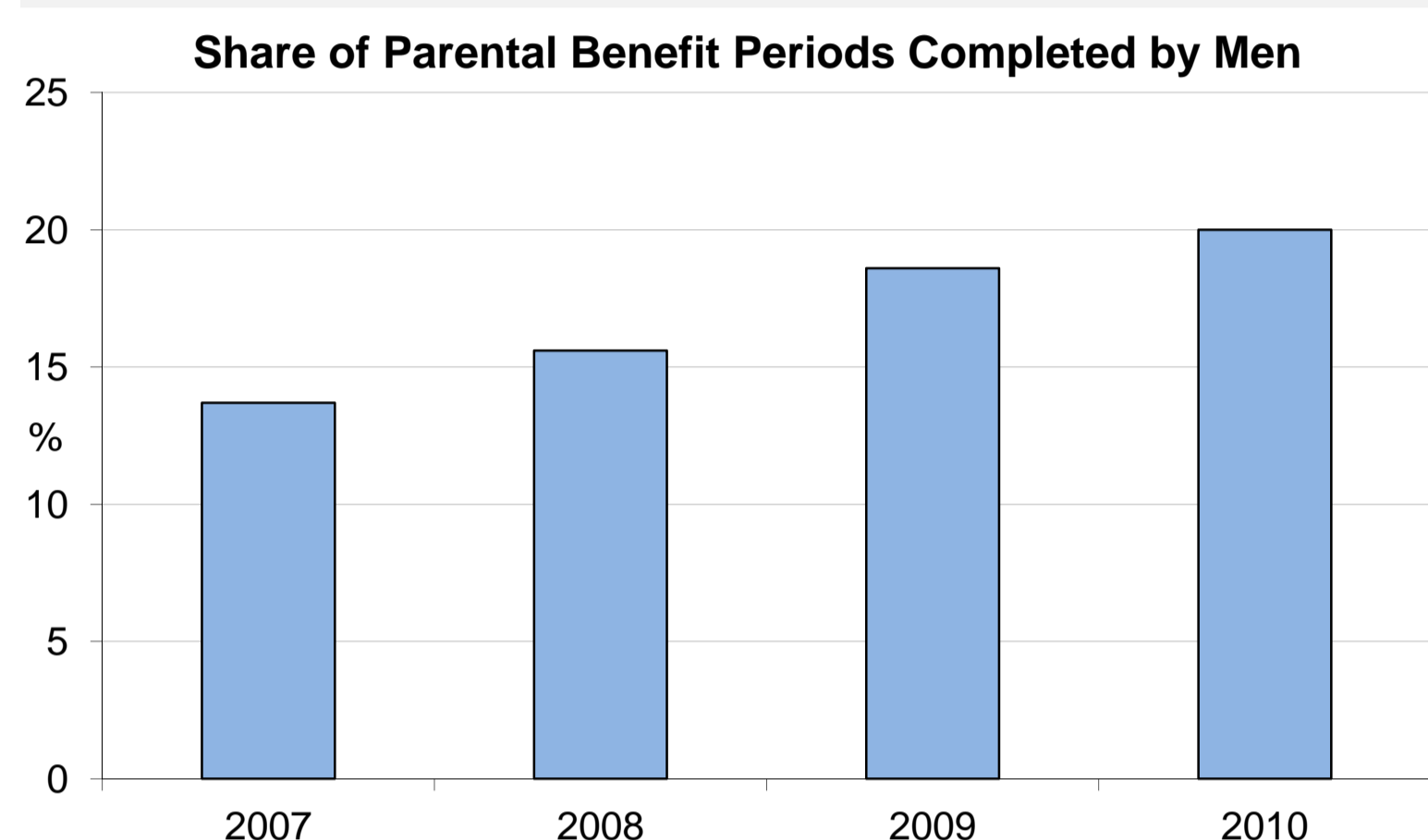


Fathers on parental leave: What happened since the recent reforms in German family policy?

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Background

In 2007, a parental leave benefit reform was introduced in Germany. Among other goals the reform aimed at encouraging men to share in child care more intensively than in the past. Politically this goal was pursued by reserving two out of 14 months of relatively generously paid leave (67% of net income in the year prior to child birth) to the other partner. These two months follow the principle of use it or lose it.



