

Artículo / Article

The Swiss leave scheme at crossroads. Gender equality implications of parental and paternity leave proposals / *El sistema de permisos parentales suizo en la encrucijada. Implicaciones en términos de igualdad de género de las propuestas de permisos parentales y de paternidad*

*Isabel Valarino

Institute of Social sciences, University of Lausanne, Switzerland/Suiza
Isabel.valarino@unil.ch

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ABSTRACT

Switzerland is characterised by a relatively lagged and gendered leave scheme. This study asks: What were the developments of parental and paternity leave policy proposals in the Swiss Parliament between 1995 and 2014 from a gender equality perspective? Content analysis and a standardized scoring methodology are used to analyse the leave policy proposals submitted by Members of Parliament. The analysis reveals that only a few proposals would create incentives for fathers to use these leaves and would therefore contribute to promoting gender equality. The article discusses future challenges for the development of leave policies in Switzerland from a gender equality perspective.

Keywords: Parental leave, paternity leave, gender equality, family policies, Switzerland.

RESUMEN

Suiza se caracteriza por disponer de un sistema de permisos parentales limitado y sesgado en términos de género. Este trabajo pretende dar respuesta a la pregunta sobre cuál ha sido la evolución, desde el punto de vista de la igualdad de género, de las propuestas de regulación del permiso de paternidad y parental presentadas al Parlamento suizo entre 1995 y 2014. A través de un análisis de contenido y de una puntuación estandarizada se han analizado las propuestas formuladas por los parlamentarios. Los resultados evidencian que sólo una pequeña minoría de propuestas plantean introducir incentivos para que los padres utilicen los permisos y contribuir así a reducir la desigualdad de género. El artículo termina discutiendo los desafíos a los que se enfrenta el desarrollo de una política de permisos parentales formulada desde una perspectiva de género en Suiza.

Palabras clave: Permiso parental, permiso de paternidad, igualdad de género, políticas familiares, Suiza.

*Autor para correspondencia / Corresponding author: Isabel Valarino, University of Lausanne, Institute of Social sciences, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland

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INTRODUCTION

Leave policies were developed throughout the 20th century in most industrialized countries. Job-protected leave entitlements were initially targeted solely at mothers for health and medical purposes (*maternity leaves*). Other forms of leaves such as *parental* and *paternity leaves* were gradually implemented, in order to enable both parents to care for their children and support them balancing their work and family lives. *Paternity leave* is usually to be taken soon after the birth of a child, and is intended to enable the father to spend time with his partner, the new child and older children. *Parental leave* is usually available equally to mothers and fathers, either as individual or family entitlements, or as a mix of both. It is understood as a childcare measure to be taken after the maternity leave period.

Leave policies have various societal implications, for instance on fertility behaviour (e.g., Duvander, Lappegard, & Andersson, 2010; Lalive & Zweimüller, 2009) and on children's development and well-being (e.g., Huerta et al., 2013; O'Brien, 2009). Not least, leave policies also influence gender relations and the gender division of paid and unpaid work (e.g., Brighthouse & Wright, 2008; Haas & Hwang, 2008; Valarino, 2014). This article contributes to this latter line of research by focusing on leave policies' implications for gender equality and parenthood.

The study adopts a gender perspective; it considers leave policies entitlements as part of the institutional setting that shapes gender relations and parenthood (Risman, 2004). In addition to leave policies, other factors such as the gendered labor market, the lack of available childcare services, fiscal disincentives to dual earner couples and gendered stereotypes also play an important part in the institutional shaping of gender relations and parenthood. Parenthood is a life transition following which gender differences in employment and family trajectories tend to increase, even if there are large differences between national contexts (e.g., Craig & Mullan, 2010). The policy context in which parents are embedded influences norms and representations of "good parenthood", as well as

parents' concrete opportunities and resources to engage in paid and unpaid work at the transition to parenthood (e.g., Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 2009).

Leave schemes vary considerably from one country to another (Addati, Cassirer, & Gilchrist, 2014; Moss, 2015). Depending on their set up – the leave length, level of payment and type of entitlement – they may promote, enable, or on the contrary impede the equal sharing of caregiving activities by mothers and fathers (Brighthouse & Wright, 2008). Research shows there is a relationship between leave schemes' design, mothers and fathers' use of these leaves, and the gender division of paid and unpaid work (e.g., Bünning, 2015; Duvander & Jans, 2008; Haas & Hwang, 2008; Huerta et al., 2013; Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007; Rehel, 2014). When fathers are entitled to individual, non-transferable and well paid leaves, they are more likely to use them, which in the medium term tends to increase their involvement in childcare and may reduce their hours of wage work, thereby challenging a traditional gender division of work.

Switzerland represents an interesting case study with regard to its leave scheme for at least two reasons. Firstly, it has a relatively laggard and gendered leave scheme. In 2015, it was one of the few OECD countries - together with "Turkey and" the USA - where fathers did not have any statutory leave rights (no parental nor paternity leave) (Addati et al., 2014; Moss, 2015). Mothers are entitled – but since 2005 only – to a maternity insurance of 3,5 months. Gendered parental roles are therefore institutionalized in the Swiss leave scheme and public policies discourage employed fathers from being involving equally in childcare.

Secondly, fathers' lack of access to leave policies has recently become a topical subject in the public sphere (Valarino, 2014). Survey data from 2012 suggests public opinion is overall positive toward paid leave for fathers (Valarino, Duvander, Haas, & Neyer, 2015). The Federal Council published a report in 2013 evaluating various possible leave models (OFAS, 2013). In 2016 a group of labour union, masculine, feminine and family umbrella associations launched a popular initiative in favour of four weeks of paid paternity leave.

And in Parliament, even though it is still relatively marginal compared to other social policy issues, political actors have submitted a growing number of policy proposals¹. Proposals submitted by members of the Parliament are important objects of study since they contribute to the frame of policy debates (Lanfranconi & Valarino, 2014) and, in the event a political majority is reached, they may have direct and concrete consequences on the new leave scheme in Switzerland.

This study therefore focuses on Switzerland and asks: What were the developments of parental and paternity leave policy proposals in the Swiss Parliament in the past 20 years from a gender equality perspective? The following questions are addressed: What are the main features of the policy proposals submitted? What consequences for gender relations and parenthood could be expected if these proposals were to be implemented? Finally, is there a relationship between leave policy proposals' main characteristics and their potential for gender equality?

The data consists of the proposals submitted in favour of paternity or parental leave in Parliament between 1995 and 2014 (n=33), as well as the government documents, parliamentary debates and votes on these proposals. Content analysis and a standardized scoring attribution methodology are used (Berg, 2001; Ray, Gornick, & Schmitt, 2010). The analysis of leave policy proposals takes into account indicators such as the leave duration reserved for fathers, the level of financial compensation, the extent of policy development proposed and the type of entitlement envisaged.

The paper is divided into six sections. First, the theoretical perspective adopted and the literature review on leave policies' implications for gender equality is presented (Section 2). Then an overview of the leave scheme situation and of the institutional context for balancing work and family lives Switzerland is presented (Section 3). The

next section presents the research design for the study (Section 4). Subsequently, results about the main features of leave policy proposals, as well as the ways in which they could promote, enable or impede gender equality, are presented (Section 5). Finally the article discusses the results and draws conclusions about the future challenges for leave policy development from a gender equality perspective (Section 6).

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

A gender and institutional theoretical perspective on parenthood

Theoretically, this paper draws on a gender perspective of public policies and the welfare state to understand how parenthood is framed and impacts men's and women's life courses differently. Following Risman's (1998, 2004) conceptualization, gender results from the social construction of differences between men and women and from the organisation of unequal relations between them on the basis of these presumed differences. With regard to parenthood, gender differences are constructed between mothers and fathers. The former are typically regarded as naturally inclined and better at taking care of children, and the latter are still mainly considered to be economic providers, as well as serving in educational and recreational roles (e.g., Hojgaard, 1997; Lupton & Barclay, 1997). The social reproduction of gender inequalities takes place at different societal levels; i.e. institutional, interactional and individual levels (Risman, 1998, 2004). However according to Risman, the gender structure and gendered parenthood can be challenged when change takes place at one or several of these interconnected levels.

Feminist welfare state scholars have emphasised how, at the institutional level, public policies organize the division of care work within societies (e.g., Bacchi, 1999; Knijn & Kremer, 1997; Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 2009). Welfare states may support the male breadwinner family model or may create equal opportunities and distribute resources in a way that supports dual-earner dual-carer families.

1 A keyword search conducted in the parliament's database Curia Vista showed that family policies are a secondary topic in comparison with health or pension insurance schemes. Among family policies, maternity leave and family allowances have received most attention.

Leave policies, as particular types of family and employment measures, are part of the state apparatus that regulates gender relations and defines parenthood.

