Work-family policy

in the United States and Germany:

Sub-federal and

employer-provided policy

by

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Abstract

Research on family policy tends to focus on public and national-level family policy. Therefore, two additional and sometimes alternative sources of institutional support for work-family balance remain under-researched, namely sub-national and employer-provided family policy. This thesis consists of four articles that address questions left in the gaps of the literature on the two themes of sub-federal and employer-provided family policy. The first article addresses the first theme concerning sub-federal family policy in the United States. It investigates two questions: Whether varieties of liberalism exist across the 50 United States, and whether these varieties help explain differences in the economic security among households with children. The findings show that there are varieties of liberalism that help explain differences in households' economic security, especially those of single-mother households. This article typologizes state-level public family policy packages, and associates these with family outcomes. Its theoretical contribution is to refine the concept of liberalism for sub-federal family policy in the United States, such that it relates to poverty outcomes and is simple to operationalize.

The remaining articles all address the theme of employer-provided family policy. Each makes a distinct theoretical contribution, which engages the debate on whether economic or normative pressures are better able to explain employer family policy provision. The second article explores the relationship between public and employer-provided family policy for childcare and flexible work in the United States and Germany. Specifically, it investigates the relevance of female leadership and organized labor for employer policy. The theoretical contribution lies primarily in the framework, which integrates rational choice theory and neo-institutionalism to generate opposing empirical predictions and thereby

distinguish whether economic or normative motivations better explain employer provision. This theoretical distinction is not commonly made, with many previous studies focusing solely on economic considerations, or on both normative and economic explanations without distinguishing the extent of their explanatory potential. Logistic regression analysis is employed to examine the association between each policy and female leadership and organized labor in each country. The findings suggest normative pressures explain crowding-in of employer childcare in Germany, while works councils are highly relevant to flexible working in Germany, and female leadership is highly relevant to employer-provided childcare in the United States. While economic explanations for these associations are useful, caution is advised against relying solely on them. The study highlights the importance of considering both economic and normative motivations for employer provision of family policies.

The third and fourth papers both address both theses of sub-federal public and employer family policy. The third paper picks up an avenue for research suggested by the previous paper in the thesis. It compares the relationship between female leadership and employer-provided childcare at the sub-federal level across the 50 United States. The article questions the sufficiency of economic considerations to explain the role of female leaders for employer-provided childcare. The theoretical contribution is to suggest that in certain contexts in the sub-federal United States, normative pressures on employers can better explain empirical outcomes. Using logistic regression, the article examines two categories of employer childcare: flexible spending accounts (FSAs), which are a cost-effective policy provided for economic reasons, and most other forms of employer childcare (non-FSAs), which are less easily rationalized as cost-effective. Results show that non-FSA forms of

employer childcare are more likely in states with generous public childcare, providing evidence of normative pressure. The prevalence of female leadership is also highly relevant for employer childcare, with female executives associated with both forms of childcare. The study suggests that a critical mass of female leaders can exert both economic and normative pressure on employers to provide childcare, highlighting the relevance of both normative and economic considerations to employer decisions.

The fourth paper examines how and why employers provide parenting leaves in the context of varying public leave policies. It challenges both the prevailing notion that economic pressure is the main driver of employer policy, as well as an emerging exception to this argument, that generous public policy can make normative considerations more important to employers. The paper offers a theoretical contribution by suggesting that the explanatory power of normative versus economic theories of employer provision is gendered: While employer-provided maternity leave in context of generous public policy is better explained by normative arguments, economic explanations better fit provision patterns of employer paternity leave. Using the National Study of Employers dataset, this case study of the United States finds that despite gender-neutral public policy, employers reintroduce gender unequal provision in their maternity and paternity leave policies. Across states where all public policies are gender-neutral, employer maternity policies are more likely when this provision is more generous, but paternity policies show no such pattern.

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Introduction

This thesis explores under-researched aspects of family policy that address work-family conflict for employed parents of young children, primarily in the United States. It consists of four articles that investigate related, yet distinct research questions. This introduction is structured in the following way: Following a brief overview of the field of family policy research, two under-researched aspects of family policy are introduced: sub-national family policy and employer-provided family policy. These are the research areas within the broader field of family policy addressed by the empirical articles that make up this thesis. With the context provided in these introductory sections, the reader can better gauge where the specific research questions posed by the articles fit within the field of family policy research. The final section of the introduction outlines the larger theoretical debate that motivates articles 2-4, specifies the different starting points for each article's theoretical contribution, and discusses the overlap between articles two and three. After the introduction, the four articles are presented. The thesis conclusion addresses each of the four articles in turn and then presents the overarching conclusion of the thesis.

An introduction to family policy research

Family policy as an area of social policy has expanded in many Western democratic welfare states since the 1990s, although comparatively little in the United States. Consequently, over the last three decades welfare state research has begun to examine the causes and nature of this family policy

expansion, as well as associated outcomes for parents and children[1]. Primary concerns of scholars of family policy have been threefold: Expanding welfare state scholarship (and typologies) by analyses of the ways in which policy addresses families (Bergqvist & Saxonberg, 2017; Bettio & Plantenga, 2004; Daly, 2010; Daly & Lewis, 2000; Ferragina et al., 2013; Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Kurowska, 2018; J. Lewis, 1992; O'Connor et al., 1999; Orloff, 2009, 1993; Saxonberg, 2013); studying the association between public family policy and gender equality (Ferragina, 2019; Ferrarini, 2006; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011; Hennig et al., 2012; Korpi et al., 2013; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005, 2006; Morrissey, 2017; Pettit & Hook, 2009); and studying the association between public family policy and child outcomes (Gabel & Kamerman, 2006; Kamerman & Kahn, 2001; Mínguez, 2017; van Huizen & Plantenga, 2018; White & Friendly, 2012; Wyness, 2014). It is a highly comparative field of study, where international comparison is standard, including when insights are sought for a particular country, such as the United States.

Yet regarding family policy in the United States in particular, there are many aspects and topics that have received little scholarly attention. This thesis addresses two such frontiers, important yet neglected aspects of welfare state research generally, and particularly in the United States: sub-national policy and occupational welfare.

[1] An exception is the seminal work by Kamerman and Kahn (1979), which conceptualized family policy as a distinct policy arena before it became more widely acknowledged as a field in its own right.

The sub-national level in analyses of US family policy

There is a branch of social policy research dedicated to investigating the relationship between federalism and welfare state development. The central question in this scholarly conversation is whether decentralized social policy structures restrain or further redistributive policies. For research concerning the bygone 'golden age' of the welfare state (Pierson, Castles & Naumann, 2014: 130),[2] the 'unanimous' consensus was that decentralized social policy structures were a break on welfare state growth (Obinger, Leibfried and Castles, 2005: 3). This consensus has however increasingly been called into question in the wake of widespread welfare state retrenchment (Pierson, 2001). Regarding the United States, very little research has been conducted with regard to the role of decentralization for the development of social policies since the 1996 welfare reform which devolved substantial social policy responsibility to the states (Bruch et al., 2018). While the research presented in this thesis does not address the question of the relationship between U.S. federalism and social policy *development*, it takes a first and rare step of analysing U.S. state-level policies in terms of two outcomes at that level: the rates of children in poverty (article one) and the prevalence and nature of employer-provided family policies (articles three and four).

[2] The term 'golden age' is often used to denote the thirty years following the second world war, in which welfare states were generally characterized by a male-breadwinner, female-carer family model, as well as relatively low inequality, high economic prosperity and high employment levels.

US state-level family policy and poverty outcomes:

The contribution of the first thesis article

The first thesis article questions the prevailing practice in comparative social policy of treating the United States as a monolithically liberal welfare state. It translates insights from other areas of social policy, primarily health, education and broader social safety policies (Bruch et al., 2016; McLendon & Perna, 2014; Newhouse & Garber, 2013) to examine whether meaningful levels of variation also exist in family policy at the sub-federal level. The article finds such variation, meaningful because the level of variation in state's family policy is associated with poverty outcomes among households with children, especially single-mother households.

Furthermore, the conceptualization of this variety is laid out in a conceptual framework which argues for the relevance of both defamilization and decommodification by degree in the United States (i.e. including state minimum wage and earned income tax credit, which do not emancipate from the market, but provide the ability to work *less* with higher take-home pay). The article suggests that the consideration of both factors is crucial in the context of family policy in liberal welfare regimes.

Finally, the article develops a practical way for scholars to take variety in U.S. family policy into account, namely by deconstructing the United States into 'hard' and 'soft' varieties of liberalism. Cross-national analyses of welfare state and poverty outcomes can incorporate this categorical difference between states to pay heed to the substantial and meaningful state-level variation of family policy this article identifies.

An introduction to occupational welfare research

In addition to the sub-federal public policy level, employers are another neglected institutional source of family policy. Such employer-provided family policies are a form of occupational welfare, the importance of which Titmuss (1958) first highlighted in his seminal work *The Social Division of Welfare*.

Titmuss identified “three major categories of welfare: social welfare, fiscal welfare and occupational welfare” (1956: 11). He devised these categories by their method of distribution, rather than policy object. Social welfare is distributed by the state to the eligible group of the population considered to be in need. Fiscal welfare in contrast is issued through “allowances and reliefs from income tax” which can be functionally equivalent to the receipt of social welfare, but are more often to the benefit of people in employment with middle or even high incomes (Titmuss 1956: 13).

Occupational welfare is the last of the welfare categories. Unfortunately left without a definition by Titmuss, one adapted from Sinfield (1978) pinpoints occupational welfare as benefits received by an employee through or as a result of employment beyond those public benefits received on the basis of citizenship or though national insurance. Such benefits can be funded entirely by the employer or though the employer in conjunction with the employee, the state, or both. They can be provided either by the employer, the state or a paid market agent. This diversity of funding and provision makes comparable data difficult to gather, but Greve (2007: 46) estimates that in 2001, occupational welfare spending as percentage of total social policy spending ranged between 3 and nearly 37% across OECD countries with advanced welfare states. These numbers suggest that private

social expenditure accounts for a significant portion of welfare spending in the OECD.

A prominent scholarly conversation has erupted around the extent of fiscal welfare in the United States as well as the regressive nature of US fiscal welfare (Hacker, 2002; Howard, 1997). Occupational welfare and 'fringe benefits' are part of this conversation, though mostly with regard to pensions and healthcare (Gottschalk, 2000; Prasad, 2016; Stevens, 1988). Discussions around employer-provided family policies are part of a separate scholarly discussion centered in organizational sociology, which tends not to focus on the relationship between public social welfare and occupational welfare (Kelly, 2005). The second of the four thesis articles addresses this sparse research field, examining the relationship between public and employer family policy in the United States. The approach adopted is conventional for family policy research, consisting of an internationally comparative study of Germany and the United States. Articles three and four have the comparative novelty that they evaluate the relationship between public and employer-provided family policy by comparing employers in different states, thereby making use of the U.S. federal structure to examine policy variation.

In this way, each of the four articles addresses at least one of the two overarching topics of the thesis: the role of federalism and/or employer-provision in U.S. family policy. At the same time, each article brings original theoretical contributions to the literature as explained in the next sub-section.

Theoretical debates in employer family policy research

Economic versus normative pressures

There are two theoretical explanations for why employers may offer employer family policy: as a response to economic, or normative pressures. The overarching theoretical perspective behind the argument for economic pressures can be summarized as a rational-choice theoretical perspective, while the theoretical perspective behind the normative argument is derived primarily from neo-institutionalist theory. As each article of this cumulative thesis is designed to stand alone, the three articles that engage with the economic versus normative pressures debate each give their own summary of rational-choice and neo-institutionalist theory. This section serves to place the overarching thesis in context of this theoretical debate.

Rational-choice theoretical approaches (Coleman & Fararo, 1992; Friedman, 1953; Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997), view employer family policy as an outcome of a calculated cost-benefit analysis, in response to economic pressures, to improve a company's profit margin (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; DeMenezes & Kelliher, 2011; Estévez-Abe et al., 2001; Hart, 2010). In the literature on employer family policy, this is often termed the "bottom line" or "business case" explanation for employer family policy provision (Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Seyler et al., 1995). The argument is that employers will provide family policies if decision makers believe the financial benefit of doing so exceeds the cost. Previous literature has repeatedly shown that this "business case" argument factors into employers' decisions on whether to provide family policy (Bardoel, 2003; Seyler et al., 1995), although research by Fleckenstein and Seeleib-Kaiser (2011) suggested that

only few employers gather information on the extent to which employer family policies benefit the bottom line. In sum, rational-choice theories view employer family policy as a response to economic pressures (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; DeMenezes & Kelliher, 2011; Estévez-Abe et al., 2001; Hart, 2010).

Neo-institutionalism in contrast explains employer-provided family policy as a reaction to institutional pressures faced by employers (e.g. Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Pasamar & Alegre, 2015; Pasamar & Valle, 2015). This theoretical stance views employer decisions as primarily shaped by pressures only tangentially or superficially related to concerns of profitability (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991; Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000). Indeed, a central tenant of neo-institutionalism is to critique the taken-for-grantedness of rationality in organizations (Tacke, 2006; Scott, 1995; Amstutz et al., 2020). Neo-institutionalism posits that employers' decision-making is primarily shaped by pressures exerted within the institutional context in which the employer is situated (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). It can thus explain employer-family policy as an organizational response to normative pressures, exerted by institutions prominently including the state. By offering certain public policies, the state shapes norms regarding the appropriate level of support employees can expect from their employers (Lewis & Smithson, 2001; Powell, 1991), and thereby puts pressure on employers to offer policies that reflect this normative standard (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991). The overarching neo-institutionalist argument is that employers will provide family policies if doing so is viewed as the appropriate thing to do (Amstutz et al., 2020; Chappell,

2006; March & Olsen, 2008), and that state public policy shapes what is perceives as appropriate (Powell, 1991; W. R. Scott, 1991).

Importantly, explanations based in economic versus normative arguments are not mutually exclusive. Specifically, it may be costly for an employer to fall below the normative standard for family policy provision in a given industry. For this reason many studies of employer family policy acknowledge that likely both normative and economic factors are at play (eg. (Chung, 2019b; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Fleckenstein & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011b; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Morgan & Milliken, 1992; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Wiß, 2017). However, with notable exceptions (e.g. Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Pasamar & Alegre, 2015; Pasamar & Valle, 2015), the literature generally focuses on economic explanations as the main reason employers provide family policies. For example, Seyler et al (1995, p. 191) conclude that employers are more likely to offer family-friendly benefits when "it is in their self-interest to do so" and "when the costs of these benefits can be reduced". Similarly, Todd and Binns (2013: 230) find that employers offer family policies "to attract and retain staff in the context of growing skilled labor shortages".

Explaining the dominance of economic explanations

At the same time, Todd and Binns (2013: 230) highlight that the focus on economic factors is itself likely a product a "neoliberal environment shaping management of the workplace [such that] workforce-economic outcomes are prioritized over social considerations". This illustrates two possible explanations as to why normative factors often taken a backseat to economic

explanations for employer-provided family policy. First, there is an economization of social policy and family policy in which economic arguments have particular salience (Elomäki, 2023; Laruffa, 2022; Ylöstalo, 2022). Explanations for occupational welfare are not excluded from this trend. Second, while rational-choice theory and neo-institutionalism differ in their explanations as to why employers provide family policies (i.e. as a response to economic versus normative pressures respectively), the theories often predict the same empirical patterns. For example, the relevance of employer size can be explained as a function of economic pressure, as provision is more likely to be cost-efficient for large employers who are better able to benefit from economies of scale (Osterman, 1995; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Seyler et al., 1995). However, the positive association between employer size and employer-provided family policy can also be explained from a neo-institutionalist perspective, where employers with greater numbers of employees are more likely to offer employer family policies because their greater visibility makes them subject to greater normative pressures (Ingram & Simons, 1995). Taken together, the power of economic arguments and the similarity in empirical prediction can make neo-institutionalism a superfluous theoretical building block for studies of employer family policy.

Exception to rational-choice explanations: Public policy context

However, this is not the case when comparative studies focus on the public policy context in which employers make decisions about whether to offer family policies. Once the public policy context is brought into the equation,

rational-choice and neo-institutionalism offer different empirical predictions, particularly regarding the relevance of certain employee segments, to employers' likelihood of providing family policy. This is because the theories offer different predictions about the relationship between public policy and employees' claims-making power. In rational-choice theory, generous public policy reduces the economic legitimacy of employees' needs, and thus their claims-making power (Hannan, 1992; Homans, 1974). In contrast, neo-institutionalist theory argues that generous public policy increases employees' normative legitimacy, thus increasing their claims-making power (W. R. Scott, 1991; Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019a). Thus, when comparing polities with more and less generous public policy, both neo-institutionalist and rational-choice explanations are needed.

Despite their potential for complementarity, rational-choice and neo-institutionalist theories are rarely effectively integrated, leaving gaps in our understanding of employer behavior in relation to specific family policy instruments and organizational characteristics. The three articles in this thesis that examine the employer level take distinct approaches to integrating and delimiting these theories, with the goal of refining our understanding of when and why employers provide family policies. The remainder of this article explains how each article's contributes to the economic versus normative pressures debate.

Theoretical contributions of the last three thesis articles

The second thesis article

The second article uses the two different public family policy landscapes in Germany and the United States to create a theoretical framework to make opposing empirical predictions about the relevance of female leadership and organized labor to employer family policy. This enables the distinction between whether economic or normative considerations are more likely motivating employer provision, an evaluation that is not usually made. Our findings suggest that both the strong association between a high prevalence of female leaders and employer childcare in the United States, as well as the importance of organized labor for flexible working in Germany are better explained as the result of economic rather than normative pressures. However, in our discussion we evaluate the extent to which this finding aligns with relevant research specifically about female leadership in the United States, and highlight remaining reasons to doubt the economic rationale in that case.

In Germany, while we find evidence that the relevance of collective bargaining for employer childcare, as well as the relevance of works councils for flexible working are more likely motivated by economic pressures, we also find evidence of the potential of normative claims making. The findings suggests that works councils in particular may be able to leverage their normative claims-making power in the light of generous public childcare policy, but that a lack of coordination between the different tiers of organized labor may be impeding that effort.

In sum, the theoretical contribution of this article is two-fold: The first is the development of a theoretical framework that enables an evaluation of the explanatory power of economic versus normative arguments for employer family policy provision by creating different empirical predictions. While the findings generally confirm the current wisdom that economic arguments have greater explanatory power at the organizational level, our ability to isolate patterns better explained by normative pressures allows a more nuanced discussion of their importance, beyond a caveat that normative pressures likely also play an unspecified role.

Specifically, the theoretical framework permits the paper's second theoretical contribution, namely that, against most evidence suggesting that organized labor exerts purely economic pressure on employers, works councils in Germany may be leveraging normative pressure to claim employer childcare, even though this effort may be hampered by a lack of coordination with collective bargaining.

The third thesis article

The third article picks up a suggestion for further research developed in the second article. Among other findings, the second article suggested that economic pressure is the most straightforward explanation for the relevance of female leadership for employer childcare in the United States. However, as discussed in the second article, there are reasons to question this economic explanation. These relate both to the dependent, as well as the independent variable of the association. Regarding the dependent variable, employer-childcare, variation in sub-federal public childcare policy in the

United States (Bruch et al., 2016; Cohen-Vogel et al., 2020; Friedman-Krause et al., 2022; Meyers et al., 2001; Parolin & Daiger von Gleichen, 2020), suggests potential for successful normative claims-making in states with more generous policies, which may not be visible at the national level. Second, regarding female leadership as an explanatory variable, there is a nascent body of research suggesting that they can be effective normative change agents (Fuwa, 2021; Gould et al., 2018; Kelan & Wratil, 2018), especially when they are present in critical mass (Kowalewska, 2020, 2021; Miliopoulou & Kapareliotis, 2021). These insights are particularly relevant in the Unites States, the OECD country with the highest percentage of women in managerial positions, with 40.9% of managerial positions held by women, well above the 33% OECD average (ILO, 2020; OECD, 2023). Taken together, these arguments are reason to focus more sharply on the association between female leaders and employer childcare in the United States, which is what the third thesis article does.

Further, this means that there is overlap between articles two and articles three of the thesis, in that they both examine the association between female leadership and employer childcare. Article three is motivated by article two, in that it engages in the call for further research made there. It does so by differentiating and comparing two forms of employer-provided childcare in the United States: flexible spending accounts (FSAs) and other forms of employer-provided childcare (non-FSAs). FSAs are geared toward high-skill, high-income employees and can also be provided at very low cost to the employer (Kelly, 2003). Therefore it can be more easily argued that they are a cost-effective policy, provided for economic reasons. In contrast,

non-FSA forms of childcare encompass employer support that come at a real and often substantial cost. Furthermore, such childcare is more supportive of employees of lower skill or income (Hipp et al., 2017; Morrissey & Warner, 2009), while at the same time being perceived as some of the more expensive measures by employers (Ratnasingam et al., 2012; Ruddy, 2020). Thus, provision of non-FSA childcare by employers, unless these are dependent on high skills employees, is difficult to explain on economic grounds alone, but rather is likely motivated by normative considerations. By comparing the provision of the two different kinds of employer childcare in context of sub-federal public childcare policy variation, the article can give a more nuanced account of the effectiveness of economic and normative explanations for the relevance of female leaders. This is the main distinction between article two and three, and also the main theoretical contribution of article three: While the few studies that discuss the relevance of female leaders for employer family policy acknowledge the likely role of both normative and economic pressures, this article is able to differentiate two contexts, one which favors economic, and another which favors normative explanations.

The last thesis article

In contrast to the previous two articles, article four focuses on the gendered nature of whether employers seem to provide family policy for normative or economic reasons. Specifically, this study examines employer-provided maternity and paternity leaves in the context of gender-neutral public policy.

The findings suggest that employers re-introduce gender-unequal provision despite gender-neutral public policy.

Previously, the only employer family policy instrument that had been studied in connection with the corresponding public policy was employer-provided maternity leave. The emergent wisdom from these comparative studies was that generous public maternity leave tends to crowd-in employer maternity provisions, i.e. that generous public policy is associated with more widespread employer policy (Evans, 2001, 2002). This “crowding-in” pattern seems to persist until public maternity leave reaches one year of leave of duration, after which the association becomes negative (Chung, 2019b, 2020a). The theoretical contribution of this study is to suggest that this pattern may be gendered, specifically limited to maternity as opposed to paternity policies. Comparing the generosity of public, gender-neutral parenting leave policies with the prevalence of employer-provided paternity leave policies provided no evidence of crowding-in, and even tentative evidence of crowding-out. This further suggests a gendered limitation on the ability of neo-institutionalism to explain employer-provision in parenting leaves in context of more generous public policy.

Article 1 Varieties of Liberalism? A Comparative Analysis of Family Policy and Poverty Outcomes across the 50 United States

co-authored with Zachary Parolin

Abstract

The United States is generally recognized as an exemplar of liberal policy regime types. However, given evidence of state-level divergence in social policy, this paper investigates to what extent such variation is present and relevant in state-level family policy. To this end, we pose a primary and secondary research question. Our primary question is whether varieties of liberalism exist across the 50 United States. Our secondary question is whether these varieties of liberalism correspond to variety in social indicators of families' economic wellbeing. To answer our primary question, we first construct a family policy index that scores the relative generosity and coverage of state-administered social programs that contribute to the (de)commodification and (de)familialization of households with children. We then perform a cluster analysis to group states by shared decommodifying and defamilializing features. To answer our secondary question, we investigate how our family-policy clusters are associated with social indicators of families' financial security. Our findings suggest that varieties of liberalism do, indeed, exist within the United States. With the exception of Vermont, which stands out with respect to its comparatively generous family policies, we classify states into two groups: those with 'soft' liberal family policy in states featuring relatively generous and accessible policies, and 'hard' liberal family policy in states achieving little of either. We find that these differences help explain state-level heterogeneity in levels of economic security among households with children, particularly single-mother households.

Introduction

Comparative social policy rests strongly on categorizations, fitting countries into ‘models’, ‘regimes’ or ‘types’. Some countries are taken to fit better than others of the same category, and are treated as an example of that type. This is often true of the United States, an exemplar of the ‘liberal welfare capitalist regime’ (Esping-Andersen, 1990) ‘liberal social policy regime’ (O’Connor, Orloff, & Shaver, 1999) or ‘liberal market economy’ (Hall & Soskice, 2001). Making the United States an exemplar of a type at the very least assumes sufficient intra-country unity to allow for straightforward categorization. Yet the strong brand of federalism in the United States opens up the possibility for policies at the state level to differ substantially from one another. In this paper, we investigate the diversity of family policy among the 50 states. With reference to the United States as an exemplar of ‘liberal’ welfare capitalism, we ask: Does U.S. family policy display varieties of liberalism at the state level?

We answer this question in two steps. First, we construct an index that captures the extent to which family policy packages allow for decommodification from the labor market and defamilialization from family labor. Second, we perform a cluster analysis to group states by shared decommodifying and defamilializing features. The analysis of the clusters reveals the nature and extent of variation in family policy packages.

We then ask an important subsequent question: Is this variation associated with differences in social outcomes? In other words, does this variation matter? For this third and final step of our analysis, we investigate the extent to which our family policy clusters are associated with social

indicators of families' economic wellbeing. Thus, we not only measure whether and how states vary by family policy, but also evaluate whether this variation is important with respect to families' financial security.

