

THE EFFECTS OF PATERNITY LEAVE AND LONG-TERM TRENDS: THE CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Abstract

The content of the article reflects some results of the sociological study „Implementation of paternity leave in the Republic of Moldova” conducted by the author in 2022. Paternity leave is an important tool that allows for to enhancement of the role of father and husband/partner. Being on paternity leave generated for all fathers participating in the study a positive impact for him, the newborn, the wife and other family members. Although the Moldovan authorities provide suitable conditions for accessing paternity leave, the proportion of fathers taking paternity leave is low. Simply offering paternity leave is not enough, as fathers face many social, professional, financial and cultural difficulties in accessing it. The data from interviews with fathers who took paternity leave and fathers who did not take paternity leave showed that their profiles differed according to socio-demographic characteristics, work situation, level of pay, relationship with the wife and her *professional* status. The article concludes with recommendations to increase the take-up of paternity leave and to increase the number of fathers who are with their mothers and newborn babies after birth to support them and enjoy the full exercise of their role as fathers.

Keywords: paternity leave, paternity allowance, family, child, employer, family policy.

Résumé

Le contenu de l'article reflète certains résultats de l'étude sociologique „Mise en œuvre du congé de paternité en République de Moldavie” menée par l'auteur en 2022. Le congé de paternité est un outil important qui permet de renforcer le rôle du père et du mari/partenaire. Pour tous les pères ayant participé à l'étude, le fait de bénéficier d'un congé de paternité a eu un impact positif sur eux, sur le nouveau-né, sur la femme et sur les autres membres de la famille. Bien que les autorités moldaves offrent des conditions favorables à l'accès au congé de paternité, la proportion de pères qui prennent ce congé est faible. Il ne suffit pas d'offrir un congé de paternité, car les pères sont confrontés à de nombreuses difficultés sociales, professionnelles, financières et culturelles pour y accéder. Les données issues des entretiens avec les pères ayant pris un congé de paternité et les pères n'ayant pas pris de congé de paternité ont montré que leur profil différait en fonction des caractéristiques sociodémographiques, de la situation professionnelle, du niveau de rémunération, de la relation avec l'épouse et du statut professionnel de cette dernière.

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L'article se termine par des recommandations visant à augmenter le recours au congé de paternité et à accroître le nombre de pères présents auprès de leur mère et de leur nouveau-né après la naissance pour les soutenir et exercer pleinement leur rôle de père.

Mots-clés: congé de paternité, allocation de paternité, enfant, employeur, politique familiale.

Rezumat

Conținutul articolului reflectă unele rezultate din studiul sociologic „Implementarea concediului de paternitate în Republica Moldova” realizat de autor în anul 2022. Concediul de paternitate este un instrument important care permite valorificarea rolului de tată și soț/partener. Aflarea în concediu de paternitate a generat pentru toți tații participanți la studiu un impact pozitiv pentru el, pentru nou-născut, pentru soție și ceilalți membri ai familiei. Deși autoritățile din Republica Moldova oferă condiții potrivite pentru accesarea concediului de paternitate, ponderea taților care beneficiază de el este redusă. Simpla oferire a concediului nu este suficientă fiindcă tații în accesarea lui se confruntă cu o mulțime de bariere sociale, profesionale, financiare și culturale. Datele interviurilor realizate cu tații beneficiari de concediu de paternitate și tații care nu l-au utilizat au evidențiat că profilul lor diferă după caracteristicile socio-demografice, situația de la locul de muncă, nivelul de remunerare, relația cu soția și statutul ei profesional. Articolul finalizează cu recomandări pentru sporirea gradului de accesare a concediului de paternitate și creșterea numărului de tați care să se afle alături de mamă și nou-născut după naștere pentru a le oferi suport dar și pentru a se bucura de exercitarea pleneră a rolului de tată.

Cuvinte-cheie: concediu de paternitate, indemnizație de paternitate, copil, angajator, politică familială.

1. Introduction

In today's society of multiple responsibilities and commitments, achieving a balance between work and family life is proving to be a real challenge. Substantial changes in the market and the organization of family life create a context in which parents are finding it increasingly difficult to develop strategies to combine work and family life responsibilities. In this context, paternity leave is a tool that facilitates reconciling work and family life.

