

Fathers' leave taking for paternity and time spent in child care

Only a small proportion of fathers have used family leave since the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was enacted 20 years ago. Given the low number of private sector establishments covered by the FMLA (Cantor et al., 2001) and its guarantee only of unpaid leave, it is not surprising that Han and Waldfogel (2003) could not find the significant association between the passage of the FMLA and men's leave usage post-FMLA. Instead of taking formal paternal leave through the FMLA, some fathers used their paid vacation, sick, or personal leave to take care of their newborns (Bond et al., 1991), which could not be captured in the FMLA statistics. With the emphasis on the importance of father involvement in child development (Tamis-Lemonda & Cabrera, 2002), however, researchers have recently conducted research on this topic by adopting multiple criteria to capture fathers' leave taking for paternity (Han, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2009) and by using secondary data to investigate the consequences of fathers' leave taking (Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007).

It is expected that through paternity leave fathers can bond with their child at an early stage so that they will be more involved afterward (Moss & Deven, 1999; Malin, 1998). Unfortunately, previous studies about this relationship do not show consistent findings. Seward, Yeatts, Zottarelli, and Fletcher (2006) could not find significant differences in time spent with children or responsibility for child care between fathers who took leave and those who did not. However, others found that fathers who took longer leave were more likely to be involved in child care later (Pleck, 1994; Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007). To overcome the limitations of previous research, we will test the association between fathers' leave taking and their involvement in child care later using two nationally representative data sets (Current Population Survey (CPS) and American Time Use Survey (ATUS)).

One shortcoming in the existing literature is the unclear concept of fathers' 'later' involvement. The time difference between when fathers took leave and when their involvement was measured was 9 months in Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007); this information was not mentioned in Seward et al. (2006). The association between fathers' leave taking and their involvement in child care may be pronounced when fathers' involvement is measured right after their leave taking. However, it may not be the same if child care is measured considerably after paternity leave. We can address this issue in this research by having variation in length of time between the CPS and ATUS.

When fathers take paternity leave has not been fully studied, as well. Although the majority of fathers' leave taking happens in the birth month, there is a handful of fathers who take leave for newborns one or two months after birth (Han et al., 2009). We will examine when fathers take paternity leave from the birth month to the following 3 months to understand fathers' leave taking patterns over the past decade. Additionally, the timing of fathers' leave taking can be linked to the timing of their involvement so that we can thoroughly understand fathers' later time in child care.

Taken the aforementioned issues into consideration, this paper will examine 1) fathers' paternity leave taking patterns, 2) the association between their leave taking and the amount of time spent in child care, and 3) any factors affecting this association, by viewing the amount of time fathers spend in child care as

an indicator of father involvement. The June Fertility supplements and monthly CPS surveys from 2002 to 2010 will be linked to the ATUS from 2003 to 2011 to answer these research questions.

The Current Population Survey (CPS) and the American Time Use Survey (ATUS)

The first data set we utilized is the CPS, a national monthly household survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics since 1962 (King et al., 2010). The June Fertility supplement is an additional survey asked annually in June from 1980 to 1999, and it has been conducted every other year since 2000. Women aged 15 to 44 are asked to answer questions about childbirth in the Fertility supplement. We obtain the month and year of their most recent birth from the 2002 to 2010 Fertility supplements and the socio-demographic information of the women and spouses from the 2001 to 2010 monthly surveys. A household in the CPS is given a total of 8 monthly surveys. When the household completes the first 4 surveys, it is out of the survey for 8 consecutive months and comes back to resume the remaining 4 consecutive surveys. The birth month and year information and the order of the survey are combined to track the household's information. For example, if the birth month is the mother's first monthly survey, we can obtain her socio-demographic information from the birth month, one month after, two months after, and three months after before she leaves. If the birth month is her 8th survey, we have only her birth month information.

The second data set we are going to use is the ATUS, a nationally representative survey of the time use of Americans aged 15 and older since 2003 (Hofferth, Flood, & Sobek, 2013). One individual is randomly selected from the household which finished the 8th CPS survey two to five months ago, and is asked to participate in the ATUS interview. During the interview, the individual reports his/her activities over the 24-hour period and the person(s) accompanying the individual when the activities took place. Because the ATUS interview always takes place after the CPS interview, the linked CPS – ATUS data will range from 2003 to 2011. We will compute father total care time and time spent in three types of child care: personal care, verbal stimulation, and play.