Brighouse and Wright (2008) developed a typology that captures their implications for gender equality and parenthood. They distinguish between leaves that are *equality-impeding*, *-enabling* and *-promoting*. *Equality-impeding* leaves such as mother-only leaves and unpaid gender-neutral leave policies (which are typically only used by women) contribute to sustaining gendered parenthood. While they may well improve women's quality of life, they also crystallize a gender unequal division of work since fathers do not engage in childcare as intensively as mothers do². *Equality-enabling* leaves such as gender-neutral paid parental leaves reduce obstacles to mothers' labour market participation and may as well enable more father involvement. Yet these family entitlements do not pressure families to divide equally the leave. Leave uptake is considered a private issue and not a state decision. Thirdly, *equality-promoting leaves* are policies that create incentives for men to involve in caregiving activities, through paid and individual leave entitlements such as paternity leaves or reserved quotas within the parental leave³.

Leave policies' implications for parenthood and gender equality

Brighouse & Wright's (2008) typology is supported by studies on leave uptake rates by men and women according to different leave modalities. When leaves are unpaid, they are barely used by parents and if so by low-skilled women only and not by men. Leaves that are paid but gender-neutral are mainly used by women (Bruning & Plantenga, 1999; Moss, 2014). If these leaves are long they have a

negative effect on women's chances of returning to the labour market and on their career opportunities (e.g., Evertsson & Duvander, 2010; Ruhm, 1998). Overall the gendered use of leave policies increases gender role specialisation at the transition to parenthood. However when leave is an individual and non-transferable paid entitlement that is universal (independent of seniority, sector of activity or collective agreement), men use it (Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Moss, 2008; Ray et al., 2010)

Such equality-promoting leaves that encourage men's uptake have several consequences on the gender structure and the constitution of parenthood. On the institutional level, they contribute to creating new norms about men as involved fathers (Hojgaard, 1997; Rostgaard, 2002). They also make fatherhood more visible in the work environment (Valarino & Gauthier, 2015).

On the interactional level, they challenge the gender division of paid and unpaid work. Fathers who have taken leave tend to be more involved in childcare tasks in the medium term than those who have not (e.g., Bünning, 2015; Duvander & Jans, 2008; Haas & Hwang, 2008; Huerta et al., 2013; Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007; Rehel, 2014). They also tend to adopt shorter working hours. It seems two weeks of leave is the minimum length for gender equality effects to be observed, but thresholds actually differ from one case study country to another. Fathers' increased participation in domestic tasks is observed only for fairly longer periods of leave taken (more than 1 or 2 months) or for solo leave uptake, when the mother has returned to work (Bünning, 2015; O'Brien & Wall, 2016). On the individual level, fathers who have taken leave tend to report undifferentiated representations of motherhood and fatherhood and to develop a similar sense of parenting responsibility as mothers (Rehel, 2014; Valarino, 2016a).

FAMILY POLICIES AND PARENTHOOD IN SWITZERLAND

Limited and gendered leave scheme

The Swiss leave scheme is comparatively limited and gendered (Valarino, 2014). The prin-

2 Authors acknowledge the need of a maternity leave for medical reasons, in order to recover from childbirth (see note n.° 2, Brighouse & Wright, 2008, p. 370). Their argument concerns leaves for childcare purposes.

3 Authors imagined a more radical version of this type of leave, where mothers' entitlement would be conditional on the amount of leave taken by fathers.

ciple of paid maternity insurance was already anchored in the Swiss Constitution in 1945, but it was only implemented in 2005, over 50 years after most industrialised countries (Kamerman & Moss, 2009). Propositions in favour of maternity allowances were rejected in national votes in 1974, 1984, 1987 and 1999 (FCWI, 2001). Over time, the scope of policy proposals and the circle of beneficiaries were reduced: adoptive parents, fathers and stay-at-home mothers were progressively excluded from the drafted proposals. A major political mobilization took place in the aftermath of the 1999 failure of the Maternity Leave Insurance Act. It led to the acceptance in 2004 by 55 % of the electorate of an interparty proposition (FCWI, 2011). Maternity was included in the Loss of Earnings Compensation Act (LECA), which previously only financed benefits for employees performing military or civil service. Since the implementation of this law in July 2005, employed and self-employed mothers receive 80 % of their salary for 98 days (3,5 months). This corresponds to the minimum length set by the International Labor Organization (Addati et al., 2014). The job protection continues for two additional weeks but with no financial compensation, unless the employer supplements the federal benefits.

There is currently no statutory parental or paternity leave. Some fathers may have access to leaves through special entitlements granted by their employers in the form of short paid paternity leaves (usually 1 or 2 days, or more rarely several weeks) and/or unpaid parental leave of several months to 1 or 2 years (FSIO, 2013; Fuchs, 2008; Valarino, 2016b). However, this only concerns a minority of workers; approximately 27 % of those covered by a collective labour agreement in 2009 (FSIO, 2013, p. 12). According to Brighthouse & Wright's (2008) typology, the Swiss leave scheme can therefore be qualified as gender-equality impeding, as men in Switzerland are not considered as caregivers by the State. This situation contrasts strongly with other European countries, in which parental leaves accessible to both mothers and fathers were introduced in the 1970s onwards (Hojgaard, 1997; Kamerman

& Moss, 2009; Thévenon & Solaz, 2013). Furthermore, since the 2000s, many countries have reformed their leave schemes in order to encourage uptakes in men's leave by introducing father quotas and other incentives.

Factors explaining the Swiss delay

The delayed development of the Swiss leave scheme is mainly due to Swiss political institutions. The direct democratic political system implies multiple veto-players and the need to reach a broad consensus for a new law to be implemented (Armingeon, 2001; Obinger, 1998). Since Switzerland is not a member of the European Union, it is for instance not bound to conform to EU directives on maternity leave (14 weeks since 1992) and parental leave (3 months for each parent since 1996, increased to 4 months each in 2010). The historical dominance of the right wing in the Swiss Parliament, as well as the late entry of women into politics at the federal level —only by 1971— certainly played a role in delaying family policies and leave policies in particular (Armingeon, 2001; Martin, 2002; Obinger, 1998).

Regarding attitudes and values, Switzerland is known to have a relatively liberal ideology towards state intervention in society (Armingeon, 2001, pp. 151-152). To some extent the valuing of individual responsibility explains the limited development of family policies in Switzerland (see Dafflon, 2003; Pfau-Effinger, 2008). And gendered representations of the family in Swiss society certainly also contributed to the laggard development of the Swiss leave scheme (Studer, 1997), even if there are differences between linguistic regions and rural and urban regions (Bühler, 2001).

In their analysis of Swiss family policy development, Häusermann & Kübler (2010) argued that the 2004 acceptance of maternity insurance took place thanks to the fact that the Liberals changed their views and considered that by supporting mothers' labor activity, the reform would ultimately benefit the economy (Häusermann & Kübler, 2010; Kübler, 2007). These authors relate

the failure of parental and paternity leaves to the fact that these policies only draw on gender equality objectives and not on employment objectives. Therefore a broader coalition with centre and right-wing political actors cannot be similarly achieved.

Another recent study analysed the way the issue of parental leave policies was framed and debated in Parliament between 1996 and 2011 (Lanfranconi & Valarino, 2014). Authors noted that the main dimension on which political actors opposed each other concerned the policy legitimacy of parental and paternity leaves. While supporters argued these measures corresponded to a need from families, opponents argued that the current system, which allows social partners to negotiate leaves, was satisfactory. Another recurring discursive dimension concerned leaves' economic aspects. Opponents argued they were unbearable for the economy while supporters focused on leaves' cost efficiency and possible return on investment. The increasing focus on these arguments (especially by supporters from the center and right-wing) during the time span analysed was said to have taken place at the cost of gender equality considerations. While this study focused on the political discourses about leave policies, the present article assesses the potential implications for gender equality of the content and the modalities of policy proposals.

Family formation and work-family arrangements

Switzerland belongs to a group of industrialized countries with fertility rates well under replacement level. In 2014, the total fertility rate was 1,5 children per woman and the mean age at which women had their first was 31 years (FSO, 2017). As regards work-family balance, a relatively high proportion of mothers are in the labor force: 70 % of partnered women aged 25-54 years with at least one child under 4 years old were in paid work in 2014. But this is driven mainly by the fact that a majority (57 %) of mothers work part-time and only 13 % work full-time. Thus the most widespread family model is the “modified

male breadwinner model” where fathers work full-time and mothers work part-time. This concerned 49 % of couples aged 25-54 years with at least one child under 4 years old in 2014 (FSO, 2017). 27 % of couples had a traditional male breadwinner model (father works full time and mother is a home maker) and only 10 % had a dual earner full-time model. The remaining percentage had alternative arrangements. The corollary of this pattern is a very gendered division of housework and of childcare tasks. In the same household situation, mothers were spending on average 59 weekly hours on these tasks and fathers only 32 hours (FSO, 2017).