In most European countries, the legal framework regarding the introduction and regulation of paternity leaves was developed in the 90s of the last century. By the beginning of 2022, the majority of EU countries provided paternity leave, with the exceptions of Germany, Croatia, Slovakia, and Luxembourg (Table 1), even though it is predominantly non-mandatory. The duration of paternity leave in the EU varies from one week to 16 weeks. In most cases, the paternity allowance is 100% of the previous income.

Since last August, according to Directive 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019, regarding the balance between professional and personal life for parents and carers, the duration of paternity leave (at least 2 weeks) has been standardized at the level EU countries. The new provisions imposed by the directive state that paternity leave is to be taken on the occasion of the child's birth, without being conditioned by the period of work or

length of service, marital status, or family status of the employee. Regulations for granting this leave in flexible formulas (before or after the child's birth) should be possible, as well as the application of requirements for determining the amount of the allowance at a level that ensures at least the income lost by the father in the event of interrupting his activities due to health reasons, within the limits of a ceiling established in domestic law.

Table 1. Granting paternity leave in EU countries (2022-2023)

| Country | 2022 | | 2023 | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--|------------|
| | Number of weeks. | Payment | Number of weeks. | Payment |
| Hungary | 1 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 2 | 100% |
| Malta | 1 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 2 | 100% |
| Netherland | 1 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 7 | 100% |
| Romania | 1 (non-mandatory) | 80% | 2 | 100% |
| Latvia | 1,4 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 2 | 80% |
| Italy | 2 (Mandatory) | 78% | 2 | 100% |
| Bulgaria | 2 (non-mandatory) | 72% | 2 | 90% |
| Cyprus | 2 (non-mandatory) | 70% | 2 | 72% |
| Czech Republic | 2 (non-mandatory) | Variable | 2 | 70% |
| Denmark | 2 (non-mandatory) | 100%. | 2 | Variable |
| Greece | 2 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 2 | 100% |
| Ireland | 2 (non-mandatory) | Weekly rate of €245 | 2 | Flate rate |
| Poland | 2 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 2 | 100% |
| Sweden | 2 (non-mandatory) | 90% | 2 | 78% |
| Belgium | 3 (non-mandatory) | Variable. | 4 | Variable |
| Austria | 4 (non-mandatory) | Flat rate. | 4 | Flate rate |
| Estonia | 4 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 4 | 100% |
| France | 4 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 4 | 100% |
| Lituania | 4 (non-mandatory) | 78% | 4 | 78% |
| Slovenia | 4 (non-mandatory) | 100% | 4 | 100% |
| Portugal | 5 (4 Mandatory and 1 non-mandatory) | 100% | 9 There is no maternity or paternity leave, only parental leave | 100% |
| Finland | 9 (non-mandatory) | Variable. | 19 Paternity leave ceased to exist in its original form | Variable |
| Germany | 0 | | 2 | |
| Croatia | 0 | | 2 | 100 |
| Luxembourg | 0 | | 2 | Variable |

| Country | 2022 | | 2023 | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|---------|------------------|------------|
| | Number of weeks. | Payment | Number of weeks. | Payment |
| Slovakia | 0 | | 2. | Flate rate |
| Spain | 16 (5 mandatory and 11 non-mandatory) | 100% | 16 | 100% |

Source: *Maternity and paternity leave in the EU* (Jurviste & Lecerf, 2022; Kern & Lecerf, 2023).
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/698892/EPRS_ATA\(2022\)698892_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/698892/EPRS_ATA(2022)698892_EN.pdf)
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739346/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)739346_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739346/EPRS_ATA(2023)739346_EN.pdf)

In the family policy of the Republic of Moldova, paternity leave was introduced only at the end of 2016 (Decision No. 1245 approving the Regulation on the conditions for establishing, calculating and paying the paternity allowance). Currently, the duration of paternity leave in the Republic of Moldova is 14 days, which is granted in the first year of the child's life, but until September 2022 it was offered only in the first 56 days (Labor Code, 2003, Article 124¹ Paternity Leave). This change is positive in that it provides more flexibility for fathers who face time and work constraints. The negative aspect of this change refers to the reduction in the number of fathers who will use this leave in the period immediately following the birth which is the most demanding and stressful for the mother.

From the perspective of the mother's level of demand and need for support/assistance, it is noted that this is most needed in the immediate postpartum period. The respective new change in the legal framework leads to a decrease in the use of paternity leave during this period. Furthermore, it is considered imperative for the father to take paternity leave in the first days of the child's life because it is an instrument that allows the building of a lasting father-child bond, the effects of which are felt for a long time. Moreover, the first week after birth is a period in which both the mother and the child are considered particularly vulnerable. Paternity leave enables the enhancement of the health security of both the mother and the child (Gosselin & Lepine, 2018).

