used to go one and a half hour in the morning, and a half to an hour later in the day. (It) was less of this when it eventually came periods of heavy rain and cold weather”.

In addition, provision of child-care at the training centres have become commonplace.

One of the fathers tells how he believes walking with the pram is something both parents do but ‘men are more likely to prioritize this’, and he notes in his log how he, when there is an opportunity walk with the pram.

5.2.6 Family time

Paternity leave is not performed in a vacuum. It takes place in different locations in time and is affected by and affects other people besides father- child constellation. Some of the participants have other children, a partner and other family and friends they interact with. These relations also influence how time is constructed practically. A sense of community with the family, by slowing down the tempo in favour of spending much time together emerges to be a major part of the leave. Even though the mother is back to either studies or work, it is not necessarily only the father who spends time with the child alone. In several of the families working shift or have flexible work hours is common, which opens up for spending time together as a family. This means they can use the possibility of being in leave to make room for family time. Geir’s log also shows how he and his wife prioritize doing family activities together when possible. He and their daughter regularly attend an open music day-care centre and when possible his wife joins them.

Paternity leave and parental leave per se is a limited time in a family’s life if one sees it in context of a life span. It provides time for the parent(s) to use (some will say invest) on family and home. One father tells about how he had planned the leave to be a combination of childcare, exercising and house-building project. In addition he was going to do work related

tasks when he had the option. Brandth & Kvande (1997) highlights how masculinity often is connected to the concept of independence. Some find the flexibility to be an opening to do 'own' things in addition to fathering. This particular father had according to the log a tight schedule where nearly all his planned tasks were done during the child's sleep hours. The flexibility of the leave one father expresses, gives not just him but rather the whole family, an opportunity to choose a kind of leave they find suitable without it colliding with being a present father. The implementation of the flexible leave itself serves as an affirmation that one can focus on both work and childcare and still be an involved father. This father forms his leave by adjusting both the structural frames of the leave to fit the family's needs, as well as identifying himself as a contemporary father being close to his child. Whilst the leave often was uttered to be a time for different personal projects as exercising, fixing the house or doing work related tasks at home, several claimed how leave equalled time for togetherness. It was used as a time of *doing family*. The fathers applied a rationality of care when constructing their time with their children, and gave their child's interest and needs due weight. Other relations were also a part of what the fathers' had to consider and take into account when in leave. Even though the father and the child were a 'duo' during the day, they were ultimately a part of a larger family unit. The structuration of the days in leave needed to consider and adjust to these relations as well.

5.3 Routines

When the fathers are asked to keep a log of the leave, the joint activities they perform together with their child is described and makes a considerable part of the material. A clear pattern is how they allocate the activities related to the child's nurturing routines, though most did not relate to routines as important to them in the interviews. On the contrary when asked about whether there were any differences between how the mother and father practiced time in leave, routines was one of the factors they mentioned. Hence they pointed out that the mothers were more likely to lean on routines and the fathers regarded themselves as flexible and more of improvising the days. As Bjørn says

“My experience is that mothers are more attentive to routines than fathers. Mothers make sure feeding and sleep happens at set times. My impression is that fathers are not that thorough about everything happens at the same time every day”.

This might be a perception of some people, but the logs nevertheless showed a different pattern. In

this selection of fathers routines seemed to be basic factor for how to shape the day. At the same time the individual fathers choice of activities repeated themselves to a great extent in the period in which the fathers wrote their logbooks. Most of the fathers both in the logs and the blogs seemed to have found a pattern of activities they were stuck with or a way to 'perform' their leave. They were not necessarily so flexible as they claimed to be. It might be easier if one is less familiar with the situation to continue with a pre-planned recipe that one know works. Following routines might also provide better options for planning.

Anders was an exception compared to the others fathers as he underlined the importance of routines, interject: 'circadian rhythm! (We) cannot disturb the circadian rhythm, we (the adults) did not sleep well as children. Routines has worked very well'.

The requirement of everyday routines that normally emerges when having children not only makes the children an obvious centre of attention. These routines also seem to supply continuity and unification, and as such the family as a unit through the children provides relational glue and sense of belonging in contrast to the decreased solidarity of society¹⁰ (Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten, 1997, in Forsberg, 2011:81).

5.3.1 Fathering is finding space and a rhythm that works

Whilst some of the logs picture a child centred 'life with dad', others picture a time in which the child is the main consideration, yet is brought along with their father doing errands focusing on the child's older siblings needs for attendance and support, or other relational obligations such as helping out own parents.

The (b)logs describe more specifically how every day life is constructed, practically and logistically. In addition they describe the fathers own experiences of the day. When the fathers are entering the leave period they need time to establish a routine of their new everyday life. They tell that they are not automatically assuming it as the mother and the child seemed to do, but rather seek to find their own pattern. Even if they tell about a day that is not very different from the mother and child's leave, the father's report how father and child pursue to adapt to each other through activities and practices that suits them both. Which activities the fathers choose vary, but common for them is what they express as 'balancing of needs'.

¹⁰ A Swedish interview study, following more than thirty families with young children over a period of two years.

The fathers communicate in words how they do not copy the mother's way of doing motherhood, but through practices they seem to do so.

The structure of the days, as noted earlier often routines, even if the fathers themselves in the interviews and daily reports mentions ideas of how fathers are less tied up to routines than mothers are. The main focus in their logs and blogs is still the children's needs and circadian rhythms. If other activities are to be done, they are adjusted according to this rhythm. This becomes a set of routines that makes up a structural main frame for the father and the child's everyday life. Bjørn who is within a flexible leave writes about how he juggles the different obligations, responsibilities and other family members needs during the day, in his log. In addition to family and work he is a member of local and national boards, which he before starting the leave decided that he would keep up with. For him knowing his child's routines and being able to adjusting to them gave him extra space to maintain what he had intended to do. To be at home with a small child require much attention and accessibility from the carer. How the active child demands more attention and more things to happen is a repeating topic in the blogs and interviews. The time when the child is sleeping release a space where the fathers can move their focus towards other activities whilst still paying attention to their sleeping child. Some of the logs and blogs give a picture of how these spaces liberate 'own time' which can be used in accordance to own preferences such as work related tasks, exercising or domestic work. One father when summing up his time in leave, reflected upon how he had learned how demanding having responsibility for a child could be and that he in this way had a better understanding of what his wife had experienced. Though he might have considered the exhausting physical challenges of pregnancy, giving birth, breastfeeding and taking the major part of the leave in most women face, he did not mention this in his summary. Nor did neither of the other participants in the study.

A father narrates about how he takes walks with his son in the pram when the little one is awake, and in this way releasing time while the child is sleeping, to do work-related activities. This is recurring in several of the fathers' accounts. Bjørn describes how he adapts to his sons rhythm and organizes his own focus demanding work. Since the work is less compatible with interactivity, it is scheduled to times the boy is sleeping or minded by others. This way he is able to fill the leave with both childcare and work.

The fathers sometimes described to be guided by routines as a challenge. This was due to dependency of routines being seen as restricting their freedom of action. On the other hand,

they argue that not following the routines would definitively mess up any predictability of the day. Predictability retrieved through routines seemed to be vital for how they construct the days, despite the fathers' claim of not being dependent on routines, as the mothers apparently were. The logs and interviews provided a picture of how the child's rhythm was experienced as both facilitating for activities as well as limiting the father's and children's possibilities when planning the day.

However, to concentrate on other tasks in addition to minding the child is not necessarily an easy operation. One father tells how he tip toed around in the house trying not to disturb his daughter when she was asleep.

“Did not get to do anything in a way. I am used to planning. Even if she slept two hour long naps, she would wake up again, and I could not relax while she was sleeping”. / It was a bit like that. To remember everything was a bit special in the start. At the same time you had to be there for another person all the time. Even if she was asleep, she just had short naps and that was something I could not be at ease with. That was something I had to work with for a long time during the leave. I felt I had her on my back all the time without it being negative, more a stressor if I can describe it like that”. (Eivind)

Getting used to being responsible for someone else, who are completely dependent on you is perceived as an exhausting exercise. Brandth & Kvande (2003) found that fathers describe fathering responsibility to be demanding work, leaving less room for independence. The father quoted above describes how these short moments when his daughter was asleep just kept him on guard, and as he did not come to rest he was frustrated of the feeling of non-constructiveness in which he found him self.

