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European policies and father's use of leave arrangements. The Spanish case

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Colloque "Pères en solitaire"
Centre Norbert Elias
Marseille, 29th november 2012

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General characteristics of the Spanish leave system

Maternity leave introduced in 1932, actually it **covers 16 weeks paid at a 100% rate**, which can be increased in case of multiple births **and in 2 additional weeks if part-time leave for breastfeeding** is allowed to be added. **Up to 6 weeks can be used by the father.**

Parental leave (after maternity leave) **for caring small children** can be taken **till the 3th year of the child** while Parental leave **for caring of dependent adults** can be taken for a maximum period of 2 years. Both leaves can be broken up in **shorter periods**, are considered an individual right and are **not paid at any level.**

Though not legally considered as part of parental leave, there exist also a **Part-time parental leave**, which consists in the possibility to **reduce working hours between 1/8 a 1/2 of the work duration** till the **child becomes 8 years old**. It can be used also for caring of dependent adults. It is **unpaid** and an individual right.

Paternity leave, as a specific leave only for men, unrelated to maternity leave, was **introduced in 2007** as a mean to foster gender equality in the domestic sphere (art.44.3 of the 3/2007 Gender Equality Law) . It consist of **13 free days fully paid.**

Research questions:

Phenomenology of parental leave use in Spain:

- Social images about parental leave: knowledge, perception of discrimination and ideas about who can afford take a leave.
- Take up rates by sociodemographic characteristics, particularly among men
- Duration and number of leaves used.

How decisions are taken

- Do partners negotiate the decision to take up a leave?
- Why do people take a leave?
- What is the cost – benefit balance persons do before they decide if they take a leave?
- How do people relate parental leave with other resources for balancing working and family lives, in particular grand parents care?

Consequences of use of leaves for professional and family lives

- Does leave take up implies discrimination in the working place?
- Does leave use by men foster a greater gender equality in family life and does women's use of it foster a traditionalization of gender roles?

(more detailed information in: www.uam.es/gerardo.meil)

Data and methodology

1. We have performed first 40 in depth interviews, mostly orientated to design the questionnaire and to know how people understand discrimination, how they evaluate pro and cons of taking a leave and to which end they use leave.
2. Afterwards we have made a **telephone survey** applied to **4.000 individuals aged 25 to 59** living in a household in Spain during the **first quarter of 2012**. The interview took some 45 minutes and separate set of questions were made for people with children less than 13.

Quotas by age and gender were established in order to avoid response biases. Though at the end, data had to be weighted to compensate some biases by age and gender.

As there were not enough men who took parental leave, a **snowball sample of 66** additional **men** who took them was gathered. This subsample was not use to evaluate take up rates, but only to analyze the phenomenology of its use.

Number of cases:

People (men and women) who took parental **leave for child care** are 129 full time and 262 part-time leave and leave **for adult care** are 7 full time and 22 part-time.

Men who took Paternity leave are 409; full-time parental leave 27 and part time parental leave 69

Maternity and Paternity leave. Percentage out of individuals who were entitled to it (had paid work when becoming parents)

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave
% of individuals out of those who worked at birth of the child	80%	75%
Used the leave on a part-time basis	13%	
Used it all the weeks legally established	94%	97%
% of fathers who have taken maternity leave	5,6%	-
Take up by salaried individuals	84%	81%
- By self employed	47%	39%
Take up by individuals working in public sector	90%	89%
- In private sector	79%	70%
Reasons for not taking leave	Was self employed No contract Left work	Was self employed No contract Others

Parental leave for child care in Spain. % of individuals who have made use some time of it by age. Base: Employed at birth of the children

	Part-time parental leave		Full time parental leave	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Age 25 to 40	2.6	28.4	-	11.3
Age 41 to 59	1.2	12.4	0.7	9.6
Total 25 to 59	1.8	19.9	0.5	10.4



Phenomenology of PART-time parental leave use by men (snowball sample)

90 % of men have taken such a leave only **once in life**.

It is mostly used **for the first child** : 61% of those with more than 1 child, took it for the first child. Logistic regression analysis show no influence of family size.

1/3 take it during the first 6 months (39%) of the child, another 1/3 at age 6 to 12 months (31%) and another 1/3 when older than 12 months (30%), while in the case of women they take it **mostly after maternity leave**

Duration is rather **short**: 21% for less than 6 months, 31% for 6 to 12 months and 49% for more than 12 months.

The most comom is a working time reduction of **1 or 2 hours or less** (35% and 40%)

Phenomenology of FULL-time parental leave use by men

(snowball sample)

Only 0.5% men against 10.4% women took such a leave, and mostly only **once in life** (96%)

As in part-time leave, full-time leave is taken mainly for the first child (72%).

