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Revista Española de Sociología

Special Issue. Gender equality and parental leave / Monográfico. Igualdad de género y permisos parentales

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ARTÍCULOS / ARTICLES

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Berit Brandth; Elin Kvande

Revista Española de Sociología

RES

Volumen 27 Número 3 Suplemento, Noviembre 2018



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WOS-Thomson Reuters-Emerging Sources Citation Index; Scopus-SJR; IN-RECS; Sociological Abstracts; EBSCO; Dialnet; ISOC-CSIC; International Bibliography of the Social Sciences; Fuente Académica Premier; Social Services Abstracts; Worldwide Political Science Abstracts; LATINDEX (Catálogo); CIRC (GRUPO B); CARHUS2014 (C); RESH; ARCE-FECYT

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Federación Española de Sociología
Montalbán, 8
28014 Madrid
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Suscripción anual en formato impreso (tres números al año, gastos de envío incluidos. Pago por transferencia bancaria a la Federación Española de Sociología)

- Suscripción anual individual (tres números/año): 90 euros
- Suscripción anual para instituciones (tres números/año): 150 euros

Número suelto: 25 euros (gastos de envío incluidos. Pago por transferencia bancaria a la Federación Española de Sociología)

Precios para envíos postales en España. En envíos al extranjero se cargará el coste extra del envío postal.

ISSN: 1578-2824

Depósito legal: M. 39.063-2001

Revista Española de Sociología

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Volumen 27 Número 3 Suplemento, Noviembre 2018

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***Monográfico. Igualdad de género y permisos parentales /
Special Issue. “Gender equality and parental leave”***

Coordinado por / *Guest Editors:*

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Igualdad de Género y Permisos Parentales

Gender Equality and Parental Leave

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PRESENTATION

In the last decade individualised well-paid parental leave has become a leitmotif of gender equality policies in Europe and most developed countries. This special issue aims to summarise present knowledge and contribute to the academic and public sociological debate from the gender equality perspective. Much is already known about how different regulations impact on the use of leave, and can serve different purposes. Still, we need to know much more about the transference of successful regulations and practices from one social or national context to others, the extension of care leave to other life phases, and how policy making takes account of research evidence. In September 2017 an International Seminar of the Leave Policies and Research Network took place in Madrid¹, at which a broad range of contributions provided an up-to-date assessment of the state of the art and a rich research agenda, to which the following selected academic articles respond.

Parental leave is a mechanism of labour regulation and social policy to facilitate the care of children or dependent family members, by providing the time either to address the solving of urgent care needs, or to give a greater diversity of options in relation to the use of care services, while remaining compatible

with quality of work and professional development. In this sense, leave systems are complementary to early education and childcare services, on the one hand, and to dependent adult care services, on the other. Leaves can help to redistribute working time and care time throughout the life course. They might contribute to achieving an organisation of work that is more sustainable in relation to quality of life for both children and adults, gender equality and social cohesion, redistributing resources towards households that assume care tasks, taking into account productivity and the wellbeing of a diverse and ageing workforce (in a context where the delay of the effective retirement age is set as a priority). Leave design is evolving in line with a new model of active citizenship based on the simultaneous exercise of the right and the duty to work and to care (i.e. the universal adult worker and care giver citizen model, or the dual earner-dual carer household model), which underpins the more diverse family system of post-industrial societies.

Within the framework of policies designed to promote gender equality, incentives for the use of parental leave by men have become increasingly important. This is a way of socialising men caring for their children and increasing the cooperation of spouses in strategies aimed towards the reconciliation of work and family life, thus promoting a more effective sharing of unpaid work, and contributing to improving family bonds and the care of children.

1 See www.leavenetwork.org

The first measures to extend men's parental leave as a mechanism to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life and promote gender equality, were introduced in the 1970s in the Scandinavian countries. This egalitarian motivation was first applied to the extension of the right to leave, initially exclusive to women, to men; making leave regulations gender neutral after the mandatory recovery period for women after childbirth. That freedom of choice did not translate into greater use of parental leave by men, since the proportion of fathers who interrupted their work beyond a few days after childbirth was extremely low. So, in the 1990s, new leave arrangements, designated as fathers' quotas, emerged to promote male use. Thus, in 1993, a one-month leave with a high replacement wage, exclusively for men, was introduced in Norway and in 1995 in Sweden. If it is not used, it cannot be transferred to the mother. Since 2000, further steps have been taken in this direction, as represented by the Icelandic case, where men and women are granted equal leave, within the "equal and non-transferable leave" philosophy and through the "3 + 3 + 3" scheme (a well-paid leave of three months for the mother only, three months for the father only, and the same again, to be shared between them according to their preferences) (Eydal and Rostgaard, 2015).

In addition to promoting the socialisation of men caring for their children and, more generally, their involvement in unpaid work, the objective of this new generation of parental leave is also to de-gender the use of leave. The underlying rationale is that, in so far as fathers use as much leave as mothers, the transition to parenthood and the use of parental leave as a resource to reconcile work and family life would not result in labour discrimination towards women. Thus, both men and women will gain experience in the use of leaves, and male managers and bosses will know, at first-hand, the challenges represented by work and family reconciliation.

This trend towards the use of parental leave as an instrument for the promotion of gender equality has spread rapidly among countries, first in Europe and then in other regions of the world. This trend has been fostered by directives and recommendations, from the EU since 1996, and from

the ILO as of 2000 (ILO, 2014). There is a process of globalisation of knowledge and the comparative evaluation of public policies, promoted by international institutions and their corresponding statistical offices, within the EU, the OECD, and the UN. The relatively easy translation of parental leave policies into quantifiable indicators of uses and impacts, and the rapid translation of reforms into their effective use among new generations of increasingly well-educated and informed parents, have raised great interest in, and focus on, these measures among the different stakeholders. Parental leave is nowadays becoming one of the symbols of success of the policies towards and achievements in gender equality. Evaluation and comparative research are contributing to an integral reformulation of parental leave systems in some countries, based on the accumulated experience and research results from different countries, achieving a fruitful transfer of research to the improvement and development of public policies based on scientific evidence. The reforms in Iceland in 2000, in Germany in 2007 and in Portugal in 2009 are examples of this process, while for other countries, development is more dependent on their particular historical trajectory.

The issues that have been addressed so far in the international literature, as well as in the research carried out in Spain, focus on four fundamental dimensions. On the one hand, researchers have studied the characteristics of the different parental leave systems and their relationship with welfare regimes and gender equality (over the life course). On the other hand, research has focussed on leave use and users, with conditioning or explanatory factors, where the analysis of use by men has become increasingly important. Thirdly, the relationship between the use of care leave and female employment has been analysed, including aspects such as the reincorporation of women into employment after childbirth, or labour discrimination in terms of lower probabilities of promotion and professional career development, and the increase of the gender pay gap. The fourth and last research dimension focuses on the effects of parental leave use on different aspects of family dynamics, such as decisions on fertility, the division of domes-

tic work or the strengthening of parental bonds through more continuous and intense contact with the children, especially after a divorce, with the positive effect that this has for the development of their personalities. The question of the relationship between parental leave and gender equality, however, has until now been rather focussed around the transition to parenthood, with a predominance of studies coming from the Scandinavian countries. In the present special issue we aim to deepen our knowledge regarding this relationship, contributing research results from central and southern European countries.

In the first contribution "Parental leave and beyond: some reflections on 30 years of international networking", Peter Moss explains the emergence of the international debate on parental leave since the 1980s and the development of the International Network on Parental Leave Policy and Research: a research network that currently gathers researchers from 40 countries across the world, contributing greatly to the present monographic issue. From his 30 years' experience of coordinating academic learning communities around the issue of parental leave and care services, Moss considers some current issues in leave policy and some possible future directions for policy and research, such as: the place of leave in wider 'reconciliation' and 'equality' policies, the need for appropriate statistics and indicators, and the voice of the child in formulating leave policies.

Where laws confirm a framework of rights, opportunities and institutional legitimacies for the whole or majority of the employed population, the resulting social uses depend on the values and cultural patterns present in both families or households, and companies or work centres. The analysis of social uses allows us to understand barriers and potentialities.

So, in the second contribution, "Parental leave in Spain: use, motivations and implications", based on the survey "The social use of parental leave 2012", Gerardo Meil, Pedro Romero-Balsas and Jesús Rogero-García analyse characteristics of use, motivations of leave users and consequences of use for professional careers, paying special attention to gender differences in Spain. The analysis reveals that while use of paid leave does not show

very marked gender differences, unpaid leave is mainly used by women and by those who have better working conditions. The motivations are mainly related to parenting (spending more time with the baby, prolonging breastfeeding, etc.), but in couples' use strategy the objective of preserving their employment is also present.

The use by men of parental leave and its contribution to the development of new forms of fatherhood and gender equality is currently the focus of academic debate. The institutional reforms show their potential to tackle or stop processes of change, in particular as shown in the following analyses of the Spanish, German and Swiss cases.

In the third contribution, "Can an egalitarian reform in the parental leave system reduce the motherhood labour penalty? Some evidence from Spain", José Andrés Fernández-Cornejo, José Andrés Fernández-Cornejo, Lorenzo Escot, Cristina Castellanos-Serrano and Daniel Franco-Romo analyse the impact of the Spanish 2007 egalitarian-oriented reform in the parental leave system. Based on a sample of dual-earner couples with children, residing in Madrid's metropolitan area, they provide empirical evidence showing that fathers who took longer leaves tended, subsequently, to be more involved in the care of their children, and that when the father is actively involved in the care of his child the mother tends to experience a lower work penalty.

In the fourth contribution, "Couples and Companies: Negotiating Father's Participation in Parental Leave in Germany", Stefanie Aunkofer, Michael Meuser and Benjamin Neumann report on the findings of a study of fathers on parental leave in Germany. Drawing on interviews with couples and human resource managers in different companies, they analyse how fathers' parental leave is negotiated within couples and how employers deal with male employees who claim parental leave. They identify conducive and obstructive factors for paternal leave, both at the workplace and at home within the couple. They also conclude that, in German organisations, taking two months' leave has become routine, but also marks a threshold of the extent to which organisations expect to be able to manage fathers' leave.

In the fifth contribution “The Swiss Leave Scheme at Crossroads: Gender equality implications of Parental and Paternity Leave Proposals”, Isabel Valarino analyses leave policy proposals submitted from 1995 to 2014 in Switzerland and their potential implications for gender equality. Content analysis results show that only a few proposals would create incentives for fathers to use these leaves, promoting gender equality, while conversely, there were several proposals that would produce further gender inequalities, or create inequalities based on social class or citizenship.

The monograph concludes with a sixth contribution, which looks in depth at the pioneering case of the use of individual non-transferable fathers’ quotas. In “Conflicting Ideas in the Norwegian Debate on Parental Leave for Fathers” Berit Brandth and Elin Kvande analyse the conflicting arguments that have arisen since the first pioneering fathers’ quota was introduced in 1993. Norwegian family policy, and particularly the fathers’ quota, has been the subject of heated political debate over the 23 years that it has existed. The article describes this debate from the fathers’ point of view, where the question of earmarking versus choice has a prominent place, concluding with a discussion of how these two binaries have influenced fathers’ uptake and appreciation of parental leave.

In the book review section, two recently published volumes, dedicated exclusively to this topic, are assessed. Both books point out that the uptake of parental leave by men is an important step towards gender equality; one that has considerable symbolic power and the potential to transform society. Nonetheless, this mechanism is just one amongst others (as the Nordic study shows) indicative of a broader structural change that is redefining the role of men in care-giving via the different personal crossroads and family transitions that occur over the life course, especially when there is a family split involving children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, Project Reference CSO2013-44097-R

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Guest Editorial Article / Artículo Invitación Editorial

***Parental leave and beyond: some reflections on 30 years of international networking* / EL Futuro de los Permisos Parentales: Reflexiones a Partir de 30 Años de Coordinación de Una Red Internacional de Expertos**

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Recibido / Received: 03/04/2017

Aceptado / Accepted: 20/01/2018

ABSTRACT

The article starts by introducing the international network on leave policies and research. Based on the author's experience of coordinating and working with this network, including the production of an annual review that now includes 40 countries, the remainder of the article considers some current issues in leave policy and some future possible directions for policy and research. The issues include the place of leave in wider 'reconciliation' and 'equality' policies; the design of leave policies; the inadequate state of statistics on leave policies; and the voice of the child in formulating leave policies. While there are many possible directions for future development, this article discusses moving from the current narrow focus on early parenthood to a broader lifecourse model.

Keywords: Parental leave; work-life relations; gender equality; lifecourse.

RESUMEN

Este artículo comienza presentando la red internacional de políticas e investigación en permisos parentales. A partir de la experiencia del autor como coordinador de la red y editor del informe anual que revisa las políticas e investigaciones de hasta 40 países, el artículo aborda distintas cuestiones relativas a la política de permisos y posibles líneas de evolución e investigación. Entre éstas se pueden citar el lugar que ocupa dicha política en la política de conciliación de vida laboral y privada y en la política de igualdad; el diseño de la propia política de permisos; la insuficiencia de datos estadísticos para su análisis y la voz de los niños a la hora de rediseñar esta política. Entre las posibles líneas de desarrollo futuro se discute la ampliación de los permisos a otras situaciones vitales que no sean la parentalidad.

Palabras clave: Permisos parentales, relaciones vida laboral y privada, igualdad de género, ciclo vital.

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Sugerencia de cita / Suggested citation: Moss, P. (2018). Parental leave and beyond: some reflections on 30 years of international networking. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 27 (3 Supl.), 15-25

(Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2018.31>)

INTRODUCTION

Today, the provision of statutory leave is a major item in social and family policy in Europe but also increasingly across the world. Starting with Maternity leave, dating back to the 19th century, statutory leave has now extended to include Parental and Paternity leave, leave to care for sick family members and various other entitlements, including working shorter or flexible hours. In this paper, I want to consider some of the issues that have arisen as statutory leave entitlements have spread and developed, as well as reflect on the future for this area of policy. But first, I want to start by introducing the international network on leave policies and research, one response to the increasing prominence of statutory leave and a rather unique example of international collaboration and exchange.

THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON LEAVE POLICIES AND RESEARCH

My own country, the United Kingdom, took up statutory leave very late in the day, implementing Maternity leave only in 1976, nearly a century after Germany had been the first country to introduce Maternity leave rights in 1883. Indeed by 1976, another form of statutory leave, Parental leave, had appeared on the scene, introduced in Sweden in 1974; and by 1983 the European Commission was proposing a European directive to set minimum standards for this form of leave across all member states, as part of its 1982-85 action programme on the promotion of equal opportunities for women. This proposal was my introduction to leave policy, as I found myself acting as an 'expert adviser' to a UK parliamentary committee scrutinizing the proposed European directive, rather a case of the blind leading the blind! In any case, the Thatcher government of the day vetoed this European proposal and continued to oppose any attempt to resurrect it: "Eurosceptical and resistant to any attempts to re-regulate the UK labour market, the UK refused to allow legal competence in this area to be consigned to Europe" (Fusulier, 2009, p. 249). This impasse was only resolved years after the original

veto, when the European Union adopted a Directive on Parental leave in 1996, enabled by the Social Policy protocol to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which permitted measures in the social policy field to be taken by qualified majority and from which the UK was given an opt out.

While the UK was out in the cold on social policy, I was brought in to the European fold with an invitation to coordinate a new expert group established in 1986 by the European Commission as part of its second equal opportunities programme (1986-1990). The European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities (usually known as the 'EC Childcare Network' – ECCN) consisted of an expert from each of the then 12 member states of the European Economic Community, plus myself as Coordinator. Over 10 years, the ECCN produced a wide range of reports on early childhood education and care, school-age childcare, parental employment, men as carers for children (both as fathers and workers in services) – and leave policies, including several reviews of leave policy across member states.

One of the off-shoots of the ECCN was another network, the international network on leave policies and research (referred to below as the 'international network'). Two members of the ECCN, myself and the member for Belgian Flanders, Fred Deven, retained a strong interest in leave policies and convened a European seminar on the subject in Brussels in 1998, which resulted in an edited book (Moss and Deven, 1999), whose title suggested one of the key issues raised by leave policies: 'Parental leave: Progress or Pitfall?'. Then in 2004 we convened a second meeting in Brussels, at which the decision was made to establish a network focused specifically on leave policies and research, coordinated by the two of us until handing over this responsibility in 2015.

That international network continues to this day. Indeed, it has not just continued, but has grown and thrived, despite having neither funding nor formal organisation, operating as a self-regulating community of scholars and learners and a forum for the exchange of knowledge. Today the network numbers some 60 members from 40 countries, mostly in Europe (including representatives from all EU member states except Bulgaria, Cyprus and Latvia, as

well as from Iceland, Norway and Switzerland – I refer to these countries below as the Europe28); but also with a number from further afield (including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, and Uruguay). The network has an annual international seminar (the most recent held in Prague in September 2017, with more than 40 participants) and produces an annual online review of leave policies and research in the countries represented in the network, a publication that over time has established itself as an important source of information for those studying leave policies. The network also provides an environment supportive of collaborative work, including two special journal issues and three books. Nearly all the authors in this special issue of *Revista Española de Sociología* are network members. (For more information on the network, and access to the annual review and seminar presentations, go to www.leavenetwork.org).

So, having been involved with statutory leave for 30 years, and with the resource of the international network to draw on, what seem to me to be the main issues in the field today?

SOME ISSUES IN LEAVE POLICY AND RESEARCH

Most statutory leave policies are focused on one important, though relatively short, period of the lifecourse: early parenthood. The first type to be introduced, Maternity leave, is limited to the period immediately before and after childbirth, whilst Parental leave has subsequently extended entitlements into the early years of childhood (with some policies enabling parents to take part of their leave up to or just after a child starts compulsory school). Among the Europe28, these two types of leave are universal, with the exception of Switzerland that has no Parental leave. Less common, though widespread, are Paternity leave (for fathers only, usually to be taken soon after the birth of a child) and leave to care for sick or disabled children; while fewer countries provide leave to care for older relatives.

I will return in the next section to the big issue of what periods and purposes statutory leave

should cover. For now I will confine myself to statutory leave related to the care and upbringing of younger children, in particular below compulsory school age. This is where statutory leave policy is currently centred, so it is here that I will identify a range of current issues. In particular, I will consider issues around four areas: the place of leave in wider ‘reconciliation’ and ‘equality’ policies; the design of leave policies; the inadequate state of statistics on leave policies; and the voice of the child in formulating leave policies.

The place of leave in wider ‘reconciliation’ and ‘equality’ policies

In 1992, the European Council of Ministers adopted a ‘Recommendation on Child Care’ (92/241/EEC). This political statement proposed that member states ‘take and/or progressively encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children’. The Recommendation proposed that such initiatives be taken in four specific areas: ‘special leave for employed parents’, but also ‘child care services’, the ‘environment, structure and organization of work’, and ‘sharing of responsibilities’ through promoting “increased participation by men [in the care and upbringing of children], in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities”. In short, leave policies should be part of a larger package of measures to provide comprehensive and coherent support for the reconciliation of employment and family life and, more specifically, to further gender equality.

What is clear is that this comprehensive and coherent approach is far from being achieved. There has been a great increase in ‘child care services’ for children, since 1992, encouraged by the EU itself (for example, through the Council of Ministers setting targets for provision in 2002, the so-called ‘Barcelona Targets’). But the ultimate test here is whether or not a gap remains between the end of well-paid statutory leave and the start of an entitlement to affordable early childhood (‘child care’) services. In 2016, only 7 of the Europe28 countries (Denmark, Finland,

Germany, Malta, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden) passed this test. Elsewhere parents face a gap, often substantial, between leave and early childhood services, a fundamental failure of policy coordination.

The relationship between statutory leave and the workplace is another area where coherence and consistency is patchy. Some employers are supportive, even encouraging, of employees who take statutory leave; indeed, some employers (either on their own or as part of collective agreements) supplement the provisions of statutory leave, for example extending the duration of or enhancing payment for leave. But other employers are less supportive. For example, as part of research to investigate the prevalence and nature of pregnancy discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace, a survey of over 3,000 mothers conducted in the UK for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (a government body) found that one in nine had been dismissed, made compulsorily redundant or treated so poorly they had to quit their job; applying these figures to the general population would suggest that as many as 54,000 new mothers lost their jobs every year. Moreover, the number of women losing their jobs in this way had nearly doubled over ten years (Adams et al., 2016).

But problems experienced by parents taking leave may well extend beyond being forced out of a job, to include a workplace culture that is unsympathetic or plain hostile. The same UK survey reported that one in five new mothers – as many as 100,000 mothers a year – experienced harassment or negative comments from colleagues, employer or manager when pregnant or returning from Maternity leave. Or the culture may create problems because of the excessive demands it makes on workers, demands that take no account of care responsibilities. So, a country may have wonderful statutory leave policies and employers may support employees taking leave – but on return to employment, these same employees are expected to work as if nothing has changed in their circumstances (see, for example, Kvande (2012), with its insight into the extreme demands on post-leave Norwegian fathers working in ‘knowledge-intensive’ workplaces).

The issue is this: however fine statutory leave may be, it is of limited use if no fundamental change occurs in workplace practices and norms, returning

parents back into an environment where the norm continues to be the full-time, continuously employed (male) worker. It seems increasingly apparent that well-designed leave policies need to be articulated with workplaces that have adopted the ‘universal caregiver model’ as norm. We need to get beyond Parental leave, to “imagine a social world in which citizens’ lives integrate wage earning, caregiving, community activism, political participation, and involvement in the associational life of civil society – while also leaving time for some fun...[I]t is the only imaginable postindustrial world that promises true gender equity” (Fraser, 1997, p. 62).

Getting the design right

In the introduction to the international network’s annual review, Parental leave is defined as “generally understood to be a care measure, intended to give parents the opportunity to spend time caring for a young child; it usually can only be taken after the end of Maternity leave”. A defining feature of this leave is that it should be equally available to mothers and fathers, and it is often assumed to play an important role in furthering gender equality, being one of those measures advocated in the 1992 Recommendation on Child Care to promote “increased participation by men [in the care and upbringing of children], in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities”.

If Parental leave is to work in this way, then it is important that it is not only equally available to fathers but also used by them. Over the years of the annual review, which includes a section for each country on the take-up of leave, it has become increasingly apparent that in order for this to happen, Parental leave must be designed to provide a period of father-only and well-paid leave¹. In other words,

1 Following the European Commission, the annual review defines ‘well paid’ as at least two-thirds of normal earnings. However, in assessing national policies, it is important to also ask if a ceiling is placed on payments made to parents taking leave and, if so, at what level the ceiling is placed. A high replacement rate with a low ceiling may not, in effect, be particularly well paid for many parents.

fathers should have an individual entitlement to a period of leave that provides a high level of compensation for foregone earnings, and which if unused is forfeit - the 'use it or lose it' principle.

This design principle can be seen working in the case of Iceland, which implemented a radical reform of leave policies between 2001 and 2003, replacing a "poorly functioning patchwork of measures...with rather limited rights" (Einarsdóttir and Pétursdóttir, 2009, p. 162) with a totally new and simple structure: nine months of well paid leave (today paid at 80 % of earnings), three months for the mother, three months for the father, and three months for the family to be shared between parents as they choose. The results have been striking: in 2000 fathers accounted for just 3 % of all leave days taken, while by 2009 this had risen to 34 %, with fathers averaging 100 days of leave (Eydal et al., 2015, Table 3). Since then, the amount of leave taken by fathers has fallen back, possibly due to the impact of the financial crisis that so badly affected Iceland; but even so, in 2012, 92.7 per cent of fathers took some period of leave, averaging 87 days leave compared to 176 for mothers. In other words, nearly all Icelandic men took their leave entitlement, though only 14 % took any part of the three months family entitlement (Eydal and Gislason, 2016). This confirms a wider conclusion: that where leave is a 'family' entitlement, rather than a non-transferable 'individual' entitlement, it will be overwhelmingly used by mothers.

A few countries have developed an alternative strategy to promote use of leave by fathers. Instead of a 'use it or lose it' individual entitlement, leave is a family entitlement, but there is a bonus of additional leave if some of the family entitlement is shared, i.e. used by fathers (the constant is that the leave, whether individual or family, has to be well paid if fathers are to take some portion). Germany provides an example. When Parental leave was first introduced into then West Germany in 1986, "the primary aim of policy makers was to enable and actively encourage mothers to stay at home and care for their children during the first years of their life" (Erler, 2009, p. 119). This was achieved by a combination of a long (3 year) and low paid Parental leave

and low levels of 'childcare' services. But in 2007 this policy was overhauled with a new intention of encouraging and supporting maternal employment and increasing fertility (subsequently taken further by the introduction in 2013 of an entitlement to a childcare service for all children from 12 months of age, in effect bringing the former West Germany in line with policies standard in East Germany before unification).

The 2007 reform basically re-configured Parental leave from a long, low paid period, to a shorter period of well-paid leave, a 12 month family entitlement recompensed at around two-thirds of earnings. But there is also an incentive for fathers to use part of this family entitlement: if both parents use at least two months of the basic 12 months, a bonus two months of well paid leave can be taken. As with Iceland, this reform has led to significant change in take-up by fathers: the proportion of fathers taking Parental leave has risen significantly from 3.5 % of fathers in 2006 to 32 % of fathers in 2013. As in Iceland, too, complete gender equality is some way off, with leave-taking fathers in Germany averaging 3.1 months of leave compared to 11.6 months for leave-taking mothers (Blum, Erler and Reimer, 2016). Nevertheless, here is more evidence that good design can affect outcomes.

Judged against the goal of encouraging gender equality, most Parental leave in the Europe28 is not well designed. Nine countries have no well-paid, father-only entitlement (whether of Parental or Paternity leave), and only one of these countries, Germany, has a bonus scheme involving well-paid leave. Of the remaining 19 countries, the average length of well-paid father-only leave is just two weeks, and such a short period of leave is usually Paternity leave rather than Parental leave.

Overall, therefore, it seems that most Parental leave in Europe is not well designed, if the aim is to encourage take-up by fathers and to promote gender equality. In some cases, of course, this may not be the national intent; in others, it is more a case of equality rhetoric not matched by policy practice. In either case, Parental leave is more a case of pitfall than progress, viewed from a gender equality perspective, with leave taking left to women and men untouched by the policy.

Of course, there are many other design issues. Let me highlight just two areas. First, how comprehensive or inclusive is leave policy designed to be: for example, do eligibility criteria exclude workers in various forms of non-standard employment, such as short-term or zero-hours contracts or agency work? Do they exclude various types of family, such as same sex parents? Second, what forms of flexibility are offered by leave policy design: for example, can leave be taken on a full-time or part-time basis; divided into several blocks; or used over a prolonged period, for example until a child starts school?

Making leave count

Over the years of producing the annual review, and in particular attempting to assess and compare take-up of various forms of leave in different countries, it has become apparent that good, detailed, comparable statistical information is in short supply. The problem is particularly acute for Parental leave, making the production of comparative tables of take-up practically impossible.

Where countries do not pay Parental leave, there are generally no administrative statistics on use; the best to be hoped for are the results of occasional surveys. Where payment is made, there are further complexities, in particular how should the take-up rate be expressed. Should take-up be calculated as a percentage of all births – or as a percentage of all births where parents are eligible for leave? In the latter case, countries with restrictive eligibility conditions may show a better take-up rate than those countries that are more inclusive. For example, Canada (excluding Quebec) has rather restrictive eligibility criteria, meaning that more than a third of mothers (36 %) are excluded from leave provision, with the proportion particularly high among low income families (61 %); in 2013, less than half of mothers in low income households received Maternity or Parental leave benefits, compared with 74 % in high income households (McKay, Mathieu and Doucet, 2016).

But there are further problems. For example, how to cope with countries that allow parents to take

their leave in blocks of time spread over a longer period, such as Sweden where leave may be taken until a child is 8 years old? Here the final take-up rate can only be judged once children have reached the cut-off point; the proportion of parents taking leave in a year will not be the same as the proportion who take leave at some point. It is also difficult to know how leave, which is open to both parents, is actually divided between mothers and fathers. As we have seen, nearly all fathers take Parental leave in Iceland, but mothers take substantially more once reckoned in terms of days used.

Then there is the next level down of analysis, finer grained data that would show in more detail who does and does not take leave. How, for example, does leave taking vary according to socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, numbers of children and other such variables? Or, again, how do parents make use of flexibility options designed into leave policies, such as taking leave part time or in shorter blocks of time? Such information might appear occasionally for a particular country in a survey, but is not routinely published through reliable administrative statistics.

Overall, therefore, due to this lack of reliable, comprehensive and comparative statistics, it is impossible to make a thorough assessment of how leave policies work and to take further the work of relating design to effect. For such a high-profile policy area, it is strange that we know so little.

The voice of the child

If we consider research and publications on leave policies (many of which are listed in the international network's annual review), then today we see three main areas of interest: labour markets and employment; gender equality; and demography. Yet from its inception, leave policy has had a concern with children and their well-being. Statutory maternity leave was first introduced in the 19th century, in countries such as Germany, France and Belgium, on the assumption that these measures "would protect and promote their [mothers'] own and their babies' physical well-being" (Kamerman and Moss, 2009, p. 262). While the EU's Directive on

Maternity leave, adopted in 1992, was justified as a 'health and welfare measure', again encompassing the welfare of both mother and child. There is, indeed, some evidence of the positive relationship between leave and children's health, for instance that

[m]ore generous paid leave reduce[s] deaths of infants and young children. The magnitudes of the estimated effects are substantial, especially where a causal effect of leave is most plausible. In particular, there is a much stronger negative relationship between leave durations and post-neonatal or child fatalities than for perinatal mortality, neonatal deaths, or low birth weight. The evidence further suggests that parental leave may be a cost-effective method of bettering child health (Ruhm, 2000, p. 931)

A further argument that leave policies can favour children is made in Sweden. Swedish researcher Philip Hwang notes that "parental leave legislation in Sweden has been designed to meet three major goals of social policy". One goal is to promote gender equality, by promoting women's economic independence; the second, also related to gender equality, is to enable men to be more involved in child care and family life. But the first goal is about children's well-being:

Parental leave is seen as guaranteeing that people can have children and return to their jobs without adverse consequences, thus ensuring children's economic well-being. Children are also seen as benefitting psychologically from mothers and fathers being home with them during their first months of life, without parents feeling economic stress from unemployment. Swedish children have a legal right to have a relationship with both parents, and fathers' ability to take parental leave is one way men can develop their relationship with their children (Hwang, 1999, p. 49).

