

**Gender Gap in Parental Leave Intentions: Evidence from 37 Countries**

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### **Author Contributions:**

The first 8 authors and the last author contributed to study design and hypothesis development. M. Olsson, K. Block, S. van Grootel, and M. Sun oversaw data collection and prepared data for analysis. All authors collected data and checked questionnaires. M. Olsson spearheaded data analysis and preparation of the manuscript under the supervision of S. Martiny, C. Van Laar, and T. Schmader. All authors provided feedback on the paper and approved the final manuscript.

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### **Abstract**

Despite global commitments and efforts, a gender-based division of paid and unpaid work persists. To identify how psychological factors, national policies, and the broader sociocultural context contribute to this inequality, we assessed parental leave intentions in young adults (18-30 years old) planning to have children (N = 13,942; 8,880 identified as women; 5,062 identified as men) across 37 countries that varied in parental leave policies and societal gender equality. In all countries, women intended to take longer leave than men. National parental leave policies and women's political representation partially explained cross-national variations in the gender gap. Gender gaps in leave intentions were paradoxically larger in countries with more gender-egalitarian parental leave policies (i.e., longer leave available to both fathers and mothers). Interestingly, this cross-national variation in the gender gap was driven by cross-national variations in women's (rather than men's) leave intentions. Financially generous leave and gender-egalitarian policies (linked to men's higher uptake in prior research) were not associated with leave intentions in men. Rather, men's leave intentions were related to their individual gender attitudes. Leave intentions were inversely related to career ambitions. The potential for existing policies to foster gender equality in paid and unpaid work is discussed.

*Keywords:* parental leave, gender, cross-national, inequality, childcare

**Note:** The present paper focuses on traditional gender roles and thus primary analyses focus on cisgender participants who may expect to be in a straight relationship in the future (and thus more likely to anticipate a gender-traditional division of roles). Including data from lesbian and gay participants does not change the main findings.

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### **Highlights:**

- The gender gap in intended (unpaid) care work is variable but visible around the world: young women intend to take longer leave to care for their future children than do young men.
- Achieving gender-equal representation in high-status paid work requires more gender-equal representation in unpaid care work, as care intentions in young people are inversely related to their career ambitions.
- National parental leave policies aiming to promote gender equality seem to influence women's but not men's leave intentions, which means that egalitarian parental leave policies paradoxically correspond with a larger gender gap.
- Policies shown to predict leave uptake in fathers do not correspondingly predict leave intentions in young men.
- Men with more gender-egalitarian attitudes intend to take more parental leave. Thus, one way to promote men's equal participation in unpaid care work would be to promote more gender-egalitarian attitudes in young men.

### **Gender Gap in Parental Leave Intentions: Evidence from 37 Countries**

Many countries have a gender-based division of labor, with higher-status paid work done more by men, and lower-status unpaid care work done more by women (EIGE, 2019; WEF, 2020). Importantly, however, the gender gap in unpaid care work (e.g., childcare) is larger than in paid work (OECD, 2020). Men's relatively lower engagement in childcare has been linked to lower career opportunities for women and marital dissatisfaction in couples (Carlson et al., 2016; Croft et al., 2019), as well as lower well-being for fathers and their children (see Meeussen et al., 2020). Notwithstanding these consequences, antecedents of men's underrepresentation in childcare have been largely overlooked in psychological research (Croft et al., 2015). While empirically underexplored, men's relatively low participation in childcare tasks is nonetheless a well-known issue among policy and political decision-makers. However, despite global commitments and efforts to tackle men's lower engagement in childcare (Eurofound, 1998), recent decades showed varied—and overall only modest—progress towards gender equality in childcare between countries (Sullivan et al., 2018). This continued gender imbalance highlights the need for cross-cultural research on reasons for men's underrepresentation in unpaid care work. In addition, despite evidence of gender inequities in parents' actual division of labor (Ma et al., 2020), less is known about young women's and men's *intended* engagement in these roles prior to having children. Young women's and men's caregiving intentions may factor into their career choices and ambitions (Croft et al., 2019; Frome et al., 2006), ultimately perpetuating a gender-based division of paid and unpaid work. We thus examine predictors of intended uptake of parental leave in 13,942 young adults from 37 countries who do not yet have children.

### **Individual Gender Attitudes and the Gender Gap in Childcare**

Empirical and theoretical research has examined why women and men often behave in accordance with traditional gender roles, with men largely occupying breadwinning roles

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and women largely occupying caretaking roles (e.g., social role theory; Eagly & Wood, 2012). Although individual differences in gender attitudes are assumed to drive gender-based division of roles (Knudsen & Wærness, 2008), evidence is mixed. Some research shows that gender-egalitarian attitudes predict more equal sharing of childcare and parental leave uptake between partners (Duvander, 2014; Evertsson, 2014). Yet even among straight couples who endorse gender-egalitarian attitudes, mothers still do more childcare than fathers, including taking the majority of parental leave (Brandén et al., 2018; Bulanda, 2004). Furthermore, realistic constraints at the country level, such as transferrable leave policies and gender inequality in the labor market, inhibit leave uptake in men, irrespective of their individual gender attitudes (Bueno & Grau-Grau, 2020; Kaufman, 2018). Thus, women's and men's engagement in childcare may depend not only on individual gender attitudes but also the broader sociopolitical context. Indeed, cross-national variation in policies and societal gender inequality corresponds with cross-national variation in the division of paid and unpaid work among mothers and fathers (Aboim, 2010; Boll et al., 2014; Craig & Mullan, 2011; DeRose et al., 2019; Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015). For example, although straight couples with children have a more traditional division of paid and unpaid work than couples without children, this difference is attenuated in countries where a proportion of paid leave is reserved specifically for fathers (DeRose et al., 2019).

### **National Policies, Societal Gender Equality, and the Gender Gap in Childcare**

One political strategy for reducing the gender gap in childcare is to extend parental leave opportunities to men. However, this does not always translate into equal participation in childcare. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2014), 66 countries across the world have introduced parental leave (i.e., leave available to both mothers and fathers) to support gender equality in the division of paid and unpaid work (Burri & Prechal, 2013). However, statistics from Europe show that even in countries that allow mothers and

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fathers to share leave, mothers tend to take most or all of the leave (Eurofound, 2019).

Research has thus examined whether equal uptake is associated with the extent to which leave policies are gender-egalitarian (i.e., available to either parent) and generous (i.e., compensated at a high rate). To identify the parental leave policies most associated with fathers' leave uptake, one analysis of leave policies in 21 European countries found that "use it or lose it" parental leave that was non-transferrable (i.e., reserved for fathers) and highly paid (approaching 100 percent of salary) was associated with the highest uptake by men (Castro-García & Pazos-Moran, 2016). In contrast, women tended to take most of the paid leave offered to them, not only leave paid at a high rate (for similar findings, see Duvander & Johansson, 2012; Geisler & Kreyenfeld, 2019; O'Brien, 2009). Longitudinal studies also show that policies play a key role in eliciting change, as introducing incentives for fathers to take parental leave increases gender-equitable norms and leave uptake (Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Comet, 2021; Omidakhsh et al., 2020).

Importantly, however, parental leave policies are likely to be confounded with other social, cultural, and economic factors (Carriero, 2020; Kasser, 2011). Thus, to better estimate the effect of leave policies over and above other country-level factors, it is important to consider the effect of societal gender equality, which may also contribute to a gendered divide of paid and unpaid work. For example, cross-national research has shown that straight couples in more gender-egalitarian societies (where women are afforded a higher degree of professional opportunities, economic power, and representation in politics) tend to divide domestic work more equally than those in less gender-egalitarian societies (Hook, 2006; Knudsen & Wærness, 2008). This association between societal gender equality and couples' share of domestic work may be explained by social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), according to which gender differences are more pronounced in more unequal countries (Eagly & Wood, 1999), as women and men are expected to behave in accordance with gender



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role beliefs. These beliefs stem from the gender-based division of labor and gender hierarchy, as women and men infer what is intrinsic and appropriate behavior for their gender based on women's and men's relative distribution across social roles. Furthermore, in line with role congruity theory, women and men are motivated to behave in accordance with gender role expectations, as they experience personal and social rewards or punishments for role congruity and role incongruity, respectively (Diekmann & Eagly, 2008). Taken together, both egalitarian parental leave policies (linked to men's higher representation in unpaid care work in prior research) and societal gender equality (women's relative representation in higher-status paid work) may be associated with a smaller gender gap in intended uptake of parental leave, as young women and men align their future caregiving intentions with gender roles in society (Brown & Diekmann, 2010).

### Overview and Hypotheses

To address the gender-based division of paid work before it is firmly rooted in a new generation, it is important to situate caregiving intentions in young adults in a broader sociopolitical context. Our preregistered study thus examined parental leave intentions among 13,942 students in 37 countries. We tested the extent to which parental leave policies and societal gender equality predicted cross-national variation in the gender gap in intended leave uptake over and above individual-level gender role attitudes (see supporting information SI for exploratory analyses with other country-level variables). We focus on intended leave uptake as a specific, tangible aspect of childcare rather than intended engagement in childcare in general, as previous research shows that men report shorter leave intentions than women, despite intending to share childcare equally (Tharp & Parks-Stamm, 2021).

In Model 1, we tested the independent effects of four different aspects of parental leave policies. In all countries, maternity leave is exclusive to mothers, whereas paternity leave is exclusive to fathers. The amount of parental leave *exclusive to fathers* corresponds

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with fathers' leave uptake (e.g., DeRose et al., 2019). Thus, in line with role congruity processes, we predicted that men would report greater intentions to take leave in countries where more leave is *exclusive to fathers* (i.e., the gender gap will be smaller in countries where more leave is exclusive to fathers, **H1**). In most countries, however, more leave tends to be exclusive to mothers than fathers. We predicted that in countries where *relatively more* leave is exclusive to mothers than fathers (estimated by subtracting the number of weeks of leave exclusive to fathers from the number of weeks exclusive to mothers), women would report higher—and men lower—intentions to take leave (i.e., the gender gap will be larger in countries with more *gender imbalance in exclusive leave*, **H2**).

Interestingly, previous research indicates that (unpaid) parental leave (i.e., leave that mothers and fathers choose how to distribute between themselves) seems to have little bearing on men's uptake of leave (Han & Waldfogel, 2003). Moreover, experimental research suggests that when women and men are offered longer leave, the gender gap in intentions to take leave increases, as women are more likely to take advantage of unpaid leave than men (Tharp & Parks-Stamm, 2021). In line with these previous findings on how policies affect the gender gap in childcare, we predicted that *longer available parental leave* would correspond with a larger gender gap (**H3**). However, we predicted that more *financially generous* leave (i.e., the degree to which leave is compensated) would correspond with a smaller gender gap (**H4**): although financial compensation may correspond with higher leave intentions among both women and men, it may be more strongly associated with men's leave intentions because of a realistic calculus of lost salary (given men's higher average pay) or gender norms prescribing men as breadwinners (Haas & Hwang, 2019).

In Model 2, we tested the independent effects of different country-level gender equality indicators on men's and women's leave intentions. Again, in line with role congruity processes, we predicted that gender equality at the national level (operationalized as women's

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relative representation in high-status paid work) would correspond with greater gender-equal intentions to care for one's future children. Specifically, we predicted the gender gap in intended leave would be smaller in countries where women's representation in *earnings* (H5) and *politics* (H6) are more equal to men's, as women would report relatively shorter—and men relatively longer—leave intentions.