The United States as an exemplar of liberalism

Comparative welfare-state research consistently seeks to group welfare states according to dimensions of social stratification (Arts & Gelissen, 2010; Esping-Andersen, 2015). In many typologies the United States is portrayed as prototypically 'liberal' (Daly & Rake, 2003; Ferragina, Seeleib-Kaiser, & Tomlinson, 2013). Following Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology, three features characterize the liberal welfare regime: the low decommodification of workers, the primacy of the market among the institutions that provide social protection, and the narrow purpose of alleviating poverty, as opposed to reducing social stratification (Daly, 2011). There are of course important differences between welfare states commonly characterized as 'liberal' (McCabe, 2018). However, unlike more hotly debated regime types such as the Christian-democratic, Mediterranean or East-Asian welfare regime types, the liberal regime type is less controversial, and the use of the United States as emblematic common in comparative social policy (Ferragina & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011).

Yet this portrayal rarely acknowledges the strength of U.S. federalism, which "obviously suggests a potential for regional heterogeneity" (Obinger, Leibfried, & Castles, 2005, p. 5). Findings from several areas of U.S. social policy analysis, including healthcare (Newhouse & Garber, 2013), teenage

birth prevention (Collins, Felderhoff, Kim, Mengo, & Pillai, 2014), and education (McLendon & Perna, 2014) support this assumption.

Furthermore, following devolution through the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work and Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), states gained substantial regulative, financial and administrative powers (Béland, Howard, & Morgan, 2014). This was especially true in terms of family policy. PRWORA ended mothers' entitlement to benefits based on their status as carers (Orloff, 1993), and made welfare payments to low-income families more expressly contingent on labor market participation. Before investigating variation in family policy at the state level, we give a brief overview of family policy in the United States.

Family Policy in the United States

Family policy is a crosscutting policy area, with functions, recipients and policy instruments that vary greatly between time and place (Lewis, 2009). One prominent approach argues that 'family policy' should be viewed as including all measures that affect, whether directly or indirectly, 'the family' (Kamerman & Kahn, 1979). Kamerman and Kahn further distinguish between 'explicit' and 'implicit' family policies, with the former including policies "deliberately" addressed to families, and the latter policies not "specifically or primarily addressed to the family, but [having] indirect consequences" for families (1979, p. 3). Thus 'family policies' address individuals or groups as members of specified constellations of relationships, as opposed to classic targeting methods, such as 'means' targeting (although in practice these approaches are often combined).

Given the scope of family policy understood in this way, Kamerman and Kahn (1981) highlight the necessity to examine the family policy 'package', i.e. the combination of policies that create the policy context for families. Their framework distinguishes between family policies providing money, services, and/or time (Kamerman & Kahn, 1994). Time policies give family members the option of caring themselves. Services provide care, enabling family members to continue active employment. Money ostensibly provides the choice as to whether family members can provide care themselves or purchase care services, although in practice this greatly depends on the generosity of the benefit.

In the United States, public benefits make up a substantial component of family policy spending, which nevertheless is exceptionally low in international comparison (Daiger von Gleichen & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018). This suggests a limited ability to reduce social stratification, as is characteristic of liberal welfare regimes. O'Connor et al. (1999, p. 223) highlight that in the liberal social policy regime, the state "is clearly subordinate to the market and the family." In terms of family policy, they conclude that "the United States provides the most coherent exemplar of the primacy of the market." (p. 189). Market primacy is signaled through the dominance of means-tested and employment-related eligibility requirements for every explicit policy, with the exception of state-level pre-Kindergarten services in some states.

Table 1: United States Explicit Family Policies

Dimension	Name	Eligibility	Federal or State Funding
Benefits (in cash)	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	Means-tested, time-limited	Federal Block Grant, supplemented by the states
	Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Means-tested, employment-related	Federal EITC funded federally, State EITC funded by the states
Services (childcare)	Pre-Kindergarten	Age and residency restrictions, means-tested in some states	Funded mostly by the states with additional local funding
	Head-Start	Means-tested	Federally funded
	Childcare Subsidies	Means-tested	Federal Block Grant, supplemented by the states
Services (healthcare)	Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)	Means-tested, age restrictions	Federal Block Grant, supplemented by the states
	Medicaid	Means-tested	Federal Block Grant, supplemented by the states
Time	Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	Employment-related	Not funded
	State Family Leave Programs	Employment-related	State funded

Abbreviation: EITC, Earned Income Tax Credit

Importantly, the United States provides many benefits in kind, specifically food and housing assistance programs that are vital to families. These are not listed in Table 1 as they are not explicit family policies. Yet Table 1 includes medical services, which in many countries do not qualify as explicit family policies. Here the United States is an exception. The healthcare services included in the table above are explicitly geared toward the family, as the rhetoric that circumscribes them is of aiding families in meeting the

substantial healthcare costs in the United States (Cornachione, Rudowitz, & Artiga, 2016).[3]

As the last column in Table 1 shows, the states are significantly involved in funding all dimensions of family policy. It therefore seems plausible that federalism would be related to variation in state-level family policy. Indeed, there is a consensus that federalism is fundamental to the politics and outcomes of social policy (Pierson, 1995; Soss, Schram, Vartanian, & O'Brien, 2001; Obinger et al., 2005; Beramendi, 2009), and has contributed to state-level variation. Yet there is little research on how the U.S. federal structure contributes to variation in family policy, as a specific arena within social policy. Bruch, Meyers, and Gornick (2018) examine social safety net policies across time and space, looking at 11 'social safety net policies' in the 50 States between 1994 and 2014. They find great variation between the states consistently and over time. Our primary research question is similar, though with the specific focus on family policy: Do we observe varieties of liberalism in family policy across the 50 United States? Moreover, through our secondary research question, we examine the poverty outcomes associated with this variation.

[3] We only included explicit family policies in our analysis. We agree with Kamerman and Kahn's (2001, p. 69) assessment, "that the United States has no explicit family policy" in the sense of a coherent policy-package addressed to families. Furthermore, the extent to which policies designed for families truly aid and target these is not straightforward.

Poverty in the United States

Research shows that levels of poverty vary widely across the 50 United States (Rainwater & Smeeding, 2003). Laird, Parolin, Waldfogel, and Wimer (2018) find that state-level differences in poverty rates cannot fully be attributed to differences in demographics across states; instead, differences in welfare state and labor market institutions play an important role in shaping the likelihood of poverty across the United States. These two potential determinants – individual characteristics and institutions – frame two of the dominant perspectives in poverty research.

A large share of U.S.-centric poverty research tends to focus on the individualistic determinants of poverty, such as single parenthood or education status (McLanahan, Garfinkel, & Mincy, 2001; Haskins & Sawhill, 2009). In contrast, cross-national literature tends to give greater emphasis to variation in welfare state and labor market institutions. However, as Brady, Finnigan and Hübgen (2017) summarize, the likelihood that a given individual lives in poverty is not merely a feature of demographic characteristics; instead, the political-institutional context in which the individual resides must be take into account.

With regard to households with children, and especially single-mother households, we assume that the state is a crucial polity, and that state family policy is a crucial component in the political-institutional context that shapes poverty outcomes. To test this assumption, we examine the extent to which family policy supports households with children, and single mothers in particular, across the 50 states. Specifically we ask: does variation in family

policy correspond to differences in the likelihood that a household with children lives in poverty?

Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework combines two concepts to characterize state-level family policy regimes: decommodification and defamilialization. Decommodification, as conceptualized by Esping-Andersen (1990), describes the extent to which public programs enable individuals to maintain a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation. In that sense, decommodification can only be accomplished through the state. However, feminist scholars have noted that male market participation relies on the provision of unpaid domestic, overwhelmingly female labor (Lewis, 1992; Lister, 1994; Leitner, 2003). Women's decommodification thus depends not only on emancipation from the labor market, but also on emancipation from family labor. The degree of this emancipation is captured by the concept of defamilialization (McLaughlin & Glendinning, 1994), indicating the degree to which domestic labor and care can be relegated either to the state or market (Saxonberg, 2013)[4]. Esping-Andersen (2009, p. 80) notes that states in the liberal regime type chose "to encourage the market" as a vehicle for defamilialization. The United States is commonly portrayed as uniformly liberal in its defamilialization through the market (Daly & Rake, 2003; O'Connor et al., 1999).

[4] Saxonberg (2013) notes that the ambiguity over whether defamilialization occurs through the state or through the market is problematic, especially when analyzing parental leaves. Since our analysis does not include leaves we find it not meaningfully affected by this ambiguity.

By applying these two concepts we categorize family policy at the state level in terms of varieties of liberalism.[5] If our conceptualization is meaningful, then we expect that these categories are predictive of differing social outcomes. Specifically, we measure the association between our categorization of states' family policy and poverty outcomes among households with children. We also assess whether our indicators are likely to affect single-mother households more so than other family types, giving an insight into the economic welfare of children for which the (de)familialization framework is of particular value (Kurowska, 2018).

We do not include leave policies, because there is no paid state-level leave program generally available to low-income workers. The few such state programs are restrictive in their access, primarily based on tenure and contract type, and thus are not a relevant policy for those on low-incomes where we are examining an effect on outcomes. Therefore, our analysis examines a family policy package composed of benefits and services. We conceptualize benefits as decommodifying, and offered primarily through the state (e.g. unemployment insurance, TANF) and partially through the market (e.g. minimum wage, EITC)[6]. Services are defamilializing and offered both through the state and the market.

[5] In practice, defamilialization policies are often employed with the express purpose of commodifying female labor. Nevertheless, for those with caring responsibilities, decommodification can only provide real choice as to labor market participation if coupled with defamilialization.

[6] Importantly we include benefits that decommodify by degree. Specifically, state minimum wage and earned income tax credit do not emancipate from the market, but rather provide the ability to work *less* with higher take-home pay. We find that this consideration of decommodification by degree is crucial in the context of liberal welfare regimes.

Data and Methods

Family Policy Index

The development of indices to capture differences across welfare states has a long tradition in comparative welfare state research (Esping-Andersen, 1990). As Trochim and Donnelly (2008, p. 126) explain, an index "cuts across the variables" to express meaning. Our index captures the relative generosity and coverage of states' family policy packages. In Table 2, we outline the policies utilized to measure each of the four dimensions.

States are scored for each dimension according to their performance relative to the other 49 states. Specifically, we follow a standard indexing technique, measuring a state's performance in standard deviations away from the 50-state mean (Everitt, Landau, Leese, & Stahl, 2011). To compute the benefits generosity score, for example, we take the average of states' standardized scores for our four benefit indicators: the generosity of the state's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), minimum wage, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and unemployment insurance. A state with average scores on each of those four indicators would thus receive a score of zero for benefits generosity, as its values do not deviate from the mean. In contrast, a below-average state would receive a negative score for the benefits-generosity dimension. The same scoring approach applies to the coverage of benefits, as well as the generosity and coverage of services. We discuss the scoring for our generosity and coverage indicators below. We emphasize that each of our coverage indicators measures participation among low-income houses or among eligible households and, as such, are not affected by the number of low-income households in a given state.

In our primary analysis, we do not adjust for price differences across the 50 states when measuring generosity. In a sensitivity check presented in figure 1 of the appendix, however, we apply regional price parities from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to adjust for price differences. We discuss the implications of the price adjustments in our findings section.

Table 2: Framework for Measuring Family Policy

Decommodification		
Benefit	Generosity Indicator	Coverage Indicator
EITC	State match of federal EITC	Share of eligible earners claiming EITC
Minimum Wage	Level of state statutory minimum wage	n/a
TANF	Maximum benefit level	Share of families in poverty receiving TANF benefits
Unemployment Insurance	Replacement rate for mean wage earner	Share of unemployed claiming
Defamilialization		
Service	Generosity Indicator	Coverage Indicator
Pre-Kindergarten	Spending per enrolled child	Percent of enrolled 3- and 4-year olds, out of all 3- and 4-year olds in the state
Medicaid/CHIP	Federal & state spending on CHIP and Medicaid per enrolled child	Ratio of eligible/enrolled children to all eligible children
Childcare Subsidies from Child Care and Development Fund	Mean level of childcare subsidies per recipient household	Share of families in poverty receiving childcare subsidies

Note: Data sources listed in appendix Table A1

Our benefits dimension includes four policies that support the net income of a household with children. EITC is a federally-administered tax credit that adds to the net income of low-wage earners. In 2014, roughly half of the states had

adopted a state supplement to the EITC matching a specific percentage of the federal value. The level of this match (set at zero for non-participating states) is used to measure the relative generosity of each state's EITC. Coverage is measured as the share of eligible earners actually receiving the EITC. The minimum wage is not a benefit per se, but an important determinant of the net income of low-wage earners, so we include state minimum wages in our measurement of benefit generosity. We do not measure the coverage of the minimum wage, as the share of workers employed at minimum wage has little conceptual value in our framework. TANF, the state-administered social assistance program, is measured on the benefits dimension according to a state's maximum TANF value, while its coverage is assessed based on the share of families in poverty actually receiving the benefit. Finally, the generosity of unemployment insurance is measured as the replacement rate for a worker at average wage, while coverage is measured as the share of unemployed workers actually receiving unemployment insurance.

We include three policies in our services dimension: pre-Kindergarten, childcare subsidies from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), and Medicaid/CHIP (the Children's Health Insurance Program). The specific pre-Kindergarten programs considered are programs that receive state-funding for early childhood education and care for 3- and 4-year-olds. While many of these programs rely on local funds, they receive the majority of funding from the states, with the explicit intent of supporting working families (NIEER, 2015). Forty-one states had such pre-Kindergarten programs in 2014. CCDF,

in contrast, offers means-tested childcare assistance to eligible families with children of any age.

The healthcare policies examined are Medicaid and the (State) Children's Health Insurance Program (commonly abbreviated to (S)CHIP). Both are administered by the states under federal guidelines and funded by states with 'matching' funds of at least 50 percent. We measure the generosity of either service as the share of funds invested into the program divided by the number of children in the state enrolled in the program. For pre-Kindergarten and Medicaid/CHIP, coverage is defined as the share of eligible children enrolled. For CCDF, coverage is defined as the share of families in poverty who receive the childcare subsidies. Again, we average the standardized score for each policy in order to compute, for each state, a generosity and coverage score on the services dimension.[7]

Cluster Analysis

Our index allows us to measure variation across states in the extent to which their family policy packages provide parents with economic independence from the market or family. To classify states into groups, we utilize cluster analysis, a common method in welfare state research to classify states according to shared policy features (Bambra, 2007). We use hierarchical clustering, thereby making no a priori assumptions as to the number of clusters or the sequencing of data points. We further employ the complete linkage method, meaning that the farthest data points between two

[7] A limitation of many of our indicators is that while they allow us to score states based on state-wide generosity and coverage averages, they do not capture variation at the local level. This means that generosity and coverage can vary substantially within a state.

observations determine the grouping. This results in the most conservative clustering, which we found advisable for our exploratory approach. The resulting dendrogram shows visually how all 50 cases are related to each other, providing a point of objectivity in the method of cluster analysis, which is often considered a subjective exercise. The subjective component of hierarchical cluster analysis is the choice of cut-off point, which decides the level at which groupings are considered clusters. Given the overarching purpose of grouping to reduce complexity, a relatively high cut-off value is desirable in explorative cluster analysis. To protect against arbitrariness in our selection, we calculate Duda-Hart stopping indices to help determine the 'optimum' number of clusters. A Duda-Hart analysis calculates the number of groups that 'best' fits the data based on sum of squared distances between the partitions (Duda, Hart, & Stork, 1997; Everitt & Rabe-Hesketh, 2006; Halpin, 2016). As we discuss in more detail when presenting our findings, the Duda-Hart stopping index suggests that four clusters, or a cut-off value of three, allows for the greatest reduction of complexity through the smallest number of clusters. In Figure A2 within the Appendix, we also present clusters derived from a latent class analysis. We discuss the differences in the results in more detail in the Findings section.

Estimation Strategy

After generating the clusters, we further test their relevance to social outcomes. Given the structure of our data (a three-year cross-section of states), we cannot attempt to claim a causal link between our family policy clusters and poverty rates. We can, however, measure the association

between these variables while controlling for confounding factors, such as demographic differences across the 50 states. To do this, we estimate a multi-level linear probability model to measure how living in a particular cluster is associated with the likelihood of living in poverty.[8] We also estimate multilevel models with cross-level interactions to estimate whether differences in the family policy clusters affect single-mother households more so than two-parent households.

Specifically, we use household income data from the U.S. Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC) from the years 2012 to 2014. We follow Census Bureau guidelines in measuring state-level outcomes over an average of three years (2012 to 2014) to reduce potential for measurement error. To address benefit underreporting at the bottom of the distribution, we apply TRIM3's benefit adjustments for TANF and SNAP (Parolin, 2019). We follow standard practice in international poverty measurement in using a post-tax, post-transfer income definition, meaning that we count all taxes and transfers (including the EITC and SNAP) as part of household income.

Our sample (N=78,703) consists of household heads of all households with children in the 50 United States. In a sensitivity check (Appendix Table A2), we also present results with children as the unit of analysis (N=148,915). The findings are substantively similar. We first estimate a multi-level linear probability model to measure the relationship between states' family policy clusters and the likelihood that a household with children lives in poverty. The

[8] Our results are robust when using logistic regressions. We prioritize linear probability models due to more straightforward interpretation of interaction terms in our cross-level models.

multi-level model takes into account that households are nested within states and allows us to derive a cross-sectional relationship between family policy packages and poverty outcomes. We include individual and household controls to account for age, sex, racial and ethnic status, education, employment, family size, and number of children in the household. We follow Brady, Baker, and Finnigan (2013), Gornick and Jäntti (2012), and many others in adopting a relative conceptualization of poverty. Specifically, we set the poverty threshold at 50 percent of the national median equivalized household income. We emphasize that poverty rates are merely one indicator that variation in family policy packages might influence. Thus, the results of the poverty analyses are not the sole barometer by which the importance of the family policy clusters can be evaluated, but do provide one assessment of whether the state-level variation is important to households with children.

Results

We begin by summarizing the extent of state variation according to our index. Table 3 reveals several immediate patterns with respect to states' scores on each of the measures presented.

Table 3: Policy Dimensions and Mean Generosity and Coverage Scores

	Benefits Dimension		Services Dimension		
	Generosity	Coverage	Generosity	Coverage	Total Score
Minimum	-0.94 (MS)	-1.16 (UT)	-1.56 (UT)	-1.26 (UT)	-1.11 (UT)
1st Quartile	-0.45 (UT)	-0.47 (MT)	-0.35 (TX)	-0.36 (KS)	-0.26 (VA)
Median	-0.08 (NM)	-0.14 (VA)	0.01 (LA)	-0.04 (LA)	-0.14 (CO)
3rd Quartile	0.38 (DE)	0.34 (WI)	0.41 (MD)	0.38 (WA)	0.28 (MD)
Maximum	1.64 (VT)	1.74 (VT)	1.26 (MA)	2.82 (VT)	1.73 (VT)

Note: Standardized scores. First and third quartiles reflect states ranked 13th and 37th, respectively.

First, Vermont and Utah stand out as near opposites. Vermont features the highest score for each of the measures except the generosity of services. As a result, the state's total score (the mean of the four primary measures) is 1.73 standard deviations above the 50-state mean. Conversely, Utah scores the lowest on three of the four measures, and features the lowest total score (-1.11 standard deviations below the mean) among all states. Mississippi, meanwhile, scores the lowest for the generosity of benefits, reflecting its meager TANF cash assistance values and lack of a state supplement to the federal EITC.

The results from our cluster analysis help to organize and add meaning to this state-level variation. Figure 1 depicts the dendrogram derived from our hierarchical cluster analysis. In short, the dendrogram depicts the relative closeness of the states according to their scores on the family policy index. Moreover, the dendrogram segments states into clusters based on the distance between their scores. On the far right, for example, Vermont stands alone as distinct from the other 49 states. This matches our descriptive findings presented above, in which Vermont outscores all states with respect to three of the four primary indicators. The first three states on the opposite (left) side of the dendrogram include Alabama, Idaho, and Mississippi. Their positioning suggests that these states feature similar scores on the family policy index, and that their scores differ greatly from those of Vermont.

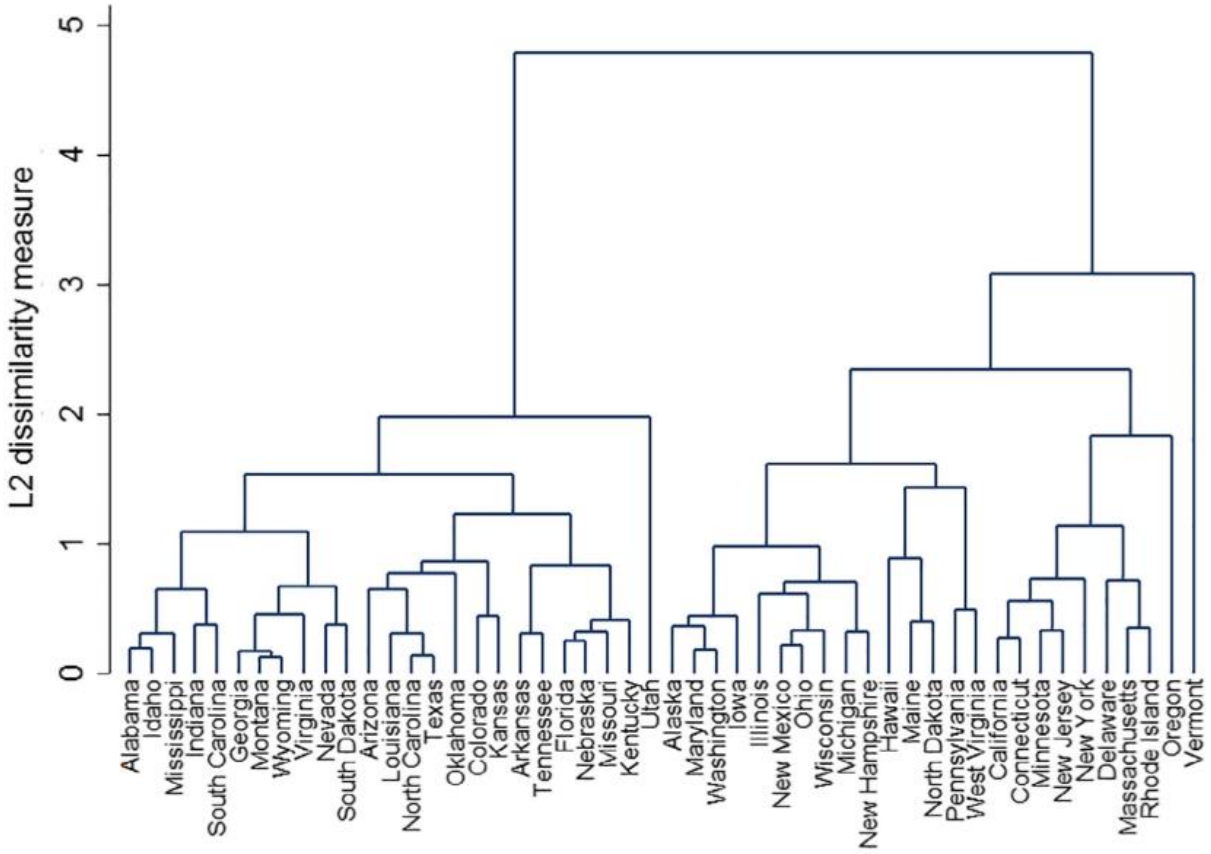


FIGURE 1 Dendrogram of hierarchical cluster analysis of states' family policy scores

An important feature of hierarchical cluster analysis is its ability to segment states based on their relative similarity in each of the four family policy index scores. The horizontal lines connecting states in the dendrogram represent these clusters. As detailed in our methods section, we apply a Duda-Hart stopping index to determine the 'optimum' number of clusters. The results of the stopping index suggest segmentation into four clusters.[9] This equates to a cut-off point of 3 within the dendrogram.

[9] Specifically, the Duda-Hart index shows that the Je(2)/Je(1) value is higher for the four-cluster partition (0.78) than for a two-cluster partition (0.76), three-cluster (0.56), five-cluster (0.69), or six-cluster (0.56) partition. The higher value indicates that the four-cluster partition allows for more distinct clustering and is the 'optimum' segmentation point for this analysis.

Table 4 shows that the four clusters cut neatly across all four of our family policy index scores. The first cluster features 25 states that perform comparatively poorly on each of the four scores. We label this cluster ‘commodifying and familializing’. The mean value of each generosity and coverage measure (for benefits and services alike) is lower in this cluster relative to the other three.

Table 4: Clusters and Mean Generosity and Coverage Scores

		Benefit Dimension		Services Dimension		
Cluster	States	Gen.	Cov.	Gen.	Cov.	Total Score
(1) Commodifying & Familializing	AL, AZ, AR, CO, FL, GA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NC, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WY	-0.33	-0.39	-0.33	-0.39	-0.41
(2) Light Decommodification & Defamilialization	AK, HI, IL, IA, ME, MD, MI, NH, NM, ND, OH, PA, WA, WV, WI	0.14	0.08	0.14	0.08	0.16
(3) Moderate Decommodification & Defamilialization	CA, CT, DE, MA, MN, NJ, NY, OR, RI	0.37	0.87	0.37	0.87	0.68
(4) High Decommodification & Defamilialization	VT	1.64	1.74	2.83	0.71	1.73

Note: Mean value of standardized scores.

The second cluster features 15 states that range geographically from Hawaii to Maine. These states fit a pattern of 'light decommodification and defamilialization'. In other words, the states tend to feature about average scores on each of the four dimensions. Across all dimensions, the average state in this cluster performs better than the average state in the 'commodifying and familializing' cluster identified before.