The issue here is not whether or not leave policies are relevant to children's well-being; they clearly are. The issue is how the interests of children might be represented in policy making and implementation. For it is my impression, after wor-

king in this field for nearly 30 years, that children are marginal if not totally invisible in policy making and implementation. Ministries of employment and social welfare, employers' groups, women's groups, family groups, even trade unions may have their say, but I have not come across any groups that represent children participating. Similarly, researchers in early childhood or childhood studies show little or no interest.

We need, I conclude, to have the voice of the child heard in this policy area, and to find ways to factor in consideration of the best interests of the child and children's rights. Doubtless easier said than done. But not impossible either, at least once the present-day silence is acknowledged and found unacceptable.

THE FUTURE FOR LEAVE POLICIES

Leave policies have taken off in recent years, becoming a big ticket item in social policy. Yet policy interest has remained remarkably limited and static, with policy debates and changes largely focused on 'parental' leaves, measures focused on a few years of the lifecourse – early childhood and early parenthood. This is, in my view, insufficient; we need to raise our sights and take a far wider perspective. We are, in Europe, ageing societies. The share of those aged 80 years or above in the EU-28's population is projected to more than double between 2015 and 2080, from 5,4 % to 12,7 % (Eurostat, 2016); while today's 20-year-olds can expect to live to 105! Increased longevity means we have to work longer as retirement is pushed ever further back, but also that we are more likely to be caring for adult relatives while still in employment. At the same time there are, arguably, many other important social activities calling for our participation, in civil society, in lifelong learning, and caring for our own health.

All these developments, already upon us, seem to call for a radical rethinking of leave policies, moving from their current narrow focus, to a broader lifecourse model, in which we all, as citizens, have a substantial quota of leave that we can draw down for a wide variety of reasons and at any time during

our working lives. Backed, too, by a matching source of replacement income, perhaps some form of universal basic income which, it has been argued, “gives everyone some real freedom – as opposed to a sheer right – to withdraw from paid employment in order to perform autonomous activities, such as grass-roots militancy or unpaid care work” (Parijs, 2004, p. 20; for a fuller discussion, see Ackerman, Alstott and van Parijs, 2005).

In this respect, Belgium provides an important, if too little known, example. The Belgian career break/time credit system gives each worker the right to one year’s full-time leave (or longer if taken part-time) over the course of their working lifetime, with collective agreements extending this period in some cases. Leave can be taken for any reason, with a flat-rate payment previously paid for all users; more recently, government has confined the flat-rate payment to those taking leave to provide care, although care here is broadly defined to include adults as well as children (Merla and Deven, 2016).

Such a model could readily be enhanced, with a larger time credit and/or more generous payments. But important as it might be as part of a statutory framework of support for working carers and citizens, it will not be sufficient by itself. We are drawn back to the importance of changes in employment and the workplace that normalise the idea of all workers routinely having important responsibilities and roles beyond employment, and therefore shifting employment and the workplace to Nancy Fraser’s ‘universal caregiver model’, defining care in its broadest sense to include care of self, others, society and environment.

All this may seem visionary, utopian even, something for the distant future. But arguably it is realistic and feasible, and the need for such radical rethinking and wholesale reform is upon us now. Moreover, it is by no means the end of the matter. For looming up in the future, the not too distant future, is the very real possibility of far larger changes and what these changes mean for the future relationship between care and employment.

I am speaking here of the possibility of the mass eradication of jobs and human employment as the full impact of technological change is felt across

our world. In a 2013 publication – ‘The Future of Employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?’ – Frey and Osborne conclude that nearly half of all US jobs are at high risk of going within 20 years. While a recent report on the UK in 2030 concludes that

15 million jobs – two-thirds of the total – are at medium to high risk of being automated in the coming decades. Both routine and non-routine work will be displaced... Over time there will be fewer and fewer tasks – and in time, jobs – where humans can outperform machines. Given this, it is likely we are at ‘peak human’ in terms of human labour being the most important factor of production (IPPR, 2016, p. 28).

To which it can be countered that past production revolutions have destroyed jobs, but also created new ones in at least equal measure. The question begged by this scenario is: what sort of jobs? Rather than a bonanza of new good quality employment, a more daunting prospect is likely, marked by increasing insecurity and inequality. In its report on the UK in 2030, the IPPR think tank envisage that

[f]luidity will become normal and insecurity near-universalised... Labour market insecurity, already prevalent for many, will be the experience of work for the majority of people by 2030. Technological change, including the advance of algorithmic management and mobile technologies, will mean digital Taylorism for some, and increased autonomy for others. The growth of digital platforms will facilitate the rise of the gig economy, with work more piecemeal and task-based. Without effective regulation it will worsen working conditions for many while reducing wages. Work will be polarised between those with greater control and flexibility, and those whose time is ever more controlled. There will be more high-tech, high touch roles involving greater skills and more creative, non-repetitive forms of work (where humans will retain comparative advantages over robots for the foreseeable future). At the same time, a long tail of low-skilled work is likely to remain in place, with a growing divide in terms of autonomy, agency and reward at work (IPPR, 2016, p. 26).

But in another scenario for the future, this time round such job replacement may not happen; in the latest technological revolution new work will not fill the gap left by the destruction of current jobs. As Yuval Harari observes:

[this job replacement] is not a law of nature, and nothing guarantees it will continue to be like that in the future...As long as machines competed with us merely in physical abilities, you could always find cognitive tasks that humans do better. So machines took over purely manual jobs, while humans focused on jobs requiring at least some cognitive skills. Yet what will happen once algorithms outperform us in remembering, analysing and recognising patterns...(so) the crucial problem isn't creating new jobs. The crucial problem is creating new jobs that humans perform better than algorithms (Harari, 2016, p. 326).

This, Harari suggests, may create a wholly new and disturbing situation:

The technological bonanza will probably make it feasible to feed and support the useless masses even without any effort on their side. But what will keep them occupied and content? People must do something, or they will go crazy. What will they do all day? (ibid., p. 326).

Of course, such scenarios may turn out to be far too pessimistic. Former patterns of job generation may repeat themselves, a sufficiency of good new jobs may emerge. Humankind may continue to be as busy as ever, with work of some kind continuing to play a central role in life. Harari, for all his insights, has little to say about care and caring (although presumably he would envisage this going the same way as employment, increasingly taken over by robots, computers and algorithms). Or alternatively those predictions I recall from the 1970s, of a life mainly filled by leisure time, will come real. Perhaps the debates in 50 years' time will be about giving citizens an entitlement to employment for a few hours a week or for a few years in a lifetime otherwise consisting of endless leave.

Positive outcomes shared by everyone might result from the evolution of unbridled capitalism, unexpected but welcome. More likely though they will require the exercise of collective will through societies coming together to contest technological determinism, reminding themselves that "[t]echnology is not neutral; politics and culture shape its use and who benefits" (IPPR, 2016, p. 18). Democracy may be renewed and democratic societies may assume control over the direction and manner of development, to ensure that all benefit from technology and changes in employment, rather than weakly accepting the entrenching of "a new form of economic feudalism: those who own the robots will reap the rewards, the rest will struggle as human labour becomes less and less important in the production process" (ibid.). Democratic societies could, in short, re-assert the dominance of the social over the economic, the political over the technical.

As part of such 'future building' (Facer, 2011), fighting to create better futures for all rather than succumb to what futurist Riel Miller calls "the totalitarianism of inevitable futures", much could be done to improve the lives of employed women and men in the more immediate future, not only by better designing Parental leave but by going beyond Parental leave: rethinking and reconfiguring the relationships between care (broadly defined), employment and gender, in which a mix of leave and service entitlements combines with reforms to the labour market and cultural changes in the workplace – not to mention other redistributive measures intended to increase equality and so improve the lives of citizens and the functioning of the societies in which they live. At the same time, we need to be thinking now even further ahead, to the more distant future, not least so we can, perhaps, begin to exert some democratic control over that future and the direction we want to take to reach it.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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Artículo / Article

Parental Leave in Spain: Use, Motivations and Implications / Los permisos para el cuidado de niños en España: uso motivaciones e implicaciones

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Recibido / Received: 03/04/2017

Aceptado / Accepted: 20/01/2018

ABSTRACT

In Spain as in other countries, advances in childcare leave policy have aimed to encourage leave-taking by both parents. Based on the survey Social use of parental leave 2012, this study explores the characteristics of and underlying motivations for leave-taking, as well as the implications for careers, focusing in particular on gender differences. While the analysis reveals only moderate gender-based differences where paid leave was concerned, unpaid leave was taken primarily by women or by the parent with the most favourable working conditions. The reasons for using unpaid leaves revolved essentially around a desire to spend more time with or breast-feed the baby beyond the termination of paid leave, although contributing to the partner's job security also entered into the equation. The study showed that in addition to economic costs, taking unpaid parental leave entails a setback in a significant percentage of men and women's careers.

Keywords: leave policy, work-life balance, childcare, parenthood, Spain.

RESUMEN

Como en otros países, en España se ha promocionado el uso de permisos para el cuidado de niños y niñas por ambos padres. A partir de la encuesta *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*, este trabajo analiza las características del uso, las motivaciones y las consecuencias para la carrera profesional, prestando especial atención a las diferencias de género. El análisis evidencia que, mientras la utilización de los permisos remunerados no presenta diferencias de género muy marcadas, los no remunerados son utilizados principalmente por mujeres y por quienes tienen mejores condiciones laborales. Las motivaciones para utilizar los permisos no remunerados están relacionadas con la crianza (pasar más tiempo con el bebé, prolongar la lactancia, etc.), pero también para preservar el empleo de la pareja. El uso de estos permisos no sólo tiene costes económicos, también supone perjuicios para la carrera profesional de una parte significativa de quienes los han utilizado.

Palabras clave: Permisos parentales, conciliación de vida laboral y familiar, cuidado de niños, parentalidad, España

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Sugerencia de cita / Suggested citation: Meil, G., Romero-Balsas, P., Rogero-García, J. (2018). Parental Leave in Spain: Use, Motivations and Implications. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 27 (3 Supl.), 27-43

(Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2018.32>)

INTRODUCTION

With women's rising participation on the labour market and the concomitant growth in the proportion of dual-earner families, the harmonisation of work and family life has acquired increasing social significance in developed countries. Demands for public authorities to implement policies that would further such harmonisation have therefore intensified. One of the responses has been to broaden the scope of traditional maternity leaves with policies that would enable fathers to take time off work to care for their children and favour their return to work upon termination of their leave (Kamerman & Moss, 2009). National governments have reacted in very different ways to such demands, although a common trend may be identified in the initiatives appearing in the European Union over the last 25 years. One such common trend, for instance, entails extending the length of leaves (although this parameter is very variable), raising the percentage of the salary paid during leaves and enhancing the flexibility of their use (OECD, 2011; Moss and Deven, 2015). Moreover, fathers' use of such leaves has been fostered, mainstreaming parental leave policies in overall gender equality policy (Haas and Hwang, 2008; O'Brien & Wall, 2017).

Although somewhat later than in other developed countries, the proportion of mothers in Spain engaging in paid work has risen steadily, intensifying the life-work balance problem (Moreno Minguez, 2010). Further to Eurostat data, the percentage of Spanish women aged 25 to 54 with paid employment rose from 38,8 % in 1992 to 65,6 & in 2016. Although the transition from the single- to the dual-earner family has been possible thanks primarily to inter-generational support (Tobío, 2012), alternative or supplementary resources have also been forthcoming. Policies favouring parental leave have been implemented and related measures reinforced, with the reduction of the age of first enrolment in school and the furtherance of change in business culture and labour relations in this regard (Meil et al., 2008, García Sainz, Luque and Ayuso, 2008; Escobedo et al., 2012, Flaquer and Navarro, 2012; Lapuerta et al., 2011, Baizán and González, 2011). Spanish parental leave policy has generally followed in the footsteps

of developments in other European Union countries. EU legislation has been transposed and partially improved and provision made for fathers' leaves, as discussed in the following section.

Studies on leave to care for children in Spain have engaged primarily in comparative analyses of its evolution with respect to other European countries (Iglesias de Ussel and Meil, 2001; Escobedo and Wall, 2015) and in inquiries into the scope of the various types of leaves and their conditioning factors. Particular research has addressed paternity leave (Romero-Balsas, 2012; Flaquer and Escobedo, 2014; Escot et al., 2014, Fernández-Cornejo and Poza, 2014; Meil, 2017), unpaid full-time parental leave (Lapuerta, Baizán and González, 2011; Romero-Balsas et al., 2013, Muntanyola-Saura and Rogero-García, 2013), part-time parental leave (Lapuerta et al., 2011) and men's use of maternal leave (Escot et al., 2012, Fernández-Cornejo, Lafuente and Poza, 2012; Meil et al., 2017b, Romero-Balsas and Rogero-García, 2017b). In this article, in keeping with the international literature on the subject, leave of absence (*excedencia por cuidado de hijos*) and part-time parental leave or reduced hours (*reducción de jornada por cuidado de hijos*) are referred to as parental leave.

The present study aims to contribute to an understanding of the use of such leaves, focusing not only on the social and professional factors conditioning their use but also on the motivation underlying leave-taking and the implications of doing so for one's career, areas that have been largely ignored to date. The authors drew for this purpose from a survey specifically designed to analyse leaves taken to care for children and dependent adults: their use, the reasons for using full or part-time parental leave and the implications of use for the user's career. Three objectives were posed: 1) to ascertain the use rates and characteristics of use of the various types of childcare leaves, and more specifically paternity, maternity, nursing and parental leaves in Spain; 2) to identify the main reasons for using parental leave (which is non-paid); and 3) to determine the implications of using parental leave for job quality and content and the user's career. One over-arching issue to which particular attention was paid was the gender perspective, in light of its significance in the distribution of childcare tasks.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF CHILDCARE LEAVES IN SPAIN

The earliest childcare leaves in Spain date back to the early twentieth century, with the institution in 1929 of 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and one day of paid leave for fathers for the birth of a child (Wall and Escobedo, 2009). Childcare leave legislation developed very slowly, with significant progress recorded only after 1980 (Iglesias and Meil, 2001). In the years following, maternity leave coverage and remuneration were expanded and new paid leaves for specific risks

(during pregnancy, during nursing and to care for seriously ill minors) were introduced, along with unpaid parental leave usable after paid maternity leave either under full- or part-time arrangements or a combination of the two. While initially envisaged for women only, the right to parental leave was subsequently extended to men, in 1980 as a family right and in 1999 as an individual right, i.e., as the father's personal right, independent of the mother's. The mother's right to assign part of her maternity leave to the father was acknowledged in 1989, and paid and non-transferable paternity leave was instituted in 2007.

Table 1. Characteristic features of childcare leaves in Spain

Maternity leave

Sixteen weeks of fully paid (subject to a ceiling) leave for biological maternity, adoption or fostering, providing the mother is affiliated or similar and has been contributing for the specified minimum time. When contributory requisites are not met, the mother is entitled to 6 weeks of leave paid at a flat rate. A 6 week leave after childbirth is mandatory, whilst the remainder may be transferred to the father or converted to reduced hours.

Nursing leave

After maternity leave, either parent may opt for the nursing leave (although it may be taken by only one of them), consisting in two half-hour breaks or a one half-hour shorter working day till the ninth month after birth. If stipulated in collective bargaining agreements or covenanted with the employer, this leave can be used to extend maternity leave by 2 weeks (4 weeks for public officials).

Paternity leave

Two days for the birth of the child and 13 consecutive days (4 weeks as of 2017) of fully paid leave (subject to a ceiling) for birth, adoption or fostering, providing the father is affiliated or similar and has contributed for the specified minimum time.

Full-time parental leave to care for children

Right of any worker to suspend their employment contract without pay until the child reaches the age of 3; the right to return to the same position is guaranteed for the first year and to a similar position through the third year. The leave may be taken intermittently.

Part-time parental leave to care for children

Right of any worker to reduce their hours by a minimum of 1/8 and a maximum of 1/2, with a proportional decrease in salary, until the child is 12 years old. The leave may be taken intermittently.

Other childcare leaves

Fully paid (subject to a ceiling) full-time leave for risk during pregnancy or nursing. Right to reduced hours to care for children with cancer or any other severe illness, with compensation for the concomitant reduction in salary.

Source: compiled by the authors from information in Meil, G., Lapuerta, I. and Escobedo, A. (2017).

The leaves presently available (see Table 1) can be classified under two main headings. Fully paid leaves include maternity, paternity and nursing leaves as well as special circumstances (risk during pregnancy or breast-feeding and severely ill child). Whilst fully paid leaves envisage a replacement salary but are of limited duration, unpaid leaves can be taken for very long periods of time (3 years in the event of leave of absence and up to 12 years for part-time leaves) but lack any financial consideration (except in a few regions) (Meil et al., 2017, Lapuerta and Escobedo 2017). More than in other countries, leaves in Spain are characterised by this distinct duality in terms of remuneration and duration. From the gender equality perspective, the legislation has tended to individualise leaves, in keeping with a pattern found in most OECD countries, although few explicit incentives are in place for parents to make use of such benefits. Nonetheless, the extension in 2017 of fully paid paternity leave from 2 to 4 weeks forms part of a trend to lengthen the duration of leaves available to fathers. Further to the typology developed by Wall and Escobedo (2013), which also takes the characteristics of childcare and the mother's employment into consideration, Spain has evolved in recent years from the 'short leave modified breadwinner model' to an 'extensive early return to work model' (Escobedo and Wall, 2015).

METHODOLOGY AND DATABASE

The analysis was based on the survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012* (Social use of parental leave 2012) designed under a broader eponymous project¹. Those data were supplemented with secondary information published by the National Social Security Institute for 2013 and earlier. The survey, which was cross-sectional and retrospective, was conducted between January and March 2012 and covered all of Spain except the cities of Ceuta and Melilla. A total of 4000 respondents between the ages of 25 and 60 were surveyed. Random sampling with minimum sex and age quotas was used and weighting was based on those two variables.

1 For which funding was provided by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (CSO2009-11328).

The sub-sample for this study consisted of 2 775 parents between the ages of 25 and 60 who had paid employment when their children were born. A total of 411 had taken at least one unpaid full- or part-time parental leave. The specific analysis of leave use was run on the 359 parents with children under the age of 13 at the time of the interview. The reason for this selection was to avoid long-term memory bias and to take the break-off point as the entry into effect of Act 39/1999 of 5 November on harmonisation of family and work life.

The survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012* proved to be an innovative and useful source of information, for it shed light on the effect of leaves on the population eligible to apply for them. Other sources with detailed data on leaves, such as the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, showed how many people took full-time parental (and other) leaves yearly and the terms of their employment contracts, but not the number or characteristics of potential applicants. Moreover, the *Encuesta sobre el uso de los permisos parentales 2012* furnished information on the employment status of respondents and their partners when applying for the leave (or otherwise), the reasons for the application, the couple's decision-making process and the participation of other members of the social network in childcare.

A descriptive analysis was conducted with contingency tables whose significance is measured with Pearson's chi-square statistic. Logistic regression models were also developed to analyse the factors conditioning leave use. Analyses were run using SPSS 21 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Leave use and characteristics

Even though maternity leave is firmly rooted in Spanish labour legislation as a women's right of which the population at large is fully aware, not all working mothers benefit from it. Further to the survey *El uso de los permisos parentales 2012*, 81 % of women between the ages of 25 and 60 who were working when their children were born claimed to

have taken maternity leave, whilst 19 % reported that they had not. Younger mothers took maternity leave at significantly higher rates than their elders: 90 % of working mothers under the age of 35 and 85 % of those between 35 and 44 reported benefiting from maternity leave, compared to 71 % of mothers between 45 and 54 and 61 % of those between 55 and 60 (Meil and Romero-Balsas, 2016). Those results are consistent with the findings reported for other studies. According to data published by Mari-Klose et al. (2010), 91 % of eligible mothers with children under the age of 4 took maternity leave. The rise over time in maternity leave coverage may be attributed essentially to improvements in leave conditions for beneficiaries introduced by successive legislative reforms.

Working conditions were observed to be a determinant for extent of use. Self-employed women, women working in the private sector and especially women with temporary employment contracts or no contract at all were the ones most frequently unable to take maternity leave, and also the ones with the lowest incomes. That finding is illustrated by

the logistic regression in Table 2, which analyses the odds ratio of using versus not using the leave conditioned to working conditions, level of schooling (as a proxy for income level) and age. The odds ratio for using maternity leave dropped to half for women working in the private (OR=0,52) versus the public sector and even more steeply for self-employed women (OR=0,40) as opposed to salaried workers. It was 9,2 times higher for women with permanent than for those with temporary employment contracts. Higher levels of schooling also raised the likelihood of leave-taking. Women with unstable employment were, then, the ones unable to exercise their right to maternity leave laid down in the legislation. When the women themselves were asked why they had not taken maternity leave, all their reasons shared a leitmotif: self-employment at the time (31 %), no employment contract or working as a contractor (16 %), temporary employment contract (13 %), loss of job (13 %) or others (29 %). According to the Mari-Klose et al. (2010) study, this leave was taken least frequently by women with low salaries, less schooling and an older age.

Table 2. Logistic regression for factors conditioning the likelihood of using maternity and paternity leave or otherwise (odds ratio)

	Maternity leave taken by mothers	Maternity leave taken by fathers	Paternity leave
Private sector employment (ref. public sector)	0,52*	0,81	0,36**
Self-employed (ref. employed)	0,40**	0,42+	0,38**
Permanent employment (ref. temporary employment)	9,17***	-	4,22***
Age 18-34 (reference)			
Age 35-44	0,59+	0,82	1,05
Age 45-60	0,47*	0,50*	0,85
Primary education (reference)			
Secondary education	1,94*	1,22	1,57
Tertiary education	3,67***	1,13	1,66+
Partner not employed (ref. employed)	0,72	-	0,55**
Constant	5,16*	0,12***	3,40**

Source: Survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*. Notes: + $p < 0,10$, * $p < 0,05$, ** $p < 0,01$, *** $p < 0,001$. Nagelkerke R square 0,33, 0,03 and 0,29 respectively.

The option most often adopted was to use maternity leave full time for the maximum entitlement specified in the legislation. Nonetheless, it was used part-time (for only part of the working day) by 13 %, with no significant differences between self-employed and salaried women. Around 4 % of the salaried mothers who took the leave took less than the 16 weeks to which they were entitled, while among self-employed women the percentage ranged from 25 to 30 %, depending on the child's birth order. In 2016, the mean duration of the leave among women contributing to social security was 113 days (16 weeks), compared to the 42,5 days (6 weeks) taken by non-contributors (unemployed women seeking employment and receiving unemployment benefits) (Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social, 2017). Employees, then, tended to use the legal maximum entitlement: 16 weeks for individual births and 18 for multiple births for contributors and 6 and 8 weeks, respectively, for non-contributors.

Some fathers took part of their partner's maternity leave where it was granted to them by the mother under the terms provided by law. The percentage of maternity leaves taken by fathers has remained flat at around 2 % in the last 10 years. The mean duration of men's maternity leave in 2016 was 71,2 days (10,2 weeks), the maximum allowed (Instituto Nacional de la Seguridad Social, 2017). Further to the survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*, 7 % of fathers entitled to maternity leave used it. Use was more intense among younger salaried workers, while no differences were observed by level of schooling or sector (private or public) (see Table 2). Based on the survey *Encuesta de la calidad de vida en el trabajo*, however, Escot et al. (2012) observed a higher rate of leave-taking among males who worked in public health or public education. Similarly, men working in companies where conciliation policies were encouraged were more inclined to use maternity leave (Escot et al., 2012).

Nursing or breast-feeding leave, in turn, which is often taken as an extension to maternity leave, was used much less frequently than the latter (by 40 % of women drawing salaries when their children were born). Such a low use rate may denote scant awareness of the existence of this leave or

that many women may confound with maternity leave, for the two are generally applied for successively.

Furthermore, despite its recent enactment (in 2007), 2 week paternity leave was taken by 75 % of fathers who were working when their children were born, 97 % of whom used their full entitlement. The couple's employment status and their working conditions were determining factors in leave-taking, which was more common when both parents than when only the father worked (the odds ratio declined to half in the latter case, as shown in Table 2). As in the case of maternity leave and as reported by earlier studies (Romero-Balsas, 2012; Escot et al., 2012; Lapuerta et al., 2011; González and Baizán, 2011), greater job stability furthered use: the odds ratio was 4,2-fold higher for men with permanent as opposed to temporary employment contracts and two-thirds lower for self-employed men or those working in the private sector.

On the whole, paid leave was extensively used for the full entitlement established by law, the main constraint being job instability, with the added risk, in the case of self-employed workers, of losing market share.

Full- and part-time parental leaves were used much more sparingly, essentially because in most cases such leaves are unpaid (Lapuerta et al., 2011, Baizán and González, 2011) and only salaried workers are eligible. A mere 9,7 % of parents working when their children were born used part-time parental leave (Table 4). Full-time parental leaves were even less common, with a usage rate of 4,8 %. Women were much more prone to use full- and part-time parental leaves: 26 % compared to 2 % in men. Only 0,5 % of men used full-time parental leave, compared to 10,4 % of women, with a similar divide for part-time parental leave: 1,8 % of men and 19,9 % of women (Table 4). As in paid leave, working conditions were a determinant, as were child-care models, as discussed in an earlier paper (Meil et al., 2017b, Romero-Balsas and Rogero-García, 2017b). As Table 3 shows, the odds ratio for using one of these unpaid leaves was 4,37 times greater among women and 2,93 times greater among men with permanent jobs than among those with temporary employment. For women, having a partner with

a stable job was also relevant (OR=1,46), whereas for the few men who used this leave it was not. For them, the determinant was working in the public sector (OR=3,94), which may be interpreted to mean that the risk of adverse discrimination for using such leaves was lower there than in the private sector. Women with higher incomes (as measured by the proxy variable schooling) were observed to be more readily able to temporarily forgo their full salary, whereas among men that variable was not particularly relevant. Women with more demanding jobs (work weeks of over 40 hours) tended to use these leaves less frequently, however. In addition to a couple's working and financial status, childcare models

were observed to be significant, for the odds ratio for using parental leaves was significantly higher (OR=1,69) when mothers deemed they should cut back on their working hours while their children were very young. Men who felt that such leaves are primarily intended for women, in turn, were much less prone to use them (OR=0,22). Significantly, the presence of grandparents in the vicinity able to care for the children had no impact on the use of such leaves. In other words, unpaid leave did not appear to be a substitute for grandparents but rather the result of a desire to spend more time with one's children, as discussed in the following section.

Table 3. Logistic regression for factors conditioning the likelihood of using parental leave (full or part-time) or otherwise

	Women	Men
Permanent employment (ref. temporary employment)	4,38***	2,93**
Public sector employment (ref. private sector)	0,84	3,94**
Partner with permanent employment (ref. temporary or no employment)	1,46*	0,99
Primary education (reference)		
Secondary education	1,71+	6,47+
Tertiary education	1,88*	5,39
Work week > 40 hours (ref. work 40 or less hours)	0,57**	0,69
Traditional attitude towards parental leave		0,22*
Attitude towards childcare prioritising childcare over paid work	1,68**	
Partner used a parental leave (ref. not used parental leave)	1,72	2,53*
Grandparents less than 30 min. away (ref. no grandparents or live further)	1,23	0,82
Age 18-34 (reference)		
Age 35-44	1,06	0,94
Age 45-60	0,74	0,82
Constant	0,06***	0,002***

Source: Survey El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012. Notes: + $p < 0,10$, * $p < 0,05$, ** $p < 0,01$, *** $p < 0,001$. Nagelkerke R square 0,19 and 0,16 respectively.

Gender differences were observed not only in percentage of use, but also in the leave characteristics with career implications (Lapuerta, 2013). Men tended to take shorter leaves than women, particularly where part-time unpaid leave was concerned: 24,5 months compared to 36,3 months for women (Table 4). Women also tended to reduce their working hours more than men (2,6 compared to 2,2 hours/day).

Full-time parental leave, in turn, lasted for 9,8 months among women and 8 months among men. Earlier studies such as the one authored by Lapuerta et al. (2011), Baizán and González (2011) revealed

a high return to work rate after a 12 month parental leave, given that the right to return to the job held when the leave was taken is guaranteed for 1 year. According to the data gathered for this study, 86 % of full-time parental leave were shorter than 1 year. Mothers tended to take this leave when their children were younger and fathers when they were somewhat older (6,1 months on average for women compared to 12,5 months for men); 64 % of the women who took such leaves did so immediately after maternity leave (Meil and Romero-Balsas, 2016). The timing was more variable in part-time unpaid leaves, which parents tended to take after the child was 1 year old.

Table 4. Use and characteristics of full- and part-time parental leaves by sex

	Part-time parental leave			Full-time parental leave		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Use (%)	9,7 %*	1,8 %	19,9 %	4,8 %*	0,5 %	10,4 %
Duration in months	33,6*	24,5	36,3	9,5	8,0	9,8
Child's age (1)	12,5	14,0	12,0	7,4*	12,5	6,1
Number of hours (2)	2,5*	2,2	2,6			

Source: Survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*. **Note:** All means calculated from at least 27 cases (1) Child's age in months at outset (2) Hourly reduction per day. * $p < 0,05$

Table 5. Employment status by sex after termination of full- or part-time parental leave

	Post-full-time leave status			Post-part-time leave status		
	Total*	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Full-time work	62	87	55	73	76	72
Part-time work	30	13	35	7	8	7
Temporarily / permanently out of work	8	0	10	20	16	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	115	23	92	131	25	106

Source: Survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*. * $p < 0,05$

After their part- or full-time parental leave terminated, most people returned to full-time work. Nonetheless, according to the survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*, substantial percentages, 38 % full-time and 27 % part-time leave-takers transitioned into other situations, with significant differences by gender and sector. Only 55 % of the women but 87 % of the men taking full-time parental leave returned to full-time work (Table 5) and while one in ten women did not return to work at all, not a single case of stay-at-home dads was recorded.

As corroborated in the literature (OECD, 2011; Hegewisch and Gornik, 2011; Gornik, 2015), leave duration conditioned women's return to full-time work, although not linearly. After part-time leaves of over 2 years, 62 % of women returned to full-time employment compared to 76 % for shorter durations. The gap was even wider for full-time parental leave, for only 9 % of women who used such leaves for over one year returned to full-time work, compared to 62 % whose leave lasted for 12 months or less. Employment in the public or private sector was the variable with the greatest effect on the return to full-time work. After full-time parental leave, half of private sector employees (both sexes) failed to return to full-time work and 14 % failed to return at all. All public sector employees returned to work, 77 % full time. The data also showed that private sector employees were much less likely than public sector workers to return to full-time work after a part-time parental leave. These data revealed the impact of full- or part-time parental leave-taking on parents' and especially on mothers' careers.

