Parental leave policies and the gender division of housework.
By Helene Dearing
Policy Debate

On a national level...

- Several countries implemented leave schemes with the objective of raising gender equality
- E.g. fathers’ quotas in Iceland, Sweden, Norway,...

On a European level...

- Tendency towards the standardization of leave legislation in a gender-egalitarian way
- Most recent council directive from 2010 suggests that at least one of the four months should be non-transferrable (Council Directive 2010/18/EU)
Quantitative empirical literature studying the effects of leave on mothers’ employment and fathers’ family work

- The paid duration of leave (Akgunduz and Plantenga 2012; Ronsen and Sundström 2002; Pettit and Hook 2005)
- Leave reserved for fathers (Boll et al., 2014; Kotsadam and Finseraas 2011; Ekberg et al. 2013; Duvander and Johansson 2012; Schober 2014)

Literature focuses more on the analysis of normative implications of leave schemes

- One dimension not enough + it needs more comprehensive assessments of leave policies (Gornick and Meyers 2003; Ray et al. 2010; Javornik 2014; Haas and Rostgaard 2011; Ciccia and Verloo 2012; Dearing forthcoming)
- Development of policy indicators based on regulations, but usually do not relate these indicators to outcomes
I aim at connecting these two bodies of literature a bit closer by...
  - Going beyond single-dimensional measures
  - But still relate leave measures to empirical outcomes on the division of work

I will use
  - single and multidimensional indicators of leave policies
  - relate these to micro-level data on the division of housework in 21 countries

I add
  - to the literature that studies the relation between leave policies and the division of housework
  - methodological contribution: studying how relation btw. leave and housework changes depending on the measure
Parental leave policies

- International Review of Leave Policies and Research for 21 European countries from 2010

Housework and individual characteristics

- European Social Survey (ESS) for 2010
- Special module: weekly hours spend in housework
- Controls: education, income, employment hours, housework hours of the partner (Stier and Lewin-Epstein 2007; Cooke 2007; Bittman et al. 2003; Fuwa 2004; Fuwa and Cohen 2007)
- Sample: 4,805 parents living with a partner and children under the age of 7
Single and multidimensional leave measures (Dearing, forthcoming)

**Parental Leave Policies**

- **Total duration of leave**
- **Paid duration of leave**
- **Paid duration of leave for fathers**

Baseline $EGDL = \frac{\text{total} + \text{paid} + \text{fathers}}{3}$

Father $EGDL = \frac{\text{total} + \text{paid} + 2 \times \text{fathers}}{4}$

Mother $EGDL = \frac{2 \times (\text{total} \times \text{paid}) + \text{fathers}}{3}$
Relating leave and housework

How to relate leave policies housework data?

- We have data on two levels!
- Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition
- Used in labour economics
- Decomposes mean differences in wages based on linear regression models
- Part that is “explained” by differences in individual characteristics between men and women
- “Unexplained part” (= “other determinants”)
Weekly housework hours

Total Gap = 15

Explained part: due to education, income, employment hours...

Unexplained part net of mean differences in individual characteristics

= proxy for “other” determinants, such as institutions (Christofides et al. 2013, Melly 2005)
### BO Decomposition for all countries

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Total Gender Gap in Housework

A: Total duration of leave (in months)
B: Paid duration of leave (in months)
C: Paid leave reserved for fathers (in months)
D: Baseline EGDL Indicator
E: Father-centred EGDL Indicator
F: Mother-centred EGDL Indicator

F: Mother-centred EGDL Indicator
Total Gender Gap in Housework and total duration
Total Gender Gap in Housework and fathers' leave

[Graph showing the relationship between paid leave reserved for fathers (in months) and total gap in weekly housework hours across different countries.]
Total Gender Gap in Housework and father EGDL

Father centred EGDL Indicator

Total gap in weekly housework hours

0 .2 .4 .6

[Graph showing various countries and their gender gap in housework hours, with a trend line and cluster marked by a blue circle.

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Unexplained Gender Gap in Housework

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Unexplained Gender Gap in Housework
Total Gender Gap in Housework and paid leave

Paid duration of leave (in months)

Total gap in weekly housework hours

0 5 10 15 20 25
Unexplained Gender Gap in Housework and paid leave
Total Gender Gap in Housework and paid leave

Paid duration of leave (in months)

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Unexplained Gender Gap in Housework and paid leave

Paid duration of leave (in months)
Total Gender Gap in Housework and Father EGDL
Unexplained Gender Gap in Housework and Father EGDL
Total Gender Gap in Housework and Father EGDL

Father centred EGDL Indicator

[Graph showing scatter plot with countries marked by circular labels and trendline representing the gender gap.]
Unexplained Gender Gap in Housework and Father EGDL
Total Gender Gap in Housework and Father EGDL

[Graph showing the relationship between father-centred EGDL Indicator and total gap in weekly housework hours across different countries.]
Unexplained Gender Gap in Housework and Father EGDL

Father centred EGDL Indicator

[Graph showing data points for various countries, with a focus on countries in blue circles.]
Conclusions

- There is a systematic relation between leave policies and the division of housework: negative relation for the baseline and father EGDL-measure & fathers’ leave

- I find a positive relation btw. paid leave and housework

- There is no systematic relation between the total duration of leave and mother-centred EGDL indicator

- So, at least when looking at housework, it matters what indicator is used when aggregating leave policies

- Multidimensional measures accounting for fathers leave might be the stronger indicators if we intent to aggregate leave policies with regard to their gendered structures.

- Considering the distribution of inidividual characteristics changes the results, it is important to account for them!
Weekly housework hours

Total Gap = 18

Endowment effect mainly due to differences in income

Unexplained gap

Mothers 28
Fathers 10

Mothers

Total Gap = 18

Endowment effect mainly due to differences in income

Unexplained gap

Fathers

Endowment effect mainly due to differences in income
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BO Decomposition: Slovenia

Weekly housework hours

Mothers: 21 hours
Fathers: 12 hours

Total Gap = 9

Endowment effect due to Education

Unexplained gap

Leave policies