Parental leave uptake and the work environment: a vignette experiment

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WORK-LIFE BALANCE

• Male-breadwinner model versus dual earner model
• Netherlands: one-and-a-half earner model

• Work-life balance: a healthy and sustainable balance between work and private life (among which care tasks)

• How to improve the Work-Life Balance?
  • Part-time work
  • Flexible working
  • Homeworking
  • Parental leave
IDEAL AND ACTUAL SITUATION

Source: Emancipation monitor, 2020 (Van den Brakel & Portegijs, 2020)
• Fathers use work-family policies less often than mothers (Munn & Greer, 2005)
• Financial reasons (Van Breeschoten et al, 2019, Bueno & Grau-Grau, 2021)
• Workplace characteristics (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Van Breeschoten et al., 2019)

• Which work environment factors explain the potential take-up of parental leave by male civil servants working in 8 Dutch municipalities?
Paternity and Parental Leave in the Netherlands in the First Year

- 2018 and earlier
  - 2 days of paternity leave (paid)
  - Unpaid parental leave (26 weeks in the first 8 years)
  - In sectors like the local government 13 weeks partly paid parental leave

- 2019
  - 5 days of paternity leave (paid)
  - Unpaid parental leave (26 weeks in the first 8 years)
  - In sectors like the local government 13 weeks partly paid parental leave
PATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE NETHERLANDS IN THE FIRST YEAR

• 1 July 2020
  • 5 days of paternity leave (paid)
  • 5 weeks of partly paid parental leave (70% pay, in the first year)
  • Unpaid leave (maximum of 26 weeks, in the first 8 years)

• 2 August 2022
  • 5 days of paternity leave (paid)
  • 9 weeks of partly paid parental leave (70% pay, in the first year)
  • Unpaid leave (maximum of 26 weeks, in the first 8 years)
Four factors from the literature are distinguished that influence leave uptake:

- Career consequences
- Support from the supervisor
- Support from colleagues
- Parental leave use
DATA & METHODS

- Data collection in 8 Dutch municipalities that were part of the FLAME project (FLexible work Arrangements among Men)

- Online questionnaire with 16 vignettes (4 per person)
- Career Ambition Scale (Dikkers et al, 2010)
- Self-developed scale for relative care ambition (alpha = 0,66)
- Controls: age, partner, children at home, work hours

- N=572 men
- Multilevel regression analysis
Imagine that you and your partner are expecting your first or next child. The child is wanted, and the birth is approaching. Parents will soon have the legal right to up to nine weeks of partly paid parental leave. Assume you have the financial capacity to make use of this leave. The maximum of nine weeks must be taken in the child's first year of life.

You have the following information about your work environment:

- Taking parental leave may have negative/does not have consequences for your career opportunities within the municipality.
- Your manager does not support/support taking parental leave.
- Most of your direct colleagues' do not support/support taking parental leave.
- A small/large proportion of the fathers in your department have taken parental leave in recent years.
DIFFERENCE IN PARENTAL LEAVE UPTAKE BETWEEN MOST EXTREME VIGNETTES

Parental leave uptake in days

- Most negative climate: 28.7 days
- Most positive climate: 35.4 days

Most negative climate | Most positive climate
## MULTILEVEL REGRESSION ANALYSIS

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<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career consequences</td>
<td>-0.62***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support supervisor</td>
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<td>Support coworkers</td>
<td>0.30***</td>
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<td>Use parental leave coworkers</td>
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INTERACTION EFFECT WITH WORK AMBITION

![Graph showing interaction effect with work ambition](image)
CONCLUSION

- Largest effect of career consequences, followed by support supervisor and coworker. No effect of parental leave uptake of colleagues.

- Effect of career consequences was stronger for those with a stronger work ambition, point at diversity among men.

- No significant effect of relative care ambition (although p<0.10)
DISCUSSION

• Give fathers a place in the scientific debate on work-life balance and work-life family policy (Munn & Greer, 2015)

• Frame of reference for men might be difficult, because the policy was not implemented yet

• Select sample of municipalities that participated in the research
Data were collected within the FLAME project (*Flexibele Work Arrangements Among Men*) which was (partly) financed by a Radboud Gender & Diversity Grant. The research was also supported by the Radboud Interdisciplinary Grant for Consortia which was granted to the Radboud WORKLIFE consortium.

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REFERENCES