Reasons for taking parental leave

A key question in the sociological analysis of leaves is to ascertain mothers' and fathers' motivations for using them. This is the only way to determine whether a public policy is meeting its objectives effectively: in this case, to enable fathers to devote more time to childcare while eluding possible adverse effects on their careers, such as resignation or forfeiture of job-associated rights.

Different approaches may be adopted to explain the relevance of the motivations and practices involved in gender model change. One of the most prominent is the 'doing gender' theory (West and Zimmerman, 1987) that carries gender role theories one step further, contending that gender is not a series of features *pertaining* to individuals, but a staging of interactions built on everyday social practice. The theory assumes that people are aware that their acts are assessed in terms of gender expectations and behave accordingly (West and Zimmerman, 1987). From that perspective, the reasons given by mothers and fathers to justify their use of leaves denote either the reinforcement of traditional gender roles or progress toward more egalitarian childcare models.

The reasons for taking unpaid full- or part-time parental leave are analysed here because as they generally have a longer duration, they carry a high opportunity cost and have more profound effects on the social construction of gender roles. Given the limited use of full-time leave, the number of cases was insufficient to break the analysis down by sex and type of leave both. The discussion consequently distinguishes by sex only, pooling the information on full and part-time leaves.

The reason most frequently given for applying for such leaves was the desire to spend more time with the baby (Table 6). That is closely related to the reluctance to surrender childcare to others: to avoid either overburdening grandparents (48 %) or placing the baby in a nursery or hiring a "nanny" (50 %). The underlying assumption in this group of responses was that parents, more than any other agent, are primarily responsible for childcare. The fact that women subscribed to such responses more frequently than men is consistent with their stated desire to take leaves to have sufficient time to assume a lead role in raising their children. Another significant reason given by women was, as in other countries (McKay & Doucet, 2010), to breast-feed their children beyond the termination of paid leave (46 %). On the whole, then, child-raising was a concern that prevailed among women and men both. The decision appeared to be unrelated to the availability or otherwise of grandparents able to provide childcare, for no statistically significant

differences in leave-taking were observed between families living at shorter or longer distances from maternal or paternal grandparents.

A minority of respondents listed other reasons for taking leaves. Five per cent did so to engage in other professional activities, 3 % to participate in training courses and 4 % to lower their likelihood of being laid off. These reasons were given more frequently by men than by women.

Men who used a parental leave tended to prioritise their family over their career, for 75 % claimed to be more devoted to their family than their job, compared to 40 % among men not taking such leaves (25 % and 46 %, respectively, said they were equally devoted to both). No statistically significant differences were observed among women in this respect. These findings were consistent with earlier qualitative studies according to which the discourse characteristic of men using parental leave was more family- and childcare- than career-oriented (Romeo-Balsas et al., 2013, Muntanyola-Saura, Rogero-García, 2013; Brandth and Kvande, 2002).

It is up to the couple to decide which of the two partners is to take the leave. Hence the interest in asking those who took a parental leave why their partner did not (Table 7). The question is important for it is an indication of how leave-takers build their maternity and paternity ideal. The reasons given by women for their husbands' not taking the leave were primarily financial, although as they stemmed from the division of work along sex lines and men's and women's traditional roles in childcare, in 'doing gender' theory they would be seen as contributing to the reproduction of such attitudes. The reasons most frequently cited by mothers had to do with the effects on household income (53 %). The decline in family earnings tends to be greater when leaves are taken by the father, for men's salaries tend to be higher. A fair percentage (50 %) of the women claimed that it was unimaginable for their partner to take a leave to care for the children, reinforcing the idea that men's employment is less dispensable than women's.

Table 6. Reasons why respondents took full- or part-time parental leaves, by sex

	Men	Women	Total
To spend more time with child(ren)	89 %	96 %	94 %*
To avoid placing the child in a nursery or with a domestic worker	40 %	53 %	50 %*
To avoid overburdening grandparents	43 %	50 %	48 %
To continue breast-feeding	-	46 %	-
To avoid the high cost of childcare	19 %	38 %	34 %*
To reduce work-induced stress or fatigue	26 %	28 %	28 %
To engage in other professional activities	10 %	3 %	5 %*
To reduce the likelihood of being laid off	6 %	3 %	4 %
To engage in training	6 %	3 %	3 %
<i>Number of cases</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>359</i>

Source: Survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*. * $p < 0,05$

Table 7. Reasons for leave-taking by respondents instead of their partners, by sex

	Men	Women	Total
Because of the adverse effect of the contrary on (their partner's) earnings	40 %	53 %	52 % *
Because the characteristics of their partner's job made such leaves unthinkable	42 %	51 %	50 % *
Because the respondent wanted to take a full- or part-time leave	33 %	51 %	49 % *
Because the contrary would have endangered (their partner's) job	26 %	35 %	34 % *
Because of the adverse impact of the contrary on (their partner's) career	21 %	28 %	27 %
Because their partner had better working hours	40 %	16 %	19 % *
Because their partner preferred to devote more time to work	9 %	9 %	9 %
Because their partner thinks these are women's leaves	-	6 %	-
Because the respondent thinks these are women's leaves	-	14 %	-
<i>Number of cases</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>264</i>	<i>307</i>

Source: Survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*. * $p < 0,05$

Three of every four women (77 %) who took a leave contended that they did so because their working conditions were less favourable than their husbands', attesting to the gender inequality on the labour market (García Sainz et al., 2014, Santos Pérez and Valencia Olivero, 2014). One in four (22 %) wielded ideological reasons around gender role models, either because their spouses associated parental leaves with women or because they prioritised work over childcare. Half of all women (51 % compared to 33 % of men) reported that they took the leave because they "wanted to", i.e., because they were more inclined to do so than their husbands. The reasons given by most women about why they instead of their husbands used leaves were related to a desire to exercise a right to which they are entitled by law, and to the traditional definition of gender roles still in place in Spanish society.

Men also wielded financial-occupational reasons to explain why they took leaves instead of their

partners. The two reasons most often put forward were that the characteristics of their wives' jobs made the contrary unthinkable (42 %) and that the reverse would have had an adverse impact on household earnings (40 %). Overall, two of every three men (63 %) took the leave to protect their wives' jobs. Men, then, took leave primarily to support their partners' employability and career and, to a lesser extent, to raise their children outside the traditional model.

WORK-RELATED IMPLICATIONS OF TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE

Workplace implications

Full- and part-time parental leaves, which have long been in place, may have direct or indirect costs for users' employers and workmates. More specifically,

they may lower production levels due to the high replacement costs (not only substitutes' pay, but also their lower productivity) and entail a heavier workload for workmates (Bygren and Duvander, 2006). In light of such consequences, leave-taking might understandably be discouraged by superiors and, where they entail a redistribution of work, criticised by workmates. That notwithstanding, 95 % of the people taking full-time and 94 % taking part-time leaves, and 94 % of the men and 92 % of the women taking parental leave deemed that their absence had no adverse consequences for their employer (Table 8). The respondents reported that employers' strategies to adapt to their leave varied and depended, among others, on the type of leave.

As noted before, workplace characteristics affected the use (or otherwise) of parental leave. Scant information is available on the impact of leave-taking at the workplace, however. Qualitative studies have shown, in the case of men taking parental leave, that workmates' most frequent reaction is indifference, although occasionally attendant upon surprise and joking about the idea (Meil et al., 2017a, Romero-Balsas, Rogero-García, 2017a; Wall, 2014). Further to the survey results analysed, only 5 % of those using a leave reported any objection or attempted discouragement by their workmates. Such indifference may be related to how work is distributed during the leave. According to 71 % of the respondents (with no differences between the sexes), taking a part-time

leave usually did not lead to any substantial decline in their own workload, but rather to a rise in their productivity: i.e., they did more work in less time. This perception was more common where the reduction in working hours was smaller (88 % for one hour less) and was more widespread in the private (75 %) than in the public (62 %) sector. One-third of the people who reduced their working hours mentioned, however, that another employee had been hired. That percentage rose with the number of hours cut back (41 % for two or more hours compared to 18 % for one hour) and was higher in the public (54 %) than in the private (30 %) sector. A constant 15 %, irrespective of the hourly cut-back, said that work had been redistributed among workmates, which was more common in the public (26 %) than in the private (14 %) sector. Where part-time leaves were concerned, then, leave-takers' productivity rose, particularly where the cut-back was small. In other cases, either more people were hired or the work was redistributed among the remaining employees.

Substitutes were hired to replace 67 % of full-time leave-takers, a practice that was more frequent when the leave was longer (56 % for under and 71 % for over 6 months) and in the public (76 %) than in the private (61 %) sector. Redistribution of work among other employees, while not the most frequent solution, was not unusual (23 %), with higher percentages for shorter leaves (30 % for under and 18 % for over 6 months).

Table 8. Effects of the use of parental leaves on the workplace, by type of leave

	Full-time leave	Part-time leave	Total
The leave had an adverse effect on the workplace	5 %	6 %	6 %
The workload was the same after the hourly cut-back	-	71 %	71 %
A substitute was hired during the leave	70 %	37 %	44 %***
The leave increased other employees' workload	21 %	17 %	18 %
<i>Number of cases</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>343</i>

Source: Survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*. *** $p < 0,001$

In light of the foregoing, when employees applied for full- or part-time parental leaves their superiors did not usually object, but rather approved the request without posing reservations (72 %). According to 14 % of men and 18 % of women, when they applied for the leave, their superiors tried to discourage them or opposed their request. Such obstacles were found most frequently by women applying for full-time leaves (22 % compared to 7 % in men) and in general, regardless of sex, when the leave was expected to have adverse consequences for the employer (40 % compared to 16 %).

Implications for careers

Studies conducted primarily in Scandinavian countries have shown that the use of leaves can impact careers. Research on the effect of the use of leaves on future earnings, one of the factors explored most thoroughly, showed a decline in earnings after the return to work (Görlich and De Grip, 2009; Nielsen, 2009; Johansson, 2010; Hegewisch and Gornik, 2011). That the effect proved to be more accentuated with longer leaves of absence (OECD, 2011) was attributed to a loss of 'human capital' during the long leaves available in Nordic countries (Johansson, 2010) and the absence of ongoing training during the leave (Luotonen,

2012). Income loss may have been the result not only of professional de-qualification, but also of a reduction in the number of hours worked by both male and female Swedes after their leaves. That decline was observed to steepen with increases in the length of the leave (Duvander and Jans, 2009). Johansson (2010) in fact found that Swedish men took a heavier income loss than Swedish women.

In the survey analysed respondents were not asked about the impact of leaves on their salaries, although they were asked about other areas of job performance not yet broached in the literature. Some type of adverse consequence for their work or career was reported by 35 % of workers, with no significant differences by sex or by type of leave (full- or part-time). The types of discrimination most frequently mentioned included retarded career promotion (26 %) and lower quality of job content, i.e., lesser responsibility or competence (16 %), less demanding tasks (11 %) or the boss's loss of confidence (15 %) (Table 9). Although the use of parental leave is legally protected against dismissal, 5 % of women (but none of the men) claimed to have lost their job as a result of having taken such a leave. Other adverse consequences of using leaves included exclusion from ongoing training (11 %) and the forced acceptance of a lower category job (3 %). Frequently (20 %), leave-takers were affected by one or two of the aforementioned adverse consequences, although 15 % reported three or more, with no significant differences by sex.

Table 9. Consequences of using full- or part-time parental leave on careers

	Men	Women
Dismissed	0	5 %
Career stalled	23 %	27 %
Job category lowered	-	4 %
Loss of superior's confidence	14 %	15 %
Exclusion from ongoing education courses	-	12 %
Job responsibility or competence lowered	18 %	16 %
Lower level tasks assigned	11 %	10 %
One or more consequences reported	35 %	35 %
<i>Number of cases</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>274</i>

Source: Survey *El uso social de los permisos parentales 2012*.

While higher in the private sector (41 %), the likelihood of encountering one of these types of discrimination was also present in the public sector (23 %). Discrimination for using parental leave was also more frequent when the immediate superior opposed the leave or attempted to discourage its use (63 % versus 30 %) and when the leave had adverse effects for the employer (55 % versus 34 %). Leave duration was not clearly related to the number of adverse consequences. Only where parental leave were taken full-time for over 1 year did a clearly higher proportion of women report having experienced at least one such adverse consequence (61 % compared to 29 % for shorter leaves). That finding is consistent with the effects on future income observed in the papers referred to above.

Therefore, in addition to the direct costs as a result of the forfeiture of all or part of the user's salary and the absence of compensatory benefits, using full- or part-time parental leave also entailed indirect costs in terms of career promotion, power or quality of job content. This risk of discrimination was similar for women and men.

CONCLUSIONS

In recent decades Spain has implemented a parental leave policy that has afforded parents greater freedom in connection with their children's upbringing. Gaps can still be found in the understanding of the use and effects of such leaves, however. This article aimed to illustrate the state-of-play of the various childcare leaves in Spain, introducing new information in three areas: their use, the motivations behind their use and the career implications involved.

The findings show that in Spain as in other countries the rate of leave-taking depends largely on whether or not absence from the workplace is paid. Most people who were working when their children were born took paid leave. From that perspective, the introduction of non-transferable paternity leave, with the same degree of protection as maternity leave, may be deemed successful, for most fathers used it to the full entitlement. Some studies suggest that such success may be due not only to full salary

benefits, but also to the fairly short leave duration (Bygren and Duvander, 2006; Romero-Balsas et al., 2013, Montañola-Saura and Rogero-García, 2015). Be that as it may, such a high rate of use stands as proof that progress can be made in involving men in childcare via longer paternity leaves, longer even than the 4 weeks legislated in Spain in 2017. Future research on the use of this leave should analyse the extent to which that longer duration may have affected use, the type of possible constraints on the exercise of the right and any career implications.

Despite the progress made, the use of paternity and maternity leaves is very uneven, depending on each individual's work situation: the percentage of use is significantly lower among self-employed workers and those with unstable employment. Future research should explore how difficulties in accessing leaves weigh on workers' fertility and identify effective measures to guarantee the right to care for vulnerable segments of the population. The implementation of mechanisms favouring more flexible arrangements, such as the possibility of transferring part of the maternity leave to the father or using a leave part-time, may constitute a valuable resource for parents whose working conditions are an obstacle to 'standard' leave-taking. The easing or elimination of requirements restricting access to leaves by non-contributors to the system might be instrumental to raising their use among workers with unstable jobs.

This paper introduces a new estimate of the duration of men's and women's full- and part-time parental leaves. Whilst the maximum duration allowed in such leaves is generous, the fact that they are unpaid has led to very uneven use, depending on sex and working conditions. On the one hand, only a tiny minority of men use them and then for shorter times than women. Where part-time leave (the option of choice for both sexes) is taken, men shorten their working hours less than women. The establishment of such leaves as an individual right has served to facilitate work-family conciliation for only a minority of men, while not significantly furthering their use. In-depth reform of the entire leave and childcare system would be required to ensure more egalitarian use from the standpoints of gender and working conditions.

Another novel element in this study is the analysis of the motivations behind parents' decision to take full- or part-time parental leave. The present findings show that the reasons are associated more with care for the baby than financial or work-related considerations (such as capitalising on the time to train or engage in other professional activities), although the latter are present in a minority of cases, among men in particular. The persons taking such leaves appear to deem that parents should assume childcare rather than delegating that task to third parties, even when grandparents or other resources are locally available. In women, the desire to extend breast-feeding beyond the end of maternity leave also plays a significant role. Consequently, parental leave does not appear to be taken to compensate for the absence of other conciliation resources, but rather out of adherence to a model of parenthood that entails personally devoting more time to children. That is especially true for women, whose motivations are more frequently linked to the division of productive and reproductive work along sex lines. As the present quantitative approach lacks the depth that might be afforded by a qualitative analysis based on interviews or focus groups, future studies should explore the subject from that perspective in greater depth.

The present findings show that parental leave, be it in the form of full- or part-time leave, has more than the direct costs measured in terms of salary and social protection. Although earlier studies have addressed some of the effects of leaves on careers (Hegewisch and Gornik, 2011; OECD, 2011), this article analyses aspects yet unstudied, such as the loss of responsibility prior to leave-taking, the loss of trust on the part of superiors or the perception of career stalling. One of every three respondents, with no sex-based differences, report indirect costs in terms of promotions, responsibility or quality of job content. Moreover, a significant proportion of people, particularly women, fail to return to work at the end of the leave, either voluntarily or involuntarily. In short, the findings of this study show that at present regulation is insufficient to prevent post-leave workplace discrimination.

Pursuant to earlier research, the longer the duration of the leave the higher are the career costs (OECD, 2011). Nonetheless, studies covering a wid-

er window and addressing the question of whether the penalisation is higher in certain occupations should be undertaken. That would call for longitudinal surveys able to detect the relationship between adverse effects and leave duration and the sector or industry involved. Measures adopted that have proven to effectively protect leave-takers' rights in other countries should also be identified and their likelihood of success in Spain determined.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, Project Reference CSO2013-44097-R

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Artículo / Article

Can an egalitarian reform in the parental leave system reduce the motherhood labor penalty? Some evidence from Spain / *¿Puede una reforma igualitaria del sistema de permisos parentales reducir la penalización laboral por maternidad? Alguna evidencia española*

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Recibido / Received: 03/04/2017 - Aceptado / Accepted: 20/01/2018

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes how an egalitarian reform in the parental leave system may reduce the motherhood penalty. We used a sample of heterosexual dual-earner couples, with children between 3-8 years old, residing in Madrid and its metropolitan area. We show, first, that the introduction of a 13-day paternity leave increased significantly the average number of days that employed fathers were off work after the birth or adoption of a child. Second, we found some empirical evidence that fathers who took longer leaves tended to be subsequently more involved in the care of their children. And third, we obtained some evidence in favor of the hypotheses that when the father is actively involved in the care of his child the mother tends to experience less work penalty. We also considered the effect of other variables such as having egalitarian gender attitudes, working in a family-friendly company, earnings and the working week.

Keywords: *IPaternity leave, father involvement, motherhood penalty, policy reform.*

RESUMEN

El artículo analiza cómo una reforma igualitaria en el sistema de permisos parentales puede reducir la penalización por maternidad. Usamos una muestra de parejas heterosexuales de doble ingreso, con hijos de entre 3-8 años, de Madrid y su zona metropolitana. Mostramos, primero, que la introducción del permiso de paternidad de 13 días ha incrementado significativamente el número promedio de días que los padres trabajadores están de baja tras tener/adoptar un niño/a. Segundo, mostramos que los padres que se toman permisos más largos tienden posteriormente a implicarse más en el cuidado infantil. Y tercero, obtenemos evidencia a favor de la hipótesis de que cuando el padre se implica activamente en el cuidado del bebé la madre tiende a experimentar una penalización laboral menor. Además consideramos el efecto de otras variables tales como las actitudes de género igualitarias, el hecho de trabajar en una empresa familiarmente responsable, los ingresos y la jornada laboral.

Palabras clave: Permiso de paternidad, implicación del padre, penalización por maternidad, cambio de política

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Sugerencia de cita / Suggested citation: Fernández-Cornejo, J. A., Del Pozo-García, E., Escot, L., Castellanos-Serrano, C. (2018). Can an egalitarian reform in the parental leave system reduce the motherhood labor penalty? Some evidence from Spain. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 27 (3 Supl.), 45-64 (Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2018.33>)

INTRODUCTION

Over recent decades (and in different contexts) we have witnessed a growing participation on the part of men (and in particular of fathers) in domestic chores and the care of small children (Richter and Seward, 2008; Fursman and Callister, 2009; Esping-Andersen *et al.*, 2013). This is a slow process and is taking place more out of step and more slowly than the incorporation of women into the workplace (Hook, 2006; Kaufman, 2013). Nevertheless, it seems to be a phenomenon established firmly enough and one treated with sufficient sensitivity by society. In this sense reference is often made to a “new father” (Yeung *et al.*, 2001) or “superdads” (Kaufman, 2013); of a “new masculinity” (Connell, 2014); of a “new culture of fatherhood” (Wall and Arnold, 2007; Meil, 2013); or of a “involved fathering” (Gatrell *et al.*, 2015). This typology of father (found mostly among young males with high levels of education and egalitarian gender attitudes) may not be the mainstream but it is emerging.

This higher involvement of the father in the care of the baby and small children is positive for the welfare of the children (Pleck, 2007; Sarkadi, *et al.* 2008; Lamb, 2010; Huerta *et al.*, 2013); and it is also good for the welfare of men themselves (Haas and Hwang, 2008), who, among other things, can develop a richer masculinity than the traditional hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 2017).

But that greater father involvement is also very good for the advancement of women (and mothers) in the workplace does not halt. In general it is mentioned that a full shared responsibility between women and men in domestic work and care tasks is a necessary condition for reaching convergence in results between these two groups in the labor market (Bjørnholt, 2014). For the specific case of child and baby care the problem of lack of shared responsibility may be accentuated as a result of a phenomenon such as the “retraditionalization” (Schober, 2011; Grunow *et al.*, 2012; Habib, 2012; Abril *et al.*, 2015a and 2015b). Indeed, when a child is born (particularly the first child) some couples activate or accentuate traditional gender roles, which generates a shift toward a higher gen-

der-based division of labor in the family (independent of spouses’ relative economic resources). Therefore designing policies to further progress in this specific area of share responsibility in parenting is key to reducing or eliminating the phenomenon that we want to analyze in this article –the “professional motherhood penalty” (Raley *et al.*, 2012).

In this sense, regarding parental leaves, there is now an international trend to adopt reforms aiming to introduce parental leaves that are egalitarian in terms of gender (often with some kind of mechanism to encourage the father to use them) (Moss and Deven, 2015; Eydal and Rostgaard, 2015). The arguments related to gender equality are a fundamental line in the justification of these policies of parental leave reform. The literature on this issue shows that men tend to respond well to the introduction of well paid and non-transferable leaves (Duvander and Johansson, 2012; Ekberg *et al.*, 2013; Escot *et al.*, 2014; Eydal *et al.*, 2015; Castro and Pazos, 2016); meanwhile, taking longer leaves may promote greater subsequent involvement of the father in childcare (Duvander and Jans, 2008; Haas and Hwang, 2008; Kotsadam and Finseraas, 2011; Meil, 2013; Arnalds *et al.*, 2013; Fernández-Cornejo *et al.*, 2016a); and these resulting higher levels of shared responsibility in the care of babies and young children may result in mothers making fewer professional sacrifices in order to care for the child (the motherhood penalty would be lower).

The basic aim of this article is to cast light and empirical evidence on the previous argument. Is the penalty for motherhood lower for those women whose partners are fully involved in baby care? Can the introduction of non-transferable and well-paid leave for the fathers cause them to become more involved in the care of their babies? For this purpose we are going to use a sample (collected in 2012) of 795 heterosexual dual-earner couples (at the time of the birth of the reference child), with children between 3 and 8 years old, residing in Madrid and its metropolitan area. In this sample the research unit is both parents (the couple), so for each observation we have matched information on the characteristics and perceptions of both partners. We use path analysis modeling as a main analytical tool (Hayes, 2013).

SPANISH CONTEXT

With respect to the cultural context, Spain is a Mediterranean Latin Country that until the seventies in the 20th century was a quite traditional society with a division of household labor largely traditional (patriarchal), with strong family values; but where values and social norms (including gender norms) have been evolving quite quickly towards those existing in the most advanced societies, and towards a dual-earner family model (Dema-Moreno and Díaz-Martínez, 2010; Naldini and Jurado, 2013; Valiente, 2013; Fernández-Cornejo, 2016b). This has been reflected in a significant increase in female participation in labor force. The activity rate (Economically Active Population Survey 2015) among women between 25 and 44 has risen from 45.1 % in 1987 to 85.0 % in 2015 (the figures for men were 94.9 % and 93.6 %, respectively).

Nonetheless, there are still significant gender inequality in the labor market and the home. The wage gap in terms of gross hourly wage stood at 14.1 % in 2015; the percentage of female workers working part time was 26.1 %, whereas for male workers it was 8.0 % in the fourth quarter of 2017. There are still important levels of horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the labor market (Dueñas *et al.*, 2014). Moreover the ratio of average time spent by women and men to “household and family” was 216.7 %, according to the Time Use survey (2009-10). Furthermore, as it is highlighted by Abril *et al.* (2015 a,b), often an important discrepancy can be observed between egalitarian family ideals and the survival of a family reality strongly marked by gender.

Despite what is stated above, in Spain the target of gender equality has become increasingly important in political and social discourse, and this has been reflected in public equality policies and particularly in the Law for Equal Opportunity between Women and Men of 2007. One relevant policy reform originated in this law was the introduction in March 2007 of a non-transferable 13-day paternity leave, that has been used by most eligible fathers. This policy reform is considered in our analysis. However, and not covered by our study, a new paternity leave of four weeks came into force in January 2017.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that at the time of implementing our survey (2012) the Spanish economy was experiencing an important economic crisis, whose worst consequence has been to generate a very high unemployment rate, which must be conditioning the decisions of the couples included in our sample.

THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Gender division of work

In the literature on the sexual division of work (Meil, 2013; Lapuerta, 2013) two types of influences can be distinguished which simultaneously determine how housework (especially childcare) is divided between the couple. The first one is related to economic incentives (and opportunity cost), and includes the comparative advantage approach and that of bargaining models. According to the comparative advantage theory (Becker, 1965), given a specific endowment of resources (human capital and wage, domestic work skills, etc.) between the couple, each of them will tend to specialize partially or completely in the area in which each of them has a comparative advantage (specialization is utility maximizing when partners' earning power differs). Moreover, the bargaining models (Manser and Brown, 1980; McElroy and Horney, 1981; Lundberg and Pollack, 1996) (in which the unit of analysis is the individual, not the home), argue that the distribution of available time between the couple between paid and unpaid work (it is assumed that domestic work, including looking after small children is an unpleasant activity) depends on the bargaining power of each of them (which depends, *inter alia*, on the earnings of each one). This bargaining power is determined by his and her “threat point” (the level of well-being that each would attain if the couple cannot reach agreement and get divorced).

The second of these influences is that of gender norms. The Identity Economics approach (Akerloff and Kranton, 2000, 2010) tackles this question. The Identity Economics constitutes an application to the area of Economics of the Social Identity approach

(Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Haslam, 2001; and Haslam *et al.*, 2010), and has the peculiarity of being able to include aspects related to identity (mental frame of oneself) in the rational choice models of the Economics (based on the use of utility functions). Starting from an approach like that of the previous paragraph (economic incentives) three identity elements will now be added. First, social categories: “men” and “women”. Second, the norms and ideals for each category: “Some tasks are labeled appropriate for men; other tasks are labeled appropriate for women”. Specifically, according to traditional gender norms, “housework and childcare is a primary responsibility of the woman”. And third, gains and losses in identity utility (which is the gain when actions conform to norms and ideals, and the loss insofar as they do not): Women lose utility from doing a man’s task or job; and men lose utility from doing a woman’s task or job.

As pointed out by Akerlof and Kranton (2010), if the gender norms were not important, in accordance with “comparative-advantage” model, the partner who works more inside the home will work less outside the home. But according to the empirical evidence, this is not the observed pattern. Women, even when they work more hours outside the home and supply the majority of the income, do more of the housework (Darling-Fisher and Tiedje, 1990; Hersch and Stratton, 1994; Tsuya *et al.*, 2000; Rizavi and Sofer, 2010; Dema-Moreno and Díaz-Martínez, 2010; Höfner *et al.*, 2011). This would be because (assuming that the partners have some traditional gender attitudes) in an identity model, a woman or man will lose identity utility when performing a gender inappropriate task. There also exist time use studies showing that many couples experience a retraditionalization of gender roles after the birth of their first child (Schober, 2011; Höfner *et al.*, 2011; Grunow *et al.*, 2012). And, similarly, the literature on uses of time clearly shows that gender segregation in domestic work is quite persistent over time (Kan *et al.*, 2010).

“New fathers”

However, at the same time we can talk of the emergence of the ideal of a “new father” (Bonney

et al., 1999; Devreux, 2007; Fursman and Callister, 2009; Fox *et al.*, 2009; O’Brien and Moss, 2010; Gregory and Milner, 2011; Romero-Balsas *et al.*, 2013; Meil *et al.*, 2017a; Meil *et al.*, 2017b), who is a direct and involved carer of their children. O’Brien and Moss, referring to the case of Europe, state that “today fathers are expected to be accessible and nurturing as well as economically supportive to their children”. And Kaufman (2013), referring to the case of United States, affirms that “(...) fathers are expected to work long hours but are also expected to be highly involved with their children”.

The “new father” figure has been criticized, for example by Devreux (2007), who considers that often these researches assign more importance to the way men “feel” about the space of family life than to actual changes in practice. Nonetheless, what the literature seems to show is that, even though it might be a minority, there is a group of fathers with advanced attitude towards gender and care who clearly see that they wish to be involved in looking after their small children.

In the case of the United States, Kaufman (2013) makes a distinction between “new fathers” —men who seek a better work-family balance— and “superdads” —men who make large changes in their work lives in direct response to their role as fathers.

For the case of Spain, Romero-Balsas *et al.* 2013 analyze (on the basis of an analysis with 30 in-depth interviews) how Spanish fathers construct and justify their decisions to use parental leaves. They identify a minority group of “new fathers” with a clear pro-care discourse and a discursive awareness of the need to balance personal, family, and work time. Furthermore in their qualitative study with 68 couples refer to this type of parents as “committed fathers, Abril *et al.* (2015b)”.

How the participation of the fathers in childcare changes when the mother works more hours.

As was mentioned previously, women do more of the housework, even when they work more hours outside the home and supply the majority of the in-

come. But even in this context of non-egalitarian sharing of work within the household it is important to know to what extent there are factors which produce a change in this unequal distribution, and one of these factors is the growing number of women and mothers working outside the home. When the woman works more hours outside her home does the father tend to do more of the housework? Centering our attention on childcare, empirical evidence with time-use data shows clearly two types of results. First of all, there exists a group of studies which found some sort of relationship between the mother's participation in the labor market and the father's involvement in childcare, albeit this relationship is rather weak and unsatisfactory (Darling-Fisher and Tiedje, 1990; Bonney *et al.*, 1999; Suppal and Roopnarine, 1999; Kitterød and Pettersen, 2006; Nkwake, 2009; Rizavi y Sofer, 2010).

