Paternity Leave – A Structured Review

Stephan Köppe (University College Dublin)
Mansi Rawat (Social Justice Ireland)

SASE Annual Meeting 2024, Limerick, 27-29 Jun
MC10: Welfare States and Gender Inequality: Regional and Global Perspectives,
Session: Focus on Fathers: leave policies and entitlements

𝕏@welfaremarkets

Background

- Besides parental leave, the shorter paternity leave receives less attention in the literature
- Paternity Leave: ear-marked for fathers, usually directly after birth, not father quotas in parental leave
- Insufficient systematic review of literature [when we started in Jan 2023, now: Pizarro & Gartzia 2024]
- High on the policy agenda (EU work-life balance)

Methods and Data

- PRISMA technique
- Data: Scopus / WoS
- Time: 1980-2022
- Relevant: manual selection of empirical studies on paternity leave
- Analysis:
  - Based on abstracts
  - Code book derived from previous unstructured review and refined by coding first 50 studies (of full sample 400+)
  - Manual coding

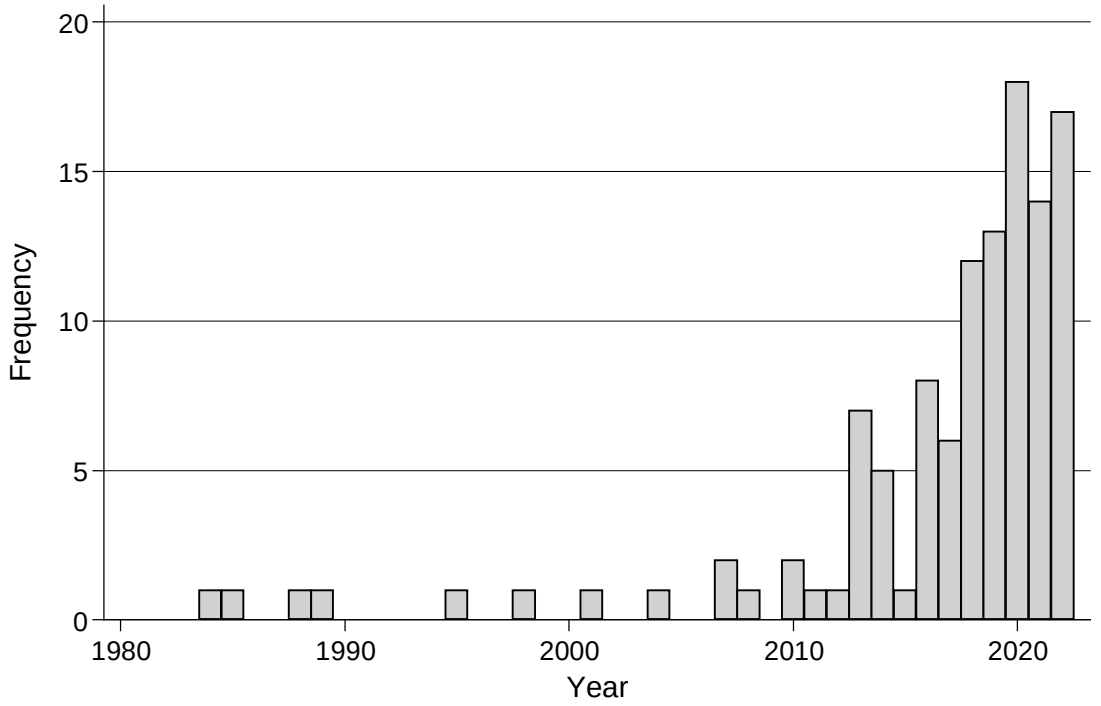
Table 1: Sample of publications

Source	1 Retrieved	2 Duplicates		3 Relevant	
	N	N	Percent	N	Percent
Scopus	348	344	78.18		
WoS	278	96	21.82		
Total	**626**	**440**	**100**	**117**	

Results: Terminology

- Imprecise terminology using paternity and parental leave interchangeably
- Parental leave studied earlier and increase of paternity only in 2010s