Finally, with the aim to integrate previous literature and examine the relative importance of national policy versus gender equality indicators on the gender gap in intentions over and above individual gender attitudes, we included all significant interaction effects between participant gender and country-level variables (from Models 1 and 2) into a final model where we also controlled for individual gender attitudes. In addition to testing the preregistered hypotheses outlined above, we explored the relationship between women's and men's leave intentions and career ambitions to assess the implications of caregiving intentions for gender-equal representation in high-status careers.

### Method

#### Sample

Data were collected as part of an international research collaboration on gender roles ([BLINDED]). Exclusion criteria, hypotheses, and analyses were preregistered ([https://osf.io/7psh5/?view\\_only=a6ef288322884140b788042819d926c9](https://osf.io/7psh5/?view_only=a6ef288322884140b788042819d926c9); see SI for minor deviations from the preregistration). Because the question about leave intentions may be interpreted as only hypothetical in countries that do not offer leave, we preregistered excluding data from 12 countries that did not offer parental or paternity leave to fathers (ILO, 2014).

The present focus is on how gender norms influence a traditional gender division of labor and future child-rearing intentions between women and men in straight relationships. Lesbian and gay couples are more likely to engage in “degendered parenting,” where

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personal choice, aptitude, and fairness rather than gender guide the division of labor (Fulcher et al., 2008; Silverstein et al., 2002). Accordingly, we preregistered excluding participants who identified as neither male nor female (1.19%) or defined their sexual orientation as *gay/lesbian* or *mostly gay/lesbian* from the hypothesis testing<sup>1</sup> (2.95%).

Furthermore, because we were interested in future child-rearing intentions, participants who were younger than 18 (1.65%) or reported *already having a child* (1.10%) or *not wanting children in the future* (4.88%) were excluded. Notably, despite declining birth rates in many countries, the majority of our young sample (82.30%) indicated that they *definitely* or *most likely* want to have children. A minority (17.70%) indicated being *unsure*. A relatively equal proportion of women (4.35%) and men (4.58%) reported *not wanting children in the future*.

After applying these preregistered exclusion criteria, the final sample contained 13,942 participants (8,880 identified as women; 5,062 identified as men) from 99 universities across 37 countries (see Table 1). The gender imbalance in the final sample is due to convenience sampling; most of the sample (57%) was recruited from majors in psychology, healthcare, and early education where women are overrepresented (OECD, 2019, see Table S11 for more details).

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<sup>1</sup> Including (mostly) gay/lesbian participants in the hypothesis testing generated comparable results. Notably, however, the gender gap was more pronounced between straight women and men than between lesbian women and gay men. The relatively smaller gender gap in the latter group appears to be more driven by differences between straight vs. gay men than straight vs. lesbian women (see SI for related analyses).

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**Table 1**

*Sample Information by Country*

Country (rank)	<i>n</i> (% men)	Country (rank)	<i>n</i> (% men)
<b>Albania</b> (38)	148 (43)	<b>South Korea</b> (118)	136 (60)
<b>Australia</b> (35)	402 (38)	<b>Lithuania</b> (28)	171 (42)
<b>Belgium</b> (31)	322 (22)	<b>Macedonia</b> (67)	151 (44)
<b>Canada</b> (16)	1189 (40)	<b>Netherlands</b> (32)	509 (25)
<b>Chile</b> (63)	365 (37)	<b>New Zealand</b> (9)	222 (45)
<b>Colombia</b> (36)	308 (42)	<b>Norway</b> (2)	269 (38)
<b>Croatia</b> (54)	384 (54)	<b>Poland</b> (39)	439 (23)
<b>Czech Rep.</b> (88)	198 (35)	<b>Romania</b> (58)	215 (36)
<b>Denmark</b> (14)	148 (26)	<b>Russia</b> (71)	154 (39)
<b>Ecuador</b> (42)	134 (48)	<b>Serbia</b> (40)	740 (25)
<b>Estonia</b> (37)	190 (37)	<b>Singapore</b> (65)	189 (44)
<b>Ethiopia</b> (115)	194 (46)	<b>Slovakia</b> (74)	253 (40)
<b>France</b> (11)	369 (38)	<b>Spain</b> (24)	327 (43)
<b>Germany</b> (12)	622 (31)	<b>Sweden</b> (5)	169 (50)
<b>Indonesia</b> (84)	240 (33)	<b>Tanzania</b> (68)	89 (51)
<b>Ireland</b> (8)	282 (41)	<b>Ukraine</b> (61)	238 (43)
<b>Italy</b> (82)	286 (37)	<b>U.K.</b> (15)	265 (18)
<b>Japan</b> (114)	463 (41)	<b>U.S.A.</b> (49)	3049 (34)
<b>Kazakhstan</b> (52)	113 (45)	<b>Total</b>	13942 (36)

*Note.* Sample information is reported with exclusion criteria applied. Rank refers to

countries' rank on the global gender gap index (WEF, 2017).

### Procedure and Instruments

Participants completed a 45-minute survey in the language of instruction at their university. Only relevant measures are described (for a complete list, see: [https://osf.io/rwxcj/?view\\_only=35deb74b4ddc49958bd7001a0064431d](https://osf.io/rwxcj/?view_only=35deb74b4ddc49958bd7001a0064431d)).

### Individual-Level Variables

**Intended Parental Leave.** Participants' *intended parental leave* was assessed with: "If you had a child in the future, how much voluntary (non-medical) parental leave (may be paid or unpaid) would you like to take in the first 2 years of your child's life? Please indicate in weeks. For reference, 1 month ~ 4 weeks, 6 months ~ 26 weeks, 1 year ~ 52 weeks."

**Gender.** Participants were asked: "What best reflects your gender?" Participants could

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choose between *male*, *female*, or *neither best reflects my identity*.

**Career Ambitions.** Two items assessed participants' *ambitions to pursue high-status careers*: "I have ambitious career goals" and "I want to be an important person in my field," rated from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Items correlated between .42 to .76 across countries.

### ***Control Variables***

To account for potential differences in sample characteristics across universities, we preregistered as covariates participants' study major, age, and subjective socioeconomic status (SES), each of which have been linked to parental leave uptake (Borràs et al., 2018; Geisler & Kreyenfeld, 2019; Ma et al., 2020; Marynissen et al., 2019; see SI for control variables).

We also preregistered examining the role of country-level factors on leave intentions, over and above individual attitudes. We therefore controlled for individual gender role attitudes toward childcare in the final model.

**Gender Role Attitudes toward Childcare.** Three items assessed participants' *gender role attitudes toward childcare*<sup>2</sup> (shortened from Gaunt, 2006), e.g., "Mothers are instinctively better caretakers than fathers" ( $\alpha = .45$  to  $.88$  across countries). The response scales ran from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate more traditional attitudes.

### ***Country-Level Variables***

Indicators of different parental leave policies (ILO, 2014) and gender equality (WEF, 2017) were collected from publicly available datasets. As preregistered, to maximize the degrees of freedom (by limiting the number of predictors in each model), we applied a data-

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<sup>2</sup> Scale is labeled "gender essentialist attitudes" in the dataset.

## GENDER GAP IN LEAVE INTENTIONS

driven approach to select which indicators of gender equality to include as predictors in Model 2 (see SI for more details). To address missing data, we imputed 10 datasets from a larger dataset of 63 country-level economic, political, and social indicators using Amelia II in R (Honaker et al., 2011; for imputation code, see: [https://osf.io/9tshr/?view\\_only=becdb1e590a64ffca6cce74f131fea8](https://osf.io/9tshr/?view_only=becdb1e590a64ffca6cce74f131fea8)).

No multicollinearity was detected as indicated by  $VIF < 10$  between hypothesized country-level variables in each model (Kutner et al., 2004; see Table SI6 for bivariate correlations between country-level variables).

**Parental Leave Policies.** *Father-exclusive leave* represents the days of leave exclusive to fathers in a given country (sample range: 0 to 80 days). *Gender imbalance in exclusive leave* represents the extent to which leave is exclusive to mothers over fathers (in days) and is calculated as the total leave reserved exclusively for mothers minus the total leave reserved exclusively for fathers in a given country (range: -10 to 283 days). *Available leave length* represents the total leave (in weeks) that is available to either parent (i.e., no part of this leave is exclusive to mothers or fathers; range: 0 to 156 weeks). *Financially generous leave* represents the number of weeks with 100 percent income compensation in a given country (range: 0 to 78 weeks), computed as the product of parental leave duration (in weeks) and compensation rate (% of previous earnings; e.g., 10 weeks compensated at 80% = 8 weeks).

**Gender Equality.** *Women's relative income* represents the ratio of female to male income in a country and is estimated using the proportion of working women and men, their relative wages, and overall GDP of the country in question (scale ranges from 0-1; sample range: .43 to .79; WEF, 2017). *Women's relative representation in politics* is based on the ratio of women to men with seats in parliament, at the ministerial level, and number of years

## GENDER GAP IN LEAVE INTENTIONS

with a female head of state over the last 50 years in a given country (scale ranges from 0 to 1; sample range: .08 to .53; WEF, 2017).

### Results

Data and analytical code are available on the Open Science Framework ([https://osf.io/65dnv/?view\\_only=c0fff2520ce949749013a30324770f46](https://osf.io/65dnv/?view_only=c0fff2520ce949749013a30324770f46)). All analyses were performed in R (version 4.1.1.1).

#### Data Structure

We had a sufficient sample size for hierarchical modeling based on the number of countries included (i.e., 37; Maas & Hox, 2005). To examine whether there was sufficient variance at the site and country level to justify a 3-level hierarchical linear model, we first ran an intercept-only model that included no predictor variables but random intercepts at the site and country level. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for intended leave indicated sufficient clustering at the site (ICC = 0.06) and country (ICC = 0.09) level (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). We noted a higher degree of clustering for women (ICC = 0.24) than for men (ICC = .06). When we added individual- and site-level control variables to the model, the clustering decreased for site (ICC = 0.03) but increased for country (ICC = 0.12), indicating that we successfully captured variance at the site level by including the control variables.

#### Analytical Strategy

We ran a series of hierarchical linear models in which we included a random slope of participant gender at the country level to account for between-country variability. We added cross-level interactions between participant gender (centered at the grand mean; Enders & Tofighi, 2007; women = -0.36, men = 0.64) and country-level variables (i.e., parental leave policies and gender equality indicators, centered at their grand mean; Enders & Tofighi, 2007) in two respective models. To test each hypothesis, we followed significant cross-level



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interaction effects with simple slopes analyses and examined the gender gap in intentions (i.e., the effect of participant gender) at different levels ( $\pm 1$  *SD*) of the country-level variable.

In each model, the predictors were entered simultaneously. Each effect is thus tested as the other effects are held constant (see Table SI3 for bivariate correlations between each country-level variable and country-level gender differences in intended leave uptake). We subsequently entered all significant cross-level interaction effects from Models 1 and 2 into one final model, which also controlled for individual gender role attitudes. This strategy allowed us to weigh different cross-level interaction effects against each other with maximum degrees of freedom, over and above individual gender role attitudes.

Age and subjective SES (centered within sites) and study major (effect coded) were added as individual-level control variables. Age and subjective SES were also averaged across sites (grand mean centered) and added as site-level control variables (to partial out potential differences across data collection sites).