We conducted a preliminary analysis on a sample that consists of 278 fathers whose resident spouses gave birth from January to June in 2010. Their socio-demographic information was gathered from April to September in the same year, and the number of available monthly surveys varies from 1 (76 fathers) to 4 (27 fathers) due to the CPS structure. We also obtained their status in the labor force during the preceding week of the survey to see whether or not they took leave. We take into account the leave taken any time from the birth month to the next three months due to vacation/personal days, own illness/injury/medical problems, or maternity/paternity leave in the preliminary analysis. This definition reflects the fact that the leave that fathers take to care for their infants is not always explicitly stated as 'paternity leave.' Additionally, since the CPS survey asks the respondent's employment status during the preceding week, not during the month, we may not be able to capture fathers' short leave. Factors that may affect fathers' leave taking, such as their gender role attitudes or involvement in prenatal care, could not be controlled for in this paper. Thus, fathers' leave taking for paternity and their time spent in child care should not be interpreted in a causal way.

Analysis plan

The first analysis will be conducted to see fathers' paternity leave taking patterns with the CPS data from 2002 to 2010. Their socio-demographic variables will be included in the analysis to explain who and when takes paternity leave and how soon their paternity leave ends, using the survival analysis method. The second and third analyses will be done with the linked CPS – ATUS data ranging from 2003 to 2011 to investigate the association between fathers' leave taking for paternity and their time spent in child care afterward.

Preliminary descriptive results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of weighted socio-demographic variables in the preliminary sample. As predicted, very few fathers took leave during the birth month or up to three months thereafter (7%). The mean age of fathers was 32.06, which is greater than that of mothers (29.78). Almost half of fathers and mothers had college-level education attainment, and approximately 70% of the parents were non-Hispanic White. All were married and living together in the same household. All fathers were employed; half of mothers were employed. Mothers had given childbirth almost two times, and the average number of own children under the age of 5 in the household was 1.64.

The proportion of fathers on paternity leave changes depending on when their employment status was measured. We obtained the birth month's employment status information for 69 fathers; 11 (approximately 15.94%) of fathers took leave for paternity. Eight out of 153 fathers were on leave for paternity in the first month after birth (5.23%), 6 out of 192 fathers were on leave for paternity in two months after birth (3.13%) and 2.96% of fathers (6 out of 203) were out of the labor force for paternity three months after birth.

Conclusions and Plans for the Full Paper

The preliminary descriptive results show a small fraction of fathers on leave for paternity during the birth month or the following months. However, the proportion of fathers who were on paternity leave declined from 15.94% to 2.96% over the four months. To obtain a larger sample, we are going to pool the CPS monthly surveys gathered from 2002 to 2010 in the full paper. Additionally, these data will be linked to the ATUS to examine the association between fathers' leave taking for paternity and their time spent in child care.

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Table1. Weighted means and standard deviations of variables in the preliminary sample

<i>Variable</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Father's leave taking		
Whether a father took leave during the birth month or three months thereafter (1 = yes)	0.07	
Father's sociodemographic information		
Age	32.06	5.81
Education		
College or more	0.51	
Race/Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	0.69	
Non-Hispanic Black	0.06	
Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific islander	0.08	
Hispanic	0.15	
Other	0.02	
Marital Status		
Married (1 = yes)	1.00	
Employment status		
Employed (1 = yes)	1.00	
Mother's sociodemographic information		
Age	29.78	4.79
Education		
College or more	0.59	
Race/Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	0.70	
Non-Hispanic Black	0.06	
Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific islander	0.09	
Hispanic	0.14	
Other	0.01	
Marital Status		
Married (1 = yes)	1.00	
Employment status		
Employed (1 = yes)	0.55	
# of live births ever had	2.14	1.07
Household's sociodemographic information		
# of own children in the household	2.09	1.02
# of own children under age 5 in the household	1.64	0.65
<i>N</i>		278