During the paternity leave period, the employee is entitled to a paternity allowance. The request for the establishment of the paternity allowance is personally submitted by the father or mother of the child, with the presentation of supporting documents, to the territorial social insurance office or electronically. The amount of the paternity allowance is 100% of the average. Over the period since paternity leave has been implemented in the Republic of Moldova, we see that the amount of paternity allowance has increased from 213 euros in 2017 to 271 euros in 2022. If we relate the last reference year (2022) the amount of paternity allowance to the value of the average salary which was 539.38 euros, then we find that it represented almost half of it.

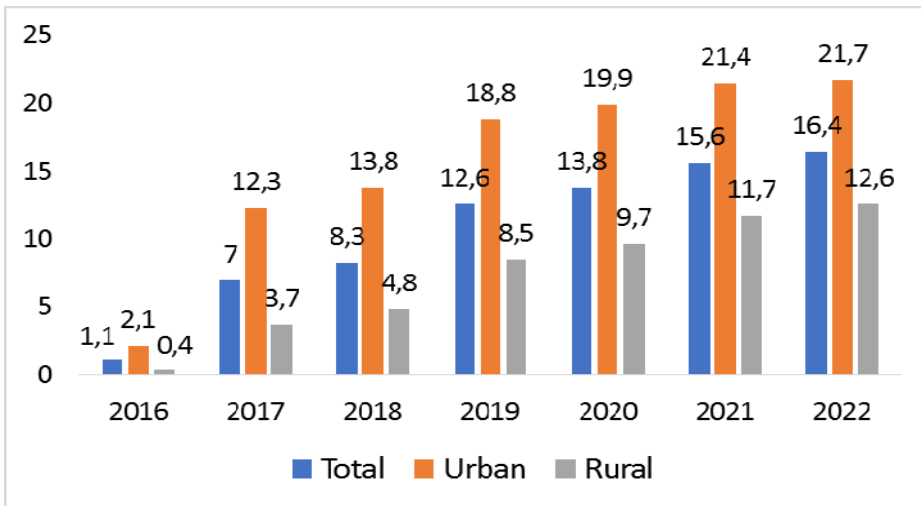
Table 2. Average Amount of Paternity Allowance in the Republic of Moldova

| Year | The average amount of the allowance | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 01.01.2022 | 5309,11 | 271.97 |
| 01.01.2021 | 4947,13 | 253.43 |
| 01.01.2020 | 4509,68 | 231.02 |

| Year | The average amount of the allowance | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 01.01.2019 | 4392,61 | 225,02 |
| 01.01.2018 | 4074,13 | 208,71 |
| 01.01.2017 | 4162,33 | 213,23 |
| | Moldovan lei | Euro |

Source: National Social Insurance House (2017-2022).

Starting from January 1, 2024, paternity leave in the Republic of Moldova will be extended to 15 calendar days and can be granted either in full or divided into a maximum of 3 fractions, each consisting of 5 days. Additionally, this type of leave can be requested by socially insured fathers who have adopted a newborn child.



Source: National Social Insurance House (2016-2022)

Figure 1. The ratio of the number of fathers taking paternity leave to the total number of newborns (in %).

By the aforementioned provisions, it is evident that the authorities in the Republic of Moldova provide favourable conditions for accessing paternity leave and the associated paternity allowance. Throughout the calendar period 2016-2022, the proportion of fathers taking paternity leave in the Republic of Moldova has been slowly increasing, reaching 16.4% in 2022. The lack of stable employment opportunities and the persistence of informal employment issues among men in rural areas contribute to the fact that the proportion of fathers taking paternity leave in rural areas is nearly half of that in urban areas (Figure 1).

The data from Table 3 reveal that the majority of fathers who have taken paternity leave fall within the age range of 25-34 years, which is also the most fertile age category. Additionally, the data show an increase in the number of fathers aged 35-44 who have taken paternity leave in recent years. In this context, we can presume that this trend is attributed to the phenomenon of delayed childbirth at more advanced ages.