The third cluster features nine states, which we regard as achieving 'moderate decommodification and defamilialization', as they feature above-average scores on each of the four dimensions. In practical terms, we expect

that a single parent living in one of these states is less dependent on the market or family to achieve financial security as compared to a single parent in a state in one of the preceding clusters.

Finally, Vermont sits alone in the fourth cluster.[10] Relative to all other states, Vermont features 'high decommodification and defamilialization', scoring at least one standard deviation above the mean with respect to each of the four measures (except for service coverage, where it scores at 0.7). A look at Vermont's family policy indicators justifies its exceptionalism and sole place in this fourth cluster. The state features a minimum wage above the federal minimum ($8.73 in 2014), a state supplement to the EITC (matching 32 percent of the federal value), and relatively generous TANF benefits ($640 per month) and coverage (78 percent). Moreover, it features higher unemployment insurance replacement rates (58 percent) and coverage (47.4 percent), relatively high pre-Kindergarten investment and coverage, and high per-capita investment in CHIP and Medicaid. To be sure, there are many factors that might allow Vermont to achieve greater levels of decommodification and defamilialization. The state's relative racial and ethnic homogeneity, for example, may ensure that expansions of social assistance benefits are more politically feasible. Determinants aside, however, the pattern seems clear: Vermont does more to provide single parents in particular with economic independence from the market and family.

[10] Given Vermont's comparatively high decommodification and defamilialization scores, we also perform a sensitivity check in which we drop Vermont from the sample before calculating states' generosity and accessibility scores. This does not lead to substantive changes in the cluster analysis. In this scenario, only three clusters are identified. The comparatively generous cluster features the same 9 states, while the 40 remaining states still sit in the two less generous clusters.

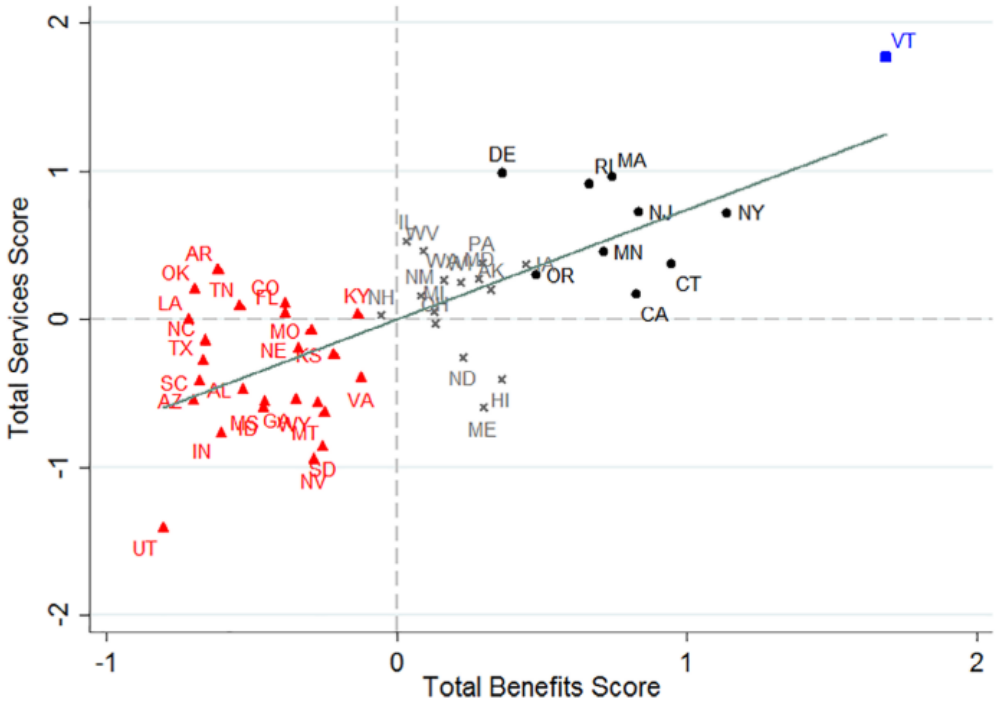


FIGURE 2 Scatterplot of states' total benefits and services scores. Cluster indicators: red triangles = 1; grey cross = 2; black circle = 3; blue square = 4. Total benefits scores are calculated by taking the state's mean value of benefit coverage and generosity scores. All scores are standardised. The same process applies to the total services scores. *R* = .72

Figure 2 visualizes the relationship between states' total benefit score on the benefit dimension (the mean of benefit generosity and coverage) versus states' total services score. The states are labeled according to the cluster to which they belong. There is a strong correlation (R=0.72) between states' benefits and services scores. In other words, states that tend to perform well in one area also tend to perform well in the other (and vice versa). In the Appendix (Figure A1), we also depict clusters after adjusting our generosity dimensions for price differences across states. We note two differences from our primary analysis. First, several low-cost states, such as Missouri and Alabama, appear slightly more generous with respect to services and benefits. Several high-cost states, such as New York and Massachusetts, appear slightly less generous. However, the differences are not generally

enough to substantively alter the rank order of states. Second, the cluster analysis suggests three clusters, rather than four, is more appropriate after adjusting for price differences. As Figure A1 shows, the middle two clusters in our primary analysis merge into one, adding a couple of low-cost states such as Missouri. The differences between the more generous states (those in the right-half of the figure) and less generous states (left-half of figure) is still evident. In Figure A2 within the Appendix, we also present the clusters derived from a latent class analysis (LCA). The primary change when using LCA rather than hierarchical clustering is a downsizing from four to three clusters, with Vermont joining the more generous collection of states rather than forming its own cluster.

The final step of our analysis investigates whether our four clusters are relevant for explaining an important indicator of decommodification and defamilialization: levels of poverty among households with children.

Table 5: Mean Poverty Rates by Cluster (2012-2014)

Cluster	States	Children	Households with Children	Single-Mother Households
1	Commodifying & Familializing: AL, AZ, AR, CO, FL, GA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NC, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WY	19.9%	18.1%	35.2%
2	Light Decommodification & Defamilialization: AK, HI, IL, IA, ME, MD, MI, NH, NM, ND, OH, PA, WA, WV, WI	14.0%	13.3%	30.4%
3	Moderate Decommodification & Defamilialization: CA, CT, DE, MA, MN, NJ, NY, OR, RI	13.5%	12.3%	23.9%
4	High Decommodification & Defamilialization: VT	8.3%	7.9%	21.8%

Note: Poverty thresholds are set at 50 percent of national equivalized median household income. Differences in poverty estimates for clusters 2 and 3 are not statistically significant at the 95 percent level. Differences between all other clusters are statistically significant.

Table 5 presents descriptive patterns of poverty rates across the four clusters. The point estimates in each cluster match the relative scores of the family policy index. In other words, the cluster with the lowest family policy scores features the highest poverty rates, while the clusters with above-average scores have lower rates of poverty. Vermont, for example, has the lowest rates of poverty whether evaluating children, households with children, or only single-mother households. These patterns provide descriptive support that our family policy index not only captures varieties of liberalism in terms of policy input, but that this variation also aligns with differences in social

outcomes. It may be, however, that demographic differences across states influence these poverty estimates more so than our index of decommodification and defamilialization. Our multi-level estimation of poverty outcomes (Table 6 below) tests whether differences in poverty rates across cluster are statistically significant when controlling for demographic characteristics.

The first model only features the cluster dummies and a time control, with the 'commodifying and familializing' cluster as the reference group. In the first model, for example, we see that a household with children living in cluster 4 – Vermont – is 9 percentage points less likely to live in poverty relative to a household in the reference cluster. A household in the third cluster (moderate decommodification and defamilialization) is 6.1 percentage points less likely to live in poverty compared to households in the first cluster.

The second model includes all household controls, as well as the state-level controls for GDP per capita and unemployment rate. Here, we see that the effect size for Cluster 4 weakens considerably. Now, living in Vermont is associated with a 3.8 percentage point reduction in poverty. Much of Vermont's advantage in terms of poverty rates, then, appears to be related to the composition of its population. The effect sizes for the second and third clusters drop slightly as well.

Table 6: Multi-Level Linear Probability Estimates of Association of Family Policy Clusters with Poverty (2012- 2014)

	Clusters Only (1)	With Controls (2)	Cross-Level Interactions (3)	Cross-Level: Benefits Score (4)	Cross-Level: Services Score (5)
Cluster #2	-0.046** (-3.09)	-0.015* (-2.44)	-0.024* (-1.97)		
Cluster #3	-0.061*** (-4.81)	-0.017 (-1.95)	-0.039 (-1.42)		
Cluster #4	-0.093*** (-9.08)	-0.038* (-1.99)	-0.027*** (-3.30)		
Single Mother HH		0.084*** (28.43)	0.11*** (13.05)	0.091*** (12.72)	0.091*** (13.70)
Benefits Score				-0.028 (-1.73)	
Services Score					-0.006 (-0.68)
Cluster 2 # Single Mother HH			-0.026 (-1.66)		
Cluster 3 # Single Mother HH			-0.076*** (-4.39)		
Cluster 4 # Single Mother HH			-0.067*** (-8.11)		
Benefits Score # Single Mother HH				-0.056*** (-5.71)	
Services Score # Single Mother HH					-0.026** (-3.00)
Demographic Controls		X	X	X	X
Household Controls		X	X	X	X
State Controls		X	X	X	X
Year Dummy	X	X	X	X	X

Observations: 78,703. t statistics in parentheses. Household heads of all households with children included. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

We further hypothesized that the family policy packages would affect the likelihood of poverty for single-mother households more so than two-parent households. To test this, we now turn to our multi-level models with cross-level interactions between a state's family policy cluster and single motherhood. To gain deeper insights into which components of the clusters affect poverty among single-mother households, we also include separate cross-level interactions with states' average benefits and services scores (the mean of generosity and coverage for the respective indicator) and single motherhood.

The third model in Table 6 shows the results. We see that living in the third or fourth clusters – moderate or high decommodification and defamilialization – significantly reduces the likelihood that a single-mother household, relative to a two-parent household, lives in poverty. Specifically, a single-mother household in either cluster faces around a 7 percentage point decline in its relative likelihood of living in poverty. As expected, differences in states' family policy packages seem to be more relevant to single-mother than two-parent households.

Does a state's score on the benefits or services dimension appear to matter more in shaping poverty among single-mother households? The final two models test this, estimating the cross-level interaction between the respective score and single-motherhood. We see that a 10 percent increase in a state's score on the benefits dimension reduces the relative likelihood that a single-mother households lives in poverty by 5.6 percentage points, and that a similar increase for the services dimension reduces the relative

likelihood of poverty by 2.6 percentage points. Thus, it appears that either dimension of our family policy index – benefits or services – is associated with declining likelihood of poverty among single-mother households relative to two-parent households, though the benefits dimension has a stronger effect. Given the strong positive correlation between a state's benefits and services scores (see Figure 2), we do not attempt to include both into the same model. In the Appendix, we replicate the estimates in Table 6 but with children, rather than households with children, as the unit of analysis. The results are substantively similar.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our family policy index and subsequent cluster analysis demonstrated that meaningful variation exists across states with respect to family policy. We introduced a framework for measuring state variation in states' family policy packages, then performed a cluster analysis to group states by shared decommodifying and defamilializing features. Finally, we investigated whether such variation is relevant solely in explaining policy inputs, or whether the differences in family policy packages are also associated with differences in social indicators of families' economic wellbeing.

Our findings suggest that varieties of liberalism do, indeed, exist within U.S. family policy. Specifically, we find two such varieties, which we describe as 'hard' and 'soft', capturing the way in which they seem to cushion the likelihood of poverty for households with children. In 10 states, the level of decommodification and defamilization results in a 'soft' variety of liberalism, in which family policy significantly reduces the likelihood of poverty for a

household with children, and for single-mother households in particular. The remaining states display a ‘hard’ variety of liberalism, in which family policy likely provides some relief but is not significant for the likelihood of whether those households find themselves in poverty.

To illustrate the magnitude of this variation, we can imagine a thought experiment in which the ‘hard’ states match the institutional characteristics of the ‘soft’. If we were to take the estimates in Table 6 as a firm indicator of anti-poverty potential of the soft states’ family policy packages (a complicated assumption given our cross-sectional data), we could estimate that rates of poverty among single-mother households in hard states would fall by up to eight percentage points.

Our findings have broader implications for international comparative social policy research. First, our results provide a practical way for scholars to take variety in U.S. family policy into account. Cross-national analyses of welfare state and poverty outcomes should acknowledge the categorical difference between states in which family policy is and is not significantly associated with a lower likelihood of households with children, and single-mother households in particular, living in poverty. Deconstructing the United States into ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ varieties of liberalism when studying family policy can be of greater practical value to future research, especially international comparisons, than, for example a continuum of 50 ranked states. Nevertheless we would like to mention the longstanding debate surrounding ‘typologies’ in social policy (Kasza, 2002; Arts & Gelissen, 2010; Ferragina & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011), and suggest that future research consider our index as well as our clusters when investigating a given research question.

Furthermore, a fruitful avenue for future studies of family policy variation in the United States might include the construction of an index with more localized data.

In closing we note that the scope of state-administered family policy continues to expand. For example, in 2019 New York began to phase-in a paid family leave (Engeman, 2018), which promises higher access for low-income families, thus potentially making a real difference to those addressed by the state's soft liberal family policy. Future studies can build off this paper's framework to continue to conceptualize differences in family policy packages across the diverse United States. Doing so will help garner a fuller understanding of U.S. family policy as it exists in a context of varieties of liberalism.

Article 2 Public policy, female leadership, and organized labor: A comparative analysis of employer childcare and flexible working in the United States and Germany

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co-authored with Marina Hagen and Daniela Grunow

Abstract

Comparing public and employer family policies in the United States and Germany, we focus on the role of female leadership and organized labor for employer childcare and flexible work. We provide a theoretical contribution by integrating rational choice theory and neo-institutionalism in a way that enables opposing empirical predictions. We can thereby determine whether economic or normative considerations are likely motivating employer provision, a distinction not usually made. The analysis first compares the prevalence of childcare and flexible work in the two countries, then uses logistic regression to identify how female leadership and organized labor are associated with each policy. We find evidence of crowding-in of employer childcare by generous public provision in Germany, best explained as the result of normative pressures. We further find that in the United States, female leadership is highly relevant to employer childcare. While economic explanations are most straightforward here, we advise caution in relying solely on them. Economic explanations are more decisive for relevance of works councils to flexible working in Germany. There is also tentative evidence that works councils in Germany may be leveraging normative pressure to claim employer childcare. However, such efforts may be diluted by a lack of coordination with collective bargaining. Overall, the study highlights the importance of considering both economic and normative motivations for employer provision of family policies.

Introduction

Ever since the 1970s, when women began entering the labor market in large numbers in Western democracies, work-family conflict has become increasingly visible as a social issue (Giele, 2006; Gornick & Meyers, 2008; Ruijer, 2012; van Breeschoten et al., 2018; J. Williams & Boushey, 2010). In response, public labor and family policies have generally expanded across Western democracies to include work-family reconciliation policies (Abrahamson, 2007; Daiger von Gleichen & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018; Ray et al., 2010; Ross, 2008). But public policies are only one avenue of support for working parents. Employers too are an important source of policies to support employees in their efforts to reconcile work and family demands (Chung, 2019b, 2020a; Daiger von Gleichen, 2022; Seelkopf & Starke, 2019; Wiß & Greve, 2019). Given the high and in many countries growing rate of female labor force participation, it is important to understand why and under what conditions employers support their employees in reconciling work and family life.

However, scholarship on work-family reconciliation still tends to focus on the state to the exclusion of employers as an institutional source of work-family reconciliation policy (Chung, 2020a; Daly & Ferragina, 2018; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2013). This has resulted in an incomplete picture as to how prevalent employer family policy is, how it relates to public family policy, what organizational characteristics are favorable, and whether provision seems to be rooted in employers' economic or normative considerations. This paper addresses these knowledge gaps by investigating three questions: What is

the relationship between public and employer family policy? How relevant are specific employee segments – female leadership and organized labor – to employer family policy provision? And what can their relevance, in the context of public family policy, tell us about the applicability of normative versus economic explanations for employer family policy?

To guide the investigation of these questions we develop a theoretical framework that contributes to the literature by integrating two theoretical strands that usually remain separate in analyses of employer family policy: rational choice theory and neo-institutionalism. Most studies draw on one or both theories, despite lacking a study design that enables opposing empirical predictions depending on which theory is applied. By integrating our analysis of employer provision in a public policy context, we move past this empirical predicament. This framework allows us to make our second theoretical contribution, which is to suggest that normative pressures may be playing a role in the landscape of organized labor in Germany, although the effectiveness of these pressures seems hampered by a lack of coordination between works councils and collective bargaining.

Analytically, we first examine the relationship between state and employer-provided family policy for childcare and flexible work within two different public family policy contexts: the United States and Germany. Given the importance both rational choice theory and neo-institutionalism ascribe to employees' demands, we then look at organizational characteristics that should strengthen employees' claims-making potential: the prevalence of female leadership and organized labor. The paper proceeds in the following manner. We first introduce our theoretical framework, followed by sections

reviewing the literature relevant to and justifying our choice of organizational characteristics, policy measures, and country cases. The findings section presents the results, while the discussion relates these back to our research questions. The conclusion briefly summarizes and presents policy implications. To preview: We find that public policy is highly relevant for employer provided family policy, but that the likelihood of provision depends on employer characteristics and the policy considered. Theoretically, we find that neo-institutionalism better explains the country-level prevalence of employer family policy, but find little evidence that this is a result of normative claims-making by organized labor or female employees. An exception is evidence to suggest that works councils in Germany may be leveraging normative pressure to claim employer childcare, even though this effort seems hampered by a lack of coordination with collective bargaining. While this evidence is tentative, it suggests a caveat regarding the general wisdom that organized labor derives its power purely by applying economic pressure.

Theoretical Framework: Integrating rational-choice and neo-institutionalist perspectives

Most research into why employers provide occupational family policy tends to explain employer behaviour in one of two ways: either as the outcome of a deliberate and rational cost-benefit analysis (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; DeMenezes & Kelliher, 2011; Estévez-Abe et al., 2001; Hart, 2010) or as the response to normative pressures, in which economic considerations are secondary or tangential (Bergqvist & Saxonberg, 2017; Chuang et al., 2011;

Everly & Schwarz, 2015). The former approach, which can be summarized as a rational-choice theoretical perspective, dominates investigations into the relationship between organizational characteristics and employer family policy provision (Osterman, 1995; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Seyler et al., 1995). The latter theoretical approach – neo-institutionalism – is the more relevant framework in analyses of the relationship between public family policy and employer family policy (Chung, 2019a; Pasamar & Alegre, 2015) Although most studies acknowledge that likely both economic and normative factors play a role (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Osterman, 1995; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009), few studies integrate these perspectives in their theoretical frameworks.

This division in where which theory is applied is understandable because empirically, it works: rational-choice theories are more effective at explaining the relevance of many organizational characteristics for occupational family policy provision. For example, there is evidence suggesting that employers dependent on female employees (who experience greater work-family conflict than male employees) tend to offer employer family policies to reduce the cost of turnover due to work-family reconciliation issues (Budd & Mumford, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2012; Osterman, 1995; Seyler et al., 1995). Similarly, evidence suggests that economic competition for employees with rare and sought-after skills motivates employer family policy (Budd & Mumford, 2004; Chung, 2019b; Chung & van der Horst, 2018; Fleckenstein & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011a; Wiß, 2014).

However, rational-choice theory doesn’t perform as well in explaining the relationship between public and employer family. Specifically, based on

rational-choice theory, we would expect generous public family policy provision to coincide with comparatively limited employer provision, a mechanism referred to as “crowding-out” (Wiß & Greve, 2019). The underlying assumption is that employers will not provide family policies offered by the state, as this is seen as an inefficient use of employer resources. This assumption is however not consistent with the empirical literature. Broader analyses of occupational welfare find little evidence of crowding-out (Ebbinghaus et al., 2011; Natali et al., 2018). Rather, analyses of the relationship between public and employer family policies tend to suggest the opposite, namely that “crowding-in” – generous public and widespread employer policy – is repeatedly observed across policy measures and national contexts (Chung, 2019b; Den Dulk et al., 2013; Mun & Jung, 2018). These findings are better explained by neo-institutionalism, which posits that the state puts isomorphic pressure on employers to offer family policies (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991). In this perspective, the availability of extensive public work-family policies legitimizes workers’ claims for support regarding work-family reconciliation. This creates normative pressures for employers to offer work-family reconciliation policies, to gain legitimacy from their environment i.e., clients, competitors, or the public.

Given the success of neo-institutionalism in explaining the relationship between public policy and employer provision, it is tempting to also apply it to understanding the relevance of organizational characteristics to employer family policy provision. However, this is rarely done for two reasons. First, as explained earlier, rational-choice theory is generally successful at explaining the relevance of organization-level characteristics. Second, both theories

predict the same outcome: that the prevalence of certain employees will increase the likelihood of employer-provided family policy. Yet while the predictions behind the theories are similar, their explanations for these findings differ. For rational-choice theorists the pressure applied to employers is economic, while for neo-institutionalists it is normative.

Despite the difference in explanations, the similarity in empirical prediction makes neo-institutionalism a superfluous theoretical building block for studies that do not engage the level of public policy. However, once the public policy context is brought into the equation, rational-choice and neo-institutionalism offer different empirical predictions regarding the relevance of certain employee segments to employers' likelihood of providing family policy. This is because the theories offer different predictions about the relationship between public policy and employees' claims-making power. In rational-choice theory, generous public policy reduces the economic legitimacy of employees' needs, and thus their claims-making power (Hannan, 1992; Homans, 1974). Neo-institutionalist theory argues that generous public policy increases employees' normative legitimacy, thus increasing their claims-making power (W. R. Scott, 1991; Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019a).

Thus, when comparing polities with more and less generous public policy, both neo-institutionalist and rational-choice explanations will be needed to understand the relevance of employee segments to employer family policy provision. This study theoretically advances the literature on employer family policy by integrating two theoretical perspectives to generate opposing empirical predictions. This allows for findings that suggest employer

provision for normative or economic reasons, rather than just focusing on economic considerations alone, or both in an undifferentiated way.

Organizational Characteristics: Female leadership and organized labor

There are four segments of employees that can be considered vested with claims-making power vis a vis the employer: skilled employees (Sauer et al., 2021), female employees (Luekemann & Abendroth, 2018), female management (Liu & McDonald, 2022), and organized labor (Berg et al., 2013). In our study we focus on the latter two. Although there is debate as to whether and how strongly these segments of employees actively demand greater efforts toward work-family reconciliation, especially with regard to unions in Germany (Klenner et al., 2013), the evidence generally suggests that it is an important issue for female managers (Gagliarducci & Paserman, 2015; Kowalewska, 2021; van Mensvoort et al., 2021) and organized labor alike (Berg et al., 2013; Budd & Mumford, 2004; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009).

The evidence on the relationship between female managers and employer family policy is sparse, but suggests that the association is positive, and likely due to both economic and normative pressures exerted by female leadership on employers (Calinaud et al., 2021; Hayward et al., 2007; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Witkowski, 1999). However, none of these studies compare two different public policy contexts, and thus cannot speak to whether female leadership seems to matter more in context of generous or less generous public policy. A study by Pasamar and Alegre (2015) is exceptional in that it

finds a larger share of female managers to be positively associated with employer family policy, and puts this in context of weak public family policy. But the sample is not comparative, or generalizable, and the theoretical connection between the relevance of weak public policy for the significance of female managers is not drawn.

Regarding organized labor, the evidence is richer but mixed. Several studies find positive associations between organized labor and employer family policy (e.g. Budd & Mumford, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2012; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009) while some find no association (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Kelly, 2003; Osterman, 1995; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009). The wealth of literature however makes it easier to differentiate the results by country and employer policy. Organized labor seems generally not to be relevant particularly in the United States (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Kelly, 2003; Osterman, 1995). In Germany, the evidence suggests that the association depends very much on the type of employer-provided family policy in question, with the positive association tied to employer assistance during parental leave (Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009), but not childcare or flexible working time (Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009). Importantly, across studies that examine organized labor, its relevance is tied to bargaining power, which is treated as fundamentally economic (Jacobi, 2023). In that sense, the literature explains the existence or absence of associations between organized labor and employer family policy mostly as the result of economic factors.

To determine the importance of normative claims-making, buoyed by generous public policy, we need to compare the role of different employee segments across diverse policy context. If employers with a high prevalence of female leadership and organized labor tend to provide family policy for normative reasons, we would expect this association to be stronger in polities with generous public family policy (where normative pressure is higher, and economic pressure is weaker). If employers with a high prevalence of female leadership and organized labor tend to provide occupational family policy for economic reasons, we would expect this association to be stronger in polities with weaker public family policy (where economic pressure is stronger, and normative pressure is weaker). The following section places these expectations in the context of two specific policy measures: childcare and flexible working.

Policy measures: Childcare and flexible working

Our choice of policy measures is guided by both theoretical and empirical considerations. Theoretically we follow an existing distinction between work-facilitating and work-reducing policies (Misra et al., 2011; Pettit & Hook, 2009). As the terminology implies, work-facilitating policies aim to reconcile work-family conflict by changing attributes of work or care, such as the timeframe, place or conditions under which these take place. Work-reducing policies instead aim to reconcile work-family conflict primarily by reducing working time. Of the three classically studied employer family policies, leave is commonly considered work-reducing, whereas working-time arrangements

and childcare (provision or financial support) are considered work-facilitating (Chung, 2019; Misra et al., 2011). We limit our analysis to work-facilitating policies as these do not put employees and employers' interests at odds to the same extent as work-reducing policies. Furthermore, work-facilitating policies are in line with the prominent policy-making goal of increasing female labor force participation (Ferragina, 2020).