It is mostly taken during the first year of life of the baby (51% during the first 6 months and 30% at age 6 to 12 months), only 19% at an older age.

Duration is short: 35% less than 6 months and 54% between 6 and 12 months. Only 10% for more than 1 year

After leave, 88% of men returned to a full-time job while a 12% reduced working time (part time leave or part time work). In the case of women, only 55% of women returned to full time work.

	Reasons to take parental leave					
	Men			Women		
	Part-time	Full time	Total	Part-time	Full time	Total
To be more time with my children	85%	86%	85%	96%	93%	96%
To develop other professional projects	8%	14%	9%	4%	2%	3%
To improve my education	8%		6%	4%	2%	3%
To reduce work stress or work load	15%	14%	15%	29%	26%	28%
To increase protection against being fired	15%		12%	3%	5%	3%
For not send the child to a childcare centre or leave it with a nanny	38%	29%	36%	44%	71%	53%
Because a childcare centre or a nanny costs too much	31%	14%	27%	35%	47%	38%
In order not to overload grandparents with childcare	50%	29%	45%	53%	38%	50%

Reason for not taking parental leave	Men	Women	Total
Your working time was helpful	35%	39%	37%
Because of the kind of my work, it was unthinkable to ask for a leave	38%	36%	37%
I would have lost too much income	40%	48%	43%
I would have endangered my work contract (fear to be fired)	26%	35%	30%
It would have affected negatively my promotion possibilities	20%	22%	21%
I preferred to devote my self more to my work	5%	3%	5%
We got help from the grandparents or other relatives	41%	42%	41%
Because children go (went) to a childcare centre	41%	36%	39%
Because the working time of my partner was helpful	46%	20%	35%

Does men taking paternity and parental leave foster their involvement in childcare and housework?:

Measures for childcare involvement (children 0 to 12 years old):

-Sharing of 6 different childcare tasks (take & pick them from school/ childcare centre or help them with homework; take care of them after school; bath, dress and take them to bed; play with them; stay with them when they are ill). Answer categories: 5 point scale from always woman to always man plus a 6th category “a third person”. Reported results include both equally, mostly man and always man together. Cronbach alfa 0.75

-Who is the main responsible for their care?

-Estimated number of hours a day involved in childcare on a normal workday, excluded sleeping time (responses above 16 hours are treated as missing values).

Measures for housework involvement:

-Sharing of 5 different housework tasks (shopping; preparing food; washing and ironing; house cleaning; bureaucratic tasks and bricolage). Answer categories as for childcare. Cronbach alfa 0.73



Men's use of leave and involvement in childcare

% of MEN who say they share equally with their partner or do more childcare by type of task and paternity leave use. Children aged 0 to 6 years.

Tasks	No paternity leave	Took paternity leave	Total
Transport to school/homework	66%	66%	66%
Care after school	57%	61%	51%
Bath, bring them to bed, clothing	78%	82%	81%
Play with them	92%	95%	95%
Being with them when ill	38%	42%	41%
Main responsible	75%	75%	75%
Mean nr. hours of care	4.6 hours	5.1 hours	5.0 hours
Number of cases	148	501	649

Notes: * p0.05 Population of reference: Men who were working when they became fathers. The difference of each percentage till 100 refers to those who answer the task is done by the woman (only or mostly) or by a third person. Paternity leave was introduced in 2006

% of men who say they share equally with their partner or do more childcare by type of task and parental leave use. Children aged 0 to 12 years.

Tasks	No parental leave	Part-time leave	Full time leave	Both leaves	Total
Transport to school/homework	68%	82%	93%	100%	69%*
Care after school	61%	89%	88%	63%	63%*
Bath, bring them to bed, clothing	76%	89%	100%	100%	77%*
Play with them	93%	96%	100%	100%	93%
Being with them when ill	48%	60%	75%	60%	49%
Main responsible	76%	82%	88%	73%	76%
Mean nr. hours care	4.4	5.4	6.2	6.1	4.5*
Number of cases	1,099	56	17	11	1,183

Notes: * p0.05 Population of reference: Men who where working when they became fathers. The difference of each percentage till 100 refers to those who answer the task is done by the woman (only or mostly) or by a third person

OLS regression model of childcare involvement of men index (parents of children younger than 6 years)

	Non standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Error típ.	Beta		
1(Constant)	16,194	,961		16,854	,000
Age youngest child	-,052	,088	-,024	-,587	,558
Number of children	-,167	,190	-,036	-,877	,381
Has/had full time parental leave	,923	,349	,107	2,645	,008
Has/had part time parental leave	,127	,458	,012	,277	,782
Has/had paternity leave	,107	,295	,015	,362	,717
Men: Number worked hours/week	-,636	,069	-,378	-9,238	,000
Women: Number worked hours/week	,517	,069	,313	7,487	,000
Grandparents daily child care help	,379	,273	,056	1,388	,166
Has paid housework help	-,252	,305	-,038	-,827	,409
Educational level	-,058	,045	-,057	-1,298	,195

N=477, Rsquare=0.251. Task done by "other person" treated as done "equally by both partners".

