INTRODUCTION

Statutory parenting leave policies in high-income countries have been subject to numerous reforms, with a general trend towards increasing leave provision for fathers. Simultaneously, promoting gender equality by increasing maternal employment and fathers’ involvement in childcare has become a more important policy goal of parenting leave policies (Gornick & Meyers, 2003). In this chapter, we contribute to the literature by collating, summarizing, and discussing existing empirical findings on the relationship between statutory parenting leave policies – i.e., maternity, paternity, and general parental leave – and parental labour market outcomes, the gender division of family work, and gender norms. To this end, we conduct a literature review of studies published in international journals during the period 1990–2020. We substantively complement a recent review on family policy and female employment by Ferragina (2020) in several ways by focusing solely on parenting leave as one area of family policy and covering a broader range of parental practices and gender norms. Specifically, we focus on the labour market participation and careers of mothers and fathers and their involvement in family work. As many scholars have emphasized the legitimizing and norm-setting role of such family policies (e.g., Schober, 2014; Gangl & Ziefle, 2015), we also summarize the small number of studies investigating effects on beliefs and norms regarding the gender division of labour. We take an interdisciplinary approach and consider cross-country comparative as well as national case studies. We critically review the analytical extent to which previous studies suggested plausible causal chains of mechanisms for how parenting leave policies relate to our outcomes of interest.

The chapter is organized into three major subsections, presenting the relationship between parenting leave policies and (1) parents’ labour market outcomes, (2) the gender division of family work, and (3) beliefs and norms regarding the gender division of labour. In each of the three subsections, we first review different theoretical perspectives that have been used to analyse the impact of parenting leave policies on the respective outcome. Then, we summarize and discuss selected quantitative studies that analysed the relationship between parenting leave policies and the particular outcome. If the existing evidence allows, we discuss effect heterogeneity across social groups. We close the chapter by summarizing the main findings and pointing to research gaps and fruitful avenues for future research.
METHODOLOGY

In total, we collected 256 articles, 228 using quantitative and 28 using qualitative approaches. All articles are written in the English language, were published in journals between the years 1990 and 2020, and were found by searching Web of Science and Google Scholar. Additional articles were found in a review article on a related topic (Ferragina, 2020). In a second step, the bibliographies of all selected articles were scanned and all publications quoting the selected articles were browsed on Google Scholar. An overview of all relevant studies is available in the online appendix. The articles mainly reflect research from high-income countries in Europe, North America, East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

In the next step, we excluded studies that did not examine outcomes related to parents’ employment, the division of family work, or beliefs and norms about the gender division of labour. Specifically, we focused on parents’ employment outcomes measured as employment status, number of working hours, time of return to paid work, earnings, gender or motherhood wage gap, job continuity, job change or job promotion, parents’ division of family work measured as parents’ involvement in housework or childcare/care for sick children, or people’s beliefs and norms about the gender division of labour. Furthermore, we excluded studies that did not examine statutory parenting leave policies, that applied summary measures combining various social policies or that applied descriptive or simulation methods, which do not allow for causal claims about the effects of existent statutory parenting leave policies. Due to space constraints, the literature review focuses on quantitative studies using multi-country, quasi-experimental or longitudinal techniques and mostly leaves out single-country cross-sectional and qualitative studies. Due to the large number of studies on employment outcomes, the review focuses on recent studies concerning this topic, published after 2008. We grouped the study results by methodology used, presenting multi-country studies, followed by policy reform evaluation studies and finally longitudinal studies on individual parenting leave take-up. In total, 56 studies are included in the review. We are unable to conduct a systematic quantitative review, as the measures of parenting leave policies and parental outcomes vary greatly across studies, meaning that the results are not always directly comparable (see also Doucet & Duvander, Chapter 10 in this Handbook).

PARENTING LEAVE POLICIES AND EMPLOYMENT BEHAVIOUR

Theoretical Mechanisms

Economic rational choice perspectives assume that parenting leave policies create economic incentives for certain parental work-care practices (e.g., Gangl & Ziefle, 2015), and that leave uptake has diverse short- and long-term economic consequences. Some parents might increase their labour force participation just before childbirth in order to gain eligibility if leave is based on pre-birth earnings (Ang, 2015). Job protection during leave might raise the probability of returning to the same employer, as it decreases the costs of a new job search and potential job loss (Kluve & Schmitz, 2018). Generous leave benefits might allow parents to stay out of the labour market during the leave period through partial wage-replacements which diminish income losses (‘benefit entry effect’) and increase the incentive to return to employment when paid leave entitlements expire (‘benefit expiry effect’) (Kluve & Tamm, 2013, p. 992).
Moreover, human capital theories (e.g., Becker, 1981) predict that longer durations of leave go along with larger losses of human capital and work experience, leading to reduced earnings or career prospects. Signalling theory (e.g., Albrecht et al., 1999) states that employers might interpret (long) leave take-up as a signal of lower work commitment and penalize the respective employees with reduced earnings or career prospects. In practice, these theoretical economic assumptions apply more often to mothers than to fathers.