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The first aim of the present research was to examine whether there is cross-national variability in the gender gap in caregiving intentions. Descriptive analyses showed that women intend to take longer leave than do men in all countries (see Figure 1). The gender gap in leave intentions ranged from 0.79 weeks (in Tanzania) to 45.79 weeks (in Russia). See Figures SI2-3 for absolute averages and ranges for women and men across countries. Exploratory analyses at the individual level further revealed that leave intentions were

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negatively (albeit weakly) associated with career ambitions<sup>3</sup> in both women ( $r = -.14, p < .001$ ) and men ( $r = -.09, p < .001$ ).

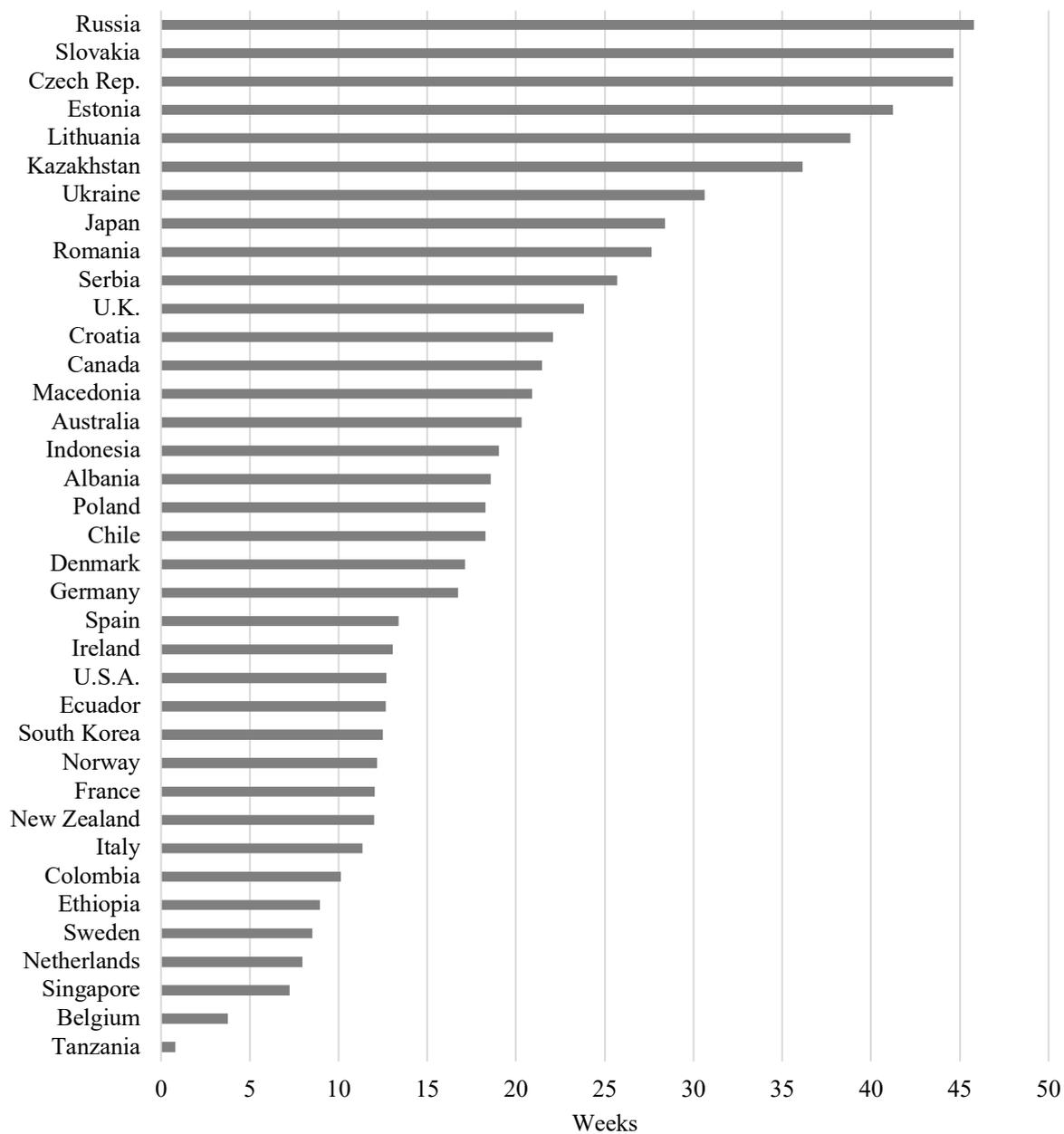
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<sup>3</sup> Overall, women ( $M = 5.53, SD = 1.29$ ) reported higher career ambition than men ( $M = 5.45, SD = 1.37$ ). However, this gender difference was significant in only a minority of countries: Belgium, Chile, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, and U.S.A. (see Table SI5).

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**Figure 1**

*Gender Gap in Intended Uptake of Parental Leave by Country*



*Note.* Scores are based on the estimated means (i.e., subtracting the intercept for men from the intercept for women, when individual- and site-level control variables are held constant). Values above 0 indicate how many more weeks of leave women intend to take than men.

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### Hypothesis Testing

The second aim of the present research was to examine the relationship between the gender gap in caregiving intentions and different national parental leave policies and levels of societal gender equality.

#### *Model 1: Parental Leave Policies*

Model 1 tested whether different national parental leave policies predicted gender differences in leave intentions. Model 1's total explanatory power was substantial (conditional  $R^2 = .30$ ) and the fixed effects alone explained 21% of variability (marginal  $R^2$ ). See Table SI6 for bivariate correlations between different parental leave policies.

We predicted that the gender gap would be larger in countries with more leave available exclusively to fathers (**H1**). However, contrary to our hypothesis, with all other leave policies held constant, the gender gap in intended leave did not significantly vary as a function of the amount of **exclusive leave available to fathers**,  $b = 0.13$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $p = .187$ , 95% CI [-0.06, 0.32]. We also predicted that the gender gap would be larger in countries with more leave available exclusively to mothers over fathers (**H2**). Weak evidence for this hypothesis emerged, with **gender imbalance in exclusive leave** only marginally significantly moderating the effect of gender on intended leave uptake,  $b = -0.04$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $p = .053$ , 95% CI [-0.09, 0.0002] (see SI for related analyses).

In addition, we predicted that the gender gap would be larger in countries where longer leave is available to either parent, as women will be more likely to take leave that is available (**H3**). When gender imbalance in exclusive leave, length of exclusive leave to fathers, and financially generous leave were held constant, **available leave length** significantly moderated the effect of gender on intended leave uptake,  $b = -0.07$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $p = .005$ , 95% CI [-0.12, -0.03]. The gender gap in intended uptake was larger in countries that offer relatively longer (+1 *SD*) parental leave,  $b = -22.92$ ,  $SE = 1.88$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-

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26.61, -19.23], than in those that offer shorter (-1 *SD*) parental leave,  $b = -14.23$ ,  $SE = 2.22$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-18.59, -9.87]. In line with **H3**, simple slopes analyses indicated that this cross-national variation in the gender gap seemed to be driven by women's (not men's) leave intentions: The slope of length of leave was significantly positive for women,  $b = 0.10$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $p = .001$ , 95% CI [0.05, 0.15], but not men,  $b = 0.02$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $p = .125$ , 95% CI [-0.006, 0.05].

Finally, we predicted that the gender gap in leave intentions would be smaller in countries offering more **financially generous leave**, because men will be more motivated to take leave that is paid (**H4**). Contrary to **H4**, however, with all other leave policies held constant, evidence for the opposite pattern emerged,  $b = -0.19$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $p = .044$ , 95% CI [-0.37, -0.006]. Specifically, the gender gap in anticipated leave uptake was larger in countries that offer more financially generous (+1 *SD*) leave,  $b = -21.52$ ,  $SE = 2.01$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-25.46, -17.58], than in those that offer less financially generous (-1 *SD*) leave,  $b = -15.63$ ,  $SE = 2.07$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-19.69, -11.57]. Simple slopes analyses indicated that this cross-national variation in the gender gap seemed to be driven by women's (not men's) leave intentions: The slope of financially generous leave was non-significant for men,  $b = 0.09$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $p = .104$ , 95% CI [-0.02, 0.21], but significantly positive for women,  $b = 0.28$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $p = .008$ , 95% CI [0.09, 0.48].

### ***Model 2: Gender Equality***

Model 2 tested whether country-level gender equality indicators (income and political representation) predicted gender differences in leave intentions. Model 2's total explanatory power was substantial (conditional  $R^2 = .32$ ) and the fixed effects alone explained 16% of variability (marginal  $R^2$ ). See Table SI6 for bivariate correlations between different indicators of gender equality in the labor market.

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We predicted that, with women's relative representation in politics held constant, women's relative income at the national level would be associated with lower leave intentions among women and higher leave intentions among men (**H5**). However, the interaction between gender and **women's relative income** was non-significant,  $b = -5.71$ ,  $SE = 22.89$ ,  $p = .760$ , 95% CI [-49.82, 38.29], indicating that the gender gap in intended leave uptake is not directly associated with the gender gap in income. We also predicted that women's relative representation in politics would be associated with lower leave intentions among women and higher leave intentions among men (**H6**). We found that, when women's relative income was held constant, **women's relative representation in politics** significantly moderated the effect of gender on intended leave uptake,  $b = 42.97$ ,  $SE = 14.82$ ,  $p = .007$ , 95% CI [14.53, 71.57]. Specifically, the gender gap was smaller in countries where women are relatively more (+1 *SD*) represented in politics,  $b = -15.20$ ,  $SE = 2.37$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-19.84, -10.56], than in those where women are less (-1 *SD*) represented in politics,  $b = -25.98$ ,  $SE = 2.73$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-31.24, -20.54]. In partial support of **H6**, simple slopes analyses indicated that this cross-national variation in the gender gap seemed to be driven more by women's than men's leave intentions: The slope of women's representation in politics was negative (albeit only marginally significant) for women,  $b = -36.44$ ,  $SE = 18.97$ ,  $p = .063$ , 95% CI [-73.62, 0.74], and positive but non-significant for men,  $b = 6.54$ ,  $SE = 8.52$ ,  $p = .450$ , 95% CI [-10.17, 23.24].

### Final Model

To weigh the effect of parental leave policies and gender equality at the national level against each other, we subsequently entered the statistically significant cross-level interaction from Models 1 and 2 into one final model. To assess whether the gender gap in intended leave relates to parental leave policies and/or women's relative representation in politics, over

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and above individual gender role attitudes, we also added interaction terms between gender and gender role attitudes toward childcare (grand mean centered; Enders & Tofighi, 2007).

When considered simultaneously, the slopes were comparable to those in Models 1 and 2, but the cross-level interaction effect between financially generous leave and gender was reduced and statistically non-significant (see Table 2). Only the interactions between gender and length of available leave (see Figure 2) and gender and women's relative representation in politics (see Figure 3) statistically predicted intended uptake of parental leave<sup>4, 5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Available leave length was not significantly correlated with women's relative representation in politics (see Table SI6).

<sup>5</sup> The significant interaction between participant gender and women's representation in politics should be treated with caution as it fell short of statistical significance when controlling for egalitarian cultural value orientation (see SI for more details).