Both him and Haakon tell about how the child is accommodated for and how they are trying to avoid stress factors. Other practicalities and errands compatible with childcare are done with the child brought along or adjusted to the child's rhythm and needs.

Despite describing *everyday practices* to appear as a cyclic time wheel, some fathers experience it as an easily abrupt pattern, unless they have some things settled and pre-arranged. One such issue is sleep. In addition to the circular pattern of nurture, sleep is a controlling torque. 'It is a challenge to get her sleep right, it is controlling important with sleep. If she does not get her sleep it all goes all-wrong` (Haakon). Sleep needs are prioritised and all other activities are, if necessary put on hold.

5.4 Priorities and ambitions

In this section, the third topic, what the fathers' priorities and their ambitions of their time in leave will be described and elaborated.

When asked to elaborate on expectations and plans for their days in leave the question was approached and answered from two different angles. Initially a brief description of main expectations and practical activities were presented as tools to reach these goals. This was then followed up by explanations of their intentions of the chosen structures and doings. Involved parenthood is all about the child. It includes both responsibility and engagement from the parents (Forsberg, 2011). The reasons were often two folded. First, bringing up a child's perspective, or visions of what would be in the child's best interest to focus on. Secondly the fathers expectations and his interests where presented.

Giving accounts for their expectations for their father-child time, activities are mentioned as the 'key' to construct a close interrelationship. Intentions of togetherness through doing were striking, but not an unexpected finding. According to Brandth & Kvande (1997) fathers described themselves as more active with the children than the mothers, with an emphasis on doing things most of the time. How and what they are doing differ. What to do are mostly self-driven projects of the father, where he decides what would seem the best activities to engage with. This part will describe what the fathers reported they used to do and why they preferred the strategies they had chosen.

5.4.1 Accounts of the different choices of leave

When asked about describing being in leave the fathers often started to talk of accounts related to the type of leave they had chosen. Three of the fathers in the study had chosen a time flexible leave scheme, two of them opened with describing it as a *good solution for the family*, and not at least for themselves as they wanted to have continuity regarding their work. The possibility within the leave schemes flexibility facilitates for a combination of work and childcare. So *the structure of the leave itself* opts for a bit of both worlds. Haakon, a first time father explained how the *initial* reason for choosing this particular flexible leave of one week home, one at work, was due to practicalities of not have been allocated a day-care place and needed to stretch the leave as long as possible. His wife worked night shifts and therefore they could choose this particular way of solving their situation. Though, he pointed humoristic that

his 'dislike of winter weather' was a good opportunity to alter between home and work every second week. That way he would avoid being at home merely in the winter months which he regarded as limiting his options for activity. He also pointed out how he was the only one who could do his job at work. 'Besides' he tells, 'my wife is a nurse, she has a demanding working day, the nine months of leave is hers'. Though both of them belongs to a group of higher educated couples, the physical strain of the mothers body is given due weight on who 'needs' or deserve the leave the most. Anders, another first time father, also emphasized how spending every second day at home was beneficial for the family. He said that 'suddenly staying at home all alone would be intense' and the flexibility was a good option for him as well. Bjørn, father of three, stretching his leave over 15 weeks by choosing an 80% allotment, on the other hand explained how he had agreed with his employer to have one day at work a week during the leave period. From 2005 men choosing flexible leave scheme has increased and today more men than women use this opportunity (NAV, 2014). The flexible time account leave scheme was initially made to make it easier to combine work and leave. One of the goals of implementing the leave was to encourage more men to regard taking leave feasible (Brandth et al., 2005). Accommodating the leave to work and family by using the flexible option of the leave, seems to have increased rapidly (NAV, 2014). This was not the case in 2003 according to Brandth & Kvande (2003), who regarded this particular leave scheme to be an unused resource. In this study this seems the other way around. Nevertheless while some of the father's in my study in the start of the interviews points out how they find the possibility to alter home and work makes the leave more manageable they convey some other ideas in the end of the interview. Anders says he would choose flexible leave again, 'but' he states, 'it would be fun to (also) try one month at home (...) I like the flexibility, but question how much father and child gets to know each other'. Likewise Haakon in the end tells how he is about to be a father again and have a new leave next year. 'Then' he claims 'it will be summer and I will take the leave continuously, everything at once'.

On the other end there is the cases of Eivind and Jon. They chose to take more than the part reserved the father though they had different reasons for doing so.

Eivind who had both the father's quota of the leave shared the dividable part of the *parental* leave 50/ 50 with his wife. He tells about how they as a couple agreed about sharing the leave equally. They also split the leave to make sure that both parents got to stay with their child during the first months as well as at the end of the leave. This, Eivind claimed, was done to enable both parents to experience the different age and development of the child. They had, he pointed out, the same type of jobs and due to their good income economy was not an

obstacle while choosing type of leave. Jon, one of the bloggers also extended his leave to be able to stay at home for six months. One other participant had chosen to stay at home in the sharable leave as his wife was a student and this excluded him from being entitled the father's quota. He and his wife solved this by her staying at home the first nine months, whilst he took on the parental leave from the baby was ten months old. The rest of the fathers had chosen a traditional way of leave. They took paternity leave reserved the father just before their child was going to day-care centre Plantin (2001) highlights how personal and structural factors like economical aspects, options of social political benefits and relation to work is seen to influence which type of leave the parents choose and who's taking the main part of the leave. Though all the couples in the study are educational middleclass, the majority tend to choose a traditional type of leave, where the mother receives the majority of it. Runar Døving, a social anthropologist and a frequent debater of social issues, discussed on Verdibørsen¹¹ how 'fathers as a result of the paternity quota has gained access to a sphere he (earlier) has been excluded from' (my translation). Further he talks of women's *power* within the home, and how they still can be perceived, as gatekeepers when it comes to how much leave the men are favoured through negotiation.

5.5 Sources of information

When asked the rather broad question about expectations of the leave, the fathers in addition to own plans, communicated where they received information on what being in leave might imply. As there were both first time fathers as well as fathers who had been in leave before the answers differed. The first time fathers told about how they mainly were informed by the mother of their child. To some extent they had gained knowledge from friends and from media. Those fathers who were in their second or third leave had accumulated experienced knowledge and constructed their leave according to that. Several of the first time fathers mentioned they had to figure out things themselves. In the interviews and within the blogs narratives they described how they had heard stories about depressed men with nothing to do for weeks when entering leave. The 'isolated father' was presented as an illustration of how other fathers might experience the leave unless they had enough plans for it.

¹¹ Radioprogram sent on 21.03.2015. Verdibørsen is a program on the Norwegian Broadcasting where ethical, moral, religious and philosophical issues concerning outlook on life and philosophy is debated.

“Then you read in the newspaper that there must be arranged baby carriage groups for men, because the men do not take paternity leave because it is so lonely since it does not exist baby carriage group for men and such” (Father of three).

The fathers who were actively blogging about their own leave seemed to use the internet for more reading about fathering and parenting information on other blogs. They sometimes referred to other bloggers blog-posts. One father commented upon how mummy-blogs often provided glossy images of interior and baby gear, something his blog would not attempt to do. Some of the bloggers also communicated with other people by commenting upon each other's posts about the child-related activities or happenings of the day. Family members who want to keep up with the blogger and his family are often following daddy blogs. At the same time one often follow other bloggers and this provides an impact of reciprocity were one reads one another's posts and comment upon them. This way they participate in sharing information on fathering, childcare and family life. They *display family*, providing images of how family can be performed (Dermott et al., 2011).