In addition, identity-related perspectives (e.g., Stryker, 1968; West & Zimmermann, 1987) suggest that parenthood and parenting leave uptake may change parents’ priorities – differently according to gender – and thus also their time allocation between paid and family work, with consequences for parents’ future employment behaviour. For details on this mechanism, see the theory sections on family work as well as on gender norms below.

**Existing Studies**

Cross-national multilevel studies analysed the relationship between parenting leave length or benefit level and women’s employment. Longer job protections during parental leave were associated with larger gaps between childless women and mothers in labour market participation and working hours (Boeckmann et al., 2015) and showed curvilinear effects for annual earnings among employed women (Budig et al., 2016). Countries with longer paid maternity, paternity or fully funded parental leave exhibit smaller motherhood gaps in annual earnings (Budig et al., 2016). Regarding the benefit level, countries with more generous paid parental leave benefits exhibited smaller motherhood gaps in labour market participation or working hours among employed women (Boeckmann et al., 2015). The two factors interact: Short paid periods of parenting leave available for mothers did not show any association with mothers’ labour force participation, while paid leave periods longer than six months were associated with a lower likelihood of mothers being in the labour force or (full-time) employed (Hook & Pack, 2020). A few more recent cross-national studies include country fixed-effects or use longitudinal data to control for unobserved differences between countries. For example, Hausman-Taylor panel models strengthen the evidence that longer paid maternity leaves reduce the motherhood wage penalty (Halldén et al., 2016). In contrast, a cross-national study of 21 rich democracies using multilevel and fixed-effects models found no general relationship between the length of paid parenting leave available for mothers and seven labour market outcomes among women or mothers: (full-time) employment, (full-time) earnings, being a (well-paid) manager, and share of women in one-digit occupations (Brady et al., 2020). Finally, paternity leave regulations and the length of parenting leave for mothers did not explain cross-country differences in fathers’ working hours (Bünning & Pollmann-Schult, 2016).

Longitudinal reform studies based on event history models analysed the effects of country-specific leave policy reforms and found that mothers’ transition rates back to employment are reduced during maternity or parental leave entitlements available for mothers, while re-entry concentrates around the time of entitlement exhaustion (evidence from Australia, the United States, and Germany: Ziefle & Gangl, 2014; Grunow & Aisenbrey, 2016; Hondralis, 2017; Broadway et al., 2020). Also, mothers’ returns to employment tend to shift in line with introductions, extensions, and reductions of parental leave entitlements or benefits available for mothers (Ziefle & Gangl, 2014).
Other longitudinal reform studies applied quasi-experimental methods such as difference in means, difference-in-difference or regression discontinuity designs to study the effects of introductions or changes in parenting leaves on women’s and men’s employment. Some studies on more recent introductions of short (paid) parenting leaves mainly did not find any effects: Some member states of the United States, like California in 2004, introduced a 6-week partially paid parenting leave, which showed no significant effect on women’s employment probability but increased the working hours of employed mothers 1–3 years after childbirth (Rossin-Slater et al., 2013). The introduction of an 18-week paid parental leave period in Australia in 2011 exhibited no significant effects on mothers’ working hours before or after childbirth (Bass, 2020). The introduction and increase in parental leave cash benefits in Japan in 1995 and 2001 did not significantly change the job continuity of first-time mothers (Asai, 2015). Further studies examined changes in single countries’ parental leave policies: Based on three parental leave reforms in 1990, 1996, and 2000 in Austria, findings revealed that extending the duration of job protection and/or cash benefits delayed mothers’ return to work, especially during the job-protected period (Lalive et al., 2014). No medium-term effects on mothers’ employment rates, return to the pre-birth employer, and earnings when the child was 5 years old were found. The extension of unpaid parenting leave in Korea from 12 to 15 months combined with the option to split leave into two time points in 2008 increased women’s return to work within 3 years but did not affect returns to the pre-birth employer (Kim, 2020). Moreover, some studies analysed the effects of introductions of parental leave reserved for fathers and found mixed results on parents’ employment: The introduction of a one-month paternity leave for fathers in Norway in 1993 significantly decreased fathers’ earnings up to 5 years after childbirth but had no effect on mothers’ labour force participation (Rege & Solli, 2013). Sweden’s introduction of a one-month paternity leave in 1995 together with a reduction in parental leave wage replacement from 90 per cent to 80 per cent exhibited no effect on fathers’ or mothers’ wages or employment rates (Ekberg et al., 2013). The introduction of paternity leave together with an augmentation in the benefit level of maternity and parental leave in 2006 in Quebec (Canada) significantly increased employment rates and earnings among women of childbearing age, extended working hours among pregnant women, and decreased mothers’ presence at work during leave eligibility (Ang, 2015). Germany’s introduction of two months of paternity leave together with a more generous income-replacement during parental leave in 2007 significantly decreased mothers’ employment during the time of benefit receipt and increased their employment probability 3–5 years after childbirth. The reform also raised mothers’ likelihood to continue in the same job and hold a fixed-term work contract (Kluve & Schmitz, 2018). No long-term effects on fathers’ employment rates were found (Kluve & Tamm, 2013). All in all, longitudinal reform studies cannot distinguish between the effects of different policy measures in the case of combined policy reforms and analyse all or eligible parents.

