

Recent research on paternity leave in the Czech Republic

(context, opinions, expectations)

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Content

- **Basic contexts of an introduction of paternity leave (PL)**
- **Changing attitudes to family/informal care**
- **Opinions and notions about the use and design of potential (discussed) paternity leave (full-time father's care for about 3 months)**

Main source:

**Public opinion survey on the new motivational paternity leave,
RILSA 2015**

Context of family policy

Since the 1990s a orientation to refamilization prevailed – as reaction to the previous pro-population and paternalistic character of the family policy of the communist regime.

Since about 2000 – a gradual reversal occurred, supported from EU and initiated among others by growing influence of gender equality agenda, economic prosperity issues, social and demographic changes

At present elements of defamilization are reinforced, which brings about e.g. flexible parental leave, (slowly) growing numbers and forms of day-care services, growing involvement of men in care for children

It corresponds with changing attitudes to gender division of labour but not so much with prevailing attitudes toward formal and informal care for children

On a “history” of paternity leave/allowance

The first attempt to introduce paternity allowance

2008: A government family policy document that proposed a family allowance within the system of sickness insurance - it aimed at fathers interrupting their earning activity in order to care (mostly full time) for their children.

This measure was intended to support men's taking up parental leave + to support creating close relationship between a father and his child

Context of unequally changing gender equality understanding – attitudes to gender division of care and housework

Public opinion polls on family and gender issues reveal that gender equality is understood differently when different aspects are concerned:

Gender equality is required generally in: leisure time, social contacts, further education, intimate life, family budget

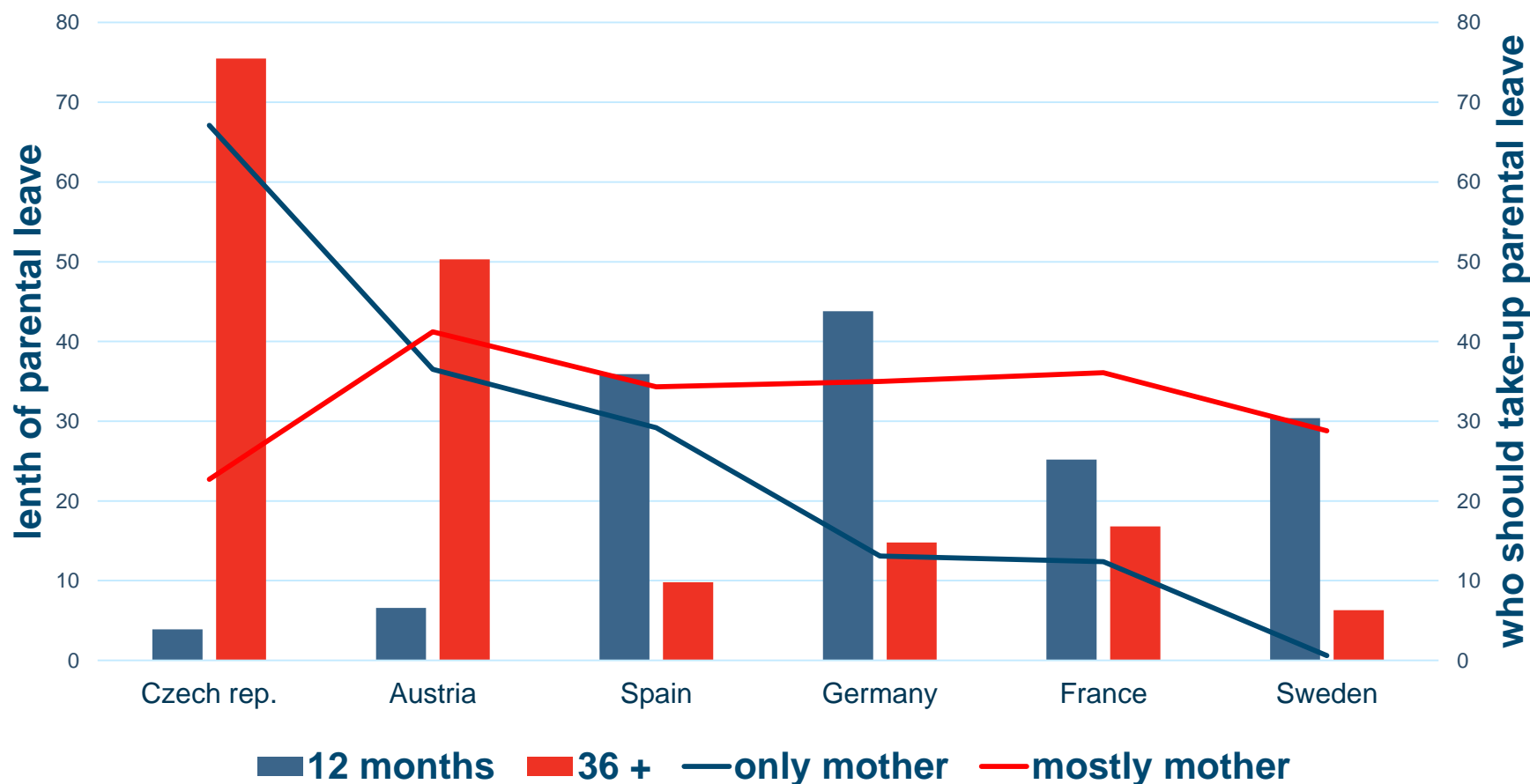
Equality or primary womens' role is required in: caring for children, shopping, cleaning up

