



Sustainability@Leave

CA21150

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Parenting Leave Policies in Denmark and Inequalities – a Complex System





Parenting Leaves in Denmark: Types of Leave and Design Elements



1901–1980: From Maternal Protection to Social Right

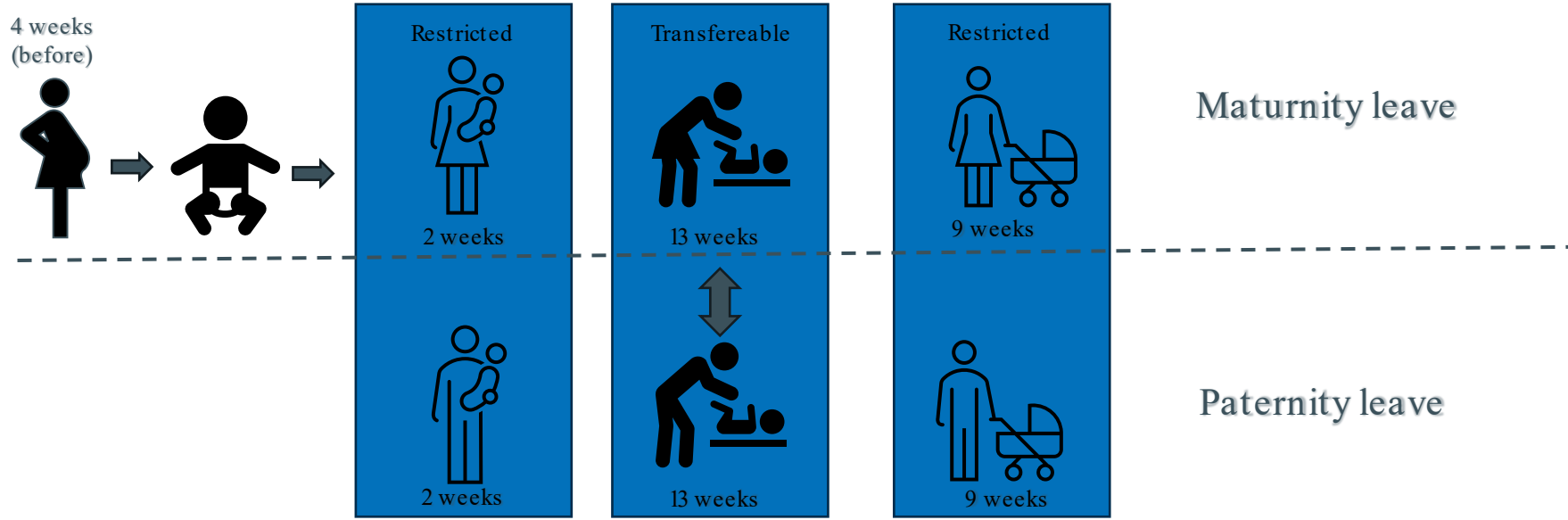
- Overall policy focus: Labour protection → Social policy → Welfare state
 - 1901 – First maternity law (labour protection): 4 weeks after birth
 - 1913 – Maternity linked to social insurance: 4–6 weeks
 - 1960s – Expansion of welfare state rights: ~14 weeks (mother)
 - 1973 – Universal maternity leave established: 14 weeks (mother)
- Key message: Maternity leave began as protection of mothers, not gender equality policy

1980–2021: From Maternity Leave to Parental Leave and Gender Equality

- Policy focus: Family policy → Labour market → Gender equality
 - 1984 – Parental leave introduced: 24 weeks total
 - 1997–2002 – Increased flexibility and sharing: 32 weeks (shareable)
 - 2002 – Temporary earmarked leave for fathers: 2 weeks
 - 2019 – Adjustments, but strongly gendered take-up
 - 2022 – EU directive implemented: 48 weeks total (earmarked for both parents)
- Key message: Shift from family autonomy to labour-market regulation and gender equality

