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**FATHERS' PARTICIPATION IN PARENTAL LEAVE:
THE CASE OF UKRAINE**



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Abstract

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The possibility of fathers to take parental leave in order to be involved in childcare is introduced in many countries. This thesis examines fathers' use of parental leave in Ukraine. The analysis of Ukrainian welfare is made with focus on the issue of care and is implemented by applying theories of welfare and care regimes. The method of semi-structured interviews was chosen for the qualitative research conducted in order to find out what influences the decision of couples when considering who should go on parental leave. Among factors that have influenced the decision of parents regarding parental leave, four main categories were distinguished: stereotypes about traditional gender roles; (dis)approval by their social surroundings; father's motivation to be involved in childcare; and employment conditions of both parents.

Key words: parental leave, childcare, fathers, Ukraine, family policy

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1. Introduction

To gain equality between men and women it is necessary to implement such conditions in society under which they have equal rights and opportunities in public life as well as in private. When it comes to the private sphere, it is harder to influence gender equality through social policy reforms on caring and unpaid work performed mostly by women in the household. Moreover, in the policy debates on improving work-family balance the idea to develop conditions for women to do both dominates (Pascall and Lewis, 2004, p. 383).

Still, policy makers consider the question of care. In order to involve men in care work and enable women to do paid work the possibility for fathers to take parental leave has been introduced in many countries. The Soviet Union legislation also provided a possibility for fathers to take parental leave. Nevertheless, the aim of parental leave was reached only partially, as a rule enabling women's labor market participation (Pascall and Lewis, 2004). However, fathers' participation in parental leave in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) was less than one percent according to UNICEF (1999) data.

Daddy leave introduced in Sweden, which means that a period of paid leave (now it is two months) must be used by the father, is considered as a first major policy which involves fathers in care work rather than women into paid work (Pascall and Lewis, 2004). On the one hand, still, women take much more parental leave than men do in Sweden (Bjornberg, 2002, cited in Pascall and Lewis, 2004). On the other hand, taking parental leave by a father changes his views about and his participation in childcare (Haas and Hwang, 1999 cited in Pascall and Lewis, 2004).

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the Ukrainian case on the issue of parental leave. Ukraine is my home country and that is why its welfare is of special interest to me. The possibility to take parental leave by fathers has remained from the communist era, as well as a pattern of its use by fathers. According to the latest

data of Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy,¹ approximately two percent of fathers take parental leave in Ukraine, so the situation has not changed much. When a Ukrainian father goes on parental leave, it is rather an exception.

Then **the aim of the thesis** is to analyze why fathers in Ukraine do not take parental leave and what makes fathers, as an exception, to take it. This aim will be reached by answering the following **research questions**:

1. What is characterizing the Ukrainian welfare regime? What is the role of parental leave in it?
2. How is childcare carried out in the Ukrainian society – is it a state or family responsibility?
3. How does a couple form the decision about who will go on parental leave? What factors influence them to choose the fathers? What is the role of the father in child rearing in Ukrainian society?

In answering these research questions, I will:

1. Discuss welfare regimes, using Esping-Anderson's (1990) typology of welfare regimes, and its critique by feminists that insist on the use of care regimes as a basis for gender-centered typologies (Orloff, 1993; Lewis, 1997). In this context European care regimes will be introduced.
2. In order to analyze the welfare state of contemporary Ukraine it is important to study the regime that existed in the Soviet Union, which has influenced the way in which Ukrainian welfare is developing today. The analysis will be made by putting gender relations in the center and by paying special attention to care work.
3. To answer the question whose responsibility it is now to care for children the care culture of Ukraine and the role of the state in shaping it by family policies will be analyzed.
4. In order to do an analysis on the micro level, semi-structured interviews with fathers who stayed on parental leave and with partners who decided that a mother would go on parental leave were conducted. This is done by in-depth interviews,

¹ Information received from the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, March 2012

where one can understand the life experience of people and what that experience mean for them (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). The semi-structured interviews help me to understand deeper how a couple decided who will go on parental leave and why they think they made such a decision.

2. Theoretical discussion

2.1. The concept of care

For the analysis of the Ukrainian welfare state, and the social policy on parental leave in particular, it is crucial to begin with the concept of social care. To conceptualize it the work of Mary Daly and Jane Lewis (2000) will be used since it has been the most influential analysis of care so far. Care has been studied by other scholars, but usually separate aspects of care were analyzed. The literature on care usually is divided into analyses of relational aspects of care and investigation of care-related services (Daly and Lewis, 2000). In addition, this literature separates paid and unpaid care, or childcare and elderly care, etc. What Daly and Lewis (2000) emphasized and analyzed was the concept of social care as one notion, which included different dimensions and actors. Furthermore, social care was defined in relation to the welfare state being an indicator of its change.

In the beginning of the concept's elaboration, we see its relation mostly to unpaid, informal care in the family, performed by women. In the pioneering literature, a specific type of social relationships was implied in the meaning of care (Daly and Lewis, 2000, p. 283). Later this notion was expanded, so also paid work has been included as one of the services of the welfare state, but still performed mostly by women. Thomas (1993), as cited in Daly and Lewis (2000), elaborated this concept further, discussing the identity of provider and receiver of care and relationships between them, the economic aspects of these relationships, and the social and institutional context of care. However, Daly and Lewis (2000) highlighted the diverse and fragmented use of the term, so they tried to find the core meaning of it.

What is care then? Being a multi-dimensional concept care is work, obligation and responsibility, and an activity with financial and emotional costs, which extends across boundaries of public and private (Daly and Lewis, 2000, p. 285). Regarding actors within social care, it is argued that care covers an activity and relationships not only between individuals but also between the state, family and

the market (Daly and Lewis, 2000; Daly and Rake, 2003). Thus, those three actors influence every dimension of care. First, being a work and being considered as equal with other kinds of work, analysis of care examines whether it is paid or unpaid work, formal or informal, what the role of the state is in defining such boundaries. Further, care through normative framework of responsibilities and obligations. What norms and views on care as responsibility are there in society, in the family? How does the state strengthen or weaken these norms? Costs of care leads to the question of how these costs are distributed in the family and in society (Daly and Lewis, 2000).

Care analysis can be carried out on two levels – micro and macro level. On the macro level, the division of care between the state, market and family is analyzed. On the micro level individual's experience of welfare and distribution of care among individuals within the family is considered (Daly and Lewis, 2000). Both these levels of analysis will be used in the paper.

2.2. Welfare as a care regime

All welfare regimes have a “caring regime” (Lewis, 1997). We will try to analyze the care regime of Ukraine in the thesis.

All discussions of welfare regimes have a tendency to begin with Esping-Andersen's (1990) influential typology. Besides Esping-Andersen, feminist ideas about care regimes as a basis for gender-centered typologies of welfare are also connected to this discussion. Thus, we will start from the typology of welfare regimes by Esping-Andersen and introduce its main points.

2.2.1. Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes

Establishing the typology on the criteria of quality of social rights, social stratification, and relationships between the state, market and family, three welfare regimes were defined – liberal, conservative and social democratic (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Liberal welfare regimes are characterized by the provision of a certain minimum

to its citizens. Social benefits mainly go to people with low income and these benefits are quite modest (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 26). The decommodification² effect in this regime is minimized. The United States, Canada and Australia are examples of liberal welfare states, according to Esping-Andersen.

In conservative welfare regimes social rights are connected to class and status (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 27). In these welfare states market efficiency and commodification were never considered as an important issue. Being influenced by the Catholic Church social policy encourages motherhood and traditional family relationships. Social services of care are underdeveloped (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 27). According to Esping-Andersen, such countries as Austria, France, Germany and Italy belong to this regime.

Social democratic welfare states, represented by the Scandinavian countries, are characterized by the principle that all citizens regardless of their needs, class and status have equal access to social rights of high standards, not only to minimal needs provision (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 27). This regime is characterized by a high level of decommodification and universalism. A policy of emancipation in this regime relates to both the family and the market. The main idea is to maximize the ability for individual independence. Different policies are developed in order to enable women to combine work and family, etc. (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 28).

There are different kinds of critiques and development of Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes (e.g. Castles and Mitchell, 1993; Ferrera 1996; Kwon 1997). The feminist critique (Orloff, 1993; Lewis, 1997) on this issue will be brought to the analysis, because of its focus on unpaid work, where care plays a big role.

