Competing Powers: what matters for the timing and duration of fathers’ parental leave

Merve Uzunalioglu, Marie Valentova, Margaret O’Brien, Katherine Twamley
Research question
To what extent intra-couple negotiations influence fathers’ parental leave take-up duration?

Monetary resources
Negotiations, Decisions
Gender ideologies, beliefs

Time resources

Relative earnings: share in the household income
Number of hours spent in paid employment

Workplace characteristics

Culture
Education
Care value
What do we know about fathers’ parental leave take-up?

- Fathers’ parental leave take-up is higher when the leave is
  - Compensated
  - Designed as an individual entitlement
  - Non-transferable (see for example Karu & Tremblay, 2008; O’Brien, 2009)

- **Father-reserved days** make a difference, but the take-up remains within the limits of these days, even in pioneering countries like Sweden (Haas & Hwang, 2019) At the individual level,
  - one’s education (esp. when higher), work experience, age, nationality, partnership status, children’s sex, income

- At the workplace level,
  - the sector, workplace size, composition of the workforce (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Lewis & Haas, 2005)

- At the household level,
  - partner’s characteristics (Duvander & Johansson, 2012; Ma, Andersen, Duvander, & Evertsson, 2019)

- More qualitatively, social norms, collegial attitudes, workplace culture (Allard, Haas, & Hwang, 2007; Lewis & Haas, 2005)
What do we know about intra-couple negotiations?

- Transition to parenthood comes with new responsibilities & often **competing with existing responsibilities** → a need for (re)consideration of division of labour in the household

- With “**child well-being no longer being a private matter**” (O’Brien, 2009) and associated “motherhood penalty” (Budig and England, 2001) and “fatherhood premium” (Killewald, 2013) new parents are more often left to make decisions at their best interests:
  - Alturist behaviours (Becker, 1981) i) to protect the family income ii) to meet the child’s care needs

- **Relative resources theory** (Blood and Wolfe, 1960): allocation of resources in the household is predominantly driven by partners’ economic resources and their bargaining power is positively correlated with their economic resources (Esping-Andersen and Schmitt, 2019; Bittman et al., 2003)

- **When men’s bargaining power is greater the division of labour is more gendered** (Breen and Prince Cook, 2005; Antman, 2014).

- Despite women’s greater participation in paid labour, which stimulated the intensified negotiations around division of tasks (Kluwer et al., 2000), the **convergence to a more equal division of labour within household continues to be slow** (Altintas and Sullivan, 2016).

- The intra-household bargaining is a multi-faceted process not only involving the partners’ relative resources, but also **extra-household resources**, such as access to services, institutional support and social norms (Agarwal, 1997).
Parental leave policy in Luxembourg

- Core characteristics:
  - Paid
  - Individual
  - Non-transferable
  - Conditional on employment
  - Equally available for those who are eligible, i.e., no sectoral segregation
  - Renewed for each new-born
  - Same-sex parents are eligible
  - Self-employed parents are eligible
- 2016: parental leave reform
Parental leave policy in Luxembourg

Changes with the reform

- New modalities of use → more flexibility
- Increased compensation → from flat-rate payment to a function of previous salary*number of hours worked
- Expanded coverage period → from age 5 to 6
- Expanded eligibility → marginal part-time workers (10-20 h/w) included

Number of parental leave takers in Luxembourg (1999-2019)

Hypotheses

• Fathers with greater economic advantage in comparison to mothers will take the leave for shorter periods

• We assume that fathers taking up the leave for shorter duration suggest lower bargaining power of mothers.

• The stronger involvement in paid labour, would potentially indicate less time allocated to care work. Similar to Kroska (2004)’s conclusions, we would expect a positive correlation between increased number of hours in mothers’ paid work and their bargaining power → fathers’ longer parental leave take-up
Method

- Multinomial logistic regression
- **Outcome variable:** co-residential parents’ joint leave take-up decisions in 3 categories leave shared equally, mothers take longer leave than the fathers do (base), and fathers take longer leave than the mothers do
- Independent variables: parents’ relative resources i) financial power ii) time in paid work
  - \( \frac{(Fathers'\text{ salary} -\text{mothers' salary})}{(Fathers'\text{ salary} +\text{mothers' salary})} \) 1 means father is the sole income provider, 0 means they have an equal income
  - Time in paid work: both parents work for equal hours, mothers work for longer hours, fathers work for longer hours
Data and sample characteristics

- IGSS data
- N = 3,030, parental leave eligible, Luxembourg-resident, co-residential parents
- Working full-time is a norm among parents (95% of fathers, 87% of mothers)
- Majority of parents work in private sector
- Half of the parents work in large-size companies
- Fathers tend to be employed in low-feminized workplaces
- 33% of fathers & 89% of mothers took parental leave
- Part-time leave take-up is more prevalent among fathers than the mothers
Couples’ joint-leave take-up decisions

- In 43.88% of households where fathers did not take any leave whereas mothers took the full-time leave
- In 14.14% of the couples, fathers were not taking the leave and mothers were on part-time leave
- 12.14% of the couples were «parental leave rich» households where both parents take full-time leave
- 8.02% where fathers take part-time leave and mothers’ take full-time leave
- 3.96% both parents take part-time leave

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leave distribution</th>
<th>Number of couples</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave shared equally</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>16.10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mothers’ leave &gt; fathers’ leave</td>
<td>2,142</td>
<td>70.83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fathers’ leave &gt; mothers’ leave</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>13.06%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,024</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Source: IGSS 2020. Authors’ calculations.
**Relative risk ratios** from multinomial logistic regressions where the base category is mothers take longer leave than fathers do

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<td>base: mothers’ leave &gt; fathers’ leave</td>
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<th>Fathers’ nationality</th>
<th>Leave shared equally</th>
<th>Fathers’ leave &gt; mothers’ leave</th>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbouring countries (BE-DE-FR)</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>2.06**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other European or non-European</td>
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<td>1.15</td>
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<th>Fathers’ employment sector</th>
<th>Leave shared equally</th>
<th>Fathers’ leave &gt; mothers’ leave</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public vs. private</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>.61</td>
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<th>Fathers’ relative share in the household income</th>
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<th>Fathers’ employment industry</th>
<th>Leave shared equally</th>
<th>Fathers’ leave &gt; mothers’ leave</th>
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<td>Construction vs. public admin.</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>1.33</td>
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<th>Mothers’ nationality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.95**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other European or non-European</td>
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<td>1.59**</td>
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<th>Leave shared equally</th>
<th>Fathers’ leave &gt; mothers’ leave</th>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.43**</td>
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<th>Reform</th>
<th>Leave shared equally</th>
<th>Fathers’ leave &gt; mothers’ leave</th>
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<td>1.47**</td>
<td>.42***</td>
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<td>Constant</td>
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<td>.06***</td>
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N= 3,030

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.001

Source: IGS 2020. Authors’ calculations.

Note: controlled for age, nationality, employment sector, employment industry, relative income share, labour force composition of the workplace by age, sex and white-collar worker ratio, company size, all separately for fathers and mothers, child’s sex, and reform.

Note: Constant (_cons) estimates baseline relative risk for each outcome.
Conclusion

- Parental leave is a two-staged decision happening under the influence of intra-household as well as extra-household factors
- Fathers’ economic power in comparison to mothers’ make them take the leave shorter
- Working in public sector reduces fathers’ relative risk ratios in taking longer parental leave
- Economic resources happened to be playing a greater role than time resources
- The 2016 parental leave reform positively influenced fathers’ leave take-up, but remains lower than mothers’
Thank you!

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