So, a minority of individual-level longitudinal studies analysed the consequences of the actual leave take-up for parents’ employment. Studies using event history models revealed that taking more than 16 months of parental leave or homemaking time decreased the likelihood of an upward occupational move for Swedish mothers once they returned to work (Evertsson & Duvander, 2010; Evertsson & Grunow, 2012); no effects for employed women in Germany were found (Evertsson & Grunow, 2012). German studies using fixed-effects models showed that fathers reduced their working hours during parental leave but not beyond (Tamm, 2019).
while first-time fathers reduced their working hours also in the year after leave, and more so if they took longer or solo parental leave (Bünning, 2015).

Some studies tested for effect heterogeneity: Mothers with medium or high education/income were more likely to reduce their labour market participation during benefit entitlement and returned to work at higher rates after benefit expiry (Kluve & Tamm, 2013; Hondralis, 2017; Kluve & Schmitz, 2018). They were also more likely to return to their previous job or hold a fixed-term contract 3–5 years after childbirth, while mothers with low education/income did not tend to adapt their employment behaviour following parental leave reforms (Joseph et al., 2013; Kluve & Schmitz, 2018). Paternity leave reduced working hours and earnings more for fathers with low and medium education, whereas highly educated fathers tended to increase their working hours when longer periods of parenting leave became available for mothers (Rege & Solli, 2013; Bünning & Pollmann-Schult, 2016).

Overall, in line with economic rational choice perspectives we found that longer job protection periods decreased mothers’ employment participation during leave and delayed returns to work. Longer (paid) maternity leaves reduced mothers’ employment participation during leave and decreased motherhood wage gaps. We found mixed (no or positive) evidence that mothers’ employment participation and earnings tended to shift in line with lengths and benefit levels of paid parental leave. The long-term effects on mothers’ employment likely stem from both economic incentives and changed preferences. The few existent studies on fathers found no or short-term negative effects of paternity leave on fathers’ employment hours or wages, pointing more towards economic effects than longer-lasting preference changes. In the next section, we discuss how parenting leave policies affect the gender division of unpaid family work.

PARENTING LEAVE POLICIES AND THE GENDER DIVISION OF FAMILY WORK

Theoretical Mechanisms

From a time availability perspective (e.g., Blood & Wolfe, 1960), leave policies are assumed to influence parents’ time for children and housework mainly through their effects on the length of time parents spend outside the labour market, during which they perform more unpaid family work. Moreover, bargaining theories (e.g., Lundberg & Pollak, 1996) hold that couples negotiate the division of family work. As parental leave benefits usually do not fully compensate for the loss of income during leave uptake, the partner who takes (longer) parental leave tends to experience reduced bargaining power and a higher relative share of family work during and after leave.