2.2.2. Feminist critique

Feminists (see Orloff, 1993; Lewis, 1997; Sainsbury, 1999) criticized Esping-

² Decommodification was central to Esping-Andersen analysis and it means such conditions under which people are not dependent of the market, because social benefits are provided as a matter of right (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Andersen's analysis of welfare regimes mostly because his analysis ignored the concept of unpaid work, which includes housework and caring labor. Ann Oakley (1986) and Jon Eivind Kolberg (1991), as cited in Lewis (1997), consider the family as a main provider of welfare. Thus, feminists argue that the category of unpaid work should be added to the analysis of welfare regimes, emphasizing the importance of relationships between paid work, unpaid work and welfare (Lewis, 1997).

The position of a woman and the position of a man in a welfare regime is different (Lewis, 1997, p. 163). Pointing to the inattention of Esping-Andersen's (1990) welfare regime analysis to gender, Orloff (1993) examined three main dimensions of that analysis – social rights, stratification, relationships between the state, market and the family – and showed how the positions of a man and a woman differs. Almost all of these differences are connected to the unpaid labor.

Decommodification: A male worker not only benefits that labor is decommodified and gives a “capacity to resist capital and enter the market on their own terms”, but also unpaid services provided by women in his family give such capacity (Orloff, 1993, p. 317).

In the case of female workers, once they enter the labor market they do not stop performing unpaid domestic work. They do not choose between paid and unpaid work, they stay at home being full time homemakers and mothers or combine paid work and domestic work (Orloff, 1993).

Thus, decommodification must be considered as a gendered concept and must be supplemented by the indicator that reflects women's access to paid employment and availability of social services that enable them to combine work and family (Orloff, 1993).

Arguing that *stratification* is also a gendered issue, Orloff (1993) refer to the nature of state benefits for women and men. She points to the fact that in most Western welfare regimes men receive state benefits that are based on their participation in the labor market, while state benefits, which women receive, are

based mostly on their familiar roles. Social provision based on motherhood and marriage is associated with lower benefits than those based on paid work in most systems of social provision (Orloff, 1993, p. 315). Only in a few welfare states (the Nordic countries), men and women receive benefits that are based on citizenship.

Orloff (1993) argues that considering that social programs are shaped differently depending on what kind of labor a person performs – unpaid or paid – the analysis of welfare impact on stratification should include gender relations.

Analyzing gender *relations between the state, market and the family* Orloff (1993) points to two main issues, which usually are ignored: the sexual division of labor within states, markets, and families and the importance of the family as a provider of welfare.

In turn, Orloff (1993) added two new dimensions for welfare regimes classification. The first one is an access to paid labor, which provides independence for a person, for a woman particularly independence within the patriarchal family (Orloff, 1993). The second one is the capacity to form and maintain an individual household that indicate the ability of a domestic and caring worker to “survive and support their children without having to marry to gain access to breadwinners’ income” (Orloff, 1993, p. 319).

The latter is what scholars define as "defamilization". Therefore, if decommodification indicates the level of individuals’ independence from the labor market in terms of maintaining normal standards of living, defamilization in turn indicates the level of individuals’ independence from family relationships (Lister, 1997; Bamba, 2007). Typologies of care regimes usually rely on the notion of defamilization, and by care services they consider means of supporting the autonomy of individuals, especially of women, from the family (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996, p. 90).

2.2.3. Care: is it family or state responsibility?

To analyze the responsibility of care, two dimensions should be taken into

consideration. The first one is the provision of informal care, which displays the norms and traditions that exist in a certain society. The second dimension is formal care provision, which in turn shows how a state shapes these norms and traditions. There is a strong correlation between these two dimensions. Childcare policies are influenced by general views on the family, cultural models of motherhood and fatherhood, so, for example, in states, where children are seen as a private responsibility of parents, family policy is very limited (Bettio and Plantenga, 2004; Lister, 2007).

European countries vary in terms of both formal and informal care provision. Care regime typologies (e.g. Gustafsson, 1994; Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996; Bettio and Plantenga, 2004; Guo and Gilbert, 2007) usually distinguish more clearly two types of care regime – one in the Scandinavian countries and the other in the Mediterranean countries (Southern Europe). Regimes in continental Europe are considered less distinct.

The Scandinavian regime has considerably higher public spending on family services than other welfare regimes (Pascall and Lewis, 2004; Guo and Gilbert, 2007). Therefore, the Scandinavian model is characterized by a very high level of state provision of care resources, where the state replaces the family rather than supports it (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996; Bettio and Plantenga, 2004). The family plays here a modest role and it is less characterized by close intergenerational relations.

The care regime of countries in Southern Europe, on the contrary, is characterized by a very limited supply of formal care provision (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996; Bettio and Plantenga, 2004). Care in this regime is entrusted to the family and the level of intergenerational sharing of care is high in these countries.

As for Continental Europe, the situation is varied. For example, in UK and the Netherlands, informal care is important, but there is a difference between care for children and for elderly. While childcare is definitely a family responsibility with a low level of public services' provision and leave facilities, care for elderly seems to be a state responsibility with a high level of residential care and public

pension schemes (see classification of Bettio and Plantenga (2004). In Austria and Germany informal care is also important; at the same time as the government supports families financially (Bettio and Plantenga, 2004). Belgium and France in turn are characterized by a modest role of the family in caring and a high level of services and financial resources provision by the state, nevertheless time-off arrangements are underdeveloped (Bettio and Plantenga, 2004).

Of course, these are not pure models. Moreover, these classifications are unstable over time, due to the constant welfare development. For example, Rauch (2007) questioned even the image of the unique Scandinavian social service model, noticing that now most of our comparative knowledge is still based on old data (from the 80s and 90s). A lot has changed since then, for example, as he (2007) pointed to the decline in Swedish elderly care, because of its transformation from universalistic into highly selective. After analyzing social service in terms of its universalism and care defamilization, Rauch (2007) came to the conclusion that “it does not seem to make much sense to speak of a particular Scandinavian social service model” (Rauch, 2007, p. 264).

2.3. Ukrainian welfare regime

In this section, the historical context of Ukrainian welfare will be introduced. Being a part of the Soviet Union for nearly 70 years has affected the way Ukrainian welfare is developing now. So, firstly we will start with the analysis of the welfare regime which existed during the Soviet Union time and then will analyze how it has changed so far, positioning gender relations, especially in terms of care, at the center of the welfare regime. Soviet Union countries had common legislation; social policy and family laws were quite similar among them (Pascall and Manning, 2000, p. 245). Thus, it gives us a possibility to analyze Ukraine as part of the FSU’s common ideology and social policy.

2.3.1. Gender regime in the USSR

The official constitutional position in the FSU was equality between men and women. The breadwinner family model was challenged by Soviet policy. A policy

of emancipation was mostly related to the labor market, providing access to paid employment for women (Pascall and Manning, 2000; Pascall and Lewis, 2004; Temkina and Rotkirch, 2002).

Labor market participation

As a result of encouraging women to enter the *labor market* there was a relatively high level of labor market participation by women. In 1980, 50 percent of the labor force in the USSR was women while in Western Europe this proportion was 32 percent (Pascall and Manning, 2000). In Belarus, Russia and Ukraine the gender gap in labor force participation was comparable to Sweden (UNICEF, 1999). In 1989 in Russia and Ukraine female labor force participation was over 80 percent. If we compare it with the current situation in Ukraine – in 2011 labor force participation of women was 62 percent (Hausmann et al, 2011).

Moreover, the gender pay gap was low by international standards (Pascall and Manning, 2000). For example in Russia in 1989 female to male earning ratio was 0.71, compared to the Russian Federation in 2011 where this ratio was 0.65 (Global Gender Gap Report, 2011). Anyway, occupational segregation was high.

To sum up the situation with women's labor market participation we could say that the high level of labor market participation made women more independent both from the family and within it. Furthermore, taxation and benefit systems were based on individual abilities, so women were attached to the welfare system not as wives or mothers (as it was mentioned earlier with reference to Western welfare states) but in relation to their own employment (Pascall and Manning, 2000).