Taking on leave is, as mentioned previously, entering what mainly has been a mother-child sphere for a long time. Gendered patterns have a long history and tradition in society. Traditionally childcare has been regarded as a female domain and to a great extent mothers are still regarded as the 'most competent' regarding analysing what is in the child's best interest (Holter & Aarseth, 1993; Doucet, 2006).

One father wrote after being at the health care station how 'it turned out rather well, I think I managed to do what the mother does because we received no negative feedback'. Not surprisingly, the mothers represent the golden standard of parenting.

I interpret this father to perceive mothers as still being the template for what is considered proper performance of care. Aarseth & Holter (1993) found that childcare and the domestic sphere where imbued with what they describe as maternal power.

Brandth & Kvande (2003:124) argues how fathers who spend their leave *together* with the mother can experience the mother as mediator for the child's needs, therefore they do not get the continuity of reading their child and such acquire the same competence as fathers who have the sole responsibility of their child. However in the feedback from several of the fathers in my study, the maternal presence is not far away. This might imply how maternal

knowledge is regarded as 'tacit knowledge', and as the fathers become child carers they need to learn and perform the care in their own way, but are not always free to do so, according to what Aarseth and Holter (1993) argues as maternal gatekeeping.

Whilst some fathers uttered how they measured themselves against this maternal ideal, others resisted it and was very clear about how they disagreed in this maternal 'ownership' of care knowledge.

After visiting the health care station, another father on the other hand describes how he is irritated by a public health nurse who loudly praises his paternal participation at home and at the same time offers to help him as she claims how she would have approached the dressing differently`.

This father does not approve of the patronizing (matronizing?) tone he was put up with. It does not coincide with his experience or picture of care competence.

How this maternal power is put to display during everyday practices one of the interviewees neatly pictured when he recounted an anecdote from a seminar he attended.

“Most of the participants were women, with children from early school age and above. They kept calling home to their husbands, asking things like; 'have you remembered ski class today? Have you remembered lunch boxes?' I sat there thinking how happy I was. If my wife would call me up about things like that I would have been annoyed. Because I think I will deal with that my self. And they kept calling their husbands. We are more the same types; both can cook, both can do the lunchboxes and such. It's all clarified”

This father points at how he experiences father's care competence is being disregarded by the mothers controlling questions or seen from a perspective of deficit. Both men's stories can be interpreted, as contemporary experiences of a view on they perceive how mother's still maintain a hierarchic position within parenting.

5.6 Expectations

In this part the fathers' expectations of the leave is in focus. How the fathers understand the leave their role in it and the strategies they use to accomplish their intentions of the leave is described in the following section.

5.6.1 Doing fatherhood is presence

Connecting the blog narratives and practical descriptions as well as the interviews and the belonging logs gave me a unique opportunity to explore how they talked about this, which words they used about fathering during paternity leave and how reality looked like when the leave was put into practice. Even though these fathers represent multiple types of leave, they communicate a rather consistent idea of what the intentions of the paternity leave is.

Through the data several patterns occurred and a reoccurring theme in the interviews with the fathers as well as in the blogs, points towards paternity leave as time for *bonding* or time for *getting to know each other by being there*. What it means to be there is not necessarily a uniform conception, rather an array of different interpretations. Hence the idea of what it implies to be there might be solved and translated into multiple practices. How the leave is performed and experienced is not necessarily evident concurrent with the initial intentions and understandings as everyday life is played out in different interpersonal and structural configurations. All the fathers in this study in principle take their share of the leave whilst the mothers are either at work or school. They are, on their days in leave the main career for their child. Isak, a first time father, is blogging about time in his ten weeks continuous leave:

“...at last, it is my turn (..) I am going to spend some proper quality time with Iris (daughter) and get to know her (..) since I have been working during mum’s leave I don’t have the full overview over how Iris is during daytime, even though I have received some information from my wife”

One of the interviewees, Anders, a first time father who had a flexible¹² paternity leave alternating between home and work every second day on what expectations he had prior to the leave:

“ (My) expectations were to get to know Anne (daughter). (I) Expected to become a real dad, have the feeling of being a dad, have the responsibility.”

Anders pinpoints his expectations of becoming a real dad through having the soul responsibility for his daughter. He argues that fatherhood is formed through a process of experience. He is going to *become* a dad by gaining caring competencies. The very structure of the parental leave underpins men and woman as equal parents. Care competence is not

Parental leave can be used as flexible time accounts as described in chapter 2.

regarded as something inherent, but rather as something that is learnt, a socially constructed skill.

Like Isak, Anders is expecting to know his daughter and her everyday life by being present and take responsibility for her. Both men communicate what they think it implies to be or become a father and this is what they both want to *accomplish* through their very different types of leave. Isak though, is also displaying joy connected to spend time with his daughter. It is a bonding project connected with positivity and pleasure.

These fathers communicate an idea of father-child relation much similar to what Plantin (2001) describes as in line with the hegemonic discourse as well as public expectations of contemporary fatherhood, a view he found when interviewing father's in Sweden. Time on their children is crucial for these fathers. They tell that paternity leave is regarded as father's time with their children to facilitate a close parent-child relation. In the interviews and the blogs *the present father* is presented as the ideal norm, the type of fatherhood they as father's identify with. They expect to get to know the child better, to bond with them and the means is through responsibility and rationale of care. Time alone with their child is favoured, and presented as imperative to achieve knowledge about their child. Brandth & Kvande (2003) found that men's own needs and wish for time and relation to their child was one of the main reasons for taking paternity leave. The emotional aspect of spending time with their child is described as springing from a significant need for close bonds and is coherent with the discourse on the present and engaged father. This need of closeness and bonding is reported as reflexive being as much the child's need and best interest as well as the father's request and correspondent with approved, involved fatherhood (Nielsen & Westerling in Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015). By relating paternity leave to 'the best interest of the child', the fathers bring in a child perspective to their accounts. In other words, they relate attached fathers to be in accordance to what the child *needs*. One father mentioned how research shows that paternal engagement in the long run is beneficial for the development of children's mental health. At the same time *not* taking leave depart from the social and cultural expectations to paternity leave as being a part of contemporary fatherhood.

Caring for a small child with the intentions to get to know them and care for them emotional and physically, implies to be both attentive to their needs and present to interact. When the fathers was asked to narrate about time with their child focusing on structuring the day, they mentioned both intentions and taking point of departure in how they comprehended their

child. Additional accounts were made in the blogs, and the summing up in the logs, describing the basis for the performed activities or practices.

Anders writes in his log about how his daughter is standing upright without holding tight to anything. He describes how he is watching her walk a few steps before she stops and tries again writing 'I wonder what I should have done to stimulate her more. The days easily fall into routines'. In the interview he picks up the theme himself, pointing out how this is the period (in age) they are developing the most.

“We have to think about being pedagogical and think about upbringing from early on”
(Anders).

Anders uses a developmental perspective whilst describing his daughter. He wonders how he can arrange for her development. He describes his expectations of himself, as a father who's role is to have the knowledge to facilitate and accommodate for his daughter's development and adjustment. Brandth and Kvande (1997) found that fathers are more likely than mothers to focus on activities that stimulate their children's development or try to help them reach achievements such as walking.

5.6.2 Doing bonding

Haakon, another father with flexible leave, shifting between home and work every second week expresses the following expectations to the leave; 'My thought was to build a good relation to my daughter and we were to do activities together'.

Bonding and closeness are described by the fathers as founded in common experiences and was given due weight in their descriptions of paternal leave as a “bonding project”. The logbooks showed that father and child spent considerable time outside the home. These activities had different points of departure. Being physical active is a growing part of (Norwegian) middle class culture. The importance of spending childhood playing outdoors is also a part of Norwegian culture ((Nilsen et al., 2008; Brandth and Kvande, 1997) Activity is also closely connected to a masculine type of care, focusing on friendship and outdoor side-by-side activities (Brandth & Kvande, 1997). Several of the fathers interviewed underpinned the importance of running, or exercising in general as an important part of their lives that they

wanted to keep doing whilst in leave. Bringing their child with them solved this and incorporated them in what are familiar activities for the father.