Parenting Leave Policy in Denmark – a Complex System

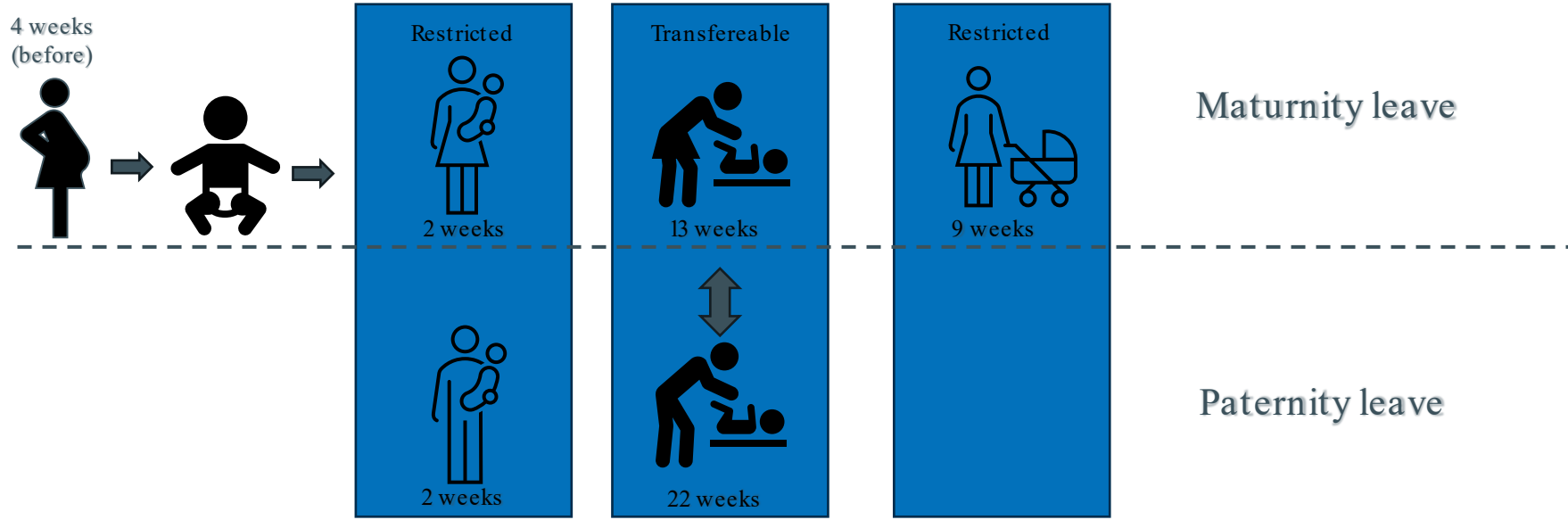
Parental leave



Both primary caretakers are wage earners

Parenting Leave Policy in Denmark – a Complex System