The high prevalence of maternal part-time work is related to the structural constraints on families for balancing work and care responsibilities, as well as to gendered representations of what is best for the child (Girardin, Bühlmann, Hanappi, Le Goff, & Valarino, 2016). Thus early childhood education and care services in Switzerland do not meet the demand, and the access and cost vary substantially by regions and settlement types (urban/rural differences). Therefore parents usually combine parental care (i.e., mothers' part-time work) with institutionalized childcare solutions (childcare services or private child minders) and unpaid care by family relatives, especially by grand parents (Le Goff, Barbeiro, & Gossweiler, 2011). In fact 56 % of children aged 0-3 years were cared for at least once per week by an informal caregiver in 2013, and 39 % attended at least once per week institutionalized childcare (FSO, 2017).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research questions

Considering that couples in Switzerland become parents within a gendered institutional and leave scheme context and that parental and paternity leaves have the potential to challenge gendered parental practices and representations, it is particularly relevant from a policy implication perspective to study the leave proposals put forward in the political arena.

This article aims to analyse the development of leave policy proposals in Switzerland from 1995 to 2014 from a gender equality perspective. Firstly, it describes the main features of the policy proposals submitted. The question asked is: What is the content of the policy proposals and what is the profile of the Members of Parliament who submitted them?

The second step is to evaluate the potential implications of the proposals put forward, notably the consequences for gender relations and parenthood that could be expected if these proposals were to be implemented. It asks: Would the proposals promote gender equal representations and practices of motherhood and fatherhood? Finally it also asks whether there is a relationship between leave policy proposals' main characteristics and their potential for gender equality?

Dataset

The dataset entails 33 parliamentary parental and paternity leave policy proposals submitted between 1995 and 2014 (see Appendix 1 for details). They were collected using the search engine of the Parliament (Curia Vista) entering key words such as “paternity/parental leave”, “paternity/parental insurance” and “paternity/parental allowance”. Curia Vista provides online access to all proceedings on parliamentary proposals since 1995. The data consists of interventions such as postulates, motions, parliamentary initiatives, questions and interpellations.⁴ Interventions were included in the

data set only if their main object, request, question or proposal concerned parental or paternity leave. Other interventions were excluded from the analysis.

When applicable, responses from the Federal Council to these interventions, reports from the Committee for Social Security and Health (CSSH), and parliamentary debates and votes were included. The dataset represents approximately 130 pages of text documents.

Methodology

Content analysis is used to describe and analyse leave policy proposals in a systematic way, according to predefined characteristics (Berg, 2001, Chapter 11). These characteristics are the year of submission, the current status and the leave type proposed, its length, eligibility criterion and financing system. The profile of the Members of Parliament (MPs) who submitted the interventions is analysed according to their political party, as well as to their sex, and linguistic region of origin.

Policy proposals' potential implications for parenthood and gender equality are evaluated using a standardized scoring system, similar to that used by Ray et al. (2010) in a comparative analysis of leave schemes in 21 countries. The system is based on the theoretical framework outlined previously as well as on results from empirical studies on leave policies and their gender equality outcomes. Two axes are considered to play a crucial role for the promotion of gender equality in the current Swiss policy context: *federal state intervention* and *father-care sensitivity* (see Table 1). The *federal state intervention* axis captures the extent to which fathers are targeted individually in leave proposals through new federal legislation. Research shows that such a policy set-up is necessary to promote men's leave uptake and that it also promotes new societal and organizational norms about men as involved fathers (e.g., Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Hojgaard, 1997; Moss, 2015; Ray et al., 2010; Rostgaard, 2002).

⁴ A *parliamentary initiative* enables political actors to submit a draft bill for an act or to propose in general terms that such a text be drafted. It is subject to a preliminary examination by the Committee for Social Security and Health (CSSH). A *motion* obliges the Federal Council to submit a specific draft bill or decree, or to take appropriate measures. It requires the approval of both chambers. A *postulate* requires that the Federal Council examines whether an act or decree needs to be drafted or whether other measures need to be taken. A postulate is binding once it is approved by one of the two chambers. An *interpellation* enables members of the Federal Assembly to request information.

Table 1. Gender equality score attribution criteria

| Main axes | Components | Score attribution |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Federal state intervention | Policy development | +1 New statutory leave for employed parents 0 Modification of programme or legislative frame -1 Reduction of maternity leave |
| | Type of entitlement | +1 Individual (paternity leave or non-transferable parental leave) 0 Family (parental leave with quota) -1 Family (gender-neutral parental leave) |
| Father-care-sensitivity | Leave duration reserved for fathers | +1 Very long: > 1 month 0 Extended: > 2 weeks and up to 1 month -1 Short: ≤ 2 weeks / not specified |
| | Financial compensation | +1 Well-paid (80-100 %) & collectively funded 0 Private insurance with tax rebate -1 Unpaid |

Within the federal state intervention dimension, two components were differentiated:

—The *policy development* component differentiates between proposals where MPs consider it is the federal state's responsibility to regulate parental or paternity leave by expanding public policies (+1 point attributed). Any proposition to modify the current legislative framework, but without developing federal public policies is attributed 0 points. Cantonal and private insurance solutions fall in this category, as legislative changes at the federal level would be necessary in order to make them possible. Policy proposals that would result in reducing the rights of current beneficiaries (i.e., mothers) are attributed -1 point.

—The *type of entitlement* component captures MPs' different conceptions of the role of the state with regard to parenthood and gender equality. Individual and non-transferable leave rights reflect an underlying objective to promote gender equality in family life and fathers' involvement (+1 point). Family entitlements that combine a "free choice" (gender-neutral parental leave) and an incentive approach (quota for fathers) are attributed 0 points. Finally, proposals in favour of a gender-neutral parental leave only suggest leave division is a private decision (-1 point). They enable men's uptake but do not promote it.

The *father-care-sensitivity* axis captures the extent to which policy proposals would reduce the gendered construction of parenthood that prevails in the current leave scheme and whether men's caregiving would be promoted. The *father-care-sensitivity* concept, proposed by O'Brien (2009), assesses the extent to which "the leave period formally allows fathers to be away from the workplace in order to undertake child and partner care obligations rather than engage in economic breadwinning functions" (p. 194). The concept takes into account the duration of leave for fathers, as it plays a central role for the medium term effects on father involvement in childcare (e.g., Almqvist & Duvander, 2014; Haas & Hwang, 2008). It also considers leave payment, which is another key determinant of men's uptake of leave (Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Moss, 2015; Ray et al., 2010).

Within the father-care sensitivity dimension, two components were differentiated:

—Adapting O'Brien's (2009) categories, the *leave duration reserved for fathers* component distinguishes between a short leave (≤ 2 weeks, or no minimal leave length stated; -1 point), an extended leave (2-4 weeks ; 0 points) and a very long leave (> 1 month; +1 point). The latter category would substantially reduce the leave length differential between mothers and fathers in Switzerland.

—The level of *financial compensation* of the leave granted to fathers also contributes to policy proposals' father-care-sensitivity. Well-paid (80 % or more) and collectively-funded benefits are attributed +1 point. Since a private insurance system would imply a tax rebate, there is only an indirect financial participation by the state (0 points attributed). Unpaid leaves are attributed -1 point, since there is a clear financial disincentive to use them.

Scores were given for each component and summed for each axis. In several cases, the attributed score was subject to interpretation. For this purpose, details on the decisions made are provided in Appendix 2. The analysis was only performed on parliamentary interventions that proposed policy solutions and for which enough information was available. This concerned 27 out of 33 interventions (see details in Appendix 1). Graphical representation was used to visually compare policy proposals with one another. Finally, the gender equality scores of leave policy proposals (the sum of scores on both axes) were compared according to the period of submission and MPs' characteristics; i.e., their political coalition, sex, linguistic region.

RESULTS

Main features of leave policy proposals

Recent and contested issues in parliament

Leave policies have received increasing attention by Members of Parliament (MPs) from 1995 to 2014. The first intervention took place in 1998, but the large majority of interventions were submitted since 2006, after maternity insurance was implemented (see Figure 1). Some MPs were particularly active in promoting leave policies and submitted several propositions (see Appendix 1). Female MPs were proportionally more invested than men: half of interventions were deposited by women, even though they only represented 26 % of Parliament after the 2007 elections (FSO, 2013, p. 33). A similar over-representation is observed among MPs from French-speaking cantons, who hold about one fourth of parliamentary seats (Federal Chancellery, 2012) but were responsible for 48 % of interventions.

