

Prof. Dr. Carsten Jentsch (*1979) has been working as Professor of Economic and Social Statistics at TU Dortmund since the summer semester of 2018. At the moment, he is moving to Dortmund together with his wife and his two sons Cornelius and Tristan (*2015, *2017).



Source:
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The commuter father

When I enter Prof. Dr. Jentsch's office in the CDI building, he welcomes me warmly. There are two tables in his office. We sat down at the smaller table, because the smaller table - in keeping with the interview - seems more familiar. First I answer his questions about the fathers' project. Then he enthusiastically turns to my questions.

A new beginning

The Jentsch family is currently living in Frankfurt for the last few weeks, after which the family will start a new chapter together in Dortmund in mid-August. When he takes up his professorship in the summer semester of 2018, Carsten Jentsch will already be living in Dortmund during the week. On these days, his wife takes care of their sons alone in Frankfurt. The family man only sees his family on extended weekends. He can hardly wait to spend more time with his family again soon: "In recent months, I've usually only been able to get more involved with the family from Friday to Sunday."

"With the start of my position here at TU Dortmund, remained significantly more family work on my wife."

Before his professorship at the TU, Carsten Jentsch was a postdoc in Mannheim and lived in Frankfurt. At that time, he took the children to the daycare center every morning and continued commuting to his job from there. His wife was responsible for picking up the children, which is why she usually started work very early in the morning.

"At that time, dropping off and picking up children was split between us in about half-and-half. With ge-

I was also quite involved in the household. Some of the things that the children

my wife was more committed than I was. But the idea was, and still is, that we're relatively equal and committed to the same extent, including raising children."

However, this basic attitude could not be continued over the long period of time and especially the long distance since he started in Dortmund in March 2018. Nevertheless, he is good things that the tasks will be distributed more evenly again after the move.

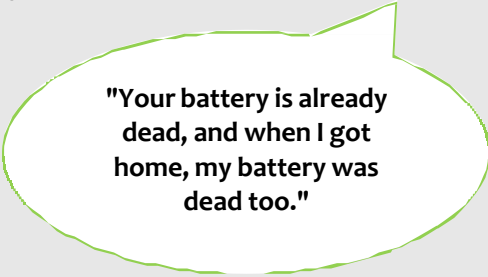
Between Dortmund and Frankfurt

Carsten Jentsch currently works three and a half days a week during the semester in Dortmund so that he can invest the remaining time with his family in Frankfurt. His working days are extremely full because many appointments accumulate that could otherwise be spread over the whole week. "That is extremely strenuous," the professor emphasizes. After work, he regularly calls his family in Frankfurt. In this way, he leaves his work stress behind and also alleviates his homesickness.

"We talk on the phone a lot over video, of course, and can see us, although not to the same degree as at home."

While the professor sets off for Frankfurt immediately after his university days, his family awaits him impatiently.

But when he arrives exhausted at his family's home on Thursday evening, he also feels the need to relax. At the same time, his wife She is just as overloaded and has an urgent need to take the children into her husband's hands. "Sometimes that collides," sighs Carsten Jentsch in retrospect.



"Your battery is already dead, and when I got home, my battery was dead too."

His wife has a PhD in mathematics and works in a 75% position at a major bank in Frankfurt. Since last spring, since her husband is present only on weekends,

At the same time, she takes care of her two sons alone. On days when the father is also with his family, she often works longer hours to make up for her hour deficits. These arise, for example, when the children get sick or doctor's appointments for the children are necessary. "In this phase, my wife is anything but flexible, because she has to take care of the children and everything else completely on her own. The children take up a lot of time," the professor feels.

Overall, however, he very much enjoys the free time with his children. He takes them to the zoo or to the playground, where his sons can let off steam as they please. The sons also enjoy getting out and about with their father. And then at home, the fun continues with toys. "At the moment, I'm high on the list because I'm offenbar great at building Lego," laughs the family man.

Support is the be-all and end-all

The older son Cornelius started at the daycare center at the age of one year and the younger Tristan at eleven months. As far as early childcare is concerned, the Jentsch family has not experienced any criticism from their current environment and circle of friends. The city of Frankfurt has high rent prices, so it is more common there for both parents to work full-time or at least nearly full-time. However, from his former family environment and neighborhood, he also knows more conservative views about the "classic" family roles. The rather early use of childcare was also noted there with astonishment and sometimes incomprehension. However, Carsten Jentsch believes that men and women should have the right to do what they feel like doing and not be forced by external circumstances to fall back into "classic" family roles. He also sees relatively often in his environment that the couple is on eye level until the birth of the children and then the tasks are shared.

ling changes. He doesn't like that at all. And his wife is also certain that she wants to remain equal in the distribution of tasks. "I fully support that," he shares without question. Nevertheless, in stressful professional situations, the professor has sometimes wished that something less would stick to him.

Carsten Jentsch believes that the availability of more flexible childcare is particularly important for parents because it is the only way to create family-friendliness. This sees

He considers this to be the most important factor for equal rights and equality - also in academia. In his perception, however, many women are more likely to opt for children when faced with the agony of choosing between a career or children, even if they know that this decision will have a bad effect on their careers. "I don't think that would be the case if you can safely assume that good, flexible childcare is available," the father ver- mutes. Finally, he announces happily:

"We have already found kindergarten places in Dortmund. Starting in August, fairly close to campus and even with relatively long care hours."

Career: A security question

"By default, people associate careers with earning a lot of money," says Carsten Jentsch.

"But for me, an academic career as a professor has the attraction of being able to largely

Being able to pick and choose what I want to worry about."