For example, Kitterød and Pettersen (2006), using the Norwegian time-use survey, find a non-linear relationship between mother's working hours and the father's family-work. The father makes up for the mother's absence only when she works short hours and only for certain chores. Full-time employment for the mother does not increase the father's contribution in any types of family-work. They suggest that dual-earner parents rely mostly on external childcare to substitute for the mother's absence.

Rizavi and Sofer (2010) use the French Time Use Survey, focusing on couples where both partners participate in the labor market. They show that though a better relative position of the woman in the labor market increases her husband's share of household work, there is no role reversal in the division of labor.

Bonney *et al.* (1999) use a sample of fathers and mothers ($n = 120$) of preschool-aged children from USA, and obtain some evidence that suggests mother's extended work hours serve to increase the father's participation in child care. However, there are other more important determining factors in the father's participation in childcare. Father's gender role ideology and attitudes about the father's role (positively) and father's long work hours (negatively) seem to be the most important determinants for father's involvement in child care.

In various social spaces, very different from the previous ones, a weak or non-existent relationship is obtained between the mother's participation in the labor market and the father's participation in child care, as in the cases of Suppal and Roopnarine (1999), for India, or Nkwake (2009), for Uganda.

Secondly and unlike previous studies Raley *et al.* (2012) show that the link between fathers' care of children and maternal employment and earnings is stronger when measures of caregiving capture fathers' increased responsibility for children. They use time diary data from 6,572 married fathers and 7,376 married mothers with children under age 13, from USA. Their results indicate that fathers engage in more "solo" care of children when their wives are employed; they are more likely to do the kind of child care associated with responsibility for their children when their wives spend more time in the labor market; they participate more in routine care when their wives contribute a greater share of the couple's earnings; and finally, the "father care" to "mother care" ratio rises when mothers contribute a greater share of household earnings.

Literature on motherhood penalty

In previous paragraphs a direction of causality has been used starting from the maternal employment to the fathers' care of children. However, causality can also go the opposite way. The fact that the father (perhaps a new father) is more actively involved in looking after young children might be a contributory factor to the mother feeling a lesser "motherhood labor penalty". For example, as is shown by Raley *et al.* (2012), studies of the motherhood wage penalty show that it is the division of labor surrounding children that seems to differentiate the activities of men and women and stall movement toward greater gender equality in labor market outcomes.

As pointed out by the literature on the motherhood wage penalty, basically formed by empirical studies based on longitudinal survey data and panel analysis models (Budig and England, 2001; Data-Gupta and Smith, 2002; Anderson *et*

al., 2002; Anderson *et al.*, 2003; Molina and Montuenga, 2009; Budig and Hodges, 2010; Wilde *et al.*, 2010), traditional gender norms mean that the costs of childbearing fall disproportionately on women, in the form of a lower labor supply and a loss of human capital by the mothers, all of which affect negatively their wage trajectories. Mothers are more likely than fathers to drop out of the labor force, cut back to part-time employment, using compensating wage differential mechanisms (accepting a lower wage in exchange for having a less demanding job or having an occupation that is more family-friendly), or pass up promotions. Furthermore, to the loss of wages suffered by mothers compared to non-mothers we must add the possible wage bonus received by fathers compared to men who are not fathers (Hodges and Budig, 2010).

In most of these studies it is stated that the lack of shared responsibility between mothers and fathers in childcare is one of the basic causes of motherhood penalty. However, given the limitations of the longitudinal survey data used, normally the father's involvement in childcare cannot be included in the analysis as an explanatory variable. Even then, in some studies an attempt is made to introduce indirectly the father's participation into childcare, via the number of hours worked by the husband (if these are fewer the husband is assumed to have more available time to share childcare tasks).

For example, Budig *et al.* (2010) assume that there are two aspects of the husband that may influence the motherhood penalty (the importance of which would depend upon the situation of the mother across the women's earning distribution): Husband's earning and husband's time availability. Husband's earning may have a greater effect on low-earning women (spousal earnings may enable low earning women to trade job amenities for wages, producing larger motherhood penalties). By contrast, husband's time availability may have a greater effect for high-earning women. These women are less likely to be dependent on their husband's income. For them husband's work hours and availability to share childcare task may matter more (having husbands who work fewer hours may lead to a smaller motherhood penalty because a reduced work schedule may enable the husband to provide

more childcare). However, in their study, based on data of white American women from 1979-2004 waves of the NLSY, they could not find empirical evidence of this relationship.

On the other hand, Herrarte *et al.* (2012) do obtain some evidence for the case of Spain. They do not analyze the motherhood wage penalty but the effect of childbirth on Spanish women's decisions to withdraw from paid work. They use a pool of cross-sectional data corresponding to four waves of the second quarters of the Spanish Labor Force Survey (EPA) from 2001 to 2004. Their results show that if the male partner works long hours or if he works outside the region of residence, his female partner will be more likely to leave the labor market.

Finally, Ekberg *et al.* (2013), using a natural experiment setting, evaluated the introduction of the 1995 'daddy month' reform in Sweden in three fields: take-up rates, involvement in childcare, and long-term effects on female earnings and employment. They found that men took much more parental leave after the reform. However (and probably due to the limitations of their dataset), they did not find a robust evidence of a change in the behavior of fathers in terms of childcare (the indicator of fathers' involvement in childcare that they used was the proportion of fathers using the leave to care of sick children); and they did not find a statistically significant positive long-term effects on female earnings or employment rates.

MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Hypothesized model

According to what was mentioned in the previous section, if the father is more involved in childcare the motherhood labor penalty will be lower; fathers are more involved when they have favorable attitudes to it and when they have fewer restrictions to do so. In particular, having a longer parental leave example, because of the introduction of a policy reform that extended parental leave for the father seems to positively influence their involvement. This is the kind of arguments that we consider in our model.

Figure 1 presents our hypothesized model. It depicts the different variables that could explain (directly or indirectly) the motherhood labor penalty. Some of the exogenous variables correspond to the approach of gender roles (“Father’s egalitarian gender attitudes” and “Mother’s egalitarian gender attitudes”); whereas the other exogenous variables correspond to the economic-rational approach.

First, as can be seen in the figure, we assume that these seven variables influence the variable “Motherhood negatively affected mother’s career” both directly as well as indirectly through the effect of some of them on “Father’s involvement in childcare” (and also through “Father’s total duration of childbirth leave”). To put it another way, the father’s involvement in childcare would be a mediating variable between some of these seven variables and the motherhood labor penalty. Thus, in our hypothesized model we assume that some of the determinants of the father’s involvement in childcare are the same as those for the motherhood labor penalty.

Second, an exclusive determining factor of the duration of childbirth leave is the introduction of paternity leave (a policy change). A part of our sam-

ple (50.2 % of fathers whose children were born after March 2007) took advantage of the new 13-day paternity leave.

Third, we assume that the mere fact of taking longer leave influences the subsequent involvement of the father in childcare, in line with empirical researches such as Seward *et al.* (2006) and Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007), for United States; Tanaka and Waldfogel (2007), for United Kingdom; Haas and Hwang (2008) and Duvander and Jans (2008), for Sweden; Hosking *et al.* (2010), for Australia; and Meil (2013) and Fernández-Cornejo *et al.* (2016a), for Spain.

Fourth, in line with the literature reviewed in the previous section, we consider in our analysis the direct and indirect effects of gender attitudes of the father and the mother on the involvement of the father in childcare; and the direct and indirect effects of several labor and contextual variables (father’s earnings, mother’s working week, working in a family friendly workplace) on the motherhood labor penalty.

Fifth, we consider five control variables (not depicted in the figure) (see them in the section of Method).

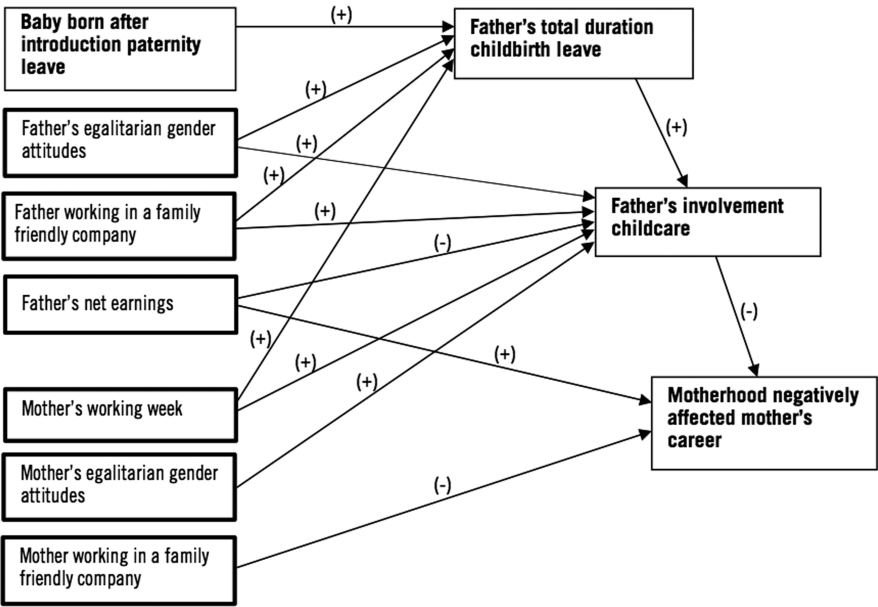


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of the determinants of motherhood labor penalty

Contrasting hypothesis

Hypothesis 1. The fact that the father is actively involved in the care of his child is negatively related to the work penalty experienced by the mother (a negative and statistically significant relation exists between “Father’s involvement in childcare” and “Motherhood negatively affected mother’s career”).

Hypothesis 2. The introduction of egalitarian reforms in the parental leave system (that give new leaves to fathers) help reduce gender inequality in the labor market. Indeed, through the mediating variables “Father’s total duration childbirth leave” and “Father’s involvement childcare”, “Baby born after introduction paternity leave” is negatively associated with “Motherhood negatively affected mother’s career”.

Hypothesis 3. The fact that the father and the mother have egalitarian gender attitudes is negatively related to the labor penalty experienced by the mother. This relationship is mediated by the variable “Father’s involvement childcare”.

Hypothesis 4. The organizational and economic restrictions affect the motherhood labor penalty. In particular, the fact that the father (indirect effect) and the mother (direct effect) work in a family friendly company is associated with a lower motherhood labor penalty. The higher the earnings of the father the higher will tend to be the motherhood penalty, both indirectly (having a high salary means a higher opportunity cost of the time the father spends with the baby) and directly (the greater the father’s earnings the greater the probability that he will earn more than her, and so the greater will be the tendency for her to be the person who assumes professional sacrifices in order to be able to balance family with work).

METHOD

Database

Data were collected (from January to June 2012) from 1.130 households with children between 3 and 8 years old, residing in Madrid and

its metropolitan area (Fernández-Cornejo *et al.* 2016a). Sampling was obtained through several randomly selected schools belonging to 10 homogeneous geographic zones (in terms of the number of inhabitants). In each of these schools, some of the teachers distributed the questionnaires among their students (from “3 year”, “4 year” or “5 year” of pre-school education; or from the first year of primary education) for them to give to their parents. Once the questionnaires were completed, the children returned them to the teacher in a sealed, anonymous envelope. Given the purpose of this article we were interested in households were: (a) the mother was married or cohabiting with the father when the baby was born; and (b) the mother and the father had a job when the baby was born. Thus from the initial sample we selected a subsample of 795 heterosexual dual-earner couples (at the time of the birth). The average age of these mothers and fathers when the “reference child” (the child who had given them the questionnaire) was born were 32.5 and 34.2 years respectively; 12.9 % and 13.0 % of mothers and fathers were immigrants; and 83.8 % of the mothers and 85.3 % of the fathers were wage earners.

The questionnaire had a closed structure and was divided into three parts: the first one had 7 common questions for both parents (household characteristics); the second part had 39 questions to be filled out by the mother; and the third part had 46 questions for the father. The objective was to gather information (from the mother and father) about how they organized (after birth) the care tasks of the reference child; and how these arrangements affected their respective careers.

Dependent variable

In the quantitative analysis that will be developed later the dependent variable will be “Motherhood negatively affected mother’s career”. The question asked to the mother was “In your opinion, being a mother, has impaired or slowed your career advancement?”; the response options were (Likert scale): “1”=“not at all”; “2”=“to a small extent”; “3”=“to some degree”; and “4”=“to a

large degree" (see table 2). There was another question with which we obtained similar results to those obtained with the previous variable: "Who do you think has sacrificed more career opportunities for the fact of having a child?" (response options: "you", "your partner", "neither of the two"). For space reasons we do not include this second variable in this article.

Explanatory variables

"Father's involvement in childcare (14 non-playful activities)". This is a measure that summarizes the relative participation of the father (compared to the mother) in 14 non-playful activities of childcare, during the first two years of the child's life. In two blocks of the questionnaire, both mother and father were asked the following question: "on a day-to-day basis, between zero and two years of the child's life, which of the members of the couple was in charge of the following activities?" A list of 18 activities followed the question (see table 1). The answers could be: (1) "mother mostly", (2) "mother somewhat more", (3) "same", (4) "father somewhat more", and (5) "father mostly". Two more options were added ("mostly grandparents" and "others") in cases when neither the father nor the mother was in charge of these activities. From this starting point the independent variable was obtained in the following manner; first, in cases when the answer was "mostly grandparents" and "others" we changed these answers to "same" (3), so as not to lose these cases. Second, we calculated the mean of the answers from the father and the mother. Third, of the 18 existing items we chose 14 items corresponding to non-playful activities of childcare (an exploratory varimax factor analysis identified a factor including four "playful" or "rewarding" childcare activities; see table 1). And, finally, the measure was constructed as the average score of these 14 items (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.883$). The range of values is from 1.00 to 4.50 (see table 2). The higher the value, the greater the father's involvement in these non-playful activities.

"Father's total duration of childbirth leave" reflects the total duration in days of the childbirth leave of the father. In the questionnaire the father was asked if he had used each of these different types of leaves and their duration: 2-day childbirth leave (paid by companies to wage earners); paternity leave (13-day paid leave introduced in March 2007); transferable part of the mother's maternity leave (up to ten weeks; used only for a very small percentage of men); accumulation of the breastfeeding leave (very small take-up); unpaid parental leave (very small take-up); other leaves; and vacation days. The range of days is from 0 to 477 (see table 2).

"Baby born after introduction paternity leave" is a dichotomous variable (1=yes; 0=no) indicating that the reference child was born after March 2007 (the date of the introduction of the 13-day paternity leave).

"Egalitarian gender attitudes" is a measure that was developed from 9 questions addressed to the father and to the mother that sought to determine whether the gender attitudes were traditional or egalitarian. Specifically, the respondent was being asked "to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?", and the response options (Likert scale) were: (1) "strongly agree", (2) "somewhat agree", (3) "neither agree nor disagree", (4) "somewhat disagree", (5) "strongly disagree". The 9 statements were: "Women have more ability for language and verbal expression, while men have more ability for spatial perception and mathematics"; "I consider it far more unpleasant to hear a woman who swears and says offensive words rather than to hear a man doing the same"; "A working mother can establish as warm and secure relationship with her children as a mother who does not work" (reverse scoring); "It would be good for society if the traditional roles of men and women were largely maintained"; "Women are more patient and tolerant than men by nature"; "A man may be as qualified as a woman to care for his baby and connect emotionally with him" (reverse scoring); "The ideal household would be one where the two partners work, but the

woman works fewer hours than the man and she is responsible to a greater extent for family responsibilities and childcare"; "The fact that most nurses are women and most pilots are men has to do partly with different innate abilities of women and men"; and "It is likely that small children suffer if their mothers work". The measure is the average score of these 9 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.732$ for mothers and 0.747 for fathers). The range of values is from 1.44 to 5.00 for mothers and 1.22 to 5.00 for fathers (see table 2). The higher the score, the more egalitarian the gender attitudes.

"Working in a family-friendly company" is a measure developed from two questions where the respondent was asked: "indicate to what degree the company or organization where you worked met the following aspects when your baby was born". The response options ranked from 0 to 10, where "0=not at all" and "10=totally". These two aspects considered were: "My company was a family-friendly company in the sense that it facilitated the reconciliation of work and family life of the staff", and "The managers of my company were aware of the importance of the reconciliation policies". The measure is the average score of these 2 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.916$ for the mother and 0.905 for the father). The range of values is from 0 to 10 for both the mother and the father (see table 2). A greater value means that the respondent considers she/he works in a more family friendly company.

"Father's net earnings" is the monthly net income of the father. There are 8 categories: from (1) "Fewer than 600 Euros" to (8) "More than 4.000 Euros".

"Mother's working week" is the number of hours the mother worked per week at the time when the baby was born.

As control variables these five variables were also considered: "Mother's age" (at the moment the baby was born); "Father's age" (at the moment the baby was born); "Help from grandparents" (dichotomous variable: 1=yes; 0=no); "Help from domestic service" (dichotomous variable: 1=yes; 0=no); and "Older siblings", which is a dichotomous variable (1=yes ; 0=no)

which reflects the fact that the reference child has at least one older brother. None of these five variables had a statistically significant effect, and therefore they were not included in the path analysis subsequently developed.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the average score of participation of the father (compared to the mother) in the 18 activities of childcare considered in the questionnaire (scale of 1 to 5). These average scores show two aspects: First, the relative participation of the mother was higher in every activity (average scores always below 3). Second, mothers tend to perform relatively more the most routine childcare activities whereas fathers tend to perform relatively more the most rewarding ones. This result matches the usual pattern observed in the studies of time use (Craig, 2006; Baxter and Smart, 2010; Kan *et al.*, 2010). In the present research we are interested in analyzing the father's participation in the less rewarding childcare activities. For this purpose we decided to omit from our measure the 4 playful activities from the end of the list in the table.

The basic descriptive statistics of the 10 variables to be used in our path analysis are shown in table 2, as well as the corresponding correlations between these variables. Correlations are quite consistent with the relations raised in our hypothesized model. In this sense, for almost all direct relationships between variables raised in our model statistically significant correlations (with the expected sign) are observed. For example, the model states that there are three variables ("Father's involvement in childcare", "Father's net earnings" and "Mother working in a family friendly company") that are directly associated with the variable "Motherhood negatively affected mother's career", and indeed statistically significant correlations are obtained between those three variables and the latter (respectively, $r = -.144$, $p = .000$; $r = .203$, $p = .000$; and $r = -.160$, $p = .000$).

Table 1. Eighteen childcare activities ordered from the most to the least feminised (by 1-5 score).

In the day-to-day, between zero and two years of the child, which of the members of the couple was in charge of the following activities?	Average score of mother's and father's opinion		
	N	Mean	
h) Washing child's clothes	766	1.640	Non-Playful
g) Buying child's clothes	764	1.709	Non-playful
b) Cooking child's food	772	1.740	Non-playful
i) Organizing housework and childcare	770	1.839	Non-playful
c) Feeding the child	768	1.956	Non-playful
o) Taking child to the doctor	770	2.094	Non-playful
a) Buying child's food	772	2.138	Non-playful
q) Taking care of the child when he/she becomes ill at school/nursery	762	2.175	Non-playful
n) Comforting child when tired or ill	769	2.229	Non-playful
d) Changing diapers	767	2.301	Non-playful
p) Getting up at night	764	2.323	Non-playful
f) Putting child to bed	764	2.328	Non-playful
r) Dropping/ picking up child at school	753	2.427	Non-playful
l) Reading books to child	763	2.519	Playful
e) Bathing child	769	2.573	Non-playful
k) Taking child to the park	772	2.661	Playful
m) Teaching child something new	760	2.736	Playful
j) Playing with child at home	771	2.844	Playful

Notes: Scores 1 to 5: "1"=mother mostly; "2"= mother some more; "3"=Same; "4"=father some more; and "5"=father mostly. Sample of heterosexual dual-earner couples (at the time of the birth).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations (main variables)

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Motherhood negatively affected mother's career	781	1.00	4.00	2.63	1.20	1.000								
2. Father's involvement childcare	690	1.00	4.50	2.10	.57	-.144**	1.000							
3. Father's total duration childbirth leave	795	.00	477.00	14.51	26.85	-.017	.126**	1.000						
4. Baby born after introduction paternity leave	775	.00	1.00	.50	.50	.027	.051	.148**	1.000					
5. Mother's egalitarian gender attitudes	732	1.44	5.00	3.62	.70	-.038	.212**	.097**	-.045	1.000				
6. Father's egalitarian gender attitudes	740	1.22	5.00	3.50	.72	-.031	.290**	.108**	-.029	.554**	1.000			
7. Father's net earnings	777	1.00	8.00	3.81	1.43	.203**	-.094*	-.015	-.014	.138**	.114**	1.000		
8. Mother's working week	695	4.00	77.00	37.28	8.59	.037	.205**	.101**	-.019	.085*	.079*	.107**	1.000	
9. Mother working in a family friendly company	603	.00	10.00	3.47	3.39	-.160**	.016	.068	.022	-.006	.012	.013	-.009	1.000
10. Father working in a family friendly company	634	.00	10.00	3.30	3.24	-.071	.117**	.050	.055	.018	.075	.173**	.072	.179**

Pearson's correlation: (**) Statistically significant at .01 (bilateral); (*) statistically significant at .05 (bilateral)

Path analysis

Path analysis was conducted with the Amos 20.0 program in the SPSS 20.0 software package (Arbuckle, 2011).

First, we examined the fit to the data of our hypothesized model of the determinants of motherhood labor penalty (Figure 1). In this initial model only one effect was not statistically significant ("Father working in a family friendly company" on "Father's total duration childbirth leave"). Thus we removed this path, resulting in a slight improvement in the fit to the data. The chi-square for this "final model" was not significant ($\chi^2=17.981$, $df=18$, $p=.457$), and its fit indices were better than before (CMIN/DF=.999, CFI=1.000, RMSEA=.000). Figure 2 shows the "final model" (standardized coefficients are provided for each path in the model).

Our four contrasting hypotheses appear to be confirmed by the data.

According to the final model, in support of hypothesis 1 (the fact that the father is actively in-

volved in the care of his child is negatively related to the work penalty experienced by the mother), the path from "Father's involvement childcare" to "Motherhood negatively affected mother's career" has a negative sign and is statistically significant ($-.118$, $p=.001$).

"Baby born after introduction paternity leave" shows a positive and significant relation with "Father's total duration childbirth leave" (.153, $p=.000$); in turn this last variable shows a positive and significant effect on "Father's involvement childcare" (.073, $p=.039$). Therefore, through these mediating variables "Baby born after introduction paternity leave" is negatively associated with "Motherhood negatively affected mother's career". This means that, in support of hypothesis 2, a policy change—the introduction of a new 13-day, non-transferrable and well paid paternity leave—has contributed (indirectly) to reduce gender inequality (motherhood penalty) in the labor market.

According to hypothesis 3, the fact that the father has egalitarian gender attitudes has an im-

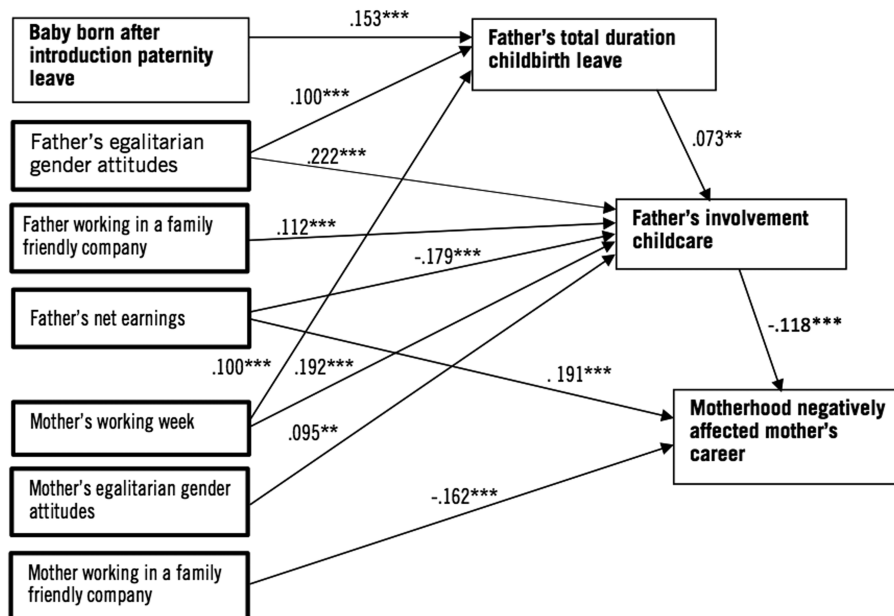


Figure 2. Path analysis for the determinants of motherhood labor penalty (final model)

Notes: N = 795; * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$. Standardized coefficients are provided for each path in the model tested

portant positive direct effect on his involvement in childcare (.222, $p=.000$), and also has an indirect effect on his involvement through the longer duration of childbirth leave (.100, $p=.005$). That is, the duration of childbirth leave is a mediating variable between these two. But the mother's gender attitudes are also relevant. Indeed, the path from "Mother's egalitarian gender attitudes" to "Father's involvement childcare" has a positive sign and is statistically significant (.095, $p=.031$). In sum, gender attitudes of both members of the couple turn out to be important indirect determinants of the motherhood penalty.

In the final version of the model the fact that the father works in a family friendly company does not have an effect on the duration of his leave, but it has a statistically significant effect on his involvement in childcare (.112, $p=.004$). On the other hand, "Mother working in a family friendly company" has direct and negative effect on "Motherhood negatively affected mother's career" (−.162, $p=.000$). So the fact that both members of the couple work in workplaces that facilitate work-family balance tend to reduce the motherhood penalty indirectly (in the case of the father) and directly (in the case of the mother).

The father's net earnings have an important effect (indirectly and directly) on motherhood penalty. Indeed, "Father's net earnings" has a negative and significant effect on "Father's involvement childcare" (−.179, $p=.000$) and a direct and significant effect on "Motherhood negatively affected mother's career" (.191, $p=.000$).

Finally, as was expected, the fact that the mother has a longer working week is related positively both with the duration of the father's leave (.100, $p=.007$) and with the involvement of the father in childcare (.192, $p=.000$).

All of these results related to the organizational and economic restrictions are in line with hypothesis 4.

DISCUSSION

The survey used in this article is retrospective in character and included couples of mothers and

fathers who had their child before and after the introduction of the 13-day paternity leave in Spain, in March 2007. 386 fathers had their child before this policy change and 389 afterwards. The empirical evidence (Ekberg *et al.*, 2013; Escot *et al.*, 2014; Eydal and Rostgaard, 2015; Romero-Balsas, 2015; Castro and Pazos, 2016) shows that males respond largely to reforms which allow them access to non-transferable and 100 % paid leaves. In line with this evidence, this article shows, first, that, in the case of Spain, the introduction of the 13-day paternity leave has increased significantly the average number of days that employed fathers are off work after the birth or adoption of a child.

Second, there is some empirical evidence (Seward *et al.*, 2006; Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel, 2007; Tanaka and Waldfogel, 2007; Haas and Hwang, 2007; Duvander and Jans, 2008; Hosking *et al.*, 2010; Meil, 2013; and Fernández-Cornejo *et al.*, 2016a) showing that fathers who take longer leaves tend to be subsequently more involved in the care of their children. And precisely, through path analysis, in this article some evidence has been obtained in favor of this hypothesis, using a measure for the father's involvement in childcare (relative to the mother) that included 14 non-playful activities of childcare.

And third, we have tried to connect the father's involvement in childcare with the motherhood labor penalty. In this paper we have obtained some evidence in favor of the hypotheses that when the father is actively involved in the care of his child the mother tends to experience less work penalty (measured by the answer to the question "In your opinion, being a mother has impaired or slowed your career advancement?"). Why may a greater paternal involvement promote greater gender equality (less motherhood penalty)? Following Kaufman (2013), there are three ways: first, when men and women share tasks in one domain (e.g., at home), they are more likely to share tasks in another domain (e.g., in government). Second, men's greater participation in home life frees women to participate in public life. And third, men who are more involved with their children are likely to raise girls and boys who have a greater sense of gender equality. Given the characteristics of our sample

our research may have provided evidence that acts through the second way.

According to our analysis, another important indirect determinant of motherhood penalty is the gender attitudes of the father (and the mother). The fact that the father has egalitarian gender attitudes has an important positive direct effect on his involvement in childcare, and also has an indirect effect on his involvement through a longer duration of childbirth leave. As a measure of egalitarian gender attitudes we used an instrument that included 9 items, with a range of values from 1.22 to 5.00 for fathers (from 1.44 to 5.00 for mothers), indicating a higher score a more egalitarian gender attitudes. If, for instance, we consider that gender egalitarian fathers are those whose scores are 4 or higher, then the percentage of fathers who hold egalitarian gender attitudes would be 29.6 % (33.9 % for mothers). Some of the members of this group of fathers may coincide with the emergent group of “involved fathers” identified in the qualitative literature on fathering as: “shared caregivers” (Habib, 2012); “new fathers” or “superdads” (Kaufman, 2013); “demanding fathers” (Romero-Balsas *et al.*, 2013); “committed fathers” (Abril *et al.*, 2015a); or “involved fathers” (Gatrell *et al.*, 2015).

But the fact that the mother has egalitarian gender attitudes also has a positive direct effect on the involvement of the father in childcare. This result may be consistent with the hypothesis that women with more egalitarian gender attitudes tend to be more supportive of the involvement of his partner in childcare. That is, in this group of mothers there would occur less frequently the phenomenon of “maternal gatekeeping” —a collection of beliefs and behaviors of some mothers that may inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work (Fagan and Barnett, 2003; Schoppe-Sullivan *et al.*, 2015).

Several contextual characteristics, such as fathers’ workplaces, may impinge upon the father’s involvement. Indeed, barriers in the workplace have been repeatedly reported by fathers as among the most important reasons for low levels of paternal involvement (Lamb and Tamis-LeMonda, 2004; Escot *et al.*, 2012; Kaufman, 2013; Abril *et al.*, 2015a). In line with this idea, in our sample the fact

that the father works in a family friendly company has a positive and statistically significant effect on his involvement in childcare. Moreover, the fact that the mother works in a family friendly company has a direct and negative effect on “Motherhood negatively affected mother’s career”. So the fact that both members of the couple work in workplaces that facilitate work-family balance tends to reduce the motherhood penalty indirectly (in the case of the father) and directly (in the case of the mother).