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**Table 2**

*Final Model: Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Predicted by Gender, Financially Generous Leave, Available Leave Length, and Women's Relative Representation in Politics*

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Fixed Effects</b>			
<b>Level 1</b>			
Intercept	32.28	1.66	<.001
HEED major	1.85	0.38	<.001
STEM major	-0.62	0.44	.154
Social Sciences major	0.20	0.75	.788
Business major	-1.06	0.64	.100
Age	0.25	0.10	.014
Subjective SES	-0.55	0.13	<.001
Attitudes toward childcare	-0.21	0.14	.117
Gender	-17.54	1.83	.002
Gender × Attitudes toward childcare	-2.33	0.28	<.001
<b>Level 2</b>			
Age (site average)	0.34	0.35	.337
Subjective SES (site average)	-3.89	0.92	<.001
<b>Level 3</b>			
Financially generous leave	0.18	0.08	.024
Available leave length	0.07	0.02	.003
Relative representation in politics	-12.69	10.53	.237
<b>Cross-level interactions</b>			
Gender × Financially generous leave	-0.11	0.08	.190
Gender × Available leave length	-0.08	0.02	.003
Gender × Representation in politics	31.08	11.63	.012
<b>Random Effects</b>			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Intercept variance (site-level)	0.35	0.59	
Intercept variance (country-level)	59.56	7.72	
Slope variance	64.65	8.04	

*Note.* HEED = majors in fields associated with health care, early childhood education, and domestic roles: Psychology (General); Psychology to be a clinical practitioner; Medicine to become a doctor; Other Health Care/Social Work professions; Education/Teaching). STEM = majors in Science (Chemistry, Biology, etc.); Technology (e.g., Computer Science), Engineering, and Mathematics/Statistics. The remaining clusters included Social Sciences majors (History, Sociology, etc.); Business majors; and Other majors (Law; Sport Sciences; Fine Arts; Theology/Religious Studies). Four variables used standard effects coding (Aiken



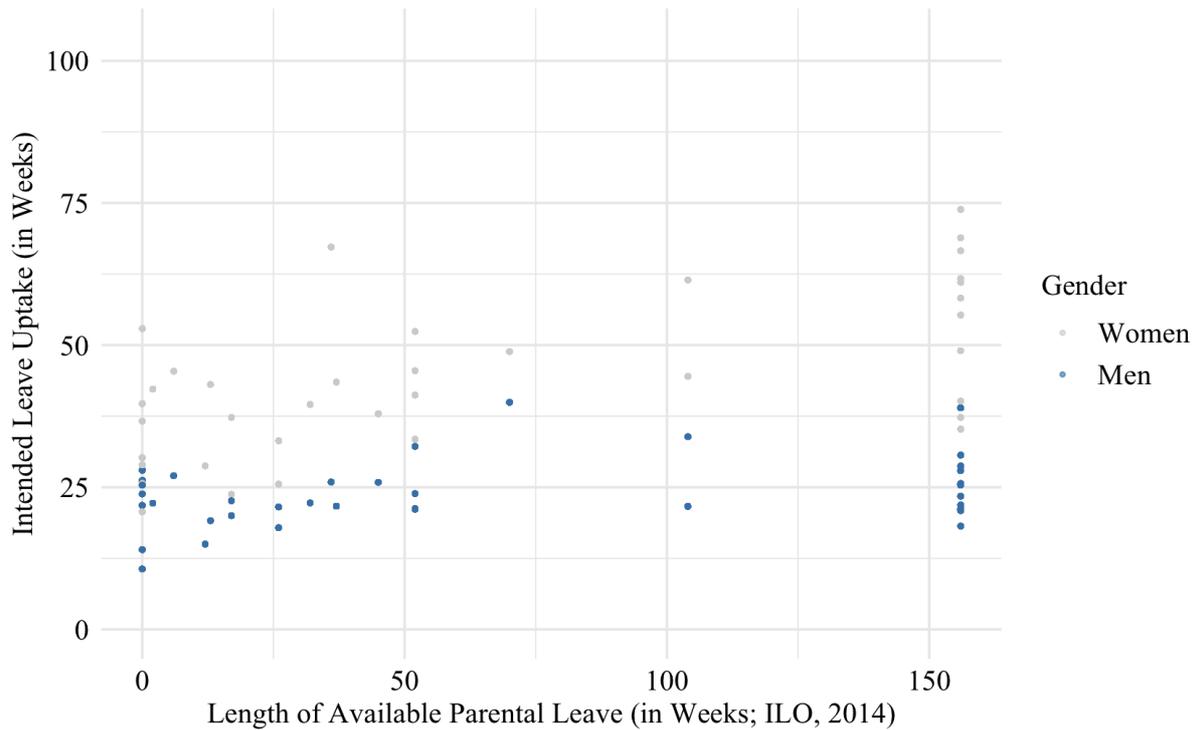
## GENDER GAP IN LEAVE INTENTIONS

& West, 1991) to represent five clusters of academic majors, with the named group coded 1, “other” majors (the base group) coded -1, and remaining clusters of majors coded 0.

Participant gender was grand mean centered (women = -0.36, men = 0.64).

### Figure 2

*Gender Gap in Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Predicted by Available Leave Length*

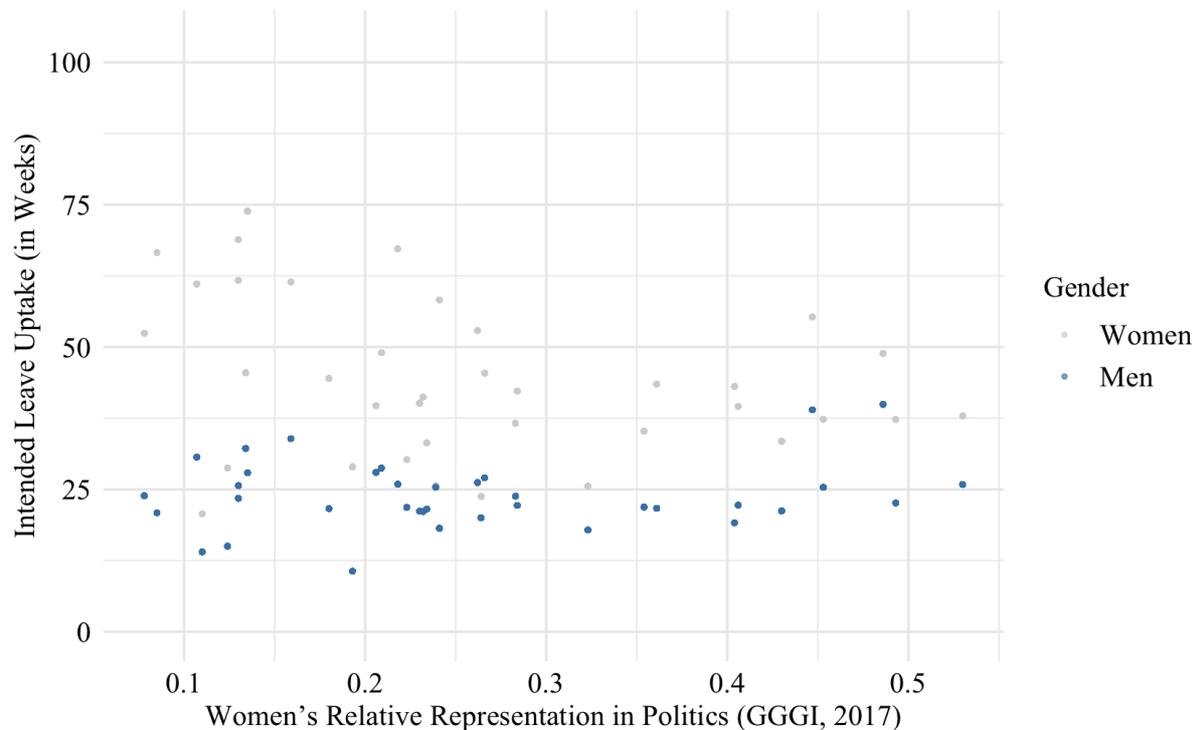


*Note.* Dots represent the relationship between averaged intended leave uptake for a given gender in each country and length of available parental leave without additional covariates.

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**Figure 3**

*Gender Gap in Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Predicted by Women's Relative Representation in Politics*

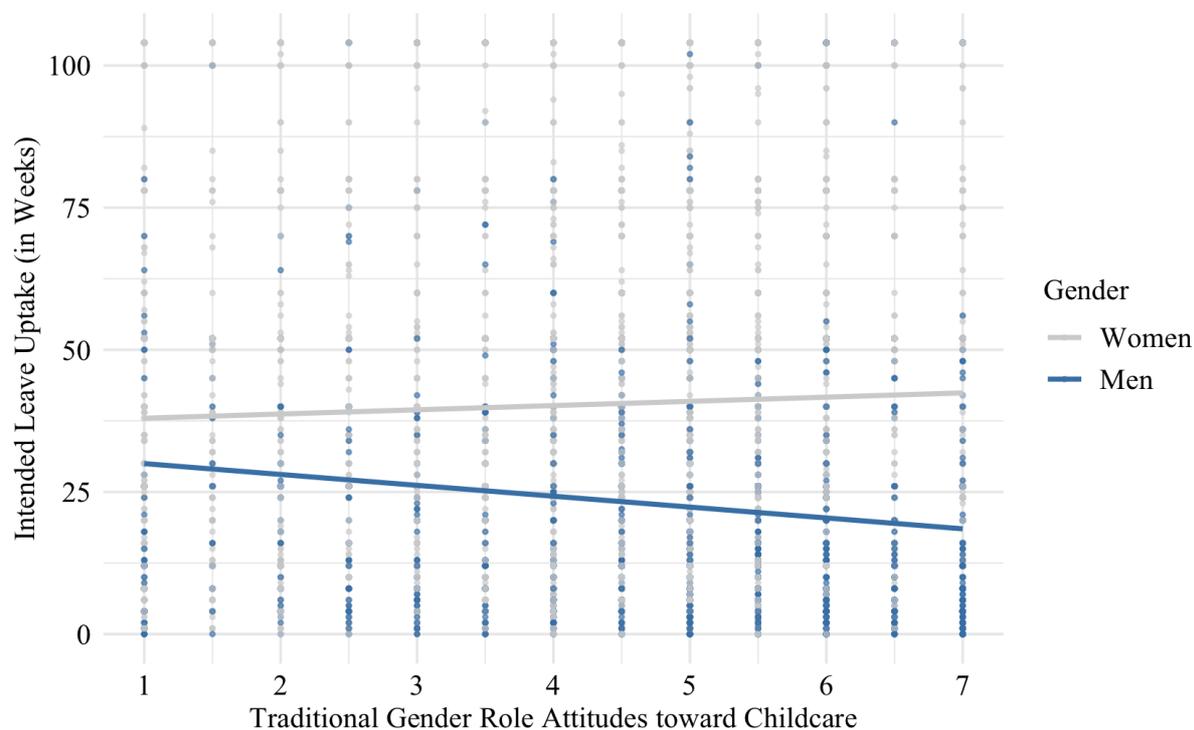


*Note.* Dots represent the relationship between averaged intended leave uptake for a given gender in each country and women's relative representation in politics.

The final model revealed that country-level indicators predict cross-national variation in the gender gap in leave intentions over and above individual-level gender role attitudes toward childcare. As an exploratory analysis, we noted that individual-level gender role attitudes toward childcare significantly interacted with gender in predicting individual intentions to take parental leave,  $b = -2.33$ ,  $SE = 0.28$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-2.88, -1.77]. Simple slopes analyses revealed that the slope was significantly positive for women,  $b = 0.63$ ,  $SE = 0.17$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.30, 0.96], and significantly negative for men,  $b = -1.70$ ,  $SE = 0.23$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-2.14, -1.25]. In other words, endorsing more traditional gender role attitudes was associated with women intending to take more leave and men intending to take less leave (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

*Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Predicted by Gender and Attitudes toward Childcare*



*Note.* Dots represent the relationship between women’s and men’s individual intentions to take parental leave and gender role attitudes toward childcare without additional covariates.