I think this illustrates how several of the fathers both on blogs and interviews communicated how they had expectations of being together with their child and doing activities became tools for bonding, often based on their own specific interests.

Within the daily life they were supposed to and expected to construct some joint practices to fulfil the father-child bonding. This is in line with what Brandth & Kvande (1997) found in their studies. How this practically is done differed among the men in my study.

The paternal leave was often described as a novel explorative project of togetherness and mutuality they were doing with the child as the (main) manager in command and the parent continuously on duty.

This piece illustrates how the father expected leave to look like in a practical sense. It also gives indications on what the intention of his leave is. His ambition is to develop a close relational tie to his daughter. The means are activities for mutual experiences.

The expectations to strengthen his emotional tie to his child in addition to practical care can be seen in light of an “approved fathering” discourse. “Good fathers” are supposed to be emotionally present and practically competent. These expectations of ‘doing bonding’ led to another focus namely their practical approach. By looking at patterns of actions and perspectives on their practices, some themes and concepts became clearer. Doing fatherhood subsequently meant a turn from being a father to become a ‘proper’ father through fathering involvement. Being a competent father, performing approved fatherhood is regarded as something one become, not born with (Dermott, 2008; LaRossa, 1988).

5.6.3 Cultivation through activities

Preparing for the forthcoming years in day-care is a reoccurring issue from the perspective of the fathers in this study. The approaching transition from the ‘safe sphere of staying at home’, towards staying in day-care along with several other children and adults seem paramount to prepare for.

One aspect is how some fathers walk by and eventually ends up visiting the day-care in which their child will attend. The fathers explained this as an intention to gather information and to let the child see it before the initial starting date. Another issue is how the fathers consciously arrange for increased social encounters as the child's prevailing start at day-care.

The fathers tell how they are aware of this transition and how they try to teach the child social skills. At the same time it is good for them selves.

“I would really like to get out on one activity (open day-care) once a day. It looks like Guro (who is active) really likes it there. She becomes impatient if we stay at home all day. Likewise it is good for me to get out, move, and get to meet people.”
(Geir)

When he talks about his daughter as active, he refers to what he thinks is her need to be stimulated to become *socialized* by being presented to other children so she can be submitted to interact according to her age. The father points out how he actively *seeks* practices that stimulates his daughter's development. The open day-care provides an atmosphere the child can engage socially with other children. The open day-care provides activities and structures much similar to ordinary day-care centres the child is likely to attend after the parental leave ends, but the parents do not leave. One of the fathers explained how his son enjoys 'being social'. 'He really enjoys to be together with other babies, and I see it as important to train him on this before he should start in kindergarten in august'

Open day –care was used by a few fathers, likewise child-care offered at the gym. The difference between the two arrangements was the need of an attending parent at the open day-care, whilst the gym provided child-minders so the parent could exercise as staff from the gym attended the child. Both places however, were social spaces for the little ones as they were likely to engage with other children at the more or less same age.

By attending an open day-care or child-care at the gym the child is exposed to other children and adults also inhibits an element of social practice for the child.

One father stated how his child would have to get used to interact with other children, as she would soon enter public day-care with other children. He wanted her experience being around other and become able to wait and to take turn. The sooner the children got used to being around others, the better.

“She will start in kinder garden during the summer. She has to master facing other children. She is determined on what she wants. We have to be attentive to not indulgent all the time. In the kindergarten she’ll have to wait”.

I interpret this as the father’s comprehension of adjustment as an important focus of fathering practices. He as a father thinks he is responsible for providing his child with the necessary skills to minimize difficulties when extending her social life. Halldén (1992) points at how parents understand children alternating between two different, though not excluding views. The first view is the child as ‘varande’ (being) regarding development as an autonomous, natural process the parents are not supposed to intervene with. The second view is the child as ‘projekt’ (project) where the child is regarded as a responsibility of the parents to actively cultivate according to (governing) norms. Though Halldén did not utter a class perspective in her findings, the two views of children differed between working class and middleclass. The latter class is giving more weight to the latter view. Stefansen & Farstad (2008) found similar patterns in their studies of class perspectives in care projects in families with young children. They found that middleclass families tended to prefer a directed care trajectory for their children, which means that their perspective of the child as an active being with increasing need of challenges regarded kindergarten as a natural next step from the parental leave.

For some fathers the child and childhood itself was the major ambition for being in leave. The focus was the child, not as much the child in development itself, rather the possibility to attend and participate in a unique time in his child’s life.

As one father described;

“Babies, little children, they are so good at things we have forgotten, things we half-deaf grown ups stuck in routines have forgotten. Children are sort of relational genius. They are tremendously good at contact and can tell so many things just by their glance. They are extremely enthusiastic, they have so much emotion is so heartfelt, and they mean things so much, it is so nice as an adult to be near that” (Eivind).

Eivind expresses a gratitude and joy of being close to his son. It is a unique experience and a possibility he would not miss. Eivind also had half of the dividable leave to get as much time as possible with his child. For Eivind and one of the bloggers time with their child served as a main motivation and prime activity for their leaves, and they defined themselves as homemakers centring their activity axis around the home. Most of their interests were connected to the home sphere and exercising.

Life in leave does not imply the father and the child construct their days alone. People live and act in relation to other and these keep influencing and taking part in life while on leave. Sometimes these relations demand attention and action as well.

Bjørn writes in his log about how he experienced the day after he and his wife had chosen to spend some days individually focusing on one child each whilst visiting maternal and paternal grandparents of the children. “Nice to have been on the trip with only Birk (son). I get far more time focusing on him when the older sister is not nearby”.

Later in the leave the parents switch child for a weekend and Bjørn spends time focusing on their daughter. He explains:

“ (Older daughter) has been quite a dad’s girl today,- nice to get some time alone with her(..)

Goode to have some proper time with older daughter in the play ground. When I have both the children I don’t have the same amount of time to focus on them individually. It's good to be able to have some time with only one at a time.”

Bjørn points at how he (and his wife) sees it as important and a priority to focus on both the children. In order to balance their needs and intentions of care into practices they as parents cooperate, and adjust to each other and the children.

Haakon narrates how he and his daughter need to be quiet when being at home on day times as his wife is sleeping after night shifts. The logs describe how he and his daughter normally leave the house and take walks in the forenoon. Often ending up at café’s just the two of them or occasionally seeing another friend in leave.

According to Aarseth (2011) traditional family identities are gradually being replaced by reflexive lifestyle projects making room for subjective self-fulfilment. How the leave is planned and made use of involves factors outside the individual intentions of the one taking leave and makes some of the frames the parent’s scope of action.

Several of my participants used part of the paternity leave to go abroad as well as visiting family. Some also had family visiting them during parts of the leave. This was explained with the inherent possibility within the leave. Anders tells: ‘We took one week of vacation during the autumn leave. We had the opportunity to do it then, during the leave’.

In this way the leave provided the family with possibilities to have experiences together, which they normally would not have the opportunity to. At least four of the fathers and their families prioritized spending family time abroad during their leave. This opportunity to share common experiences and spend time as a family unit was described as a valuable time.

5.6.4 Own interests

Haakon tells how he had expectations of walking and going to cafés prior to the leave. The same is the case with Bjørn. He describes how he had planned to walk every day and had an agreement with his job to work one day a week. Nevertheless he came to spend more time on work than the intention was. Other fathers also communicated how they used time on work during the leave, so it seems like a common thing to implement in the leave. For most of the fathers work took more time than they had expected to, yet this was not regarded as problematic, on the contrary several fathers spent time on work when they found time for it.

Work seems to be close as the PC` and mobile phone for some are all the things you need and most often have close at hand. This makes the physical boundaries between home and work more fluid and harder to restrain. Things do not stop because you are absent for some time. Mails and phone calls keep coming in whether you like it or not.

