

Why German fathers' do not take parental leave

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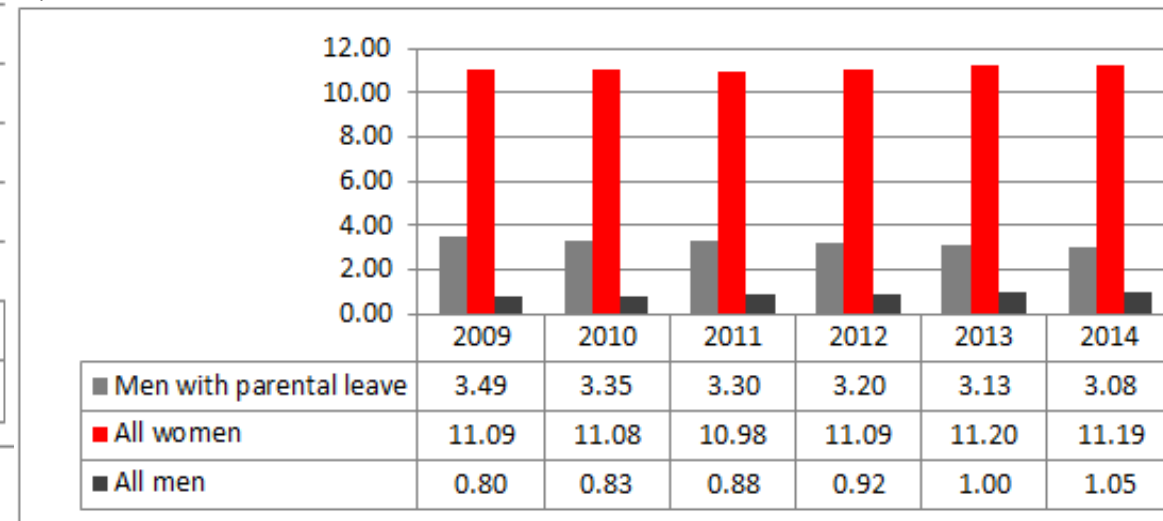
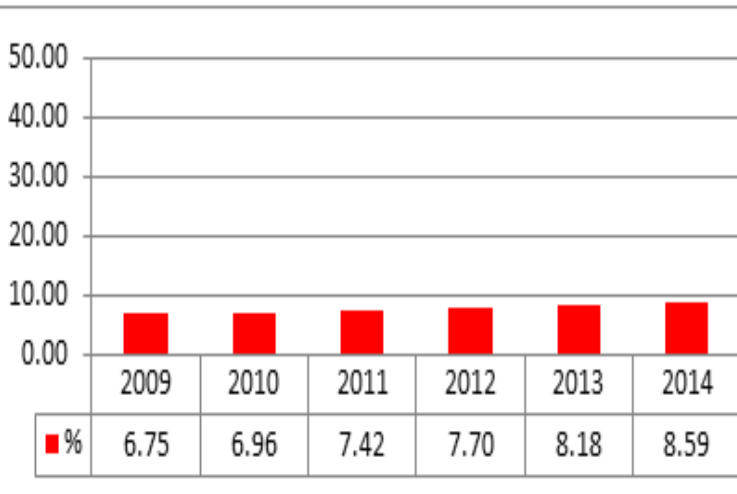
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German parental leave policies: designed to enhance gender equality

- New Parental leave benefits in Germany since 2007 aiming at ‘*activating*’ fathers’ engagement in childcare (Reimer 2013) by increasing fathers’ *take-up rates* of parental leave
- Two characteristics in the new parental leave policy design were considered being suitable to increase fathers’ take-up rates (e.g. Eydal & Gislason, 2015)
 - 65% earnings replacement for 12 months (100% for low incomes)
 - Two additional months of parental leave benefits if the second parent takes at least two months of parental leave (*‘Partner months’*)

Fathers take-up of parental leave in Germany

- 32% of fathers with a child born in 2012 (compared to 3.5% of fathers with children born in 2006, before the new legislation) (Blum, Eler & Reimer 2016)
- However: By now, fathers' share is only 8.6% of all leave months (left figure)
- Fathers' mean duration of leave is rather decreasing than increasing (right figure)



Problem

- Increasing number of couples with gender egalitarian attitudes
- Relative persistence of 'traditional' care arrangements in the family, particularly in the first year after a child is born
- → Why won't more fathers use (more) parental leave? (Gornick 2016)

State of the art: Factors of fathers' leave use

- Fathers' advocacy of shared parenting (Haas et al. 2002, Pull & Vogt 2010)
- Parental leave policy design (Brandth & Kvande 2009, Duvander & Johansson 2015, Haas & Rostgaard 2011, Fox et al. 2009, Lappegard 2008)
- Work cultures in organizations (Haas et al. 2002, Hass & Hwang 2007, Murgia & Poggio 2013)
- Anticipated career penalties with regard to parental leave use (Pfahl & Reuss 2008)
- Economic factors & family economies: when the mother has a lower income, the father is less likely to use parental leave (Almqvist 2008, Lappegard 2008, Sundström & Duvander 2002, Yeung et al. 2001)

Research gap

- How can the *interplay of factors* for fathers' waive on (longer) parental leave use be explained?
- How do fathers' *work organizations* affect their decisions to take no or not more parental leave *differently*?