As mentioned in the previous section, among studies examining the relationship between public and employer-provided family policy, there is more evidence for crowding-in of generous employer policies than crowding-out (Chung, 2019b; Den Dulk et al., 2012, 2013; Wiß & Greve, 2019). Yet most studies that examine the relevance of policy context use a composite measure to capture the generosity of public policy (Den Dulk et al., 2012, 2013; Farnsworth, 2004), although research on organizational-level factors suggest that the association depends very much on the specific policy measure (Fleckenstein & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011b; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009). The relationship between a specific public policy and the corresponding employer policy has only been tested for one measure, namely maternity leave (Evans, 2001, 2002). Here the finding is that the relationship is characterized by an inverted-U shape: Employer-provided maternity leave is least widespread in polities with ungenerous or very generous public maternity policies, and most widespread in countries with a 'medium' level of statutory maternity leave provision (Chung, 2019b). This suggests a form of "crowding-out" once a public generosity threshold has been crossed, at approximately one year of job-protected maternity leave duration (Chung, 2020b). This means that, while studies with composite

measures of family policy suggest that crowding-in is more common than crowding-out (e.g. Den Dulk et al., 2012), the specific evidence on maternity leave implies that crowding-out is also taking place (Evans, 2001), if limited to specific conditions of duration.

Since duration is not a design feature of work-facilitating policies, there is reason to believe that crowding-out may play less of a role for childcare and flexible working. Thus, there are empirical gaps in the literature on childcare and flexible working, and theoretical reasons to believe that the underlying dynamics may differ from those of maternity leave policies.

Country Cases and Hypotheses

Regarding the country cases selected, Germany and the United States have established opposite positions regarding the welfare triangle, i.e. the role of the state, market and family in welfare provision and work-family reconciliation (Esping-Andersen, 2002; Leitner, 2003; O'Connor et al., 1999). This difference allows us to formulate and assess context-specific expectations regarding the relationship between public and employer family policies. Despite these differences both countries share important economic and cultural similarities to facilitate meaningful comparison (Evertsson et al., 2016; Grunow & Aisenbrey, 2016; McGinnity & McManus, 2007; McManus & DiPrete, 2000). As shown in table 1 below, Germany and the United States present quite different public family policy contexts regarding childcare, but very similar contexts for flexible working. They therefore provide an excellent comparative case to examine the relationship between public and employer

family policies, and how the relevance of female leadership and organized labor varies with the public policy context.

Table 1. Public work-family reconciliation policies in Germany and the United States

	Germany	United States*
Work-reducing		
Leave for parents	Various forms of paid leave available to mothers and fathers with unpaid-job protected leave available for up to three years.	12 weeks of unpaid, gender-neutral, job-secured leave. Eligibility requirements limit access to less than 60% of the working population.
Part-time work	Right to part-time work	No right or right to request part-time
Work-facilitating		
Public childcare for children 0 - 6	Universal right to public childcare beginning on child's first birthday	- Means-tested childcare subsidies - Means-tested and non-means tested public childcare
Flexible work policy	No right or right to request flexible working	No right to flexible working

Notes: *Only federal policies listed. When the US-data was collected only California, New Jersey and Rhode Island enabled paid leave around childbirth. With regard to child benefits and public childcare, most states offer means-tested supplements to these federal policies. Vermont offers a right to request flexible working.

The analysis proceeds in two steps. First, we investigate the relative prevalence of employer-provided childcare in flexible working in Germany versus the United States. Regarding childcare, Germany has a more generous public policy landscape, whereas regarding flexible working the public policy landscape in the two countries is similar. Based on neo-institutionalism, we would expect:

$H1_{Childcare:}$ We expect employer-provided childcare to be more widespread in Germany than in the United States. This is because normative pressure to provide childcare is greater on employers in Germany than in the United States, as public childcare policy is more generous in Germany than in the United States.

$H1_{Flexible\ working}$: We expect employer-provided flexible working to be similarly widespread in the United States and Germany. This is because the lack of public flexible working policy in both countries suggests equally absent normative pressure on employers to provide flexible working in Germany and the United States[11].

In a second step, we examine the relationship between prevalence of female leaders and organized labor on the one hand, and employer provision of childcare and flexible working in both countries on the other hand. Given the stronger public childcare landscape in Germany, and based on neo-institutionalist theory, we would assume greater provision of employer-childcare in Germany, among organizations with influential female leadership and organized labor. We therefore hypothesize:

[11] There is evidence to suggest that working parents in the United States experience greater work-family conflict than do working parents in Germany (Hsiao, 2022; Spector et al., 2007). From this perspective, with isomorphic pressures emanating from the state onto employers in both countries being equal, one might expect more employer provided flexible working in the United States than in Germany. However, Germany offers a right to request part-time, which may lower the demand for flexible working here. Thus we feel confident in formulating our hypothesis based on neo-institutionalist expectations.

> H2: A high prevalence of female leadership and the presence organized labor will be positively associated with employer-provided childcare in Germany, but not in the United States. This is because, according to neo-institutionalist theory, female leadership and organized labor have greater normative claims-making power in the generous public policy context of Germany.

Regarding flexible working, based on neo-institutionalist theory, we would assume no association with the prevalence of female leadership or organized labor in either country. We therefore hypothesize:

> H3: A high prevalence of female leadership and the presence organized labor will be insignificant for employer-provided flexible working in both Germany and the United States. This is because, according to neo-institutionalist theory, female leadership and organized labor have similarly low normative claims-making power in the absence of public policy on flexible working in both countries.

Data, variables and methods

Data

For the analysis of the U.S. case, we used the 2016 National Study of Employers conducted by the Families and Work Institute (Matos et al., 2017). This is a nationally representative survey of employing organisations in the private sector with at least 50 employees. For our analysis of the German

case, we used a representative sample from the year 2016 of the IAB-Establishment Panel (Ellguth et al., 2014), supplied by the Research Data Centre (FDZ) of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) at the Institute for Employment Research (IAB). After dropping all observations in the German data that had fewer than 50 employees to match the US data and cleaning the data of observations that did not include information on all relevant variables, we had the following sample sizes: For the analysis of childcare support, n = 4,405 for Germany and n = 906 for the United States. Regarding flexible working, n = 4,407 for Germany and n = 909 for the United States.

Variables

Our dependent variables are employer support of childcare in Germany and the United States, as well as employer-based flexible working arrangements in Germany and the United States. Employer support for childcare in Germany includes childcare provided directly by the employer, childcare provided through cooperation between the employer and external childcare providers, as well as financial support by the employer for childcare. The same is true of employer support for childcare in the United States, excluding employer provision of flexible spending accounts. Regarding employer-based flexible working provisions in Germany, the dependent variable measures “Vertrauensarbeitszeit”, i.e., the option for some groups of employees to choose their own working hours without attendance recording or a timecard. In the United States, the dependent variable captures whether the

organisation permits at least some groups of employees to change starting and quitting times daily.

Our two explanatory variables were operationalised in the following way. The share of female leadership was operationalized as a continuous variable in the German data. Regarding female leadership in the US data however, the only available variable was ordinal, containing three broad categories for designating the prevalence of women on executive levels: none, some or all. Organized labor was operationalised in the following way: In the US, this was the percentage of unionized employees at the establishment (see Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Osterman, 1995). In Germany, these were binary variables capturing the two prongs of the country's system of organized labor: whether the organisation was covered by a collective agreement as well as whether there was a works council (see Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009).

We also controlled for share of female employees, employer size by number of employees, employer industry, and whether recruitment problems were reported. The models of the German data additionally control for whether the employer is situated in the former east or west (Mätzke, 2019), while the models of the US data additionally control for US-state level family policy (following Daiger von Gleichen & Parolin, 2020). Table A1 in the appendix presents all descriptive statistics for the independant and control variables.

Methods

To answer our first research question, we employed the comparative method, conducting a different-systems comparative analysis regarding employer support for childcare and a similar-systems comparative method regarding employer provision of flexible working hours. The core of these methodologies is the choice of comparative countries that enables us to draw conclusions about the relevance of public family policy (or its absence) for the outcomes of interest (Anckar, 2008; Hank & Steinbach, 2019). For our first research question, we ask: What is the relationship between public and employer family policy? If public policy is relevant for the level of provision of employer family policy, then we expect different public policy landscapes in the two countries to coincide with differing patterns of employer policy provision, as is reflected in our first set of hypotheses (p. 59). If, however, we should find similar patterns of childcare support in both countries, despite differing public policy landscapes, this would indicate that public policy is not a decisive factor for employer childcare support in at least one of the two countries. Regarding our comparative analysis of employer provision of flexible working hours, we employ a similar-systems comparative method. Here we would expect to find that a similar public policy landscape in the two countries will coincide with similar patterns of employer provision.

To answer our second research question about the relevance of female leadership and organized labor to employer family policy, we conducted logistic regression analyses for each policy-country pair, with binary dependent variables of employer provision. We used logistic

regression for all models. Our interpretation of the results in the discussion section informs the answer to our third research question on the relevance of female leadership and organized labor in the context of public family policy, and the applicability of normative versus economic explanations for employer family policy.

Findings

Table 2 below shows the findings regarding the comparative prevalence of employer-provided childcare and flexible working in Germany and the United States.

Table 2. Employer family policy provision by country

	Childcare		Flexible Working	
	Germany	United States	Germany	United States
Employers providing	23%	13%	38%	43%
Employers not providing	77%	87%	62%	57%

Note: For both the German and US data, the difference between hypothetical 50/50 distributions and the observed distributions is statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

For $H1_{Childcare}$ we expected employer-provided childcare to be more widespread in Germany than in the United States. The findings show that 23% of employers with more than 50 employees in Germany provide childcare, compared to 13% in the United States. In other words, 77% more employers provide childcare in Germany as compared to the United States, which we consider to be a substantial difference. We thus fail to reject our first hypothesis for childcare.

Regarding $H1_{Flexible\ working}$, we expected employer-provided flexible working to be similarly widespread in the United States and Germany. The

findings show that this policy is offered by 38% of employers in German, and 43% in the United States. With a 5% difference we consider the level of provision in the two countries to be substantively similar. We thus fail to reject our first hypothesis for flexible working.

Table 3 below presents the results of the logistic regression analyses for each policy and country. Regarding H2, we postulated that a high prevalence of female leadership and the presence of organized labor would be positively associated with employer-provided childcare in Germany, but not in the United States. The regression shows that female leadership is not associated with childcare in Germany, but rather in the United States. In the United States, compared with employers without female executives, employers with women on some executive levels are 6%, and employers with women on all executive levels 18% more likely to provide employer childcare. Thus we must reject H2 with regard to female leadership. For organized labor, we see no significance for childcare in the United States. In Germany, we see a significance, but the marginal effect goes in two different directions for each branch of organized labor. Employers with collective agreements in place are 4% less likely than other employers to offer childcare. Employers with works councils on the other hand are 4% more likely than others to offer childcare. Given that the positive marginal effect seen in association with works councils is weaker, we reject H2 with regard to organized labor as well.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Results

	Childcare				Flexible Working			
	Germany		United States		Germany		United States	
Share of executives who are female	.00	(.00)	--	--	.00	(.00)	--	--
Prevalence of women across executive levels (ref: no female executives)								
Women on some executive levels	--	--	.06*	(.03)	--	--	.01	(.05)
Women on all executive levels	--	--	.18***	(.05)	--	--	.05	(.05)
Presence of unionized employees	--	--	.05	(.03)	--	--	-.02	(.04)
Presence of a collective agreement	-.04**	(.02)	--	--	-.02	(.02)	--	--
Presence of a works council	.04*	(.02)	--	--	.11***	(.02)	--	--
Pseudo R^2	.05		.07		.04		.01	
N	4405		906		4407		909	

Notes: This table shows explanatory variables of four models (full models in appendix tables 2-5), one per country-policy pairing, with average marginal effects and standard errors in brackets.[12] All models control for share of female employees, employer size by number of employees, employer industry, and whether recruitment problems were reported. The two models of the German data additionally control for whether the employer is situated in the former east or west. The two models of the US data additionally control for variety of state level family policy. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

[12] Following the example for reporting this type of regression modelling set by Insarauto (2021)

Regarding H3, we postulated that a high prevalence of female leadership and the presence of organized labor will be insignificant for employer-provided flexible working in both Germany and the United States. The findings in table 3 show that both female leadership and organized labor are insignificant for employer-provided flexible working policy in the United States. In Germany, female leadership and collective agreements are also both insignificant for employer-provided flexible working. Thus we mostly fail to reject H3, with one exception: In Germany, we see that employers with works councils are 11% more likely to provide flexible working policies. In this constellation we reject H3.

Discussion

What do the results of the hypothesis tests mean with regard to our three research questions? When comparing the general prevalence of employer-provided childcare and flexible working across the United States and Germany the findings match our predictions based on neo-institutionalist theory. Regarding childcare, we see that employer provision is more widespread in Germany than in the United States. This suggests a "crowding-in" mechanism, theoretically grounded in neo-institutionalism, in which strong public provision coincides with strong employer provision. Regarding flexible working, we also see a pattern of provision that can be explained by neo-institutionalism, namely comparable prevalence of provision in both countries[13]. From this we can formulate an answer to the

[13] The difference in level of provision for childcare in the two countries is 10%, while the difference in level of provision for flexible working in the two countries is 5%. There is an

first of our three research questions: What is the relevance of public family policy for employer family policy? The evidence suggests that public policy is relevant to employer provision both in its relative generosity and its absence. We see a pattern of more employer policy where there is generous public policy, suggesting a "crowding-in" mechanism. In contrast, we see a similar prevalence of employer provision in the absence of public policy, suggesting that public policy matters[14].

The second step of our research addressed how relevant female leadership and organized labor are to employer-provided family policy. For our second question, we asked: How relevant are female leadership and organized labor to employer family policy provision? We see that in the United States, female leadership, especially when present on all executive levels, is highly significant for the provision of employer childcare. Compared to employers with no female executives, employers with female executives on all levels are 18% more likely to provide childcare. In contrast, and against our theoretical prediction, female leadership is not significantly associated with employer childcare or flexible working in Germany. Taken together, the relevance of female leadership for childcare in the United States and their irrelevance in Germany, permits two answers to our third research question about the applicability of normative versus economic explanations for employer family policy provision. Either employers with a high share of

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argument to be made that this level of difference is small. It nevertheless supports neo-institutionalist explanations of employer behavior in public policy context.

[14] The evidence further shows that flexible working is a far more widespread employer policy in both countries. This can be explained by the higher economic costs associated with employer childcare as opposed to flexible working (Smeaton et al., 2014), which under some circumstances can pay for itself through increased productivity (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011).

female leaders may simply be more likely to provide childcare for economic as opposed to normative reasons. Or female leadership in Germany specifically is unwilling or unable to translate normative pressure from the state into successful normative claims-making for employer childcare. The lack of evidence that can explain the relevance of female leadership through normative pressure is surprising, given the growing body of literature suggesting that women in leadership roles are increasingly acting as normative change agents (Fuwa, 2021; Gould et al., 2018; Kelan & Wratil, 2018). Particularly the fact that female leadership was only significant for employer childcare in the United States gives reason for pause, as public childcare on the sub-federal level in the United States has experienced a notable expansion in recent decades. Variation in public policy may be relevant for normative explanations at the state level, but lost in international comparisons of the federal level. This may be the case for our findings despite controls for regional differences in general family policy at the sub-federal level both in Germany and the United States (see methods section). Future literature should consider the sub-federal level directly, and whether that comparative context reveals any evidence suggesting the relevance of normative pressures for the association between female leadership and employer childcare in the United States.

Turning to organized labor, it did not, as predicted, prove relevant to either employer childcare or flexible working in the United States. In Germany, however, we see that organized labor is relevant to both policies. However, regarding childcare, collective agreements and works councils seem to be working against each other, with collective agreements negatively

associated with childcare provision while we see the same marginal effect in reverse with works councils. This suggests a lack of coordination between claims-making by works councils and collective bargaining with regard to employer childcare, a phenomenon which has been documented in other arenas of German organized labor (Dribbusch & Birke, 2019). With regard to flexible working, we see a similarly different relevance of collective agreements versus works councils. While collective agreements are not associated with employer provided flexible working, employers with works councils are 11% more likely to provide. This in response to our second question we can say that organized labor is not relevant to employer family policy in the United States, but highly relevant in Germany, though in which way depends both on the tier of organized labor and the policy in question.

With regard to our third question, this finding suggests that normative explanations for the relevance of organized labor to employer family policy in Germany are limited. In line with Heywood and Jirjahn's (2009) finding that works councils take on a 'voice role', we find evidence that works councils may be using normative pressure exerted by generous public policy to make normative claims for employer childcare. However, as employers with works councils in Germany are only 4% more likely than employers without works councils to provide employer childcare, this evidence is not strong. It is however plausible given the inconsistent and occasionally lacklustre way unions in Germany have engaged with the topic of work-family reconciliation, even when the official standpoint of many of them is that employers should be responsible for providing support (Klenner et al., 2013). Our study thus provides evidence for the potential of organized labor to leverage normative

pressure to successfully demand employer childcare. But this potential depends on co-ordinated claims-making, which seems to be lacking. This lack of co-ordination is also evident with regard to flexible working in Germany, for which we find works councils are highly relevant, but collective agreements not at all. In sum, there is evidence to suggest that economic considerations are the more applicable when trying to explain the relevance of organized labor for employer family policy in Germany. But in the case of childcare, this may in no small part be due to uncoordinated claims-making which cannot effectively leverage normative legitimacy provided by a generous public childcare context.

Conclusion

This paper presented a comparative study of employer family policy in the United States and Germany. Specifically, we investigated the relevance of female leadership and organized labor for employer-provided childcare and flexible working policies, considering the public policy contexts of the two countries. We asked three research questions, two primarily empirical and the third theoretical.

Our first question was, what is the relevance of public family policy for employer family policy? Our comparative study suggests that public policy is relevant to employer provision both in its relative generosity and its absence. Regarding childcare, we found a crowding-in mechanism, theoretically grounded in neo-institutionalism, in which strong public provision coincides with strong employer provision. Regarding flexible working, we also see a

pattern of provision that can be explained by neo-institutionalism: Comparable prevalence of provision in both countries, where normative employee claims-making is similarly unsupported by public regulation.

Our second question asked how relevant female leadership and organized labor are to employer family policy provision. We found that female leadership is highly relevant for employer childcare in the United States, while works councils are highly relevant for employer-provided flexible working in Germany. There was no evidence of organized labors' relevance for either employer policy in the United States, or the relevance of female leadership for either policy in Germany.

Our last research question concerned the applicability of economic versus normative explanations for employer provision within a given public policy context. The findings suggests that although neo-institutionalism is better able to explain the comparative prevalence of employer childcare and flexible working on the country level, the findings provided little evidence for successful normative claims-making by female employees and organized labor for employer family policy. We discussed the high significance of female leadership for childcare in the United States as particularly surprising, given evidence that suggests female leaders are normative change agents in organizations (Fuwa, 2021; Gould et al., 2018; Kelan & Wratil, 2018). We suggest that this surprising finding should be further examined, ideally at the sub-federal level in the United States where normative pressure exerted by state-level variation in public childcare generosity may be masked at the aggregate level of international comparison (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2020; Parolin & Daiger von Gleichen, 2020). Furthermore, with regard to organized

labor in Germany, we found evidence that the strong association between works councils and flexible working is best explained through economic considerations. There was some evidence that works councils may be leveraging normative pressure exerted by generous public policy to make normative claims for employer childcare, but that such efforts may be diluted by a lack of co-ordination between works council and collective bargaining. Here too, further research is needed on the processes that may be reducing organized labor's ability to leverage normative pressures.

These findings have at least three policy implications. First, given the relevance of female leaders for employer childcare in the United States, this analysis provides evidence of an additional benefit of enabling women's ascent up the job hierarchy into leadership positions, namely the increased likelihood of employer childcare and concomitantly improved work-family balance. While this cross-sectional study is not able to deduce the directionality of the effect, previous evidence suggests that a critical mass of female leaders is an important threshold for organizational change (Flabbi et al., 2019; Kowalewska, 2021). Second, for Germany, this is new evidence from the realm of employer family policy that the two branches of organized labor require more coordination. It supports a sparse qualitative literature suggesting that German organized labor generally has not sufficiently embraced work-family reconciliation as an arena for organized labor, although unionized employees assert it is an important issue for them (Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009; Klenner et al., 2013; Menne, 2007). And third, the evidence suggests that policymakers should consider the relationship between public and employer family policy when passing family policy

measures. Regarding flexible working, the evidence is a strong reminder that the absence of policy is also policy, in that it positions claims-making legitimacy in the economic rather than the normative realm. With regard to childcare, this study provides evidence in support of crowding-in, even if the claims-making mechanism in Germany does not seem attached to female leadership or organized labor. More research is needed on this front. A crowding-in of employer childcare by generous public provisions, as our findings suggests, indicates that the expansion of public childcare can be a win-win situation for the state, employers and working parents.

Article 3 Employer-provided childcare across the 50 United States: The normative importance of public childcare and female leadership

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Abstract

This article explores the relevance of public childcare and female leadership for employer-provided childcare in the United States. The sufficiency of economic explanations for such provision are questioned, and it is suggested that normative pressures, as posited by neo-institutionalism, provide an additional explanation in certain contexts. Employing simple logistic regression, the article examines two categories of employer childcare: flexible spending accounts (FSAs), which are an arguably highly cost-effective policy likely provided for economic reasons, and most other forms of employer childcare (non-FSAs), which are less easily rationalized as economical. Results show that non-FSA forms of employer childcare are more likely in states with generous public childcare, providing evidence of normative pressure. The study finds that female executives are highly relevant for both forms of employer childcare, and that the likelihood increases with a higher prevalence of female leaders. These findings suggest that a critical mass of female leaders can exert both economic and normative pressure on employers to provide childcare. Overall, the study provides evidence that employers with a high prevalence of female leaders in the United States are likely to provide childcare for both economic and normative reasons.

Introduction

As work-family conflict has become a more visible social issue over the last half-century (Chung & van der Horst, 2018; J. Lewis, 2009; Pettit & Hook, 2005; Ruppanner & Huffman, 2014), so social policy research has sought to investigate patterns and drivers of institutional support for work-family reconciliation (Bettio & Plantenga, 2004; Daly, 2010; Gornick & Meyers, 2008; Hook, 2015; Pettit & Hook, 2009). Both public and employer-provided family policy are major sources of institutional support for employees struggling to reconcile work and family obligations (Daiger von Gleichen, 2022; Glass & Fodor, 2018; Ooms, 2019), although far more research is devoted to understanding public provision (Baum, 2006; Daly & Ferragina, 2018; Hank & Steinbach, 2019).

From research on public family policy, we know that patterns and drivers of provision are shaped by economic as well as normative considerations (Bergqvist & Saxonberg, 2017; Ferragina & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015; Sarna et al., 2013). Yet research into employer provision is still heavily skewed in favor of explaining work-family reconciliation measures as the results of economic considerations (Budd & Mumford, 2004, 2006; Fleckenstein & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011b; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009). This is particularly true of research on employer family policy in the United States (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992; Osterman, 1995; Seyler et al., 1995).

The overarching theoretical contribution of this paper is to challenge the primacy of economic explanations for employer family policy in the United

States, and to show instanced where normative explanations are better able to account for the evidence. The impetus to question the primacy of economic explanations comes from two fields of research. First, studies from Europe suggest that generous public family policy is associated with more generous employer family policy, a mechanism called “crowding-in” (Wiß & Greve, 2019). This finding tends to be explained through neo-institutionalist theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991), where public policy provisions make it easier for employees to claim work-family support vis-à-vis their employers on normative grounds rather than by applying economic pressure. Contrary to common belief, the United States has experienced considerable public family policy expansion in some policy areas in the last decades, although this has been on the sub-federal as opposed to the federal level (Engeman, 2020; Parolin & Daiger von Gleichen, 2020). This is particularly true in the case of state-level public childcare policy, where we see certain policy dimensions approaching European standards of universality (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2020; Friedman-Krause et al., 2022; Stanford, 2023). If states in the US differ with regard to their generosity of public childcare, and if generous public policy crowds-in employer policies for normative reasons, these may be playing an underappreciated role in employer-provided childcare in many US states.

Second, neo-institutionalism – the theoretical premise of the crowding-in literature – places a high importance on claims-making employees. Women in leadership positions are in a notable position to make claims for employer childcare (Witkowski, 1999), because they are at once female (and therefore more likely to be sensitive to work-family conflict) and

relatively powerful employees (Wiß, 2017). There is a burgeoning literature that suggests women in leadership positions can be powerful drivers of cultural and normative changes in organizations (Fuwa, 2021; Kelan & Wratil, 2018; Kowalewska, 2020, 2021). These insights are particularly relevant in the Unites States, which, aside from the Russian Federation, is the OECD country with the highest percentage of women in managerial positions, with 40.9% of managerial positions held by women, well above the 33% OECD average (ILO, 2020; OECD, 2023). In sum, one can assume that female leaders may be shaping the norms in favor of generous employer policy, and that they play a particularly important role in the United States.