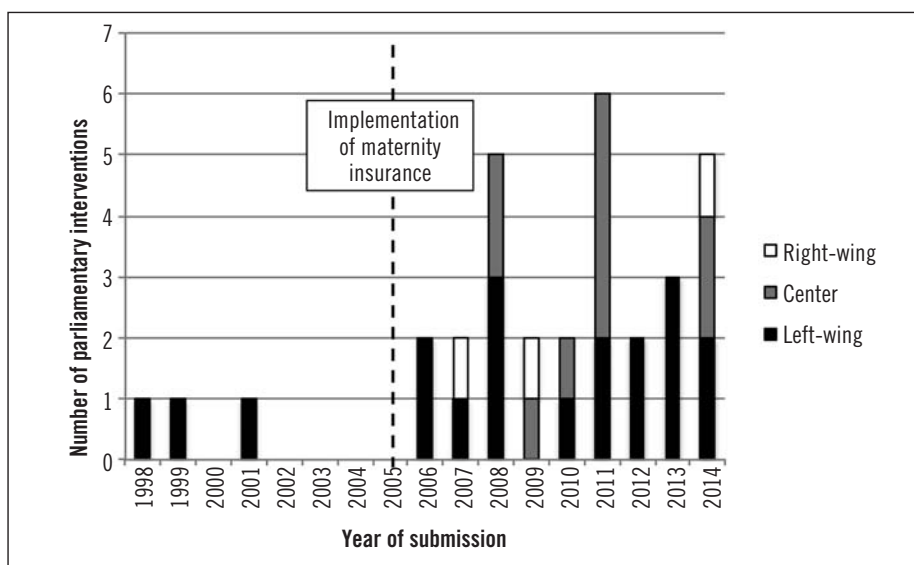


Figure 1. Parental and paternity leave proposals by year and political coalition. *Source:* Own elaboration, based on data from Curia Vista (www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/curia-vista).

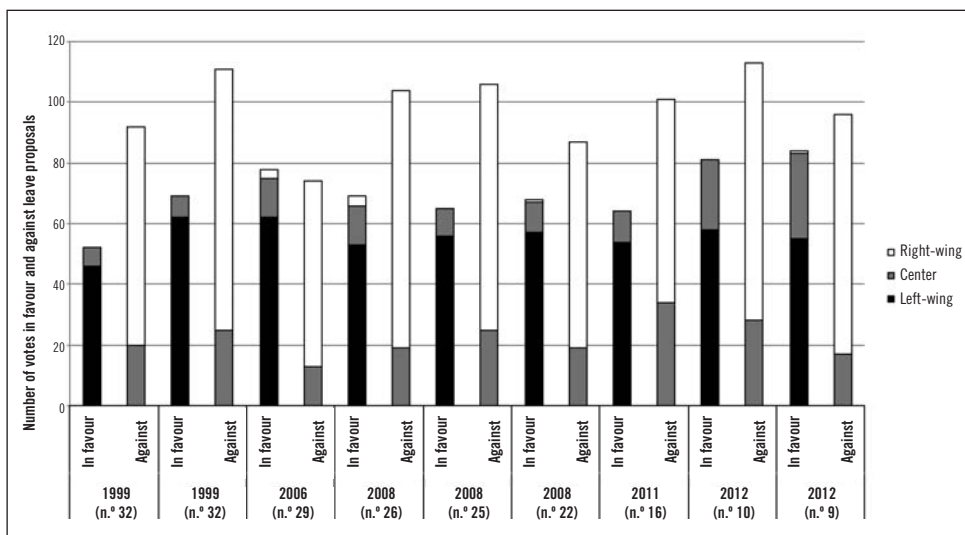


Figure 2. Voting results in the National Council by political coalitions. *Source:* Own elaboration, based on data from Curia Vista (www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/curia-vista)

With regards to political affiliation, the whole spectrum of parties is represented. Left-wing MPs gather 60 % of interventions, the centre 31 % and right-wing MPs 9 %. Figure 1 shows centre and right-wing MPs’ proposals were submitted in the most recent years. The left-wing is clearly over-represented, considering the distribution of parliamentary seats. During the 2007-2011 legislature, the right-wing held about 47 % of seats, the left-wing 30 % and the center 23 %⁵.

As expected, right-wing parties are opposed to leave policies. Voting results on policy proposals at the National Council show a clear left-right divide (see Figure 2). Centre MPs, especially from the Christian Democratic Party, are more divided. An increasing number has supported leave proposals in recent years. This ambivalence can be linked to their political programme which aims both to support families and to contain welfare state’s social expenses (Federal Chan-

cellery, 2012, p. 19). Green Liberals, a small and newly created centre party formed for the latest legislature (2011-2015), have recently voted unanimously in favour of leave proposals (n^{os}. 9 and 10).

As of December 2014, parental and paternity policy proposals had however found no substantial support in Parliament or within the Committees of Social Security and Health⁶. Similarly, the Federal Council had almost systematically given a negative recommendation to leave proposals. There were a few exceptions, for instance a motion submitted in 2006 (n.° 29) favouring several weeks of paid paternity leave found a small majority in the National Council (78 votes against 74, see Figure 2). However this was due to the circumstances in which the motion was discussed: a debate on the Swiss Equality Law. Many right-wing MPs (31 out of 200), who are generally opposed to gender equality and leave policies, were absent from Parliament during the vote. The motion was later turned down at the Council of States.

5 The Liberals and the Swiss People’s party are grouped under «right-wing»; the «center» corresponds to the Christian Democratic Party, the Conservative Democrats and the Green Liberals; and the «left wing». includes the Socialist Party and the Greens. The number of MPs by political group was retrieved from www.parlament.ch.

6 This was still the case in October 2017, when the article was finalized for publication.

Table 2. Leave models identified

| Leave models | Description | Leave proposals |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Extension solution | In addition to maternity benefits, extend LECA benefits and give access to fathers (and mothers) | 1; 4; 5; 9; 16; 17; 18; 20; 24; 29; 30; 31; 33 |
| Substitution solution | Modify existing laws (LECA or ArmA) and redistribute benefits to fathers | 3; 4; 12; 15; 19; 23; 24; 28 |
| Unpaid solution | Implement a statutory parental or paternity leave, without financial compensation | 11; 15; 24; 32 |
| Cantonal solution | Enable cantons to levy taxes and implement paid parental or paternity leaves | 7; 22; 26; 27 |
| Private insurance solution | Implement a private, tax-deductible parental insurance that is funded voluntarily | 13; 14 |

Notes: Interventions n^{os}. 2; 6; 8; 10; 21; and 25 are not indicated because they do not propose a concrete leave solution. Some interventions combine different options and are indicated in different leave solutions. Interventions n^{os}. 31 and 33 were deposited before LECA maternity benefits existed, but they propose paid entitlements for fathers (and mothers).

More recently, an important milestone was set regarding the emergence of leave policies on the political agenda. A postulate (n.° 14) was accepted by the Council of States in 2011, which led to the publication in 2013 of a report outlining eight different parental and paternity leave models for Switzerland (FSIO, 2013). The Federal Council nonetheless concluded that even if leave policies would improve work-family life reconciliation, they were not a priority for Swiss family policy (FSIO, 2013, p. 64).

Heterogeneous leave policy proposals

Content analysis shows that leave policy proposals are very heterogeneous. For instance, there is no consensus among leave supporters about the type of leave needed in Switzerland. Paternity and parental leaves were claimed 19 and 18 times, respectively, by MPs. Only one intervention, submitted in 2008 (n.° 24), proposed that both types be combined and implemented. The lengths of the leaves proposed range from one week of paid paternity leave, in the 1998 motion of the Socialist Erwin Jutzet (n.° 33), to 18 months of paid parental leave in Aline Trede's motion (the Greens, n.° 1) submit-

ted in 2014. The eligibility criterion that determines access to a federal statutory parental or paternity leave is predominantly based on employment status. More limited eligibility criteria were found in proposals that link benefits with military service (n^{os}. 12; 15; 19), with the canton of employment (n^{os}. 7; 22; 26; 27) or with the sector of activity (public vs. private) (n.° 32). Some interventions also widen the scope of eligibility from biological to adoptive parents, who at the moment are not entitled to any statutory leave (n^{os}. 16; 20; 32)⁷.

Five different types of leave models and corresponding financing systems are identified among MPs' propositions (see Table 2). The *extension solution* is the most frequent model identified. The aim is to develop a paid leave by broadening the current circle of eligible beneficiaries in the Loss of Earnings Compensation Act (LECA) to include fathers. This means for example that paternity leave (n^{os}. 5; 9; 18; 29; 30) or parental leave (n^{os}. 1; 16; 17; 20; 31) would be compensated at 80 % of the previous salary and financed through wage contributions, just as for women on maternity leave.

⁷ Several parliamentary interventions in favor of adoption leave have been submitted separately; they are not included in the sample.