The welfare regime of the communist era was in many ways similar to the Scandinavian ones, with high rates of female labor force participation and a relatively low gender pay gap – it was a dual worker model. Moreover, there were similarities in these two regimes concerning a collective approach to care – the opportunity for women to enter the labor market was provided by state support for their care responsibilities (Pascall and Lewis, 2004). Even though the communist

gender regime was close to Scandinavia in terms of these issues, living standards in the FSU were much lower (Pascall and Lewis, 2004, p. 376). Furthermore, if the communist regime can be considered as a dual earner model, it cannot be viewed as a model of dual carer. Women under the communist regime were encouraged to work outside the family and in the family as well (Molyneux, 1990 cited in Pascall and Manning, 2000, p. 242). Therefore, a gender contract³ of a “working mother” existed in the FSU.

This gender contract was a dominant one in the communist era and it remained as such throughout the Soviet period (Temkina and Rotkirch, 2002). Society expected women to combine work with mothering and care for the family. Thus it was considered as a social norm, moral obligation or even as a “civil duty” (Pascall and Manning, 2000; Temkina and Rotkirch, 2002). However, there were some exceptions - women’s employment in military families and families of key administrative workers was rather an exception.

The government supported working mother by a set of social services – free healthcare and childcare systems (which included nurseries and kindergartens), paid maternity and parental leaves, family allowance (Pascall and Manning, 2000; Pascall and Lewis, 2004; Temkina and Rotkirch, 2002).

Policy of parental leave

Parental leave was a strong feature of the regime. Parental leave can be considered as a means to enable women to participate in the labor market as well as a means to encourage men to participate in caring work (Pascall and Lewis, 2004). In the case of the FSU, it was the first option.

The goal to raise the female level of education and labor market participation was achieved along with maintaining fertility levels to guarantee a strong working force in the future (UNICEF, 1999). The decline in fertility to replacement level became evident in the 1970s (Zakharov, 2006 cited in Perelli-Harris, 2008, p.

³ The term gender or sexual contract is used to identify a dominant type of relations in a particular society between men and women in relation to marriage, family and work (Pateman, 1988 cited in O’Reilly and Spee, 1988; Temkina and Rotkirch, 2002).

1167). In 1982, in order to raise fertility, several steps were taken, mostly they were related to parental leave arrangements.

If a mother had one year of work experience or if she interrupted her work in order to study, she received partially paid leave, which was 35 rubles⁴ per month during the first year and she had the right to stay on unpaid parental leave up to 1.5 years (Perelli-Harris, 2008, p. 1167). In 1990, the government expanded the period of paid maternity leave at minimum wage to one and a half year, with a payment of 70 rubles (Perelli-Harris, 2008, p. 1167).

Men were also encouraged to have children. According to data from my interviews, if a man of 18 years and older did not have children (even though he was not married) then 6 percent of his salary was deducted.

Social benefits for sick and disabled children were introduced in all countries of the FSU, with little changes in the 1990s. Support for single parents was greater than that for other families (Pascall and Manning, 2000).

Private sphere

Equality in the public sphere existed alongside with a private sphere where traditional gender roles dominated. In the family, a woman was responsible for housework, care for children and elderly. What also was important is the so-called social competence of the woman-housewife, which meant an ability to provide the family with scarce goods by using their social connections (Temkina and Rotkirch, 2002, p. 9). This included such practices as to provide the family with food, clothes, to find a good doctor for family members and relatives, to get a place for a child in a good school or kindergarten etc.

Domestic violence persisted in families, but in the FSU there was no special article about domestic violence (but there is now in the Ukrainian legislation), and in the society there was (and there still is) a view that domestic violence is a part of family life. Still, housing access was a barrier for women to divorce and escape

⁴ An average salary in 1980 was 146 rubles, in 1990 – 244 rubles (Information received from State Statistic Service of Ukraine, April, 2012)

from a violent partner (Pascall and Manning, 2000, p. 251). Even though the gender gap was low, salaries were also low, so it was unrealistic to afford an apartment alone. Therefore, even if the legislation treated a man and a woman as equal individuals, in practice, in the family in particular, the situation was different. In addition, such practical issues like housing policy make it difficult in practice to divorce, even if easy in theory.

2.3.2. Transition period

Transition processes have common roots among the countries of the FSU – all countries experiences economic shocks which in turn limited state services, care services in particular (Pascall and Manning, 2000; Pascall and Lewis, 2004). The gender regime of the Soviet Union were built on a high level of public expenditure of around 55 percent of GDP, according to UNICEF (2001) data cited in Pascall and Lewis (2004); comparable figures in South-Eastern Europe now is 40 percent. As a result spending on childcare, child benefits, education, health were reduced (Pascall and Lewis, 2004, p. 376).

The gender contract of working mothers is transforming, but the change of a gender order is not a part of social policy and ideology, rather strategies to cope with the situation, the result of adaptation to changing economic conditions (Temkina and Rotkirch, 2002). For what women were responsible at home, they are still responsible now as well. Paid employment is still crucial for women, but their labor market participation decreased, so many unemployed women are dependent on family networks to survive (Pascall and Manning, 2000). Even though men's labor force participation decreased too since 1989, "women have tended to lose somewhat more than men in almost every dimension of labor market activity" (UNICEF, 1999, p. 6).

2.3.3. Care for children in contemporary Ukraine: whose responsibility is it?

To assist families with childcare the government may support them by providing parental leave that support a mother or a father as a carer, childcare services (nurseries, kindergartens, after-school facilities) that support them as earners and

cash benefits (Bettio and Plantenga, 2004; Lister, 2007). All of these options are available for Ukrainians.

Parental leave and cash benefits

After independence in 1991 family programs in Ukraine were changed. Population growth was negative so family policies were still intended to raise the fertility level. The duration of partially paid parental leave was already two years, and it was possible to take one more year of unpaid parental leave (Perelli-Harris, 2008).

In 1996, parental leave benefits were expanded to three years and its duration has remained as such until now. Such long duration of parental leave is also a characteristic of other FSU countries. For example, the same duration of parental leave is available in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Lithuania etc. Perhaps in terms of the duration of parental leave, Ukraine (and some other countries of the FSU) has no equal among other countries (see Enclosure 1).

According to article 15 of the Law on Vacations (1996), parental leave benefits until the age of three is provided. The amount of parental leave benefits is equal to the difference between subsistence minimum, which is set for the working age population, and the average total family income the previous six months, but not less than 130 UAH (12 EUR).

From 2007 the Ukrainian government introduced financial aid at the birth of a child, from the beginning the total sum was 8 500 UAH (800 EUR). Now, the financial aid at the birth of a child is equivalent to 30 subsistence minimums⁵ for the first child, equivalent to 60 subsistence minimums for the second child and to 120 subsistence minimums for the third and each subsequent child, according to article 12 of the Law on state aid to families with children (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 1992). The aid is paid once at birth of a child (ten subsistence minimums), and the rest is paid during the first 24 months for the first child, 48 months for the second child, and 72 months for the third and each subsequent

⁵ For 2012 the subsistence minimum for children under 6 years is set as 893-961 UAH (83-90 EUR) (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2011)

child - in equal installments in the manner prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

Table 1 Parental leave indicators and cash benefits

Maternity leave	Parental leave	Cash benefits at childbirth
duration		
126 days*	three years	<u>1st child</u>
Benefits		
100% of woman's income, but no less than 25% of subsistence minimum	1. The minimum benefit is 130 UAH per month and it is paid to all regardless of income 2. If $(s-i/n) > 130$UAH, where <i>i</i> – family income for the last 6 month; <i>n</i> – number of people in the household Then benefits are equal to the difference $(s-i/n)$	financial aid = 30*s; is paid throughout first two years;
	s – subsistence minimum for working age population;	<u>2nd child</u> financial aid = 60*s; is paid throughout first four years; <u>3rd and > child</u> financial aid = 120*s; is paid throughout first six years

Information from Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy (1992, 1996, 2001)

*140 days in case if two or more children were born or in case of childbirth complications

Childcare arrangements also have changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Declining birth rates, budget cuts and privatization of state-owned workplaces has lead to the decline of childcare facilities provided by the government by a third after 1990 (UNDP Ukraine 2003 cited in Perelli-Harris, 2008, p. 1168). Therefore, practical issues regarding parenthood and care have become a matter of individual arrangements. The tendency is to push care work onto families, where unemployed grandmothers become main helpers (Pascall and Manning, 2000).