Most prevalent in the discussion of direct effects of parenting leave policies on the gender division of housework and childcare are identity-related perspectives. Particular focus has been placed on how paternity leave reserved for fathers and corresponding uptake might change fathers’ identities in the long term. The ‘doing gender’ approach (West & Zimmermann, 1987) and identity theory (Stryker, 1968) posit that identities as a mother or father are developed through lived experiences and day-to-day social interactions, which contribute to the meanings that women and men attribute to motherhood and fatherhood and the associated roles. In the absence of leave specifically reserved for fathers, traditional fatherhood ideals that attach greater importance to breadwinning and pursuing a career, and which are often also...
prevalent in fathers’ workplaces, are likely to compete with new fatherhood ideals of greater emotional and temporal involvement with one’s children (see also Brandth et al., Chapter 13 in this Handbook). By encouraging time devoted solely to children, leave-taking may enhance fathers’ childcare-related skills and experiences, bonding with the child, and the confidence and self-esteem men derive from being an involved father and therefore increase the salience of identities prioritizing involved fatherhood (for an informative qualitative study documenting these identity-related transitions, see Rehel, 2014).

Existing Studies

Cross-country studies using multilevel models suggest that fathers spend more time on childcare in countries with paid parental leave schemes and where fathers possess an individualized right to paternity leave (Hook, 2006; Smith & Williams, 2007; Boll et al., 2014). Mothers are relatively more and fathers less involved in housework in countries with very long parental leave, especially if fathers are not individually entitled to leave, as long leaves tend to be taken up by mothers. This leads mothers to spend more time on routine housework and results in a more traditional gender division of domestic work (Fuwa & Cohen, 2007; Hook, 2010). Boll et al. (2014) conducted the most recent cross-national longitudinal study, which accounts for country and year fixed-effects. Drawing on repeated cross-sectional time use data from eight Western countries from 1970 to 2005, they found that the number of parental leave weeks available for fathers and high benefit levels were positively associated with fathers’ time spent on childcare.

With respect to longer-term effects on fathers’ involvement in family work, existing reform evaluation studies provide mixed results. A Norwegian study based on cross-sectional survey data suggested that the introduction of a one-month paternity leave period in 1993 led to a more gender-equal sharing of laundry tasks, but no other household chores (Kotsadam & Finseraas, 2011). A Swedish study investigated the effects of reserving one month of parental leave for fathers in 1995 on the division of temporary leave to care for sick children and found no effect up to when children were 8 years old (Ekberg et al., 2013). More recently, Duvander and Johansson (2018) found that the same reform led to more equal sharing of leave to care for sick children between parents up to 12 years after childbirth, mainly because use of the leave benefit decreased among low-educated mothers. However, the authors did not find any effects of the introduction of a second month of paternity leave in Sweden in 2002. Two studies analysed the 2007 parental leave reform in Germany, which introduced a shorter but more generous income-based leave benefit and reserved two months of leave for fathers (Kluve & Tamm, 2013; Schober, 2013). Comparing parents of children born 2 years before and 2 years after the reform indicated an increase in fathers’ childcare time up to the point where the child was 3 years old, but did not affect the division of housework (Schober, 2013). By contrast, Kluve and Tamm (2013), using a shorter time window before and after the reform, found no significant increases in fathers’ relative involvement in childcare during the first 18 months after childbirth.

The most rigorous studies to date (Patnaik, 2019; Wray, 2020) have been conducted for the Quebec Parental Insurance Program implemented in 2006, which improved leave compensation and reserved 5 weeks of leave for fathers. Both studies employ difference-in-difference methods that exploit variations across provinces and over time. Patnaik (2019) found significant longer-term increases in mothers’ working hours and fathers’ housework time, whereas
fathers’ childcare time seems to have gone up across all groups of parents in Quebec. Wray (2020) found a significant rise only in fathers’ solo accessibility time, whereas fathers’ overall childcare time or direct engagement with children did not increase.