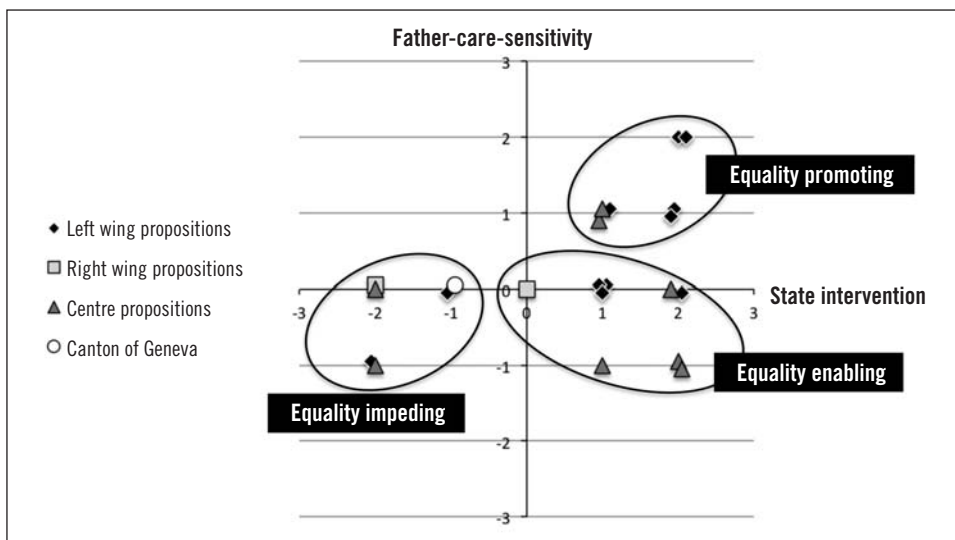


Figure 3. Policy proposals according to federal state intervention and father-care-sensitivity scores

Source: Own elaboration

Secondly, some proposals aim to implement paid parental or paternity leave by redistributing existing LECA benefits. These *substitution solutions*—even if they imply a financial compensation for leave recipients—differ from the previous one because they aim to limit social expenses. This is the case of interventions proposing that parents share part of the existing maternity benefits between them, thereby potentially reducing the length of mothers' benefits (n^{os}. 3; 4; 23; 24; 28). Other proposals also envisage that military recruits, instead of performing their yearly military 3-week course, take a paternity leave and receive LECA benefits during this period (n^{os}. 12; 15; 19).

Thirdly, interventions in favour of *unpaid solutions* were submitted by the Christian Democrat MP Barbara Schmid-Federer (n^{os}. 15; 24). She also suggested that Switzerland follows the EU Directive on Parental Leave (n.^o 11). Although the directive recommends this leave should be compensated financially, this is not a binding criterion.

The fourth leave model is a *cantonal solution* that would enable cantons to grant employed parents (n.^o 22) or fathers (n^{os}. 7; 26; 27) with paid

leave. One cantonal initiative (n.^o 22) stems from the Canton of Geneva. In 2008, Geneva's parliament reached a majority in favour of a two-week paid paternity leave and a four-month paid parental leave⁸. However, in order for a cantonal parental or paternity leave to be implemented, the federal legislation (Employment Act and Code of Obligation) should be amended. Finally, two interventions (n^{os}. 13; 14) propose a *private insurance solution* through which men and women could make savings on a voluntary basis for the prospective birth of a future child and an uptake of parental leave. The state's contribution would take the form of tax rebates in order to encourage such savings. This model is based on the third pillar of Switzerland's pension system.

⁸ The Canton of Geneva already played a pioneer role when it implemented a maternity insurance in 2001 at the canton level before a federal solution was found (Daf-flon, 2003). Link to the cantonal parliament debate and vote on parental leave: http://www.ge.ch/grandconseil/memorial/data/560402/10/560402_10_partie3.asp

Leave policy proposals' potential implications for gender equality

The policy proposals differ considerably from one another on the two investigated axes: they score from -2 to $+2$ on the federal state intervention axis and from -1 to $+2$ on the father-care-sensitivity axis, as Figure 3 illustrates (see Appendix 2 for the detailed attribution of scores).

Equality-impeding leaves

The proposals on the bottom-left corner of the graph are equality impeding according to Brighthouse & Wright's typology (2008); they score low on both axes. Their design implies the reproduction of inequalities and a gendered use of leave. Among them, three substitution leave solutions (n^{os}. 3; 4; 23) deposited by centre- and right-wing MPs propose to transform (part of) the maternity benefits into parental leave benefits. Although the leave would be paid, this new family entitlement – which is known to be barely used by men (e.g., Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Moss, 2015) – would imply putting mothers' and fathers' rights in competition. Very low uptake rates by men can be expected if it implies limiting their partners' rights.

Two interventions in favour of a private insurance solution submitted by a Christian-Democratic MP and a Socialist MP (n^{os}. 13 and 14) would generate additional sources of inequalities. This leave proposal promotes the mix of private and public financing of policies and indistinctly targets mothers and fathers. Because this solution is based on individuals' own savings, it is somewhat comparable to an unpaid leave, which is scarcely used by men (Moss, 2015). In addition to this gendered effect, there is a class effect: it is likely that mainly medium- to high-income parents would subscribe to this kind of insurance.

Further inequalities would result from proposals that target civil servants only and not private sector employees (n.^o 32) or that create entitlements according to individuals' canton of employment (n.^o 22). Federal state intervention in these propositions is low: only a portion of the population could possibly be entitled.

Equality-enabling leaves

The bottom right corner of the graph gathers *equality-enabling leave* proposals in which the federal state is attributed more power to regulate leave policies, but gender-equality issues are not considered. Some aspects of their design make it unlikely that fathers will use them. This is the case, for example, in centre MP interventions favouring unpaid solutions (n^{os}. 11; 15; 24). Although the leaves are targeted at men, they introduce a class bias in leave use between wealthy and low-income fathers.

The proposals submitted by centre and socialist MPs in favour of paid paternity or parental leaves for a short period —i.e., one or two weeks only (n^{os}. 5; 18; 20; 29 and 33)— also score low on the father-care-sensitivity axis. The recent proposition of the Green MP Aline Trede (n.^o 1) clearly goes much further in terms of leave length (18 months), but the motion does not propose a non-transferable leave period for fathers.

Equality-promoting leaves

In the upper-right corner of the graph are located leave proposals that score high on both axes. These *equality-promoting leaves* were mainly submitted by left-wing MPs. They propose father-targeted paid leaves of one or two months that would encourage a more gender equal division of childcare work in the family.

The two most equality-promoting proposals (n^{os}. 30 and 31) were submitted by the Green MP Franziska Teuscher. Similarly to the Swedish leave scheme, these proposals grant very long (2 months), well paid, and earmarked leaves for fathers. One of them (n.^o 31) suggested equal leave lengths for each parent. It is the only time when motherhood and fatherhood were represented in an undifferentiated way. Three further interventions – also submitted by left-wing MPs – are identified. They would grant fathers with slightly shorter leaves (one month), either as a paternity leave (n.^o 9), or as part of a parental leave with a reserved father quota (n^{os}. 16; 17).

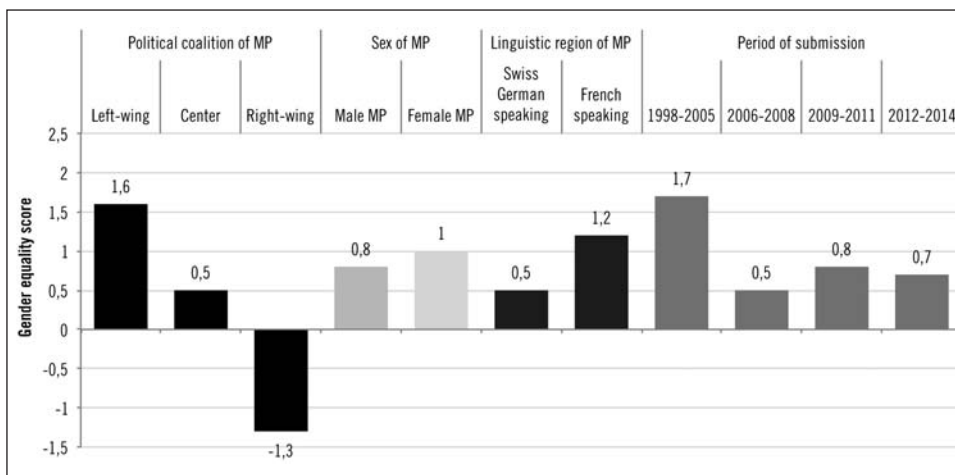


Figure 4. Gender equality mean score of proposals, by a set of policy proposal characteristics

Source: own elaboration

Finally, according to gender equality scores, the centre MP proposals in favour of a substitution solution using military and civil service benefits also fall into this category (n^{os}. 12; 19). Even though fathers would be granted an individual entitlement with an extended leave length, this solution would introduce inequalities based on nationality and age. Only Swiss citizens between 18 and 30 years old (and in some cases up to 50) are subject to military or civil service. Furthermore, it could potentially create inequalities among children, as second- and third-born children are less likely than first-borns to have their father in the eligible age range. These proposals can therefore not be considered as equality-promoting. It illustrates the need to qualitatively assess each proposal individually and indicates that the score attribution system is not flawless.