In 2011 the number of children in kindergartens increased by 61 000 compared with 2010, according to the Ombudsman for Children in Ukraine (UNIAN, 2012). The Ombudsman noticed that, according to preliminary reports, it is the first time since Ukrainian independence when the percentage of children in pre-

school childcare exceeded indicators of 1990 (UNIAN, 2012). According to the information received from the Ministry of Education and Science Youth and Sport of Ukraine as of 01.01.2012, 15.2 percent of children aged 0-2 years and 81 percent of children aged 3-5 years attend pre-school educational institutions. The total number of preschool children in private kindergartens in relation to the number of children of corresponding age is less than one percent, in public it is about 56 percent.

However, it is difficult to evaluate the quality of care in such facilities; moreover, there are not many studies on the issue of preschool childcare facilities in Ukraine. Anyway, the interviewees are rather dissatisfied with the quality of state-owned kindergartens in terms of its conditions, provision of sufficient time and care for a child, difficulties with enrolment to state-owned kindergartens.

Perelli-Harris (2008) points out that Ukraine's family policy can be considered as "one of the most generous in the world" taking into account the financial aid at childbirth and the possibility of three-year parental leave. In reality, the low level of parental leave benefits, plus the low quality level of state-owned childcare facilities and high costs of private ones reduces the effectiveness of family policy and makes it more difficult in practice to have and raise children.

Therefore, the availability of state supported schemes in assisting families with childcare is presented on a high level, even though the quality of this support may be questionable.

Informal care

At the same time, the family plays a big role in childcare. Grandparents and especially grandmothers are of particular importance in informal childcare in Ukraine.

Ukraine and Russia have a long time tradition of support to younger generations by older generations in terms of finances, childcare etc. (Buckley, 2001 cited in Perelli-Harris, 2008, p. 1171). Grandmothers are often main helpers in childcare and in domestic work, for example with cleaning or cooking. They can stay with a

child so a mother is able to return to work (Gabriel, 2005). The young in turn will help their parents in old age. This has a high cultural value. Moreover, this intergenerational connection is so strong that often couples decide to have children earlier, when parents are still able to assist them in childcare (Gabriel, 2005). Then, the ability of parents to help can be a decisive factor for having children.

Gabriel (2005), writing about the situation in Russia, argues that high quality childcare for all children, which Soviet Union planned to achieve but never succeeded to accomplish, now is even getting worse. Therefore, during the Soviet period as well as now younger generation approaches their parents to help with childcare. According to results from Parakhonskaya's study (2002), cited in Gabriel (2005), in 1998 in Russia (Tver region) 44.8 percent of grandmothers care for their grandchildren. Unfortunately, we do not have the relevant statistics for Ukraine, but the situation seems to be similar.

3. Previous studies

Many studies have been conducted on the topic of fathers' participation in parental leave in different countries, especially in Scandinavia; however, none of them investigated the case of Ukraine. Those studies consider different questions in relation to fathers' (non-)participation in parental leave. This section presents some of those that are relevant to our study.

The study of Bygren and Duvander (2006) investigates the impact of parents' workplace context on fathers' use of parental leave in Sweden. Quantitative research was conducted with data from Statistic Sweden for couples who lived in Stockholm in the period 1990-1999. However, the authors mention that the level of parental leave by fathers in Stockholm is similar to the national average (Bygren and Duvander, 2006).

The main results of the study indicate that father's workplace characteristics affect his use of parental leave. If a father works in the private sector, at a small workplace, and it is male-dominated, then he uses less parental leave. The practice of other men in the workplace of taking parental leave positively influences father's use of the leave (Bygren and Duvander, 2006). Mother's workplace characteristics do not have a significant impact on father's use of parental leave. However, it was found that if a mother's workplace is female-dominated then a father takes less leave.

Bygren and Duvander (2006) acknowledge that the case of Sweden is specific due to existing norms according to which fathers should be directly involved in childcare. Therefore, workplace characteristics and the use of parental leave by fathers in Sweden may have a stronger connection than it has in other countries (Bygren and Duvander, 2006).

Another study on Scandinavian countries examined the case of Norway on this issue. The study of Naz (2010) was aimed to find out what factors influence

father's choice to take parental leave and paternity quota⁶. After conducting qualitative analysis, it was found that Norwegian fathers tend to take parental leave if mothers work full time, have equal or higher income and education (Naz, 2010). The author gives two explanations for this. If mothers have a higher income, then the opportunity cost of the leave for them is higher than it is for fathers, therefore it is more rational that fathers stay with children. On the other hand, Naz (2010) points to the possibility of more educated mothers with higher income to use their economic power and force fathers to go on the leave. In addition to that, mother's working hours, income and education have more affect on fathers' use of parental leave than the use of paternity quota (Naz, 2010).

The number of children in the family is also an influential factor: the more children in the family the less likely that a father will take parental leave. One interesting finding indicates that fathers in married couples use more parental leave than cohabitants do (Naz, 2010).

Another result of the study corresponds to the conclusion reached by the Swedish research of Bygren and Duvander (2006) described above. It shows that if a father works at a female-dominated workplace then it is more likely that he will take parental leave. Colleagues and employers may influence father's participation in childcare. However, father's workplace characteristics do not affect his use of paternity quota (Naz, 2010).

It is also important to consider a study by Karu and Kasearu (2011), which investigated factors for the choice of Estonian fathers (not) to take parental leave. Being a part of the Soviet Union in the past, the Estonian welfare is similar to the Ukrainian one, being a dual earner and female carer model. The use of parental leave by fathers is not popular in Estonia: as of 2009 and 2010, six percent of fathers take the leave (Karu and Kasearu, 2011). This number seems small taking into account a generous policy of parental leave in Estonia. According to Karu and Kasearu (2011), a mother or a father can take the leave, the parental benefit is

⁶ Paternity quota is a period of leave that can be used only by a father, and it will be lost if a father does not use it (Naz, 2010).

equal to the previously earned income (full coverage) and it is paid during one and a half years. In this case, fathers do not seem to lose their traditional role of breadwinner; however, they are still not willing to stay on the leave.

The study was based on 20 interviews with fathers, half of them used parental leave and the other half did not (Karu and Kasearu, 2011). The authors concluded that not only structural opportunities, but also a set of beliefs and norms influence father's decision (not) to stay on the leave. The first set represent beliefs of fathers that they are more needed at work than at home, and is connected to the fear of losing a job or the suspension of a career (Karu and Kasearu, 2011).

Another set of beliefs and norms is connected to attitudes of society toward men who are on parental leave. The point is that childcare is still associated with women. An interesting result was that fathers who stayed on the leave felt that it was better to explain their decision to people referring to work issues, rather than to the desire to participate in childcare (Karu and Kasearu, 2011). In this case, their choice would be more acceptable by the society.

The last set of beliefs is connected to fathers' underestimation of their own abilities in childcare compared to mothers, who are considered more skilled and competent (Karu and Kasearu, 2011). The authors explain that fathers' confidence regarding childcare depends on the role they assign to themselves.

The first role that was distinguished is a "project manager", which means that a child is viewed as a "project", and thus the aim of a father is through the process of teaching and upbringing to raise a successful person (Karu and Kasearu, 2011). Those fathers were afraid of making mistakes and believed that mothers are better carers. For fathers, whose role as a parent was directed not at the result but on the process of upbringing, the value was close relationship with a child, therefore they were not scared of taking responsibility for a child and did not report doubts about their competence in childcare (Karu and Kasearu, 2011).

The last study that will be presented in this section examines effects of parental leave use by fathers on their participation in childcare (Haas and Hwang, 2008).

The study is based on the survey of 356 employed fathers in Sweden. Results of the research showed that the fact itself of taking parental leave by fathers has no effect on their further participation in childcare (Haas and Hwang, 2008).

What has a significant impact on the relationship between fathers and children is the duration of the leave. Fathers who stayed on parental leave longer were more likely to report satisfaction with the amount of time they had with children (Haas and Hwang, 2008). Moreover, such fathers were more likely to spend more time with children on workdays and reported that they took “solo responsibility” for children when mothers were at work (Haas and Hwang, 2008, p. 99).

However, the relationship between the duration of parental leave use and general responsibility for children and the amount of time spent on weekends with children was not found (Haas and Hwang, 2008). A possible explanation for this may lie in the fact that the parents already shared these duties largely; therefore, the leave did not affect this pattern significantly.

In this section, previous studies on the role of fathers in parental leave were presented. To situate our study results in this field of knowledge we will come back to research presented above in the discussion part.