Table 3. The distribution of fathers who have used paternity leave according to their age

| | < 24 years | 25-34 years | 35-44 years | 45+ |
|------|------------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| 2016 | 8 | 310 | 115 | 6 |
| 2017 | 100 | 1740 | 663 | 48 |
| 2018 | 128 | 1855 | 832 | 60 |
| 2019 | 186 | 2661 | 1170 | 73 |
| 2020 | 213 | 2706 | 1237 | 107 |
| 2021 | 206 | 2890 | 1396 | 92 |
| 2022 | 189 | 2686 | 1456 | 111 |

Source: National Social Insurance House

2. Study methodology

The article is based on the results of the sociological study „Implementation of paternity leave in the Republic of Moldova” carried out by the author in 2022 within project 20.80009. 0807.21 „Migration, demographic changes and stabilization policies”, 2020-2023. The qualitative study sample consisted of 24 respondents who had children up to 3 years old. In the study, 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with fathers who were on paternity leave and 14 with fathers who did not request and respectively did not benefit from this measure. The research tool was the in-depth individual interview guide that was specific to the two categories of respondents and included questions regarding the professional and familial situation, the benefits of paternity leave, the difficulties encountered in accessing it and the role of the employer in its implementation. The data collection took place between August and November 2022. The analysis of the collected data was carried out, based on the information matrix collected through in-depth individual interviews.

3. Results

Reasons for fathers taking paternity leave are diverse, ranging from affective to instrumental and personal. Affective reasons are exemplified by situations such as experiencing the joy of childbirth and savouring the first moments of the child's life. These aspects confirm the idea emphasized in other studies that paid paternity leave could be beneficial for the mental health of fathers.

For instrumental reasons, the following situations are included:

- Spending time with the mother and providing necessary support. *„I helped my wife a lot because she had undergone surgery, and it was difficult for her to hold the baby. During those two weeks, at night, I would wake up and rock him when he started crying, allowing my wife to rest after breastfeeding”.*

- Taking care of the other children and allowing the mother to focus solely on the newborn. *„Our third child was born prematurely. My wife, along with the little one, had to stay in the hospital for 3 weeks to gain weight. At home, there was another school-age child and one in kindergarten. The grandparents were far away, and there was no one to help us. Therefore, thanks to this paternity leave, I could take care of the*

other two—prepare their meals, check their homework, and so on.” „The eldest boy was very jealous when the second one was born, so I granted him this paternity leave to make him understand that he is still loved, and we don't ignore him”.

- Providing support to the mother of the newborn when returning to work after the birth of the child. „My wife is the chief accountant, and immediately after giving birth, she was the one who had to do the majority of the work. Her boss encouraged her to return to work quickly, so I had to be the one to support her. This leave helped us a lot because, at that time, the grandmother could no longer help us, so it came in handy until we found someone to take care of the little one. I helped her not to be too stressed. I brought the baby to her for breastfeeding”.

- Taking over household tasks by the father. This is particularly necessary because paternity leave allows men to increase their participation in household activities. Thus, increasing the participation of men in the care and education of children generally contributes to the promotion of responsible fatherhood, and in this way, the father becomes a helper for the mother.

In some studies, the effect of paternity leave is less pronounced in the redistribution of household chores between parents. This reduced effect was to be expected because, primarily, it is desired that fathers be more involved with their children than in other household activities. In addition, housework is generally less enjoyable and less socially valued than parenting (Pailhé et al., 2018). Other studies have shown that although the effects are relatively imprecise, paternity leave causes a shift from maternal to paternal care at home (Cools et al., 2015).

The reasons of a personal nature were mentioned by a very small number of respondents, including taking paternity leave to rest, travel, and engage in other activities. „My job is very demanding, with night shifts, physical, mental, and psychological exhaustion. That's why I took this paternity leave to recover and to be in good shape so I can continue working for my family”.

Based on the results of the interviews, it became clear that the request and use of paternity leave depend on several aspects. First of all, socio-demographic characteristics (level of education and age) were noted, distinguishing that fathers who took paternity leave have a high level of education and are relatively young. Another relevant aspect with implications for the request and use of paternity leave concerns working conditions and salary levels. Thus, fathers who were on paternity leave had skilled jobs, had stable professional positions, predominantly worked in the public sector, earned relatively high incomes and were official. Also, taking paternity leave depended on: the relationship with the wife, and the wife's professional activity. Thus it was determined that fathers take paternity leave when the relationship with the wife is harmonious and she is also integrated in the labour market.