Figure 1: Publications per year

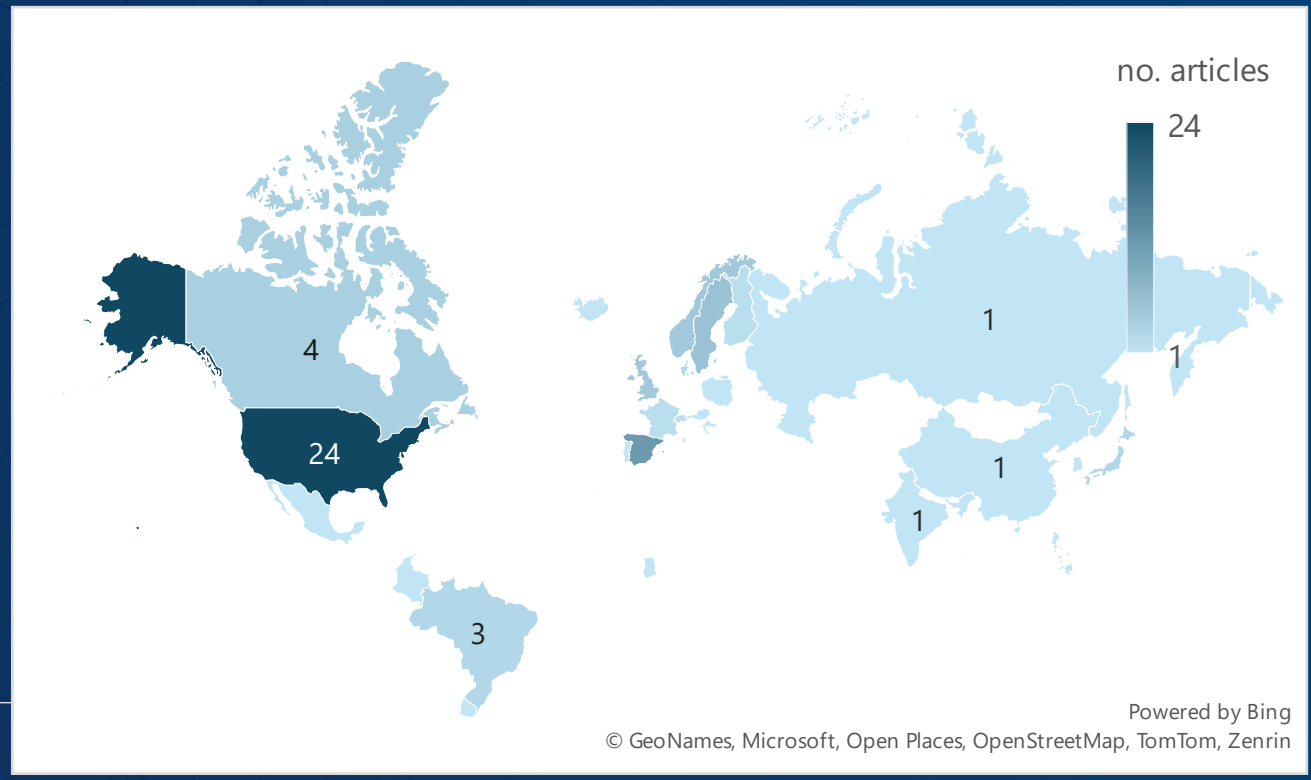


Scope

- Dominated by Western World
- If comparative, rich countries
- US studies dominate volume, but not quality
  - Narrow occupational field of medical consultants and non-representative surveys
  - Often lack of policy link as studies cover taken time off
- Scandinavia dominates early studies and Spain in 2010s

Table 2: Regional distribution

Region	N	Percent
North America	28	23.93
Europe	47	40.17
Asia	8	6.84
Central & South America	8	6.84
Africa	1	0.85
EU	3	2.56
OECD	1	0.85
Other	21	17.95
Total	**117**	**100**



Disciplines and Methods

- Interdisciplinary field, led by sociology and social policy
- Country case studies dominate the field, which includes single in-depth surveys
- Comparative studies typically restricted to OECD/EU due to data availability
- Strong emphasis on quantitative studies (60%), more than in other fields; few are mixed-methods (6%)
- Quant: multivariate cross-sectional designs in majority (53%), few descriptive (17%), other combine these (10%) and the remaining methods are bivariate, longitudinal, multi-level
- Surveys dominate, few administrative, panel or register data

Themes

- Policy
  - Few explanatory studies, mainly descriptive policy design
  - Some sub-national studies (excl. Quebec)
  - No supranational studies, despite the relevance of EU/ILO
- Take-up
  - Inconsistent measures (see also Köppe 2023)
  - Length, leave taken
  - US studies not comparable due to inconsistent policy reference point
  - Meta-review feasible
- Outcomes
  - Father engagement, health, career
  - Less on child outcomes
  - Inconsistent measures, e.g. career, do not facilitate meta-reviews
- Attitudes [rare and needs further analysis]

Table 4: Themes

Themes	N	Percent
policy	30	25.64
policy and other	8	6.82
take-up	13	11.11
take-up and outcomes	10	8.55
outcomes	46	39.32
attitudes	10	8.55
TOTAL	**117**	**100**

Table 5: Policy Studies

	N	Percent
policy-making	6	16.67
policy-making & design	4	11.12
design	26	72.23
TOTAL	**36**	**100**

Table 6: outcomes

	N	Percent
Father engagement	11	19.64
Mental health	4	7.14
Physical health	4	7.14
Gender equality	2	3.57
Career mother	2	3.57
Career father	3	5.36
Earnings mother	1	1.79
Earnings father	2	3.57
Wellbeing	6	10.71
Fertility	3	5.36
Other	18	32.14
Total	**56**	**100**

Conclusion

- Narrow geographical scope
  - US studies not comparable to rest of the world
  - Lack of supranational studies
- Incoherent measures
  - Some consistency within take-up studies, but less on outcomes
  - Meta analysis and generalisations very limited
  - We need more replication studies across jurisdictions
- Longitudinal and multi-level studies are rare as well as attitudinal research
- Agenda: comparative, consistent, longitudinal

Thank You

Paternity Leave – A Structured Review

Stephan Köppe (UCD), Mansi Rawat (SJI)

UCD DUBLIN

RISING TO THE FUTURE
UCD Strategy 2020-2024