Research questions

1. Why do fathers decide not to take (more) parental leave?
 - a. Step 1: Identifying single conditions

Which single conditions are relevant for fathers' waive on (longer) parental leave?

- a. Step 2: Identifying mechanisms

Which different social mechanisms of fathers' waive on (longer) parental leave can be identified in different work organization?

Research strategy

1. Examination of single conditions of fathers' parental leave take-up:

→ Content analysis based on qualitative interview data with fathers, condensation of their reasoning towards their leave-use to single conditions

2. Examination of sets of conditions (social mechanisms) for fathers' non-take-up of parental leave in different work organizations:

→ csQCA (Qualitative Comparative Analysis) (Ragin 1987)

Research strategy: QCA as a method to capture the interplay between several factors

- Search for mechanisms as a strategy to answer the question: Why does a phenomenon exist? (e.g. Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010)
- Configurational approach: Not single factors but rather the *interplay* between single factors can explain an outcome (Schneider & Wagemann 2009)
- Explication of *underlying causal processes* (Steel 2004)

Data: The three work organizations

- **A: Consumer Goods**

→ Family-owned, white collar workers, high payment level, certificate 'family-friendly'

- **B: Social Security**

→ Public employer, white collar workers, medium payment level, own 'home-office program'

- **C: Technic Equipment**

→ Private owned, mainly white collar workers, low to high payment level, aspirations to enhance fathers' use of (short) parental leave through owner and management (both young fathers by themselves)

Data: Descriptives

Fathers' mean/average characteristics	Consumer Goods (A)	Social Security (B)	Technic Equipment (C)
Number of interviews	16	14	17
Mean age	37,5	39,9	38,4
Mean duration of parental leave (all fathers, in months)	1,5	2,3	1,5
Fathers who took parental leave	75%	36%	41%
Fathers with 2 months of parental leave ('daddy quota')	75%	7%	29%
Fathers with more than two months of parental leave	0%	29%	12%
Father works in home office 3 days a week or more	0%	100%	0%
More than one child in the household	37%	50%	71%

Source: CRC882-B5; own calculations.

Results: Single conditions of fathers' non-leave-taking

Fathers' stated reasons for taking no parental leave	Single condition	Acronym
Father mentioned the relevance of income losses for the family as a consequence of fathers' parental leave taking	Family Income Loss	FIL
Presence of a norm of an unembodied worker at the workplace; presence of a long hours culture	Traditional Work Norm	TWN
Anticipated risks of leave-taking with regard to colleagues and supervisors who might withhold their approval; anticipated risks with regard to career prospects; presence of insecurity about the job consequences of leave-taking	Risk Work & Career	RWC
No sense of entitlement mentioned	~Sense Entitlement	~SE
No anticipated particular value of fathers' parental leave-taking for the father-child relationship	~Sense Value	~SV
Absence of the necessity to support the partners' (mothers') career	~Support Career Mother	~SCM

Results: Mechanisms of fathers' decisions not to take parental leave

Organization	Condition sets	Consistency	Coverage
Organization (A)	RWC * ~SE * ~SCM * ~FIL	1.0000	0.7500
	RWC * ~SE * ~SV * ~FIL	1.0000	0.7500
Organization (B)	FIL	1.0000	0.5556
Organization (C)	RWC * FIL + ~SE * FIL	1.0000	0.5000
	RWC * TWN + ~SE * FIL	1.0000	0.5000

Note: (* = 'and'; + = 'or'); Source: CRC882-B5; own calculations.

Results: Mechanisms of fathers' decisions not to take parental leave for more than 2 months

Organization	Condition sets	Consistency	Coverage
Organization (B)	~SCM	1.0000	1.0000
Organization (C)	~SCM	1.0000	1.0000

Note: (* = 'and'; + = 'or'); Source: CRC882-B5; own calculations.

Conclusions: Why do German fathers do not take (more) parental leave?

- Strong *single conditions* taking no parental leave: No sense of entitlement, anticipated risks for career development, family income losses
- Crucial *single condition* for taking not longer parental leave: not having to support the partner 's career
- Fathers' decisions not to take (more) parental leave can be understood as *social mechanisms*, rooted in societal settings, individual circumstances and and conditions at the workplace:
 - Gender pay gap matters for leave decisions
 - Flexible work options enhance fathers' possibilities to engage in childcare, with less necessity to claim parental leave for shorter periods
 - Double–faced boundary setting function (Brandth & Kvande) of the 'daddy months', particularly effective at the fathers' workplaces