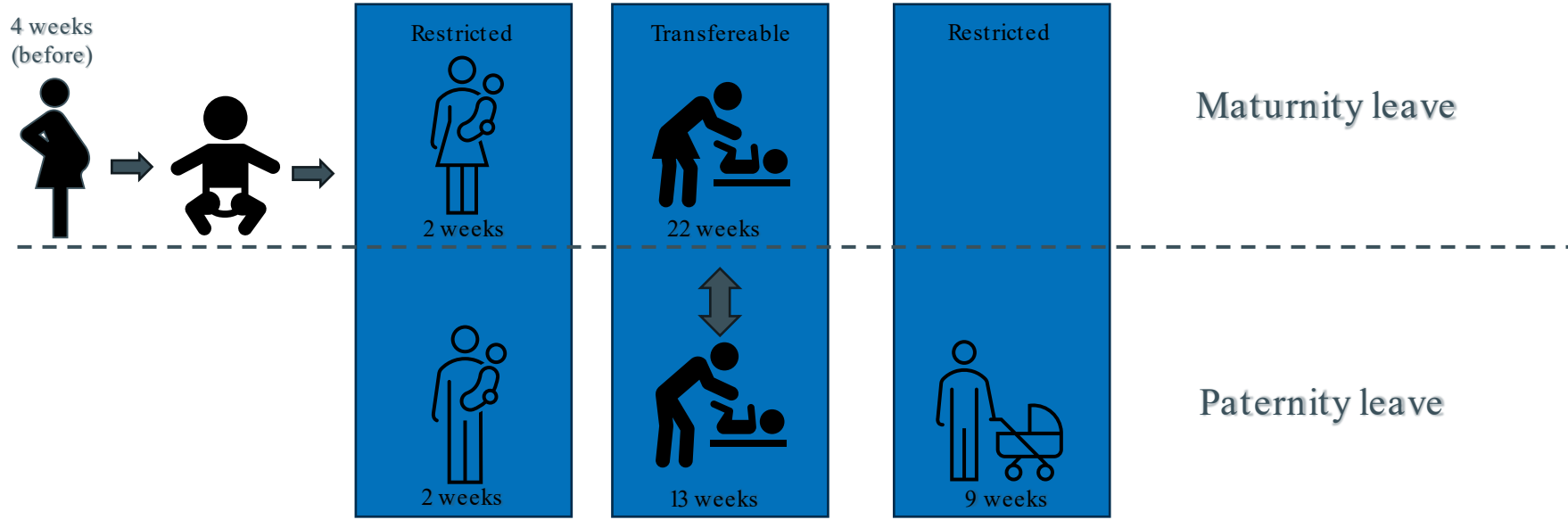
Parental leave



Mother wage earner and father/second primary care giver self-employed

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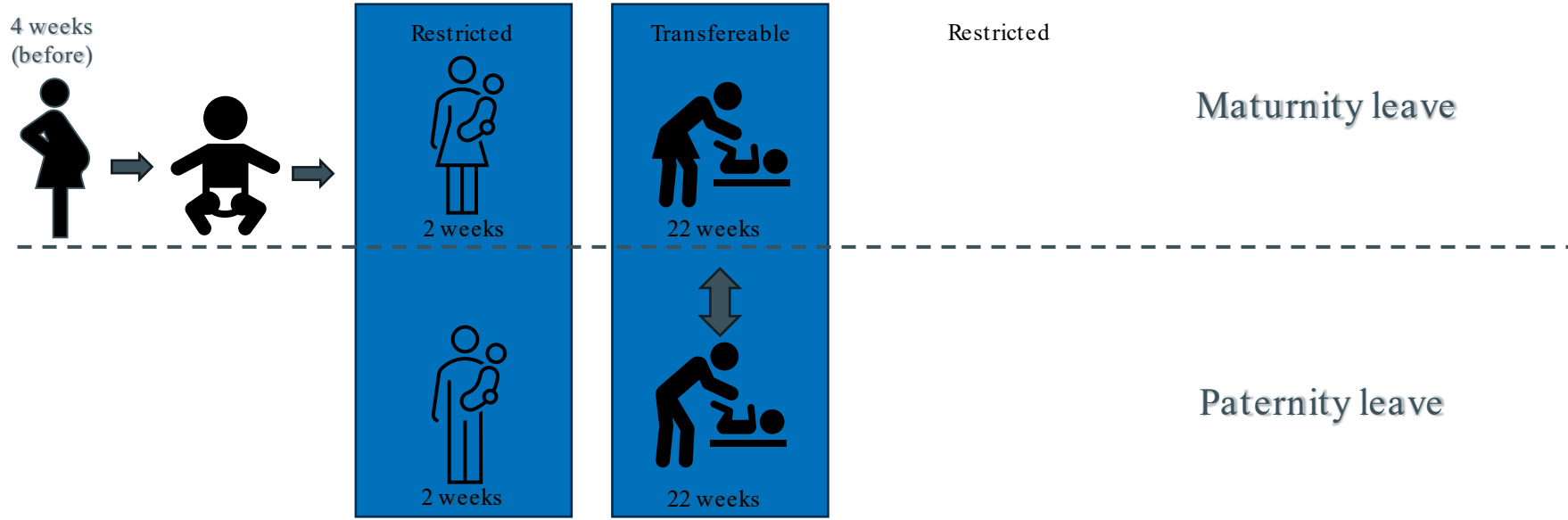
Parental leave



