For which fathers do reforms matter?
A study on the impact of three Swedish parental leave reforms

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## Overview of reforms in the Swedish parental leave benefit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Introduction of the parental leave for 6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Stepwise extension to 15 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>First reserved month</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Second reserved month and extension to 16 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Gender equality bonus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Parental leave use

- **Present regulations:** 195 days to each parent, 80% income replacement, can be used also during preschool years. Also 3 months at low flat rate
- 90% of fathers use leave but large variation in how much
- Fathers’ parental leave vary by education, income, work place, birth order, attitudes
Fathers’ share of parental leave
Earlier studies: Reserved months had effect but not gender equality bonus

This study:

Which fathers changed their leave use at the time of reforms?
Method of evaluating reforms

- Natural experiment
- **Comparison of children born just before reform with children born just after**
- Add children born same period one year before to control for seasonal variation
- Follow leave use for 24 months
Number of parental leave days, fathers’ education

Number of parental leave days, work sector
Number of used parental leave days, parents’ birth origin

Conclusions

• First reserved month:
  Reform reduced differences between subgroups of fathers

• Second reserved month:
  Reform increased differences between subgroups of fathers

• Gender equality bonus:
  No direct changes

• Trend of increased leave use over time but polarised pattern