4. Methodological discussion

4.1. Method

In this section, the choice of research method will be explained, interviewees' profiles will be introduced and issues related to the process of interviewing will be discussed, including ethical considerations and limitations.

For the analysis of care on a micro level, I wanted to examine how the decision of a couple about who will take parental leave was made. What interested me was the experience of parents in making that decision, what they were guided by in making it, and the experience that they obtain staying on parental leave.

Since, according to Darlington and Scott (2002), interviewing assumes that "people are experts on their own experience", and their stories are the best way of getting information about their experience of particular events, the method of semi-structured interviews was chosen. As Seidman (2006) argues, stories are a way of knowing and by interviewing people we get access to the context of their behavior and understand the meaning of it.

Semi-structured interviews are somewhere in between usual conversation and a closed questionnaire (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore, I had a guide (see Enclosure 2) with topics that I wanted to investigate. Still, such interviews are flexible, so in the process of interviewing other related topics were also covered and clarifications by asking supporting (second) questions were made. Darlington and Scott (2002) notice that the less structured and more conversational the interview, the easier is it will be to clarify what interviewees mean by their talk.

Since conducted interviews were connected to past events in the interviewees' lives, it is important to mention what Darlington and Scott (2002) consider as a false sense of access to the past. Talking about something that already happened does not give us access to the past; we can only figure out how a person feels and thinks about it now. When an interviewee describes past events the present influences his/her understanding of that experience (Kleinman, 1988, cited in Darlington and Scott, 2002, p. 50).

4.2. Sample and process of interviewing

I planned to conduct interviews with fathers who have experience of staying on parental leave, but I also wanted to include families that decided that a mother would take parental leave. Finding the latter was no problems since they are a big majority. To find fathers who stayed on parental leave appeared to be more difficult. My first plan to recruit interviewees with the help of Ukrainian Network of Papa-schools did not work.

Therefore, I did not have any other choice besides using my social connections in Kiev to find this target group – through friends, former colleagues, and connections from the University. As a result, three interviews with fathers who stayed on parental leave were conducted (two of them with fathers and one with both parents) and two interviews with families where the mother stayed with a child (one with a mother and another one with both parents). The interviews were conducted at the interviewees' homes and in quiet cafés. All interviews were recorded.

4.3. Limitations

Sample

The sample is limited to a particular group of people due to the way of finding interviewees; they represent people of the Ukrainian middle class⁷. The

⁷Is there a middle class in Ukraine? An application of class systems, which were developed for Western societies (e.g. Goldthorpe's class scheme) to Ukraine, is often criticized. The criticism is connected to the fact that most professional groups in Ukraine, which are considered as a western middle class, do not fit the definition of it in terms of income and living standards (Simonchuk, 2006, p. 217). Simonchuk, defining the middle class in Ukraine, say that people of this class:

- Are highly educated, professionally successful and live in big cities.
- They are heterogeneous in terms of professions. They are entrepreneurs of small and medium business, mid-level government officials, senior officers of the army and security forces, highly skilled managers and intellectuals who work in the private and public enterprises and organizations
- have \$150-1000 a month per family member
- if the size of the Ukrainian middle class is determined by subjective criteria, as social identity, it is 25-28% of the population, by objective criteria (level of material welfare, education) less than half of this figure - 11% (Simonchuk, 2006, p. 240-241)

interviewees have similar social positions – they all have higher education, intellectual professions, they reproduce their social backgrounds (see more information about the interviewees in Enclosure 3). In addition, all participants of the study live in the Capital city Kiev, where lifestyle and living conditions differ from smaller cities and other regions in Ukraine. Therefore, since people tend to describe their behavior and views according to society's expectations and norms, and mostly according to the ones of their social surroundings, the stories of the interviewees are considered as a reflection of norms and views that exist in their surroundings only.

Language

The interviews were conducted in Russian and Ukrainian, both of which are my native languages. Nevertheless, the language question is still relevant, as the interviews had to be translated into English. Thus, special attention had to be paid to translation, in order to represent the full sense of what the interviewees said (Vygotsky, 1987 in Seidman, 2006). Anyway, it was not a big challenge to translate the interviews in English, since thoughts of the interviewees were clear and easy to follow and they were expressing themselves constructively and comprehensively.

4.4. Ethical considerations

All interviewees were informed about the topic and aims of the research, and after that they agreed to participate in the interviews. I also notified them that I planned to record the interviews and received their consent to do that. I explained that the information I receive from them during the interviews would be used only in the thesis and if I should use it with any other purpose, I will contact them again for their permission.

Taking into consideration stereotypes, which exist in Ukrainian society, that staying on parental leave is not a man's business, I tried to exclude sensitive questions from the interview guide. Still, if some questions were sensitive for them (such as those related to the attitude of their relatives), I did not insist on

details. In addition, to respect the privacy of the interviewees I use pseudonyms instead of their real names in the text.

5. Results and Discussion

In this section, the results from the qualitative research and the reflection on it will be presented.

Impressions after an interview

How do we know that people whom we are interviewing are telling us the truth? Let us consider an example from the interviews.

While interviewing Julia and Roman (see Enclosure 3 for more information) Julia tried to convince me that their family is “modern and extraordinary”, that they do not have any stereotypes about gender roles in the family. This I considered firstly as a need to behave accordingly to her professional status, since she worked in the Family Gender Policy Department of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Ukraine. In addition, Julia acknowledged this herself, explaining reasons of her husbands’ stay on parental leave:

I had to show by our example how parental leave is important for men. Therefore, after that, some of our male friends took parental leave (Julia, 42 years old)

What more made me to think in this direction is that Julia’s husband in the beginning was arguing with her. He insisted that every family is extraordinary and he is an ordinary Ukrainian father, and only circumstances that occurred (Julia had to get back to work) played a major role in his decision to stay on parental leave. Still, after some time of interviewing only Roman I could understand from his words that he really had a desire to stay with their daughter besides those circumstances and that he enjoyed time spent with the girl, and he still spends more time with her than Anna does. Then, I understood that maybe the father is different and he was insisting on his ordinariness because of the feature, which characterizes modest people.

To sum up, I want to emphasize that we can not define for sure whether interviewee’s words are true, and if they are true for the interviewee we do not know if they are true for anyone else, etc; anyway, our goal is to understand how

our interviewees realize and make meaning of their experience themselves (Seidman, 2006).

The analysis of the interviews is divided into different topics and is presented below.

5.1. Forming decision about who should go on parental leave

5.1.1. Stereotypes

Scholars, mostly in social psychology (e.g. Bodenhausen, 1988, 2005), have studied the influence of stereotypes on decision-making processes. Some of this research focuses on studying the effects of gender stereotypes' existence on decision making, in particular (e.g. Futoran and Wyer, 1986).

The existence of stereotypes about traditional gender roles in the family may be an important factor of parents' decision about parental leave. In other words, depending on the views of a couple on gender roles, a decision about who goes on the leave is made. Based on the data from the interviews, two kinds of views on gender differences can be distinguished – social and biological.

As it was discussed earlier, from the Soviet Union times women in Ukraine have been “working mothers”. Consequently, the responsibility for childcare has been assigned to women. Men are involved in childcare to some extent, but usually they are not primary caregivers. Therefore, parental leave during which a parent has to stay all the time with a child is considered not a man's business:

It seems to me that a man who is on parental leave ... it will knock him down, psychologically maybe, his male energy. I would not want my husband to stay on parental leave. It is a woman's challenge and woman's function (Anna, 32 years old)

Usually a mother went on parental leave...I do not think that fathers will go on parental leave in nearest times; it is not father's business. Although, views are changing (Alex, 48 years old)

A lot of interviewees' attention is paid to the biological differences between men and women, and the first issue here is breast-feeding. All the interviewees pointed to the great importance of mother's milk for a child. Therefore, even in the

families, where fathers stayed on parental leave, it was planned that the first year a mother will be with the child:

When parents decide who will go on parental leave they take into account... that a woman breastfeeds, therefore, it is extremely necessary for a child to stay with a mother during the first six months (Igor, 30 years old father on parental leave)

Well, we considered the fact that mother's breast-feeding is very important, that is why she was with him for the first year (Anton, 27 years old father on parental leave)

Another kind of views on biological differences, which the interviewees mentioned, is connected to the physiological connection between a mother and a child. It is argued that there is a biological contact between them, then to break this connection by sending a father on parental leave will affect the child's development. These arguments are considered mostly by couples where the mother was on parental leave:

First 2 years are very important for a child; the best environment for him/her is a mother, in all senses. A father does not experience pregnancy, hormonal changes; he cannot feel a child as a mother can [...] maternal instinct plays a great role here. It is unnatural if a man is on parental leave (Anna, 32 years old)

If father goes on parental leave, it is bad from a physiological point of view. Up to 12 years children have a strong connection with a mother [...] it is a connection on the energy level [...] So, it is better for a child to stay with a mother as long as possible, of course, if she is a good loving mother (Alex, 48 years old)

Consequently, couples, in which a father was on parental leave, have less traditional views on gender roles, what, most likely, is influenced by their educational and professional backgrounds. In those three families, either one or both parents work with social issues. Moreover, views of their surroundings influence their personal vision of the situation, and, as we will discuss later, friends and colleagues of those couples reacted quite positive on a fathers' readiness to stay on parental leave:

We do not have these stereotypes, which other families have about roles of a mother and a father. In our family we know a lot about

gender and parental leaves [...] If we lived in a small city or in a village... the situation would be different though (Julia, 42 years old)

Moreover, there are no stereotypes in our surroundings; they [friends] do not have such kinds of prejudice (Roman, 48 years old father on parental leave).

Fathers who stayed on parental leave did not report any views about biological differences between men and women, which may influence child's development (besides breast-feeding). They more tend to think that an ability to provide a good care depends not on sex differences but rather on personal characteristics:

There is one difference, biological – a man does not have milk. The rest is just a question of commitment or laziness (Igor, 30 years)

It depends not on the sex differences – mother/father, but more on a person. I truly believe in situations when a father is more involved into child's upbringing and a mother is less. Probably, it is more connected to the personal qualities (Anton, 27 years)

Therefore, in addition to stereotypes about gender roles in the family (that parents or their surroundings have or do not have), which affect the decision about which of the parents will take parental leave; it seems that there is a cultural-medical construction of proper childrearing in Ukraine. The latter assumes that it is necessary that a child receives mother's milk during first six months, also that there is a biological connection between a mother and a child during the first years of a child's life. Accordingly, the existence of such attitudes within a couple affects their choice.

5.1.2. Employment

Financial issues

An important issue that is taken into consideration, while deciding who goes on parental leave, is money. Therefore, from the practical point of view, the parent who has a lower income stays with a child. Since all over the world women earn less than men, and Ukraine is not an exception (see section 3.2.1.), mostly mothers take the leave. At the same time, if a father has a lower income, it can be a reason for his choice to stay with a child:

We planed that from the beginning, taking into account that my wife had a higher income and an increase of that income was more feasible than mine was (Anton, 27 years old).

It seems that in Igor's choice money also played an important role, since he did not lose the salary staying on parental leave:

We had a possibility to be together with our son (even though I had only one month, during this I received a full salary), so our decision was simple (Igor, 30 years old)

Money benefits, which parents get at childbirth, are aimed to support parents financially during the leave; nevertheless, the interviewees do not consider it the main means of raising a child:

That financial aid is equivalent to diapers in that age... And we do not live in the village, where this money can be spent on food or house maintenance [...] The support is good, but it is not a decisive factor in terms of a having baby or not (Roman, 48 years old)

However, the amount of financial aid at childbirth is constantly increasing since 2007; so if in 2007 when Roman's daughter was born the assistance for the first child was 8 500 UAH (800 EUR), in 2012 this amount is approximately 25 000 UAH (2 400 EUR) for the first child.

Flexibility of work

Additional factor in the decision on parental leave is working conditions. If father's work is more flexible than mother's, then there is bigger chance that he will stay with a child. In the case with Julia and Roman, Julia was told to return to work after some time on leave. The couple had to consider who would be with their daughter since then. Given that Roman was a head of a non-governmental organization, he could plan the work on his own, so that also influenced their choice.

Career

Another issue related to the impact of parents' employment on the decision about parental leave is career. A choice of a man to be with a child may be made in

favor of the wife's career and readiness to lose his own. Our interviewee Roman argues that due to his age, to build a career was not a main concern for him anymore, that is why family values have become the priority for him, which in turn also influenced the decision:

People of our age do not think that it is so important to earn money or make a career, but it is more important to raise a child properly [...] I am head of All-Ukraine NGO. So, I decided that I would rather deal with one member of society than with society in general (Roman, 48 years old)

Therefore, employment conditions of the parents are another decisive factor in these studied decisions. A choice in favor of the father is made when it is more profitable for a family that a mother continue to work. Another point is that men, who can sacrifice their career in favor of their wife's career, are more likely to take time off for childcare.

5.1.3. Fathers' motivations

Nevertheless, besides the practical side of the issue, fathers' desire to participate in childcare is also crucial:

The main reason for the decision... was my fear to lose the moment when my son will make the first steps in this world. [...] I realized that the first child means that parents do not have relevant experience and it would be easier for us both to take the first steps in the field of parenthood (Igor, 30 years old)

I would not say that I wanted very much to do it, but I felt my responsibility and I knew that it will be better if I stay with Mila than a nanny or someone else (Roman, 48 years old)

Thus, recognition of the responsibility for the child's upbringing and desire to help the partner contributed to fathers' choice of taking parental leave.

5.1.4. Attitudes toward male participation in parental leave

Friends and colleagues

Describing the reaction of the surroundings concerning fathers' stay on parental leave, the interviewees supported the assumption that people behave and express

their views according to expectations of their social surroundings. For example, in the case of Anna, who has traditional views on fathers' participation in parental leave, she takes for granted that her friends and relatives would be "shocked" if her husband had gone on the leave instead of her:

They would say: Anna, are you confused? Come back; remember your grandmothers [...] read books. Ask your grandfather; ask how that was done for generations and calm down (Anna, 32 years old)

On the contrary, attitudes of surroundings of the families where fathers stayed on parental leave are quite positive:

They reacted very positive. I can not say that I became a hero, but my colleagues treated my decision very creditable (Igor, 30 years old)

Our friends are different. For some of them a family is more important than a career, for others – vice versa. There were no disapprovals, anyway. Maybe it is because we live in Kiev, in smaller cities, views can be more conservative (Roman, 48 years old)

Consequently, views of the interviewees are similar to the ones of their environment, and it seems that the latter is taken into account when deciding who of the parents should go on parental leave.

Nevertheless, positions of interviewees' parents toward this issue are still traditional:

When Roman stayed with our first child, while I was on business trips, Roman's father reproached him constantly that my husband was with our son[...] He was more concerned though about what kind of mother is the one who does not stay with her child (Julia and Roman)

My parents did not react very positive on that decision due to their views on traditions... maybe, because of some stereotypes (Anton, 27 years old)

Interviewed couples reproduce the social background of their parents. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the social positions of the interviewees and their parents do not differ significantly, still views on gender roles are changing in these families.

In addition to the discussed issues that prevent fathers' participation in parental leave, an important question is that the law is not promoted in society. Therefore, people may not know about the possibility of fathers to take the leave, and I experienced people's unawareness of it many times in the process of finding the interviewees.

5.2. Staying on parental leave

5.2.1. Informal care: the help of grandparents

As was discussed in section 2.3.3, the level of intergenerational sharing of care in Ukraine is high. With the only exception of Alex and Olga, who lived in another country during the first years of the children's lives, all the rest of the participants reported parents' active participation in childcare, either directly by providing care or by assisting with housework etc.:

My husband's mother helped a lot. She took all the housework, so I was only responsible for the care of the child (Anna, 32 years old)

The first month of our son life my wife's parents lived together with us... it is better to have eight hands than four (Igor, 30 years old)

My father helped us. He says that he brought up her. He helped a lot during these 3 years (Roman, 48 years old)

My mother helped us. [...] She helped to cook, took a walk with the child (Anton, 27 years old)

Therefore, our findings also support the view according to which grandparents are main helpers in children's upbringing and the cultural value of this care is high in Ukraine.

