

Gender and Family in Motion: Parental Arrangements

Scientific Abstract

(dt. Titel: Familiäre Fürsorge und elterliche Erwerbstätigkeit im Wandel)

Wider research context, theoretical framework:

The presented research bases upon investigations on men's parental leave and work-family-balance (Mauerer and Schmidt 2019, Mauerer 2018, O'Brien and Wall 2017). Although amendments in gender and family policies pursue the goal of abolishing gender inequalities in parents' career, a gender gap in men's and women's gainful employment and the distribution of paid and unpaid work still exists. Moreover, investigations in family and gender research have revealed lower quota of men on parental leave outside metropolises and cities (Mauerer 2018, O'Brien et al 2017).

Hypotheses, research questions, objectives:

Although new family policies provide parental leave and childcare allowance for both parents, women use both to a higher extent. The research generates qualitative data to identify reasons for existing disparities in men's and women's gainful career after starting a family in Austria, including interviews in all nine federal states. As there are lower quota of men on parental leave in rural areas, it includes parents in different Austrian regions. Furthermore, it prioritizes parents with low income, as previous studies have also shown a larger proportion of well-off fathers claiming childcare allowance (Mauerer 2018, O'Brien et al 2017). It explores if and how men's parental leaves (de)construct traditional gender inequalities in parents' reconciliation of gainful employment and childcare. The gender impact in reconciling work and family will be examined regarding parental leave in Austria after the implementation of a new childcare allowance model since March 2017.

Approach, methods:

Methodical approaches for analysing the generated data are the Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990) and Theoretical Samplings (Strauss 1994). The data corpus consists of a minimum of 54 newly generated interviews with couples in Austria and around 27 individual follow-up interviews on challenges in parental arrangements and the individual work-family-balance, and own previous data (Mauerer 2013-2017). By coding and evaluating problem-centred interviews (Wimberger and Motakef 2017, Witzel 2000), messages on current social phenomena are captured, the individual case abstracted and grounded in facts. Couple interviews offer multi-perspective insights in parents' strategies in sharing gainful work and childcare and investigating couple interactions. Moreover, a quantitative data sheet gives information on parents' gainful income, financial sources and informal support.

Level of originality, innovation:

This empirical research provides original data on parental leave in Austria since the introduction of a new childcare allowance model in March 2017. The research provides 1. original data, 2. an empirical review of the Austrian childcare allowance model in a gender perspective, 3. an international scientific discussion of results (UCL London, Univ. of York, Univ. of Lisbon).

Primary researcher involved: Mag. Dr. Gerlinde Mauerer.