### Discussion

A gender-based division of paid and unpaid work is a pressing issue worldwide. The present research documented, across a wide range of countries, a gender gap in young people’s intentions to take leave from work to care for their child(ren). In all countries, women intended to take longer leave than did men. Leave intentions were in turn negatively associated with career ambition, highlighting the importance of reducing this gender gap for equality in higher-status careers.

The gender gap in intended leave uptake varied across countries. In some countries, intentions to take leave were similar between women and men (e.g., 9 weeks difference in Sweden). In other countries, women intended to take many more weeks of leave than did men

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(e.g., 46 weeks difference in Russia). There seemed to be a regional pattern to leave intentions, with post-Soviet/Eastern European countries making up nine of the 10 countries with the largest gender gaps. More importantly, this variability in the gender gap in intended leave was systematically related to cross-national variation in parental leave policies and societal gender equality, over and above individual attitudes.

Specifically, results showed a larger gender gap in countries that offer longer parental leave to either parent (in support of **H3**; even when controlling for financially generous leave, which was hypothesized to reduce the gender gap by increasing men's intended uptake). This finding suggests that longer parental leave, often implemented with the intention to promote a more equal share of childcare, may paradoxically perpetuate childcare inequities between women and men (for similar findings, see Boeckmann et al., 2014; Tharp & Parks-Stamm, 2021). Notably, leave length was largely associated with women's, rather than men's, leave intentions. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that whereas women take advantage of unpaid leave, men do not utilize leave unless it is highly paid or offered to them exclusively (Castro-García & Pazos-Moran, 2016; Jurado-Guerrero & Muñoz-Comet, 2021; Patnaik, 2019).

In contrast to prior evidence that generous and egalitarian leave policies promote uptake in men, we found that neither compensation (**H4**) nor exclusive leave (**H1-2**) was associated with greater leave intentions in young men (even when excluding control variables, see SI). A potential reason for this absence of an effect may be that we operationalized the compensation variable differently from previous research, as we computed a continuous measure (i.e., the number of weeks compensated at 100%), whereas previous research compared men's uptake at low vs. medium vs. high-medium vs. high compensation levels (e.g., Castro-García & Pazos-Moran). However, we did not replicate previous findings even when we employed a categorical variable with different compensation

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levels (see SI for related analysis). Thus, it seems that while generous policies relate to men's leave uptake, they do not relate to men's leave intentions. This null effect may be attributed to young men's unfamiliarity with parental leave policies, highlighting the importance of educating young men about these policies so their career decisions are more similar to the choices made by young women.

We had hypothesized that men's intentions would align with previous findings showing gender-egalitarian policies increase uptake among fathers, by influencing young men's future selves through role congruity processes. This prediction was not supported, potentially because men are not aware of the details surrounding their rights to (compensated) parental leave prior to having children themselves. It also warrants further exploration as to whether policies must have been in place for a certain amount of time to catalyze such processes (but see SI for related analysis), or whether there are additional psychological barriers to men's future caregiving selves.

Although it is important to interpret cross-sectional findings with caution, gender differences in caregiving intentions may affect career choices (e.g., what to study, how high to set one's goals) and reinforce inequalities in the labor market. Indeed, our descriptive analyses showed that leave intentions were inversely correlated with career ambitions for both women and men (but particularly for women), indicating that caregiving intentions and ambitions for high-status careers may be perceived as incompatible (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016). The pervasive gender gap in intended leave uptake revealed in young adults thus suggests that gender segregation in paid and unpaid work will continue to be an issue at a global level. This gap will, in turn, have implications for women's economic independence, men's psychological well-being, and children's welfare (see Meeussen et al., 2020).

That said, although reducing the gender gap in leave intentions can have positive outcomes for both women and men, gender equality is not about gender parity in leave

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intentions/uptake per se, but rather intentions/uptake that are no longer restricted by gender norms of what or what not to do. Such gender norms are still influencing women's and men's intentions/uptake over and above their individual preferences (Beglaubter, 2017; Miyajima & Yamaguchi, 2017).

Thus, even though generous and gender-egalitarian policies may lead to a smaller gender gap in actual uptake later, these findings highlight the importance for gender equality campaigns to not only target caregiving engagement in fathers, but also caregiving intentions in boys and young men who want to have children (likely the fathers of the future). Our findings do not speak to how this goal can be achieved through policies, as we do not have data on why these policies do not have any notable bearing on young men's leave intentions. Nevertheless, this (lack of) effect is important for policy makers to recognize and calls attention to the need for future research to explore how policies can seek to promote leave intentions in young men.

In line with prior research showing that couples share domestic work more equally in countries where women are more represented in employment (Hook, 2006), or have more professional opportunities and economic and political power (Knudsen & Wærness, 2008), our results also showed a smaller gender gap in parental leave intentions in countries where women are more represented in politics (**H6**). Again, this effect seemed to be driven by women's, rather than men's, leave intentions. However, in contrast to our research, past work examined the division of unpaid work that can be done outside of paid work hours. Such work is different from the division of parental leave, which entails a break *away* from one's career (for which men may expect to receive backlash; Reimer, 2020; Wayne & Cordeiro, 2003). Perhaps this work type distinction could explain the null effect for men.

The significant relationship between women's relative representation in politics and women's intended parental leave uptake did not replicate for other gender equality indicators,

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such as women's relative income (**H5**) and women's relative representation in employment (see SI). It is possible these discrepant findings reflect that women in politics are more visible than women in other high-status work, and may thus better serve as role models by acting as behavioral models, representing the possible, and being inspirational (see Morgenroth et al., 2015). However, the relation between women's relative representation in politics and young women's caregiving intentions may also be driven by a tendency for female politicians to push for gender-egalitarian parental leave policies (see Table SI6 for correlations between country-level indicators). To inform policy that seeks to address a gender-based division of paid and unpaid work, it is thus important for future research to examine the processes underlying this effect.

Taken together, our findings suggest that both leave policies and political representation are related to women's family and career planning. Interestingly, we found no significant relationship between men's leave intentions and the broader policy or sociocultural context. Previous research suggests that, relative to women, men's engagement in childcare is rooted less in country-level factors (such as policies; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015) and more in individual-level factors (such as their own gender attitudes; Duvander, 2014). Indeed, our exploratory analyses showed individual variation in men's (but not women's) attitudes toward leadership related to their intended leave uptake (see SI). This finding suggests that to increase men's caregiving intentions, it may be more effective for interventions to focus directly on promoting gender-egalitarian attitudes in young men (Das et al., 2016). Notably, however, country-level initiatives and individual-level attitudes are not mutually exclusive. For example, changes to parental leave policies that incentivize or encourage fathers to take time off seem to shift gender role attitudes in the general population (Omidakhsh et al., 2020). The relatively low cross-national variance in men's intentions to

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take parental leave may indicate a lack of effective policies across countries to shift these attitudes.

### **Strengths, Limitations, and Perspectives for Future Research**

The current research was developed based on the understanding that young people's caregiving decisions are made within a broader context (e.g., within couples, families, peer groups, and countries). Insight into the interdependence of these decisions is essential. The present data help move science further along that path by situating individual decisions within countries. Although we were able to make inferences about country-level factors with our large and diverse cross-national sample (including countries from every major world region), it bears noting that the data are cross-sectional. Relationships between policies and public attitudes are likely bi-directional, as policies may influence and be influenced by public opinion through political voting decisions. Moreover, the relationship between length of parental leave and intentions may be driven by a third unknown variable. To account for this possibility, we explored several country-level confounds (related to economic development, preferences, and cultural values), but none of these moderated gender differences in intended uptake (see SI for more details).

Notably, despite our relatively large sample of countries, we have limited statistical power at the country level. Moreover, highly compensated parental leave and father-exclusive leave is unavailable in most countries, which means that the findings related to these policies must be interpreted with caution. It is important to replicate these findings using other research designs (e.g., by comparing young people's intentions to take parental leave before and after changes to parental leave policies). In addition, future research may wish to explore the cultural, historical, or political factors that underlie the above-mentioned regional pattern to the gender gap in intended leave uptake.



## GENDER GAP IN LEAVE INTENTIONS

Finally, given that gender roles differ across social classes (England, 2010), different findings could emerge among young adults not enrolled in higher education. It is therefore important to not generalize these findings to the broader population. Thus, replicating these findings with representative samples remains a priority. That said, these findings are meaningful: university students' intentions may indicate how societies are likely to develop, as young highly educated individuals are more likely to later hold positions of power to influence policies at an organizational or country level.

Taken together, the broader political and sociocultural context does appear to relate to the gender gap in intended uptake of parental leave, over and above individual-level gender attitudes. The current findings suggest that political decisions are meaningfully related to gender equality in the domestic sphere. However, merely offering both women and men the opportunity to take leave is not an effective way to promote caretaking intentions in men. As young people's caregiving intentions seem to relate to their career decisions, more research is needed to better understand how to promote men's intentions to take leave and reduce the gender gap in caregiving intentions. Indeed, accelerating progress for gender equality will depend on understanding what guides women's and (especially) men's decision making regarding their future families.

**Data Accessibility Statement**

This research was conducted consistent with open science practices. Exclusion criteria, hypotheses, and analyses were registered on OSF prior to data analysis ([https://osf.io/7psh5/?view\\_only=a6ef288322884140b788042819d926c9](https://osf.io/7psh5/?view_only=a6ef288322884140b788042819d926c9)). Materials, data, and code are publicly available on OSF for purposes of reproducing results or replicating the procedure ([https://osf.io/65dvn/?view\\_only=c0fff2520ce949749013a30324770f46](https://osf.io/65dvn/?view_only=c0fff2520ce949749013a30324770f46)).

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## **Supporting information for**

**Gender Gap in Parental Leave Intentions: Evidence from 37 Countries**

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## Deviations from the Preregistration

The hypotheses and analytical strategy were preregistered on the Open Science Framework (OSF, [https://osf.io/7psh5/?view\\_only=a6ef288322884140b788042819d926c9](https://osf.io/7psh5/?view_only=a6ef288322884140b788042819d926c9)) at the end of data collection but prior to analyses. Below, we outline how and why we deviated from the preregistration. These deviations did not have a substantial impact on the planned analyses nor the conclusions we made.

### Statistical Power and Participants

We preregistered several inclusion criteria at the country and individual level. Here we detail the justification for a few slight deviations from these inclusion criteria.

**Sample Size at the Country Level.** First, we planned to include in our analyses countries that had sampled a minimum of 50 participants from each gender, providing 80% power to detect a medium sized ( $d = .50$ ) gender difference, given  $\alpha = .05$  (G\*Power; Faul et al., 2007). However, to maximize country-level degrees of freedom, we made one exception to this rule as we included Denmark (that had sampled 39 men after all other exclusions) in the analyses.

**Sample Size at the Site Level.** Second, during data preparation, we noticed that the survey had sometimes been accessed by individuals who were not affiliated with the university where the data was collected. In order to nest participants' responses within universities, we decided (prior to data analysis) to apply an additional exclusion criterion to exclude participants who either failed to indicate which university they attended, or who attended a university with  $< 6$  responses (0.75%).