Longitudinal individual level studies that explore the effects of leave take-up can provide helpful information on underlying mechanisms. A large number of correlational studies from various countries, including Bangladesh, Iceland, Sweden, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Estes et al., 2007; Nepomnyschy & Waldfogel, 2007; Tanaka & Waldfogel, 2007; Haas & Hwang, 2008; Jesmin & Seward, 2011; Fernández-Cornejo et al., 2018; Pragg, 2021), found that fathers who take leave or longer leave tend to be more involved in childcare even later on during their children’s early years (for an exception, see for Australia Hosking et al., 2010). Fathers who take (longer) leave are likely to differ from other fathers in several aspects, such as in their identities as fathers and workers, which are difficult to capture using quantitative measures. Three studies from the United States applied growth curve models in combination with statistical matching or weighting to account for the risk of selection bias (Petts & Knoester, 2018; Knoester et al., 2019; Petts et al., 2020). All of these studies used longitudinal cohort survey data and found positive associations between fathers’ leave-taking around childbirth and subsequent childcare involvement. To further reduce the risk of bias, a few recent longitudinal studies applied fixed-effects panel models or change score models. One study for Sweden and two studies for Germany found that fathers’ leave take-up was associated with a shift towards a less traditional division of childcare and sometimes also housework (Almqvist & Duvander, 2014; Bünning, 2015; Schober & Zoch, 2019). For Germany, Tamm (2019) used father fixed-effects models for a sample of fathers who had a first child before the 2007 parental leave reform and a subsequent child after the reform. He found that fathers’ uptake of parental leave significantly increased the time fathers with children below age 6 dedicate to childcare on weekends and to housework and errands on both weekends and weekdays. Both effects persist even after the end of fathers’ leaves.

Few studies on the division of housework and childcare have been able to examine heterogeneous effects, as sample sizes have often been too small. Cross-country multilevel analyses by Boll et al. (2014) pointed to stronger effects of leave reserved for fathers and well-paid leave for highly educated fathers. Recent studies have provided interesting evidence on non-resident fathers. They found that fathers’ take-up of longer leave was positively related to father–child contact in Sweden (Duvander & Jans, 2009) and to fathers’ engagement and solo-responsibility among non-resident fathers in the United States (Knoester et al., 2019; Pilkauskas & Schneider, 2020).

On the whole, multi-country studies, reform evaluation studies, and individual level longitudinal studies on leave take-up found that individualized parental leave entitlements and increased take-up by fathers seem to moderately increase fathers’ relative and absolute contributions to childcare and housework over the longer term. This supports identity-related mechanisms postulating that fathers’ leave-taking strengthens the salience of identities prioritizing father involvement. Notably, parental leaves reserved for fathers have been found to increase childcare involvement not only among fathers who actually take leave but seem to exert norm-setting effects for fathers more generally. Norm-setting effects of parenting leave policies will be discussed in greater depth in the following section.
Theoretical Mechanisms

Building on a large body of welfare state and feminist literature on the normative connotations of institutions (e.g., Mau, 2003; Kremer, 2007; Pfau-Effinger, 2010), Gangl and Ziefle (2015) provide the most detailed conceptualization of how parenting leave policies may impact norms and preferences regarding the gender division of paid and family work. They differentiate between two mechanisms: First, an exposure model of preference formation assumes that exposure to novel circumstances, especially during important life course events, will trigger a certain degree of corresponding preference adaptation. For instance, if the economic incentives of leave policies, such as long low-paid leaves, promote longer work interruptions for mothers, mothers are expected to adapt their preferences in the direction of a greater family orientation and reduce their career orientation. Well-paid individual leave entitlements for fathers would be expected to increase their leave take-up, time with family and thus also their family orientation. This preference adaptation may occur as a result of cognitive dissonance, mentally discounting the desirability of alternatives that are currently unavailable, or due to a genuine re-evaluation of alternatives based on lived experience.

The second mechanism expects normative policy feedback from norm-setting and cultural diffusion processes. Norm-setting assumes that family policies serve as legitimizing normative anchors in the process of preference formation and change, especially among people facing major life course transitions that involve exposure to novel situations and who are thus open to receiving novel information. Following cultural diffusion processes, preference adaptation may be further stimulated by altered role perceptions and expectations within social networks based on observable behavioural changes by other mothers and fathers as a result of the policy reform. Leave policies may therefore affect citizens’ perceptions of the moral acceptability or personal desirability of various gender or parental roles (Gangl & Ziefle, 2015). Whereas the exposure mechanism is expected to mainly affect parents who respond to changed economic incentives in their choice of leave take-up, cultural diffusion and norm-setting effects are likely to occur more broadly within the population of new parents or people of childbearing age.