Finally, we obtained a series of results with the two variables concerning the labor characteristics of the mother and the father that were consistent with the economic-rational approach (Blau *et al.*, 2014). First, the higher the earnings of the father the higher will tend to be the motherhood penalty. Having high earnings means a higher opportunity cost of the time the father spends with the baby, so the father will tend to devote fewer hours to childcare; on the other hand, the greater the earnings of the father the greater will be the probability that he will earn more than her, and thus the greater will be the tendency for professional sacrifices (in order to balance work with family) fall on the mother’s side. And second, as was expected, the fact that the mother has a longer working week is related positively both with the duration of the father’s leave and with the involvement of the father in childcare. This is consistent with the literature based in time-use surveys previously reviewed, and in particular with the results obtained by Raley *et al.* (2012).

Regarding public policy recommendations, the starting point is the fact that, as we have just seen, the introduction of egalitarian reforms of parental leave (that give new leaves to fathers) help reduce gender inequality in the labor market (a reduction in the motherhood penalty). As shown in this article, even a timid reform —a new paternity leave of only 13 days— seems to have positive effects in this area. For this reason, a public policy that aims to promote a significant advance in shared responsibility between mothers and fathers in childcare (and the advance in the elimination of motherhood penalty) should carry out a progressive evening up of paternity leave with maternity leave, in such a way that, in the end, both mother and

father would enjoy 16 weeks (in the case of Spain) of non-transferable (and well paid) leave (Castro and Pazos, 2016).

Secondly, and in parallel to the above, it would be desirable to improve the conditions in which the fathers (and mothers) access the reconciliation of work and family life. To do this, on the one hand, there should be further progress in reconciliation policies applied by firms (schedule flexibility measures, etc.). On the other hand, it would be necessary to eliminate (if any) the so-called “female bias” in reconciliation policies (Haas and Hwang, 2007; Holter, 2007; Levine and Pittinsky, 2007; Abril and Romero, 2008; Escot *et al.*, 2012; Burnett *et al.*, 2013), which means that male employees sometimes do not recognize as applicable to them the reconciliation policies of the companies, but they conceive them as policies for female employees only.

Finally, we must acknowledge two limitations of our research. First, our data are cross-sectional data, asking people to think retrospectively about previous points in time. This strategy does not give it longitudinal strength and does not grant you the ability to use causal evidence and directional inferences (see Ekberg *et al.*, 2013). For this reason, a line of future research might be to apply the kind of analysis performed in this article but on the basis of longitudinal data. And second, apart from our indicator of motherhood penalty (“In your opinion, being a mother, has impaired or slowed your career advancement?”) it would have been very interesting to have data about the change in the earnings of mothers as a way to measure it. In a potential future research with longitudinal data it would be very interesting to analyze the relation between the involvement of the father and the motherhood wage penalty.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the “Instituto de la Mujer” of the Spanish Government under Grant 040/10. Special thanks go to Gabriela Chaparro, Daniel Franco, Nacho Cáceres, Carlos Poza, Maite Palomo, J. Luis Brita-Paja, M. Rosario Cintas, M. Lina Vicente, Eduardo Ortega, Guñy B. Eydal and Barry Readman for their advices and research support.

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Artículo / Article

Couples and Companies: Negotiating Fathers' Participation in Parental Leave in Germany / Parejas y empresas: La negociación del uso por los padres del permiso parental en Alemania

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Recibido / Received: 03/04/2017

Aceptado / Accepted: 20/01/2018

ABSTRACT

This article reports on findings of a study of fathers on parental leave in Germany. Drawing on interviews with couples (n=16) and human resource managers in different companies (n=8), we analyze how fathers' parental leave is negotiated between couples and how employers deal with male employees who claim parental leave. We ask for conducive and obstructive factors to paternity leave. We analyze expected and actual workplace problems, parenting models, gender beliefs, and power relations among the couple as factors in the question of paternity leave. In most organizations, two months have become an organizational routine, but two months also marks the threshold at which these organizations assume being able to manage paternal leave. Among the couple, an extension of paternity leave must be established against an asymmetric cultural tradition of parenthood, which is, despite of a dominant rhetoric of gender equality, still deeply embodied within the everyday routines of most couples.

Keywords: Parental leave, fathers, childcare, gender, Germany.

RESUMEN

Este artículo versa sobre los resultados de un estudio sobre el uso por los padres de la excedencia por cuidado de niños en Alemania. A partir de entrevistas en profundidad a 16 parejas y a 8 responsables de recursos humanos de distintas empresas, se analiza cómo negocian los miembros de la pareja el que el padre utilice parte del permiso parental y cómo reaccionan las empresas cuando los hombres solicitan este tipo de permiso. Nuestro enfoque se centra en los factores que facilitan y dificultan esta opción. Analizamos los efectos esperados y los problemas a los que se han enfrentado, los modelos de parentalidad y los modelos de género así como las relaciones de poder en el seno de la pareja.

Palabras clave: Permiso parental, padres, cuidado de niños, género, Alemania.

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Sugerencia de cita / Suggested citation: Aunkofer, S., Meuser, M., Neumann, B. (2018). Couples and Companies: Negotiating Fathers' Participation in Parental Leave in Germany. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 27 (3 Supl.), 65-81

(Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2018.34>)

INTRODUCTION

Parents in Germany have an entitlement to up to three years' parental leave. Until 2007, the parent who took the leave received a maximum of 300 euros per month for the first two years of the leave. In 2007, the legislation changed. A parental allowance is paid as a replacement for the wage that the parent earned before taking leave. The most significant change concerning fathers' involvement was the introduction of two 'partner months'. The parental allowance is paid for up to fourteen months. In order to get the full amount, both partners are required to take at least two months' leave. Otherwise, the money is paid for twelve months only. The replacement rate is 67 % of the previous wage, with a floor of 300 and a ceiling of 1800 euros. The introduction of the two 'partner months' was intended to encourage fathers to increase their commitment to household and child-care activities (Possinger, 2013, pp. 86-88). Between 2006 and 2014, the percentage of fathers taking parental leave rose from 3 % to 34 % (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 16). This increase is often interpreted as indicating a fundamental change towards involved fatherhood. Yet the trend is not as clear as the increase suggests: 79 % of the fathers who take the leave make use of only the two 'partner months'. Most of them take these months during the mother's parental leave. They do not replace the mother (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 18).

Survey data show that the majority of German fathers wish to participate in the child's development (Li et al., 2015, pp. 26-27). The German law on parental leave provides fathers with an entitlement to realize their desire to participate in childcare - from the minimum of two months up to twelve months. However, that entitlement must be claimed. Taking parental leave, and in particular the length of time to be taken off, must be negotiated at the workplace as well as between the couple themselves.

This article reports on the findings of a study of fathers on parental leave in Germany. Drawing on interviews with couples as well as with human resource managers in different companies, we analyze how fathers' parental leave is negotiated

within couples and how employers deal with male employees who claim parental leave.¹

RESEARCH ON FATHERS TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE

In 2005, the German Journal for Family Research (*Zeitschrift für Familienforschung*) published a special issue entitled "Men - the 'Neglected' Gender in Family Research" (Tölke & Hank, 2005). At that time there was little sociological research on fathers and fatherhood in Germany. One decade later, research on fatherhood is an expanding field in German family research and gender studies, as it is internationally. A growing number of studies is focusing on fathers taking parental leave with the aim of analyzing the impact of the 2007 amendment of the parental leave legislation on father's involvement in childcare and domestic work (Ehnis, 2009; Pfahl & Reuyß, 2009; Vogt, 2010; Possinger 2013; Trappe, 2013; Bünning, 2015; Peukert, 2015).

Internationally, the greatest volume of research on paternity leave has been carried out in the Nordic countries, particularly in Sweden. Sweden has one of the highest rates of fathers taking parental leave (88,3 %; Duvander, Haas & Hwang, 2015, p. 316). According to OECD data (OECD, 2014, p. 11) Swedish fathers spend 26 hours per week caring for and educating children; this is the highest rate in Europe. German fathers spend 19 hours. Sweden and the Nordic countries are often used as a reference point for assessing developments in other countries (cf. Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Fox, Pascall & Warren, 2009). Due to differences in legal frameworks and the corresponding welfare state regimes as well as cultural differences in gender regimes, findings on the uptake

1 The "Fathers on parental leave: negotiations and decision-making between couples and their employers" project was funded by the Mercator Research Center Ruhr. The participant organizations were TU Dortmund University, Ruhr-University Bochum and the University of Duisburg-Essen. The members of the research team were: Stefanie Aunkofer, Ilse Lenz, Michael Meuser, Benjamin Neumann, Katja Sabisch and Christine Wimbauer.

of parental leave by fathers in the Nordic countries are not simply transferable to other countries.

It is a recurrent question whether paternity leave helps to increase gender equality by changing the gendered division of labor (Doucet 2017; Fox, Pascall & Warren 2009; Haas & Hwang 2008; Haas & Rostgaard 2011; Jan & Hildingsson 2009; Johansson 2011; Meil 2013; O'Brien/Wall 2017a; Trappe 2013). In Sweden, promoting gender equality was an objective of parental leave legislation from the outset (Haas & Hwang 2008). According to Haas and Hwang (2008, p. 93), fathers who take parental leave are more "equality-minded than other fathers". Fox, Pascall and Warren (2009), as well as Haas and Rostgaard (2011), point to the impact of proactive work-family policies and non-transferable leave. On the basis of a comparative study of men's uptake of parental leave in EU member states, Meil (2013, p. 568) argues that "the existence of a specific leave for fathers only is very important for fostering involvement". Haas and Rostgaard (2011, p. 193), comparing parental leave systems in the five Nordic countries, found that a father's quota of non-transferable leave has the highest impact on fathers' involvement in childcare. Further, it 'seems to challenge, in varying degrees, the notion of parental care mediation as a female prerogative.' (Wall 2014, p. 208). On the other hand, if non-transferable leave does not exist 'leave can be experienced as a "gift" offered by the mother [...], thereby underlining ... the naturalness of women taking paramount responsibility for the care of young children.' (Wall/O'Brien 2017, p. 208).

Using Socio-Economic Panel data, Bünning (2015) found in the case of Germany that even a short period of paternity leave has the effect of increasing German fathers' involvement in childcare even after the leave. However, a more equal division of labor is not established unless the father takes a longer period of leave or if he takes it while the mother is working (for the impact of taking leave alone cf. O'Brien/Wall 2017a). However, for other countries the reverse is also reported in the literature, so the findings are not consistent (Meil, 2013, pp. 560-561). Overall, paternity leave does not automatically advance gender equality (O'Brien/Wall 2017b, p. 3). It seems to be an important but not sufficient tool (Thomas & Hild-

ingsson, 2009). Paternity leave may potentially pave the way to greater gender equality, but it is often only a transitional phenomenon having little impact on the gendered division of labor.

A major obstacle to gender equality is the organization of work (Johansson, 2011, p. 113). The indispensability of the male workforce still seems to be an indisputable norm to many employers - in contrast to the female workforce (Björnberg, 2002). Many fathers fear that their careers will be damaged if they take parental leave (Possinger, 2013, pp. 204-207). Fathers' claims for parental leave, in particular if they want to take a longer leave, must be implemented against a prevailing ethos that accepts fathers' participation in childcare only in so far as it does not reduce fathers' indispensability in the labor market (Born & Krüger, 2002; Neumann & Meuser, 2017). In companies and other workplaces it is a widespread and usually unchallenged expectation that care work is done by the mother. Against this backdrop, paternity leave is perceived as optional whereas maternal leave is seen as a necessity or the mother's "natural right" (Ehnis, 2009; Richter, 2012, p. 140). This applies in particular to longer periods of paternity leave extending beyond the usual two months (Richter, 2012, pp. 138-139). Nevertheless, employers' attitudes towards fathers taking parental leave seem to change the longer the legislation exists and the more fathers make their claims, as the Swedish case shows (Haas & Hwang, 2009). Further, being supportive of paternity leave helps to enhance a company's image as a family friendly organization, which is seen as an advantage in competing for highly qualified employees (Neumann & Meuser, 2017).

Whether or not fathers take parental leave, and for how long, is influenced by gender ideologies and beliefs about femininity and masculinity. On the organizational level, masculinity norms have a strong impact on fathers' decisions on taking parental leave. Although involved fatherhood is becoming part of cultural patterns of masculinity, it contradicts job-centered masculinity norms that are still highly influential. Paternity leave challenges an important institutional pillar of the established gender order

(Valarino 2017). Masculinity is also at stake in a couple's negotiation of the father's parental leave (Schmidt et al., 2015). Insofar as the breadwinner role is a core feature of "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell, 1987), the shift towards involved fatherhood challenges this culturally dominant pattern of masculinity. Fathers doing care work see themselves challenged to emphasize that this work does not jeopardize their masculinity (Behnke & Meuser, 2012; Merla, 2008). In a study of involved fatherhood, Behnke and Meuser (2012) identified a variety of practices for asserting masculinity by referring to the semantics of masculine strength and autonomy.

According to Lammi-Taskula (2008, p. 145), who did research on paternity leave in Finland, "the parents' gender ideology seems to be a more crucial aspect in relation to sharing parental leave than economic rationality". Besides masculinity concepts, beliefs related to motherhood, and in particular the assumption that mothers have greater expertise in childcare (Doucet 2017, p. 18), have a strong effect on the share of fathers taking parental leave and their involvement in childcare generally. McKay and Doucet (2010, pp. 308-310) point to the influence of breastfeeding on the couple's decision on how to share parental leave. The mother's physical ability to breastfeed legitimates an asymmetric childcare arrangement, at least for the initial period after the birth. This establishes the mother as the primary caregiver and for most couples this is a self-evident fact. It establishes a kind of "hegemonic motherliness" (Ehnis, 2009, p. 146) that is opposed to longer paternity leave and promotes maternal gatekeeping (Trappe, 2013, p. 258). In turn, the usually shorter duration of paternity leave compared to maternal leave helps to further consolidate hegemonic motherliness. Otherwise, being "critical towards the prevailing hegemony of mother care" increases the chances of a father taking paternity leave (Lammi-Taskula, 2008, p. 145). However, this can provoke 'competitive caring' and give rise to a new kind of gendered power struggles and gender conflicts about who is entitled to define the standards for proper care work (Lengersdorf &

Meuser, 2016; Henwood & Procter, 2003; Doucet, 2017). However, only a minority of fathers have a critical attitude to the hegemony of mother care (Thomas & Hildingsson, 2009, p. 150).

The decision to take paternity leave is not one made by the father alone, but is negotiated between the parents. Little is known about such negotiations (McKay & Doucet, 2010; Schmidt et al., 2015). One methodological reason might be that in the majority of studies fathers are interviewed alone. The method of interviewing couples together is used only seldom (cf. for exceptions: McKay & Doucet, 2010; Schmidt et al., 2015; Behnke & Meuser, 2012; Lengersdorf & Meuser, 2016).

DATA AND METHOD

In our own study, we interviewed couples in order to gain insights into their negotiations on how parental leave is timed and shared. Expert interviews were conducted with human resource managers in order to capture employers' views on paternity leave.

In order to reconstruct the negotiations that preceded the fathers' decision to take the leave, the partners were interviewed together. The interviewees not only responded to the interviewers' questions but also (and predominantly) talked to each other. Such interviews are a suitable method for gathering information on couples' arrangements. They generate two sorts of data: a couple's history as reported by both partners (content) and the couple's interaction during the interview (discourse organization). The way in which a couple relates their joint history *in situ* gives clues about the partner's relationship (Hirschauer, Hoffmann & Stange, 2015). The partners' efforts to negotiate certain aspects of their family life also become visible. Thus the couple's interview is particularly well suited to recreating the joint construction of the partnership, the family, private gender arrangements and gendered identities (Behnke & Meuser, 2013; Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2014; Wimbauer & Motakef, 2017).

Human resource managers were interviewed in order to ascertain how organizations deal with

claims for parental leave made by male employees. They were addressed as experts because, due to their status in the organization's hierarchy, they have privileged access to information about the organization's personnel development and their employees' careers (for the methodology of the expert interview cf. Meuser & Nagel, 2009).

Sixteen couples and eight human resource managers were interviewed. The couples belong to different social milieus; a few migrant couples are also included. They work in organizations of different sizes and in different sectors: in public

administration as well as in private enterprises. With one exception, all the couples interviewed were heterosexual. In all couples, except one, both partners were employed. The present article draws on data relating to twelve couples. Some information about their employment status and leave arrangements is listed below. The expert interviews took place predominantly in private enterprises, but also in public organizations. The interviews were conducted in two regions: in North Rhine-Westphalia (where the share of fathers on parental leave is low) and in Bavaria (where the share is high).

Table 1. Couples' employment status and leave arrangements

Couple	Employment Status		Length of parental leave (months)		Parental allowance (Euro)		Father's leave arrangement		
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Completely simultaneously	Partly simultaneously	Seperatly
Albert	P.E.	P.E.	2	10	1800	1000	X		
Cramer	P.A.	P.A.	7	7	980	1800		X	
Dietrich-Dorsten	P.A.	P.A.	4	10	1197	831		X	
Erdmann	P.A.	P.E.	4	10	1800	850			X
Friedrich	P.E.	P.E.	2	17	1600	1140	X		
Graf-Gabler	P.E.	P.E.	2	24	1305	1006	X		
Halil	P.E.	P.A.	2	10	1370	600	X		
Keller	P.E.	P.E.	2	24	N.A.	N.A.	X		
Martens	P.E.	P.E.	3	8	1800	1800			X
Niem	P.A.	P.A.	5	10	1695	1675		X	
Ortmann	P.E.	P.E.	11	4	1800	1800			X
Peters	P.A.	P.E.	10	4	800	1800			X

Source: Own Interviews. PA = Public Administration; PE = Private Enterprise. N.A. = Not Available

The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and anonymized. Data analysis was carried out using the documentary method of interpretation (Bohnsack, 2010 & 2014). This method is based on Mannheim's (1952) sociology of knowledge and its differentiation of three levels of meaning (objective, expressive and documentary). It not only takes account of the literal (objective) meaning of what is said and of the expressive meaning (the subjective intentions of the actors), but its focus on how the discourse develops also gives "access to the pre-reflexive or tacit knowledge" (Bohnsack, 2010, p. 103) that is documented unintentionally in the respondents' explanations and narrations. Similar to Bourdieu's notion of habitus, it is targeted at "the structure of action and orientation, which exceeds the perspective of those under research" (ibid, p. 101).

FINDINGS

Anticipated and actual workplace problems

We begin by discussing the influence of the workplace on the couples' arrangements and the fathers' parental leave. Both can be greatly influenced by anticipated or expected problems within the workplace (e.g. with colleagues and management or financial problems). However, our findings reveal that anticipation does not necessarily translate into actuality (especially if the leave does not exceed two months) and that actual problems were not always anticipated. Thus in the following chapter we differentiate between cases with and without anticipated and actual problems in the workplace.

The *first group* of our sample consists of couples who did not experience any workplace problems with regard to their paternity leave. However, these fathers mostly work in the public services or took only the two 'partner months'. The majority of fathers in our study made use of the two partner months. The use of these *two months* seems rather unproblematic, both for the organizations and the couples we talked to. This reflects the *institutionalization of the two months' paternity leave*. This arrangement seems to have become well established since its introduction. However, the fact that most

fathers do not take a longer period of leave shows that institutionalization has led to only limited changes in gendered norms in both the workplace and the family.

This institutionalization is reflected in the couples' narratives. They refer to the father's right to take parental leave. The Alberts explained this as follows:

Mr. Albert: There was not really resistance because I didn't put certain things up for debate. Given that I knew about the existing general conditions, that was something I was able to do.

Mrs. Albert: You knew your rights.

The two months' paternity leave in particular seems to be perceived as an institutionalized *right of fathers* to be more engaged in the family. The Alberts described their knowledge of the legal position as a 'strategic advantage', which they were able to exploit in announcing their intention to take parental leave to their employer. For Mr. Erdmann, 'it was entirely clear that I would take parental leave no matter what reaction might follow, because I knew I was legally entitled to do so.'

Another father, Mr. Friedrich, also told us that his employer was not able to say anything because 'I have the right to do this. And they would just embarrass themselves if they said anything else'. Since there is a legal entitlement, not only do fathers feel legitimized to take parental leave but this also generates a normative pressure for companies to agree to it. This finding is consistent with results from research on the effects of non-transferable leave for fathers in other countries. Taking the so called "daddy months" becomes 'a "normal" decision both in families and in the workplace' (Wall & O'Brien 2017, p. 258).

The different organizational cultures of the various companies seem to have considerable influence not only on paternity leave itself but also on the negotiations between the couple as they seek to identify the factors that might encourage or hamper their efforts to strike a balance between family and work. Furthermore, we observe that the *public services or nonprofit organizations seem to provide advantageous terms* for parents seeking to take parental leave. For example the Dietrich-Dorstens

received positive and even supportive responses to their announcements that they would be taking parental leave:

Mr. Dietrich: In my case there was no problem at all. Far from it, my boss told me, "Yes do it". You will never get a chance like this. In the first place I wanted to take a half year. [...] But then I thought if you want to take eight months you could just as well take a whole year. [...] This was absolutely no problem for my employer.

Mrs. Dorsten: Yes in my case it was unproblematic, too.

The Peters are also an example of a long period of paternity leave without any anticipated or actual workplace problems. Mr. Peters' employer, a non-profit organization, also reacted very 'positively' in his view:

I really felt that they were glad. No one said anything negative not even between the lines. I really felt like ok that's nice. Funnily they didn't ask any questions like 'What? You want ten months?' No, that was not a big issue. It was nice.

An exceptional case can be found in the academic field. The Cramers explained that parental leave was unproblematic for both of them but that reducing working hours is perceived as a disadvantage compared with couples without children. This case also shows very clearly that it is not just one but two careers that have to be negotiated. Both partners reduced their working hours and took parental leave 'fifty-fifty' in order to ensure they both enjoyed the same career prospects.

Even though none of the three couples experienced any explicit problems at their workplace after having taken parental leave, they did acknowledge that reducing their working hours did not exactly enhance their future career prospects. Mr. Dietrich used paternity leave to change direction, at least to some extent: he wants to return to his previous employer, but not in a leading position. Mr. Peters thought that, in taking paternity leave, he had to some extent sacrificed his career, but this did not seem to bother him.

We also observed *anticipated but baseless fears* in terms of the impact on careers. In some cases, even two months were initially thought to be

problematic, especially for fathers in the corporate sector. Mr. Friedrich was afraid that his two months' leave might cause problems for his career, while the mother already knew she would not be able to return to her previous workplace:

Mrs. Friedrich: 'And I really insisted on you taking at least two months and you were afraid of your career being stalled. And I thought to myself: woaah, eight weeks (...), eight weeks are nothing compared to the remaining 36 years of your working life.'

Mr. Friedrich: Yes I was actually concerned about that, yes.'

Mr. Friedrich was also afraid to tell his boss about his parental leave plans because he was the first one in his department to take the leave. This highlights the importance of general principles and orientations in companies and institutional frameworks (besides the institutionalization of the right to take parental leave), which could help to encourage fathers to be more involved in domestic work and childcare (Neumann & Meuser 2017). In many cases, the fear of suffering disadvantages proved baseless. Mr. Friedrich was surprised that 'no one at my workplace said anything negative to me'. Mr. Erdmann reported: 'I expected more resistance. But it was just accepted'. This could indicate that taking parental leave might actually be less problematic than anticipated.

The *second group* consists of couples who experienced actual problems in the workplace, even if some of them did not anticipate them. Many couples describe their companies as adhering to a traditional gender role model. Some anticipated problems in terms of career, believing that involved fatherhood contradicted the norms of male labor market behavior, in particular the emphasis on full-time employment. Also the norm of mothers' responsibility for care work often goes unquestioned in the world of work. For example, Mr. Albert explicitly described his company as 'conservative' and sees himself as 'revolutionary' and 'exotic'. According to him, in particular older employees in his company regard parental leave as 'maternity protection'. Mr. Martens reported that his boss had declared that he was 'doing female work now'. For companies, paid work seems

to be a largely masculine sphere, while care work is feminized. While the mothers' care work is taken for granted, the fathers' leave and family involvement seems to be optional (Ehnis 2009). If a father wants to be more involved in care and domestic work, he may be confronted with devaluing comments and sneers:

Mr. Gabler: Yes, one is going to be sneered at by some of our colleagues in the company, with comments like 'What? The fathers stay home?' It's simply the traditional role model which is found particularly among elderly colleagues: the father goes to work, the mother stays home. Older bosses and supervisors in particular share a lack of understanding.

A mothers' claim to take parental leave is often seen as an expression of her 'natural' femininity, which may legitimize her commitment to her child. Comparable commitment is not expected of a father. This can lead a company to treat fathers' and mothers' applications for parental leave differently. The two 'partner months' mostly taken by fathers are framed as an *additional* support, while the mother stays in the gendered role of having the primary responsibility for childcare (Neumann & Meuser 2017). Consequently, paternity leave can be seen as a challenge to the hegemonic beliefs about men's labor market behavior. Taking paternity leave can be perceived as a lack of loyalty to the company, even if the father does extend the period of leave.

Fathers who work in the corporate sector experience greater career disadvantage if they take parental leave, especially if they take more than two months. Overall, according to the company representatives interviewed, it is not so common to extend paternity leave beyond the institutionalized two months.

Normally men do not go on leave for too long but rather work part-time and stay for a few hours during parental leave. Thus it is actually not a real issue, because it is just a natural consequence, that it is that short. (Company D)

The couples (and also the company representatives) referred to different kinds of problems posed by extended paternity leave. Two central difficulties

were mentioned in particular: *career disadvantages* and *financial problems*. For Mr. Albert, two months were unproblematic, but a longer leave would be out of the question because he feared that he would be disadvantaged professionally:

Mr. Albert: For me, a one-year break is out of question. Simply because in my field there's constant technological change and there's so much change that it would be too much to catch up [...]. And to be off for such a long time would put me at considerable disadvantage in career terms.

Mr. Albert's stance towards extended parental leave is supported by his wife's understanding of her role as a mother. She likes 'the versatility that I have with both my child and my work' and wants to 'cover his back'.

The Halils can be seen as an example of how financial aspects determine the negotiation of parental leave. This couple focuses on the financial losses that might be incurred if the father takes extended paternity leave, although both are high earners.

Mr. Halil: It's not possible for everyone to cover this two-month period financially. It was really hard and a balancing act for us and we had to economize for months, almost a year.

Furthermore, most fathers in our sample did not anticipate being disadvantaged in their careers because of the parental leave itself. However, a reduction in working hours after the leave is often described as an enormous disadvantage. For most mothers, accepting responsibility for domestic work and childcare puts them at a disadvantage in their careers. Generally, long career breaks appear to be challenging for companies. Returning to work after a lengthy period of leave seems to be particularly problematic, for both men and women.

For women, the question of the return is always relevant when one takes a lengthy career break. For men, basically, it's well accepted that they take the two months; anything beyond that is problematic, too. (Company A)

Company A, for example, tries to deal with this by making short-term appointments to cover for

employees taking career breaks of about a year (in exceptional cases two years). However, the company representative also told us that this strategy does not work in all cases; it depends on the hierarchical level and/or area of work. The fear of losing one's job or of returning to a different position within the company still remains and is often taken into account by couples when they make their decisions on paternity leave.

For companies *parental leave seems to be unproblematic as long as it fits in with the operational processes* or as long as the operational processes are secured. In the Inans' case, the father perceived a positive reaction to his leave. In the first two months of his leave there were 'absolutely no problems, because it fitted very well' with the company's project status. Taking a longer leave also turned out to be unproblematic because 'it was the end of a project. Yes, it also fitted very well'. Reconciling paternity leave with the project status seems to be crucial in this case. This illustrates the importance of arranging the parental leave not only within the couple but also with the employer. Mr. Keller experienced a very negative response because he did not arrange his leave with his employer:

'I didn't ask for permission I just told my boss that I was going to take parental leave. He reacted very negatively to this. He said something like I should have discussed it with him and the whole team first.'

Small companies are special cases. Both mothers and fathers who work in small companies, report that their parental leave gave rise to some serious issues. These companies are less able to deal satisfactorily with employees' temporary absence. For example, Mrs. Friedrich's contract was terminated after her lengthy period of maternity leave. Although the company was legally required to keep her job open, they made it clear that they did not want to keep her. Mr. Gabler's boss wanted to dismiss him, made insinuations and sent warning letters because of his leave. Insisting on legal rights can mean risking consequences that are certainly not intended in the legislation.

Images of parenthood and the relevance of gender beliefs

In the interviews, the couples outlined different gender beliefs and images of parenthood. These are very important in determining both the extent of fathers' parental leave and families' care arrangements. These images and beliefs range between the twin poles of biological determinism and indeterminism. For some couples, being a parent is intertwined with ideas about gender and 'biological facts'. The limits of gender equality are marked out by this biological determinism. Mr. and Mrs. Albert expressed this as follows:

Mr. Albert: There are simply differences between men and women that women can bear children and men can't. Whatever is done regarding to equity and equality is a fact and can't be solved through discourse. That's given by nature as well as the bond between mother and child is basically more intense. Those are facts that can't be changed [...]. For that reason a mother shouldn't work full-time after giving birth. In my opinion this wouldn't be appropriate for the child's development, either.

Mrs. Albert: I think the same. I don't give birth to a child to pass it on to another person right away.

Within this biological framework, the fact that men cannot give birth has further implications, such as a supposed stronger bond between the mother and the child or even gender equality. From this perspective, a mother working full-time could also impair a child's development. It is important to notice that the couple is in complete agreement on this point. The topos of biology is often linked to a hierarchization between the parents in terms of rights regarding the child, e.g. who is (or should be) the primary caregiver. This issue is especially relevant if the partners' perspectives are not congruent. The following sequence makes clear that a father's wish to be more involved in childcare can lead to conflicts within the couple:

Mrs. Halil: As soon as the baby is coming anyway... as a mother you are likely to be biased by hormones a little bit and we had a serious argument about who takes care of this child and it is still difficult.

Mr. Halil: Sensitive issue.

Mrs. Halil: Because as a mother one has the feeling of having the right to decide on this. Yes, you

Mr. Halil: Which is not necessarily true.

Mrs. Halil: But that is true

Mr. Halil: Well, you have said that as a mother you have more rights.

Mrs. Halil: Well, you feel like that. But you tend to forget that of course the father has the same or similar rights but

Mr. Halil: Er, the same rights was quite true, darling. You should have finished that statement with the same rights. The rights are fifty-fifty.

Mrs. Halil: Similar, similar er no but honestly speaking as a mother you don't feel it like fifty-fifty.