One father says;

“I have a type of work which should not be possible to bring home. Yet, I managed to do just that. Those hours before I go to bed are suitable for doing deskwork. It is not a problem. It is late in the day anyway and we don't have the time to do much new things anyway” (Anders)

How work is regarded as an important feature in their lives is common for several of the men. They work or perform work related tasks when in leave, but do not regard it as an obstacle. Nevertheless time spent on work was considerable, but the amount of work was mostly communicated in the logs and given accounts for in the interviews without questioning it.

For many higher educated working part time or even 'just' normal working hours appears to be more problematic due to the risk of lacking behind in relation to the request of the assignment and such suffer setback in the competition of new challenges and new possibilities.
(Aarset, 2011: 350)

One father told how he was in a unique position at his work place as he was the 'only one that could maintain those tasks'. For him to continuity and participation regarding the projects he was involved in was important for him.

Another aspect was how the work place itself provided social fulfilment.

The bloggers wrote how rewarding contact with the workplace was, much due to the social part of it. If anything related to his field of expertise needs to be taken care of he is sometimes called up. At these occasions he goes to his workplace bringing his child. He writes how he 'miss the job a bit already'. Further he describes how he 'does not go there before it is convenient for Iris (daughter), my new employee'.

The 'greediness' of work-life have been described as a factor that contribute to 'absent' fathers (Brandth and Kvande, 2003). As mentioned in chapter two, one of the intentions of the father's quota was to make it easier for fathers to take on parental leave. In the negotiation between employee and employer, the father's quota was supposed to function as a line-drawer. However the fathers in my study communicate how they want to make room for work and actively organize to make it possible.

5.6.5 Constructing new masculinities in familiar terrain

Research indicates that contemporary men by caring for very young children challenge and expand the traditional image of masculinity by moving towards a closer, more connected type of care (Olsen, 2000). Traditionally, care activities are connected to the sphere of the home. Thus one can assume that nurturing and care activities would to a large extent take place within the home.

Brandth & Kvande on the other hand found that men by doing their joint activities outside the house and argue that it is within this 'landscape' they argue, the fathers in their study find their place.

Being in motion and outside of the home was communicated as an important part of the day by several of the men in this study as well, nevertheless it is not the most apparent pattern or general feature. The logs provided concrete information of the daily practices of father and child. When asked about what influenced how the days were structured besides the child's needs for care and stimulation, performing activities in a familiar surroundings or within spaces the father felt comfortable with appeared to be far more important than 'being

outdoor`. These preferred spaces was described as connected to particular interests or social and practical competences of the fathers (Marsiglio et al 2005). Caringscapes¹³, a concept derived from Bowlby (2012) refers to the geography and social space of care related activities and care-practices.

The fathers in my study described how they used competence and knowledge they already held as basis for joint father-child activities was a pattern in the study.

Eivind reflects upon what affects the way parents constitute their leave practices as he describes how he spends time at home, combining child-care and house chores.

“He (son) has been a calm child (..) He likes to sit and look at a car, to explore the kitchen, - so there has been no urge to go anywhere. So I have been able to do that at the same time as I fold up the laundry. There has been no conflict in it. The nice thing about having children is how the children tend to resemble one self. So active people have active children and active children need to be outside on tours and such. Whilst we who tend to be more quiet we have quite children who want to potter around, and be a bit at home and sleep longer and that matches us. As such it is wisely constructed”.

Joint activities as described above are by these fathers performed in a terrain previously familiar for the father. These were places they knew or felt competent within. Eivind, the only father who had the paternity quota as well as half of the dividable part of the leave explained how he likes to be at home. He refers to himself as a quiet type ‘a homemaker type` and has centred much of his activities both inside and outside their house in addition to walking and running with the child in a pram. His log also reveals how he and his son spend time together doing house chores, playing in the garden and exploring the greenhouse. Though some of the bloggers appears to be closely connected to the home, they do not proclaim it. Rather they focus on what child directed activities they have outside the house, yet their overviews on their days in leave gives a picture of homemaking and caring within the domestic sphere as the most common practice they did and a place to connect and explore together. It became one of their bonding-sites.

Anders’ log on the other hand tells about how much time he spent at the gym as well as walking when outside of the home. In the interview he gives a fitness self-presentation as he

¹³ Derived from the words caring and landscape. Refers to the geography and social space care is practiced.

explains he spend much time exercising and how it is an imperative part of both his and his partners lifestyle.

In addition, he tells he has acquaintances at the gym. I interpret this as moving from an independent adult everyday to a new defined by another persons needs is experienced as smoother when one can utilize a familiar network or practices that has already been established.

Activities outside the house, either right outside or at other sites, are in this group of men prioritized as soon as the baby is fed and cared for. The fathers clearly giving priority to activities outside the house, something that Brandth & Kvande (1997) also found in their research of these men, which had chosen to stay at home with young children, something which at that time was considered a non-traditional choice (ibid). The major reasons for not engaging outside the house were illness or such bad weather conditions that the fathers did not find it rewarding for the child.

Where Brandth and Kvande (1997) found that fathers prioritise friendship and side-by-side activities, the fathers in my study indicate a slightly different approach. For them comfort zones and preparations and accommodation for further development for the child are communicated to be the key to how they interact with their children as they accommodate activities and space to enable father-child activities. These activities were as much face-to-face activities as side-by-side activities.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, gendered expectations to how one perform the leave and maternal power might induce intended or unintended restrictions of where men feel comfortable of performing their leave.

Some fathers found it a bit sad that they did not have the same possibilities as the mothers to arranged activities to participate in. When asked about experiences of time in leave a father who enjoyed walking and going to café's, went to a café renown to be especially intended for parents (mothers?) with babies. He tells how he experienced the visit and the feeling of just not blending in because he was the only father present in the all pink-painted café.

“I tried to visit this café, but it was extremely alienating. All others were mums with their babies, breast feeding in groups, and I sat there all alone. While she (daughter) was sitting at the play carpet I was just drinking my coffee, staring out the window and looking at my cell phone. This place was definitely for mother's only (Haakon).

5.6.6 Expanding social terrain

Whilst most of the fathers describe how they share experiences in within landscapes the fathers are already familiar with, others tell about child directed activities and doing things they would not do unless they were attending a child. One father tells how fathering takes them to a near by visiting –farm and how they attend open child- care. Places he definitely would not engage in if it were not for being a father.

The fact that it was an arranged activity for parents *and* children seemed appealing. Gillis (2003) argues that parents do not just live with their children but lives *through* them.

Some of the fathers who were much at home also attended open day-care as they knew there where other in a similar situation there.

“There are a few couples in our network with children. We see them occasionally. I know someone with a baby that is younger than ours child. But the children sleep at different hours. So that makes it easier with open day care” (First-time father).

The planning and coordinating in order to socialize takes time. Already at place arrangements such as open day-care, are reliving in the way that one just have to pack and go there. Yet, planning packing is also described as part of the learning process. One first time father with humour explains how he in the start of his leave, after overhearing how another father at the gym is made fun of after arriving with his child dressed in what was regarded as miss-matching clothes, became obsessed of remembering his own child’s hair band and forgot her food.

5.7 Concluding reflections

This part will sum up and interpret how these fathers came to construct their paternity leaves and their experiences of it.

The study is seen in light of contemporary discourses of fatherhood, as well as different prevalent child perspectives that influence how these fathers’ shape their time with their child during paternity leave.

Interviews, blogs and logs all provide information about how paternity leave provided the men with a unique time with their children. A time many of them claim to be a privilege that is both important and special. Nevertheless, these men’s experiences of time in leave are

multifaceted and complex. Through the logs, blogs and interviews these fathers provided a nuanced picture of everyday life during leave. Sometimes the picture harmonizes very much with the media provided image of paternity leave. Yet at other times reality and intentions are not that easy to coincide. This part will present some of the communicated pleasures, challenges and experiences these fathers met during their leave.

The importance of *presence* and *time* is pointed out as a key factor to the initial goal, namely the father-child relation. Noticeable is equality among the genders is not a topic in the accounts of why time in paternity leave is important to the fathers. On the other hand regardless of the type of leave they have chosen the participants in the study, including the blogger's underpin the importance *for the child* to have two parents, two competent caretakers to lean on, along with the importance of getting to know each other and construct close relationship from early age. Brandth & Kvande (2005) points at how the child, and not equality is what the fathers prioritize when giving accounts for taking leave.