The benefits of using paternity leave are manifold: learning the skills of caring for a newborn; establishing a strong emotional connection between the father and his child; strengthening confidence in one's abilities to care for the child/children by taking responsibility for providing them with appropriate care and managing the challenges of this process; strengthening the mother's trust in

the husband's ability to delegate child care responsibilities according to his needs; modification of the father's attitude towards the care of the child/children through the prism of recognition and positive evaluation. All this shows that the role of fathers in their children's lives is changing and that paternity leave is an opportunity for fathers to build strong relationships with their newborns.

Thus, paternity leave provides fathers with more time, resources and opportunities to learn and hone additional parenting skills. Therefore, paternity leave can reduce the risk of the traditionalization of parental roles by allowing fathers to be involved in the care of the child from birth. Through this leave, fathers can become comfortable with performing tasks traditionally assigned to mothers and identify themselves as competent caregivers (Rehel, 2014). These developments seem to encourage fathers to adopt the parenting qualities of sensitivity and responsiveness, which are two essential traits in child development and the establishment of a harmonious parent-child relationship (Petts et al., 2020). The benefits mentioned above indicate that the implementation of leaves strictly dedicated to fathers is a way to make fathers more involved in childcare and thus promote gender equality (Pailhé et al., 2018).

Some comprehensive studies have shown that fathers who took paternity leave were more involved in their children's lives throughout their lifetimes, compared to fathers who did not take it. Increased father involvement contributed to reduced behavioural problems in adolescents and good education (Barry et al., 2023).

Fathers who did not take paternity leave most frequently justified this by the potential loss of income. This reason is explained, on the one hand, by the prevalence of the practice of dual employment – official and „under the table” – at certain workplaces. On the other hand, there is also a dependence on additional income from the workplace. According to data from the Tax Inspectorate of the Republic of Moldova, in 2022, undeclared work among employees amounted to 6.2%.

Some fathers did not take paternity leave because they were not aware of this opportunity. To inform and encourage men to take advantage of paternity leave, state authorities, in partnership with the associative sector, created a video spot on this topic, broadcast on TV stations and social networks. According to interview data, none of the respondents were informed through promotional materials in the media about the possibility of accessing paternity leave, emphasizing the need for further comprehensive materials on the importance of this leave and how to benefit from it.

Awareness campaigns can increase awareness and encourage fathers to take leave. In Sweden, for example, the use of leave for childcare by fathers increased following awareness campaigns (Belle, 2016). Therefore, ongoing communication campaigns against social stereotypes are needed to encourage fathers to take paternity leave. Another practice could be informing all fathers about this possibility through personalized letters from institutions responsible for its provision (National Social Insurance House).

Very low take-up of paternity leave is recorded in small towns and rural areas of the Republic of Moldova. This is explained by the fact that there are few formal, stable and well-paid jobs here. This indicates that there is a high level of competition between employees and potential employees. Consequently, some fathers, although the legal framework provides for this opportunity do not risk taking paternity leave in order not to create impressions to the employer that he is not devoted to work.

Some participants in the study did not take paternity leave because they did not see its purpose and felt that it was too short to have an essential influence on family life. Indeed, this may be an objective reason. Thus, some fathers who took paternity leave after it was completed also took annual leave. *„It's very short this leave, in 2 weeks you don't achieve much, that's why I took another 14 days of annual leave”*.

Another serious obstacle to using paternity leave is the perception of traditional gender roles in household chores and childcare. Moreover, due to traditional stereotypes, some fathers believe that young children need a mother more than a father. This is also the issue for fathers who do not take paternity leave because they are not encouraged and understood by relatives, friends and acquaintances. *„It's shameful in my family, in my circle of acquaintances to stay at home with my young child while my wife is on childcare leave”*. Some complex studies have shown that after a longer period of implementation of paternity leave, the norms and behaviours related to gender equality change, being less stereotyped (Farre et al., 2023).

The study data highlighted that fathers working in the private sector face more difficulties in taking paternity leave (excessive workload, inability to be replaced, employer discouragement, fear of the employer, unstable professional situation, and specific workplace situations, such as the opportunity for promotion shortly) than those in the public sector (Table 4). At the same time, we emphasize that the salary is higher in the private sector (real) – 10,954.7 lei (2022) – than in the public sector – 8,891.1 lei.

The excessive workload was mentioned by fathers working in both the public and private sectors. Some researchers argue that behind this reason, there may be a form of self-censorship for those who fear the judgment of colleagues and superiors (Gosselin & Lepine, 2018).

Discouragement from the employer and fear of repercussion from it are problems encountered only by fathers active in the private sector of the economy, in the context of a general obligation for employers to support this practice. This reveals that in the opinion of many employers, the ideal employee adheres to a masculine work style, fitting in with full-time work and unburdened by family or other obligations outside of the workplace (Özbilgin et al., 2011).