Existing Studies

Using a combined measure of family policies supporting dual-earner families, including leave length, benefit levels, and leave reserved for fathers, Sjöberg (2004) found for 13 countries that such policies correlated positively with more egalitarian beliefs towards female employment. Heymann et al. (2019) focused on health outcomes of parental leave policy reforms and explored gender norms as a mediating factor. Using longitudinal data from 1995 to 2016 on seven developing countries with policy reforms (Bangladesh, Colombia, Lesotho, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) and 15 control countries with similar levels of economic development, they found that extending paid maternity or parental leave by 10 weeks positively impacted gender norms, measured as women’s bargaining and decision-making power in households. Using a similar difference-in-difference longitudinal cross-country design based on data from 1995 to 2008, Omidakhsh et al. (2020) also found evidence that the implementation of incentives for fathers to take parental leave or at least 2 weeks of paternity leave...
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in Estonia, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom contributed to an increase in egalitarian beliefs regarding female employment compared to 4 control countries.

Single-country studies of leave policy reforms provide mixed evidence. Kotsadam and Finseraas (2011) found no significant effects of the introduction of the one-month paternity leave in Norway in 1993 on parents’ beliefs regarding an appropriate gender division of labour measured about 15 years later. This may be due to norm-setting effects spilling over from the target population to the wider population. In an interrupted time-series design based on German panel data, Gangl and Ziefle (2015) found that extending parental leave entitlements in 1992 and 2001 led to significant declines in subjective work commitment among mothers in East and West Germany, and among mothers employed and outside the labour force. They suggest that exposure-based explanations accounted for part of the change observed for employed mothers, whereas norm-setting mechanisms appear to be important for all mothers. Tentative support for norm-setting effects also comes from reform evaluation studies in Germany and Quebec, which both found positive effects of an introduction of leave reserved for fathers on childcare involvement among fathers in general (Wray, 2020; Schober, 2014).

The small but growing number of studies provided evidence that parenting leave policies influence gender norms and beliefs in high- as well as low-income countries. Notably, the effects of parenting leave reforms and subsequent changes in gender norms and beliefs appear to occur within a relatively short time span after reforms are adopted. This suggests that important shifts in family policies might trigger cultural change faster than previously thought (Neyer & Andersson, 2008). Future research should aim to work out under what circumstances parenting leave policies impact gender norms and beliefs as well as consistency with gendered practices of different population groups.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Summarizing the findings of parenting leave policies, we see detraditionalizing effects of well-paid leave durations of moderate length (up to 1 year) and of leave reserved for fathers on the gender division of family work and maternal employment, less on paternal employment. The effects are substantively meaningful but not large. Also, parenting leave policies influence gender norms and beliefs among the broader population, not just the target group of such policies, in both high- and low-income countries.

Overall, scholars have increasingly applied methods which seek to detect causal effects, such as reform evaluations or longitudinal methods, including multi-country studies. Future studies should follow this trend. Longitudinal time use or panel data with survey measures for a larger number of countries, including low-income countries, are needed to investigate the effects of leave policies in varying economic and cultural contexts. Moreover, access to statutory leave differs strongly between countries, and actual individual leave eligibility, take-up, leave duration, and hours worked during parental leave are selective (Dobrotić & Blum, 2020; Hook & Li, 2020); thus, it seems advisable to use models controlling for selection effects as much as possible. Moreover, the exploration of heterogeneous effects, e.g., with respect to family status or prenatal employment status and identities, should be continued in order to detect within-group differences among fathers and mothers. With regard to paid work, future studies should proceed to explore the effects of parenting leave on fathers’ employment and careers as well as the consequences of the division of and flexibility in leave use between
partners and part-time leave use for parents’ employment. Regarding the division of family work, more longitudinal studies capturing personal identities and normative views of what relevant others think are needed to establish mechanisms. Factorial surveys might be a promising way to capture preferences and norms under different leave policy contexts (see Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015). Innovative designs are needed to test the alternative mechanisms of exposure and norm-setting effects, for instance, studies of the effects of media reports about parenting leave policy reforms.

Similar to Doucet and Duvander (Chapter 10 in this Handbook), our review points to mostly moderate effects of statutory parenting leave policies that incentivize slow changes in the direction of a more gender-equal division of paid and family work. Even in countries where statutory leave policies with such positive incentives are in place, the division of parenting leaves and of paid and family work between mothers and fathers is still far from equal. To further promote gender equality, we may need to devote more attention to other key contexts and policies that affect the division of labour and gender norms around birth events, such as employer-based leave policies (for details, see Daiger von Gleichen, Chapter 25 in this Handbook), institutions related to maternal pre- and postnatal care and breastfeeding, as well as labour market policies that encourage longer working hours for mothers and shorter hours for fathers upon labour market return.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Supplemental material for this chapter is available at https://www.e-elgar.com/textbooks/dobrotic

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NOTE


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