Relationship between leave proposals' characteristics and their gender equality scores

As the previous description suggests, some characteristics of the leave policy proposals seem to influence the extent to which they promote gen-

der equality. Looking at the mean score of the proposals by political coalition, sex, linguistic region and period of submission, we observe the following trends (see Figure 4).

On average, leave policy proposals score highest when submitted by an MP from the left-wing, by an MP from the French-speaking region, and when submitted in the first period of observation (1998-2005). There is only a very small difference according to whether the MP is a man or a woman. Differences between means are largest when it comes to the political coalition of the MP submitting the proposal⁹. As already visible in Figure 3, left wing MPs submitted on average leave proposals that were considerably more gender equality promoting (M=1,6), than centre MPs (M=0,5) and even more so than right-wing MPs (M=-1,3).

⁹ T-tests (for sex and linguistic region differences) and one-way ANOVA independent tests (for political coalition and period of submission) show that differences between means are significant only for the political coalition. Analyses are not displayed considering the small sample size, but they are available from the author on request.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article aimed to analyse the recent development of leave policy proposals in Switzerland from a gender equality perspective. According to the theoretical framework of the study, leave policies are part of the institutional context that influences the constitution of parenthood, as well as gender relations and gender inequalities (e.g., Brighthouse & Wright, 2008; Orloff, 2009; Risman, 2004). Switzerland currently has a gender equality impeding leave scheme where only mothers are considered caregivers. To this day no leave policy proposal has found a majority in Parliament and it remains an open question whether and when fathers will have access to statutory federal leave and what form it will take. There is however much to say about the content of submitted policy proposals and their possible consequences.

The study firstly described the main features of the policy proposals submitted between 1995 and 2014 and the profile of their promoters. Results show an increasing interest in parental and paternity leave policies in Parliament over the years, but a clear absence of consensus and of a political majority supporting them. Collective agreements and company-based leave solutions are viewed as suitable alternatives to federal state regulation by leave opponents. This result reflects the traditional influence of social partnership in Swiss policy making, as well as the fact that the right-wing opposes welfare state expansion (see also Lanfranconi & Valarino, 2014). Voting results in Parliament show a sharp divide between left- and right-wing political actors, but they also indicate a growing support from centre MPs. This suggests that a left-wing and centre alliance could possibly play a decisive role in shifting the power balance in Parliament on this issue. The centre's recent interest in reforming the Swiss leave scheme to include fathers is also reflected by the increasing number of proposals submitted by centre-MPs, especially since maternity insurance was adopted.

Perhaps even more strikingly, results show a lack of consensus among leave supporters themselves. They have diverse views about how to de-

fine the legitimate length and recipients of leave policy and even to determine the type of leave that is missing. Parental and paternity leaves are considered as alternative measures by MPs, yet in many countries they are regarded as complementary (see for example Moss, 2015). No less than five leave policy solutions put forward consisted of a private parental insurance, which is unheard of in any other country. All but the extension solution have in common the aim to reduce the economic implications of a new leave policy. The variety of proposals and the focus by many MPs on the economic aspects of leave policies should be put in perspective with the repeated failures of proposals. This process is reminiscent of the progressive downgrading of maternity insurance proposals, until a minimal consensual solution was found (e.g., Aebi, Dessoulavy, & Scenini, 1994; Dafflon, 2003; Häusermann & Kübler, 2010).

Secondly the study tackled the potential gender equality implications of the proposals put forward. An important finding of this study is that only very few leave policy proposals, if they were to be implemented, would influence parenthood in a more gender equal way. This is striking considering that parental and paternity leaves are generally *a priori* considered as pursuing gender equality objectives (Häusermann & Kübler, 2010) and that leave supporters mobilize this argument to claim the implementation of such policies (Lanfranconi & Valarino, 2014). The content analysis reveals the potential risks entailed in many leave proposals, depending on their set-up. Inequalities between mothers and fathers are expected if there is no incentive for fathers' uptake or if mothers' entitlements are reduced. However the study does not only uncover potential gender inequalities, but it also shows that further inequalities could be created. Class inequalities would occur in the event the leave would be unpaid or if it were based on voluntary capitalization. And inequalities based on citizenship or on region of employment would be created if access to leave depended on participation in military service or if it became cantonal.

Switzerland is therefore at a crossroad. If the *status quo* continues, the leave scheme will

continue to support gendered parenthood. If the leave scheme is reformed, it could challenge gendered parenthood, but it could also increase existing gender inequalities or create new forms of inequalities. Paradoxically, the delayed development of the leave scheme in Switzerland may represent an opportunity from a gender equality perspective. The experiences from many European countries, which have reformed their leave schemes in order to increase fathers' uptake and gender equality outcomes (e.g., Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Moss, 2008), could be taken advantage of as models in the Swiss context.

Thirdly, the study also asked whether there was a relation between the profiles of leave supporters and leave proposals' potential for gender equality. Results suggest that MPs' characteristics do influence the extent to which the leave policies submitted promote gender equality. There seems for instance to be linguistic regional differences regarding the extent to which gender equality is prioritized, as documented on other policy issues (Bühler, 2001). However what manifestly matters most is MPs' political coalition. Policy proposals stemming from left-wing MPs are the most gender equal ones, which is in line with their general political orientation (Federal Chancellery, 2012). Proposals from the center and especially the right-wing are far less gender equal. Results indicate that over time MPs from all political parties – and not just from the left-wing – have increasingly submitted proposals on leave policies. This suggests that as political actors from different parties invest in the issue of leave policies, the challenging potential of the proposals for gendered parenthood is mitigated. This raises important questions for the possible future development of leave policies in Switzerland. Again, as illustrated by maternity insurance implementation, it is clear that any leave policy proposal should be supported by a large interparty coalition and should draw on several policy frames in order to succeed (Häusermann, 2006; Häusermann & Kübler, 2010). Therefore, the future challenge will be for leave supporters to agree on a policy solution capable of yielding enough support across political parties without side-lining considerations for gender equality.

A limitation of this study is that it only considers the mobilization of political actors in Parliament. The development of the Swiss leave scheme will depend also on the actions and positions of other actors involved in policy-making such as unions, business and other civil society associations (see Armingeon, 2001; Obinger, 1998). More research attention should be paid to these collective actors. Thus it may well be that the decisive impulse to develop the Swiss leave scheme will come from civil society. If the popular initiative committee gathers enough signatures in favour of its four-week paid paternity leave proposal, a national vote is likely to take place in the near future¹⁰.

In any case, the policy implications of this study are relevant for proposals stemming from both political and civil society actors, as well as for the federal administration. If the Swiss leave scheme is to be developed without reproducing inequalities based on gender, class, citizenship or region of employment, then special attention must be paid to the design of the leave solutions envisaged. Two dimensions in particular should be considered: the degree of federal state intervention, as well as the father-care-sensitivity of the proposal. Only proposals granting all employed fathers with long, statutory, individual and non-transferable well-paid leaves that are collectively funded are likely to promote gender equality.

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¹⁰ Website of the popular initiative committee: <http://www.conge-paternite.ch/#initiative>. At the moment of finalizing the manuscript (October 2017), the signatures had been collected, confirming that a national vote on paternity leave would take place in the coming years.

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Appendix 1. Summary table of leave policy proposals (1995-2014), state as of January 2015