Haakon, a first time father who has chosen a time flexible leave by altering between home and work every second week tells this about how he got another role in his daughter's life during his leave:

“We got a closer relation than what we would have had if we did not have this time together. She's like she would just as well call on me rather than her mother if she falls and hurts. Comforted by both (of us), and not just a mummy's darling like she was for a while”.

What Haakon tells is common with the other accounts when the men narrate about their experiences of constructing a relation with their child. Though the fathers have been present in their child (ren)'s life during afternoons and weekends before the leave, they report a better understanding of their child when they got closer to the everyday routines.

Eivind, a father of three children enthusiastic deepen how he looked forward to the leave.

“Ah, it was of great significance for dad. Like with the first two. It is something I looked forward to. Unique! It is a special time. You get a tremendously good contact with your child. Every day, all day, do everything yourself, (...) very attached to the child. It is my third child. The child gets to know you, becomes confident with you. Equally confident with mother and father.”

Both men points at how spending time with their child not just generated knowledge about each other. The reflexive inter-relational aspect of it became also important. Giving care

provided the men with a new competence in terms of being a caregiver, thus they also received affection and increased importance in someone else's life. Leira & Ellingsæter (2004) point at how the child becomes valuable as they represent a stable source of love as an opposite to the unstableness of contemporary relationships. The child then becomes an emotional investment. The *child's right* for two parents is a factor the father's refer to when talking about the intentions of the leave. This is also what Brandth & Kvande (2003) found in their studies of father's use of paternal leave.

As described in the previous chapter most of the fathers took on their part of the leave as the child was 8 months or older.

The impact of the child's age when the fathers take on their leave is argued by the fathers in the study to make paternity leave more demanding than the first part of parental leave. Entering the scene so to speak to get to know and construct a mutual everyday together with a person in rapid development. When talking about all the changes and the growth of their children they relate to accelerating development both cognitively and physically.

When describing differences between mother and father's leave the child's age clearly mattered like when it came to finding suitable things to engage in. The rapid changes in the child's skills were one aspect to consider. Another challenge was how the child urges to increase its exploration of its surroundings.

"I gradually experience that she become more demanding, more needs to happen (..) It is much more demands for us, it is more that is happening now. The child is older when the fathers take on leave. The trick has been to put her in the pram. There she falls asleep. I put her in the pram and can listen to music whilst walking" (Haakon)

How one needs to be attentive to the child's changing need to explore and experience the world is sometimes perceived as a challenge. How to plan the day is also dependent on where the child is at the current time. In order to accommodate for the child to use its potential the fathers seek to adapt practices they consider to correspond with the child's needs.

Another issue is the father's do not spend continuous time together with the child in the same way as the mothers do. Some of the fathers in this study argued how mothers and fathers often had different point of departure regarding knowledge of the child and its routines and needs as

the mothers might experience 'growing' with their child. This continuity they argue the mothers acquired from spending time together with the child from birth until the father steps in as primary carer several months later. Pointing at the rather substantial time together on a daily basis is something the fathers have been a part of in a minor degree, and such they are more likely to 'jump' into the care when entering leave.

However and important to note, this does not mean that the fathers have been absent from their child prior to the leave. Rather it is intended to point out how they due to work have been prevented from taking part in a continuous all-day care for a longer time prior to their leave. Hence the mothers in most of the families have been the main parent developing the daily routines of their child. As such the fathers are more likely to experience the shift from work to a stay-at-home life as an abrupt switch, finding themselves in an established child centred world, in which they are to find their place on their own. For some the change from a work life embossed with familiar routines and incorporated assignments to having a 'new boss' can be overwhelming in the start when trying to establish a way to go that functions for the pair of them.

The importance of personal fill-up is claimed by most of the fathers. To maintain some of own interests and activities one used to engage in before having children is lifted forward by many of the men. Yet just how to manage this is a matter of planning and cooperation.

As mentioned previously, research on fathers often placed the child as the centre of fatherhood or as centre of the paternity leave. When fathers describe their daily life in leave it is obvious that the child at the beginning comes up as the main theme, it may be an expectation that it is what the researcher is looking for. When asked, the most prominent changes by going out in leave of absence several themes are mentioned. Time as dedicated to another person who is dependent on your presence and attention is a one topic yet time away from other relations is also a theme. Time as presence is moved from job and independence to another being that requires you in a new way. For some, this is an abrupt transition and takes time to get accustomed to. Although parental responsibility and the child's dependency is lasting the actual leave is a transitory period some fathers report as an upheaval.

Additionally given the logistic in the family, one father had responsibility for his daughter from she woke up until she went to bed at night on his weeks leave. He described how he was

happy about the possibility to take leave, and had come closer to his daughter. Nevertheless, he, like several of the fathers, experienced these weeks as not merely fulfilling.

“ From full job, to play, changing nappies, feeding with porridge, I think it is good that it is every second week. It is a bit like when you sing children’s songs and changes nappies and a whole day goes like that, you feel the brain shrink a little. When it has been periods of bad weather, it has been some long days.” (First-time father)

Days in leave are not just joy and play. Switching from a hectic work life to a slower tempo and routines can be perceived as an obstacle. Like mentioned above, men are more likely to take on their leave as the child is older and they initially have to relate to some routines which already have been established, and is more or less given from the child’s physiological needs.

5.7.1 Fathering is balancing of needs

Being a father in leave and doing fatherhood provide options for some individual clarifications regarding that they are: father, employee, and family man. The father’s intentions and practices when being in paternity leave is adjusted according to own interests and what they regard as the needs and interests of those they are in close relation to. Such their practices are adjusted to various needs in various situations. This means they have to find out which strategies or competences they should deploy to meet the different and sometimes contradictory needs and interests and solve these situations the best possible way.

“Fathers march to the beat of many different drummers, and the nature and quality of their marching must be viewed in the context of the band by which they are expected, or seek to be guided”(Marsiglio et al., 2000)

The dilemma often seem to arise when the various who, what, and how meet other and contradictory alternatives or expectations. The child’s needs are crucial to the fathers when shaping the days. Nevertheless they are not living in a dyad independent of others.

Rationality of care takes place in various locations and relationships. It comprises reflexivity and the demanding balance of needs is dependant of a significant knowledge of the other person.

Paternity leave itself is depicted as a right for both the child and the father. Taking on paternity leave seems to be integrated as a part of involved fathering, and most of the fathers communicated this as a matter of course. What emerged from the interviews is how paternity

leave is regarded as a space designed for the fathers and their children to create and maintain a close, intimate relationship. Their communicated intentions of being at home caring for their small ones are very much in line with the formulations of the leave that underpins the father-child contact and relation as imperative. The importance of the father-child contact is something they underline. How deprivation of paternal contact is known to be harmful for the child these fathers are well aware of as they underpinned the importance of bonding and getting to know their children. A reoccurring theme in these father's narratives was how they expected to perform paternity leave as a mean to strengthen their relationship to their children for the future, which was supposed to be good for both of them. My interpretation is that they seem to enter a role as facilitators to ensure that the practices fathers perform would encourage a close relationship between the two of them.

The facilitator role also entails adjustment and calibration of own interests and needs to accommodate to the child's best interest. Sometimes father and child's interests are not easily commensurable and such clashes of interests invoke choices where the father through rationality of care, have to figure out the best possible solution for them both. Means to balance the different requests is done in various ways by combining activities to make it rewarding for the both. This seems to be easier when the father and child engages in activities and arenas the father already hold competence and feel comfortable, such as engaging in domestic work together or engaging in outdoor activities like walks and visiting cafés. Other times adjusting own activities to the child's daily routines is required. Such as when the fathers wants to engage in own work-related tasks, they adjust to their child's rhythm and needs, by structuring the day so that the fathers' own interests do not conflict with those of the child. The child holds the trump card so to speak in terms of vulnerability and dependence and thus the fathers own interests are put on hold to a more suitable time to match the child. This entails a great deal of planning and effort from the father's side. Thus when accomplished the fathers find a space for own time, engaging in activities that is not one-sided child focused.

