



“Who will stay home today?”

What do we know...

What do we need to know about parental sharing of leave to care for sick children?

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Outline

- Why study fathers' use of leave to care for sick children?
- What do we know about fathers' right to leave to care for sick children?
 - Findings from a 2015 Swedish study
- What future research is called for?



Why study fathers' use of leave to care for sick children?

- Unlike parental leave:
 - Doesn't typically interfere with breastfeeding
 - Fathers home alone → builds skills
 - Requires intensive nurturing → builds skills
 - Cannot be planned ahead
- Like parental leave:
 - Challenges gendered assumptions about work and caregiving
 - Might promote shared division of labor
 - Promotes strong father-child relations
 - Could reduce discrimination against mothers



What do we know about fathers' leave to care for sick children?

- EU directive entitles fathers to time off
- 12 EU countries offer fathers at least 10 days with pay per year (+4 non-EU), 4 EU states offer leave without pay
- Taken more than parental leave
 - (e.g., Swedish fathers take 38% of sick leave days, 25% of parental leave days)
- No upward trend (Finland and Sweden)
- Taken less when partner's income is low, when he works in private sector



2014 Swedish Study of White-Collar Fathers in Private Sector (N=1,344)

- Telephone survey, 56% response rate
- Conducted by Novus of Unionen members (largest union)
- 34% were managers
- 74% took turns being home with partner
- Overall finding:
**Worklife was “boundary-less” – when fathers were home with sick children, many continued working and experienced stress

Two ways fathers were at home:

VABBNING = benefit

- 84% fathers
- 47% could not detach themselves from work
- 43% worked at home to reduce workload
- 38% felt stressed about work when home
- 27% bad conscience because not at work

VOBBNING = no benefit

- 40% fathers (always/often)
- reasons:
 - time pressure
 - co-worker loyalty
 - specialization
- 35% said they were not “there” for their children
- 31% would like to not “vobba”

Conclusion?

Policy is good but...

- White-collar fathers pressured to prioritize work even when home, by work

culture norms, work intensification, technology

- How can policies promote fathers disconnecting from work to do childcare?
- What research on fathers' use of leave to care for sick children is needed?



Picture from Radio Sweden 14/2/14