However, as employees with comparatively high human capital, female managers are simultaneously in a position to exert economic pressure on their employers to provide employer childcare. Furthermore, whether female managers are exerting normative or economic pressure, the predicted outcome stays the same: more employer family policy. Therefore, it can be challenging to identify a context in which employer provision linked to female managers is more easily explained by normative, rather than economic considerations. However, the sub-federal United States provides an ideal case for such a study because there are two salient categories of employer childcare: the first, flexible spending accounts (of FSAs), are geared toward high-skill, high-income employees and can also be provided at very low cost to the employer (Kelly, 2003). Here, it can be easily argued that they are a cost-effective policy that is provided for economic reasons. The second form of employer childcare encompasses all other forms of childcare support that come at a real and often substantial cost to employers (non-

FSAs). Such childcare is more supportive of employees of lower skill or income (Hipp et al., 2017; Morrissey & Warner, 2009), while at the same time being perceived as some of the more expensive measures by employers (Ratnasingam et al., 2012; Ruddy, 2020). Provision of non-FSA childcare by employers, unless these are dependent on high skills employees, is difficult to explain on economic grounds alone, but rather is likely motivated by normative considerations.

For these reasons, this paper sets out to question the current wisdom that normative considerations are negligible in employers' motivation to provide childcare in the United States. I investigate three specific questions: First, how important is public childcare for employer childcare in the United States? Second, how important is the prevalence of female leadership for employer childcare in the United States? And lastly, what do these patterns of provision tell us about the relevance of normative considerations for employer decisions to provide childcare in the United States?

To preview, the results suggest that public childcare is relevant for the provision of employer childcare support, excepting flexible spending accounts. This suggests that public childcare provision may be increasing normative pressure on employers to provide such childcare. Second, female leadership is highly significant for employer childcare, both for flexible spending accounts and other forms of employer childcare support. The evidence suggests that female leaders likely exert both economic and normative pressure on their employers to provide childcare. In sum, the paper makes the argument that public childcare, the prevalence of female

leadership, and also the interaction of these two factors, demonstrate the high and often overlooked relevance of normative considerations for employer family policy in the United States.

The dominance of rational-choice perspectives

Two theories tend to be used to explain employer-provided family policies: neo-institutionalism and rational-choice theory. Neo-institutionalist theory explains employer-family policy as the organizational response to normative pressures, such as changing perceptions of what is an appropriate level of support employees can expect from their employers (Lewis & Smithson, 2001; Powell, 1991). The theoretical premise is that, by offering certain public policies, the state puts normative pressure on employers to offer similar policies (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991). In this perspective, the availability of generous public family policies legitimizes workers' claims for support vis-à-vis their employers regarding work-family reconciliation. This creates normative pressures for employers to offer such work-family policies to gain normative legitimacy from their environment i.e., clients, competitors, or the public.

Rational-choice theoretical perspectives in contrast view employer family policy as a response to economic pressures, and interpret provision as the outcome of a deliberate and rational cost-benefit analysis (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; DeMenezes & Kelliher, 2011; Estévez-Abe et al., 2001; Hart, 2010). In this view, employer provision is a means to increase profits by improved hiring efficiency or retention of highly skilled employees (Osterman,

1995; Ackers, 2003; Berg et al., 2004; Wiß, 2015; Chung, 2018; Allen, 2001; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009), increasing productivity (Konrad & Mangel, 2000; Beauregard & Henry, 2009); or preventing costly confrontations with organized labor (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2001, 2008; Trampusch, 2013).

Of the two perspectives, rational-choice theory is more commonly invoked to explain most aspects of employer provision aside from public policy context. The most prominently studied of such factors are sector or industry (Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012; Stevens, 1988; Wiß, 2015), employee skills and tight labor markets (Berg et al., 2004; Estévez-Abe et al., 2001; Fleckenstein & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011a; Mares, 2001; Riva & Rizza, 2021), employer size by number of employees (Osterman, 1995), degree of unionization (Budd & Mumford, 2006; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009; Jacobi, 2023), share of female employees (Kelly et al., 2011; Osterman, 1995; Seyler et al., 1995).

While the focus on economic pressure makes particular sense when examining some determinants (e.g. labor market tightness), economic pressures remain dominant in explaining the relevance of certain factors even when normative explanations are readily available. For example, the relevance of employer size by number of employees can be explained both ways. From a neo-institutionalist perspective, employers with greater numbers of employees are more likely to offer employer family policies because their greater visibility makes them subject to greater normative pressures (Ingram & Simons, 1995). From a rational-choice perspective, large employers are more likely to offer family policies because they can

better benefit from greater economies of scale (Osterman, 1995). And while many studies acknowledge both theoretical perspectives in their frameworks (e.g. Davis & Kalleberg, 2006), often it is the rational-choice arguments that are employed when interpreting the findings.

Normative pressures matter too: Public family policy and female leadership

However, there are at least two reasons to question whether economic explanations are sufficient to explain employer childcare provision in the United States. The first is evidence from Europe suggesting that rational-choice considerations cannot explain employer family policy provision by public policy context. The second is another body of literature showing that female leaders – which are far more common in the United States than in most other countries – can exert considerable normative pressures toward change within organizations. This section explores these two literatures.

Regarding the relevance of public policy to employer family policy, rational choice explanations are less prominent in large part because they are less successful than normative approaches at explaining the evidence. Rational-choice theoretical perspectives predict that employers provide little support in polities with generous public family policy provision, as this is not an efficient use of employer resources. However, this is not the emergent wisdom of the empirical literature. On the contrary: generous public family policy tends to be more frequently associated with widespread employer family policy (Chung, 2019b; Daiger von Gleichen, 2022; Den Dulk et al.,

2012, 2013; Mun & Jung, 2018; Natali et al., 2018; Wiß & Greve, 2019). This finding is better explained by neo-institutionalist theory, as the result of normative pressures. This insight has so far however not been applied to the United States, most likely because public family policy in the United States has undergone far less expansion than in Europe. Yet there has been a considerable change in public family policy in the United States at the sub-federal level, especially in the realm of childcare (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2020; Friedman-Krause et al., 2022). This suggests that in the United States too, the role of public family policy is one context which might highlight the relevance of normative pressure in employer family policy provision. This however has not yet been tested empirically.

Regarding the relevance of female leaders, there is a nascent body of research suggesting that they can be effective change agents (Fuwa, 2021; Kelan & Wratil, 2018), particularly when they are not anomalies (Miliopoulou & Kapareliotis, 2021), but part of a critical mass of women leaders (Kowalewska, 2020, 2021) able to change organizational culture from the top (Gould et al., 2018; Jouber, 2022; Khushk et al., 2022). These studies are new in large part because only in recent years have women gained leadership positions in sufficient numbers to enable the analysis of critical mass effects. While these studies acknowledge the economic pressure female leaders are able to apply due to their higher human capital, the research stresses the ability of women to better apply normative pressure by virtue of their leadership positions (Gould et al., 2018; van Mensvoort et al., 2021).

Notably, in the few instances when the relevance of female leadership for employer family policy has been examined, normative arguments are similarly salient as economic arguments. Studies on the link between female leadership and employer family policy generally show a positive association (Flüter-Hoffman & Seyda, 2006; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009). Moreover, the relationship is often theorized as female managers applying both normative and economic pressures to effect change in their organizations (Fleckenstein & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011b; Fuwa, 2021; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Pasamar & Alegre, 2015; Wiß, 2017; Witkowski, 1999).

This is the theoretical frontier: Female leaders likely apply both normative and economic pressures, but when and why remains unexplored. This has contributed to the discounting of normative explanations for employer family policy, particularly in the United States. This is the case although empirically, the predicted effects of normative pressure by female leaders tend to be the same as the predicted effects of economic pressure, namely that employers with many female managers are more likely to offer employer family policies. This study contributes to the theoretical literature by distinguishing employer provision patterns, given the presence of female leaders, by whether provision is likely driven by normative versus economic pressure. This is made possible by exploiting the landscape of public and employer provided childcare in the United States.

Forms of public and employer childcare, and hypotheses

Public family policy in the US is liberal in terms of targeting low-income families and being geared towards poverty alleviation (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; O'Connor et al., 1999). Policies providing financial assistance to families with dependent children are furthermore ungenerous in comparison to other Western European countries in terms of eligibility, duration and replacement rates (Daiger von Gleichen & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018; Woods, 2012). Moreover, the United States is the only OECD country that does not have paid maternity leave at the national level (Engeman, 2020; Isaacs et al., 2017). The United States is thus commonly labelled a 'laggard' in comparative evaluations of public family policy expansion (Daiger von Gleichen & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018).

Nevertheless, several dimensions of public family policy in the United States have expanded in recent decades. The most prominent policy realm has been paid leave, which is currently offered in eleven states (Engeman, 2020). But state-level public childcare policy expansion has also been extensive. As of 2020, 17 states had so-called "universal" pre-Kindergarden programs in which age and residency were the only requirements for eligibility (Stanford, 2023). An additional 34 states offer programs with eligibility tied to an income cap (Friedman-Krause et al., 2022). Importantly for comparative research, the variation of public childcare policy is substantial across the 50 states (Meyers et al., 2001; Parolin & Daiger von Gleichen, 2020). Both rational-choice and neo-institutionalist theoretical approaches

suggest that pressures on employers to provide will vary by state public policy context. This leads to the first hypothesis:

> H_1: Employers in states with more generous public childcare are more likely to provide employer childcare. This is based on neo-institutionalist theory, which posits that more generous public family policy increases normative pressure on employers to provide employer policies.

Beyond the variation in public childcare, there are two different categories of employer-provided childcare in the United States. Specifically, they differ in the extent to how probably they are offered in response to economic versus normative pressures. Analysing how these two policies are associated with public policy and female leadership will provide evidence of economic versus normative pressures to provide employer childcare. The first of these employer-provided forms of childcare, are flexible spending accounts (FSAs). They are economically efficient in that they are both low-cost (Galinsky et al., 2008; Kelly, 2003), and targeted toward high-skills, high-income employees (Hipp et al., 2017). FSAs enable employees to annually devote $5,000 pre-tax dollars, administered by their employer, to childcare expenses.[1] At the same time, setting up an FSA requires that the full sum be paid up front, which is likely to deter low-income employees from participation (Hipp et al., 2017). Hipp, Morrisey and Warner (2017) further suggest that the hidden nature of FSA tax deduction may make it an especially attractive

policy for high-status employees eager to avoid stigmatization associated with participation in employer family policies.

In contrast, all other forms of employer-provided (and financial support for) childcare tend to be both highly expensive for employers (Ratnasingam et al., 2012; Ruddy, 2020) and less targeted toward high-skill, high-income employees (Feldman & Schultz, 2001; Morrissey & Warner, 2009). For example, childcare centres have high fixed costs (Feierabend & Staffelbach, 2016), and are often of interest to lower-income employees who are not as easily deterred by concerns over stigmatization through policy use (Morissey & Warner, 2009). Childcare subsidies are also frequently tied to specific childcare providers which limits parental choice (Sosinsky, 2012), another provision aspect that tends to be more important to high- as compared to low-income parents (Shlay et al., 2005). This leads to the following hypothesis pair:

H_2: Employers reliant on high-general skills are more likely to provide employer childcare in the form of flexible spending accounts, but no more likely to provide other forms of childcare. This is based on rational-choice theory, suggesting that employers under economic pressure are more likely to provide the most cost-efficient policy.

H_3: Employers with a higher share of female leadership are more likely to provide flexible spending accounts (FSAs) as well as other forms of employer childcare (non-FSAs). The first association is based on rational-choice theory, suggesting that female leaders exert economic pressure on

employers to provide the most cost-effective employer policy. The second association is based on neo-institutionalism, suggesting that female executives exert normative pressure on employers to provide childcare, even if doing so is not necessarily cost efficient.

Lastly, the following hypothesis pair places the relevance of female leaders within the state-level public policy context:

H4: Employers with a high prevalence of female leaders, in states with ungenerous public policy, are more likely associated with flexible spending accounts. This is based on rational-choice theory, where the lack of public childcare legitimates employees' economic claims.

H5: Employers with a high prevalence of female leadership in states with generous public policy are more likely associated with other forms of employer childcare support (non-FSAs). This is based on neo-institutionalism, where more generous public policy legitimates employees' normative claims for employer support.

Data, measures and method

Data

The data employed for the analysis of childcare provision by employers in the United States is from the 2016 National Study of Employers (NSE). The NSE (N=919) was conducted by the Families and Work Institute (Matos et al.,

2017), on the basis of a nationally representative sample of private sector employers with at least 50 employees. The NSE data was supplemented by data from five additional sources: Data regarding public childcare stems from the National Institute of Early Education (NIEER) 2016 State of Preschool Yearbook (Barnett et al., 2017). The employers' industry skill-profile was determined by analysing the skill composition of industries in the US using the 2016 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Data on state GDP per capita, and the regional price parities by state used to adjust state GDP per capita, were both drawn from the US Department of Commerce (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2016a, 2016b). Female labor force participation rates by state were drawn from the US Department of Labor (Women's Bureau, 2018). Data on what percentage of the state population prefers a male-breadwinner / female-carer model were drawn from the 2016 Pew Research Center's Paid parental, family and medical leave survey (Horowitz et al., 2017).

Measures

Dependent variables

The NSE queried survey respondents about a total of seven forms of employer-provided childcare support: provision of information services helping parents locate childcare, childcare vouchers or subsidies that incur direct costs to the employer, childcare at or near the work site, childcare during school vacations, back-up childcare when regular childcare arrangements fall apart, childcare for sick children, and flexible spending

accounts that help employees pay for childcare with pre-tax income. From this information, we created two dependent variables: Employer-provided childcare including flexible spending accounts (“FSAs”) and all other forms of employer childcare that incur a cost to employers (“non-FSAs”).

The variable “FSAs” captures whether employers provide flexible spending accounts, while the variable “non-FSAs” captures whether employers provide childcare other than flexible spending accounts or “information services”. "Information services" were excluded as they tend to be low-cost, which weakens the argument that non-FSA forms of childcare tend to be less cost-effective in part because they are more expensive. Both variables were coded as binary: provides / does not provide. The distributions are shown in table 1 below, with the column ‘percent’ indicating the percent in the data, and ‘weighted percent’ indicating the prevalence of provision across the United States. Importantly, employers providing FSAs may also provide non-FSA childcare, i.e. the respective variables do not capture employers who only provide the one policy to the exclusion of the other. However, the overlap should not affect the analysis in any way as correlation between the two measures is weak, with a Cramér’s V statistic of .06 (Acock, 2018; Botsch, 2011).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables

Employers providing flexible spending accounts (FSAs)

	frequency	percent	percent (weighted)
Provided	344	39%	44%
Not provided	536	61%	56%
Total	880	100%	100%

Employers providing other forms of childcare (non-FSAs)

	frequency	percent	percent (weighted)
Provided	127	14%	13%
Not provided	751	86%	87%
Total	878	100%	100%

Independent variables

Public policy in the form of public childcare was captured in a binary variable indicating whether the state in which the employer is located has public pre-Kindergarten not subject to a family income cap, but accessible to children with the appropriate age and residency requirements independent of family income. This operationalization ensures that the public pre-Kindergarten represents an outside option for employees irrespective of income.

The variable capturing the prevalence of female executives in the NSE is categorical: “no female executives”, “women on some executive levels”, “women on all executive levels”. The skills variable is binary, capturing whether a given employers industry contains occupational positions considered indicative of high-general skills, as categorized by Fleckenstein et al., (2011)[15]. This was determined by analysing the skill composition of

[15] See Appendix table 2 for reproduction of Fleckenstein et al (2011) categorization.

industries in the US using the 2016 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017)[16].

The models additionally control for the size of the employer by number of employees, difficulty filling vacancies, share of female employees, share of unionized employees, state gdp per capita, state female labor force participation rate and state gender norms. Table A1 in the appendix shows the distributions of the independent variables by dependent variable.

Method

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between public childcare provision, the prevalence of female leadership, skills, and employer-provided childcare. Significant associations between independent and dependent variables are important indicators for this relationship, which is why regression analysis is the employed method. Specifically, given the binary dependent variables, simple logistic regression was used. For the main analysis, two simple logistic regressions were conducted, one for each dependent variable. The associations are presented as margins. In a further step, the relevance of interactions between public childcare provision and female leadership were examined with respect to employer-provided childcare. These results are presented as coefficients, as margins cannot be used for interactions in logistic regression (Williams, 2012).

[16] See Appendix table 3 for industry skill-profile categorizations used in the skills variable.

Furthermore, given that observations in the same state form presumably dependent groupings in the dataset, multilevel logistic regression was considered. For this purpose, the interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for each model was examined. For the FSA model, the ICC was 0.004 and for the non-FSA model it was even smaller, 6.33×10^{-32}. In other words, the ICC for both models is practically zero. Thus, there is no evidence of state-dependent groupings in the data, making a multilevel logistic model mathematically equivalent to a simple logistic model. A possible reason for the lack of measurable groupings may be the relatively low number of observations in many states. Table 2 below shows the data for all observations where the state was non-missing[17]. As with most surveys examining employer-provided family policies, the low number of observations generally (and consequently, in many states) is a limitation of the data.

Table 2. Observations across States

Range of observations per state	Number of states	Number of observations	Percent of observations
2 - 8 observations	22 states	110	12%
10 - 27 observations	18 states	306	34%
30 - 74 observations	11 states	477	53%
Total	50 States + DC	893	100%

In sum, simple logistic regression was chosen as it is mathematically equivalent to multilevel logistic regression in this dataset and easier to

[17] Fewer observations had missing data for their state as compared to missing data on whether they offered employer childcare, which is why Table 2 shows 893 observations while table 1 shows 880 and 878 observations respectively. The difference between 880 and 878 for the two models stems from two observations that responded as to whether or not they provided FSA childcare, but not showed missing responses with regard to other forms of childcare. Those observations could thus not be incorporated into the model on non-FSA childcare.

interpret. Lastly, the slightly differing number of observations in the two models (880 versus 878) is due to two missing responses regarding non-FSA provision of childcare, observations which subsequently had to be excluded from that model.

Findings

Table 3 below summarizes the five hypotheses for which this section evaluates the evidence.

Table 3. Overview of Hypotheses and Outcome of Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis		Test outcome	
		FSAs	Non-FSAs
H_1	Employers in states with more generous public childcare are more likely to provide employer childcare.	Reject	Fail to reject
H_2	Employers reliant on high-general skills are more likely to provide employer childcare in the form of flexible spending accounts, but no more likely to provide other forms of childcare.	Fail to reject	
H_3	Employers with a high prevalence of female leaders are more likely to provide both forms of employer childcare: FSAs and non-FSAs.	Fail to reject	
H_4	Employers with high prevalence of female leaders in states with ungenerous public policy are more likely associated with flexible spending accounts.	Fail to reject	
H_5	Employers with a high prevalence of female leaders in states with generous public policy are more likely associated with non-FSA forms of employer childcare.	Fail to reject	

Table 4 below presents the results of the logistic regression analyses of each type of employer-provided childcare. Regarding H1, we postulated that more generous state-level public childcare would be associated with more widespread employer family policy. The regression shows that while

FSA childcare is not associated with more generous state-level public childcare, employers are 5% more likely to provide non-FSA childcare in states providing public childcare without an income cap. So while we reject the hypothesis regarding employer provision of FSAs, we confirm it with regard to non-FSA childcare[18].

Table 4. Logistic Regression Results

	FSAs		Non-FSAs	
Public childcare witout income cap[1]	-0.01	(0.03)	0.05*	(0.02)
High-general skills industry[2]	0.12***	(0.03)	0.02	(0.03)
Prevalence of female executives[3]				
Women on some executive levels	0.12**	(0.05)	0.06*	(0.03)
Women on all executive levels	0.16*	(0.07)	0.19***	(0.05)
Pseudo R^2	0.05		0.06	
N	880		878	

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: This table summarizes two models (full models in appendix tables 4 and 5), one for FSAs and one for non-FSAs, with average marginal effects and standard errors in brackets. [1]Reference category: public childcare with cap or no public childcare. [2]Reference category: non high-general skills industry. [3]Reference category: No female executives. Both models control for number of employees, difficulty filling vacancies, share of female employees, share of unionized employees, state gdp per capita, state female labor force participation rate and state gender norms.

With regard to H2, we posited that employers reliant on high-general skills would be more likely to provide employer childcare in the form of flexible spending accounts, but no more likely to provide other forms of childcare. The evidence suggests that indeed, employers in high-general skills industries are 12 % more likely to provide flexible spending accounts to their employees, but no more likely to provide other forms of childcare.

[18] While technically statistically incorrect, the phrase “confirm hypothesis” instead of fail to reject is used in some instances in this thesis to improve readability.

Moreover, this association is highly significant with a p-value smaller than 0.001. Thus we find that the evidence supports our second hypothesis.

In H3, we postulated that employers with a high prevalence of female leaders are more likely to provide both forms of employer childcare: FSAs and non-FSAs. The regression table shows that in comparison to employers with no female executives, employer with women on some executive levels are 12% more likely to provide flexible spending accounts, and 6% more likely to provide other forms of childcare support. The size of the association increases among employers with women on all executive levels. Here we find employers 16% more likely to provide flexible spending accounts, and 19% more likely to provide other forms of childcare support. The evidence thus supports our third hypothesis.

To test hypotheses four and five, we evaluated the direction, strength and significance of interactions between prevalence of female executives and generosity of public childcare. As interactions cannot be presented in margins, table 5 below presents the coefficients of the interaction terms. Importantly, the coefficients cannot be interpreted in terms of likelihood in percentages, the way margins can. Nevertheless the coefficient signifies comparatively stronger and weaker associations. While the strength of these associations cannot be compared to the margins presented in table 4 above, they can be compared to each other to determine the relative strength of the interaction effects.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Interaction Effects: Coefficients and Standard Errors

	FSAs	Non-FSAs
Reference: No female exeutives #		
No public childcare or income requirement		
No female executives #		
Public childcare without income cap	-0.07 (0.35)	0.54 (0.67)
Women on some exeutive level(s) #		
No public childcare or income requirement	0.51* (0.24)	0.78 (0.49)
Women on some exeutive level(s) #		
Public childcare without income cap	0.51* (0.26)	1.16* (0.50)
Women on all executive level(s) #		
No public childcare or income requirement	0.83* (0.36)	1.53** (0.56)
Women on all executive level(s) #		
Public childcare without income cap	0.37 (0.46)	2.14** (0.62)
Pseudo R^2	0.05	0.06
N	880	878
	* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001	

Note: This table presents interaction calculations based on the same models as table 4 (full models in appendix tables 4 and 5), one for FSAs and one for non-FSAs, showing the coefficient and standard errors in brackets. 1 Reference category: public childcare with cap or no public childcare. 2 Reference category: non high-general skills industry. 3 Reference category: No female executives. Both models additionally control for industry by dominant skill-type, number of employees, difficulty filling vacancies, share of female employees, share of unionized employees, state gdp per capita, state female labor force participation rate and state gender norms.

Regarding H4, table 5 above shows that employers are most likely to provide FSAs when they are in a state with no public childcare or there are women on all executive levels, as compared to all other constellations of those interaction terms. This evidence supports our hypothesis. With regard to H5, we see that the association is strongest among employers with a woman on all executive levels, in states with generous public childcare policy. Again, the evidence supports our hypothesis. The implications of these findings are discussed in the following section.

Discussion

What do the results of the hypothesis tests mean for our three research questions? To recall, these were: First, how important is public childcare for employer childcare in the United States? Second, how important is the prevalence of female leadership for employer childcare in the United States? And lastly, what do these patterns of provision tell us about the relevance of normative considerations for employer decisions to provide childcare in the United States?

Regarding the first research question, we see that generous public childcare is associated with non-FSA forms of employer childcare. Employers in states with more generous public childcare are 5% more likely to provide such forms of childcare. Given that these are less cost-efficient than flexible spending accounts, there is reason to believe that normative factors play a stronger role in employers' decision to provide them. The fact that such childcare is more strongly associated with generous public policy is in line with neo-institutionalist theory, which posits that generous public policy increases normative pressure on employers to provide family policies. Thus, we can infer answers to the first and third research questions at this point: the evidence suggests that public childcare is a relevant, likely normative factor in employer-childcare provision in the United States.

Regarding the second research question, we see that the prevalence of female leadership is highly relevant for employer childcare provision in the United States. The findings in table 4 show that in comparison to employers

with no female executives, employers with women on some executive levels are 12% more likely to provide flexible spending accounts, and 6% more likely to provide other forms of childcare support. The size of the association increases among employers with women on all executive levels. Here we find employers 16% more likely to provide flexible spending accounts, and 19% more likely to provide other forms of childcare support.

Several inferences can be drawn from these findings: First, the evidence clearly suggests that a high prevalence of female leadership is relevant for employer-provided childcare. Second, the higher likelihood between ‘women on all executive levels’ and both forms of employer childcare is further evidence that a critical mass of female leaders is helpful to transform women from ‘cogs in the machine’ to ‘change agents’ within organizations (Fuwa, 2021; Kowalewska, 2020, 2021). Lastly, the evidence further suggests that female leaders are using their position in organizations to exert both economic and normative pressure on employers. While this cross-sectional evidence cannot support any claims of causality, the finding that organizations with women on all executive levels are almost 20% more likely to offer non-FSA childcare suggests that a critical mass of female leaders may be of particularly importance to affect normative change.