When constructing the leave practically the focus is tuned towards multiple needs of the child in addition to the intention of shaping a good relationship. In the daily life attention paid to nurturing and play focused on being here and now. Joy and play are major parts in the father-child time, less than work. The fathers communicate how being there in the moment provides them with pleasures and a feeling of taking part in a unique period of their children's life

allowing them to witness growth, the increasing development and not at least the directness and honest emotional communication their children display. This part is though not much focused on in this study, but needs to be communicated, as being in leave is a nuanced experience for all the fathers in the study.

5.7.2 'Future is here and now'

Being with the children here and now also entails a focus on the future. In the logs and blogs comments often accounts for what they have done. They describe their intentions with their activities as related to their child's future in terms of developing different types of skills. At other times what they have not done is mentioned as well. Like the father who argues how he should have used more time on his child's motoric skills. For him, like most of the fathers in my study, fathering implies guiding the child, to be a companion who's mission is to actively stimulate the child's development.

Fully aware of how the small-scale sample of my study, conclusions on class is not plausible to make. Nevertheless the fathers in the study seem to relate to a tidy trajectory for their children. How they tend to lean on a view Halldén (1992) calls 'children as projects' as their main perspective is visualized in how they accommodate and take a role as mentor on a joint cultural and normative cultivation towards the future. Equally Stefansen & Farstad (2008) find middle class parents to choose what they call 'tidy trajectories', much similar to Halldén's findings in Sweden. The fact that the child is about to enter other arenas than home, is underlined as the main focus when engaging in different activities both within the domestic sphere and in other activities outside it. However as there is a scarcity of father-child centred arranged activities the fathers adjust or make arrangements to accommodate own interests so the child can benefit from it within frames of development, this is partly how they construct the rationality of care.

5.7.3 Paternity leave holds several projects

The importance of independent needs is brought forward in the narratives and the blogs and the logs, along with the challenge of balancing the different and sometimes conflicting needs. However, urge to do other things that is not child-related appears to become more visual as the leave proceeds. To maintain independent time is mentioned as crucial. Nevertheless this seems to be an obstacle. Own activities are for some considered but not always prioritized. One father who has prioritized to schedule the days in leave very much according to his child

tells how he gets to socialize through the open day-care. Still he is always attending his child, and never really feels that he has any time for him self. During leave he also facilitates for his wife to have space for her occupations, in addition he arranges practicalities when other family members are visiting.

Attending to the child take most of the time and additionally other relations demand attention as well. Talking about challenges on a day-to-day basis a father pointed at how he struggled with grandparents who wanted to attend the child, as he found it difficult to 'read' when they needed a break and it was time for him to take over the responsibility for his daughter again. Reading other peoples needs including the child's was a battle for several of the men. Being on leave they where perceived to have plenty of time, and thus expected to give a helping hand when needed. One father narrates how the day has consisted of driving back and forth to arrange for his daughter's well being as well as fixing practical issues in his immediate family. His availability is different as he is in leave, and hence becomes a resource for other relations as well.

5.7.4 A pragmatic approach to fathering

The preferred child-centred activities that is not nurturing or feeding tend to focus on a mixture of play and practice. A repeated reply in the interviews and a reoccurring theme in the logs was how the child centred activities served a purpose or how they where given accounts for. Haavind (2006) mentions how mothers can give accounts for their practices by claiming it to be in the child's best interest. When talking to the fathers and combining it with what the logs tell, these particular fathers planning and ideas on what they can do to activate and cultivate their children take a considerable effort. The child's need for nurture meets need for independence as the fathers also have interests and expectations for what to fill the leave project with.

This does not mean that they do not enjoy the leave, but it is seen by some to be an exhausting exercise where rationality of care as continuous interplay with a young child entails is demanding. For especially the first time fathers to find space and accompany to perform fathering seems to be more of a do it your self project. As the fathers in this study did not find much arranged father child directed activities besides open day-care, they might experience to be left with the leave. How they come to construct this time they regard as imperative for both

the current and future relationship with their child seems to be very much dependent of their own competence and familiar surroundings.

5.7.5 Diverse fatherhoods, similar strategies?

The fathers in this study narrate how they use their own network, own competences and comfort zones as caringscapes for their children. Some actively seek social activities like open day care and account for this as a good place for them as fathers to be as well. They get to be social and see other adults. At the same time they promote and organise for their child to see other children.

How the fathers construct their time in leave is dependent on both what they regard as the intention for the leave. They expressed an understanding congruent to the incentives of the paternity leave and thus the according child perspectives. How they moulded their understanding of the child as well as the paternity leave into practices differed in relation to own competence and spatial room they associated themselves with. The joys of fatherhood are very much present in their stories, but to a large extent they also de-romanticise how it is to be at home with responsibility for young children. This study focuses on some of the dilemmas and conflicting needs that might arise when switching from work life to be the main career of a young child. These are issues one might to highlight to better understand the plurality of experiences of constructing paternity leave in contemporary Norway. As middleclass fathers are perceived as closely connected to the leave arrangement looking at how care is practiced and balanced within this group, this study has attempted to picture how paternity leave can become a 'do it yourself project' dependent on own initiative, competence and spatial 'comfort zones' as fathers receives less attention when it comes to arranged activities then what is the case for mothers.

Likewise work is still an important part of these father's lives, and their wish to combine childcare with attention towards their jobs demands planning and considerations to accomplish. How this balance is solved varies, but most of the fathers arrange for this through making space for own work related activities.

As such this study hopefully can through the paternal narratives provide a nuanced picture of contemporary involved fathering. By sharing both pleasures but also challenges and feelings

of monotony and lack of independence they shed light on a part of parenthood that also is a part of doing fatherhood in paternity leave.

Plural factors are substantive in how long the paternity will be, and what form the outtake turns out. Parental and paternity leave is *a time-limited* and intense period in a family. Thus as it is a part of a public family welfare benefits it necessarily relates to some prevailing structural conditions in terms of time limitations as described in chapter two. The family has to make a choice on how they are going to structure this allotted time between the pair of them considering economy, and personal wishes. In some cases the prospects of being allotted a place at a day-care centre turn out to be an influential factor for how the structure of the leave looks like in the end. Another factor influencing time spent is the practical life and activities of the *family unit*. Additionally lie the social and cultural discourses influencing what might be regarded as the normative opportunities and limitations of how this time is going to be used. One might ask if it is reasonable to look at it as a family project or a situated experience in addition to subject of gender and class?

Staying at home with young children seems to be more organised and prepared for. The lack of continuity and 'male' directed activities 'makes the man left with the leave'.

Women has indeed thread the way for men's participation in childcare, but maybe it is due time to ask whether following these footprints does not match a terrain men necessarily feel comfortable in.

The main findings in this study show that even within a small sample there are variations, but also a reoccurring pattern in how these fathers approach and shape their fathering practices on paternity leave. These fathers put down much effort to stimulate their children, by actively promoting their children's development the fathers describe a view of their children as active and in need of being given challenges and cultivated through activities. Furthermore the fathers in this study tell about high expectations to the shaping of fatherhood, expressed not only by themselves in the interviews and their logs, but also from the mothers and displayed through the blogs. The fathers are supposed to, like mothers, consider and attend to own wellbeing, health, interests and career in addition to contribute to the constitution of the 'proper' family and the good childhood. The paternity leave turns out to be a multifaceted project for the fathers where they have to balance the different needs and interests of their close relations. Whilst mothers experienced a form of practical time squeeze between the

home, family, and work which the fathers to some extent was exempt from in the role as the 'breadwinner', the fathers are now both in and on full speed ahead towards the same time-squeeze, - as well as taking ownership to the relational joyful moments being together with young children entails.