| N° | ref. n.° | Date of submission | Political actor | Sex | Canton (*French speaking region) | Political party | Title | N° of co-signers | Type of intervention |
|----|----------|--------------------|--------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 14.4161 | 11.12.2014 | Trede, Aline | F | Bern | The Greens | Parental leave | 10 | Motion |
| 2 | 14.3932 | 26.09.2014 | Trede, Aline | F | Bern | The Greens | Family models of the Confederation. What now? | 0 | Interpellation |
| 3 | 14.3109 | 18.03.2014 | Caroni, Andrea | M | Appenzell (AR) | The Liberals | Parental leave. More freedom without cost increase | 0 | Motion |
| 4 | 14.3068 | 12.03.2014 | The Green-Liberals | n.a. | n.a | The Green-Liberals | Replace maternity allowances by a parental leave | 0 | Motion |
| 5 | 14.415 | 21.03.2014 | Candinas, Martin | M | Graubünden | Christian-democratic | Two weeks paternity leave paid by the LECA | 13 | Parliamentary initiative |
| 6 | 13.3794 | 25.09.2013 | Trede, Aline | F | Bern | The Greens | Study about paternity leave in Switzerland | 0 | Interpellation |
| 7 | 13.3431 | 12.06.2013 | Hodgers, Antonio | M | Geneva* | The Greens | Possibility for the cantons to implement a cantonal paternity leave | 0 | Motion |
| 8 | 13.5218 | 10.06.2013 | Gysi, Barbara | F | St.Gallen | Socialist | The opposition to paternity leave is in contradiction with the objectives of the legislature | 0 | Question |
| 9 | 12.3565 | 29.08.2012 | Piller Carrard, Valérie | F | Fribourg* | Socialist | Reserved time for fathers | 0 | Motion |
| 10 | 12.3478 | 29.08.2012 | Gilli, Yvonne | F | St.Gallen | The Greens | Fathers who involve in family life put their life in danger | 22 | Postulate |
| 11 | 11,406 | 12.12.2011 | Schmid-Federer, Barbara | F | Zürich | Christian-democratic | European norms on parental leave | 0 | Interpellation |
| 12 | 11.3666 | 17.06.2011 | Barthassat, Luc | M | Geneva* | Christian-democratic | Replace military service with a paternity leave | 18 | Motion |
| 13 | 11.3567 | 15.06.2011 | Hochreutener, Norbert | M | Bern | Christian-democratic | Parental leave and family benefits provision | 14 | Motion |
| 14 | 11.3492 | 06.06.2011 | Fetz, Anita | F | Basel | Socialist | Facultative parental leave and family benefits provision | 8 | Postulate |
| 15 | 11.3361 | 13.04.2011 | Schmid-Federer, Barbara | F | Zürich | Christian-democratic | Unpaid paternity leave | 21 | Motion |
| 16 | 11.405 | 03.03.2011 | The Greens | n.a. | n.a | The Greens | Forward with parental leave and allowance | 0 | Parliamentary initiative |
| 17 | 10.4117 | 17.12.2010 | Nordmann, Roger | M | Vaud* | Socialist | Support parents of young children | 44 | Motion |
| 18 | 10.3700 | 28.09.2010 | Streiff-Feller, Marianne | F | Bern | Christian-democratic | Two weeks of paid paternity leave | 35 | Motion |
| 19 | 09.3943 | 25.09.2009 | Barthassat, Luc | M | Geneva* | Christian-democratic | Replace military service with a paternity leave | 19 | Motion |
| 20 | 09.3187 | 19.03.2009 | Hiltbold, Hugues | M | Geneva* | The Liberals | Parental leave | 5 | Motion |
| 21 | 08.3953 | 19.12.2008 | Teuscher, Franziska | F | Bern | The Greens | Models for a paternity leave | 21 | Postulate |
| 22 | 08.330 | 09.12.2008 | Canton de Genève | n.a. | Geneva* | n.a. | For a parental leave | 0 | Cantonal initiative |
| 23 | 08.3506 | 23.09.2008 | Schmid-Federer, Barbara | F | Zürich | Christian-democratic | Partial parental leave. Modification of the law on Income Compensation Allowances | 14 | Motion |
| 24 | 08.3507 | 23.09.2008 | Schmid-Federer, Barbara | F | Zürich | Christian-democratic | Parental leave. Modification of the law on Income Compensation Allowances | 13 | Postulate |
| 25 | 08.3315 | 11.06.2008 | Nordmann, Roger | M | Vaud* | Socialist | Effects of paternity leave | 13 | Postulate |
| 26 | 08.430 | 02.06.2008 | Hodgers, Antonio | M | Geneva* | The Greens | Possibility for the cantons to introduce and finance a paternity leave through the Income Compensation Allowances scheme | 6 | Parliamentary initiative |
| 27 | 07.3809 | 19.12.2007 | Hodgers, Antonio | M | Geneva* | The Greens | Financing a paternity leave. Possibilities for the cantons | 4 | Interpellation |
| 28 | 07.3156 | 22.03.2007 | Freysinger, Oskar | M | Valais* | Swiss People's party | Federal law on Income Compensation Allowances in case of Service and in case of Maternity. Modification | 15 | Motion |
| 29 | 06.3662 | 11.12.2006 | Nordmann, Roger | M | Vaud* | Socialist | A paternity leave to associate fathers since the birth of the child | 32 | Motion |
| 30 | 06.448 | 23.06.2006 | Teuscher, Franziska | F | Bern | The Greens | Modification of the Federal law on Income Compensation Allowances in case of Service and in case of Maternity. Extension of beneficiary rights to employed fathers | 0 | Parliamentary initiative |
| 31 | 01.438 | 22.06.2001 | Teuscher, Franziska | F | Bern | The Greens | To grant a parental leave to employed parents | 0 | Parliamentary initiative |
| 32 | 99.434 | 18.06.1999 | Teuscher, Franziska | F | Bern | The Greens | Parental leave for Confederation civil servants | 0 | Parliamentary initiative |
| 33 | 98.3043 | 23.01.1998 | Jutzet, Erwin | M | Fribourg* | Socialist | Paternity leave | 49 | Motion |

Source: own elaboration, based on database from Curia Vista (www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/curia-vista); state as of January 13th 2015

The Swiss leave scheme at crossroads. Gender equality implications of parental and paternity leave proposals

| Description | parental leave | paternity leave | Current state | Types of documents | | | Type of solution proposed |
|---|----------------|-----------------|--|--------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | Federal Council response | CSSH report | Debates | |
| Request that the Federal Council drafts a law proposing a paid parental leave of 18 months, of which at least 6 months could be taken by fathers | x | | In abeyance | | | | extension |
| Question to the Federal Council about the development of leave policies (the report published in 2013) and the intention to implement parental leave or paternity leave | x | x | In abeyance | x | | | no model recommended |
| Proposal to modify the LECA in order to enable spouses to share freely among the mother and the father the existing 14 weeks (98 days) of maternity leave. | x | | In abeyance | x | | | substitution |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament the replacement of the LECA maternity benefits by parental leave benefits of minimum 14 weeks, extendable up to 20 weeks, depending on how much leave the partner takes. (14/0; 13/2.5; 12/5; 11/7.5; 10/10) | x | | In abeyance | x | | | substitution/extension |
| Proposal to modify the LECA, in order to enable fathers to benefit from LECA benefits (80% of salary) during 2 weeks, to be taken during the first six months after the birth of a child | | x | In abeyance | | | | extension |
| Asks the Federal Council about men's leave uptake practices and opportunities when they have a child | x | x | Filed the 13.12.2013 | x | | | no model recommended |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament the legal modifications necessary for the implementation of a cantonal paid paternity leave | | x | In abeyance | x | | x | cantonal |
| Question to the Federal Council about the contradiction between the mandate to implement gender equality at the level of the confederation as a public employer and being opposed to implementing a parental or paternity leave | | x | Filed the 17.06.2013 | x | | | no model recommended |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament a paid paternity leave of 20 days (4 weeks), 5 of which should be taken in the first 10 days after birth and the rest during the following 6 months, in accordance with the employer. | | x | Rejected the 12.09.2013 at the National Council (96/84 votes) | x | | x | extension |
| Request that the Federal Council studies and presents a report on different models which would enable fathers to better reconcile work and family life, in particular right after the birth of their child | | x | Rejected the 14.12.2012 at the National Council (113/81 votes) | x | | | no model recommended |
| Question to the Federal Council about the increasing gap between Switzerland and the European Union concerning family policy and paternity and parental leaves in particular. What are the measures envisaged to implement in Switzerland an equivalent minimum of 4 months of parental leave as in the EU? | | x | Filed the 16.03.2012 | x | | | unpaid |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament a modification of the Armed Forces Act, to enable the replacement of military courses by a paid paternity leave financed by the LECA fund | | x | Filed the 21.06.2013, after two years in abeyance | x | | | substitution |
| Request that the Federal Council elaborates the legal bases enabling a private parental leave insurance, tax-deductible | | x | Filed the 21.06.2013, after two years in abeyance | x | | | private insurance |
| Request that the Federal Council studies and presents a report on different models of a private parental insurance and leave. The model - comparable to the existing voluntary pension insurance "3rd pillar" - would enable individual and voluntary financing of parental leave savings, with tax rebates. When the child is born, individuals could use these savings to finance their leave (part-time work also possible) | | x | Accepted the 14.09.2011. Filed the 10.06.2014 | x | | x | private insurance |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament the legal modifications necessary for the implementation of an unpaid paternity leave of 4 weeks maximum. The possibility for fathers to be discharged from military courses during the 12 months following the birth of the child should also be proposed | | x | Rejected the 30.09.2011 at the National Council | x | | | unpaid / substitution |
| Proposal to implement the parental leave and benefit model developed by the FOCF (in 2010). It is a 24 weeks parental leave (4 weeks of non transferable leave for each parent) paid at 80% for all employed parents | | x | Rejected 08.03.2012 at the National Council (101/64 votes) | x | x | x | extension |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament the implementation of 20 paid days of leave for each employed parent to use for the care of the child until s-he reaches the age of 4. The leave can be used in bloc or in a flexible way and is not transferable | | x | Filed the 17.12.2012, after two years in abeyance | x | | | extension |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament the implementation of a 2 weeks paid paternity leave for employed men, financed through the LECA | | x | Filed the 28.09.2012, after two years in abeyance | x | | | extension |
| Request that the Federal Council modifies the Armed Forces Act in order to enable the replacement of military courses by paid paternity leave during the year of the child's birth of the year after | | x | Rejected the 11.12.2009 at the National Council | x | | | substitution |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament a paid parental leave of 2 weeks. Parents can share freely the parental leave. The leave is open to adoptive parents. | | x | Rejected the 12.06.2009 at the National Council | x | | | extension |
| Request that the Federal Council elaborates different models of paternity leave, presenting for each its (dis-)advantages, costs and possible financing systems | | x | Filed the 17.12.2010, after two years in abeyance | x | | | no model recommended |
| Proposal to modify federal laws in order to enable the cantons to implement a parental leave financed through wage contributions levied for cantonal maternity leave | | x | Rejected the 02.03.2010 at the Council of States (22/11 votes) | | x | x | cantonal |
| Request to the Federal Council that it submits to the Parliament a model of partial parental leave. With the exception of the 8 weeks of maternity leave reserved for the mother (period of job ban), the rest of the leave (6 weeks) would be shared freely among the mother and the father | | x | Filed the 01.10.2010, after two years in abeyance | x | | | substitution |
| Request that the Federal Council submits to the Parliament the implementation of one or several of the following parental leave models: A. extension of the maternity leave to 16 weeks, with the possibility for parents to share 8 weeks (after the period of job ban for mothers). B. possibility for parents to share the 14 weeks of maternity leave (with the exception of the 8 weeks of period of job ban for mothers). C. unpaid paternity leave for employed fathers for 4 weeks maximum. Possibility to be discharged from the military service during the first year of the child | | x | Filed the 01.10.2010, after two years in abeyance | x | | | substitution/extension/unpaid |
| Request to the Federal Council to produce a report on the effects of paternity leave on issues such as women's paid work, on the couple relationship, children, gender equality, the active population and the financing of social insurances as well as to produce an international comparison | | x | Rejected the 14.06.2010 at the National Council (106/65 votes) | x | | x | no model recommended |
| Proposal to modify the federal laws which prevent cantons to implement a cantonal paternity leave and to levy wage contributions to finance a cantonal paternity leave | | x | Rejected the 21.09.2009 at the National Council (104/69 votes) | | x | x | cantonal |
| Question to the Federal Council regarding the (legal) possibility for cantons to implement a paid paternity leave | | x | Filed the 20.03.2008 (response from the Federal Council the 27.02.2008) | x | | | cantonal |
| Proposal to modify the LECA in order to enable spouses to share freely among the mother and the father the existing 98 days of maternity leave. | | x | Filed the 20.03.2009, after two years in abeyance | x | | | substitution |
| Proposal to modify the CO and LECA in order to enable fathers to take a few weeks of paternity leave paid at 80%, to take during the weeks following birth, or in agreement with the employer, over the first 12 months. | | x | Accepted the 08.03.2007 at the National Council (78/74 votes) and rejected the 19.12.2007 at the Council of States (21/13 votes) | x | x | x | extension |
| Proposal to modify the LECA, in order to enable fathers to benefit from LECA benefits (80% of salary) during at least 8 weeks after the birth of a child | | x | Rejected the 11.12.2008 at the National Council (111/69 votes) | | x | x | extension |
| Proposal to implement a parental leave of 2 non-transferable months for each parent, paid at 80% of earnings (with cap) to take until the child is 2 years old. Part-time leave is possible. | | x | Rejected the 21.03.2003 at the National Council (105/58 votes) | | x | x | extension |
| Proposal to implement a parental leave of 4 months (individual right) until the child is 5 and a family leave (10 paid days per year to care for sick children) for civil servants of the confederation | | x | Rejected the 05.06.2000 by the National Council (92/52 votes) | | x | x | unpaid |
| Proposal to implement a paid paternity leave for employed fathers of at least one week at the birth of the child | | x | Rejected the 03.03.1999 by the National Council (64/45 votes) | x | | x | extension |