Thus, in response to the third question, we see that patterns of employer childcare provision associated with public childcare and female leaders suggests that normative considerations are likely highly relevant to employer decisions to provide childcare in the United States. The findings are in support of neo-institutionalist explanations of employer provision, especially the findings in table 5 suggesting the interaction between

generous public provision and a higher prevalence of female leaders are strongly significant for non-FSA forms of employer childcare. This is evidence of the mechanism postulated by neo-institutionalism: That generous public policy legitimizes female leaders' normative claims-making, thereby increasing normative pressure on employers to provide childcare. The interaction effects of public childcare and female leaders also show evidence of rational-choice explanations in the model of flexible spending accounts. Here we see the strongest coefficients when there is a high prevalence of female leaders, but ungenerous public childcare. However, the evidence here is weaker, and among employers with women on some executive levels, there is little difference between employers in states with generous versus ungenerous public policy (only the standard error is smaller when public policy is ungenerous). Here it is important to keep in mind that these coefficients are not comparable in terms of their values to the margins presented in table 4. However, by comparing the coefficients within table 5 itself we can see a clear tendency for the interaction of female leadership and public policy, as explained for both forms of childcare by rational-choice theory and neo-institutionalism respectively,

Conclusion

This study challenged the prevailing stance in most research on employer family policy in the United States that employers' decisions are primarily, if not solely guided by rational choice and are aimed at improving their financial performance. The evidence suggests that public childcare is a relevant factor

for employer-provided childcare in the United States, particularly for forms of employer childcare that are more easily explained as the result of normative as opposed to economic considerations. The findings further suggest that a high prevalence of female leaders is also highly relevant for employer childcare provision in the United States, likely exerting both economic and normative pressure on employer to provide forms of childcare that are cost-effective and ones that are less so. Taken together, these findings suggest that both economic and normative considerations play an important role in employer decisions to provide employer childcare in the United States.

Based on the findings of the study, there are several policy implications that could be considered. First, policymakers may want to explore ways to expand public childcare in the United States, as there is no evidence that it crowds-out employer provision, but rather crowds-in non-FSA forms of employer childcare. Such initiatives could include eliminating income caps in states where these exist, as well as efforts to encourage employers to partner with public childcare providers. Second, policies aimed at increasing the representation of women in leadership positions could have a positive impact on childcare accessibility through increased employer childcare. This could involve sensitivity training to address gendered leadership biases, and increased access to professional development opportunities for women. While women are more strongly represented in managerial positions in the United States than in most other OECD countries, the highest echelons of leadership are still far from reaching gender parity (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2018; Stainback et al., 2016).

Further, the findings suggest that normative considerations are an important factor in employer decisions to provide childcare. Policymakers may want to leverage this finding to promote norms of social responsibility in workplaces. This can be done through targeted education campaigns and by legitimating non-economic arguments for employer involvement in work-family reconciliation by using them in public communication.

Finally, this research highlights several avenues for future research. Ideally, the findings here could be reappraised in a longitudinal study investigating the causal relationships between public policy, female leadership, and employer-provided childcare. Second, data availability permitting, future research could better differentiate the category of “non-FSA” childcare to distinguish, for example, childcare vouchers versus on-site childcare centers and potential differences in the stigmatization of their use. Third, future research could evaluate to what extent provision patterns suggest that normative factors are at play in employer decisions to provide other types of benefits, such as employer-provided leave or flexible working. However, here too a research design would need to permit a differentiation between these two types of pressures on employers.

In conclusion, this study challenges the belief that employer decisions regarding family policies are primarily, or even solely, guided by economic considerations. Instead, the study highlights the importance of considering both economic and normative motivations for employer provision of family policies. The study's findings have important policy implications, including the benefits to expanding public childcare, increasing the representation of women in leadership positions, and promoting socially responsible workplaces.

Article 4 Public and employer-provided parenting leaves in the United States: Bringing gender back in

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Abstract

This paper adds to the debate on how and why organizations provide parenting leaves to their employees, in varying contexts of public leave policy. While rational-choice arguments dominate the literature on occupational welfare, scholars who contextualize employer decisions in context of public policy tend to favor neo-institutionalist explanations. In a case study of the United States, this study examines employer-provided maternity and paternity leaves in the context of gender-neutral public policy. The findings, obtained through logistic regression using the nationally representative National Study of Employers dataset, suggest that employers re-introduce gender-unequal provision despite gender-neutral public policy. Specifically, employer-provided maternity policies are more likely in states with more gender-neutral public leave policies. Employer-provided paternity policies on the other hand are no more likely in states with gender-neutral public leave. Theoretically, this suggests a limit to neo-institutionalist explanations of occupational welfare provision, which posits that generous public policy will diffuse to more generous occupational welfare. Regarding employer-provided paternity policies in the context of generous public policy, rational-choice approaches seem to have greater explanatory power.

Introduction

The organization is gaining recognition as a key location where normative behaviors, processes and modes of discourse perpetuate gender inequalities at work (Amstutz et al., 2020; Johansson & Ringblom, 2017; Rainey & Melzer, 2021; Sang et al., 2016), often related to women's greater involvement in childcare (Correll et al., 2007; C. Glass & Fodor, 2018; Todd & Binns, 2013), and where gendered norms, expectations and even the consequences of the social construction of rationality in organizations tend to skew in men's favor (Davies & Frink, 2014; Minnotte & Minnotte, 2021; Ross-Smith & Kornberger, 2004). However, less attention has been paid to ways in which public policy shapes how work-organizations (re)produce gender inequalities. This paper examines the relationship between public family policy and gendered provision of occupational welfare, in the form of maternity and paternity leaves. Specifically, I investigate whether in the United States, employers are more likely to provide parenting leaves in states with public paid leave policies,[19] and whether there is a difference in the relationship between public paid leave and employer maternity versus paternity leave provision. Theoretically, I ask whether employer provided maternity and paternity policies can be explained as the result of economic or normative considerations.

How accessible is parenting leave in the United States? In 2020, 89% of civilian workers had access to unpaid, job-protected family leave through

[19] I use the term 'parenting leave' to denote forms of leave that allow working parents job-protected leave to care for (younger) children (Dobrotić et al., 2022, p. 3). This is different from the term 'parental leave' which indicates a parenting leave that can be taken by both mothers and fathers, as distinct from maternity or paternity leave which are gender-specific parenting leaves.

federal law while 21% had access to pay during leave through state-level programs (Petts et al., 2021). Given that public policies on both the federal and state-level are individualized and gender-neutral, both mothers and fathers are equally eligible for these policies. However, data on gender-differences in leave-taking reveal a different story. In 2015, only 10% of new fathers actually took paternity leave in the United States, as compared to 40% of new mothers (Zagorsky, 2017). Further evidence suggests that fathers take substantially shorter leaves than mothers, i.e. an average of 9.5 weeks for mothers versus two weeks for fathers (Berrigan et al., 2021). And while fathers are more likely to be paid while on leave (Petts & Knoester, 2018), this is likely because fathers' leave-taking is more contingent on being paid (Petts et al., 2020). Given that only 15% of workers are employed in organizations that provide paid paternity leave to some male employees (Daiger von Gleichen, 2022), a picture emerges as to how strongly gendered leave-taking in the United States is, despite technically gender-neutral public policy.

If public policy is gender-neutral, yet leave use is strongly gendered, this begs the question of the relationship between public and employer provided leave policy. The question fits into a larger theoretical debate about employer behavior in different welfare state contexts. While rational-choice approaches to employer behavior posit that employers are primarily if not near-exclusively motivated by the interest to improve their bottom line (Ackers, 2003; Estévez-Abe et al., 2001; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Wiß, 2015), neo-institutionalism considers normative factors and specifically institutional pressure from the state as key drivers of change and

foundational to understanding organizational behavior (Amstutz et al., 2020; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Currently, neo-institutionalism is the more dominant theoretical approach to explaining the relationship between public and employer-provided parenting leaves. This article contributes to this debate by showing a limitation in neo-institutionalisms theoretical applicability. To preview the theoretical contribution, the findings suggest that the relationship between public and employer maternity leave is better understood through a neo-institutionalist lens, while a rational-choice approach better predicts and explains the relationship between public and employer paternity leave.

The paper proceeds as follows: the three-part literature reviews the theoretical debate on why employers provide occupational welfare, the empirical evidence in varying public policy contexts, with a focus on parenting leaves, and the role of the organization in reproducing gender-based inequalities through occupational welfare provision, specifically employer parenting leaves. Section 3 draws on these reviews to explain the United States as case choice for this study. This is followed by the methodology and finding sections, whose implications are addressed in the discussion. A final section concludes, emphasizing the empirical and theoretical contributions of the paper.

Theories on occupational welfare provision: The rational versus the appropriate organization

This research contributes to the debate about why employers provide occupational welfare to employees. On the one hand, explanations grounded in rational-choice theory assert that providing occupational welfare is primarily a means to increase profits, by hiring or retaining the most economically valuable employees (Ackers, 2003; Allen, 2001; Berg et al., 2004; Chung, 2018; Osterman, 1995; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Wiß, 2015), increasing their productivity (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Konrad & Mangel, 2000); or cooperating with organized labor to prevent costly confrontations (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2001, 2008; Trampusch, 2013).[20]

In contrast, a neo-institutionalist perspective counters that occupational welfare provision is primarily motivated by a desire to conform to normative conceptions of appropriateness (Glass & Estes, 1997; Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Kossek et al., 1994). This theoretical stance views employer decisions as primarily shaped by pressures only tangentially or superficially related to concerns of profitability (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991; Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Indeed, a central tenant of neo-institutionalism is to critique the taken-for-grantedness of rationality in organizations (Amstutz et al., 2020; R. Scott, 1995; Tacke, 2006).

[20] Power Resource Theory (Korpi, 1983, 2006) is often applied as a separate theory explaining employer motivation and behavior, which contends that the power of social democratic parties and unions have a significant if not decisive impact on employer decision-making. The theory however does not dispute that employer decision-making is based on rational-choice calculations as to which course of action will maximize profits. In this sense power resource theory is a rational-choice theory when it comes to explaining employer behavior.

Most research on occupational welfare emphasizes rational-choice explanations for employer behavior, i.e. claims that occupational welfare is provided as a human resources tool to enhance the bottom line (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Behling, 2018). This is particularly true about studies that focus on organization-level predictors of employer provision (Osterman, 1995; Riva & Rizza, 2021; Wiß, 2015). In contrast, comparative studies that focus on the relationship between public policy and occupational welfare more frequently invoke neo-institutionalist explanations for employer provision (Bergqvist & Saxonberg, 2017; Borchorst & Siim, 2008; Schröder et al., 2014). Comparing employers in different public policy contexts is particularly fruitful in trying to determine whether the "logic of the bottom line" (as suggested by rational-choice theories) or the "logic of appropriateness" (i.e. neo-institutionalism) better explain employer behavior. This is because the two theoretical approaches predict opposite employer behavior in different public policy contexts. Specifically, rational choice theory suggests' that employers in stronger public policy contexts offer little occupational welfare, as they have little incentive to do so when the state is already doing so at no cost to the employer.[21] In contrast, neo-institutionalism posits that state provision shifts perceptions of what is appropriate, and employers seek to match a normative benchmark set by the state. The two dynamics, one backed by rational-choice theory and the other by neo-institutionalism are often referred to as "crowding-out" versus "crowding-in" of occupational welfare by public policy

[21] Rational-choice theory can explain employer provision in generous public policy contexts as a means of differentiation in the competition for sought-after employees. However rational-choice theories cannot explain why, all else being equal, an employer in a more generous public policy context would offer more occupational welfare than an employer in a less generous public policy context.

(Natali et al., 2018; Wiß & Greve, 2019). The next section reviews the empirical evidence on whether public policies tend to crowd-in or crowd-out employer policies.

The relationship between public and occupational welfare

Empirically, the evidence on the relationship between social and occupational welfare is mixed. However, there is some agreement on two empirical findings. First, there seems to be little evidence of crowding-out (Natali et al., 2018). At the same time, occupational welfare tends to fill a vacuum left by retrenched public policies (Greve, 2018; Hacker, 2006; Trampusch, 2007). These two findings seem theoretically at odds. The latter finding is in line with rational-choice theory, as it suggests that employers get involved in welfare once the state no longer provides the contingent benefits at no cost. Meanwhile the former finding suggests the opposite, namely that employers do not stop providing welfare when the state increases provision, which in turn is better explained through neo-institutionalism. Thus, both theoretically and empirically the relationship between public and employer-provided policy is still up for debate. This debate is prominently being carried out in one particular area of occupational welfare, namely occupational – or, for ease of comprehension – employer family policy. The terminology is still quite diverse (for an overview of terms, see Daiger von Gleichen, 2022, p. 354), but meant are measures funded or provided by employers that purport to facilitate employees' work-family balance. Examples include subsidies for or on-site

childcare, flexible working hours or working-time accounts, and the policies studied here: employer-provided leaves or pay during parenting leave.

Employer family policy plays a central role because, unlike most other areas of social welfare, public family policy has expanded in the last several decades across the OECD (Daiger von Gleichen & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018), making it an ideal testing ground for the crowding-in versus crowding-out hypotheses. And indeed, an empirical pattern has emerged specifically regarding the relationship between public and employer maternity leave in Europe. The likelihood that employers will provide employer maternity leave seems to follow an inverted-U shaped pattern, in relation to public maternity leave (Chung, 2019; Evans, 2001). That means that generous public maternity leave seems to crowd-in employer maternity leave up to a certain point, after which a crowding-out dynamic is observed. That point seems to occur at a publicly paid leave duration of about one year (Chung, 2020). In other words, public maternity leave crowds-in employer maternity leave, up until one year of duration, at which point, a crowding-out mechanism is observed. The benchmark of one year is makes the crowding-in portion of this dynamic particularly relevant to the United States, where all public policies are substantially shorter (see table 1 below).

The crowding-in dynamic can be explained with neo-institutionalist arguments, in that public paid leaves up until one year in length change perceptions of appropriateness about whether employed women should be paid when caring for their newborns. However, the relationship between public and employer parenting leave has only been examined specifically with regard to maternity leave, not paternity leave, or gender-neutral parental

leave. In other words, there is no empirical clarity on the relationship between gender neutral public parenting leave and employer-provided parenting leave. All else being equal, neo-institutionalism would suggest that in a gender-neutral public policy context, the normative pressures exerted on employers by the state should not only concern provision per se, but also the gendered aspect. If this is not the case, it suggests a limitation to the way in which neo-institutionalism explains the relationship between public and employer parenting leaves. Namely, it stands to reason that neo-institutionalist arguments insufficiently consider the way in which organizations reproduce gender-based inequalities.

The role of the organization in reproducing gender-based inequalities

Occupational welfare provision is highly gendered, in part because it tends to be offered more to men than to women (Ginn & Arber, 1993; Grady, 2015). Rational-choice and neo-institutionalist theories offer different explanations for this observation. Rational-choice explanations stress that women tend to present a greater risk of human capital depreciation due to likely intermittent absences from employment for care reasons (Estévez-Abe et al., 2001). Neo-institutionalist arguments highlight that the exclusion of women from occupational welfare is part of a wider penalty system leveled at non-conformity to an ideal worker norm, similar to various forms of occupational segregation and lower pay (Van der Lippe et al., 2019), as well as slower professional advancement (Kele et al., 2022). This branch of scholarship is primarily concerned with investigating the ways in which employer policies

and processes reproduce gendered inequalities, and thus the extent to which the organization acts as an "inequality regime" (Acker, 2006). Identifying an organization as an inequality regime recognizes it as a distinct location of reproduced inequality, and empirical research shows overwhelming support for the idea that organizations are significant locations for the reproduction of gender inequalities (Nkomo & Rodriguez, 2019; Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019b).[22]

The question of how the organization reproduces gender-based inequalities is of relevance when studying the relationship between public and employer family policy. However, both at the state and employer level, parenting leave is gendered differently than other forms of social policy in that women tend to have more access than men. In terms of public policy, this is expressed by the fact that women have entitlements that men do not (Ciccia & Verloo, 2012; Dobrotić et al., 2022; Saxonberg, 2013). On the organizational level too, there is evidence that employer parenting leaves are provided more to women than to men (Daiger von Gleichen, 2022; Kaufman & Petts, 2022). However, examining employer leave policy in a gendered public policy context obscures the way in which organizations, distinct from public policy, perpetuate gender-based inequalities.

This is however crucial to understand, particularly since many OECD countries have seen a recent policy push away from gender-specific maternity policies to more gender-neutral parental leave policies (Daiger von

[22] In her concept of the inequality regime Acker (2006) advocated for an intersectional analysis of the ways in which organizations reproduce inequalities of gender, class, race and more. The quantitative approach of this paper, intended to help map the landscape of gendered employer family policy provision, combined with low case numbers in some states, precludes an enriching intersectional analysis, although it's potential value is not in dispute.

Gleichen & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018). If organizations reproduce gender-based inequality despite gender-neutral public policy, the fact that public policy is gender neutral will have limited effect on gender inequalities in organizations.

In sum, there are two areas in which our understanding of the relationship between public and occupational welfare is incomplete: First, the relationship between public and employer-provided leave policy in the context of gender-neutral public leave policy, and second, the ways in which the organization as distinct from public policy reproduces gender-based inequalities. Investigating the relationship between public and employer-provided leave in a gender-neutral policy context will show the potential limits of neo-institutionalist arguments when organizations function as gender inequality regimes. For this purpose, I investigate two hypotheses, both based on neo-institutionalist assumptions:

H_1: Employers in more generous public policy contexts are more likely to provide parenting leaves.

H_2: Employers in a gender-neutral public policy context are equally likely to provide parenting leaves to men and women.

Case study: Parenting leaves in the United States

In order to evaluate both public policy and the organizational level sources of gendered differences in employer family policy provision, it is necessary to compare gendered employer provision across weaker and more generous public policy contexts where the public policy itself is gender neutral. The

sub-federal level of the United States provides an excellent and previously unexplored context for such a study.

The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not have a national paid maternity leave policy (Ruhm, 2017). At the federal level, the United States provides twelve weeks of unpaid, job-protected, gender-neutral and individualized family and medical leave that can be taken to care for a new-born child up until one year of age (US Department of Labor, 2015). Additionally, to date eight states and the District of Columbia have adopted paid family leave policies (Engeman, 2018; Petts et al., 2022). In 2016, when the survey used in this analysis was conducted, three states had such paid leaves: California, New York and Rhode Island. Details of duration and replacement rate are shown in Table 1 below. Eligibility is based on work-requirements, are individualized and gender-neutral, i.e. based on the relationship to the child, not on the parents' sex (Petts et al., 2021).

Table 1: Duration and reproduction rates of state-level leaves, 2016

State	maximum duration	replacement rate
California	6 weeks	55%, capped at $1173 per week, i.e. 92% of average weekly earnings
New Jersey	12 weeks	66%, capped at $633 per week, i.e. 51% of state-average weekly earnings
Rhode Island	4 weeks	capped at $817 per week, i.e. 80% of state-average weekly earnings

Note: Data on leave provisions from Gatenio Gabel & Kaufman (2017).
Data on state-average weekly earnings calculated from US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017).

These gender-neutral, state-level, paid family leave provisions exist in a context in which U.S.-American fathers report equal or even higher levels of work-family conflict than mothers (Aumann et al., 2011; Rehel & Baxter, 2015). Furthermore, in part because there are comparatively few policies supporting

working mothers, U.S.-American fathers spend more time involved in childcare, "by necessity" than do their European counterparts (Adler, 2015, p. 193). And while on average women in the United States provide more childcare and spend less time in paid employment than men, both men and women are involved in both the labor market and in child-care at comparatively high rates, and report struggling with work-family conflict (Raza et al., 2021). In this context, employers have substantial power to shape how working parents experience work-family conflict. For example, given that the federal right to twelve weeks of job-protected leave is unpaid, employers can improve the feasibility of taking leave by providing pay during leave.[23]

Yet rational-choice theory and neo-institutionalism lead to different predictions about whether we would find more employer leave in US states that offer publicly paid leave, versus states that do not. Rational-choice theory suggests we might find occupational leaves provided in states without publicly paid leave, among employers who are having difficulty filling vacancies. In contrast, neo-institutionalism would lead us to predict that employers in states with public paid leaves would be more likely to offer employer parenting leaves, and rational-choice considerations such as the difficulty filling vacancies should be a less or insignificant factor. Given these different predicted outcomes, occupational parenting leaves in the United States are an excellent laboratory for trying to tease apart the relevance of opposing theories of employer behavior.

[23] Eligibility is conditional upon many factors including contract-type, tenure and other workplace-specific restrictions. Nevertheless, the latest estimate suggests that 89% of civilian workers in the US have access to unpaid job-protected leave through the federal family leave policy (Petts et al., 2021).

This is particularly relevant in a country such as the United States which at once espouses gender equality as a priority (Orloff, 1993) and where a larger share of employees feel it should be their employer, not the state, who provide measures to help employees balance work and family life (Petts et al., 2022).

Data, Measures and Method

Data

The dataset used in this study is the National Study of Employers (NSE) from the year 2016, conducted by the Work and Families Institute (Matos et al, 2017). The NSE is a nationally representative sample of private sector employers with at least 50 employees, and a total of 919 observations. The data were collected through telephone and online-questionnaires administered to HR representatives at the establishments. Where an employing organization encompassed several establishments at numerous locations, geographical data (i.e. the employer's state) was recorded for the organizations' U.S. headquarters. The NSE was supplemented by additional data providing state-level information used as controls in the analysis: Data on state GDP per capita, adjusted by regional price parities, was drawn from the U.S. Department of Commerce (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2016a, 2016b). The male and female labor force participation rates by state were drawn from the U.S. Department of Labor (Women's Bureau, 2018). The data on what percentage of the state population prefers a male-breadwinner / female-carer model were drawn from the 2016 Pew Research Center's Paid parental, family and medical leave survey (Horowitz et al., 2017).

Measures

The analysis examines the relationship between one key independent and four dependent variables. Each dependent variable captures a form of employer-provided parenting leave. The first dependent variable is maternity time. The variable captures whether an employer provides women with job-protected time off beyond the 12 weeks afforded by the FMLA. As all employers included in the NSE had 50 or more employees, all are legally obligated to provide twelve weeks of job-protected leave to eligible employees.[24] This variable therefore captures which employers go beyond the statutory parenting leave requirements for women.

The second dependent variable is maternity pay. It captures whether an employer provides women with pay during their leave beyond six weeks. The six-week benchmark was employed for three reasons. First during the first six weeks, there is a greater likelihood that women can draw on disability insurance policies (Petts et al, 2022). Second, in 2016, the duration of paid leave was capped at six weeks in California and four weeks in Rhode Island (see table 1 on page 11 above), so the question of what happens beyond six weeks mostly excludes the state as a source of pay.[25] Most decisively, regarding the first six weeks after delivery, there is no question in the NSE that isolates pay provided by the employer from pay provided by other sources. This distinction is only made regarding pay following the first six

[24] However, not all employees at these organizations are eligible as FMLA eligibility is also based on tenure.

[25] Given that New Jersey's public paid leave program extends beyond the six weeks after delivery (see table 1 above), the model examining the relationship between public leave and employer-provided maternity leave controls for whether the employer is situated in New Jersey.

weeks. Therefore, this variable captures which employers pay mothers during their leave beyond the period when other sources of pay have likely dried up.

The third dependent variable is paternity time. It captures whether an employer provides 'spouses or partners' who have just given birth job-protected time off beyond the 12 weeks afforded by the FMLA. While this terminology doesn't restrict this leave to men, it is assumed that the overwhelming number of employees eligible for such leave will be men. As with maternity time above, all employers in the dataset were legally required to offer this leave to eligible employees. This variable therefore captures which employers go beyond the statutory parenting leave requirements.

The final dependent variable is paternity pay. It captures whether an employer provides some employees, whose spouse or partner have just given birth, pay achieving full pay replacement. In many cases, this variable thus likely captures pay more generous than what is provided by states with publicly paid leave, as those policies are capped. Importantly, this variable is different from the variable capturing maternity pay. While maternity pay captures whether an employer provides any pay beyond six weeks and is thus concerned with the duration of pay, this paternity pay variable captures the replacement rate of the pay. These differences are due to data availability in the NSE.

The independent variable captures whether the state in which the employer is headquartered has a public paid leave program or not. All four dependent variables as well as the independent variable are binary, divided into "provided" and "not provided", as can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Dependent variables		
Maternity time: Employer-provided leave time for mothers beyond 12 weeks		
	frequency	percent
Not provided	600	66%
Provided	304	34%
N	904	100%
Maternity pay: Employer-provided pay during leave for mothers beyond 6 weeks		
	frequency	percent
Not provided	792	89%
Provided	93	11%
N	885	100%
Paternity time: Employer-provided leave time for fathers beyond 12 weeks		
	frequency	percent
Not provided	731	81%
Provided	173	19%
N	904	100%
Paternity pay: Employer-provided pay for fathers achieving full pay replacement		
	frequency	percent
Not provided	863	94%
Provided	56	6%
N	919	100%
Independent variable		
Public Paid Leave Program		
	frequency	percent
Not provided	786	88%
Provided	107	12%
N	893	100%

Note: Total N frequency counts below 919 represent missing values for that variable.

Lastly, all four models include controls which previous studies indicate are relevant for employer-provided family policy: size by number of employees (Chung, 2019, 2018; Wiß, 2017; Den Dulk et al., 2012; Den Dulk et al., 2013; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Kelly, 2003; Seyler et al., 1995; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Glass & Fujimoto, 1995), skills (Chung, 2019; Wiß, 2017; Chung, 2018; Den Dulket al., 2012; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Davis& Kalleberg, 2006; Kelly, 2003), unionization at the establishment (Den Dulk et al., 2012; Seeleib-Kaiser &

Fleckenstein, 2009; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Kelly, 2003; Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Budd & Mumford, 2006), reported difficulty filling vacancies (Den Dulket al., 2012; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Osterman, 1995; Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Budd & Mumford, 2006), the percentage of female employees (Pasamar & Alegre, 2015; Den Dulk et al. 2013; Den Dulk et al., 2012; Seeleib-Kaiser & Fleckenstein, 2009; Fleckenstein & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Seyler et al., 1995; Osterman, 1995; Ingram & Simons, 1995), and the prevalence of female executives (Pasamar & Alegre, 2015; Ingram & Simons, 1995).