**Sexual Orientation.** Third, in order to sample individuals who expected to be in a straight relationship in the future (and thus more likely to anticipate a gender-traditional division of roles; Fulcher et al., 2008), we preregistered that we would exclude participants who self-identified as *bisexual*, *asexual*, or *other* from the analyses. However, we



reconsidered these exclusion criteria when we observed a significant loss in  $N$  in some countries. Feedback from collaborators pointed to a potential misunderstanding of the term *asexuality* in some countries as not being sexually active. Given our goal to achieve a sample of  $> 50$  of each gender in each country and that identifying with any of the stated categories does not preclude currently being in, or imagining oneself being in, a straight relationship, we decided (prior to hypothesis testing) to deviate from our inclusion criteria in order to include participants who self-identified as bisexual, asexual, or other into the main analyses.

### **Analytical Strategy**

We also made some minor changes to the preregistered analytical strategy.

**Adding Father-Exclusive Leave.** First, during data analysis, we realized that it may be of interest to readers to also see the effect of *father-exclusive leave*. Thus, we added father-exclusive leave as a country-level predictor in Model 1 and formulated H1. This hypothesis was not preregistered but was in line with the reasoning outlined in the preregistration. Contrary to our prediction, however, we found no evidence suggesting that the gender gap in intended leave varied across countries that offer more or less exclusive leave to fathers,  $b = 0.13$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $p = .187$ , 95% CI [-0.06, 0.32].

**Adding Career Ambitions.** Second, in order to relate leave intentions to career planning, we reported individual-level correlations between women's and men's leave intentions and *career ambitions*. Career ambitions were measured as part of this data collection but initially not planned to be part of this report.

**Excluding Women's Relative Labor Force Participation as a Key Predictor.** Third, we reconsidered the meaning of *women's relative labor force participation* (WEF, 2017). We had preregistered the hypothesis that women's relative labor force participation would be associated with a smaller gender gap in intended leave uptake, as both women and men would be more inclined to share childcare if they both expected to be active in the labor

force, and therefore report less and more leave intentions, respectively. However, we recognized that it is of course also reasonable to assume that in countries where women are relatively more represented in the labor market, women may expect to be in paid work and therefore indicate higher intentions to take a leave from work than women in countries where women are relatively less represented in the labor force. Due to the dubious meaning of women's relative representation in the labor market, we excluded it from hypothesis testing and instead explored it as a potential control variable. There was, however, no evidence suggesting that women's relative labor force participation,  $b = -7.04$ ,  $SE = 21.29$ ,  $p = .741$ , 95% CI [-48.70, 34.59], related to the gender gap in intended uptake. Thus, to avoid unnecessary complexity, we did not control for women's relative labor force participation in the analyses.

**Excluding Mastery Value Orientation and Egalitarian Value Orientation as Key Predictors.** Fourth, there were two additional preregistered hypotheses examining the role of mastery and egalitarian value orientation on the gender gap in leave intentions. These hypotheses were initially planned to be assessed in a separate hierarchical linear model (Model 3). However, the cultural value orientation data were imputed in 7 out of 37 countries due to missing values and should therefore be interpreted with caution. The results of Model 3 are thus not included in the main manuscript but fully reported below under additional analyses with country-level variables.

**Re-Computing Available Leave Length.** Fifth, we replaced the variable 'total length of available *paternal* leave' (i.e., total amount of parental leave that both women and men have equal access to + total amount of leave that only men have access to) with 'total length of available *parental* leave' (i.e., total amount of parental leave that both men and women have equal access to). The overall effects in Model 1 remain comparable regardless of

whether we predict gender differences in intended uptake from total length of available *paternal* or *parental* leave, but the latter has a stronger effect on women's leave uptake.

**Re-Computing Gender Role Attitudes.** Sixth, we planned to control for *gender role attitudes* (using a shortened version of a scale by Larsen & Long, 1988). However, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with multigroup comparisons indicated unacceptable fit for the 4-item scale,  $\chi^2(74) = 1278, p < .001$ , CFI = .96, TLI = .87, RMSEA = .21, SRMR = .04. Two items referred to gender role attitudes toward leadership (“In groups that have both male and female members, it is more appropriate that leadership positions be held by males”; “Men make better leaders”), whereas two items referred to gender role attitudes in the home (“A woman's place is in the home”; “Some equality in marriage is good, but by and large the husband ought to have the main say-so in family matters). The response scales ran from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate more traditional attitudes. Correlational statistics indicated that the two former items ( $r = -.77, p < .001$ ) correlated more strongly with each other across countries than the two latter items ( $r = -.60, p < .001$ ). We therefore did not form a scale of these four items to include as a control variable in the final model. Instead, we formed a scale with the first two items ( $r = .14$  to  $.89$  across countries) and ran exploratory analyses with this scale (reported below under additional analyses with individual-level variables).

## **Data Collection in Different Countries**

### **Data Collection**

To ensure relatively comparable samples across countries, collaborators recruited university students from either psychology alone or some combination of HEED (i.e., health, education, clinical psychology) and STEM (i.e., natural sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics) degrees (see Table S11 for distribution of study major per gender in each country).

### **Ethical Approval**

Collaborators were instructed to obtain formal ethics clearance from their respective university (if required by the ethics standard in their country).

### **Translation of Materials**

The survey was originally constructed in English. Each collaborating team was provided with the survey in English to translate to the official language of the country where they would collect data (unless a translation was already available in their language that could be adapted to their national context). Collaborators who translated the survey from English to another language were required to have the translation checked by another collaborator. Each collaborating team completed a site survey after data collection, in which they could report how confident they were in the accuracy of their translation/the translated file they received on a scale that ranged from 1 (*not confident at all*) to 7 (*very confident*). Confidence in translation ranged from 6 to 7 ( $M = 6.41$ ) across the total sample.

**Table S11***Study Major by Gender and Country*

Country	HEED		STEM		Social Sciences		Business		Other	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Albania	34	10	38	35	4	8	5	7	4	3
Australia	158	84	46	44	12	2	14	12	21	9
Belgium	251	69	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	378	193	174	164	37	19	38	46	87	53
Chile	161	89	40	31	13	8	2	3	15	3
Colombia	85	26	32	44	6	3	46	49	9	8
Croatia	88	23	50	170	31	14	1	1	6	0
Czech Rep.	87	28	21	35	9	3	5	2	7	1
Denmark	103	25	0	5	2	2	1	5	3	2
Ecuador	68	60	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	2
Estonia	31	7	51	45	33	18	3	0	1	1
Ethiopia	70	56	34	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	174	95	50	39	3	1	1	2	1	3
Germany	282	117	47	36	36	15	44	19	22	4
Indonesia	132	62	4	2	4	2	5	3	17	9
Ireland	117	29	35	81	0	0	4	3	11	2
Italy	167	84	9	3	3	17	0	0	1	2
Japan	95	53	100	93	35	18	9	8	32	20

Kazakhstan	36	9	19	31	4	5	2	4	1	2
South Korea	29	21	22	51	2	2	1	3	1	4
Lithuania	68	11	31	60	0	0	0	0	1	0
Macedonia	49	20	19	35	4	7	0	0	12	5
Netherlands	376	122	1	2	3	2	0	1	0	2
New Zealand	90	66	10	16	8	2	7	6	8	9
Norway	118	58	35	33	0	2	4	6	9	4
Poland	196	28	86	55	20	5	16	9	19	5
Romania	108	58	4	6	6	0	6	3	14	10
Russia	83	41	3	7	3	4	5	3	0	5
Serbia	368	76	113	78	69	27	2	3	3	1
Singapore	41	30	31	38	15	8	15	8	3	0
Slovakia	107	21	24	62	1	2	18	12	1	5
Spain	93	63	45	43	2	3	31	27	15	5
Sweden	44	40	32	28	7	5	2	9	0	2
Tanzania	24	24	20	21	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ukraine	106	68	1	5	1	2	11	13	17	14
U.K.	209	44	0	3	1	0	2	2	4	0
U.S.A.	1129	340	400	298	78	32	227	266	172	107
Total	5755	2250	1628	1735	453	238	527	537	517	302
Percentage	41.27%	16.13%	11.67%	12.44%	3.25%	1.70%	3.78%	3.85%	3.70%	2.16%

*Note.* HEED = majors in fields associated with health care, early childhood education, and domestic roles: Psychology (General); Psychology to be a clinical practitioner; Medicine to become a doctor; Other Health Care/Social Work professions; Education/Teaching). STEM = majors in Science (Chemistry, Biology, etc.); Technology (e.g., Computer Science), Engineering, and Mathematics/Statistics. The remaining clusters included Social Sciences majors (History, Sociology, etc.); Business majors; and Other majors (Law; Sport Sciences; Fine Arts; Theology/Religious Studies).

## Control Variables

### Study Major

One item assessed participants' *study major*. Participants were asked: "What field most closely describes your major or aspired major? If you have not decided yet, please select what is most likely out of the choices." Participants indicated which of the following options applied best: *Science (Chemistry, Biology, etc.)*, *Mathematics/Statistics, Computer Science, Engineering* (coded as STEM); *Psychology (General)*, *Psychology with the goal to be a clinical practitioner*, *Medicine with the goal to become a doctor*, *Other Health Care/Social Work professions*, *Education/Teaching* (coded as HEED); *Other Social Sciences (History, Sociology, etc.)* (coded as Social Sciences); *Business* (coded as Business); *Law, Sport Sciences, Fine Arts (Music, Painting, Literature)*, *Theology/Religious Studies* (coded as Other).

### Subjective Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Participants were asked to indicate their *subjective SES* along a ten-point ladder (using the MacArthur Subjective Status Scale; Adler et al., 2000): "Please think about where your family stands in comparison to others in [country]. This ladder conceptually represents society, where those with the highest socioeconomic status (Rung 10; i.e., those with the most money, highest education, and best jobs) are at the top and those with the lowest socioeconomic status (Rung 1; i.e., those with the least money, least education, and worst jobs) are at the bottom. Please choose the number that best represents where your family is on this ladder compared to others in [country]." The scale ranged from 1 (*low SES*) to 10 (*high SES*)<sup>6</sup>. See Table SI2 for subjective SES by gender and country.

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<sup>6</sup> In Belgium and the Netherlands, the scale ran from 0 to 10. To make the scale comparable across sites, 0 was recoded as 1 (affecting a total of 3 responses).

## **Age**

Participants were asked: “How old are you?” and recorded their age in an open-ended response box. See Table SI2 for age by gender and country.



