CO-RESPONSIBILITY IN CHILD CARE: THE USE OF PART-TIME PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IN URUGUAY

Lourdes Rodriguez-Chamussy
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The goal of this project is to identify and evaluate mechanisms that encourage fathers to take part-time paid parental leave (not-simultaneously) granted to mothers and fathers in Uruguay to care for the newborn.

The work is in a stage of design of evaluation.

Partnership among UN-Women Uruguay, LACGIL and eMBeD (World Bank), Universidad de la Republica and the National Office for Social Security (BPS)
Context: The vicious circle of gender inequality:

- Low participation in paid work and economic opportunities
- Prominence of role as caregivers
- Limited opportunities for career progression and employment of quality
- Low earnings
Widening gaps after maternity: The case of Uruguay

High maternity penalty on women’s earnings:

After ten years of having a child, mothers earn 42% less than women who did not have a child (Querejeta 2020)

Maternity affects women’s engagement in paid and unpaid work:

Probability of engaging in paid work decreases (3-10 pp)

Time dedicated to housework increases (around 20 hours per week)

Source: Querejeta (2020)
Participation of men in unpaid work is substantially lower, particularly when there are children in the household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Gap (M – W)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-6 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-16 hours</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-29 hours</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>42</td>
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Source: Based on Bucheli, Gonzalez and Lara (2018)
PART-TIME PARENTAL LEAVE FOR THE NEWBORN CARE

Law 19.161 (November 2013)

- Subsidy for parents (both) working in the private sector
- Part-time work schedule with full-time pay
- Paid substitute worker for employer

Restrictions

- Cannot be used by both parents at the same time
- To be used between end of maternity leave and before baby turns 6 months
But…most fathers do not use the benefit

Share of individuals who have used the benefit (%)

- Fathers: 4% Did not use it, 96% Used it
- Mothers: 70% Did not use it, 30% Used it

### Why?

<table>
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<th>Constraint</th>
<th>Share of people who ...</th>
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<th>Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>don’t know the benefit</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>don’t know the duration of the benefit</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>don’t know about its portability</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic costs</td>
<td>consider that the benefit carries an economic cost</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>Social norms</td>
<td>believe that it is a mother’s responsibility to take care of babies during the first year of life</td>
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Source: Batthyany, Genta and Perrota (2018)
Hypothesis: Social norms and beliefs on the role of women/men and care may also predetermine other constraints

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Source: Batthyany, Genta and Perrota (2018)
Behaviorally-informed messages

Potential beneficiaries

Providing information about the policy

Adjusting perceptions about the cost

Affecting beliefs about the role of fathers

HOW TO PROMOTE CHANGE?
Norm Change

Diagnostics of social norms to help identify: a) norm-following behavior; the likely mechanisms maintaining the social norms at different levels of prevalence; and c) the most promising and cost-effective potential interventions to weaken social norms.

Mechanisms sustaining social norms

Potential interventions targeting the norm maintenance mechanisms

Source: Adapted from Gauri, Rahman and Sen (2019)
Content currently in process of design based on:

- “pluralistic ignorance” norms → majority of group members privately reject a norm, but go along with it because they assume, incorrectly, that most others accept it
- Activating countervailing a norm
OUTCOMES OF INTEREST

**Short-term**
- Knowledge about the existence, duration, and eligibility requirements for the benefit
- Perception of the role of women/men in care
- Intention to use the part-time paid parental leave

**Medium-term**
- Use of the part-time paid parental leave by mothers and fathers
- Duration of the part-time leave
- Father/mother’s employment
- Hours worked per week by both parents

**Long-term**
- Salary of both parents
- Employment of both parents
- Hours worked per week by both parents
- Couple’s future fertility
- % of time that father contributes to the care of the children
Potential lack of integration with other policies and benefits, for example accommodations for breastfeeding mothers at work, access to childcare for ages 6 months+
Stay tuned for results!

Thank you!

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