Also, all models include three further controls that may prove relevant for employer-provision of leave. The first is state GDP per capita. It is plausible that the strength of a state's economy (for which GDP per capita is an accepted proxy) may relate to the prevalence of employer-provision in that state. The second is the state-level female labor force participation rate, which indicates how realistically employers can expect that their male employees will be able to rely on a female partner to provide childcare. The last is an attitudinal variable capturing the percentage of people per state who prefer a male breadwinner / female carer model. This was derived from state-level questions capturing respondents who felt that the ideal situation for a young child in a two-parent household with a mother and a father is the father working full time outside the home, and the mother working part-time or not at all. It is conceivable that employers in states with more conservative work/care preferences in terms of gender will be less likely to offer paternity policies that undermine a traditional gender model. Table 1 in the appendix shows the distributions of the control variables.

Method

Given the binary nature of the dependent variables, simple logistic regression was used. In total, eight logistic regression analyses were conducted, two for each dependent variable. The first regression for each explanatory variable conducted included a control for the same employer-policy for the opposite gender, the second regression without this control. The control did not change the significance of the state-level public paid leave program for the maternity policies, but it did so for the paternity policies. The goodness of fit for the models as measured by Pseudo R^2 was greatly improved through the inclusion of the cross-gender same policy controls.

Furthermore, given that observations in the same state form presumably interdependent groupings in the dataset, multilevel logistic regression was considered. For this purpose, the interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for each model was examined. The largest ICC across the models was 1.64×10^{-31}, i.e. practically zero. Thus there is no evidence of state-dependent groupings, making a multilevel logistic model mathematically equivalent to a simple logistic model. A possible reason for the lack of measurable groupings may be the relatively low number of observations in many states (see table 3 below). As with most surveys examining employer-provided family policies, the low number of observations in many states is a limitation of the data. In sum, simple logistic regression was chosen as it is mathematically equivalent to multilevel logistic regression in this dataset yet is easier to interpret.

Table 3: Observations across States

Range of observations	Number of states	Number of observations	Percent of observations
2 - 8 observations	22 states	110	12%
10 - 28 observations	18 states	306	34%
31 - 77 observations	11 states	477	53%
Total	50 States + DC	893	100%

Findings

Descriptive Findings

As can be seen from table 4 below, employer parenting leaves remain rare in the United States. Employer-provided leave time for mothers beyond 12 weeks (maternity time) is the most prevalent policy, provided by 33% of employers. Meanwhile only 10% of employers provide pay during leave for mothers beyond the first 6 weeks after birth (maternity pay). For fathers, 18% of employers provide job-protected leave beyond 12 weeks (paternity time). Employer-provided pay for fathers achieving full pay replacement (paternity pay) is provided by 6% of employers. Two empirical findings stand out: First, time policies are more common than pay policies, and policies for women are more widespread than policies for men.

Table 4: Employers providing leave policy

Maternity time	33%
Maternity pay	10%
Paternity time	18%
Paternity pay	6%

A further descriptive finding can be gleaned from table 5 below. Cramer's V in combination with a chi-squared test were used to determine the interdependence between the four dependent variables, and the significance of that relationship.

Table 5: Pairwise correlations between the dependent variables

	Maternity time	Maternity pay	Paternity time	Paternity pay
Maternity time	1.00***			
Maternity pay	0.16***	1.00***		
Paternity time	0.67***	0.07*	1.00***	
Paternity pay	0.05	0.29***	0.05	1.00***

We see that the cross-gender same policy pairs are correlated. Maternity time and paternity time show a high interdependence of 0.67, and maternity and paternity pay show a moderate interdependence of 0.29 (Cohen, 2013). This finding thus suggests that employers offering a given policy to women are more likely to do so for men, and / or vice versa. The regression analyses presented in the following section give a fuller picture of these associations.

Inferential Findings

Table 6 below presents the results of the four regression analyses with margins (dy/dx) and standard errors in brackets. The first hypothesis, that employers in more generous public policy contexts are more likely to provide employer family policy, can be confirmed only for maternity time and pay. As the model for maternity time shows, employers in states with public paid leave programs are 35% more likely than employers in states without public paid leave programs, to provide female employees job-protected leave longer than 12 weeks. Similarly, employers in states with public paid leave programs are 13% more likely than employers in states without public paid leave programs to offer employer-provided pay during leave for mothers beyond 6 weeks. Regarding paternity policies, table 6 shows no association between

the existence of a public paid leave program in the employer's state and a higher likelihood of employer provision of additional time or pay achieving full replacement during paternity leave. The second hypothesis, that employers in a gender-neutral public family policy context are equally likely to provide employer family policy to men and women, must therefore be rejected.

Table 6: Logistic regression results excluding cross-gender same policy controls

	Maternity Time		Maternity Pay		Paternity Time		Paternity Pay	
Independent Variables	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE
State-level public paid leave program	0.35***	(0.05)	0.13***	(0.03)	.07	(0.04)	0.00	(0.03)
GDP per capita per state	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)
Size	0.01	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)	0.01*	(0.01)
Difficulty filling highly skilled positions[1]	0.01	(0.04)	0.00	(0.03)	0.02	(0.04)	0.04	(0.02)
Women on all executive levels[2]	0.00	(0.05)	0.08*	(0.04)	0.01	(0.04)	0.06	(0.03)
Pseudo R^2	0.10		0.07		0.03		0.07	
N	873		859		873		884	

Note: [1] Reference 'No difficulty filling vacancies'; [2] Reference 'Women on some executive level(s)'; Controls not shown, all insignificant: industry skill-profile, percent of unionized employees, state female labor force participation rate, share of female employees, state gender norms. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Given the substantial interdependencies of the same policy for both men and women shown in table 5 in the descriptive findings above, table 6 does not include the cross-gender same policy control in the models. However, in order to get a better sense of the direction of the association, table 7 below presents the same models including the cross-gender same policy controls. In comparison to table 6, table 7 enables more specificity on which associations are attributable to the state-level public paid leave program, as opposed to the same policy for the other gender. The most notable difference here is that in the model for paternity time, when maternity time is controlled, employers in states with public paid leave policies are 7% less likely to provide paternity time than employers in states lacking public paid leave. The results of the hypothesis test are unchanged: Employers in more generous public policy contexts are more likely to provide parenting leaves, confirming H_1, but employers in gender-neutral public policy contexts are less likely to provide paternity than maternity leave, leading to a rejection of H_2.

Table 7: Logistic regression results including cross-gender same policy controls

	Maternity Time		Maternity Pay		Paternity Time		Paternity Pay	
Independent Variables	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE
State-level public paid leave program	0.23***	(0.03)	0.13***	(0.03)	-0.07**	(0.02)	-0.05	(0.03)
Paternity time	0.59***	(0.06)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Paternity pay	--	--	0.21***	(0.03)	--	--	--	--
Maternity time	--	--	--	--	0.47***	(0.04)	--	--
Maternity pay	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.11***	(0.02)
GDP per capita per state	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)
Percent of unionized employees	0.00	(0.00)	0.00*	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
Female Labor Force Participation Rate	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.01	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
Difficulty filling vacancies[1]	0.03	(0.03)	-0.06*	(0.03)	0.00	(0.03)	0.03	(0.02)
Pseudo R^2	0.46		0.16		0.51		0.20	
N	873		859		873		859	

Note: [1] Both high and low-skilled vacancies. Reference 'No difficulty filling vacancies'; Controls not shown, all insignificant: industry skill-profile, employer size by number of employees, prevalence of female executives, share of female employees, state gender norms. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Discussion

On the one hand, the findings are in line with previous results, identifying a crowding-in mechanism between more generous public and employer leave policies. On the other hand, however, the finding is limited to employer maternity policies. There is no direct evidence of crowding-in between more generous public leave policy and employer paternity policies. With regard to paternity time, there is even some evidence of a crowding-out mechanism. These findings suggest that while neo-insititutionalism can help explain employer maternity leave provision, it cannot do the same for employer paternity leave. Employer maternity policies seem to be sensitive to isomorphic pressure exerted by the state in ways that employer paternity policies are not. Instead, rational-choice explanations are more helpful in trying to understand employer behavior with regard to paternity leave provision. As employers in more generous public policy contexts are less likely to provide paternity leave, there is evidence that state pressure toward gender-neutral policy weighs less strongly in employers' calculations than the fact that providing something already provided by the state is an inefficient use of resources. These differences in provision highlight an under-appreciated fault-line of gender-based inequality in occupational welfare, as well as the role of employers as important locations of gender-based inequality reproduction.

Why can neo-institutionalism explain the relationship between public parenting leave and employer maternity leave, but not the relationship between public parenting leave and employer paternity leave in the United States? In discussing this question, it is helpful to focus on the important role

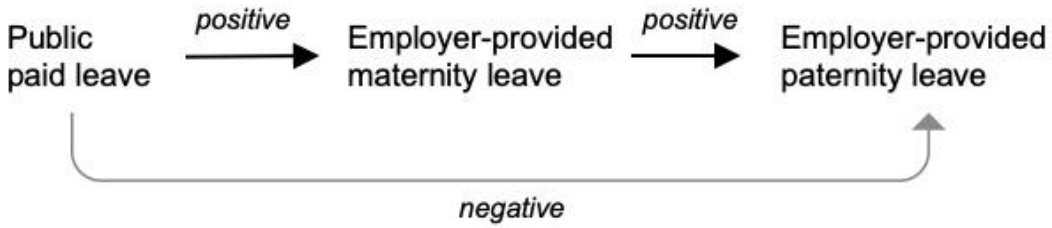
given to employee demands in both neo-institutionalism and rational-choice theory. In neo-institutionalism, the pressure exerted by public policies on employers serves not as much to create or increase new employee demands as to legitimate existing ones (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The idea is that existing employee demands legitimated by the state are more likely to be met by employers. Similarly, rational-choice theory suggests that employers will provide policies if these are demanded by "valuable" employees (Ackers, 2003). So, one potential explanation is that fathers are not demanding parenting leave to the same extent as mothers. There is ample empirical evidence which supports this explanation: mothers in the United States tend to spend more time providing childcare than do fathers (Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020), including when both parents spend equal amounts of time in paid labor, earn a similar income, and even when the mother earns more (Syrda, 2022). Women are also more likely to say that work-family conflict is an issue affecting their employment choices (Gerstel & Clawson, 2018), and that they are dissatisfied with their work-family balance (Bianchi et al., 2006).

However, in addition to fathers' demand being lower, another feasible explanation for why employers do not provide paternity policies in the context of generous public leave policies, is that fathers in these states face greater barriers or costs when voicing those demands. There is evidence to suggest that generally, fathers face great social and financial penalties within organizations when making demands in violation of the ideal worker norm (Atkinson, 2022). For example, fathers who request a family leave (Rudman & Mescher, 2013), or are assumed to be the primary caregivers due to single-parent status (Steffens et al., 2019), or temporarily opt out of the labor

market in order to provide childcare (Weisshaar, 2018), experience negative differential employment outcomes that exceed those faced by working mothers. Weisshaar (2018) explains the fatherhood penalty as a function of the gendered difference in rigidity of the ideal worker norm, which includes the expectation that employees will prioritize work over family (Blair-Loy, 2003; Davies & Frink, 2014). Given that men are expected to conform to the ideal worker norm more rigidly, men's violations of this norm are punished more harshly (Kelland et al., 2022; Weisshaar, 2018). It is reasonable to assume these penalties may be higher in states with generous public leave policies, because here it is harder for men to claim that their child's mother is unable to provide the necessary childcare. In other words, the greater feasibility of mothers taking maternity leave may make it more costly for fathers to demand paternity leaves.

In sum, the existing literature offers evidence to suggest both lower demand by fathers as well as greater barriers to voicing that demand. The findings presented here cannot add to the conversation on the prevalence of fathers' demand, but they can add weight to the idea that fathers are inhibited in voicing their demands for employer paternity policies. Table 7 shows that maternity policies are the strongest predictors of paternity policies: Compared to employers who do not, employers who provide maternity time were 47% more likely to provide paternity time as well. Furthermore, employer who provided maternity pay were 11% more likely to provide paternity pay achieving full wage replacement. One possible inference from this finding is that employer maternity provision empowers fathers to demand paternity provision from their employers. This in turn suggests that the gender-neutral

aspect of public family policy may in fact relate to gendered employer leave provision, though only as mediated through employer maternity policies:



If this is the case, then it suggests some ambiguity in the role of organizations in diffusing normative pressure through public policy pushing gender-neutral parental leaves. On the other hand, organizations are creating gender inequality in access, providing more to mothers than fathers. On the other hand, the provision of employer maternity policies is positively associated with the provision of paternity policies – suggesting maternity policies may be having a positive effect on fathers' willingness to demand more employer leave policies for themselves.

Conclusion

This paper examined the relationship between public family policy and gendered provision of occupational welfare, specifically public parenting leaves and employer-provided maternity and paternity leaves. In a case study of the sub-federal United States, the findings show that employers in more generous public policy contexts are more likely to provide parenting leaves. However, despite the gender-neutral public policy context, in states with paid public leave provision, employers were more likely to provide maternity as compared to paternity policies. Theoretically, this is further

evidence for a “crowding-in” of gender-neutral public leave policies on employer-provided maternity leave, in line with previous research (Evans, 2001; Den Dulk et al., 2013).

The empirical contribution of this research is to show that the same dynamic does not seem to apply to the relationship between generous public and employer paternity leaves. The theoretical contribution that follows from this finding is that there seems to be a limit for the application of neo-institutionalism, which explains the “crowding-in” dynamic. Employer paternity provision in context of public leave policy seems better explained through rational-choice theoretical approaches. Two possible explanations for this were explored, which are likely both at play: fathers may at once experience less demand for employer paternity policies, and they may face greater barriers in voicing such demands. Furthermore, the employer paternity pay variable available in the NSE is one asking about “full pay replacement” by the employer, which is a high bar to clear for paternity leaves the world over, let alone in the United States. This limitation in the data suggests that paternity pay may be more widespread, reflecting greater demand and/ or stronger voicing of that demand, than revealed in this study.

The results highlight the role of the organizations in reproducing gender inequalities by creating gender-based inequities of access where public policy does not. At the same time, parts of the analysis suggests that the provision of maternity policies may be having a positive effect on fathers’ willingness to demand more employer leave policies for themselves. This inference however was drawn from a cross-sectional analysis and thus cannot be discussed as causal but merely presents an indication. The firm

conclusion to be drawn from this research is the evidence that more generous gender-neutral public leave policies are associated with a greater provision of employer maternity, but not paternity policies. This is evidence of crowding-in of generous public policies for employer-provided maternity, but not paternity leaves. This further this suggests a limitation on the ability of neo-institutionalism to explain employer-provision in parenting leaves in context of more generous public policy.

Conclusion to the thesis

This thesis explored under-researched aspects of family policy that address work-family conflict for employed parents of young children, primarily in the United States. It has done so in four articles following related yet distinct avenues of inquiry. These conclusions summarize the research questions, key findings, theoretical contributions, avenues for further research, and policy implications from each article. They are followed by summary of the overarching conclusion, which highlights how this thesis has contributed to our knowledge of sub-federal and employer-provided family policy.

Article 1 Varieties of Liberalism? A Comparative Analysis of Family Policy and Poverty Outcomes across the 50 United States

The first article asks two research questions, namely, does U.S. family policy display varieties of liberalism at the state level, and is this variation associated with differences in social outcomes? The academic conclusions from this article are the answers to those two research questions. US family policy does exhibit meaningful varieties of liberalism at the state level, as measured by the significant association between these varieties and differences in families' economic security.

There are also two broader implications for further research. First, the results provide a practical way for scholars to take variety in U.S. family policy into account. This could be done, for example, by differentiating between 'hard' and 'soft' varieties of liberalism when including the United

States in comparative family policy research, especially when this research investigates families' economic security. The results themselves show that differentiating between 'hard' and 'soft' varieties of liberalism in the United States helps explain those outcomes.

Second, the results provide a theoretically grounded framework by which state-level family policies can be systematized. Using the concepts of (de)familization and (de)commodification may prove useful to research seeking to expand, re-focus or transfer our framework to other areas of social policy.

The policy implications are straightforward: Evaluating public policies by the extent to which they decommodify and defamilize can be a useful framework for policymakers seeking a guiding principle to reduce the proportion of families facing poverty, especially for single-mother households. A thought experiment conducted in the article suggests that reorienting (de)commodifying and (de)familizing features of 'hard' liberal family policy more towards those found in 'soft' liberal states could reduce standard measures of poverty rates among households with children in 'hard' states by up to eight percentage points. While the cross-sectional data precludes statements about causality, the thought experiment illustrates what our research shows may be possible in terms of improving economic outcomes for families in states by considering and reducing defamilization and decommodification in liberal family policy.

Article 2 Public policy, female leadership, and organized labor: A comparative analysis of employer childcare and flexible working in the United States and Germany

This paper compares Germany and the United States with regard to three research questions: What is the relationship between public and employer family policy? How relevant are specific employee segments – female leadership and organized labor – to employer family policy provision? And what can their relevance, in the context of public family policy, tell us about the applicability of normative versus economic explanations for employer family policy? In response to the first question, we found that public policy is relevant to employer provision both in its relative generosity and its absence. Regarding childcare, we compared employer provision in context of public policy variation and found that employer childcare was more widespread in the country with generous public childcare. This suggest that generous public policy crowds-in employer policy. Regarding flexible working, the two countries offered a comparative case within a similar public policy landscape. Here we found similar levels of employer provision, supporting the conclusion that public policy matters for employer family policy.

Regarding the second question, we found that female leadership is highly relevant for employer childcare in the United States, while works councils are highly relevant for employer-provided flexible working in Germany. There was no evidence of organized labors' relevance for either employer policy in the United States, or the relevance of female leadership for either policy in Germany.

Our last research question concerned the applicability of economic versus normative explanations for employer provision within a given public policy context. The findings suggests that although neo-institutionalism is better able to explain the comparative prevalence of employer childcare and flexible working on the country level, the findings provided little evidence for successful normative claims-making by female employees and organized labor. However, we did find tentative evidence that works councils in Germany may be leveraging normative pressure to claim employer childcare. Yet these efforts may be diluted by a lack of coordination with collective bargaining. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of considering both economic and normative motivations for employer provision of family policies.

The theoretical contribution of this article lies primarily in the framework, which integrates rational choice theory and neo-institutionalism to generate opposing empirical predictions and thereby distinguish whether economic or normative motivations better explain employer provision. This theoretical distinction is not commonly made, with many previous studies focusing solely on economic considerations, or on both normative and economic explanations without distinguishing the extent of their explanatory potential. Applying this theoretical framework led to results that suggest that economic arguments are very important for the provision of employer family policy, although in the discussion we provide reasons for why this result with regard to the relevance of female leadership to employer childcare in the United States in particular should be further interrogated. The theoretical framework also permitted us to isolate a context in which works councils in Germany may be leveraging normative pressure to claim employer childcare. However, such efforts may be diluted by a lack of coordination with collective

bargaining. Although the finding is tentative, it casts doubt on the arguments that pressure exerted by organized labor on employers in Germany is fundamentally economic.

This article further suggested at least three avenues for further research. The first was to examine the relationship between female leadership and employer-childcare at the sub-federal level of the United States, and examine whether differences in public policy generosity at the state level can uncover normative pressures masked at the federal level. Article three of the thesis proceeds with this line of inquiry. Second, future research may wish to investigate why the two tiers of organized labor in Germany appear to be working against each other, both with regard to employer childcare and flexible working, and consider what the reasons for this lack of coordination may be. Lastly, the original theoretical framework of the research can be used to distinguish to what extent economic and normative pressures may be buoying or suppressing claims-makers by other potential employee segments, and/or in other countries.

Finally, the study highlights policy implications in three areas. Firstly, improving women's access to leadership positions in the United States may benefit employees' work-family balance as this study suggests that there is an association between the prevalence of female leadership and employer-provided childcare. Although the directionality of the effect cannot be deduced from this cross-sectional study, the evidence aligns with research suggesting that a critical mass of female leaders is an important threshold for organizational change (Gould et al., 2018; Kelan & Wratil, 2018; Kowalewska, 2021).

Secondly, in Germany, coordinated efforts between the two branches of organized labor are needed to better embrace work-family reconciliation as an important issue. This study provides evidence from the realm of employer family policy that supports a sparse qualitative literature suggesting lacking coordination between works councils and unions may be undermining the power of organized labor in Germany (Dribbusch & Birke, 2019). Although unionized employees assert that work-family reconciliation is an important issue, German organized labor generally has not sufficiently embraced it as an arena for organized labor (Menne, 2007; Stockfisch, 2007).

Finally, policymakers should consider the relationship between public and employer family policy. The evidence presented here suggest that generous public provisions can crowd-in employer childcare, and thus greater investment in public childcare can benefit the state, employers, and working parents.

Article 3 Employer-provided childcare across the 50 United States: The normative importance of public childcare and female leadership

This paper also investigates three research questions. First, how important is public childcare for employer childcare in the United States? Second, how important is the prevalence of female leadership for employer childcare in the United States? And lastly, what do these patterns of provision tell us about the relevance of normative considerations for employer decisions to provide childcare in the United States? the results suggest that public childcare is relevant for the provision of employer childcare support, excepting flexible

spending accounts. This suggests that public childcare provision may be increasing normative pressure on employers to provide such childcare. Second, female leadership is highly significant for employer childcare, both for flexible spending accounts and other forms of employer childcare support. The evidence suggests that female leaders likely exert both economic and normative pressure on their employers to provide childcare. In sum, the paper makes the argument that public childcare, the prevalence of female leadership, and also the interaction of these two factors, demonstrate the high and often overlooked relevance of normative considerations for employer family policy in the United States.

This last finding is the main theoretical contribution of the paper. By isolating instances where normative pressures can better explain an association between female leadership and employer childcare, the paper challenges the conventional wisdom that employer family policy results only or primarily from economic pressures. It also provides concrete evidence supporting the previously unspecified assumption among literature that examines the relevance of female leadership, that women in top management likely exert normative as well as economic pressures.

The paper also identifies three avenues for future research. One approach would be to conduct a longitudinal study to investigate the causal relationships between public policy, female leadership, and employer-provided childcare. Additionally, research could better differentiate the category of "non-FSA" childcare to distinguish between different forms of childcare, such as vouchers or on-site childcare centers, and potential differences in the stigmatization of their use. Another avenue for research

would be to evaluate to what extent provision patterns suggest that normative factors are at play in employer decisions to provide other types of benefits, such as employer-provided leave or flexible working. Understanding the role of normative considerations in employer decisions could shed light on the broader role of employers as social and policy actors, and their potential to improve the options working families have to reconcile work and family.

In terms of policy proposals, the paper suggests several options. One approach could be to expand public childcare, for example by eliminating income caps in states where they exist. An additional policy option is to increase the representation of women in leadership positions through gender sensitivity training among those who make top-level hiring decisions in organizations. This could help create a more diverse leadership landscape and positively impact childcare accessibility. Finally, policymakers can promote norms of social responsibility in workplaces through targeted education campaigns and by using non-economic arguments for employer involvement in work-family reconciliation in public communication. These actions can help create a more equitable and supportive environment for working families in the United States.

Article 4 Public and employer-provided parenting leaves in the United States: Bringing gender back in

The final paper centered on a single research question: What is the relationship between public and employer-provided leave policies across the 50 United States? The findings suggest that generous, gender-neutral public policy coincides with more generous employer maternity policy, suggesting a "crowding-in" dynamic. However, there is no similar association with employer paternity policies. On the contrary – in some contexts generous, gender-neutral public leave policy even shows a negative association with employer paternity policies, suggesting a "crowding-out" dynamic. The findings thus suggest that employers re-introduce gender-unequal provision despite gender-neutral public policy.

The paper provides a theoretical contribution by highlighting a potential limit to neo-institutionalist explanations of occupational welfare provision. The evidence suggests that the normative diffusion mechanism postulated by neo-institutionalism may be limited to employer maternity policies despite gender-neutral public policies.

Future avenues of research related to the relationship between public and employer provided leaves could include several areas of inquiry. One option is to examine the demand for and barriers faced by fathers in accessing employer-provided paternity leave. Additionally, researchers could explore the impact of employer-provided maternity leave on fathers' willingness to demand more employer leave policies for themselves. Finally,

conducting longitudinal research to investigate what causal mechanisms may link the associations presented here would provide further insights into the relationship between public and employer-provided leave policies and its gendered nature. These areas of research could help shed light on the reproduction of gender inequalities in the workplace and the potential for public policy to influence employer practices related to family leave.

The policy implications that can be derived from this research include the need for greater government surveillance regarding what can be considered gender-unequal employer leave policies. Unequal treatment by the employer on the basis of sex or gender is prohibited (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2023), and employers must be made aware and sanctioned in the case of misconduct. At the same time, there may be potential to make employees more aware of their rights. Most importantly however, this research suggests a need for employers and employed fathers to be made aware of the societal relevance of male caregiving in an effort to change norms around paternity leave-taking. Policy makers could strive to increase general public awareness of the societal benefits of paternity leave-taking, including among the general public. By doing so, existing norms can be changed, encouraging both employers to provide more paternity leave and employed fathers to take and claim more leave.