Official statistics show that within five years, fathers' take-up rate increased greatly from around 3% to 20%. Additionally, data indicate that the great majority of fathers do not take more time off than the two 'daddy months'.

Research Questions

- What are the main determinants of men's parental leave decisions at the level of couples?
- Which are the driving forces of men's decisions to take more time off than the 'daddy quota'?

Theoretical Framework

Value Change (Inglehart/Norris)	Economic Constraints (Becker, Lundberg/Pollak)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • universal trend of men's increasing desire to participate actively in child care and joint activities with children • negotiation of shared parenthood within couples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • division of labor within couples depends on human capital of each partner or on bargaining power
→ forerunners: young and highly educated men	→ comparison of human capital endowment in couples is decisive

Data

1. 'Junge Familie 2008' (collected by RWI Essen): representative sample for Germany of parents who had a baby at the beginning of 2007 to analyze fathers' parental leave take-up
2. Register data for all births between 2007 and 2009 in Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (provided by local authorities) to distinguish fathers according to the duration of parental leave

Results I – Who Claims Parental Leave Benefits?

- Stylized results of logistic regression with dependent variable (fathers' parental leave take-up = yes)

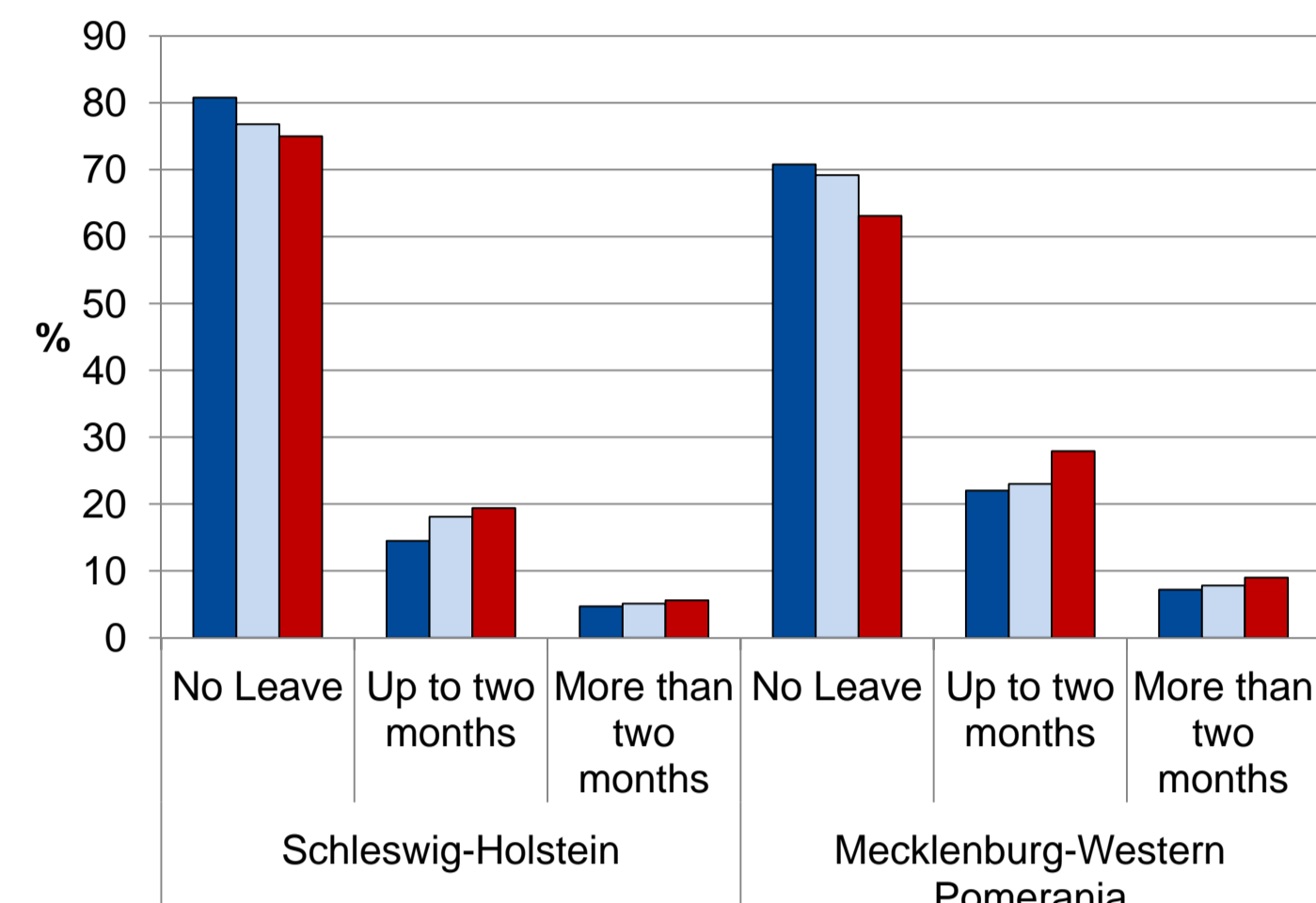
Covariate	Impact
Living in East Germany (ref. West Germany)	+
Woman of German nationality (ref. other)	-
Woman's age group: 30-34, 35 and older (ref. less than 30)	+
Schooling degree of couple: both high, man higher than woman (ref. -both intermediate)	+
Employment of couple in year prior to birth (ref. both employed):	
Man employed, woman not employed	-
Woman employed, man not employed	+
Net earnings in year prior to birth (ref. both about the same):	
Woman earns more than man	+
Man earns more than woman	-