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Appendices

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Informasjonsbrev

Forespørsel om å delta i prosjekt om småbarnsfedre og fedrekvoten.

Jeg er masterstudent i Childhood Studies som er et tverrfaglig, internasjonalt studium ved Norsk Senter for Barneforskning (NOSEB) som er et tverrfaglig, nasjonalt senter som siden 1982 har fokusert på forskning på barn og barndom. I forbindelse med min master oppgave søker jeg fedre til intervju og til å føre en enkel logg i tre uker som en del av mitt prosjekt. Hovedtema vil være far og barns hverdag i fedrekvoten, -et tema det er sett lite på. Spørsmålet jeg ønsker å studere er hvordan pappapermisjonen og barnas dagligliv formes i denne perioden.

Aktuelle fedre til prosjektet

De jeg ønsker til enkel logg/ dagbokføring og intervju er fedre som har rett på fedrekvote og er hjemme i denne permisjonen med barn født etter 01. juli 2011. Det vil si fedre som har tatt ut 12 uker fedrekvote og der mor enten er tilbake i jobb eller som student.

Hvordan vil loggføring og intervju foregå og hvilke spørsmål dreier det seg om?

Fedrene fører enkle logger gjennom tre uker av permisjonstiden om hva de har gjort og hvordan en har opplevd dagen. Intervjuene vil foregå fortløpende etter at loggene er samlet inn. Intervjuet vil ta max. 1 time, og vil bli tatt opp på lydbånd.

Spørsmålene vil dreie seg rundt permisjonstiden og hvordan man legger opp denne tiden sammen med barnet eller barna, og det far og barn fokuserer på i denne tiden.

Hva intervjuet og studiet *ikke* er: verken intervjuet eller studiet vil være en evaluering av far, farsrollen eller foreldrekompetanse.

Hvordan vil intervjuet bli anvendt?

De data og opplysninger som blir gitt i logg og under intervjuet vil bli anonymisert og behandlet konfidensielt, dette gjør at du ikke vil kunne identifisere deg selv i den ferdige oppgaven.

Prosjektet er meldt inn til personvernombudet for forskning, (NSD) som har blant annet som oppgave og vurdere forsker- og studentprosjekt i forhold til bestemmelsene i personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med tilhørende forskrifter.

Opplysninger som navn, kontaklinformasjon, fødselsår, utdanning, og antall barn vil bli anonymisert i studien. Opplysninger om deltakere vil heller ikke bli gitt videre til andre parter. Når studiet er avsluttet vil alle opplysninger som kan bidra til identifisering av deltagerne bli fjernet og lydbåndene slettet. Deltagelse i loggføring og intervju er frivillig. Deltagerne kan når som helst velge å trekke seg fra studien uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. Alle data om deg vil da bli slettet.

Om du ønsker å delta

Dersom du synes dette virker interessant og ønsker å delta kan du ta kontakt på telefon, sms eller e- post. Om du ønsker mer informasjon om studiet eller intervjuet må du også gjerne ta kontakt. Nederst på arket er det en samtykke erklæring som jeg må be deg om å fylle ut og sende til meg eller ta med på intervjudagen.

Veileder for denne studien er professor Vebjørng Tingstad ved NOSEB.

Med vennlig hilsen
Elin Skeim

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og lest informasjonen om småbarnsfedre og fedrekvoten og ønsker å føre loggbok samt delta i intervju.

Signatur:.....

Telefon:.....

E- mail:.....

Kort beskrivelse av føring av loggbok.

Fars navn:

Alder:

Utdanning:

Bosted: By /mindre sted

(Sør-, Øst-, Vest, Midt, el Nord-Norge.)

Barnets alder:

Barnets kjønn:

Antall barn totalt i familien:

Barnas alder:

Hvilken type permisjonsuttak har mor og far:

Hvor langt i permisjonen er far:

Dag1:

Beskrivelse av dagen,

Hva man har gjort av praktiske og sosiale aktiviteter.

Fars egen opplevelse av dagen.

Fint om du beskriver litt hva og hvorfor.

Dag 2:

Beskrivelse av dagen,

Hva man har gjort av praktiske og sosiale aktiviteter.

Fars egen opplevelse av dagen...

....

.....Dag 21.

Trondheim 19.04.2013

Intervjuguide til semi-strukturert intervju i mastergradsprosjektet *"A quota of time, a qualitative study of fathers forming paternal leave in Norway 2013"* om hvordan fedre former og opplever pappapermisjon.

Intervjuene blir gjort som supplement etter at fedrene har ført loggbøker/narrativ over tre uker i permisjonstiden.

Intervjuet er delt opp i tema og med mest mulig åpne spørsmål, med oppfølgings spørsmål under hovedspørsmålene.

Velkomst og Introduksjon til intervjuet. Deltagerne har allerede skrevet logg i tre uker fra permisjonstiden og har takket ja til intervju på forhånd. Deltagerne får muntlig repetert informasjon som de har allerede har fått skriftlig om at deltagelsen er frivillig, anonymitet, og at de når som helst kan trekke seg fra intervjuet/ prosjektet. Det blir også informert om tidsplan, og bruk av båndopptaker. Skriftlig samtykkeskriv blir delt ut . Tillatelse til å bruke båndopptaker blir etterspurt. Deltagerne blir gjort oppmerksom på hensikten med intervjuet, - et innblikk i fedrekvoten. Samtidig blir det understreket hva intervjuet *ikke* er. Det er ikke en evaluering av foreldrerollen eller foreldrekompetanse.

Intervjuguide:

Tema: Forventninger og opplevelse av overgangen til pappapermisjon.

-Det å være i permisjon, hva innebar det for deg?

-Kan du si litt om egne og andres forventninger til permisjonstiden i forkant av permisjonen?

(Tidligere erfaringer?)

(Hva hadde disse forventningene å si for deg?)

(Positivt/ negativt?)

(sosialt)

-Planer og forberedelser i forkant av permisjonen?

-Hva syntes du var de største endringene for deg når du gikk ut i permisjon?

Tema: Hverdagens praktiske utfordringer

-Hvordan var opplevelsen av tid og tidsbegrepet i de ukene du var i permisjon?

Lytt etter (rastløshet?/ ensomhet? Sosialt? Travelt?)

(Hva betydde det å være i pappapermisjon sosialt sett for far og barn?)

-Hvordan legges "lista" for din og barnets hverdag?

(hvilke utfordringer kan det dukke opp der)

(å overta etter mor sin permisjon)

Det å finne en rytme som fungerer, hvordan gjøres det?

(Hvor fritt står far til å forme dagene? ((sosiale medier/nettforum for fedre?))

Kan du fortelle litt om utfordringer du møtte i hverdagen?

(Hvordan kan det ha påvirket hvordan dere la opp dagene?)

Fortell litt om hvordan dere løser dagen når mor er ferdig med sin arbeids/ studiedag?

Tema: Gjennomføring av pappapermisjon vs mammapermisjon

Når du ser på permisjonstiden din ser du noen likheter eller ulikheter på den og barnets tid sammen med mor?

(Hva er det i så fall som skiller seg mest ut?)

Har du noen tanker om (u) likheter mellom fedre og mødres permisjon?

(Kan du si litt om hva tiden med far kan ha å si for barnet?)

Avslutningsvis, - er det noe viktig vi burde tatt med som vi ikke har vært innom?

Kan jeg ta kontakt med deg dersom det er noe jeg undrer på og for evt. sitat sjekk?

Tusen takk for at du deltok og bidro til gjennomføringen av prosjektet!

Ta gjerne kontakt om det er noe dere undrer på i forbindelse med prosjektet, eller det er noe dere vil supplere!

Mvh.

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Vår dato: 24.05.2013

Vår ref: 34315 / 3 / AMS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 23.04.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

34315 *A Quota of Time. A Qualitative Study of Fathers' forming Paternal Leave in Norway 2013*

Behandlingsansvarlig *NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder*

Daglig ansvarlig *Vebjørng Tingstad*

Student *Elin Skeim*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.01.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Anne-Mette Somby

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