Equality but also some dominance of men is still respected in: professional career, public activities

Rather exclusiveness of men's/women's role in: cooking (women), finances and repairs (men)

Changes in 1998-2016 were not very significant – gradual increase in interest in more equal roles in caring and cooking

Attitudes to parental leave: Czech specificity in cross-country comparison – selected alternatives of possible answers



How acceptance of paternity leave is influenced

The take-up rate and its positive effects in higher participation of fathers depends among others on:

- Openness of parents to **early father's care** and “exchange” or widening of gender roles – both in a family and profession life - there is a **discrepancy between declared attitudes and real family strategies** (the former more egalitarian, the latter more participating)
- External factors influencing gender division of roles in a family and (e.g. labour market, wage policy)
- Setting of the government leave policy, namely parental leave

2 forms of paternity leave:

- One-week paternity leave in the postnatal period – will be introduced in January 2018
- the amendment to Sickness Insurance Act was approved in May 2017
- Another potential form of paternity leave - 2-3 months paternity leave (called e.g. motivational paternity leave) have been so far under discussion



The **aim of our research** was to find out attitudes to “long term” paternity leave on the background of:

- perception of gender roles in a family and namely in caring,
- the parents' experience with parental leave and other family policy measures,
- their expectations concerning paternity leave and its conditions or design

Public opinion survey on the new motivational paternity leave - basic facts

Aimed at the attitudes of parents to the introduction of the so-called “motivational paternity leave,” which would enable fathers to devote time to full-time childcare, while providing them with a salary compensation during this period.

The questionnaire examined the preferred design of the leave with regard to the size of the salary compensation, form and conditions of take-up or the currently used practices of balancing work and family, especially in the case of fathers.