Mr. Halil: I don't want to talk about this anymore I'm fed up with this.

On the one hand, Mrs. Halil makes her point by referring to a change in hormone levels in the mother's body. The fact that a woman gives birth serves as an argument in favor of unequal parents' rights. Although Mr. Halil claims equal rights, and despite the fact that Mrs. Halil is aware of the actual inequality, the gendered belief defines the extent to which parents' rights can or cannot be equal. Even after his claim of equal rights as a parent, she only grants him similar rights – but not the same. Mrs. Halil's argument can be read as a gender-reverse exemplification of what Bourdieu describes as a core feature of male domination: the somatization of power relations. According to Bourdieu, “the *biological* difference between the male and the female body and, more particularly, the anatomic difference between the sexual organs” *are seen* “as the indisputable justification of the socially constructed difference between the sexes” (Bourdieu 1990, p. 12).

Another couple makes clear that gendered beliefs about parenting can be more influential than economic factors:

Mrs. Niem: Well, it's an infant and it belongs to its mother. And for me it was more important to breastfeed as long as I could – and I mean authentic breastfeeding instead of giving the bottle, in order to give the child a good start. This seems more important to me than to return to work as fast as I can. He

[Mr. Niem] could have handled the care for sure, but there's a physical fact that only women can breastfeed. And that seemed more important to me. And that's why he has to be the breadwinner. [...].

Mr. Niem: But our family income would be higher [if Mrs. Niem worked full-time]

Mrs. Niem: From an economic point of view that would be more efficient.

Mr. Niem: From an economic point of view that is true, but as we already said, that would be against our understanding of roles that only you can breastfeed.²

Besides valuing ‘natural’ breastfeeding higher than bottle feeding, the couple explains that they would rather accept a loss of family income than give up their traditional gender roles.

The other end of the spectrum of gender beliefs is represented by those couples who see themselves rather as *parents* instead of being ‘mother’ or ‘father’ in an essentialist sense. Mr. Cramer explains:

Well, actually I think we're parents [...]– since she stopped drinking from your breast so to say. That means that we're now parents and since we're really sharing fifty-fifty we're two parents caring for a child.

Although there are still differences between Mr. and Mrs. Cramer, they relate them rather to their individual characteristics than to their gender:

Mrs. Cramer: But not because you're a male.

Mr. Cramer: But not because I'm the father but rather because that's my personality, you're bringing in your own personality as well.

Mrs. Cramer: I think that too.

Mr. Cramer: But in principle we're parents, not playing the traditional mother or father role.

The reference to being primarily parents rather than ‘mother’ and ‘father’ provides the basis for a *praxis* of parenting that goes beyond the gendered division of parenthood. This implies that the topos

2 The understanding of roles he mentioned is that the mother has to breastfeed the baby instead of giving him the bottle. Therefore even expressing breast milk into a bottle would not be an alternative. This understanding is shared by both partners.

of biology is addressed in a very different way from that observed among the couples quoted above:

Mrs. Cramer: [...] Er that a lot of people think the mother is born this way and knows what the child needs and so on. And especially in our case I'd say that you can assess often better than me what she needs, especially when she was very young because you're very empathic somehow and anyway I'm not born with that. I had to learn and get to know the child as well and so on.

Other couples also challenge biological determinism. The Ortmanns, for example, highlight the 'social' aspect rather than the 'biological' bonds between mother and child. Mr. Ortmann took eleven months of parental leave, whereas his wife returned to work full-time after four months. Mr. Ortmann and his daughter have built a strong relationship. Since their daughter displayed a degree of 'fear of strangers' in Mrs. Ortmann's presence, the couple have tried to establish a strong relationship between Mrs. Ortmann and their daughter as well. Mr. Ortmann captures this in a nutshell:

That's nothing spiritual about the bond between mother and child, you know? It really is a social relationship. My wife is finding this out as well. But this needs continuous involvement!

A leaning towards one or other pole of a heterogeneous spectrum of gendered beliefs about parenting and being a mother/father/parent has an effect on the father's uptake of parental leave. The couple's specific mindset is a very influential factor in fathers' decisions on whether or not to take parental leave. Most of the fathers in the couples whose beliefs about parenting were strongly gendered took only two months, whereas those in couples with a more 'gender-neutral' perspective on parenthood took a significantly longer period of leave (e.g. Mr. Cramer seven and Mr. Ortmann eleven months). The Cramers, who split their leave into two periods of seven months each, also reported an egalitarian sharing of household tasks and care work. Gender beliefs open up (or close down) the space for possible parenting arrangements and practices. A biological framing of mothering and fathering, emphasizing the assumed 'natural'

ties between mother and child, acts as a barrier to extended paternity leave, particularly immediately after the birth. A non-essentialist framing, on the other hand, facilitates different kinds of parental arrangements which can affect the division of domestic and care work.

Not taking a longer period of paternity leave does not necessarily always indicate a lack of interest in childcare on the father's part. It may also be an expression of conflict prevention by the couple. If tasks and responsibilities are more or less strictly divided by gender, greater commitment by the father to childcare and household tasks may challenge the gendered norms on mothering and lead to disputes between the partners. Couples who do not think of parenting in gendered terms do not have to face this kind of conflict. However, this does not necessarily mean that these couples do not face any difficulties in dividing up responsibilities for family and other domestic tasks. Instead of gender, 'individual preferences' or 'competences' could be given as reasons. The specific framing determines what kind of parental practice is possible, e.g. whether a father can take the same number of months as his partner or even a longer period than her. It also shows that the framing of parenthood is closely related to gender as well as to equality within the couple. Mrs. Cramer's statement that she was not born with a mother-instinct and that she had to work on bonding with her child creates space not only for an egalitarian parental leave arrangement but for an egalitarian share of gainful employment and care work more generally.

Who is the primary caregiver? Power relations within couples

As mentioned before, it is a widespread expectation that taking paternity leave contributes to gender equality. Paternity leave has the *potential* to change the gendered division of labor. Who does what kind of care work (as well as domestic work generally) and to what extent becomes potentially a subject for negotiation. In particular, if a couple supports a 'gender-neutral' concept of parent-

hood, gender is no longer taken for granted as the rationale for assigning care responsibilities. However, it is not only the distribution of care and domestic work that is negotiated but also *who is entitled to define the standards* for childcare, i.e. to decide what constitutes “good” childcare and what does not. In the majority of the couples we interviewed, it was agreed that the mother was the one who was entitled to make that decision. The mother is the primary caregiver in a double sense. Despite the father's involvement, the mother shoulders the main burden of care work and also has the authority to define the standards of childcare. As a result, the father remains in the position of secondary caregiver (Lupton and Barclay 1997, p. 126), even if the partners share care work equally. We found only very few exceptions to this general pattern.

In most cases, there was a tacit agreement between the partners about the gendered primary – secondary caregiver constellation. Most fathers do not oppose being the secondary caregiver, especially those who, like Mr. Albert, took the minimum of two months' leave:

Mrs. Albert: Well, basically I have a husband who works hard and spares no effort. Well yes... For example you take out the garbage and load and empty the dishwasher. [...] You also do laundry, although at the moment I am giving orders to you a little bit. I tell you to do the laundry. But whatever needs to be done, for example getting the laundry together.

Mr. Albert: Well, that's because you have a better overview, haven't you? [...] I sometimes ask you and we talk about it but it's true that you basically lay down the guidelines and we proceed accordingly. I don't complain. I'm happy that you've put some thought into it and I just go along with it.

Mrs. Albert recognizes her husband's contribution to the domestic work; she praises him for noting what has to be done and not avoiding it. However, she relativizes that recognition to a certain degree. In the case of the laundry, for example, she explains that she has to prompt or “instruct” him. Mr. Albert does not oppose her statement that she gives “orders”. Rather he supports her by recognizing her greater competence in

domestic work and explicitly confirms his position as her junior partner. He is glad that she organizes the domestic work and is content to go along with her instructions. Both partners are complicit in confirming the wife's authority in domestic work. Endowed with this authority, the wife can legitimately evaluate the husband's contribution to domestic work. This authority is quite independent of the extent of the husband's participation in domestic work. It can also be given in couples who share the domestic work equally.

The mother claims the primary position in particular if interactive childcare is involved. Some mothers do this quite forcefully as Mrs. Graf does, for example. She and her husband disagreed about the extent of his paternity leave:

Mr. Gabler: However, I think two months is almost too short. Afterwards I was sorry that I did not take three months, or four or five, but if I had taken more time off, you probably would have flipped out.

Mrs. Graf: At some point it's enough. I looked forward to experiencing daily life with the baby alone – just me and the baby – both of us alone. That's, that's something completely different, isn't it. I have sole and full responsibility during the day. Yes.

Here, the mother not only decided the extent of her own parental leave but also sought to decide the length of her husband's leave. He took the usual two months, but having experienced the time with the baby as enriching, he wished he had taken longer. However, he anticipated his wife's rejection and she made it clear in no uncertain terms that his aspiration had its limits and that she was the one who set them. She wanted more time alone with the baby. She explained this by referencing the natural bonds between mother and baby.

Mrs. Graf: I would feel weird if I had to go to work now and he would stay at home.

Interviewer: And why?

Mrs. Graf: Because it's my little baby. Of course he would be in good hands but well [...] I don't know how it would seem if he was home more often, if it were the other way round. No, but no, a mother needs to be at home. (.) It is lovely that fathers can stay at home now but somehow it is mama's job.

She cannot imagine the father being responsible for childcare, because it is her child, which implies that the child is not the father's baby to the same extent. With regard to the idea of the father doing the childcare, she recognizes that fathers nowadays are able to do it but she nevertheless concludes that childcare is the mother's job. Such a clear expression of maternal gatekeeping is exceptional in our interviews. However, references to natural bonds or biological phenomena in order to explain or justify a mother's position as the primary caregiver are quite common. Such naturalizing arguments are not limited to couples with a more traditional division of labor; they are also made by couples who have adopted an adult worker model, with both partners working full-time, like the Halil family we referred to above. Mrs. Halil stated that she could not imagine staying at home for a longer period and that the job is existential for her ('the job is the main thing'). Nevertheless, she claims priority in caring for the baby, as already noted. Arguing about this with her husband, she referred to biological reasons: being 'biased by hormones'. She knows that her argument is not reasonable, but her maternal feeling, a 'returning feeling' as she said, is more important to her than (abstract) arguments based on parents' equal rights. The Halils do not agree on the naturalizing argument. Many other couples do concur in this respect. Mr. Albert, for example, is convinced that 'the bond between the mother and the child is basically stronger and tighter'.

Due to the cultural feminization of care, the mother's position as primary caregiver is often reproduced unintentionally. The culture of care has a strong feminine connotation, which leads to the widespread assumption that women are more competent in this area (Burkart 2007, p. 88). Some of the couples reflect on this, but cannot avoid relying on it in certain situations although they try to overcome it. The Dietrich-Dorstens are a good example, because they disapprove of a gender-typical allocation of work. At the time of the interview, the mother was providing for the family and the father had taken time out from his job after having finished his paternity leave.

Mrs. Dorsten: It's not the typical image, where the women does all these tasks and is at home to

take care of the children whereas the man is doing all the men's affairs. Well, that's completely mixed at our house.

Mr. Dietrich: Yes, it just happens I would say.

Mrs. Dorsten: He calls himself housewife [...]

Mr. Dietrich: Well, don't exaggerate.

Mrs. Dorsten: No, it is really true that each of us does everything - from changing the baby to all the other nurturing tasks.

The mother emphasizes that they do not practice the typical gendered division of labor. Both do any kind of domestic and care work. Moreover, according to her, the father perceives himself as the homemaker. Nevertheless, there is an area where she does not trust his competence to do the domestic work correctly: the laundry.

Mr. Dietrich: Well I, I do nearly everything apart from doing the laundry.

Mrs. Dorsten: Nearly everything.

Mr. Dietrich: Completely everything. [...] I would like to do the laundry. Now I'm giving away the surprise.

Mrs. Dorsten: Well, do not hesitate, tell us then.

Mr. Dietrich: But when I hang out the laundry to dry, she always hangs it somewhere else.

Mrs. Dorsten: I rearrange it.

Mr. Dietrich: She rearranges it [...] she can't accept the way I hang out the laundry.

Although she leaves the domestic work nearly completely to him, she sometimes slips into the role of evaluating his way of doing this work and correcting him. The reverse constellation of him correcting her is not reported in the interview. More generally, looking at the organization of the interview's discourse, the mother's entitlement to evaluate the father's care and domestic work becomes evident at a subtle level. She is the one who authenticates his commitment to his family. She reports on this, putting it beyond doubt. Generally in the interviews the mother comments on the father's commitment to domestic work and childcare. Only seldom is it the other way around.

The last case (the Dietrich-Dorstens) reveals that being the primary caregiver means more than doing the bulk of the care work. It also and foremost

means being authorized to evaluate the care work done by the father. It is important to note that, in most of our couples, the position of primary caregiver in the second sense is accomplished by *both* parents (cf. also Lengersdorf & Meuser 2016). The father's participation is often neglected in research on maternal gatekeeping. Maternal gatekeeping is not a one-sided strategy adopted by mothers in order to defend intra-familial power. In the literature, fathers are often portrayed as persons without agency (Dermott 2008, p. 19). It is in fact an arrangement that is accepted tacitly by both parents.

CONCLUSION

The amendment of the German parental leave legislation in 2007 offers new options to fathers who wish to be involved in childcare. It gives them a sounder basis on which to apply to their employers for leave. Nevertheless, they still face obstacles, particularly if they request more than two months' parental leave. However, couples do not always want the father to extend his leave.

In companies and other employing organizations, paternity leave of two months has become commonplace. It can be seen as the standard choice for fathers taking parental leave in Germany (Neumann & Meuser 2017). These two months are even more unproblematic if they are split into two periods of one month each. Companies treat them like an extended vacation. In this sense, the two months have tended to become an organizational routine as well as the maximum period of paternity leave that organizations assume they are able to manage. In contrast to maternity leave, paternity leave seems to be perceived as a vacation and as time for recreation as well as family time. Consequently, a longer period of paternity leave would no longer be seen as a 'longer vacation' and would have to be treated differently. In comparison, longer career breaks for women are taken for granted, and it is accepted that they have to be compensated, while there is still a strong expectation that male employees will be continuously available. The two additional months have been institutionalized as 'daddy months', while the norm of mothers'

responsibility for care work goes more or less unchallenged. However, in the public services and the non-profit sector, there seem to be fewer obstacles preventing fathers from taking a longer period of leave.

Resistance from employers is not the only reason why just a small minority of fathers take extended paternity leave. Some couples found that a longer period of leave could provoke a conflict situation between the partners and therefore waived the extended leave option. This can be discussed in terms of the notion of *maternal gatekeeping* (Allen & Hawkins 1999; Gaunt 2008). The often unintended 'gatekeeping' by mothers can prevent care responsibilities from being shared more equally. This often corresponds with widespread beliefs about mothering, fathering and children's needs that are closely related to gender stereotypes and references to biology. A shorter period of paternity leave may be the result of conflict avoiding behavior based on adherence to common gender and parenthood norms. Although the discourse on 'involved fatherhood' bemoans father's lack of involvement in childcare, our data show that, depending on a couple's gender beliefs, fathers can also be too involved.

Paternity leave can potentially jeopardize the mother's position as the primary caregiver, but in fact in most cases it does not. Paternity leave is only seldom a reason for changing the gendered division of labor fundamentally and for revising intra-familial power relations. The usual case of taking two months' leave does not lead to a sustainable reconfiguration of domestic chores. Thus, paternity leave has only a limited effect on gender equality.

The findings discussed above illustrate the complex relationship between organizational structures and couples' decision-making. A couple's negotiations with their employers mediate their decision on who takes how many months of parental leave - and vice versa. The 2007 amendment of the parental leave legislation established a new legal framework that fathers can rely on. How it is used depends not only on decisions made by employers but also on couples' gender beliefs. An extension of paternity leave - in terms of the number of fathers taking the leave as well as the number of months

taken - must be established against an asymmetric cultural tradition of parenthood that, despite the dominance of a rhetoric of gender equality in politics and public discourses, remains deeply embodied in the everyday routines of both parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding: This work was supported by Mercator Research Center Ruhr, Essen, Germany (grant number Pr-2013-0016).

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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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*

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Recibido / Received: 03/04/2017

Aceptado / Accepted: 20/01/2018

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.

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Sugerencia de cita / Suggested citation: Valarino, I. (2018). The Swiss leave scheme at crossroads. Gender equality implications of parental and paternity leave proposals. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 27 (3 Supl.), 83-105

(Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2018.35>)

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 Brighouse & 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.

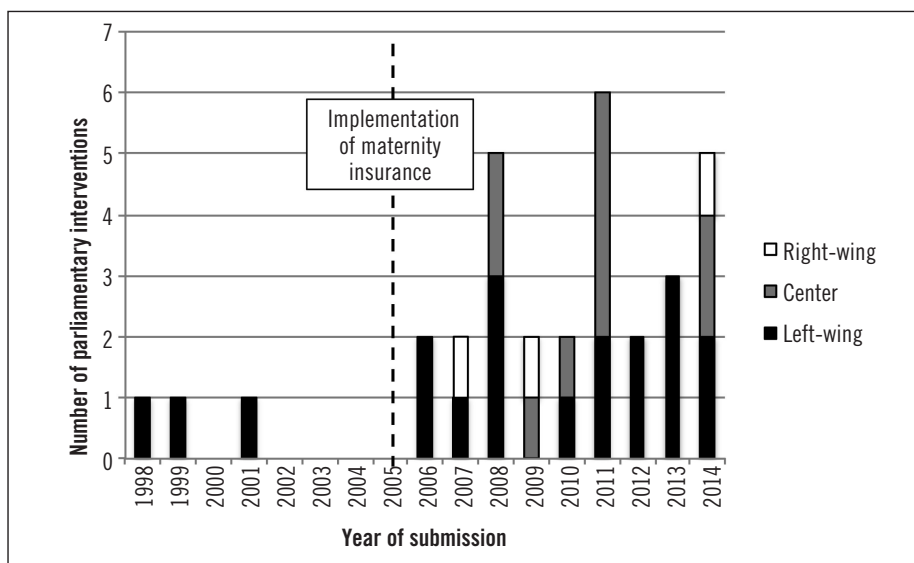


Figure 1. Parental and paternity leave proposals by year and political coalition. *Source:* Own elaboration, based on data from Curia Vista (www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/curia-vista).

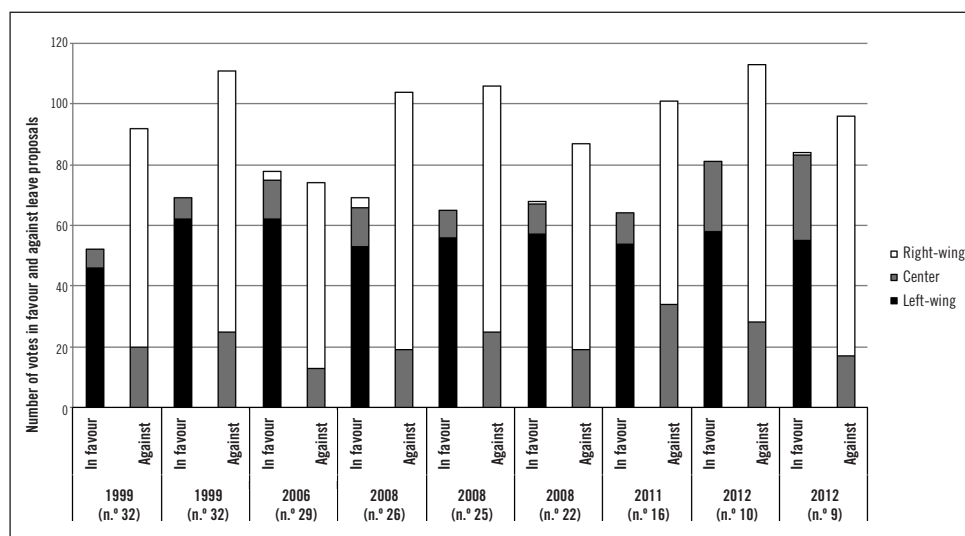


Figure 2. Voting results in the National Council by political coalitions. *Source:* Own elaboration, based on data from Curia Vista (www.parlament.ch/en/ratsbetrieb/curia-vista)

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.°s. 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.^o 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.^o 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.^o 33), to 18 months of paid parental leave in Aline Trede's motion (the Greens, n.^o 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.^o 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.

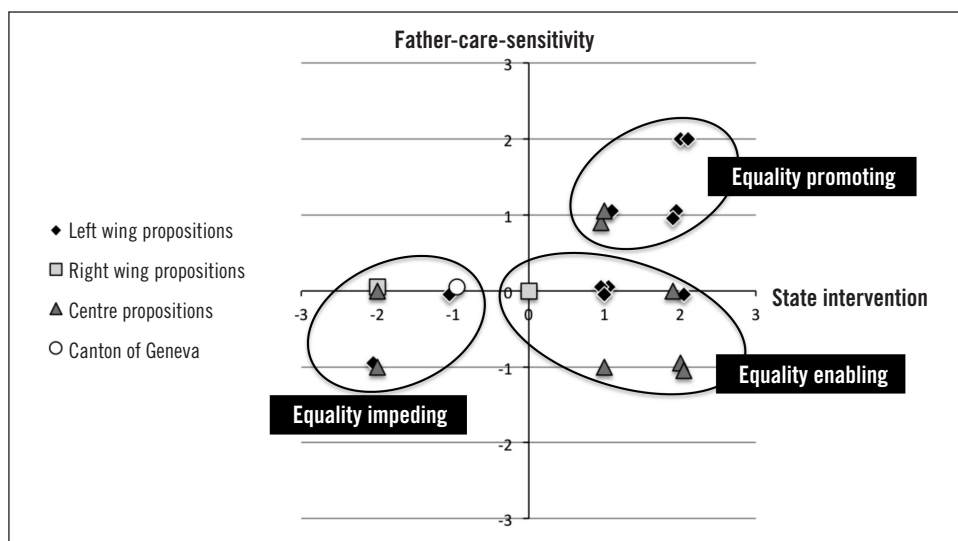


Figure 3. Policy proposals according to federal state intervention and father-care-sensitivity scores

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 (nos. 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 (nos. 12; 15; 19).

Thirdly, interventions in favour of *unpaid solutions* were submitted by the Christian Democrat MP Barbara Schmid-Federer (nos. 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 (nos. 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 (nos. 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).

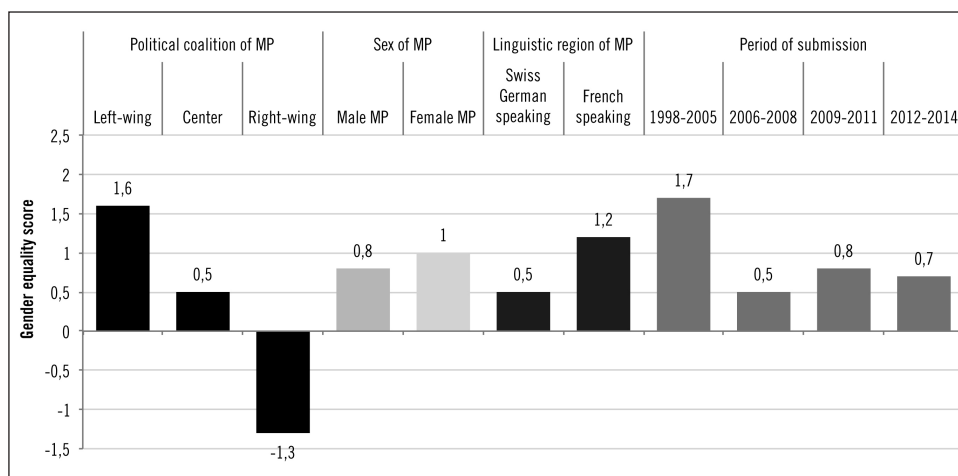


Figure 4. Gender equality mean score of proposals, by a set of policy proposal characteristics

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	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 FCFP (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	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.°	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 mentionned 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 indivual 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 indivual 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)
-

Artículo / Article

Enabling or promoting gender equality through parental leave policies / *Permitir o promover la igualdad de género a través de la política de permisos parentales*

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Recibido / Received: 03/04/2017

Aceptado / Accepted: 20/01/2018

ABSTRACT

The Nordic welfare states pioneered parental leave arrangements for fathers and not just mothers to care for their young children at home during their first year of life. The parental leave rights for fathers consist of one part that is family based and one part that is individually given to fathers. The article aims to show how these two types of leave have influenced the fathers' experiences and appreciation of parental leave. Findings show that family based parental leave rights given to parents to share seem to enable gender equality, but as there is no pressure on fathers to use them. They are defined as mother's rights and thus they have less positive effects than individual, non-transferrable leave. Individual parental leave rights such as the father's quota is better able to promote gender equality in parental leave use and childcare.

Keywords: Fathers, parental leave, gender equality, Norway

RESUMEN

Los Estados de bienestar de los países nórdicos fueron pioneros en la introducción de permisos parentales para los padres, y no sólo para las madres, para cuidar de sus hijos durante el primer año de vida. El derecho de los padres al permiso parental consiste en una parte reconocida como un derecho familiar y otra parte reconocida a título de derecho individual. Este artículo persigue mostrar cómo ambos tipos de permiso han influido en las vivencias y valoración de los padres del permiso parental. Los resultados obtenidos muestran que la parte del permiso parental reconocido como derecho familiar, que ambos progenitores deben compartir, pero no fuerza a los padres a usarlo, *posibilita* la igualdad de género. Los derechos individuales al permiso, como es la cuota para el padre, permite una *promoción* más efectiva de la igualdad de género en el uso de los permisos y en el cuidado de los niños.

Palabras clave: Padres, permiso parental, igualdad de género, Noruega.

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Sugerencia de cita / Suggested citation: Brandth, B., Kvande, E. (2018). Enabling or promoting gender equality through parental leave policies. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 27 (3 Supl.), 107-120

(Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2018.36>)

INTRODUCTION

The aim of Nordic gender equality policies is to advance the dual earner/dual carer model, i.e. to create a society where both men and women, mothers and fathers, participate in the labour market and share housework and childcare. The Nordic welfare states thus pioneered parental leave arrangements to make employed fathers and not just mothers able to care for their young children at home. To reach this aim a special father's quota was introduced in 1993 as part of the parental leave scheme in Norway. It meant reserving a portion of the parental leave for fathers which is lost if they fail to use it as it cannot be transferred to the mother. The father's quota gives male employees the right and obligation to provide care during the child's first year of life. The principal aim of this leave is to break away from the primary understanding of men serving as breadwinners and women as caregivers even if they are employed outside the home.

Before the introduction of the father's quota, parental leave was a family based scheme that both mothers and fathers could use. It was thus optional for fathers, something that distinguishes it from the individual father's quota. Family based leave is still the longest part of the leave in the Norwegian parental leave system.

Over the years it has existed, the father's quota has been widely used, and a large majority of eligible fathers use all or part of this leave (Kitterød et al. 2017). This high use of the father's quota may suggest that an individual right is necessary to ensure that fathers make use of parental leave. Most fathers use exactly the father's quota but the share of eligible fathers using more than the quota, i.e. use some of the family based leave, has increased. Mothers, however, take most of the family based leave days, and their total leave is considerably longer than fathers'.

In this article, which is based on interviews with 20 fathers who have used parental leave, we will examine fathers' understandings of and experiences with the father's quota and the family based right. We are interested in exploring the significance of these two parts of the leave for the development towards equal gender relationships in family and working life.

DUALISTIC PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In comparative research on gender equality, the Nordic welfare states are analysed as including regulations that support both working and caring for mothers and fathers (Pascall 2012). The family policies in these countries are based on the ideal of a symmetric family of two worker-carers. Equality between men and women is encouraged through an individual earner-carer regime (Sainsbury 1999). Important policy measures in this regime include publicly funded parental leave schemes, universal, high quality day-care and access to reduced work hours. These are the same social arrangements as Gornick and Meyers (2009) pinpoint as important in order to create a dual earner/dual caregiver society.

There are, however some important paradoxes in the Norwegian and Nordic family policy (Ellingsæter, 2006, 2012; Eydal et al., 2015; Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2015). Research has pointed out, for example, that Norwegian family policy is dualistic, branching in two directions, one towards a traditional gender division through for instance home care allowance and the other towards a more equitable division of family and work (Ellingsæter, 2006). This dualism is also found in the internal design of the parental leave system, for example between the earmarked father's quota and the parental leave that can be shared between the parents. Kimberly Morgan (2008:404) warns against a "partial transformation of policies and societies, rather than a full embrace of the dual earner/dual caregiver model". Partial reforms may be helpful to parents and bring some progress towards gender equality, but some of these reforms may reinforce a traditional division of labour between mothers and fathers.

A comprehensive research literature on parental leave has evolved during the last twenty years. In fact the study of parental leave is in the forefront of comparative social policy research focusing on gender equality (Ray et.al. 2010). This strong interest in parental leave policies must be understood on the basis of these policies having the potential to change women's position in employment and engaging men in caregiving. Parental leave policy rights and designs vary substantially across countries (Blum, Koslowski and Moss, 2017) and

the effect of the different leave systems on gender equality is also debated. Peter Moss and Fred Deven (1999) have denoted the question of what effect parental leave has on gender equality as a Catch 22, meaning that in order to promote gender equality parental leave has to be used equally by parents. However, for this to happen equality has to be more developed than can be observed in any country at present. If gender equality is not already advanced, then parental leave may delay or even represent a “pitfall” when it comes achieving equality (p.14).

In their analysis of what is needed to achieve “strong gender equality” in family and working life, i.e. where gender does not count, Brighthouse and Wright (2008) focus on three types of leave policies that can impact development of gender equality in different ways. These are: 1) policies that *prevent* equality as they preserve women’s role as mothers, for example maternity leave, unpaid leave and cash allowances, 2) policies that *enable* equality, such as parental leave granted to the family. Such policies may enable egalitarian strategies within families, but they put no pressures on fathers to use them. 3) policies that *promote* equality. The example of this latter type of programme is paid leave granted to individuals rather than families, where the leave lapses if it is not used. Brighthouse and Wright find the latter type of leave necessary for breaking down the cultural barriers to gender equality in family and working life.