In addition non-significant impact of marital status, number of kids in household, size of residence, household income

→ Mixed picture for the idea of value change, economic constraints are important

Results II – The Duration of Parental Leave in Two Select Northern States

Fathers' Share of Parental Benefit Periods for Children Born 2007-2009 in SH and M-WP

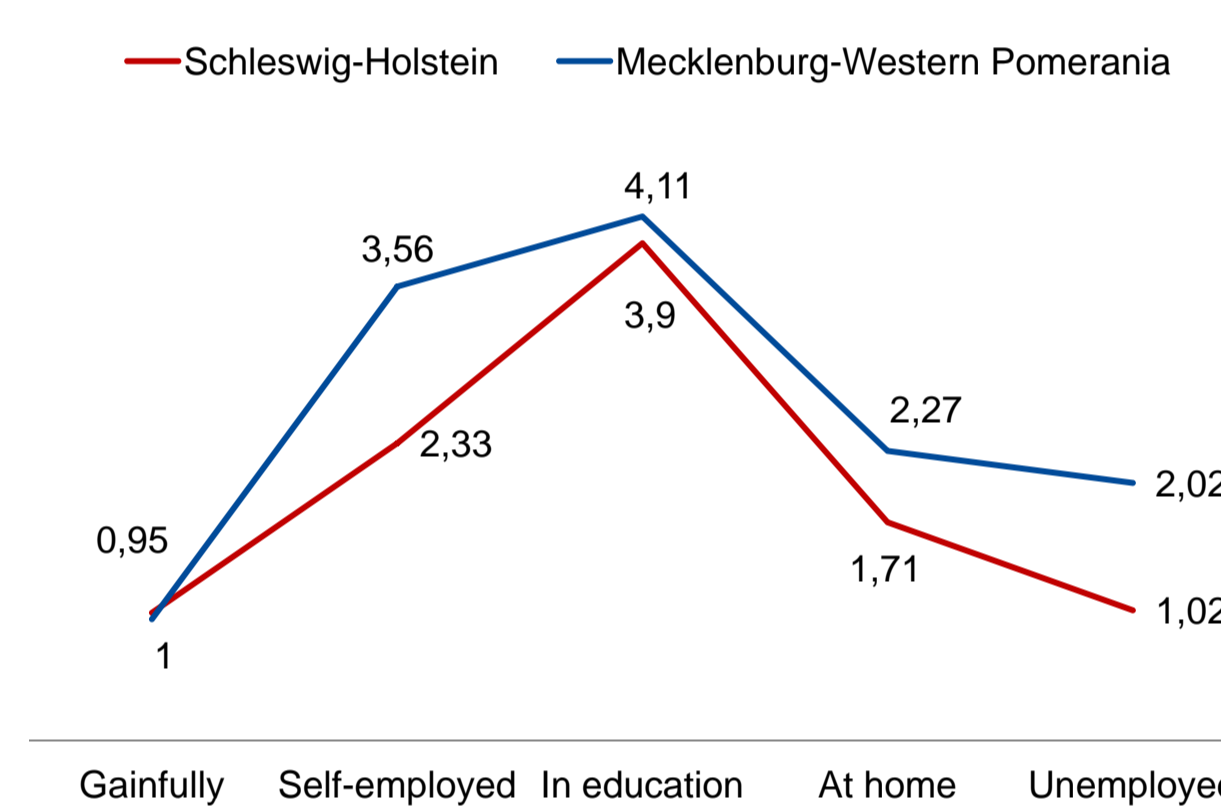


Over time fathers are increasingly more likely to take any leave although most men do not. Fathers in M-WP are somewhat more likely to take parental leave than men in SH and they do so for somewhat longer periods of time.

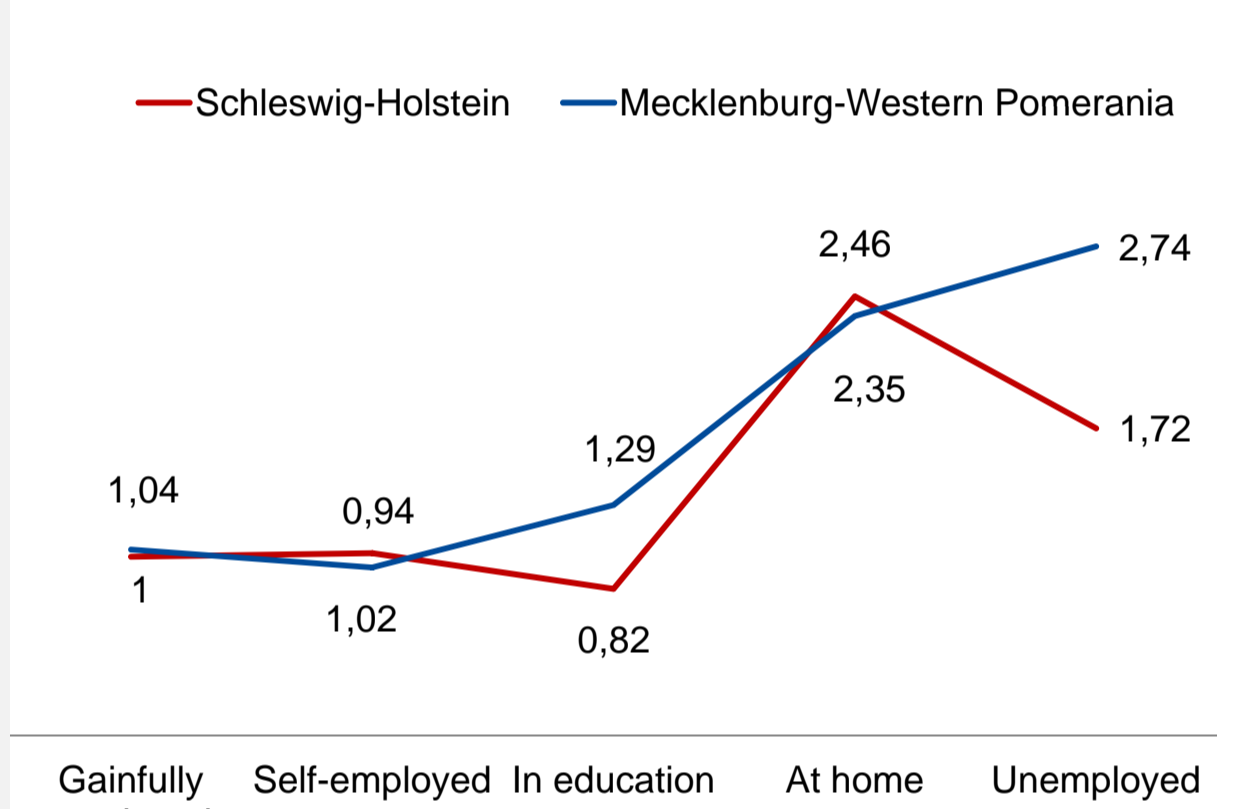
Results III – Who Takes More Leave than the 'Daddy Quota'?