The sample: N = 705

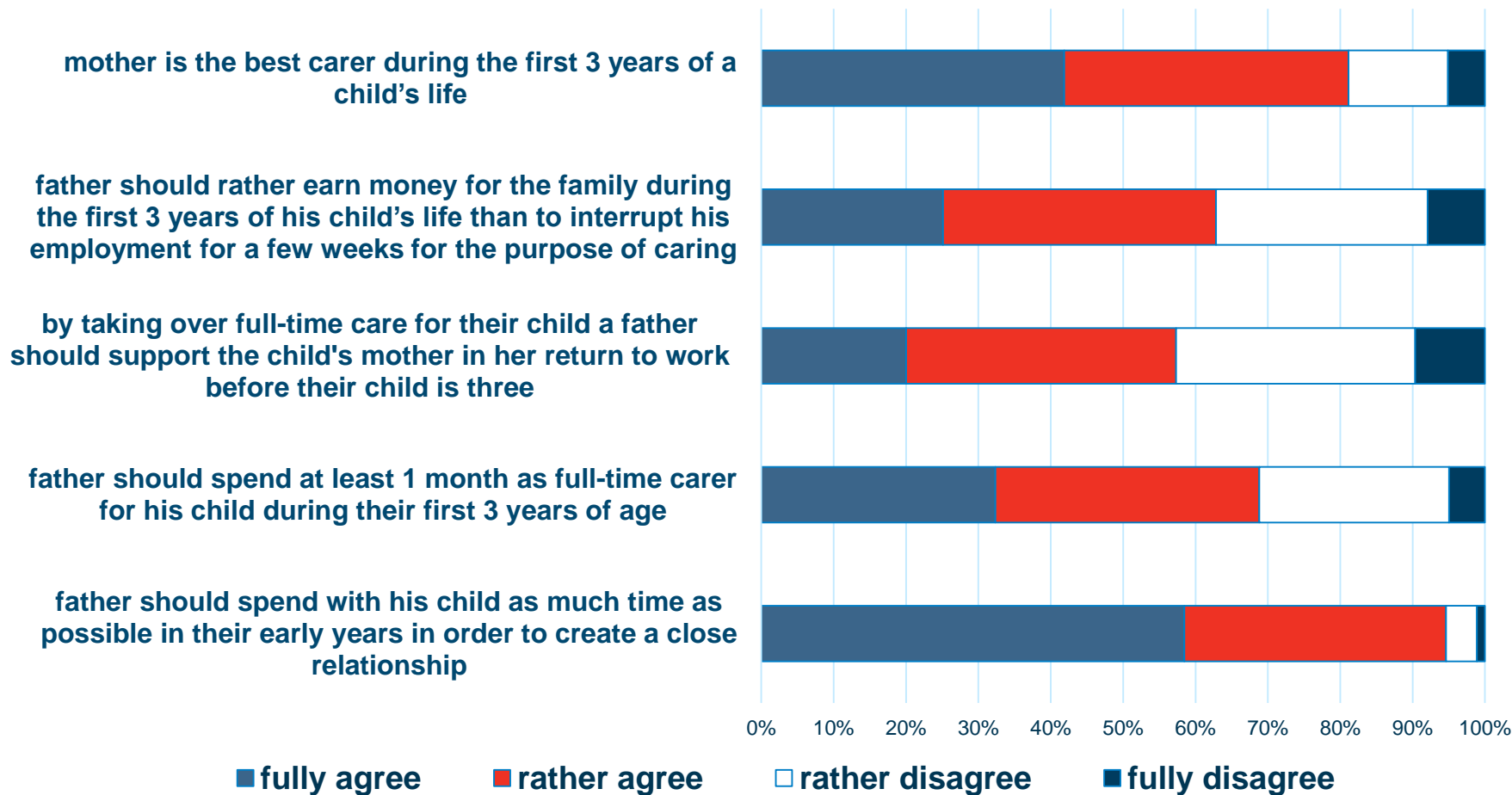
49 % men, 51 % women

61 % married, 39 % cohabiting

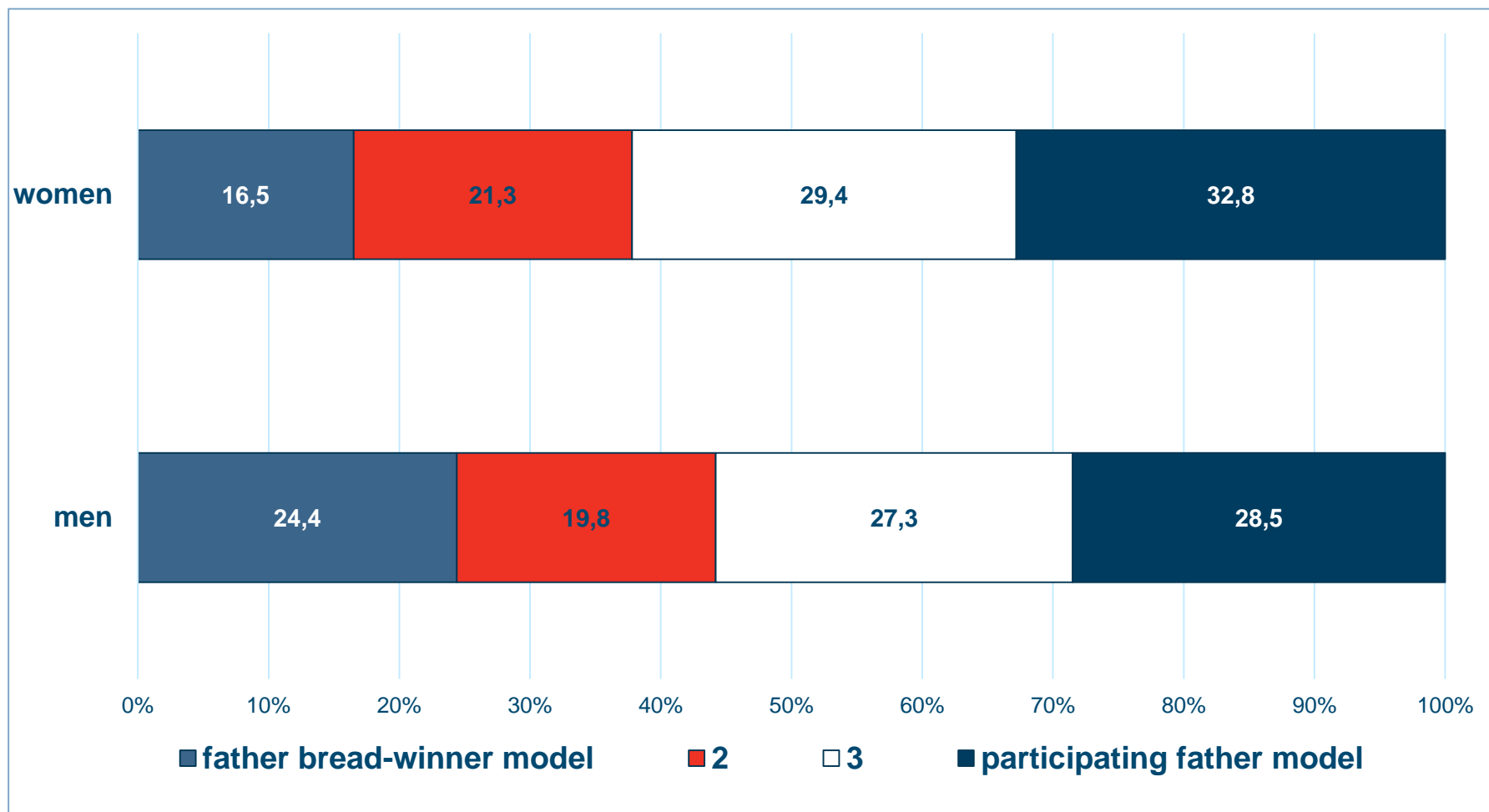
Approx. 2/3 with 1 child, 1/3 with 2 children (5 % with 3-4 ch.)

Education. 1/2 max. lower secondary; 1/3 max. upper secondary; 15 % university ed.