Appendix 2 – Leave policy proposals score attribution

| N.º | Year | Federal state intervention | | | Father-care-sensitivity | | | TOTAL SCORE |
|-----|------|----------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------------|
| | | Policy development | Type of entitlement | Total | Leave duration reserved for fathers | Financial compensation | Total | |
| 1 | 2014 | 1 | 0 | 1 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 2014 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| 3 | 2014 | -1 | -1 | -2 | -1 | 1 | 0 | -2 |
| 4 | 2014 | -1 | 0 | -1 | -1 | 1 | 0 | -1 |
| 5 | 2014 | 1 | 1 | 2 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 6 | 2013 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| 7 | 2013 | 0 | 1 | 1 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 8 | 2013 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| 9 | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 10 | 2012 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| 11 | 2011 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -1 | -1 | 0 |
| 12 | 2011 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 13 | 2011 | 0 | -1 | -1 | -1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 14 | 2011 | 0 | -1 | -1 | -1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 15 | 2011 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | -1 | -1 | 1 |
| 16 | 2011 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 17 | 2010 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 18 | 2009 | 1 | 1 | 2 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 19 | 2009 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 20 | 2009 | 1 | -1 | 0 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | 2008 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| 22 | 2008 | 0 | -1 | -1 | -1 | 1 | 0 | -1 |
| 23 | 2008 | -1 | -1 | -2 | -1 | 1 | 0 | -2 |
| 24 | 2008 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | -1 | -1 | 1 |
| 25 | 2008 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| 26 | 2008 | 0 | 1 | 1 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 27 | 2007 | 0 | 1 | 1 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 28 | 2007 | -1 | -1 | -2 | -1 | 1 | 0 | -2 |
| 29 | 2006 | 1 | 1 | 2 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 30 | 2006 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 31 | 2001 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 32 | 1999 | -1 | 0 | -1 | 1 | -1 | 0 | -1 |
| 33 | 1998 | 1 | 1 | 2 | -1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

Source: Own elaboration

Remarks

The motion states that fathers should be able to take at least 6 of the 18 months of parental leave, but it does not specify these 6 months should be reserved for them. Therefore I code (0) for the type of entitlement (it is suggested that part of the parental leave is reserved for mothers), and I code (-1) for the length reserved for fathers (not specified)

No model recommended

-

The motion mixes substitution and extension solutions: there is an incentive for fathers as the total leave length increases with fathers' leave uptake. However, the statutory number of weeks of paid leave reserved for mothers is reduced. Therefore I code (-1) for the state regulation, as the proposal entails a risk of maternity leave reduction and I code (0) for the type of entitlement, as the parental leave entails a reserved quota for mothers (their leave cannot go below 10 weeks). As there is no minimum leave guaranteed for fathers, I code the leave as short (-1) in the father-care-sensitivity axis

The initiative mentions the right to an absence of 10 working days, but the payment of 14 daily allowances. I take into account the number of leave of absence (10 days) in the determination of the leave length

No model recommended

The motion does not mention a leave duration for cantonal paternity leave ; I therefore code it as short leave (-1)

No model recommended

The proposal is not explicit about the financing system. I code (+1) point for the financial compensation component, as the leave would be fully paid, yet it would not be collectively funded (the LECA is not mentioned which suggests that employers would pay for the leave)

No model recommended

The EU directive (2010/18/EU) entitles each parent to 4 unpaid months, among which one month is non transferable. However the payment of the leave is recommended but not binding

-

The private parental leave insurance is not targeted to fathers especially; I therefore assign (-1) point to the type entitlement component. There is no minimum length mentioned in the project (it depends on the savings capitalized), so I code (-1) point for the leave duration reserved for fathers

Same as for policy proposal no. 13

The motion mentions the possibility for fathers to be discharged from military service, in addition to being granted an unpaid leave, without suggesting benefits would be paid, therefore I code the financial compensation (-1) point

-

The 20-day parental leave is an individual and non-transferable leave for each parent, I therefore assign (+1) point to the type of entitlement component

-

-

-

No model recommended

The cantonal initiative does not mention anything about leave lengths or about reserved quotas for fathers, it is therefore attributed (-1) point to the type of entitlement component and the leave duration reserved for fathers component

-

The postulate proposes a paid parental leave (at the expense of maternity benefits) and an unpaid paternity leave. This analytical tool does not enable me to capture both aspects of the proposition. As the proposition of parental leave is made by the same author in n°23, I attribute points for the additional proposition in n°24: unpaid paternity leave

No model recommended

The parliamentary initiative does not mention a leave duration for cantonal paternity leave; I therefore code it as short leave (-1 point)

Same as for policy proposal no. 26

-

The motion mentions "a few weeks" of paternity leave. I consider that it means a minimum of 2 weeks and code it as a "short" leave (-1 point)

-

The 2-month parental leave is an individual and non-transferable leave for each parent, I therefore assign (+1) point to the type of entitlement component

The parliamentary initiative targets civil servants. I therefore attribute (-1) point to the state regulation component; as only a minority portion of the population is concerned. Regarding the type of entitlement, it is an individual entitlement, but if both parents work at the Confederation, they can share it (2 months each), I therefore code it with 0 point. No indication about leave compensation is given, so it is coded as unpaid (-1 point)

-