Cases where the employer creates situations with a disadvantageous effect on employees taking paternity leave are considered instances of discrimination and are subject to sanctions. The reality of the labour market in the Republic of Moldova contributes to the fact that some employers, although they understand and support

the implementation of paternity leave, based on clear reasons (lack of labour force, high workload, etc.) do not accept its use. Moreover, the legal framework in the Republic of Moldova does not establish a necessary period (an approximate estimate, for example, one month) for the father to inform the employer about the need for paternity leave to avoid undesirable situations among employers.

Table 4. The reasons why fathers do not take paternity leave are related to their workplace depending on the sector of activity

| | Public | Private |
|--|--------|---------|
| Excessive workload. | + | + |
| Impossibility of being replaced. „We each do the work for 2-3 employees. No way”. „No replacements, this means colleagues have to take over from me while I am on leave”. | + | + |
| Discouragement by the employer. | - | + |
| Fear of the employer. „How could my boss evaluate me during the month I was on leave? My supervisor will say that something is wrong and conclude that I am not interested enough in my work”. | - | + |
| Unstable professional situation. | - | + |
| Specific situations at work, such as the opportunity to be promoted shortly. „I am sure that when a situation related to career advancement arises if the boss has to choose between me who was on paternity leave and another who was not, he will choose him”. | + | + |

It can be observed that the public sector is more supportive of fathers in providing paternity leave. This may be explained by the fact that large state-owned companies employ a significant number of female workers. In this context, men are more inclined to use leave for child-rearing and paternity because the attitude of the employer and colleagues is more 'friendly'.

However, it is important not to generalize that the private sector is hostile to parents, as some studies have found that employers in the private sector offer more opportunities aimed at reconciling family and professional life than public sector employers (Chistruga-Sîncevici, 2021). Work flexibility is more applied in the private sector, explained by the limitation of public sector flexibility due to objectives set by regulatory acts, laws, and regulations. Public organizations face much stronger legal restrictions in their activities. Private organizations offer more flexibility because they can define their strategic objectives based on their preferences. Public management operates within the context of fragmented authority structures – in the private sector, a manager reports to a clear leadership structure. In the public sector, the manager interacts with a multitude of 'bosses', whether direct superiors or leaders of interest groups, etc. (Şaitan, 2020).

International studies have also highlighted that the use of paternity leave also depends on the decision-makers position towards this measure, the field of activity, the size of the company, the presence of the trade union and the proportion of female employees (Belle, 2016). In another vein, the introduction of paternity leave has been shown to help equalize employment costs for both women and men,

eliminating the need for employers to discriminate against women in this regard (Zhang, 2020). Thus, if more employers were aware of this aspect, the rate of use of paternity leave would increase.

Even if women have a higher level of education than men, they also have a higher proportion of inactivity, mainly due to family responsibilities, such as looking after the child/children. Thus, some authors who have researched the subject in question expect paternity leave to contribute to a more balanced distribution of parental leave to have a greater potential to reduce gender differences in the labour market (Ziegler & Bamieh, 2023).

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study data reveal that a father's presence during paternity leave has positive implications for him, the child, his wife/partner, and the family. In this context, the issue of the need to extend its duration arises. On the one hand, some authors advocate for decision-makers to encourage an increase in this leave because the 2-week duration is limited and insufficient to provide mothers with the necessary support. Also, the current duration of paternity leave is insufficient to allow significant progress in balancing household and family responsibilities between women and men. Other researchers believe that extending the duration of paternity leave is not an optimal solution because the longer the leave, the lower the coverage, as some fathers may be reluctant to take a longer leave (Pailhé et al., 2018).

Children are a priority for parents, and they care a lot about their careers, policies to balance work and family life are necessary to ease the burden of pressure experienced in combining work with family life. Therefore, continuous efforts are required to increase the rate of paternity leave utilization.

Another recommendation concerns the introduction of the possibility of postponing paternity leave in case of the child's hospitalization and extending the period for fathers with prematurely born children. Additionally, ongoing efforts are needed to stimulate and encourage equal participation of women and men in family responsibilities through promoting the idea of common responsibility between men and women through education; organizing campaigns to change attitudes regarding the need for a balanced distribution of roles and domestic responsibilities between the two partners; raising society's awareness of parents' equal rights regarding childcare leave.

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