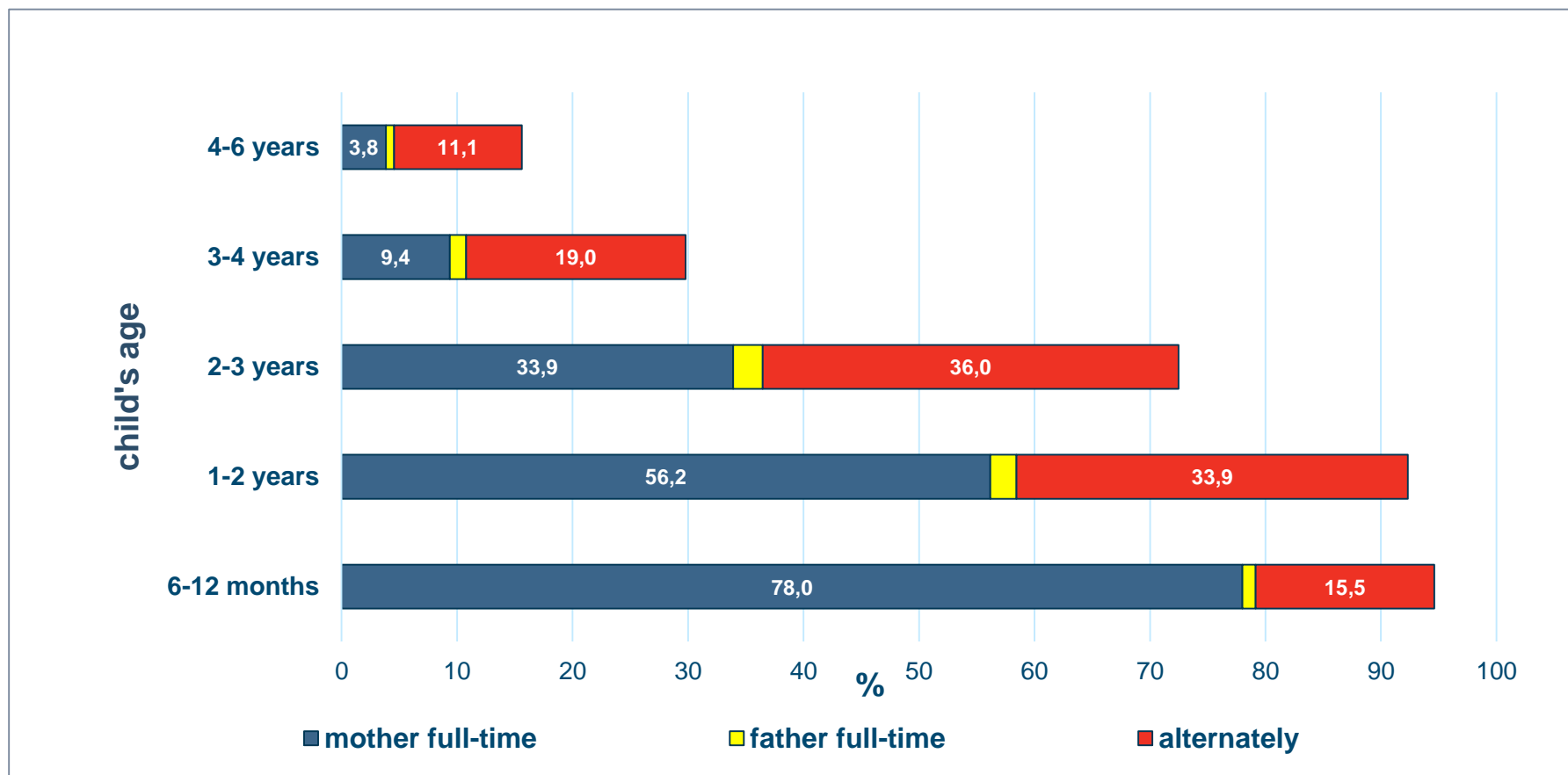
Selected opinions on fathers' involvement in care for children



Scale of attitudes towards a family model



Declared: the best way of day care for a child according to child's age (role of parents)



Czech reality in taking-up parental leave/ collecting parental allowances

The sample results:

