



13th LPR annual seminar, Madrid, Spain, 29-30th September 2016

Does the extension of a well-paid parental leave increase women's capabilities for childbearing?
The case of a lowest low fertility rate country

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Part of the project financed by National Science Centre (NCN) in Poland - ref. number: 2014/13/D/HS4/03645. Estimations carried out with cooperation with mgr Ewelina Słotwińska-Roślanowska (SGH, Poland)

Introduction

Leave scheme, before 2013:

- ▶ 20+6 weeks of maternity leave (100% RR)
- ▶ 2 weeks of paternity leave (100% RR)
- ▶ 3 years of means tested flat rate childcare leave

In 2013: introduction of 26 weeks of paid parental leave:

- ▶ As a follow-up after maternity leave paid at 100%: 26 weeks of parental leave paid at 60%
- ▶ As an alternative option: 26 weeks of maternity leave paid at 80% + 26 weeks of parental leave paid at 80% (THE MOTHER DECIDES before taking the leave)
- ▶ Other characteristics:
 - ▶ Parents can share parental leave - it is a family entitlement BUT
 - ▶ The right to parental leave is dependent on the mother's right to maternity leave
- ▶ Statistics: 99% of parents on parental leave in fourth quarter in 2015 were WOMEN
- ▶ One of the main political reasons to introduce this leave was to boost fertility

Research question and analytical framework

- ▶ **Did the introduction of paid parental leave increase women's capabilities to have a(nother)child?**
- ▶ Analysis of the short term effect
- ▶ How to operationalize and measure childbearing capabilities?

Fahlén (2013): short term fertility intentions as an indicator of childbearing capabilities

- ▶ observed fertility=functioning, not capability; effect of choice or not (unintended births)
- ▶ childbearing preferences - desires, ideal family size; intentions - according to the theory of planned behaviour, reflect consideration of constraints (incl. perceived behavioural control)

Data & method

- ▶ Generations and Gender Survey for Poland: 2011 (*before the reform*) vs 2014/2015 (*after the reform*)
- ▶ Representative samples of Polish population
- ▶ We choose subsamples of women in reproductive ages (up to 49 years old):
 - GGS-PL1: 4094
 - GGS-PL2: 2864
- ▶ We estimate 4 logistic regressions:
- ▶ One for childless women and one for mothers for both moments in time
- ▶ Dependent variable: *Do you intend to have a(nother) child in the next 3 years?*
- ▶ Tested independent variable: *moment in time – before or after introduction of the parental leave*
- ▶ Controlled independent variables: *education, age group, place of residence, employment status, partnership status*, + for mothers: *number of children, age of the youngest child*

Results

	Childless women (ODDS RATIOS)	Mothers (ODDS RATIOS)
AFTER introduction of paid parental leave	0.52**	0.81
Place of residence		
Country or small city (ref)	ref	ref
Big city	0.67***	0.99
Education		
Primary or lower (ref)	ref	ref
Vocational	1.04	0.81
Secondary	1.78**	0.99
Tertiary or higher	2.76***	1.04
Partnership status		
Living with husband	6.35***	2.15***
Cohabiting	3.07***	2.50***
No partner in the household	ref	ref
Working or not (1-working; 0 not working)	1.82***	1.16
Age group		
18-24	0.71*	1.10
25-32	ref	ref
33-38	0.66	0.54***
39+	0.04***	0.13***
Number of children		
1	n.a.	ref
2		0.15***
3+		0.07***
Age of the youngest child	n.a.	
0-2		ref
3-14		0.67***
14+		0.24***

Conclusion & Discussion

- ▶ After the introduction of paid parental leave, childless women were less likely to intend to have a child than childless women before the introduction of the reform; for mothers – no statistically significant difference has been found.
- ▶ As according to Fahlén short term intentions can be interpreted as an indicator of childbearing capabilities, we may conclude that the introduction of a paid parental leave did not increase women's capabilities to have a child, and could even have a negative impact on the capabilities of childless women to have a child
- ▶ What could be the explanation for such an effect?
 - ▶ Previous research shows that what is a precondition for Polish women to have a child is a stable position at the labour market and what is important for having another child – it is the involvement of their partners in childcare (Matysiak 2011; Kurowska & Słotwińska-Roślanowska 2013)
 - ▶ One year long parental leave, taken almost entirely by women, may diminish the role of fathers in sharing childcare related tasks, as well as increase the vulnerability of women at the labour market.
 - ▶ However, these potential causal mechanisms need further investigation