Father/second primary care givere wage-earner and mother self-employed

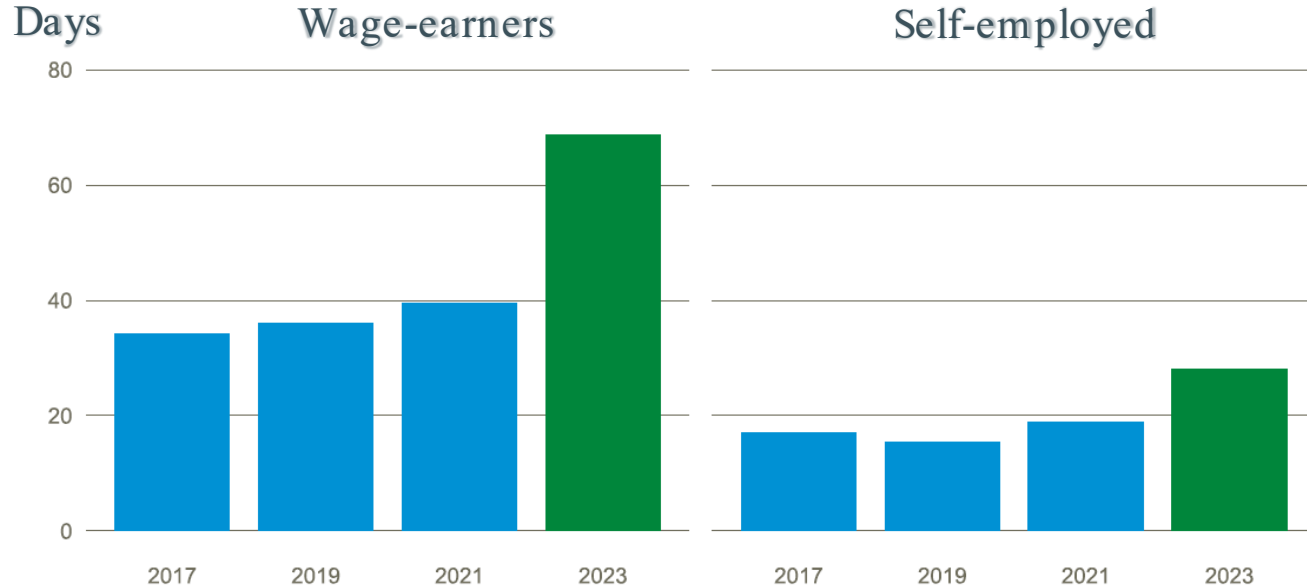
Parenting Leave Policy in Denmark – a Complex System