Second, it is important to raise awareness among employers and employees by educating them about their rights and obligations. Employers need to understand that gender discrimination at the workplace includes

inequal access to occupational welfare. Similarly, employees should be made aware of their rights to access employer programs without gender bias.

Lastly, anti-discrimination provisions that ensure equal access to employer programs based on gender could be more strictly enforced. Employers found guilty of discriminatory practices should be penalized to deter future instances of discrimination. By enforcing these legal provisions, employers will be more likely to provide equal access to leave programs to mothers and fathers in their employ.

Overarching conclusions

The research presented in this thesis has shed light on the two under-researched aspects of family policy it highlighted, primarily in the United States: sub-national and employer-provided family policy. In terms of sub-federal policy, articles one, three and four have shown that public state-level family policy makes a difference in explaining variation in families economic outcomes, as well as the prevalence of employer-provided childcare and parenting leaves. Furthermore, it has shown that employer-provided family policies are an important component of the family policy package in the United States. This form of occupational welfare should be taken into account in efforts to capture family policies in the U.S. welfare state.

From these contributions, four overarching conclusions and subsequent implications for future research can be formulated. First, regarding employer-provided family policies there is an urgent need for more data. Since the late 1990s, the only nationally representative dataset

surveying employers on their family policies was created and published by the Families and Work Institute (e.g. Galinsky & Bond, 1998; Matos et al., 2017; Matos & Galinsky, 2012, 2014). While it had been published in two or four-year intervals between 1998 and 2016, the 2016 National Study of Employers is the last to date. This presents a missed opportunity for at least two reasons: The relative stagnation of federal family policy since 2016 suggests that employer family policy remains an important component of occupational welfare in the United States. Also, the simultaneous increase in public family policy at the state-level, including public childcare and leave legislation in particular, presents an excellent opportunity to understand the relationship between public and employer-provided policy in a country in which the latter has historically been very important. Thus an implication for future research is the need for more surveys of occupational family policy that permit analysis of the state-level comparable to the 2016 NSE.

Second, national-level international comparisons remain the comparative standard in comparative social policy, including when federal states are compared. They remain particularly useful when the research design calls for large differences on specific dimensions, such as in article two of this thesis. At the same time, national-level comparisons may obfuscate patterns that can only be seen when including the sub-federal level of public policy. Yet investigating the federal level, in addition to the two explanatory and two dependent variables required by the research design, would have gone beyond the scope of article two. In that way, that article could not incorporate the analysis of the sub-federal level beyond controlling for the varieties of liberalism identified in the first thesis article. Instead, article

two motivated the more detailed analysis of the sub-federal level in the United States presented in article three of the thesis. Future research could extend the analysis by an investigation of the federal level in Germany, whose brand of federalism is also quite strong, if not as strong as that of the United States.

Third, with regard to employer-provided family policy, the research presented in this thesis has shown that the logic and factors associated with employer provision differ across policy instruments, e.g. flexible working, parenting leaves and childcare. These logics have been insufficiently theorized and so it is important to examine the policies separately, so that theoretical explanations can be formulated and empirically tested. This remains an important avenue for future research to substantiate or repudiate the findings presented here. When academic knowledge regarding the individual relationships between specific public and employer-family policy instruments has been more firmly substantiated, academic inquiry could advance to analyzing employer-provided family policy packages and the ways in which the individual components interact.

Lastly, articles two, three and four have shown the importance of engaging with both economic and normative arguments in explaining employer-provided family policy. Moreover, the individual articles are examples of how to construct hypotheses such that the answers tease apart the applicability of rational-choice versus neo-institutionalist theories in different contexts. If scholars and policymakers wish to better differentiate in which circumstances employers are motivated more by economic versus normative considerations, future research should first acknowledge the

important role of normative considerations and second take greater care in distinguishing these possible explanations for employer behavior.

Finally, three central implications for thinking about policy can be highlighted. First, in a US context, decision-makers on state-level family policy can and should pay attention to policy packages and developments in other states. The federal system is an ideal setting for policy learning even if barriers for policy transfer remain substantial (Tarr, 2001). While this policy learning is already happening, this thesis provides additional evidence for its potential in the realm of family policy. Second, policymakers more generally need to take employer-provided family policies into account when crafting public policies and think carefully about how public and private provision interact and are articulated with each other. Third, the thesis provides evidence that employer family policy provision is driven by both normative and economic considerations. Tailoring public policy and communication to account for varying employer motivations by context can increase cooperation by meeting decision-makers where they are.

To conclude, this thesis has presented original evidence on the nature of the relationship between public and employer-provided family policies. To create effective policies that expand work-family reconciliation options for working parents, policymakers must attend to the connection between public and employer-provided family policy and consider both as part of an overarching provision structure, which includes the sub-federal policy level. This holistic view is key for work-family reconciliation policy that works in the interests of the state, employers and families.

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Appendices

Appendix to Article 1

Table A1 Data Sources for Family Policy Index

Dimension	Indicator	Year	Source
Benefits	EITC generosity	2014	UKCPR National Welfare Data
Benefits	EITC coverage	2014	UKCPR National Welfare Data
Benefits	Minimum Wage gen.	2014	UKCPR National Welfare Data
Benefits	TANF generosity	2014	UKCPR National Welfare Data
Benefits	TANF coverage	2014	Center on Budget & Policy Priorities (2016)
Benefits	Unemployment Insurance gen.	2014	U.S. Department of Labor (2014)
Benefits	Unemployment Insurance cov.	2014	McHugh & Kimball (2015)
Services	Pre-K generosity	2014 - 2015	National Institute for Early Education Research, State of Preschool Yearbook 2014: State Profiles
Services	Pre-K coverage	2014	National Institute for Early Education Research, State of Preschool Yearbook 2014: State Profiles
Services	Medicaid/Chip coverage	2014	Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts: Medicaid/CHIP Child Participation Rates
Services	Medicaid/Chip spending	2015 /16	Kaiser Family Foundation & medicaid.gov
Services	Childcare Subsidies, generosity	2014 - 2016	U.S. Current Population Survey with TRIM3 benefit imputations
Services	Childcare Subsidies, coverage	2014 - 2016	U.S. Current Population Survey with TRIM3 benefit imputations

Table A2 Multi-Level Linear Probability Estimates of Association of Family Policy Clusters with Poverty (2012- 2014); Children as unit of analysis

	Clusters Only (1)	With Controls (2)	X-Level Interaction (3)	X-Level: Benefits (4)	X-Level: Services (5)
Cluster #2	-0.055***	-0.021**	-0.051*		
	(-3.50)	(-2.69)	(-2.44)		
Cluster #3	-0.067***	-0.017	-0.075		
	(-4.53)	(-1.62)	(-1.79)		
Cluster #4	-0.10***	-0.036	-0.029*		
	(-9.04)	(-1.54)	(-2.39)		
Single Mother HH		0.096**	0.133***	0.105***	0.110***
		(23.24)	(13.34)	(14.26)	(14.78)
Benefits Score				-0.053	
				(-1.95)	
Services Score					-0.0068
					(-0.48)
Cluster 2 # Single Mother HH			-0.011		
			(-0.81)		
Cluster 3 # Single Mother HH			-0.10***		
			(-8.01)		
Cluster 4 # Single Mother HH			-0.093***		
			(-9.70)		
Benefits Score # Single Mother HH				-0.072***	
				(-11.19)	
Services Score # Single Mother HH					-0.062***
					(-4.10)
Demographic Controls		X	X	X	X
Household Controls		X	X	X	X
State Controls		X	X	X	X
Year Dummy	X	X	X	X	X

Observations: 148,915. t statistics in parentheses. All children included. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

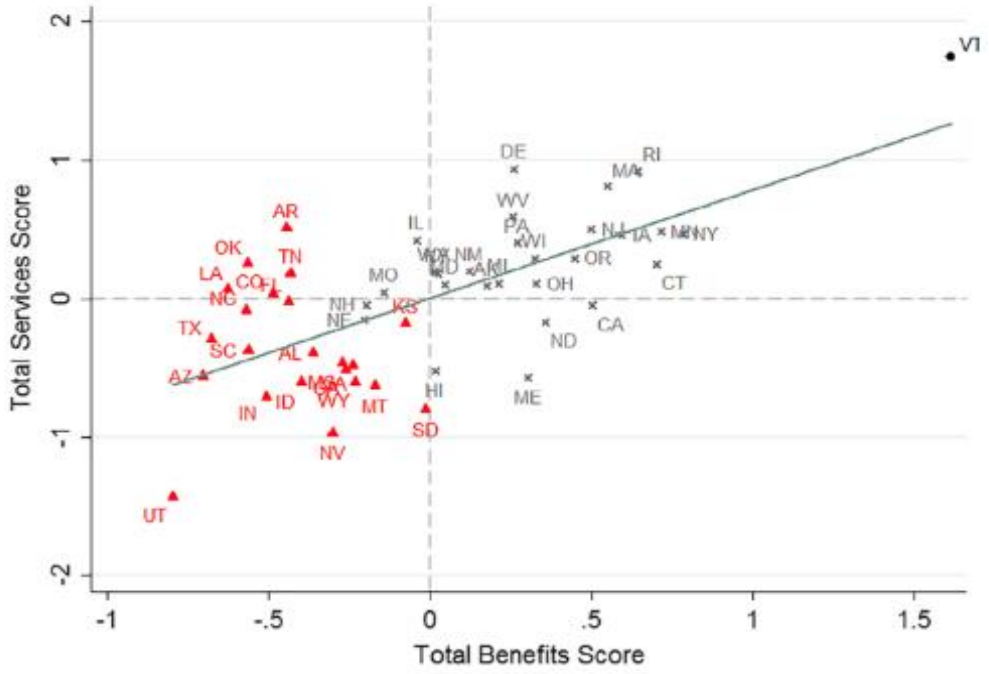


FIGURE A1 Scatterplot of states' total benefits and services scores after adjusting for price differences with regional price parities. Cluster indicators: red triangles = 1; grey cross = 2; black circle = 3. Total benefits scores are calculated by taking the state's mean value of benefit coverage and generosity scores. All scores are standardised. The same process applies to the total services scores. R = .68

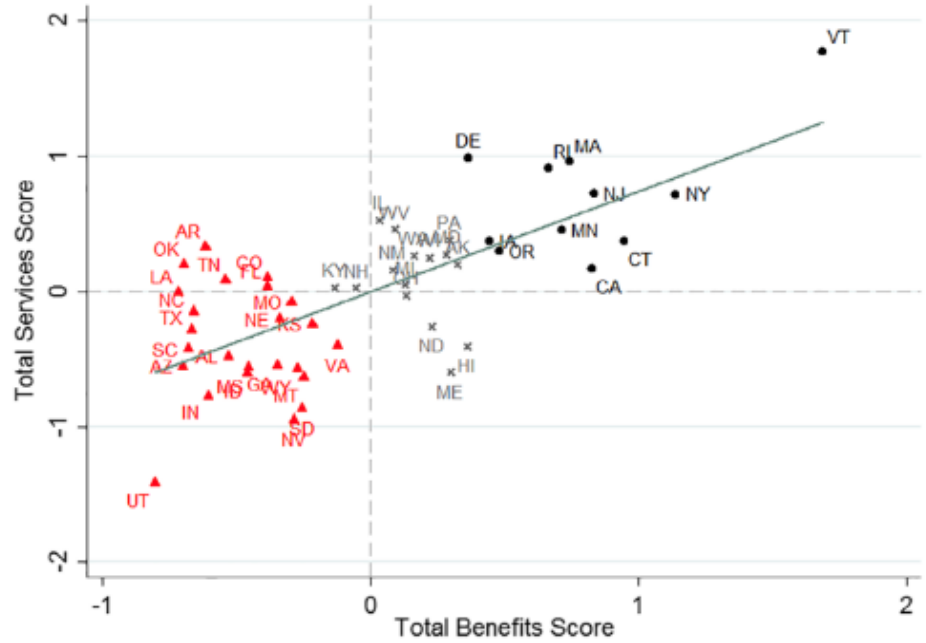


FIGURE A2 Scatterplot of states' total benefits and services scores; clusters estimated using latent class analysis. Cluster indicators: red triangles = 1; grey cross = 2; black circle = 3

Appendix to Article 2

Table A1 (1/2). Descriptive Statistics for Independent and Control Variables

	United States		Germany	
Independent Variables	Childcare	Flexible Work	Childcare	Flexible Work
Percent of employees who are female across sampled employers				
Mean	44.05	44.09	45.66	45.73
SD	24.77	24.77	28.12	28.13
Min	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Max	99.00	99.00	100.00	100.00
Percent of managers who are female across sampled employers				
Mean	--	--	29.56	29.56
SD	--	--	28.28	28.28
Min	--	--	0.00	0.00
Max	--	--	100.00	100.00
Percent of employers with given distribution of female executives				
No female executives	20.96	21.08	--	--
Women on some executive level(s)	68.35	68.11	--	--
Women on all executive levels	10.69	10.81	--	--
Percent of employers in given industry				
Goods Producing	32.40	32.29	22.61	22.53
Professional services	19.08	19.07	38.51	38.61
Wholesale and Retail Trade	19.56	19.46	22.88	22.83
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1.14	1.10	2.36	2.40
Other serives	27.81	28.09	6.74	6.73
Public Administration	--	--	6.90	6.91
Percent of employers with given level of unionization				
None or less than 1% employees union members	87.43	87.42	--	--
At least 1% employees union members	12.57	12.58	--	--
Percent of employers with a collective agreement				
Not present	--	--	40.25	40.22
Present	--	--	59.75	59.78
Percent of employers with a works council				
Not present	--	--	34.89	34.86
Present	--	--	65.11	65.14

Table A1 (2/2). Descriptive Statistics for Independent and Control Variables

Control Variables				
Percent of employers in size category				
50-249 employees	79.78	79.73	86.01	85.94
250+ employees	20.22	20.27	13.99	14.06
Percent of employers reporting recruitment problems				
Not reported	22.08	22.25	35.36	35.43
Reported	77.92	77.75	64.64	64.57
Percent of employers in states by variety of liberalism in family policy				
Hard liberalism	73.90	73.74	--	--
Soft liberalism	26.10	26.26	--	--
Percent of employers in formerly West versus East Bundesländer				
West (excluding Berlin)	--	--	82.40	82.15
East (including Berlin)	--	--	17.60	17.85

Table A2. Logistic regression results Germany Childcare

Explanatory Variables		
Share of employees who are female	.00***	(.00)
Share of executives who are female	.00	(.00)
Presence of a collective agreement	-.04**	(.02)
Presence of a works council	.04*	(.02)
Control Variables		
250+ employees	.15***	(.01)
Employer industry (ref: goods producing)		
Professional services	.03	(.02)
Wholesale and Retail Trade	-.06**	(.02)
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	.04	(.04)
Other serives	-.01	(.03)
Public Administration	-.03	(.03)
Recruitment problems reported	.05**	(0.1)
Former East	-.02	(.01)
Pseudo R^2	.05	
N	4405	

Notes: This table shows average marginal effects with standard errors in brackets, following the example for this type of regression modelling set by Insarauto (2021) . *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table A3. Logistic regression results USA Childcare

Explanatory Variables		
Share of employees who are female	.00	(.00)
Women executives (ref: no fem. execs)		
Women on some executive levels	.06*	(.03)
Women on all executive levels	.18***	(.05)
Presence of unionized employees	.05	(.03)
Control Variables		
250+ employees	.04	(.02)
Employer industry (ref: goods producing)		
Professional services	.06	(.04)
Wholesale and Retail Trade	-.02	(.03)
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	-.06	(.07)
Other serives	.06	(.03)
Recruitment problems reported	.01	(.03)
Variety of Liberalism in State Family Policy	-.04	(.03)
Pseudo R^2	.07	
N	906	

Notes: This table shows average marginal effects with standard errors in brackets, following the example for this type of regression modelling set by Insarauto (2021). *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table A4. Logistic regression results Germany Flexible Work

Explanatory Variables		
Share of employees who are female	.00	(.00)
Share of executives who are female	.00	(.00)
Presence of a collective agreement	-.02	(.02)
Presence of a works council	.11***	(.02)
Control Variables		
250+ employees	.11***	(.02)
Employer industry (ref: goods producing)		
Professional services	.04	(.02)
Wholesale and Retail Trade	-.01	(.02)
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	.26***	(.04)
Other serives	-.03	(.04)
Public Administration	-.12***	(.03)
Recruitment problems reported	.03*	(0.2)
Former East	-.11***	(.02)
Pseudo R^2	.04	
N	4407	

Notes: This table shows average marginal effects with standard errors in brackets, following the example for this type of regression modelling set by Insarauto (2021). *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table A5. Logistic regression results USA Flexible Work

Explanatory Variables		
Share of employees who are female	.00	(.00)
Women executives (ref: no fem. execs)		
Women on some executive levels	.01	(.05)
Women on all executive levels	.05	(.05)
Presence of unionized employees	-.02	(.04)
Control Variables		
250+ employees	.03	(.04)
Employer industry (ref: goods producing)		
Professional services	.14**	(.05)
Wholesale and Retail Trade	.02	(.05)
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	-.14	(.12)
Other serives	.10*	(.05)
Recruitment problems reported	-.01	(.04)
Variety of Liberalism in State Family Policy	-.08*	(.04)
Pseudo R^2	.02	
N	909	

Notes: This table shows average marginal effects with standard errors in brackets, following the example for this type of regression modelling set by Insarauto (2021). *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Appendix to Article 3

Table A1. Descriptive statistics of independent variables by dependent variable

	FSAs		Non-FSAs	
	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.
Public Childcare				
No program or program with income cap	563	64%	561	64%
No income cap, i.e. universal	317	36%	317	36%
Size by number of employees				
50 - 249 employees	577	66%	576	66%
250+ employees	303	34%	302	34%
Industry skill-profile				
Not high-general skills	436	50%	438	50%
High-general skills	444	50%	440	50%
Difficulty filling vacancies				
No difficulty filling vacancies	156	18%	156	18%
Difficulty: entry-level/hourly positions	43	5%	42	5%
Difficulty: highly skilled positions	403	46%	402	46%
Difficulty: both types of positions	278	32%	278	32%
Percent of female employees				
Mean		46%		46%
SD		24%		24%
Min		1%		1%
Max		99%		99%
Prevalence of female executives				
No female executives	158	18%	158	18%
Women on some executive levels	625	71%	624	71%
Women on all executive levels	97	11%	96	11%
Percent of unionized employees				
Mean		6%		7%
SD		18%		18%
Min		0%		0%
Max		100%		100%
State GDP: Per state per capita in USD				
Mean	54,771		54,776	
SD	11,040		11,049	
Min	33,684		33,684	
Max	174,150		174,150	
Female labor force participation: Rate by state				
Mean		73%		73%
SD		4%		4%
Min		63%		63%
Max		81%		81%
Percent of people in state who prefer male breadwinner / female caregiver				
Mean		31%		31%
SD		8%		8%
Min		0%		0%
Max		57%		57%
N	880	100%	878	

Table A2. Skills reclassification accroding to Fleckenstein et al. (2011)

Occupation	Skills
Legislators, seniors officials, and managers	High-general
Professionals	High-general
Technicians and associate professionals	High-general
Clerks	Low-general
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	Low-general
Craft and related workers	Specific
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Specific
Elementary occupations	Low-general

Table A3. Indsutry skill-profiles in the United States according to the 2016 American Community Survey

Industry (NAICS 2017 classification)	N/A	Low General	High General	Specific	Total	Industry Skill Profiile
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8%	7%	35%	50%	100%	Specific
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0%	7%	49%	44%	100%	Mixed
Utilities	0%	18%	57%	25%	100%	High-General
Construction	0%	23%	28%	48%	100%	Mixed
Manufacturing	0%	13%	42%	45%	100%	Mixed
Wholesale Trade	0%	22%	59%	19%	100%	High-General
Retail Trade	0%	76%	15%	9%	100%	Low-General
Transportation and Warehousing	0%	34%	19%	47%	100%	Mixed
Information	0%	20%	70%	11%	100%	High-General
Finance and Insurance	0%	24%	76%	1%	100%	High-General
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0%	22%	70%	7%	100%	High-General
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	0%	8%	89%	2%	100%	High-General
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0%	14%	83%	3%	100%	High-General
Waste Management and Remediation	2%	55%	32%	11%	100%	Low-General
Educational Services	0%	21%	76%	3%	100%	High-General
Health Care and Social Assistance	0%	34%	64%	2%	100%	High-General
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0%	41%	50%	9%	100%	High-General
Accommodation and Food Services	0%	76%	21%	4%	100%	Low-General
Other Services (except Public Administration)	0%	48%	33%	19%	100%	Mixed
Public Administration	6%	21%	68%	5%	100%	Mixed

Table A4. Full Logistic Regression Results for FSAs

Independent Variables	dy/dx	SE
Public childcare witout income cap	-0.01	(0.03)
High-general skills industry	0.12***	(0.03)
Prevalence of female executives (ref: no female executives)		
Women on some executive levels	0.12**	(0.05)
Women on all executive levels	0.16*	(0.07)
Percent of female employees	0.00	(0.00)
Size by number of employees	0.11**	(0.03)
Percent of unionized employees	0.00	(0.00)
Difficulty filling vacancies (ref: no difficulty filling vacancies)		
Difficulty: entry-level/hourly positions	-0.20*	(0.08)
Difficulty: highly skilled positions	0.00	(0.04)
Difficulty: both types of positions	-0.06	(0.05)
State GDP per capita	0.00	(0.00)
Female labor force participation	0.01**	(0.01)
State-level gendered work/care preferences	0.00	(0.00)
Pseudo R^2		0.05
N		880

Notes : This table shows average marginal effects with standard errors in brackets, following the example for this type of regression modelling set by Insarauto (2021). *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table A5. Full Logistic Regression Results for non-FSA childcare

Independent Variables	dy/dx	SE
Public childcare witout income cap	0.05*	(0.02)
High-general skills industry	0.02	(0.03)
Prevalence of female executives (ref: no female executives)		
Women on some executive levels	0.06*	(0.03)
Women on all executive levels	0.19***	(0.05)
Percent of female employees	0.00*	(0.00)
Size by number of employees	0.03	(0.02)
Percent of unionized employees	0.00	(0.00)
Difficulty filling vacancies (ref: no difficulty filling vacancies)		
Difficulty: entry-level/hourly positions	0.02	(0.06)
Difficulty: highly skilled positions	0.03	(0.03)
Difficulty: both types of positions	0.04	(0.03)
State GDP per capita	0.00	(0.00)
Female labor force participation	0.00	(0.00)
State-level gendered work/care preferences	0.00	(0.00)
Pseudo R^2		0.06
N		878

Notes : This table shows average marginal effects with standard errors in brackets, following the example for this type of regression modelling set by Insarauto (2021). *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Appendix to Article 4

Table A1 (1/3): Descriptive Statistics for control variables, frequencies and percentages

	Maternity time		Maternity pay		Paternity time		Paternity pay	
	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.
State GDP: Per state per capita in USD								
Mean	54,814		54,859		54,814		54,790	
SD	11,025		11,065		11,025		11,006	
Min	33,684		33,684		33,684		33,684	
Max	174,150		174,150		174,150		174,150	
N	881		867		881		893	
Size: By number of employees at establishment								
50-249	500	55%	491	55%	500	55%	511	56%
250+	404	45%	394	45%	404	45%	408	44%
N	904	100%	885	100%	904	100%	919	100%
High-general skills: Industry skill-profile								
Not high-general skills	438	49%	431	49%	438	49%	446	49%
High-general skills	456	51%	449	51%	456	51%	460	51%
N	894	100%	880	100%	894	100%	906	100%
Unionization: Percent of unionized employees at establishment								
Mean		6%		7%		7%		7%
SD		19%		18%		19%		19%
Min		0%		0%		0%		0%
Max		100%		100%		100%		100%
N	904		885		904		919	

Table A1 continued (2/3): Descriptive Statistics for control variables, frequencies and percentages

	Maternity time		Maternity pay		Paternity time		Paternity pay	
	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.
Difficulty filling vacancies								
No difficulty filling vacancies	161	18%	155	18%	161	18%	163	18%
Difficulty: entry-level/hourly positions	41	5%	40	5%	41	5%	44	5%
Difficulty: highly skilled positions	410	46%	403	46%	410	46%	414	46%
Difficulty: both types of positions	285	32%	280	32%	285	32%	288	32%
N	897	100%	878	100%	897	100%	909	100%
Female labor force participation: Rate by state								
Mean		73%		73%		73%		73%
SD		4%		4%		4%		4%
Min		63%		63%		63%		63%
Max		81%		81%		81%		81%
N	881		867		881		893	
Female employees: Percent at establishment								
Mean		47%		47%		47%		47%
SD		24%		24%		24%		24%
Min		1%		1%		1%		1%
Max		99%		99%		99%		99%
N	903		884		903		918	
Female executives: Prevalence								
No female executives	160		157		160		164	
Women on some executive levels	638		627		638		548	
Women on all executive levels	106		101		106		107	
N	904							

Table A1 continued (3/3): Descriptive Statistics for control variables, frequencies and percentages

	Maternity time		Maternity pay		Paternity time		Paternity pay	
	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.	freq.	perc.
State-level gendered work/care preferences								
Mean		47%		47%		47%		47%
SD		24%		24%		24%		24%
Min		1%		1%		1%		1%
Max		99%		99%		99%		99%
N	903		884		903		918	
New Jersey								
Not New Jersey	877	97%	859	97%	877	97%	891	97%
New Jersey	27	3%	27	3%	27	3%	28	3%
N	904	100%	886	100%	904	100%	919	100%