**Table SI2***Age and Subjective SES by Gender and Country*

Country	Age		Subjective SES	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Albania	20.39 (1.51)	20.75 (1.62)	6.05 (1.64)	6.18 (1.68)
Australia	19.76 (2.33)	20.57 (2.46)	6.49 (1.49)	6.49 (1.59)
Belgium	18.34 (0.86)	18.92 (1.30)	6.52 (1.43)	6.58 (1.84)
Canada	19.58 (1.83)	19.93 (2.03)	6.16 (1.50)	6.27 (1.52)
Chile	20.77 (2.01)	20.79 (2.14)	6.23 (1.62)	6.23 (1.75)
Colombia	20.20 (1.74)	20.51 (1.94)	6.48 (1.68)	7.02 (1.68)
Croatia	21.07 (1.87)	22.38 (1.43)	6.09 (1.31)	6.09 (1.53)
Czech Rep.	22.25 (2.03)	22.20 (2.04)	6.09 (1.41)	6.20 (1.46)
Denmark	21.18 (1.62)	22.74 (2.86)	6.66 (1.58)	6.33 (1.51)
Ecuador	21.50 (2.44)	21.80 (2.77)	5.81 (1.07)	5.95 (1.09)
Estonia	20.45 (2.34)	21.07 (2.66)	6.14 (1.67)	5.83 (1.70)
Ethiopia	20.87 (1.24)	21.72 (2.16)	5.75 (1.91)	4.88 (2.11)
France	19.43 (1.42)	20.42 (2.43)	5.55 (1.38)	5.4 (1.64)
Germany	21.57 (2.71)	22.47 (2.88)	6.53 (1.44)	6.43 (1.53)
Indonesia	19.51 (1.32)	21.40 (2.80)	5.86 (1.40)	5.74 (1.57)
Ireland	19.84 (1.63)	20.09 (1.28)	5.85 (1.51)	6.06 (1.61)
Italy	20.71 (1.93)	21.98 (2.78)	5.57 (1.34)	5.69 (1.62)
Japan	19.57 (1.29)	19.91 (1.59)	6.43 (1.39)	6.03 (1.59)
Kazakhstan	19.42 (1.42)	20.06 (2.28)	6.94 (1.46)	6.31 (1.70)
South Korea	25.18 (2.41)	25.02 (2.08)	5.85 (1.67)	5.95 (1.73)
Lithuania	21.14 (1.74)	20.13 (1.47)	6.43 (1.44)	6.32 (1.64)
Macedonia	19.56 (1.46)	20.40 (1.94)	6.19 (1.71)	6.36 (2.06)
Netherlands	19.75 (1.75)	21.19 (2.17)	6.64 (1.61)	6.60 (1.55)
New Zealand	18.61 (1.01)	18.92 (1.31)	6.37 (1.57)	6.52 (1.56)
Norway	22.16 (2.29)	23.24 (3.01)	6.57 (1.17)	6.15 (1.63)
Poland	22.12 (2.21)	22.26 (2.17)	5.70 (1.54)	5.56 (1.64)
Romania	20.63 (1.92)	21.51 (2.48)	5.93 (1.45)	6.03 (1.57)
Russia	19.57 (1.80)	21.12 (3.07)	6.09 (1.64)	6.17 (1.40)
Serbia	21.19 (2.53)	20.74 (2.38)	5.60 (1.42)	5.87 (1.49)
Singapore	21.00 (1.78)	23.11 (1.38)	5.65 (1.55)	5.39 (1.59)

Slovakia	22.30 (1.70)	22.08 (1.52)	5.99 (1.30)	6.11 (1.30)
Spain	20.56 (2.13)	21.26 (2.33)	6.22 (1.38)	6.44 (1.26)
Sweden	23.03 (2.81)	23.76 (3.25)	5.72 (1.84)	5.99 (1.85)
Tanzania	22.05 (1.78)	22.33 (1.85)	6.50 (1.53)	5.69 (2.23)
Ukraine	19.06 (1.56)	20.06 (2.07)	5.68 (1.70)	5.39 (1.57)
U.K.	18.72 (0.92)	18.90 (1.08)	6.31 (1.51)	6.22 (1.92)
U.S.A.	19.27 (1.63)	19.36 (1.68)	6.12 (1.58)	6.43 (1.66)
Total	20.19 (2.19)	20.77 (2.48)	6.13 (1.54)	6.17 (1.66)

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## Data Preparation

### Exclusion Criteria

As part of data preparation, we applied some general exclusions to the data set (exclusion criteria were preregistered on OSF: [https://osf.io/4g9su/?view\\_only=ec9e68da044b4ff78e43063103419a35](https://osf.io/4g9su/?view_only=ec9e68da044b4ff78e43063103419a35)). Specifically, participants were excluded from the dataset for failing one or both attention checks (e.g., “If you are reading this, please select three”, 15.17%) or completing the questionnaire in less than 10 minutes (1.08%). In addition, we excluded participants who had not been socialized in the respective cultural context during their formative years (i.e., prior to 15 years of age, 6.18%) or not falling in the specified age range of 17-30 (2.44%).

### Selection of Predictor Variables

We applied a data-driven approach to selecting the variables to be included in the hypothesis testing. Prior to data analysis, we ran correlational statistics to determine which indicator of women’s relative representation in power positions (politics vs. management), care values (Harmony vs. Egalitarianism), and success values (Hierarchy vs. Mastery) to include as a predictor in Models 2 and 3, respectively. We preregistered that we would include in our models the indicators that were most strongly correlated with the gender gap in intended uptake of parental leave. With respect to women’s relative representation in power, correlational analyses showed that the gender gap in intentions was more highly correlated with women’s relative representation in politics ( $r = .44, p = .006$ ) than women’s relative representation in management ( $r = .07, p = .669$ ). With respect to care values, correlational analyses showed that the gender gap was more highly correlated with egalitarian values ( $r = -.50, p = .002$ ) than with harmony values ( $r = .10, p = .568$ ). With respect to success values, correlational analyses showed that the gender gap was more highly correlated with mastery

values ( $r = -.13, p = .462$ ) than with hierarchy values ( $r = .06, p = .708$ ). See Table SI3 for correlations between the gender gap in intended leave uptake and country-level variables.

**Table SI3***Correlations between the Gender Gap in the Intended Uptake of Parental Leave and Country-**Level Variables*

	1	2	3
1. Women's intended uptake	–	–	–
2. Men's intended uptake	.54**	–	–
3. Gender gap in intended uptake	.89***	.10	–
<b>Parental leave policies (ILO, 2014)</b>			
Father-exclusive leave	-.04	.27	-.20
Gender imbalance in exclusive leave	.20	-.09	.28
Available leave length	.62***	.32	.55***
Financially generous leave	.48**	.42*	.34*
<b>Gender inequality (WEF, 2017)</b>			
Global index score of gender equality	-.11	.22	-.25
Women's relative labor force participation	.10	.11	.06
Women's relative income	.02	.26	-.12
Women's relative representation in politics	-.29	.20	-.44**
Women's relative representation in management	.09	.06	.07
<b>Cultural value orientation (Schwartz, 2008)</b>			
Egalitarian value orientation	-.43*	-.01	-.50**
Harmony value orientation	.18	.21	.10
Mastery value orientation	-.04	.16	-.13
Hierarchy value orientation	.01	-.10	.06

*Note.* Correlations computed using Pearson-method with pairwise-deletion. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ , two-tailed. These correlations were run on each of 10 imputed datasets of country-level variables and then averaged across these imputed datasets. Scores for 'women's intended uptake' and 'men's intended uptake' are country-level estimates extracted from multilevel models adjusting for demographic variables. The score for 'gender gap in intended uptake' is based on 'women's intended uptake' - 'men's intended uptake'.

## Additional Descriptive Analyses

### Future Child-Rearing Intentions among Lesbian and Gay Participants

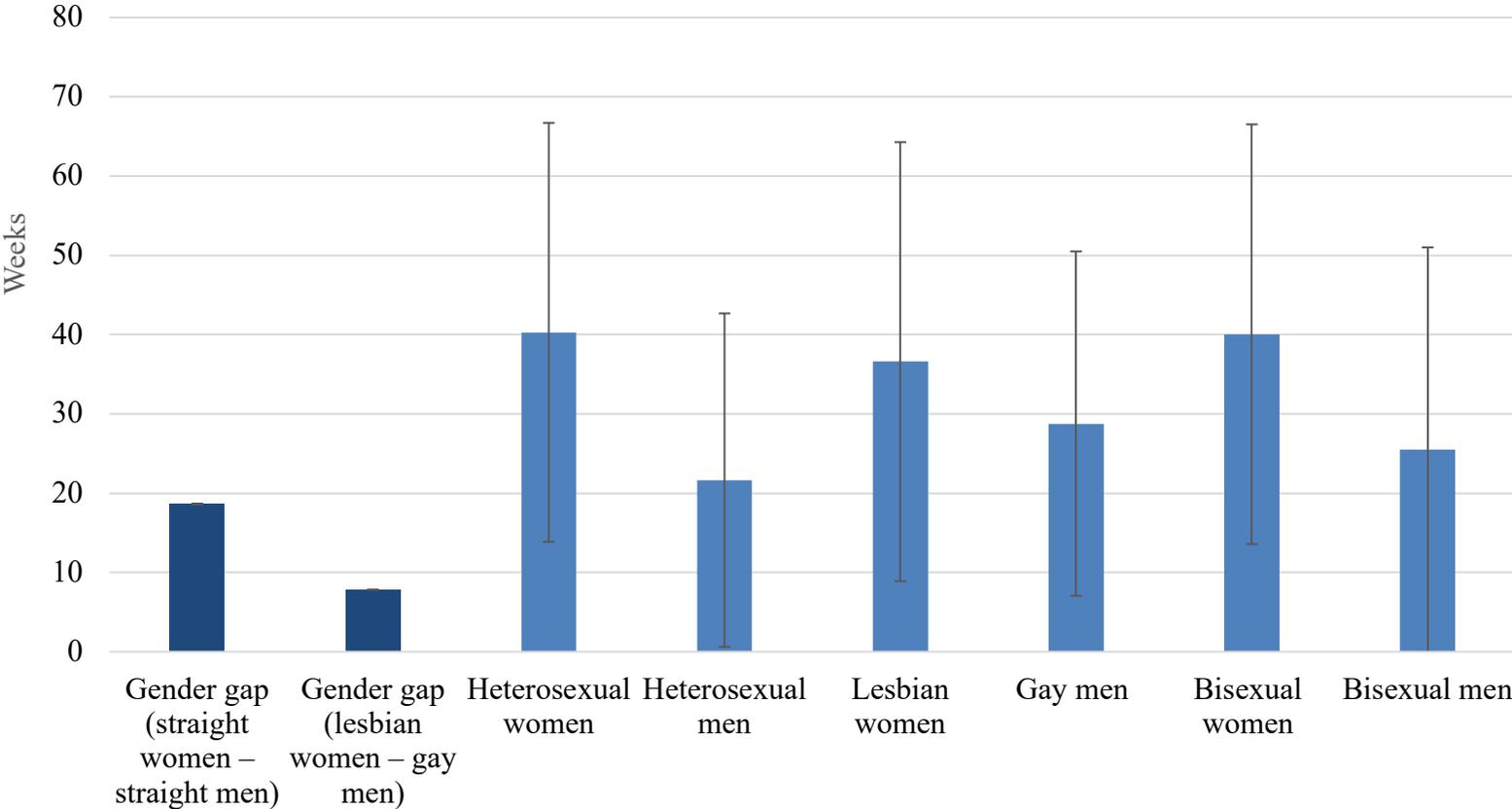
The majority of our young sample reported that they would like to have children. Notably, however, the proportion of participants who indicated that they *definitely* or *most likely want a child/children* was lower (50%) among participants who identified as (mostly) lesbian and gay ( $N = 432$ ) than among participants who identified as bisexual (63%) or (mostly) heterosexual (80%), which could be partly attributed to restricted access to artificial insemination and adoption for lesbian and gay couples.