Parental leave



Mother and second primary care giver both self-employed

Inequality in Parenting Leave Outcomes



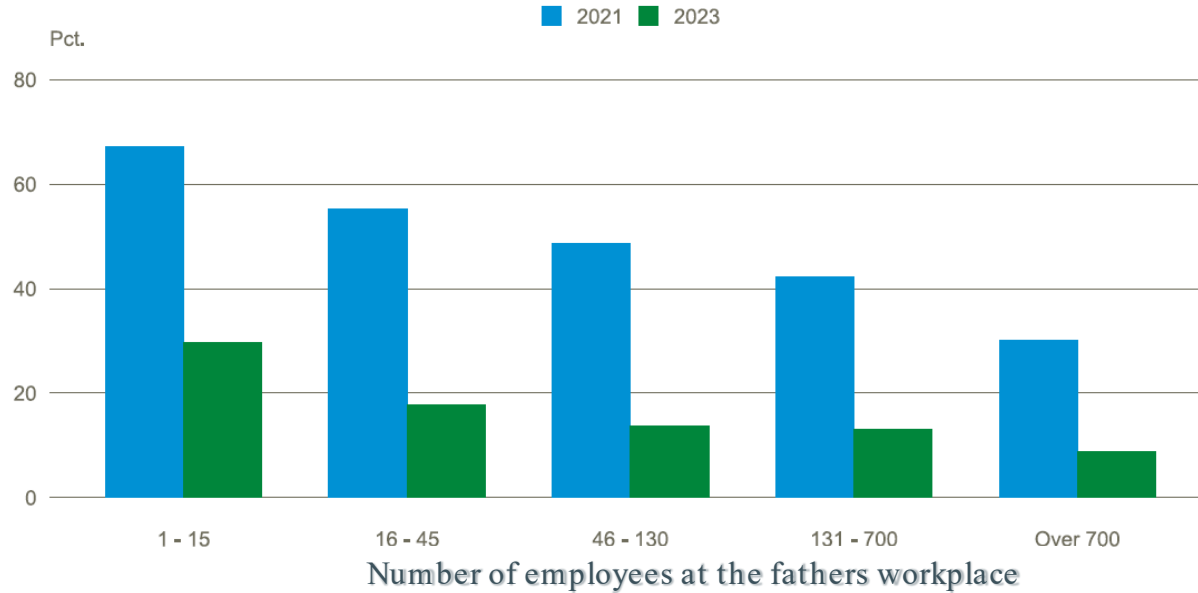
Duration of leave for fathers with wage-earner or self-employed status, 2017–2023.

Inequality in Parenting Leave Outcomes



Fathers by duration of leave, 2017–2023.

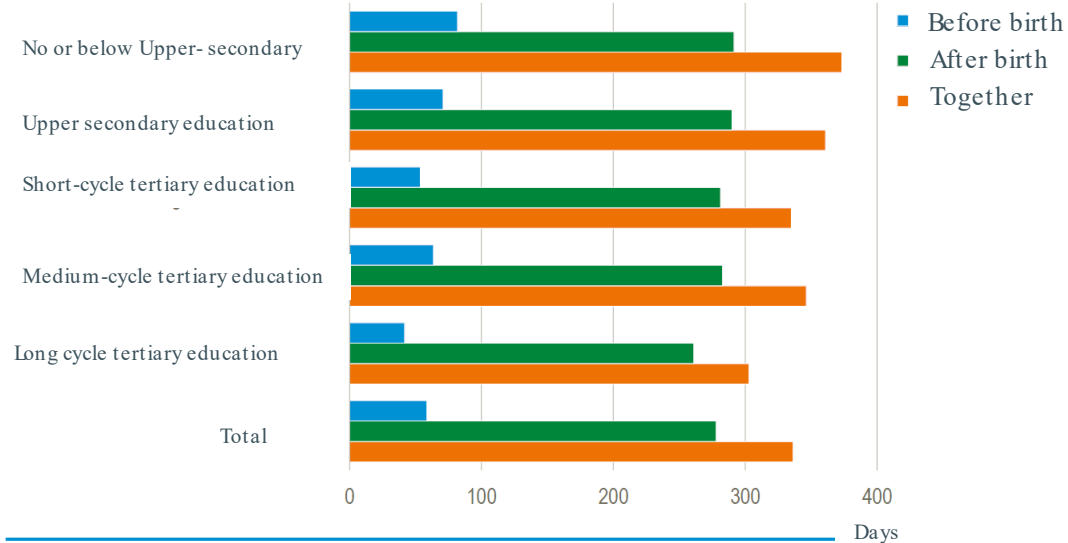
Inequality in Parenting Leave Outcomes



Share of fathers with at most two weeks of leave by number of employees at the workplace, 2021 and 2023.

Inequality in Parenting Leave Outcomes

Maternity leave before and after childbirth – benefit-eligible mothers cohabiting with a benefit-eligible partner.



Leave after childbirth refers to leave taken during the child's first year of life. Data are from the years 2021 and 2022.





Final Discussion



Parenting Leave Policies in Denmark and Inequalities

- Xxx
- Research gap /data gap
- Current problems /possible solutions