OLS regression model of daily hours devoted by men to childcare

	Non standardized coefficients		standarize d coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	St. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7,497	,716		10,475	,000
Age youngest child	-,331	,068	-,174	-4,857	,000
Number of children	,002	,144	,001	,015	,988
Has/had full time parental leave	,626	,293	,077	2,137	,033
Has/had part time parental leave	,503	,391	,048	1,289	,198
Has/had paternity leave	,600	,233	,094	2,573	,010
Men: Number worked hours/week	-,677	,053	-,463	-12,886	,000
Women: Number worked hours/week	,131	,052	,093	2,499	,013
Grandparents daily child care help	-,124	,208	-,021	-,595	,552
Has paid housework help	,227	,242	,038	,938	,348
Educational level	-,133	,034	-,150	-3,850	,000

Sample: parents of children less than 5 (children born between 2007-2011)
 N=594, Rsquare= 0.29



Men with children less than 5 years old	Mean numbers of work-hours
Not employed (unemployed)	17.4 %
No parental leave	41.9 hours/week
Full-time parental leave	34.5 hours/week
Part-time parental leave	33.3 hours/week
Total employed with regular working hours	41.1 hours/week
Had paternity leave	40.5 hours/week
No paternity leave	43.6 hours/week



Men's use of leave and division of housework among partners

% of MEN who say they share equally with their partner or do more HOUSEWORK by type of task and paternity leave use. Children aged 0 to 6 years.

Tasks	No paternity leave	Took paternity leave	Total
Shopping	66%	81%	77%
Preparing food	55%	65%	63%
Washing and ironing	32%	46%	39%
House cleaning	47%	59%	56%
Bureaucratic tasks & bricolage	87%	87%	87%
Number of cases	148	501	649

Notes: * p0.05 Population of reference: Men who were working when they became fathers. The difference of each percentage till 100 refers to those who answer the task is done by the woman (only or mostly) or by a third person. Paternity leave was introduced in 2006

% of MEN who say they share equally with their partner or do more HOUSEWORK by type of task and parental leave use.

Tasks	No parental leave	Part-time leave	Full-time leave	Both leaves	Total
Shopping	73%	86%	88%	100%	74%*
Preparing food	57%	79%	88%	82%	58%*
Washing and ironing	33%	41%	47%	67%	33%*
House cleaning	51%	46%	65%	55%	51%*
Bureaucratic tasks & bricolage	85%	89%	88%	100%	86%
Number of cases	1,318	56	17	11	1,402

Notes: * p0.05 Population of reference: Men who were working when they became mothers. The difference of each percentage till 100 refers to those who answer the task is done by women (only or mostly) or by a third person

OLS regression model of housework involvement of men index

	Non standardized coefficients		standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Error típ.	Beta		
(Constante)	15,075	,916		16,456	,000
Age youngest child	-,224	,086	-,102	-2,613	,009
Number of children	-,075	,182	-,016	-,413	,680
Has/had full time parental leave	,815	,365	,087	2,235	,026
Has/had part time parental leave	-,198	,487	-,016	-,407	,684
Has/had paternity leave	,142	,294	,019	,482	,630
Men: Number worked hours/week	-,509	,068	-,296	-7,536	,000
Women: Number worked hours/week	,411	,067	,250	6,143	,000
Grandparents daily child care help	,097	,264	,014	,368	,713
Has paid housework help	-,095	,303	-,014	-,313	,754
Educational level	,084	,043	,081	1,931	,054

Sample: parents of children less than 5 (children born between 2007-2011)
 N=589, Rsquare= 0.17

Conclusions

Men's use of parental leave is very scarce in Spain and when they take one, it is on a part-time basis, mostly for the first child and during the first year of life. However there seems to be a slight tendency to increase its use.

Paternity leave, on the contrary, is taken by most of the employed men, as it is shorter and fully compensated.

Although not with all indicators of men's child care involvement, there is support for the thesis that they foster this kind of involvement, but do not promote necessarily a greater implication in housework.



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Funding institution: Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, Directorate for Scientific Research, ref. CSO2009-11328

Research period: 2010 – 2012

More detailed information in: www.uam.es/gerardo.meil

Publications till sept. 2012 (in English):

Romero-Balsas, P.; Rogero-García, J.; Muntanyola-Saura, D.(forthcoming): “Decision Making Factors in Paternity and Parental Leaves: Why Spanish Fathers Take Time-Off Work”, in Gender, Work and Organization