This article explores fathers’ experiences of family based parental leave and the father’s quota, i.e. the two leave programmes that, according to Brighthouse and Wright (2008), may enable or promote equality. Statistics from NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) (2014) show that fathers’ use of parental benefits has increased on average by 20 days over the last ten years, amounting to an increase of 77 per cent. Over this decade, the length of the father’s quota increased from four to 14 weeks. Documented findings from a number of countries have shown that the shared parental leave (which is optional for fathers) is mostly used by mothers (O’Brien et al., 2007; Lammi-Taskula 2007; Ray et al., 2010; Haas and Rostgaard 2011; Fougner 2012; Gislason and Eydal 2013). It has been pointed out that optional leave is not strong enough to bring

about a new division of work between the mother and the father where there is more gender equality (Brandth and Kvande 2012).

Thus, studies have shown that when family policy programmes are optional, traditional gendered patterns are generally followed. The father chooses paid work more than the mother, who chooses caregiving. The provision of choice does not manage to break such patterns. Nonetheless, it is argued that more freedom to choose and flexibility in the programme are important features that may make it attractive for fathers (Bruning and Plantenga 1999; Rostgaard 2002; Rantalaiho 2009). Studies have also shown that it is important to have a statutory right that does not have to be negotiated locally or in central collective bargaining agreements. In Denmark, where the legislation does not give men a common/universal right to leave, open negotiations are widely used, and these are often characterized by unspoken gendered expectations (Bloksgaard 2013).

Studies of the Norwegian leave programme comparing the father’s quota to the more optional schemes of shared, family based parental leave and cash allowances were conducted some years after the introduction of the father’s quota (Brandth and Kvande 2001; Brandth et al. 2005). This research documented that mandatory leave for fathers made it easier for them to use the father’s quota to set boundaries against the demands of work, thus reserving uninterrupted father-child time. It was also pointed out that a statutory earmarking of the father’s quota lifts the decision of who should take leave from the family up to the institutional level, where it would apply to “all” fathers. This obviated the mother and father’s need to negotiate between themselves as to who should take leave and have the caregiving responsibility for the child. The father’s quota became a pre-negotiated right for men, also in terms of the workplace, and it was supposed to eliminate the need to negotiate individually with the employer over the use of the father’s quota. The analyses of the advantages of the father’s quota were conducted when it was set at four weeks and had only existed for a relatively short period. This article examines the impact of the expansion and maturation of the father’s quota. Do the same advantages/effects also apply today?

Using Brighthouse and Wright's conceptual framework, this article explores how the two leave policies of family based or individual right, are experienced by the fathers in our study. How are they differently experienced and what are the factors behind enabling and promoting processes?

THE NORWEGIAN PARENTAL LEAVE SYSTEM FOR FATHERS

As early as 1909 women in Norway gained the right to six weeks paid maternity leave. From the beginning, labour protection of working women was the policy's central aim. Out of consideration for their health, women were not allowed to work the first six weeks after birth, and it was regarded as reasonable to compensate women for loss of income during the period they remained at home. In 1946 maternity leave was extended to twelve weeks. The next extension came in 1978, when the leave became 18 weeks with full compensation.

What was totally new in 1978 was that some of the leave could be shared between the parents, moving away from the idea of maternity leave as an individual right for women. By granting fathers the right to leave if the mother went back to work, the legislation signalled a new view of men's responsibilities and participation in caregiving. It also signalled that mothers were expected to be employed, and it ensured women's right to combine parti-

cipation in the labour market with giving birth and providing care. The idea of equal rights, which was strong in the 1970s, was behind this legislation. The leave was given to the family as both parents were accorded rights and obligations in relation to family and work.

Fathers, however, rarely used this common family based leave so the policy did not promote more equal parenting. To advance that goal, an individual, non-transferable leave of four weeks for fathers was introduced in 1993. At the same time the total leave period was extended from 35 to 42 weeks with 100 per cent wage compensation. Proponents argued that a quota would give a strong signal to parents as well as to employers that men as well as women are parents with obligations and rights as caregivers. Children's need for their fathers was also emphasized in the debate. Since then the individual father's quota has developed gradually, extended to 14 weeks and then reduced to 10 weeks in 2014 following the politics of the parties in power.

The Norwegian parental leave system is work-related and based on the principle that parents "earn" the right through participation in working life. To qualify for parental leave, both mothers and fathers have to be in the workforce for six of the last ten months prior to birth. This type of eligibility encourages both parents to combine work and family obligations as it is built on the model where both mothers and fathers should be employed.

Table 1. Norwegian parental leave; changes in the distribution of weeks with a 100 % wage compensation* between mothers and fathers during the project period

Year	Total parental leave length	Individual parental leave for mothers	Family based parental leave*	Individual parental leave for fathers (Father's quota)	Paternity leave at birth
2009	46	3 + 6	27	10	2
2011	47	3 + 6	26	12	2
2013	49	3 + 14	18	14	2
2014**	49	3 + 10	26	10	2

* If parents choose 80 % wage compensation, the family based leave period is prolonged by ten weeks. ** Since 2014 there have been no changes, but the government has announced an increase in the father and mother's quotas to 15 weeks each from July 1, 2018. This means 16 weeks remain for the family to share.

Table 2. Overview of the sample

	Name	Educational level High, Medium, Low	Occupation	No of children	Type and length of leave FQ = Father's quota FL = Family based leave
1	Tore	H	Assistant doctor	1	12 weeks FQ
2	Lars	H	Civil engineer	1	12 weeks FQ
3	Steinar	H	Civil engineer	2	12 weeks FQ
4	Martin	H	Researcher	2	10 weeks FQ plus 6 weeks FL
5	Roberto	H	Civil engineer	2	10 weeks FQ
6	Erlend	H	High school teacher	2	10 weeks FQ
7	Fabio	H	Architect	1	10 weeks FQ plus 6 weeks FL
8	Arne	H	Adviser in the cultural sector	3	10 weeks FQ
9	Simon	H	Ph.d student	1	12 weeks FQ
10	Hans	M	Communications adviser	1	10 weeks FQ plus 16 weeks FL
11	Didrik	M	Masters student and temporary worker	1	40 weeks FL
12	Geir	M	IT worker	1	10 weeks FQ
13	Dag	M	IT worker	1	10 weeks FQ
14	Steffen	M	Police officer	2	10 weeks FQ
15	Max	L	House painter	1	11 weeks FQ
16	Kristoffer	L	Mason	1	12 weeks FQ
17	Emil	L	House painter	2	40 weeks FL
18	Sivert	L	Electrician	2	12 weeks FQ plus some FL
19	Mons	L	Photographer	1	12 weeks FQ
20	David	L	Fire prevention officer	1	10 weeks FQ

As seen from the table, the leave scheme has been evolving during the period our research project has existed. One stable characteristic is that both mothers and fathers have individual, non-transferable rights in addition to a joint, family based right. Mothers have an earmarked period of 13 weeks, of which three have to be taken before birth. Twenty-six of the weeks (or thirty-six if a lower payment is chosen) are family based and thus optional for fathers. Included in the total parental leave period is also the individual father's quota of 10 weeks. Currently, the total parental leave period is 49 weeks, with 100 % wage compensation. Of these weeks, fathers may use a total of 36 with 100 % pay. In addition to parental leave, fathers have two weeks of paternity leave to be taken after

the birth of the child to assist the mother. Wage compensation during this leave is based on collective agreements.

DATA AND METHOD

The analysis is based on an interview study of 20 fathers who had taken parental leave. The interviews were carried out in 2012 and 2013, which for most of the fathers was the second year after the child's birth. Thus, the fathers in the sample had rights to 10 and 12 weeks of individual leave and 27 or 26 weeks of family based leave if they chose 100 per cent compensation. The fathers were recruited by contact with various workplaces and then

snowballing recruitment was used. The interviewees had to have become fathers after the fathers' quota was expanded to ten weeks in 2009, as we were interested in their experiences of relatively long leaves. The length of the leave taken by the sample varied; most fathers had taken the father's quota of 10 or 12 weeks, but six had also taken more than the father's quota, i.e. part of the family based leave. Two of them (Didrik and Emil) had taken all the family based leave available, as the mothers were not eligible. Some of the fathers could remember the total length of the leave, but had problems recollecting the exact division between the fathers' quota and the family based leave.

We endeavoured to find interviewees with varied social backgrounds. About half (9) had higher education (masters' level), while the other half had either a medium level education at the bachelor level (6) or no formal education beyond high school (5). The experiences of the fathers may thus be somewhat biased, and we cannot rule out that a greater share of blue-collar workers would have produced other stories. The fathers did, however, have a wide range of occupations, including engineers, artisans, teachers, office workers, consultants, and administrative, healthcare, and technical staff. They worked in organizations of various sizes and compositions.

As Norwegian leave rights are employment based, i.e., accrued by the participation of both parents in working life, all the fathers and most mothers were in paid employment prior to the birth of their child and had a right to parental leave. Half of the fathers were employed by private companies, but only one was self-employed, and one, a student, was temporarily employed. Except for this father, all worked full time. All the fathers lived together with the mother and the child. At the time of the interview, the child was between one and three years of age, "and the relevant child could be the father's first...". As seen from table 2, only one father in the sample had three children. Most fathers were in their thirties, though they ranged between 27 and 43.

Informational letters were sent in advance to the participants to explain the purpose of the study, the ethical research rules, and the rights of the informants. To preserve anonymity, the full name and contact details of the interviewees were not re-

corded, and fictitious names have been used in all the analyses. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between one and two hours. The fathers were generally interviewed in their homes, but some interviews took place in a café or at their office. The fathers' experience with the leave was recent at the time of the interview, and their understandings were based on both what they observed and what they experienced themselves.

We examined each transcript in order to identify the father's understanding of how family based parental leave and the father's quota functioned in the gendered field of caregiving. Each transcript was first examined to identify themes in the ways fathers related to the two types of parental leave rights available to them. Several themes that are connected with the parental leave literature emerged in this descriptive stage. While focusing on clear themes, we also paid attention to the different stories and situations of the interviewees, highlighting positive as well as negative cases. Some of the interviews were particularly rich. In presenting the findings, we have therefore chosen to alternate between person oriented and thematic oriented analysis. Case stories are sometimes contrasted to disclose important elements. Sivert and Emil, for instance, are both working class fathers who have used the family based leave but under different conditions and with very divergent experiences at work.

FATHERS EXPERIENCING FAMILY BASED PARENTAL LEAVE

In this first part of the analysis we will examine how the fathers experience the family based parental leave which according to Brighthouse and White (2008) *enables* equality. It differs from the individual based father's quota because the parents may choose how to divide this leave between them. This portion of the leave amounts to 26 weeks. Since it can be shared between the parents it appears to be gender neutral, but it is mostly used by mothers (Fougner 2012).

Sivert's story is an example of a father who challenged to a certain degree the expectations

for how parental leave should be shared between the mother and the father as he had chosen to use both the family based leave and the individual based father's quota of leave. In addition to his own experiences he also gives us insight into his workmates' expectations on this theme. He worked as an electrician, had two children, stayed home on leave with both children and both times used part-time leave. With his first child he stayed home for 13 months with 50 per cent leave because the mother was a student and had not earned the right to take leave through employment. This meant that he used all of the family based parental leave, but had no right to the father's quota. The second time he also stretched his leave over a long period of time, by using both the father's quota and part-time family based parental leave alternating with the mother. This was something his wife, Solveig, actually preferred, as she wanted to go back to work on a part-time basis a bit earlier than if she had taken all the family based leave herself. "Actually, she gave some of it to me. She wanted me to have it", he said confirming that they both see it as her leave. Therefore, he called it an "easy choice" when he decided to take extra leave.

Even so, he found that his colleagues in his male-dominated construction business workplace reacted and found his use of family based parental leave strange and he explains: "You know, they use what they have to [the father's quota] and nothing more. That's the usual way. So they said to me many times: 'Quite the little woman, aren't you?'"

We see here how parental leave and caregiving for children is still considered as being gendered as feminine by his workmates. In spite of the long tradition with father's quota in Norway this was a recurring theme in several of the interviews, family based parental leave is still mothers' leave. Sivert, however, challenged the comments from his colleagues, that he was doing "women's work", when he said: "Nah, I told them: Why shouldn't I be doing that? At least I know my kids. I really get to know them well!" He experienced being home with two of his children as very meaningful. The reactions expressed by his workmates reveal that in parts of working life fathers are not expected to use the parental leave that they can share with their spouse.

Sivert's experiences illustrate how caregiving continues to be a field where the mother is seen as the obvious main actor. Commenting on the family based parental leave he said:

That's how it is; the wife is home with the kids, like. That's what's still left hanging there. I believe it might take a long time before we think that it's okay for the father to stay home. If the intention is that the mother shouldn't stay home the whole time, it [taking leave] should not be made a completely free choice.

This extract from the interview shows that the process of making caregiving for small children into an equitable field may take a long time if the design of the parental leave is to be based on policies "enabling" equality.

Lars, a civil engineer, was married to Lise, a registered nurse. Their daughter was two and a half years old when the interview took place. They planned their leave so that Lise was home full-time for ten months first, and then both took part-time leave of five months. When asked how he wanted the period of leave to be, he stated: "I think about it as a... really as mother's leave, actually". This attitude was also seen in the plans they had for their next child, who was due quite soon. He did not consider taking more than he had to (the individually based father's quota), and on top of this, he was uncertain as to whether he would take all the father's quota weeks. At the time he of the interview the quota had been extended to 14 weeks (2013). He would even have preferred the option of transferring some of these weeks to the mother - which, however, was not possible without losing the payment. Lars and Sivert's stories reveal that even if the family based parental leave is gender neutral in character, it is still perceived as the mother's leave in many families.

Steffen, a policeman, who was married to Susan, a case-processing officer in the public sector, confirmed this. They had two children, and he had been home on a part-time father's quota with both. At the time of the interview they were expecting child number three. We asked him about their plans for sharing the parental leave and he told us that he would have given the whole leave, including the

father's quota, to the mother if that had been possible, and his rationale for this was as follows:

Because she likes being home more than I do. She wants to be home. I want to be home too, and I've done that twice now. But I think it is quite exhausting, really, I have done it twice. With the third child I don't think... then... that we should do it... then we need to do it a bit differently.

He reveals ambivalence; he says he wants to stay at home with his third child like he did with the two other children. On the other side, he experienced it as exhausting and in the end he would like the mother to have more leave and his reason was: "No, I think it is a mother's leave, really". Again we see an example that family based parental leave is primarily linked to the mother, and therefore he was also open to giving his wife his quota as well, because:

She enjoys it, in a way. And then I don't see anything wrong with that, in a way. I think that... there is something special between mother and child when kids are so young. And I don't really see any point in this being controlled by the authorities, making me stay home, because I manage to prioritize the kids quite well outside my working hours anyway.

He was willing to take part in providing childcare, but he still expressed a somewhat unwilling attitude, feeling that the mother was primarily the most suitable person for this work when the children were young. During the interview his ambivalence disappeared and he ended up feeling that it is best for the young baby daughter to have her mother at home. Consequently, his wife got the main responsibility for their children and the parental leave period was not used to create equality in the care work.

That many fathers still had traditional attitudes when it came to caregiving for small children is something we also saw above in Sivert's story about his colleagues and friends:

If you're in your mid-thirties, then you're right in the middle of pursuing a career, right? Then they are so old-fashioned, sadly, that they believe that it's the wife who should do it [childcare]. And it's a bit frightening, I think, that nothing has changed all

these years and they still have this division of roles where she prepares dinner and minds the children, or 'babysits' children ... True, they also said that; that they couldn't join the Friday night in the pub because they had to 'babysit' their own kids. I don't think you can babysit your own kids. Poor choice of words!

Sivert reacted to how many of his mates did not prioritize their children, and they had what he felt was an old-fashioned view of the division of work between the mother and father in a family. He suggested that more should be expected today when the issue of equality had been on the agenda for such a long time. When fathers he knew talked about how they had to babysit their own children, he felt it illustrated how imbalanced the division of caregiving responsibilities still was in many families. Even if it was a poor choice of words, it was still quite a fitting description because the mother is the one with the main responsibility while the father can "babysit" his own children. These fathers continue to prioritize work over children and let the mother bear the main responsibility for childcare.

Emil represents another father who used the family based parental leave. His vocational training was in the construction trades and he was working as a house painter. He was married to Eli, who was a newly educated registered nurse, and they had two daughters aged two and four. He was home on leave with the youngest for 12 full months (parental leave and holidays), because the mother was a student and had not earned the right to parental benefits that are based on employment. When asked during the interview whether he had problems at work when he decided in favour of such a long leave, he said:

No, I ... It was easy, because the boss simply had to accept it. That's the way it is, really. He [the company] would just have to accept a bit less work then. He had to." He stated that he did not have a bad conscience in relation to his workplace, nor was any substitute hired for him: "It's not so simple in the house painting trade, you know, because you don't know what you get. You can't just hire somebody, really. It's hard to find good people, because they are, they are probably doing well where they're working already. That's the way it is...

This story illustrates how the parental leave rights, which are based on both parents having been in the working life, may function for fathers. Because the mother was a student the father had to take the family based parental leave, making him part of a minority practice. At the same time, Emil's story is an example of an employer accepting and adapting to the fact that men have caregiving obligations.

Sivert and Emil's experiences are examples of how a family based policy may enable equality. They both use this leave, but there are very different factors behind their uses. For Sivert, his choice is due to his wife wanting to return to work early, and this fits with his own wishes even if he has to go against gender norms at work. For Emil, the main factor behind his usage is his wife's lack of eligibility and an employer who does not obstruct the necessity of him taking such a long leave. In spite of these positive examples, the experiences we have described primarily illustrate that family based leave is still seen as women's responsibility in many contexts in the Norwegian society. Even if family based parental leave enables equality between parents, it does not seem to lead to a radical shift in the attitudes and practices of caregiving within families.

FATHERS EXPERIENCING INDIVIDUAL PARENTAL LEAVE

In this part of the analysis, the focus is explicitly on the father's quota, which is an individual parental leave for fathers and, according to Brighthouse and Wright (2008), a policy that may promote equality. In order to explore the fathers' experiences with the father's quota we will focus on the different design elements that are characteristics of this individual parental leave for fathers.

While some of the fathers in our sample took a large portion of the total parental leave, their main experience was that colleagues only took precisely what they had to, which is to say the father's quota. Sivert said: "The people I know, they only take just what they have to. Not an hour more! Don't know what they are afraid of, really. But, we all have different priorities. That's how it is. Some feel the job

is more important than anything else. I don't share that idea. Good for me. And for the kids!" As this citation shows, the fathers comply with the rules as laid down by the state, and many of them felt that the number of father's quota weeks was enough. For many fathers it was not probable that they would take any leave if there was no earmarked portion for the father which would lapse if not used. Lars explained this:

Actually, for us it was never a question that I would have more than what I had to have. Now, the leave is quite long, really, in my opinion, that is 12 or 14 weeks ... So for us it's quite natural. Both of us, she and I, want her to have the largest portion of it. And when it becomes 14 weeks at any rate she would have liked to have a bit more, or at least the opportunity...

They agreed that he would take what he had to, but more than that, i.e. taking more of the shared parental leave, was not something the couple would consider.

As we have seen above, Sivert defined himself as a father who prioritized in a different way than the other fathers, believing that both he and his children had benefited from his choice. Therefore, he was also very positive to the father's quota scheme:

If we are to eliminate the differences, these roles, and want equality, then this is how it has to be done. It's a simple measure to achieve more equality, I think, but it could have been... But it could have been longer, the father's quota, I think it's a bit short.

Lars and Sivert have different opinions about the length of the father's quota, but their stories both illustrate the importance of an earmarked leave for fathers. Lars would have preferred the leave to be shorter while Sivert sees it as a tool to achieve equality and would prefer it to be longer. The father's quota is perceived as fathers' time. The fact that the father's quota cannot be transferred to the mother, i.e. cannot be made optional for fathers as the family based parental leave is, promotes fathers' use of it. An important reason for this is that if the father's quota is not used, these weeks of

leave are lost, which will undermine the children's opportunities to be cared for in the home during their first year. The father's quota as an individual right for the father simplifies any negotiations with the mother. If the leave had not been designed like this, the mother would have taken the whole leave. It seems that for many it is still not obvious that the father should choose to stay home with the child, and to avoid making the leave only a mother's leave, it was important that things were not "made completely free". Fathers felt only to a little degree that the family based parental leave that was for them, and any use of it, was challenged by their personal and other's understandings of the gendered character of childcare.

In addition the fathers experience how the father's quota as a separate statutory quota is an important "bargaining chip" in relation to employers. If it were to disappear, in many cases it would be more difficult to take leave. Kristian, a craftsman, who had a 2 years old daughter and was married to Kari, a registered nurse, elaborated:

It's a law and... And that's very important. It's the most important thing, actually. Because if, for example, it becomes the way the Conservatives want it, that there should be no statutory quota, but that all the leave should be voluntary [for fathers], then it would be... then it would be a major problem for men to get... very many men would have problems at work to take this voluntary leave. Really. I'm sure. That's what would happen to me at any rate, guaranteed! Yes. And I think that would be the result in very different industries and professions too. Finance and all that.

Kristian illustrates how the father's quota promotes equality for employees who are Fathers. By being a separate, individual right it helps in their negotiations over leave with their employer. Martin, who was a researcher, expressed the advantage of the father's quota as follows: "I think it's important that we have a portion that is reserved for the father, and which lapses if it isn't used. I believe it will benefit equality that the father does not just have the opportunity, but that he rather *has to* take the leave". He thought that this obligation to use the leave, which legally rested with the fathers, en-

sured that employers did not have a discriminatory practice in relation to this. If the fathers had to negotiate individually with the employer to be granted leave, it might also lead to differential treatment of fathers, depending on their status with management.

Steinar, a civil engineer with two daughters, believed that having an earmarked quota for the father is an unconditional strength in relation to the workplace. He thought in terms of money, reasoning as follows:

The employer might push a lot, wanting you to postpone or drop it, but if you then say that "Well, you recommend that I should drop it, but if I do, I'm giving away three months of 'holiday', are you willing to give me that as pay? That's what it's worth, a quarter of a year with pay; do you want to give me that?" I don't think that very many employers would say yes to that. So in that way... you have in a way, quite a strong argument that is quite easy to translate into money, and that's a good thing to have when it comes to employers.

Here he translated the value of the father's quota into money, and found this was an argument that might work to his advantage in the negotiations with the employer. If fathers need to be tough when negotiating with working life, money may be an argument that might work. Using the relationship to the child as an argument would not be as forceful, Steinar felt. "It's very, very difficult to use that argument in an across-the-table negotiation with the employer," he stated, even if it depended on the attitude of the employer. He had worked for positive bosses who believed he should take leave even if it was detrimental to the job: "It's quite clear that the project we are involved in will have to be put on hold, and we'll lose customers because of that, but too bad!"

According to the parental leave rules, the organization of the leave must be agreed with the employer. This leads to the leave being adapted to the job. Kristian states: "... I really think it was a bit like... like what I felt then, that I would need to take the leave to fit with the pressures at work". Situations with a heavy work and pressure would imply negotiations over when the leave should be

taken. Then, what might happen is that: "...the boss doesn't want the employees to take leave. They would actually have to go into the office and plead for it. Even if this is something they would have a right to, it would be very difficult. At least if the company is swamped with work ... it's never suitable, you know," Sivert said. Negative bosses do exist, but his own experiences of a compliant manager strongly contrasted what he said about the experiences of some friends.

We find many examples of how this individual right for fathers is accepted and respected in working life. The fact that there is an earmarked legal right to leave leads many companies to avoid putting barriers in the way of their employees who want to take leave. Most fathers presented their plan and had it accepted by management. "I'm quite lucky in having a very flexible employer, you know, so this ensured that we just sat down and counted days," Steinar said. Steffen had a similar experience: "I brought a list and asked if it was okay, and then he [the boss] looked at it and said it was okay".

When asked what he thought about the father's quota, Lars said first and foremost it was a great opportunity and an expression of the welfare state at its best. He added "it feels like something you ought to... that it's something you should take, really. (...) It feels like there's pressure on you to take it. That... if you want to be a good parent, or a good father, then you have to take the daddy leave." The importance of this pressure was expressed in several ways: "I think it's good that they are calling for the father to be at home in this way. It's possible to choose not to take it, and then you simply lose those weeks. If it's so important that the father is at work, then it simply needs to be that way. Then you have some pressure on you," said Steinar, who felt it was a good thing that the father's quota lapsed if fathers did not use it.

Fabio, who originally was from Italy, also saw how the father's quota was not only an opportunity, but an obligation which might have direct consequences for equality in working life:

The obligation to take leave ensures that the employer does not treat people differently. Without any obligation to take the father's quota it will be more common that the mother is home with children,

and then an employer will be more sceptical to hiring a young woman of mothering age - that it will lead to differential treatment if there's no father's quota.

He saw how the obligation that is inherent in the father's quota might lead employers to stop discriminating between female and male employees, rather seeing men as employees and caregivers in the same way as women.

We have seen how individual parental leave rights for fathers promote equality through making the negotiations with the mothers and with working life easier for them. In addition the fathers experience that having an individual right for parental leave has represented a personal opportunity and motivation to provide childcare. Emil illustrates this:

I think it was a wonderful journey," he said. Several others state, on the other hand, that their leave would probably not have been as long, or they would have taken it when the child was a little older. Lars was one of these fathers: "I might have wanted to take that leave when the kid was a bit older, really.

Another reason why an individual, non-transferable leave promotes gender equality is that it "pushes" avoidant fathers into taking leave. For some of the other fathers, there would be no leave at all if there were no quota for the father. Mons, who had just finished his father's quota period together with his first child, was one of those who stated that it was the "obligation" that was built into the father's quota that led him to take leave. "It sounds a bit deplorable," he said, "but I think, to be perfectly honest, that it's right. I would not have taken it if it was not an obligation". The reason was his work situation. He worked as a freelancer and had to work when he got assignments. Roberto was another one who would not have taken leave without the quota. Roberto was an engineer, had two children and was originally from Spain. He was unaccustomed to the idea that fathers are expected to be home with caregiving responsibility for babies, and he was uncertain how his employer would react. Roberto nevertheless took the father's quota with both his children, six weeks the first time and

ten weeks with the youngest child, and after this, he was very positive and grateful for the experience it gave him. Simon would also have liked to avoid taking leave because he was so busy completing the experiments he was conducting for his doctoral thesis when he had to take the father's quota. He decided to take the father's quota because it would have lapsed. Steffen had his own version of the same issue in terms of work, but his solution was to switch departments so that he could have work duties that were easier to be away from. Martin also stated that he was not planning to take the father's quota with his first child the way his work situation was at the time. "But it was against better judgment," he said in hindsight.

Some employed fathers are hesitant skeptical to taking leave from work, and for them the father's quota is an important signal that male employees also have caregiving responsibilities. "The father's quota is not only an incentive in relation to the employer, but also an incentive for fathers themselves," Steinar said, adding: "They can choose whether to work or take leave, they will be receiving their wages anyway, so then they could try to stay home. I think many don't enjoy it. But I think it's healthy for them, just experiencing what the mother does". The fact that so many interviewed fathers pointed to the importance of having a special quota for fathers may suggest that without it, a family based leave for fathers would not be sufficient, as it has not become embedded as an accepted and taken-for-granted practice for fathers.

CONCLUSION

While previous studies have shown that parental leave given individually to fathers works well when it comes to fathers taking leave, this article has explored the reasons why this may be so. In looking at fathers' own experiences and the way they compare individual- and family based leave, several factors stand out as important.

First of all, family based leave is experienced as mother's leave. The fathers describe how they see mothers as more suited to care for the child the first year. Since at some work places colleagues

react negatively when fathers opt for this leave, the fathers must be particularly motivated and/or circumstances like mothers' lack of rights or wish to return to work may be behind this choice. Mothers must consent to fathers using this leave and this may be both a possibility and a hindrance.

When we consider the father's experiences with the father's quota, which is an individual parental leave for fathers, we see a different picture. Because the father's quota is non-transferable to the mother, the fathers regard it as *their* time with the child. The fact that it is a pre-negotiated, statutory right diminishes negotiations with the mother. The fathers also experienced that the individual right represented an unconditional strength in negotiations with their workplaces where it is accepted and respected. The individual right to parental leave is also experienced by the fathers as a motivating factor for them to take care of their baby. For other groups of fathers it represented a "push" into taking leave, which they would not have done if there was no individual, non-transferable leave.

Our data shows that the individual father's quota has the potential of creating a radical shift in the traditional roles connected to childcare. Family based parental leave, on the other hand, has not got the same transforming power. It represents a policy that *enables* equality in caregiving between parents, while the father's quota *promotes* gender equality in caring. The individual parental leave for fathers in Norway is as we have seen only 10 weeks, while family based leave is the longest part of the parental leave system in Norway and is used by a minority of fathers. This suggests that a parental leave system based on individual rights for parents is necessary to ensure that fathers make use of parental leave. If the principal aim is to encourage "strong gender equality" (Brighthhouse and Wrigth, 2008) in the field of caregiving, parental leave policy regulations should be developed as individual rights for parents. In line with this, the political debate in Norway is now focusing on doing away with family based parental leave and instead splitting the total parental leave in two equal parts, giving 6 months of individual paid leave to the mother and the same to the father. This has been suggested

by an expert committee appointed by the ministry of family affairs (NOU 2017:6). These type of policies would fully embrace the dual earner/dual carer model.

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Reseñas de libros e informes / *Book and Report Review*

Reseñas de libros e informes / *Book and Report Review*

***Comparative perspectives on work-life balance and gender equality. Fathers on leave alone.* Margaret O'Brien and Karin Wall (Eds). New York, USA: Springer, Life Course Research and Social Policies, vol. 6.**

Concepción Castrillo Bustamante

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Este libro, editado por Margaret O'Brien y Karin Wall, presenta los resultados de una investigación sobre padres que han usado un permiso en solitario para cuidar de sus hijos. Su objetivo fundamental es analizar la experiencia de los padres varones durante su periodo como cuidadores, los factores que influyen en la decisión de tomar el permiso así como las consecuencias percibidas del mismo en diferentes ámbitos de su vida familiar, laboral e identitario.

Se trata de una investigación internacional, en la que han participado equipos de once países con diferentes políticas de permisos parentales y tradiciones y culturas de género también diversas. Cada capítulo del libro está dedicado a presentar los resultados de uno de ellos. Algunos de estos países disponen de una política de permisos orientada en mayor medida a la igualdad de género (Suecia, Noruega, Islandia, Finlandia, Canadá, Portugal). En ellos encontramos típicamente permisos individuales de paternidad no transferibles, bien pagados y a menudo generosos en duración, y en algunos casos, incentivos para los padres en forma de meses adicionales en caso de compartir el permiso parental. En otra serie de países participantes, la política de permisos específicamente dirigidos a los padres está, en el momento en que se lleva a cabo esta investigación, pobremente desarrollada (Reino Unido, España, Francia, Japón). En el caso extremo de Suiza, los padres que quieren ejercer de cuidadores tienen que optar por soluciones privadas, como interrumpir su vida laboral.