5.2.2. Formal care

Nannies

Since the interviewees were supported by their parents in the process of bringing up children, there was no need to hire a nanny:

If you mean hiring a nanny in order to help me, we did not need that because as I said our parents helped us (Anton, 27 years old)

However, all of them expressed a negative attitude toward nannies. The reason for such an attitude may lie in the fact that grandparents have been the main helpers in caring work in Ukrainian families. Therefore, to entrust childcare to non-relatives may be considered wrong. The interviewees think that a non-relative cannot provide as good care as relatives do:

Relatives are better than a baby-sitter is because for them the baby is “native blood”, not a “job” (Igor, 30 years old)

The aim of a nanny is to earn money, to keep a child healthy and alive. The aim of a mother is provision of maximum comfort for a child, provision of a proper care (Anna, 32 years old)

Based on the answers of the interviewees it is clear that the attitude about leaving a child to another person itself creates negative attitudes toward nannies, rather than, for example, the quality of care provided and so forth. The interviewee Anna works in a kindergarten, so she knows firsthand about care as a job. She thinks that the quality of care provided by a nanny is evaluated by readiness of parents to leave a child with her/him:

There are no criteria of nanny’s “evaluation”. There is a willingness or unwillingness of parents. If they are ready to hire a nanny, usually they are positive about this work, because from the beginning they were ready to leave their child with another person. If they are not ready, they will find thousands of cons in the work of the same nanny (Anna, 32 years old)

Kindergartens

The quality of care in state kindergartens the interviewees considered unsatisfactory:

That (public kindergarten) was awful [...] there were around 25 children in one group and only one nanny and one teacher for the group. So, there is nothing about development of the child, the main goal is to return a child alive and healthy to the parents (Anna, 32 years old)

Children of the participants attend private kindergartens, where the quality of care is better; more attention is given to each child:

The conditions (in a private one) are much better, but the price is much higher. Just to compare - for a group of 15 children there are three responsible people (Anna, 32 years old)

Where he goes, it is more like courses for development, not a kindergarten. It is better than in public kindergarten, because they have more teachers per child (Anton, 27 years old)

Despite the fact that, firstly, conditions in public kindergartens leave much to be desired, and secondly, every child has a state-guaranteed right to free pre-school education, according to Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy (2001), however, it can be difficult to get in to a public kindergarten:

When you want to get to the state kindergarten, they will tell you: "We do not have places, but if you say that you can show your gratitude and so on... a place appears". They asked us to buy sand for the kindergarten (Anna, 32 years old)

The overall attitudes of the interviewees toward formal care are rather negative. It is preferable for the parents that someone from the family takes care of the child, not a nanny. In addition to that, the interviewees are not satisfied with the conditions of provided care in public kindergartens. That is why their children do not attend public ones. Nevertheless, not every family can afford a private kindergarten for a child due to the high costs⁸.

5.3. Women's "double burden" and men's change of behavior

What are the consequences of taking parental leave by fathers then?

Firstly, it contributed to the fact that they are spending more time with children now. Nevertheless, not all of them:

Well, to be honest, now I am with a big pleasure walking him to the kindergarten and then go to work (Anton, 27 years old)

One more issue considered by the interviewees, is related to caring and housework. Being a working mother means that a woman has a double burden. As it was discussed in section 2.2.2, women do not choose between paid and unpaid work, because when they "choose" paid work, they perform both:

⁸ Prices for private kindergartens vary from 3 000 UAH (280 EUR) to 5 000 UAH (470 EUR)

When you come back to work, a child does not disappear anywhere; you still have to care about him/her. When you work, you still have to do the same things at home (Anna, 32 years old)

Taking parental leave by a father also changes his views about childcare (Haas and Hwang, 1999 cited in Pascall and Lewis, 2004). Fathers who stayed on parental leave showed that their attitudes toward caring and housework changed. They realized that it is also a job, even though it is not paid; and some of them even noticed that it is easier to go to work than to stay at home with a child:

I have to say that I do not really know how she does it. During this time, I forgot when I read a book last time, and I even did cleaning once a week (Ira does it every day). So, those men who come from work and think that their wives did not do anything being at home with a child – should try to stay with a child at least for a week (Igor, 30 years old)

To understand how much effort a woman or a man puts in caring or housework you have to experience it [...] (Roman, 48 years old)

In this section, factors, which influenced a couples' decision to send fathers on parental leave, or prevented it, were discussed; issues of formal care and informal care in Ukrainian families were addressed; and it was considered how parental leave affected fathers.

Our results regarding the factors affecting father's use of parental leave in general correspond to findings from previous studies on this issue. Employment conditions of parents influence their choice in favor of fathers' participation in parental leave. Moreover, views of a couple and of their surrounding on gender roles in general and on fathers' role in parental leave, in particular are crucial for making the decision. Parental leave's impact on fathers' behavior, which is manifested mainly in an increase of time spent with a child, also complies with findings from other studies. The difference, however, is that in Scandinavia, with its history of policy makers' efforts to involve men into childcare, the studied issue is at another level. Those studies already investigate questions that are more specific, for example focusing on different aspects and conditions of the parents' workplace (e.g. Bygren and Duvander, 2006). While in the post-Soviet countries,

such as Ukraine and Estonia, views and beliefs seem to be a reason that is more influential for the low level of father's participation in parental leave.

Conclusion

The main aim of the thesis was to analyze why fathers in Ukraine do not take parental leave and what makes fathers, as an exception, to take it. To understand better what influences the pattern of taking parental leave in Ukraine, a theoretical analysis of Ukrainian welfare was conducted.

Only about 20 years has passed since the Soviet Union collapsed, therefore the gender regime of contemporary Ukraine is still influenced by the one that existed during the communist era. The gender regime of Former Soviet Union was similar to the Scandinavian one in the sense that it was also a dual worker model. The level of female labor market participation has remained relatively high from that time with female to male ratio of 0.86 (Hausmann et al, 2011). However, the gender income gap and occupational segregations has remained as well.

Two main characteristics distinguish the gender regime of the FSU from the Scandinavian though. These are, firstly, the much lower standards of living in the Soviet Union and secondly, there was no dual carer model in the FSU.

Women were working mothers, they had a double burden, being workers and at the same time being responsible for the housework and caring work in the family, that was a social norm and moral obligation. For what women were responsible before, they are responsible in contemporary Ukraine as well. Accordingly, the views in society are such that a woman has the primary responsibility for raising children.

The policies of USSR were not aimed at involving men into domestic work, but rather at supporting women to perform both paid and unpaid work. From the Soviet Union times, the possibility of women to enter the labor market has been supported by parental leave arrangements and state provision of childcare facilities.

Parental leave was a strong feature of the FSU regime (Pascall and Lewis, 2004). It had a long duration and it was paid. A mother, father or other relative in the FSU could take parental leave, and this possibility has remained until now.

Nevertheless, the practice of fathers taking parental leave is not popular, that is visible from the share of fathers who go on the leave, which amounts to two percent as of the beginning of 2012.

The duration of parental leave in contemporary Ukraine is up to three years and parents are supported by financial aid at childbirth. The level of the aid has increased constantly since 2006. From the beginning the total sum was 8 500 UAH (800 EUR). In 2012 the amount of the aid for the first child is about 25 000 UAH (2 400 EUR), which is paid during first two years, and it is more for the second and for the third and each subsequent child.

In addition to parental leave arrangements and benefits, the Ukrainian government supports parents by providing childcare services, which are represented by nurseries and kindergartens, and the share of children in pre-school facilities at the beginning of 2012 is equal to 15.2 percent of children aged 0-2 years and 81 percent of children aged 3-5 years. Even though, the government assists parents in childcare, the level of informal care provision is high in Ukraine, where grandparents are the main helpers in caring for children and doing housework.

Findings from the qualitative research illustrate several factors that influence the decision of a couple about who should go on parental leave, besides father's desire to be with a child and recognition of his responsibility for the child's upbringing.

The first influential factor is the existence of stereotypes about gender roles and views on biological differences between men and women. The first one is associated with the view that to be on parental leave is a woman's function and not a "man's business". The second one is related to the cultural-medical construction of the view about proper childrearing in Ukraine, which assumes that it is necessary that a child receives mother's milk and that there is a biological connection between a mother and a child during the first years of a child's life. Thus, according to the interview data the absence of such views within a couple contributes to the choice that a father takes parental leave, and vice versa.

The second aspect that is important for parents while deciding about who should go on parental leave is the surroundings' approval of their choice. The views of the interviewees are similar to the ones of their friends and colleagues. In the case of the families, where a father stayed on parental leave, it seems that there were no stereotypes in their social surroundings and the reaction on their choice was positive.