Results of Logistic Regressions (Odds Ratios, dependent variable = more than two months of parental leave compared to up to two months)

Impact of Women's Employment



Impact of Men's Employment

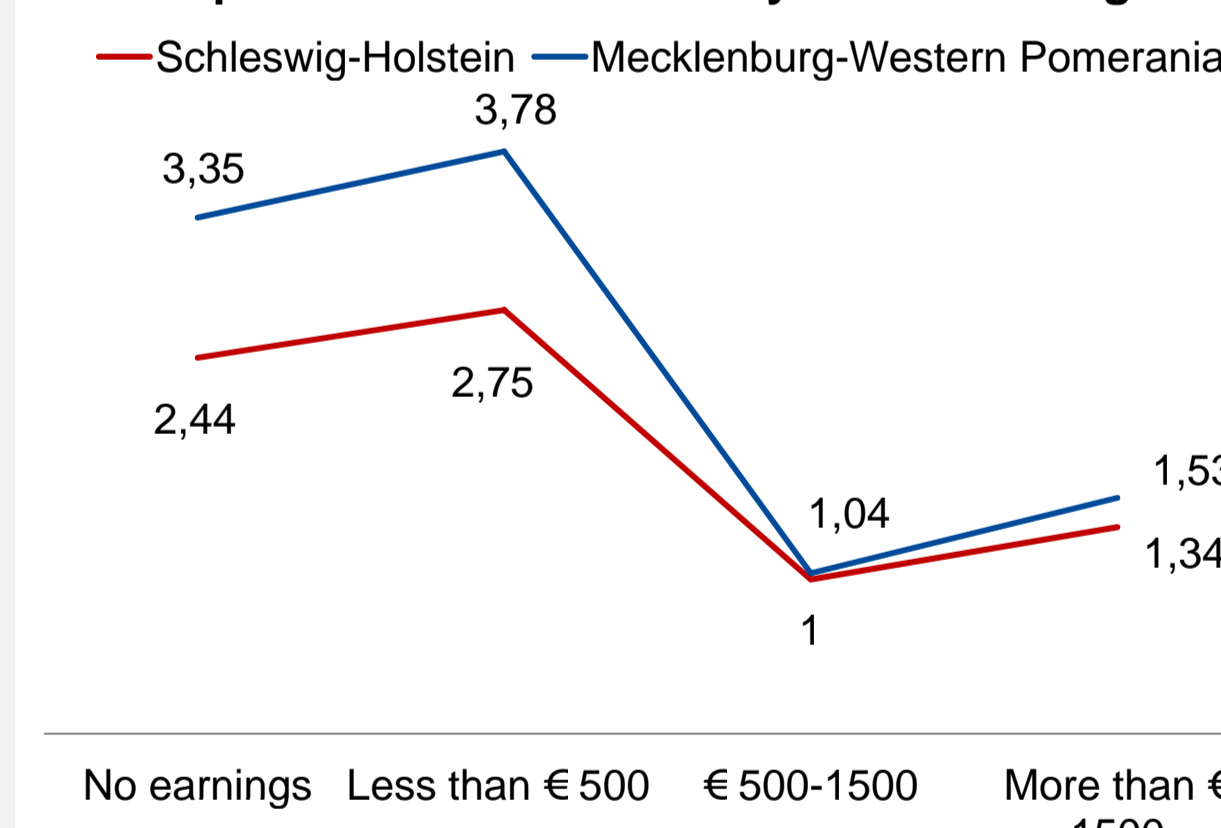


Models controlling for: region, year, marital status, number of kids in household, age, employment.