En los países occidentales, las medidas tendientes a fomentar el empleo femenino, la concilia-

ción de la vida laboral y familiar y el cuidado de los niños en su primera infancia se materializaron a lo largo del siglo xx, tal como explican las editoras del libro, en un permiso de maternidad que varía en extensión y remuneración en diferentes contextos nacionales. Sin embargo, en las últimas décadas, y especialmente desde los años 90 (aunque con diferente ritmo y alcance en los distintos países) se ha ido extendiendo el debate político en torno a la necesidad de un reparto más igualitario de los permisos parentales como modo de contrarrestar la persistente división sexual del trabajo y las desigualdades de género en el ámbito del empleo y en la esfera doméstica.

El contexto de investigación en el que se inserta este trabajo, situado en la intersección entre la sociología de la familia, la sociología de las relaciones de género y el análisis de las políticas de cuidados, ha puesto de manifiesto la relación entre los permisos de paternidad de titularidad individual, no transferibles y pagados al 100 % y la implicación masculina en el trabajo doméstico y de cuidados. Se ha señalado además la singularidad de los efectos del cuidado por parte de los varones en solitario, relacionado en mayor medida con el desarrollo de competencias e independencia como cuidador, frente a un modelo de paternidad más dependiente de la figura materna (Brandth y Kvande, 2003).

La peculiaridad de este trabajo consiste en capturar la experiencia vivida de los padres varones que han sido cuidadores en solitario durante al menos un mes de permiso tal y cómo ellos la perciben e interpretan, gracias a un enfoque cualitativo basado en

entrevistas en profundidad. La dimensión internacional de la investigación permite además la comparación de diferentes aspectos de esta experiencia en distintos contextos culturales e institucionales, proporcionando por lo tanto información sobre el modo en que determinadas políticas influyen en prácticas y disposiciones de género y en posibles transformaciones de las mismas.

Una primera influencia en este sentido se deja notar en los procesos de toma de decisión que conducen a disfrutar del permiso en solitario. Esta investigación muestra cómo en los países en los que existen culturas y políticas igualitarias más asentadas (fundamentalmente los países nórdicos) la decisión de tomar el permiso por parte de los varones frecuentemente se da por sentada y ellos mismos no lo viven como algo excepcional (ver capítulos relativos a Suecia e Islandia). En otros contextos en los que el rol de padre de familia proveedor es aún más predominante, las razones esgrimidas tienden a abarcar motivos prácticos (por ejemplo, proteger el trabajo de la pareja en países con altas tasas de paro y precariedad laboral, como Portugal y España) e ideológicos. Estos últimos están especialmente presentes en aquellos países en los que las políticas públicas hacen particularmente difícil para los padres varones la posibilidad de cuidar, como Suiza. En estos casos, los hombres cuidadores son pioneros, y es más probable que, además de tener los recursos necesarios para afrontar el cuidado sin apoyo institucional, estén motivados por convicciones ideológicas.

Estos procesos de toma de decisión están relacionados con las negociaciones que los padres tienen que hacer tanto con sus parejas como en sus lugares de trabajo. A este respecto es especialmente sugerente el análisis de las autoras de Reino Unido, inspirado en Hochschild, sobre el cuidado del padre como un regalo. Un regalo hacia él en forma de posibilidad otorgado por la pareja (debido a una política de permisos muy centrada en el permiso de maternidad parcialmente transferible) y un regalo también del padre a la madre, en forma de implicación en el cuidado, en un contexto en el que lo más frecuente es que sea la madre quien asuma este rol. Este tipo de representaciones, tal como las autoras señalan, contribuyen a reforzar la

naturalización de la feminización de los cuidados, marcando la excepcionalidad de la paternidad cuidadora a través de la admiración que suscita. En ello observamos de nuevo, por lo tanto, la influencia del diseño de las políticas de permisos en las culturas de género de las familias y su actualización cotidiana.

Cada uno de los capítulos del libro dedica una parte a la descripción y análisis de las percepciones de los padres varones sobre su propia experiencia como cuidadores en solitario. Una característica común a todos ellos es la ambivalencia de esta experiencia, marcada por una pluralidad de emociones. Los padres describen típicamente sentimientos de alegría y satisfacción, mezclados con agotamiento y, frecuentemente, con aburrimiento o inseguridad. Existen dos tendencias comunes especialmente significativas. Por un lado, la sensación de aislamiento es frecuente entre los varones cuidadores debido, en parte, a que los espacios de crianza en el espacio público están fuertemente feminizados. En ocasiones, esto provoca la impresión de estar fuera de lugar (véase capítulos de Reino Unido, Suiza y Suecia). En la investigación en Reino Unido, por ejemplo, ningún padre conocía a otro hombre en su misma situación. Tal como señala Doucet en este mismo volumen, este hecho nos habla de la importancia de estos hombres como agentes que pueden ayudar a equilibrar estos espacios y a normalizar la imagen de los hombres cuidadores, fomentando por lo tanto un mayor nivel de igualdad en lo que esta misma autora categoriza como “dimensión comunitaria” de las responsabilidades parentales, y que tiene que ver con la relación y mediación con otros agentes e instituciones implicadas en la crianza. En segundo lugar, aparece también frecuentemente la descripción por parte de los padres del trabajo de cuidados como un trabajo duro, que requiere más implicación de la inicialmente pensada y que consume tiempo y energía hasta hacer casi inviable dedicarse a otras tareas que se proyectaban antes de comenzar el permiso. Gracias al cuidado en solitario, los padres no pueden delegar las tareas que les resultan menos placenteras, y de esta forma, toman conciencia de que los cuidados son trabajo, reconociendo y poniendo en valor las pasadas experiencias y el rol de sus parejas como madres

cuidadoras (véanse capítulos de España, Suecia, Noruega y Portugal).

En relación con esto, una pregunta relevante en la investigación sobre permisos parentales es en qué medida su disfrute por parte de los varones, y, particularmente, su disfrute en solitario, tiene consecuencias hacia una mayor igualdad de género. Esta investigación pone de manifiesto procesos que apuntan en esa dirección, que no están sin embargo exentos de ambigüedades.

Los resultados en varios países muestran cierta transformación en las identidades masculinas, basada fundamentalmente en un cambio de relación con el trabajo remunerado, que en ocasiones deja de ser el componente central de la subjetividad (Finlandia, Japón). En algunos casos, esto tiene consecuencias directas, ya que un sector de estos hombres decide comenzar a trabajar a tiempo parcial (Suiza). Aún más significativa es la adquisición de nuevas habilidades y capacidades a través del entrenamiento en el cuidado. En la mayor parte de los países, los hombres relatan experiencias de aprendizaje muy satisfactorias para ellos, que no implican exclusivamente nuevas habilidades prácticas, sino también capacidades empáticas y comunicativas, es decir, competencias emocionales asociadas tradicionalmente a la feminidad (véase capítulo de Portugal). Para los padres de todos los países que conforman esta investigación, de hecho, una de las consecuencias del periodo de disfrute del permiso percibidas como más satisfactorias es el fortalecimiento del vínculo con su hijo/a. En ocasiones, y no sin dosis de esencialismo, los padres consideran que este aprendizaje es fundamental para de alguna manera “contrarrestar” la asimetría causada por las “naturales” competencias femeninas en el ámbito de los cuidados y la crianza (véase capítulo de España).

Como se señala en el capítulo sobre Suiza, el permiso en solitario es una ocasión para poner en marcha procesos de “undoing gender”, es decir, para transformar en lo más práctico y cotidiano los roles de género y lo considerado esperable acerca de los comportamientos masculinos y femeninos. Sin embargo, tal como señalan Wall y Leitaó en el capítulo relativo a Portugal, estos procesos pueden llevarse a cabo con mayor o menor nivel de reflexi-

vidad y no implican necesariamente una transformación consciente de las identidades de género. De hecho, y tal como estas mismas autoras enfatizan, no estamos ante una transformación unívoca hacia una mayor igualdad de género, sino más bien ante una pluralización de modos de ejercer la paternidad. Es especialmente interesante la tipología propuesta en torno a esta pluralización de paternidades, basada en cuatro categorías en función del nivel de independencia, creatividad y reflexividad de género de los padres.

Disfrutar de un permiso de paternidad no conlleva por tanto convertirse automáticamente en el cuidador principal o en cuidador en términos de igualdad junto a la madre. De hecho, tal como se señala en el capítulo relativo a España, un sector de padres continúa en una posición dependiente, requiriendo de ayuda y consejo constante y con una fuerte sensación de inseguridad. Sin embargo, en otros contextos, como es el caso de Finlandia, se describe un interesante proceso de adquisición de modos y estilos propios en el rol de cuidador, tras “independizarse” de los modelos de figuras femeninas cercanas (pareja y madre, fundamentalmente). Como se señala en el capítulo relativo a Reino Unido, el hacerse conscientes del propio aprendizaje de las competencias necesarias para el cuidado proporciona una gran satisfacción a los padres.

Por otra parte, es necesario señalar que el cuidado de niños incluye una gran diversidad de tareas y responsabilidades, y que el tiempo dedicado al mismo no es la única dimensión relevante para su reparto igualitario. Como se señala en el capítulo relativo a Suecia, incluso cuando los padres son independientes en su rol de cuidadores, es frecuente que se produzca una división de género de las tareas que muy a menudo ni siquiera se problematiza, y que las madres tengan una perspectiva más global del cuidado de los niños.

En las últimas décadas se han producido transformaciones en los significados y prácticas asociados a la paternidad. Estos cambios tienen que ver con la erosión del modelo del padre de familia proveedor económico y la madre proveedora de cuidados hacia tendencias familiares más igualitarias. Sin embargo, este proceso presenta diferente ritmo e intensidad en distintos contextos nacionales y en

ninguno de ellos se ha completado de forma perfecta. A pesar de que tanto la sociedad en su conjunto como los propios padres tienen expectativas de una mayor implicación de los hombres en el cuidado de sus descendientes (Gregory & Milner, 2008; Wall & Arnold, 2007) siguen existiendo desigualdades de género muy marcadas en la provisión de cuidados. En España, por ejemplo, y tal como se señala en este volumen, las mujeres dedican cinco veces más tiempo que los hombres al cuidado de niños. Estas persistencias hacen especialmente relevante la investigación sobre los factores que contribuyen a fomentar paternidades más implicadas e igualitarias, factores que se relacionan entre sí e implican diferentes niveles: cultural, institucional e identitario, principalmente. Además, es fundamental analizar la propia experiencia de los padres como cuidadores, lo cual constituye la contribución más novedosa y relevante de esta investigación, ya que ello nos permite captar los diferentes matices de estos procesos de cambio, sus contradicciones y los factores que ayudan a su consolidación.

La investigación previa ha mostrado que los padres que disfrutan de un permiso en solitario se implican en mayor medida en el trabajo doméstico y de cuidados (Haas & Hwang, 2008; Fernández-Cornejo *et al.*, 2016) que quienes no lo hacen. De hecho, tal como se señala en este trabajo, estos hombres son potencialmente agentes de cambio social, ya que contribuyen a modificar las prácticas y repartos cotidianos de los cuidados así como las representaciones sociales al respecto. Sin embargo, es necesario tener cautela en el establecimiento de relaciones causales entre disfrute de permisos parentales y el desarrollo de prácticas e identidades más igualitarias, debido a que aquellos que deciden tomar un permiso pueden ser precisamente los sectores con conciencia de género previa. Por ello sería interesante llevar a cabo más estudios

longitudinales, como apuntan acertadamente algunos autores de este volumen, así como analizar situaciones en las que el permiso en solitario no es consecuencia de una elección, sino de circunstancias tales como el desempleo. Por otra parte, es necesario seguir profundizando en los diferentes modelos que conforman la pluralización de paternidades que se señala en este trabajo, así como en la relación entre cada uno de ellos con factores como la clase social, el tipo de pareja, las características laborales o la tradición de política de permisos.

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Reseñas de libros e informes / *Book and Report Review*

***Fatherhood in the Nordic Welfare States. Comparing care policies and practice.* Guðný Björk Eydal and Tine Rostgaard (Eds.). Bristol: Policy Press, 2015**

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During recent decades, international inquiry has widened the scope of research on fatherhood in response to the challenges posed by contemporary family life and gender relations. From a Western research perspective, cultural and social changes have unlocked a 'new' or 'modern' image of fatherhood, characterised by men taking an active role in the daily lives of their children; an image opposed to the traditional male breadwinner role. In this context, *Fatherhood in the Nordic Welfare States* aims to provide insight into contemporary policies and practices of fatherhood in the five Nordic countries; Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, framed by the Nordic dual earner/dual carer model which emphasises both parents sharing labour market responsibilities and childcare, founded on an equal gender basis.

Widespread research literature has recognised how policies in Nordic countries have promoted gender equality in the labour market, achieving high employment rates among men and women, which is in line with the dual earner model. However, there is less evidence of the influence of policies aimed at an equitable distribution of family responsibilities resulting in greater involvement of the father in childcare (the dual carer model). This edited volume offers a broad, methodologically diverse and vibrant body of scholarship analysing the policies that support the Nordic dual earner/dual carer model, examining whether the outcomes of such policies are in line with the goals of Nordic family and gender equality policies to ensure the parental care rights of children, and determining whether they place the fa-

ther as a parent on an equal footing with the mother or not. Likewise, the book analyses the intricate construction of fatherhood shaped by the interaction between practices, policies, family settings, norms and institutional frameworks, to examine the statement of a common universal Nordic model in which active fatherhood takes place.

The book is divided into five themes: *Fathers, the families and family policies; Fathers in everyday life – culture, work and care; Constructing fatherhood in different family settings; Caring fathers and paid parental leave policies; and International reflections on findings*. Spanning these broad topics, each of the eighteen chapters presents a particular analytical approach, relating in different ways to each other about the Nordic policies and practices that construct fatherhood. Opening the first theme, Tine Rostgaard and Rasmus Juul Møberg (Chapter 2) give evidence of a strong relationship between attitudes and male fertility behaviour. Results show that Nordic fathers have more relaxed attitudes towards the importance of fathering for adulthood and towards the choice of childlessness, than other European fathers, thus, being more likely to be childless or have fewer children. In addition, childlessness is associated with higher education levels and the younger generations. Although transition into fatherhood has decreased in these generations, there is support for youngsters to become fathers where that choice is sustained by positive attitudes towards fatherhood and employment stability (see also the influence of attitudes in Chapters 8 and 14).

Hrefna Friðriksdóttir (Chapter 3) gives a broad perspective on contemporary Nordic family law, identifying the bases of the commonalities and differences between Nordic countries. Family law has evolved at a different pace in each of the Nordic countries; nevertheless, contemporary law reforms are based on the common principles of gender equality, and the priority of the best interests of the children. Furthermore, family law emphasises the role of the father, transcending the traditional family model and shifting focus onto the relationships, rights and responsibilities of fathers towards their children. Mia Hakovirta, Anita Haataja, Guðný Björk Eydal and Tine Rostgaard (Chapter 4) conclude theme one, presenting an innovative and complex analysis of family benefits in the Nordic countries. Evidence shows eye-opening contradictions and differences between the family benefits systems: while Norway and Sweden are more supportive of the dual earner/dual carer model, recognising equal rights of fathers in the child benefit system regardless of their family type, Iceland, Finland and Denmark, show a tendency more in line with the breadwinner model. In the last three countries, following separation, the non-residential parent (usually the father) is primarily regarded as the provider. Likewise, equal rights for mothers and fathers, regarding legislation on paid parental leave, only exist in Sweden, Norway and Iceland. Results indicate the need for improving the family benefits systems towards better cohesion with the dual earner/dual carer ideology.

Heading the second theme, Minna Ylikännö, Hannu Pääkkönen and Mia Hakovirta (Chapter 5) advise a slow and discreet movement towards a more involved fatherhood in Finland. While fathers had spent almost double the time on childcare and less time on paid work in 2009-10 than in the previous two decades, results indicate that the gender gap in childcare responsibilities is almost as wide as twenty years ago. Findings correspond with a truncated fathers' leave quota, based on the 'free choice' rationale, which does not contribute to the policy goal of improved gender equality (see an extended analysis in Chapter 14 and Danish similarities in Chapters 7 and 13). Introducing fathers' leave use in Norway, Berit Brandth and Elin Kvande (Chapter 6) explore fathers' 'told practices' show-

ing that the father's quota is somehow contributing to the transformation of the gendered and classed father practices, promoting reconciliation of care with masculinity norms. Nevertheless, parental leave and the father's quota are still shaped by socially classed attitudes to care, where middle-class parents see fathers as being as fully competent as mothers, while working-class fathers use their leave quota to be supporters, staying home with the mother present (see also the influence of social class in Chapters 10, 12, 13 and 16).

Regarding Danish fathers' use of parental leave, Lotte Bloksgaard (Chapter 7) explores the private workplace arena to highlight the struggles that fathers must face as a result of individual negotiations to use their entitled parental leave. In the Danish context, where there is no fathers' quota that constitutes a normative guide for fatherhood/carer ideals, evidence proves that existence of a paid leave entitlement is no guarantee that fathers will use it (as in the Finnish case, Chapters 5 and 14). Furthermore, the assumed gender-neutral Danish parental leave is still perceived as being 'for mothers', so, fathers' leave take-up is related to an ideal of shared parenthood responsibilities and equal opportunities for women in the labour market, rather than an ideal of the present father (see extended analysis on the Denmark case in Chapter 13). In a comparative approach, Mikael Nordenmark (Chapter 8) gives evidence that in the dual earner/dual carer regime (Nordic countries) fathers are more involved in housework and childcare than fathers in the male breadwinner regime (southern European countries; Spain, Greece, and Portugal). Dual earner/dual carer regimes excel in gender equality values, women's higher education and participation in gainful employment, which are shown to be significant triggers for fathers' involvement in housework responsibilities. However, the relationship between the regime and fathers' involvement in childcare does not seem so strong; furthermore, fathers who were more inclined towards gender equality attitudes appeared to be more involved with household responsibilities and childcare in both the Nordic and southern European countries.

Opening theme three, Steen Baagøe Nielsen and Allan Westerling (Chapter 9) give anecdotal examples of the experiences of Nordic fathers who had

found the space, time and support necessary to become caring fathers. From the fathers' experiences, the authors identify fathering as a learning process that is happening within a diversity of male contexts, although with similar characteristics. Fathers' practices are underpinned by a strong motivation for developing a relationship with their children, and the recognition of their fathering competencies based on active childcare in everyday family life. The learning process also includes orientation of previous experiences and knowledge towards the development of new ways of caring and the creation of intimacy with their children. In Chapter 10, Anika Liversage explores the diversity of fatherhood in Denmark, showing that fathers with minority ethnic backgrounds 'do fatherhood' in very different ways, being more inclined to believe and live according to the patriarchal family model prevailing in their parents' country of origin. And at the same time, they are facing the challenges posed by their immigrant status (weakly positioned in the labour market and confronting divorce struggles) and the difficulties of adapting themselves to more egalitarian gender roles.

Arnfinn J. Andersen (Chapter 11) probes deeper into Norwegian fathers' diversity, casting light on how gay fathers substitute the shared home by creating space and intimacy for their child's upbringing through cooperation with a lesbian mother. Within this new idea of home, gay fathers negotiate a space to develop their fatherhood as independent caregivers. Considering an ambitious research project, Mai Heide Ottosen (Chapter 12) shows the short-term and long-term impacts of paternal involvement in childcare within a Danish context. Overall, results evidenced the importance of fathers' involvement regarding the use of paternity, parental or childcare leave, and their immersion in everyday care tasks as an indicator of commitment to the nuclear family, which is associated with a low risk of family dissolution. Furthermore, a father's parental involvement in daily care tasks, while in an intact family, heralds more equal arrangements after the family breaks up and increased cooperation with the mother, which is associated with the child's perception of the father as a significant person. Conversely, the 15-year-old children surveyed more frequently perceived their unemployed and/

or less educated father as 'less important', which suggests that social class can influence the construction of modern fatherhood, even more so after family dissolution.

Theme four begins with Tine Rostgaard's and Mette Lausten's (Chapter 13) research on the analysis of the unresolved fathers' quota in Denmark. The introduction of the father's quota (1998-2002) triggered a significant increase in fathers taking leave, which dropped when it was eliminated, but has maintained a moderate increase since then thanks to labour market agreements and the cultural shift towards active fatherhood and gender equality. Moreover, well-educated fathers, working in public sector occupations, with well-educated partners, are the ones who take most parental leave. This reveals that the organisation of statutory leave entitlements has enhanced class differences between fathers, while the introduction of the father's quota in the period 1998-2002 may have contributed to a more gender-equal distribution of leave take-up. Minna Salmi and Johanna Lammi-Taskula (Chapter 14) look deeper into the policy goals and obstacles for fathers' parental leave in Finland. The authors show that the policy goal of gender equality improvement in Finland is obstructed by the leave schemes based on 'free choice' and 'flexibility' rationales. These reproduce the traditional gendered division of labour, as they lead to fathers only taking the earmarked leave periods and mothers "freely choosing" the transferable parental leave. Moreover, an outstanding finding shows that, contrary to conventional thought, couples rarely make calculations regarding the financial consequences of the father taking leave. Instead, the key predictor of a father opting not to take parental leave is his view on men as the main breadwinners.

Exploring the case of Iceland, Guðný Björk Eydal and Ingólfur V. Gíslason (Chapter 15) show that the policy of non-transferable rights to parental leave for fathers has its origins, on the one hand, in the state's ongoing efforts to increase gender equality. On the other hand, it is based in the expressed will of Icelandic men to be able to participate more in family childcare. The quota entitlement strengthens the bargaining position of the employed father with regards to the employer and also supports a

mother's decision to return to work while the father assumes the carer role. Icelandic experience evidences that policies can contribute to meaningful changes in practices and gender relations. At the same time, fathers' practices became a crucial influence on the making of policies and the institutionalisation of a father's quota. In Chapter 16, Ann-Zofie Duvander and Mats Johansson give a broad perspective on the effectiveness of the leave policies in Sweden. Results of the analysis of the three major reforms to the parental leave system evidence that introduction of the first month of the fathers' quota reduced the differences in parental leave usage between fathers, contributing to its universality. Introduction of a second quota month increased men's take-up, albeit the differences between fathers also increased, and the introduction of the equality bonus broadened that gap, leaving those in vulnerable positions lagging behind: i.e. no income/outside the labour market, low education, foreign-born; characteristics that overlap in many cases. Thus, leave improvements in Sweden need to be considered from a comprehensive perspective which includes social class and diverse family structures, as the parental leave assurance is still directed at families with two parents.

Finally, in theme five, following the central remarks that Janet Gornick (Chapter 17) and Margaret O'Brien (Chapter 18) present from an international perspective, it can be concluded that Nordic fatherhood is not a single institution. It is constructed within a diversity of family arrangements, households, and economic contexts, bounded by historical and cultural heritage. Moreover, active fatherhood promotion within the region has been a long and ongoing process of adapting family policies to progressive values based on gender equality, towards a dual earner/dual carer regime

where fathers and mothers have the same opportunities for work and childcare. Despite their shared progress, Nordic countries advance at a different pace towards active fatherhood, confronting obstacles to the implementation and institutionalisation of gender-neutral leave policies, highlighting that gender roles constructed around work and care are still undermining the potential of a policy aimed at promoting fathers' take-up. Likewise, Nordic countries are compelled to even out the differences between fathers resulting from their socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, so that a real universality of the Nordic model can be achieved. Those differences are connected to historical and cultural legacies but also to external factors shared with the international community, as represented in international migration. As O'Brien points out, 'a future challenge for the Nordic region becoming more multi-ethnic and multi-faith is to explore if gender equality can co-exist with different ways of doing fathering and mothering'. (p. 386)

Significant advances towards active fatherhood are underpinned by the relevance of the fathers' quota, considered throughout the volume as an effective measure to enhance father involvement in child care, and consequently, higher opportunities for both parents to succeed in work and family life organisation. In order to achieve reliable agreements regarding policies towards an equitable distribution of family responsibilities, better practices in the Nordic region evidence the importance of high consensus on gender equality values and even more, fathers' eagerness to exercise their parental rights. This shows that policies can contribute to meaningful changes in practices and gender relations, while at the same time, the practices of fathers retain a crucial influence on the making of policies and the institutionalisation of the fathers' quota.

Normas editoriales para colaboradores en la Revista Española De Sociología (RES)

La **Revista Española de Sociología (RES)** es la revista oficial de la Federación Española de Sociología (FES). Es una publicación de la principal asociación científica de los profesionales de la sociología de España, independiente de los poderes públicos y al servicio de la comunidad sociológica.

Los artículos y notas de investigación originales que se reciben para ser publicados en la RES siguen un proceso de selección y evaluación que responde a estrictos criterios de calidad, garantizando en todo momento el anonimato de los evaluadores expertos como de los autores.

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Keywords: Palabra1, palabra 2, palabra 3

Con el fin de aumentar la visibilidad de su artículo sugerimos las siguientes recomendaciones:

El título debe ser claro y descriptivo. Debe reflejar el contenido del trabajo e incluir los términos más relevantes (que se utilizarán también como palabras clave). Se debe utilizar el menor número de palabras posibles y no utilizar acrónimos, códigos, abreviaturas o palabras entrecomilladas.

El resumen debe incluir las palabras clave o sinónimos de las mismas (los robots de búsqueda de información utilizan las palabras claves y sinónimos). Por ejemplo, para saber si un documento es adecuado para una búsqueda que utilice la expresión “derechos humanos”, el buscador considerará más relevantes los documentos que también contengan términos como “democracia”, libertad”, “justicia” Debe evitarse la inclusión de referencias bibliográficas en el resumen siempre que sea posible.

4. En lo que se refiere al **estilo del texto** del manuscrito que se envía, se debe:
 - a) Emplear un sólo tipo y tamaño de letra: Times New Roman 12, espacio 1,5
 - b) No justificar el texto.
 - c) No sangrar el comienzo de los párrafos.
 - d) Todas las abreviaturas estarán descritas la primera vez que se mencionen.

5. Los distintos apartados del texto **no deben ir numerados** y se escribirán como sigue:
 - (a) **MAYÚSCULA NEGRITA, espacio arriba y abajo**
 - (b) **Minúscula negrita, espacio arriba y abajo**
 - (c) *Minúscula cursiva negrita, espacio arriba y abajo*
6. Todas las **tablas y figuras** estarán numeradas correctamente (números arábigos para tablas y figuras).

Las imágenes, figuras o gráficos se denominarán siempre con el término “Figura” y deberán aportarse en un fichero individual (en su formato original: excel, jpg, tif, png, avi, pdf, ...en color o en blanco y negro) con la máxima calidad (300ppp). Llevarán un título conciso y estarán debidamente numeradas. En el cuerpo del texto se indicará donde se colocará cada imagen con la indicación [FIGURA 1 AQUÍ]

Leyenda:

Figura 1 Título de la tabla (Times New Roman, tamaño 11. Primera letra en mayúscula)

Fuente: Esta es la fuente (Times New Roman, tamaño 11)

Los títulos de las Figuras no deben de formar o estar incluidos en la misma. Deben situarse como texto normal en el lugar donde se desea colocar la imagen.

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Las **tablas** deberán insertarse en su lugar en el texto. Deben tener un formato editable (word), y no pegarse como imágenes. Los títulos de las tablas no deben ser parte de las mismas, esto es, incluirse en una de las filas de la tabla. Deben situarse encima de la misma como texto normal.

Traten de limitar al máximo el número de tablas para evitar la redundancia con la información ya contenida en el texto del manuscrito. Así, no deben duplicarse los resultados ya descritos en otras secciones del artículo, nota o debate. Por favor, siguiendo el modelo APA para las tablas traten de evitar el uso de las líneas verticales y el sombreado de celdas.

Leyenda de las tablas:

Tabla 1 Título de la tabla.

Fuente: Esta es la fuente

7. Las **notas al texto** se numerarán correlativamente con formato de número arábigo y se situarán **a pie de página**.
8. **Los agradecimientos y menciones a la financiación de las investigaciones** sobre las que se basan los trabajos publicados se incluirán en la primera página del artículo en un párrafo aparte.
9. **Nota importante:** Los textos que no se ajusten al formato de la revista serán devueltos a sus autores para que hagan los oportunos cambios.

10. Citas y referencias bibliográficas

10.1. Sistema de citación APA (American Psychological Association):

Las citas en el texto se harán siguiendo el modelo APA.

Citas de un solo autor/a: Se indica entre paréntesis el apellido del autor/A, seguido del año y en su caso de la página de publicación. Ej: (Simon, 1945)

—Si el nombre del autor o la fecha aparecen como parte de la narración, citar únicamente la información ausente entre paréntesis. Ej: Simon (1945) afirmaba que

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10.2. Sistema de referenciación APA

Las referencias bibliográficas se insertarán al final del texto siguiendo el orden alfabético de los autores, y salvo en el caso de libros indicarán las páginas inicial y final.

Su estructura debe ser la siguiente:

a) Libros:

Thomas, W. I., Znaniecki, F. (1984). *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

b) Artículo de Revista:

Un solo autor:

Ku, G. (2008). Learning to de-escalate: The effects of regret in escalation of commitment. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 105(2), 221-232.

Dos autores:

Knights, D., Willmott, H. (1989). Power and subjectivity at work: From degradation to subjugation in social relations. *Sociology*, 23 (4), 535-558.

Más de dos autores:

Van Vugt, M., Hogan, R., Kaiser, R. B. (2008). Leadership, followership, and evolution: Some lessons from the past. *American Psychologist*, 63(3), 182-196.

c) Capítulo de un libro:

Labajo, J. (2003). Body and voice: The construction of gender in flamenco. En T. Magrini (Ed.), *Music and gender: perspectives from the Mediterranean* (pp. 67-86). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

d) Referencias de internet:

Spencer, H. (2001). The Sociology of Herbert Spencer (en línea). <http://www.spencer/info/sociology/opus5.pdf>, acceso 1 de Abril de 2011.

Se ruega a los autores de los originales enviados que adapten su bibliografía al modelo APA. Los textos que no se ajusten a este formato serán devueltos a sus autores para que hagan los oportunos cambios.

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