

TITLE: Changes in mothers' uptake of parental leave in Poland

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Background and purpose of the research:

Parental leave is considered a major instrument in reconciling family and work by parents. Despite recent developments to encourage fathers to share care responsibilities by introducing individual, non-transferable entitlements mothers are the main users of parental leave (e.g. (Cameron & Moss, 2007). Studies on take-up of parental leave usually focus on its effects on mothers' prospects in the labour market. Generally, well-paid and relatively short leave is considered to have no negative impact on women's employment. Empirical research has generally confirmed that relationship between the duration of the leave and women's employment is non-linear (e.g. Thevenon & Solaz 2013; Evertsson&Duvander 2011). The recent study for OECD countries by Thevenon & Solaz (2013), based on macro data, shows that women's employment rates start to decline when leave is longer than 125 weeks.

In Poland, only no more than 3% of fathers entitled to parental leave take-up make use of their entitlements. Therefore, our discussion on evolution in use of leave after 1989 refers to mothers only. We aim to demonstrate how Polish women change patterns of their use of parental leave under the time of the deep labour market transformation. Despite the fact that leave duration remained unchanged during the recent two decades (36 moths to be used until a child is four years old) there is an overall trend to reduce its duration in the years 1991-2010. Mothers seem to rationalize their behavior as they would know that longer stay outside work would reduce their employment chances as it has been empirically demonstrated (Kocot-Górecka & Kurowska). However, the time spent on leave vary across different groups of mothers with different labour market experience, family situation, and work attitudes, etc. And finally could be influenced by the labour market situation. We hypothesize that the duration of leave used by mothers depends on her work record, education, attitudes towards work, family background and preferences regarding family model (male breadwinner vs. dual earner). In addition, their impacts are moderated by the business cycle. Especially, under high unemployment mothers shorten their leave responding to increasing economic uncertainty. Moreover, the number of children, work attitudes and family preferences lose their influence

on the period of leave, the most important becomes to be back at job and get income for family

Data and methods:

The data used come from the first round of the Generations and Gender Survey in Poland, carried out in 2011. The questionnaire includes questions on the labour market biography of respondents and allows to study interdependencies between labour market behaviours and parenthood. For our purpose the GLM are used. The leave duration after the first and second births are modelled separately. The explanatory variables include: individual characteristics (age, completed education), characteristics of professional biography (work record, job mobility), gender roles (opinions on possible impact of mothers' work on children's wellbeing), parental home (place of birth, economic activity of respondent's mother), family model preferences.

Main expected results:

Contributions to the downward trend of leave duration observed in the years 1991-2010 in Poland differs by women's strata. In general, women with higher education are more inclined to shorten duration of leave irrespectively on the birth order and the business cycle. Women more oriented towards sharing both earning responsibility and child care with their partners prefer also to be back at work after relatively short breaks. Those coming from the dual earner family are expected to spend less time on leave.

When job uncertainty is high due to unemployment, only women with better labour market position might stay longer on leave (those with longer work record but relatively young).

The results are expected to contribute to the on-going discussion in Poland on a need to revise the system of parental leave, especially to shorten leave duration and to improve benefit coverage.

Literature:

Cameron, C., Moss, P., 2007, *Care Work in Europe: Current Understandings and Future Directions*, Routledge, London.

Evertsson, M., Duvander, A.-Z. 2011, Parental leave - possibility or trap? Does family leave length effect Swedish women's labour market opportunities?, *European Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 435-50.).

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