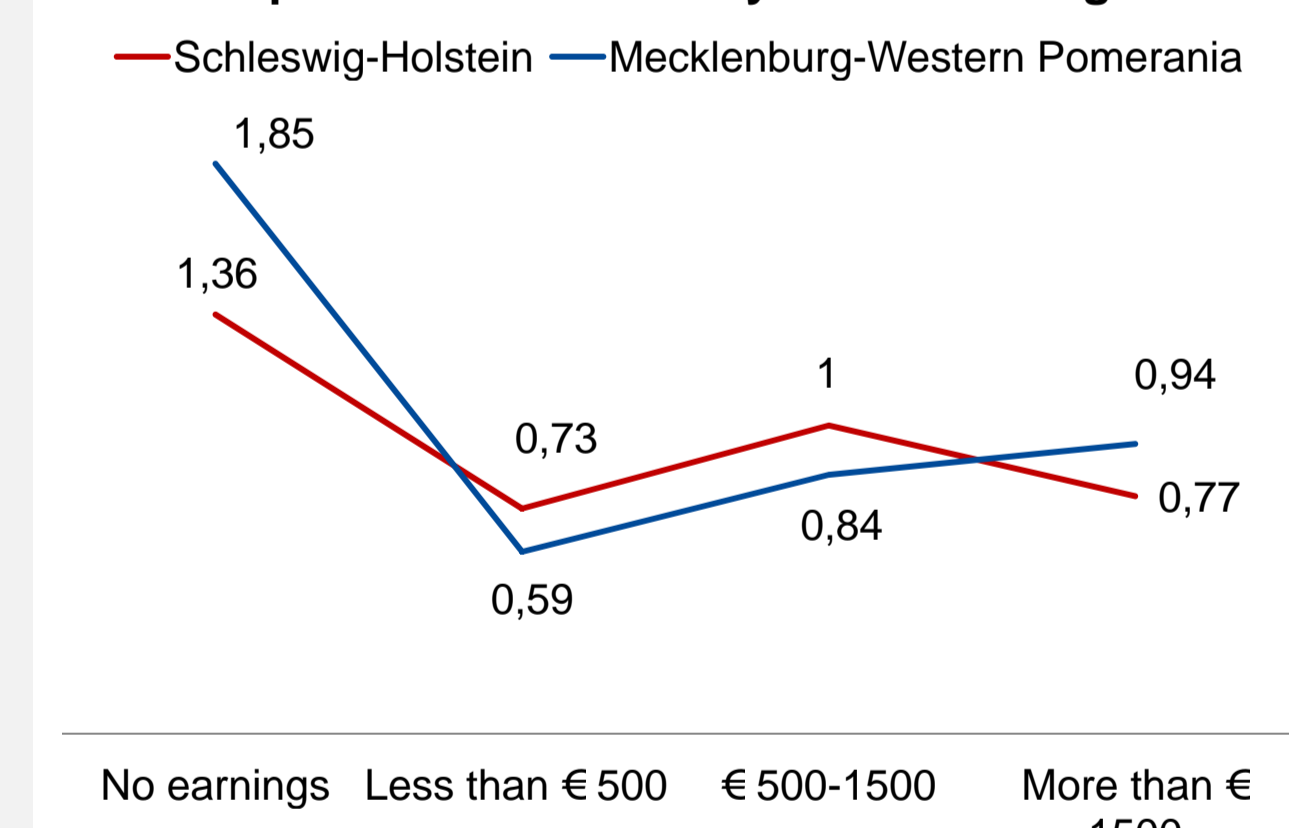
Men are more likely to take extended leaves if the woman was self-employed, in education, housewife or if she was unemployed (in M-WP only) in the year prior to child birth.

Men are more likely to take extended leaves if they were at home or unemployed (particularly in M-WP) in the year before the baby was born.

Impact of Women's Monthly Labor Earnings



Impact of Men's Monthly Labor Earnings



Models controlling for: region, year, marital status, number of kids in household, age, earnings.

Men are more likely to take extended leaves if the woman earned nothing or very little in the year before child birth and they are least likely if the woman had medium earnings.

Men are most likely to take extended leaves if they had no earnings at all in the year prior to child birth.

Conclusions

- Economic considerations are very important for men's decisions to take parental leave and to do so extensively
- It does not imply that values and attitudes towards gender roles and parenthood are unimportant
- Decisions on fathers' use of parental leave are made within the couple → capacities of both partners are of importance for the negotiation
- Differences at the regional level are an expression of structural opportunities (e.g., unemployment) and in part traditions of women's employment in the former East and the former West of Germany
- Men who spend more time with their children do not seem to belong to economically advantaged groups → generalizability?