92 % of families – only mother has ever been on parental leave

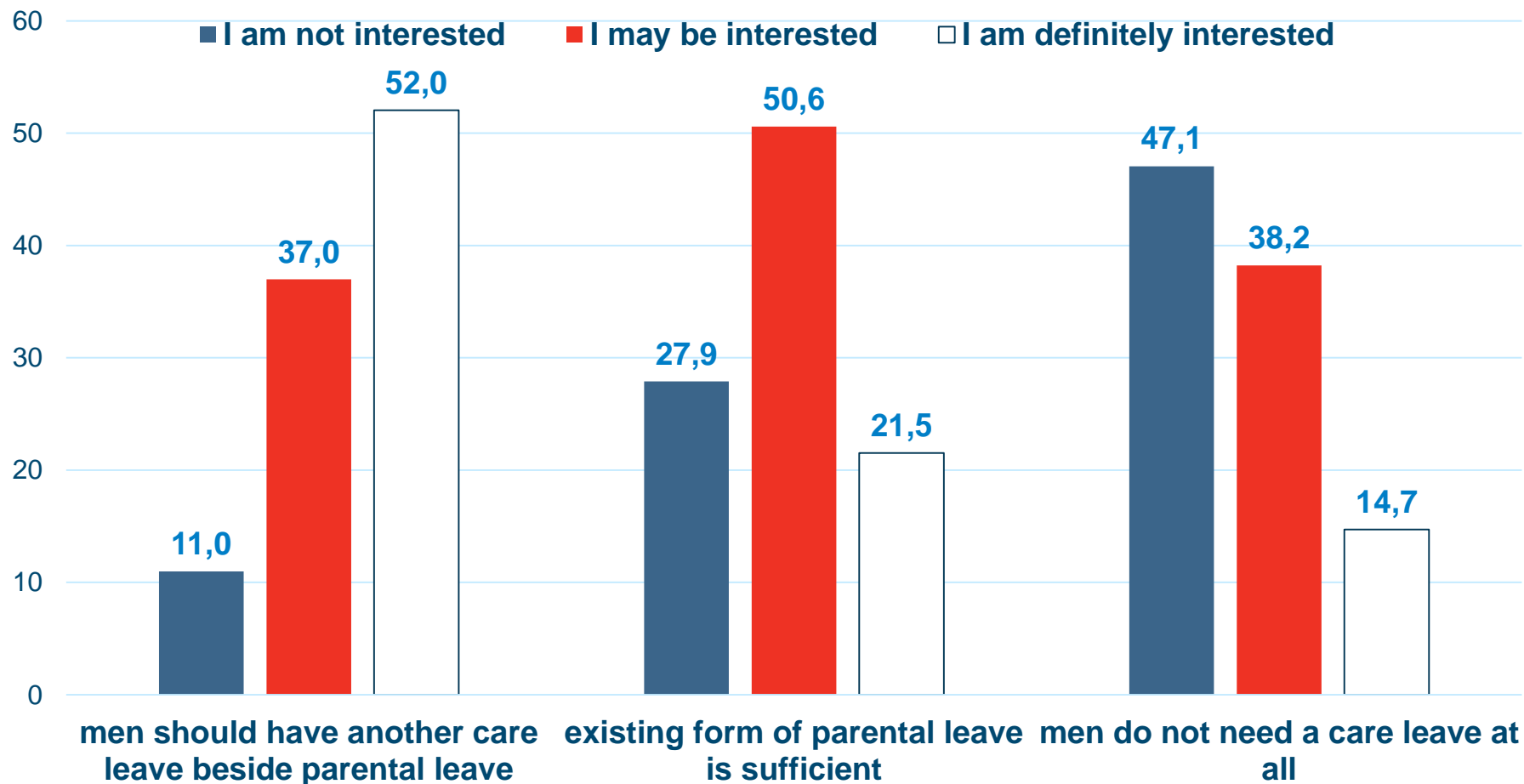
25 % of mothers on maternity for more than 3 years of a child's age. Main declared reason = they wish to care for a child (children)

Only in 6 % of families a father alternates a mother. Main arguments explaining “why” concern a man's job, income, career etc.

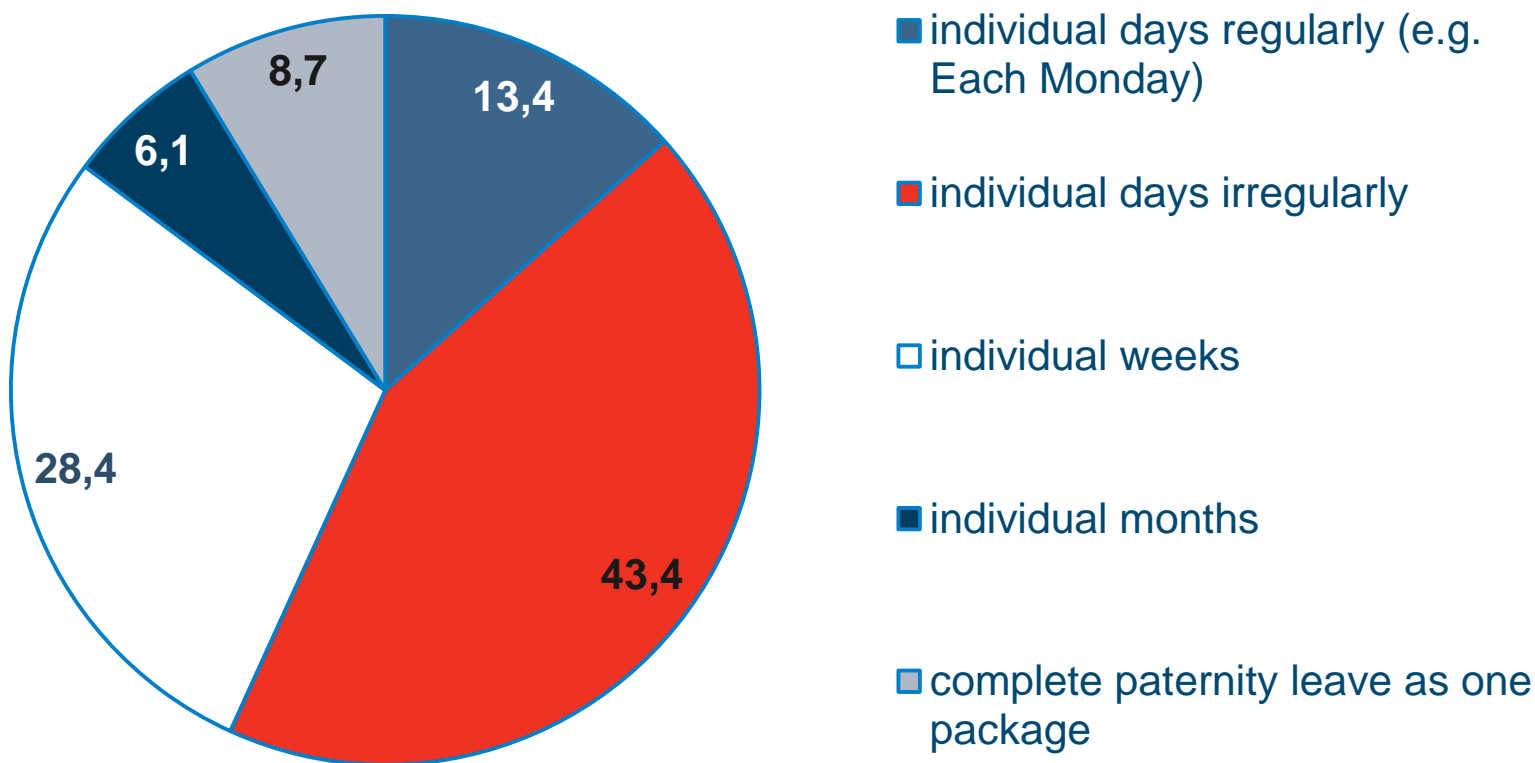
Statistics (MoLSA):