**"I can do what I want to do,
and I can make it last."**

For Carsten Jentsch, an academic career is only secure if you can stay in the sys- tem permanently. When asked whether his two sons have impaired his career, the family man thinks for a while. Finally, he admits that his children have already affected his career in a certain way. He remembers the time before his professorship at the TU Dortmund University, when he often sat at his desk until late in the evening. If his children didn't want to sleep and made a racket, it was impossible for him to work.

**"Such obstacles have
already hampered me.
and also tugged very
hard on my strength".**

Afterwards, he sums up with a smile that he succeeded in his academic career anyway. He would not want to do anything differently, even, he emphasizes, if some things were certainly easier.

would have been without children. "I am satisfied," he finally emphasizes.

The To-Do List

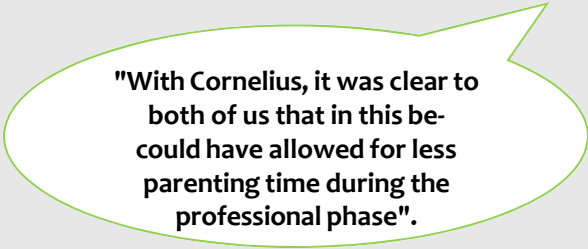
"At the moment, there's still a lot to do for the move in two weeks," laughs the father. There is a lot to do with the search for a new tenant in Frankfurt, the various remodeling measures in the new house, furniture purchases, kitchen planning and also mowing the lawn in the new garden. Carsten Jentsch adds that Cornelius is now getting to the age where he can think about sports activities for him, such as swimming or a soccer club. Because of the move, the family has not yet had a chance to take a closer look around Dortmund. As soon as everyone has settled in, they will start looking for suitable sports activities. The father is certain of one thing: "It wouldn't just be me or my wife who would pick up and take them to sports. We would try to share the work equally and alternately. Of course, you'd first have to see what exactly you do and what offers are available."

So far, the family man has dealt exclusively with the childcare issue. "I'm still looking at TU's other family offerings when my kids are here. That stands also on my to-do list," smiles Carsten Jentsch.

Parental leave depending on life phases

After the birth of the first son remained his Woman a whole year at home. At the end of this

During his first year of parental leave, the newly minted father was offered a substitute professorship. "I had actually planned to take the typical two months of parental leave. But the timing was so bad because it clashed with the substitute position, and it would also have been financially disadvantageous for me," regrets the professor. However, the substitute professorship also included the lecture-free period. Thus, he was ultimately able to act as if he had taken two months of parental leave. "Formally, I didn't take any parental leave, but I still had two months off," says the family man.

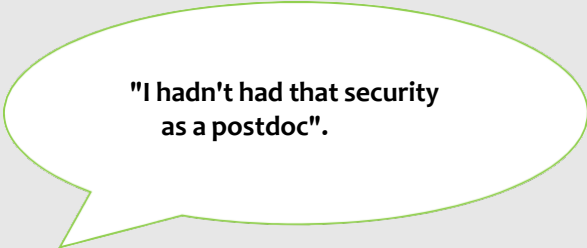


"With Cornelius, it was clear to both of us that in this be- could have allowed for less parenting time during the professional phase".

Looking back, Carsten Jentsch remembers: "After the birth of Tristan, my wife started working again on a reduced position after six months. "So I then also took parental leave for half a year on a half-time position. After my wife had borne the main burden with our first son, we deliberately wanted to spread the care more evenly in the first year of life with the second child." One of his most formative experiences during his parental leave was taking part in a PEKiP course as "the only father between peeing babies and breastfeeding babies. Mothers."

Professionally, the father of two felt no opposition when he took parental leave as a postdoc.

However, as with the first child, the pregnancy did not go well with the second. On top of that, Carsten Jentsch also contracted a serious knee injury. "That was the worst possible timing," mentions the father, slightly annoyed. So the family needed the support of a home help, which was financed by the health insurance fund. This was the only way to get the older son to and from the daycare center and to do the shopping. There was no family support locally at the time because all relatives lived several hours' drive away. Also to the "Auditioning" for his current job in Dortmund Carsten Jentsch had to arrive on crutches.



"I hadn't had that security as a postdoc".

Carsten Jentsch imagines that parental leave as a professor should be easier to realize: "I mean, if I took a semester of parental leave right now, I would just do that and I would come back after. Then I would have to I of course some again auffangen, but I

I would have the certainty that I would still be in my job and would be able to stay in the job permanently. I just didn't have that certainty as a postdoc." For example, his contract was not extended due to the parental leave he took, since his position was financed by third-party funds. Nevertheless, he took parental leave during his postdoc period and definitely accepted a perceived risk.

What the future holds

The Jentsch family's first priority is now to settle down in Dortmund and build up a new social environment. After the move in two weeks, Carsten Jentsch will be able to spread his office time over five days instead of just three and a half. This will make his working day less stressful.

His wife will and definitely wants to continue working. To realize all this they need sufficient childcare. The family is happy that this has already been sorted out.


After kindergarten, the next big step for children is school. "That will very exciting," the father of two looks to the future.

When the children go to school, they will also attend after-school care, at least that is the goal.

Time for the partnership

The relationship with his wife is also important to Carsten Jentsch. He fondly remembers spending significantly more time with his wife before the birth of their two children. It's true that after the children were born, they sometimes organized a baby sitter for the children so that they could spend time together again. However, the father of two emphasizes that these time-outs with his wife were rare but important exceptions.

Carsten Jentsch hopes to be able to do more together with his wife in the future, at the latest when their two sons are older. "The children will be more independent, and after a few exhausting years we will have more time for ourselves and our partnership," the father of two hopes at the end of the conversation.

The interview was conducted by Rahime Eser in  2019

Time for a selfie: Carsten Jentsch with his sons Tristan and Cornelius.



Source:
Private