Another matter that was observed is connected to the views of the interviewees' parents on childcare and parental leave. They all have traditional views on gender roles in the family, in other words, they tend to think that a mother should be with a child most of the time, and that she is the one who should be on parental leave. Thus, despite the fact that the social positions of the interviewees and their parents do not differ significantly, it can be concluded that the views on gender roles are changing in those families.

Another crucial factor for the decision is employment conditions of the parents. A choice in favor of the father is made when it is more profitable for a family that a mother continue to work. Moreover, a man, who can sacrifice his career in favor of his wife's career, more likely will take time off for childcare.

The consequences of being on parental leave are that the fathers started to spend more time with children. Moreover, staying on the leave changed their attitudes toward domestic work. The fathers reported about their acknowledgement of the fact how difficult it is to care for children and to perform housework, which is not only a physical burden, but also a moral one.

One more finding from the qualitative data is related to the high cultural value of grandparents' help in caring for children and to a high level of such intergenerational support. Grandparents are the main helpers for the interviewees in childcare. This fact also influences the negative attitudes of the interviewees toward nannies; the parents are not ready to leave a child to a non-relative, considering it wrong. In addition to that, the interviewees point to poor conditions and quality of care provided in public kindergartens in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, to cover the whole picture of fathers' role in child caring in Ukraine more studies should be conducted, especially in smaller cities and rural areas.

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Enclosure 1

Table 1 Parental leave in different countries: duration and leave benefits

Country	Duration of parental leave	Leave benefits (% of wages paid)
Armenia	Up to three years	Unpaid
Azerbaijan	For both mothers and fathers until the child reaches the age of three	During the first period of parental leave (until the infant reaches the age of one and a half years old): benefits equal to two equivalents of mini-mum salary; from the age of one and a half years old until the age of three years old: benefits equal to one equivalents of minimum salary.
Lithuania	Up to three years	100% (70%; 40%) It varies according to the chosen duration of the allowance.
Moldova	Partially paid parental leave for childcare until the child ages three; additional un-paid leave to care for children aged three to six years (mothers, fathers and other caregivers in the family).	30% (until the child reaches three); unpaid (child aged from three to six years).
Sweden	The mother and father are both entitled to 240 optional days of parental benefit (in total, 480 calendar days), of which 60 are reserved to each parent, while the other days can be transferred to the other parent.	80%; up to a ceiling. Collective agreements often provide supplementary pay, raising the payment percentage to 90%.
Norway	26 weeks or 36 weeks (depending on the received payment). Extended to 47/57 weeks	Parental leave: 26 weeks with 100% pay or 36 weeks with 80% pay. Up to one year unpaid leave for each child
Denmark	32 weeks to each parent	100% during 10-week parental leave.
Germany	For both father and mother for a period of three years each	Unpaid. Financial support in the form of parental allowance for a period of 14 months: 67%.

Table 1 Parental leave in different countries: duration and leave benefits (cont'd)

Country	Duration of parental leave	Leave benefits (% of wages paid)
Austria	Employees - women and men - are entitled to parental leave until the second birthday of their child, when they are living with the child in the same household.	Childcare allowance: 80% of last income, up to a ceiling. Flat-rate childcare allowance is also provided.
Turkey	24 month	Unpaid
Japan	One year to each parent. It can be taken simultaneously. If fathers take childcare leave within eight weeks after birth, they can take childcare leave again.	Minimum 50%
Netherlands	26 weeks per parent per child, non-transferable.	No statutory payment (dependent on collective agreements)
Canada	35 weeks	For biological parents: fixed monthly benefit. Slightly higher parental benefits apply to adoptive parents.
Cyprus	13 weeks each parent, until the child reaches the age of eight. Fathers can use parental leave right after the birth of the child.	Unpaid, social security benefits available
Iceland	13 weeks	Unpaid
United Kingdom	13 weeks until the child's 5th birthday	-
Spain	10 weeks	-
Belgium	Three months of parental leave for each child from the child's birth until s/he is 12 years old. It is valid for both parents. Employees who work full-time can take this parental leave on a part-time regime	Fixed monthly payment

Source: Global Gender Gap Report (2011)

Enclosure 2: Interview guide

Demographic block

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you? How old is your child?
4. What is your level of education?

Employment

5. Where do you work? (Public/private sector)
6. What position do you hold?
7. What salary did you have?
8. How much money did you get during parental leave?
9. Did you get financial aid at the birth of a child from the government?
(yes) How much money did you get? Have you had trouble in receiving it?
(no) Why not?
10. Did you return to your former place of work after parental leave?
11. How long have you been on parental leave?
12. How did childbirth and your stay on parental leave affect your work position?

Making a decision about who goes on a parental leave

13. Do you know about the possibility for fathers to take parental leave?
14. Tell me please, how did your couple decide who will go on parental leave?
 - What factors were decisive?
 - Who was the initiator of the decision?
 - What disadvantages did you see in that decision?
 - What advantages did you see?
 - How did your relatives/ friends/ colleagues react on that?

Staying on parental leave

15. What kind of problems did you have during parental leave? Tell me more about difficulties you faced up with.
16. What was your partner's contribution to the process of rearing your child?
17. How did your or your partner's parents help you during that process?
18. Did you hire a baby-sitter to help you?
19. What did it mean for you to be on a parental leave?
20. What can you say about differences between abilities of women and men to provide a good care and an appropriate upbringing for a child?

Enclosure 3: Interviewees' profiles

Interview #1 Anna

Anna is a 32 years old working mother who lives in Kiev. She has a university degree in economics. Anna is married; her husband is 40 years old and he has a university degree. Anna worked in a state bank as the head of a lending department at the time she went on parental leave. Her salary was 3000-4000 UAH (280-380 EUR)⁹. After one year and eight months on parental leave, she came back to work, but after a while, she changed her workplace, twice. Now Anna is working in a private kindergarten, so she knows firsthand about provision of childcare from care agencies. She works part-time, so she spends half a day at the work place. While Anna is at work, her mother-in-law takes care of her 4-years old son Aleksandr. In 2007, when Aleksandr was born, financial assistance for childbirth was 8 500 UAH (800 EUR).

Interview #2 Igor

Igor is a 30 years old father and he lives in Kiev. He graduated from Dnipropetrovs'k State University with a degree in journalism. His son Rostyslav is two years old now. Igor works in one of the UN agencies in Ukraine as a specialist of public relations and editing, with a salary of 8000 UAH (755 EUR). Rules on parental leave of this international organization differ from government policy. Igor had a possibility of only one month of parental leave, so he stayed on leave for one month. He got 100 percent of his salary for this month. Rostyslav was born in 2009, and by that time financial assistance for childbirth had increased to 12 240 UAH (1 155 EUR). After parental leave, Igor came back to his former place of work.

Interview #3 Julia and Roman

This family lives in Kiev. Julia is a 42 years old mother. She works in the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Ukraine as head of the Family Gender

⁹An average official salary in Kiev in 2012 is 4 148 UAH; in Ukraine: 2 722 UAH (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2012).

Policy Department. She stayed on parental leave with her daughter Mila one year and eight months. After that, Julia was asked to come back to work, so Mila's father took parental leave. Roman is 48 years old now. He is head of All-Ukraine Non-Governmental Organization. Both Julia and Roman have a university degree. Now Mila is 5.5 years old. In 2007, when she was born, financial assistance for childbirth was 8 500 UAH (800 EUR). Julia and Roman also have an older son, who is 21 years old now.

Interview #4 Anton

Anton is a 27 years old father. He has a university degree in law. His wife Olga is 30 years old; she has a university degree in sociology. When their son Marko (two years and four month old now) was born Anton worked at a prosecutor's office and earned approximately 2 500 UAH (235 EUR), while his wife worked in the private sector – in a market research company and she had a salary of 6 000 UAH (565 EUR). Olga stayed with their son for ten months and then Anton went on parental leave. He was on parental leave for one year, and then he left his former place of work, and found another job in the private sector. Marko was born in 2009 and at that time financial assistance at childbirth was 12 240 UAH (1 155 EUR).

Interview #5 Alex and Olga

Alex is 48 years old and he works as a private entrepreneur in Kiev. Alex and Olga have two children; both of them were born in Soviet Union times. Alex was an officer when the children were born and had a salary that was 3 times more than the average salary in the country. A month before their first child was born Alex was sent to Germany; Olga quit her job and went there together with her husband.