Growth 2001-2016: from 2,1 % to 5,2 % of men among parental allowance beneficiaries

Interest in paternity leave by answers to a question whether another care leave for fathers is needed (60 % yes)



Views of paternity leave: Preferred mode of taking-up paternity leave



Ways how men would like to make use of paternity leave

- Most often for 2 months (32 %) or 3 months (28 %)
- Preferably in individual days according to circumstances and needs

Main reasons for taking up are:

- Make closer relations with a child (39 %)
- More equal gender division of work (33 %)
- A mother can get back to work sooner (26 %)
- Others (namely take the load off a mother)
- 75 % would prefer to be on paternity leave when a child is 1-3 years of age
- 61 % would like to have a possibility to choose between paralel father's paternity leave and mother's maternity/parental leave or a separate paternity leave

Required financial compensation

- Very important for 93 % of parents
- Preferred form is a compensation derived from the wage compared with lump sum
- 70-80 % of the previous wage is most often taken as optimal (by a half of respondents), one third of respondents would ask higher compensation in relation to wages
- in case of lump sum this should be about 15 thousand crowns (580 €)

According to the new legislation on the one-week postnatal paternity care (Sickness Insurance Act) the compensation will be 70 % of the daily assessment base (i.e. less than is required)

Declared reasons for non interest in paternity leave

- Reluctance to interruption of a men's job (31 %)
- Opinion that mothers are better carers for very little child is (22 %)
- Financial consequences (20 %)
- General disagreement with full-time father's care ("instead of mother") (17 %)
- "a father should rather earn money" (11 %)
- Fathers' anxiousness concerning ability to care well (10 %)
- Others: a mother disagree, "father's care is sufficient anyway" (in other forms), another potential carer in a family ...

Survey results

Preference of **long-term mothers' or parental care** for small children still prevails – not so much as in the past.

Financial and work reasons and the general attitude to the **father and mother roles** in the family play the most important role here.

Parents expressed a relatively **high interest in “motivational paternity leave”** - two fifths of respondents would like to take it up for sure and an equal part would do so under certain circumstances.

However, more than a half of the respondents who expressed interest in motivational paternity leave would prefer an **irregular take-up by individual days**, i.e. as “help to the mother in the case of need.”
it does not correspond well with the main idea of paternal leave

The main factor in the decisionmaking about whether to take up paternity leave or not is the size of the **salary compensation**.

Respondents who declared they **would not consider using** motivational paternity leave were mostly **concerned about the loss of the father's employment or salary**, but frequently also expressed the opinion that mothers were better preconditioned to take care of small children.

Thank you

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