### Intended Leave Uptake among Lesbian and Gay Participants

Parenting expectations seem to be more degendered in gay than straight relationships. The gender gap was more pronounced between straight women ( $M = 40.29$ ,  $SD = 26.42$ ) and men ( $M = 21.65$ ,  $SD = 21.03$ ),  $t(11247) = 41.87$ ,  $p < .001$ , than between lesbian women ( $M = 36.59$ ,  $SD = 27.69$ ) and gay men ( $M = 28.77$ ,  $SD = 21.72$ ),  $t(114.97) = 2.01$ ,  $p = .047$ . Gay men intended to take significantly longer leave than straight men,  $t(184.51) = -4.78$ ,  $p < .001$ . Lesbian women intended to take shorter leave than straight women, albeit this difference was only marginally significant  $t(72.23) = 1.74$ ,  $p = .085$  (see Figure SI1).

**Figure S11**

*Intended Uptake of Parental Leave by Gender and Sexual Orientation*



**Table SI4***Intended Uptake of Parental Leave by Gender and Country*

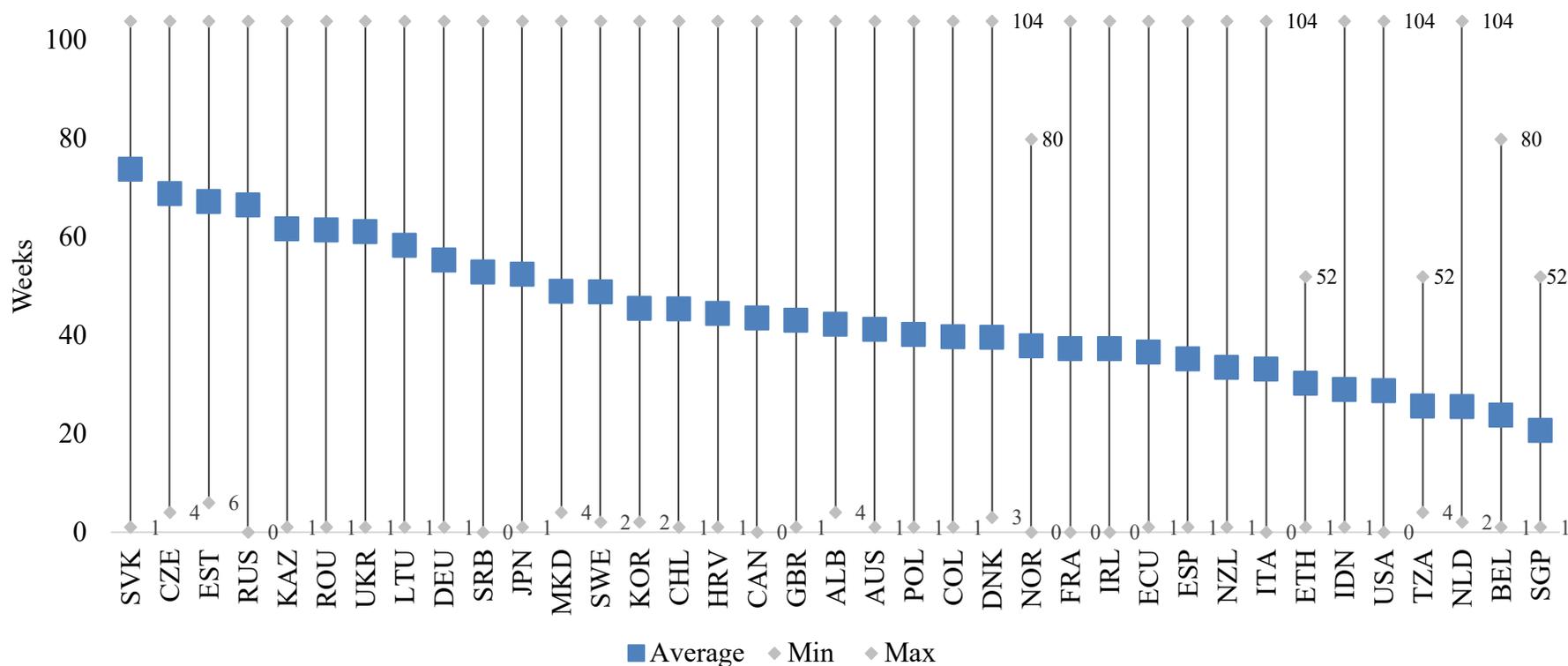
Country	Women <i>EM (ESE)</i>	Men <i>EM (ESE)</i>	Country	Women <i>EM (ESE)</i>	Men <i>EM (ESE)</i>
Albania <sup>***</sup>	41.60 (2.51)	23.02 (3.02)	South Korea <sup>**</sup>	43.73 (3.45)	31.25 (2.97)
Australia <sup>***</sup>	42.04 (1.49)	21.73 (1.86)	Lithuania <sup>***</sup>	58.39 (2.30)	19.55 (2.76)
Belgium	23.62 (1.63)	19.85 (2.81)	Macedonia <sup>***</sup>	48.94 (2.53)	28.04 (2.83)
Canada <sup>***</sup>	43.05 (0.91)	21.59 (1.08)	Netherlands <sup>***</sup>	26.04 (1.30)	18.08 (2.05)
Chile <sup>***</sup>	44.61 (1.52)	26.34 (1.96)	New Zealand <sup>***</sup>	33.51 (2.15)	21.5 (2.36)
Colombia <sup>***</sup>	41.55 (1.77)	31.42 (2.08)	Norway <sup>***</sup>	38.21 (2.00)	26.04 (2.43)
Croatia <sup>***</sup>	43.81 (1.78)	21.71 (1.69)	Poland <sup>***</sup>	37.08 (1.37)	18.79 (2.30)
Czech Rep. <sup>***</sup>	67.70 (2.11)	23.09 (2.83)	Romania <sup>***</sup>	59.31 (1.97)	31.67 (2.56)
Denmark <sup>***</sup>	40.04 (2.34)	22.92 (3.7)	Russia <sup>***</sup>	65.04 (2.39)	19.25 (2.89)
Ecuador <sup>**</sup>	33.51 (2.79)	20.85 (2.97)	Serbia <sup>***</sup>	49.63 (1.06)	23.94 (1.72)
Estonia <sup>***</sup>	66.60 (2.14)	25.36 (2.67)	Singapore <sup>*</sup>	17.76 (2.26)	10.51 (2.51)
Ethiopia <sup>**</sup>	25.72 (2.29)	16.75 (2.45)	Slovakia <sup>***</sup>	72.19 (1.99)	27.53 (2.34)
France <sup>***</sup>	32.98 (1.70)	20.95 (2.04)	Spain <sup>***</sup>	35.65 (1.73)	22.26 (1.96)
Germany <sup>***</sup>	56.19 (1.33)	39.44 (1.78)	Sweden <sup>*</sup>	46.69 (2.64)	38.16 (2.67)
Indonesia <sup>***</sup>	26.18 (1.83)	7.15 (2.62)	Tanzania	24.99 (3.43)	24.2 (3.40)
Ireland <sup>***</sup>	34.90 (1.84)	21.86 (2.2)	Ukraine <sup>***</sup>	57.16 (2.12)	26.54 (2.37)
Italy <sup>***</sup>	28.98 (1.86)	17.63 (2.35)	U.K. <sup>***</sup>	41.91 (1.69)	18.07 (3.27)
Japan <sup>***</sup>	52.52 (1.45)	24.14 (1.65)	U.S.A. <sup>***</sup>	28.23 (0.69)	15.52 (0.83)
Kazakhstan <sup>***</sup>	63.78 (3.19)	27.62 (3.22)	Total <sup>***</sup>	40.54 (0.36)	22.39 (0.41)

*Note.* *EM* = Estimated Means; *ESE* = Estimated Standard Errors (i.e., country-level estimates of the gender effect extracted from multilevel models adjusting for demographic variables). The significance of gender differences in each country is indicated by \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



**Figure SI2**

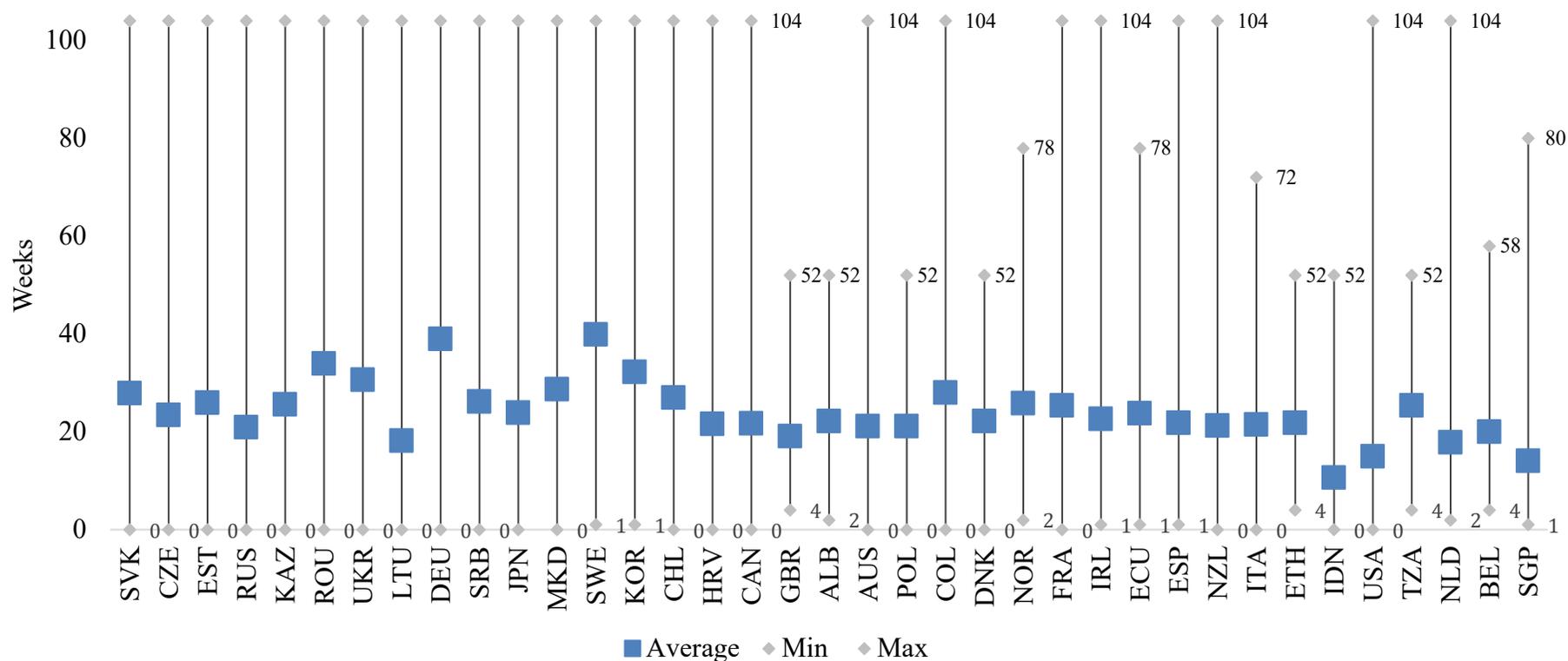
*Women's Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Across Countries*



*Note.* ALB = Albania; AUS = Australia; BEL = Belgium; CAN = Canada; CHL = Chile; COL = Colombia; CZE = Czech Republic; DEU = Germany; DNK = Denmark; ECU = Ecuador; ESP = Spain; EST = Estonia; ETH = Ethiopia; FRA = France; GBR = U.K.; HRV = Croatia; IDN = Indonesia; IRL = Ireland; ITA = Italy; JPN = Japan; KAZ = Kazakhstan; KOR = South Korea; LTU = Lithuania; MKD = Macedonia; NLD = Netherlands; NOR = Norway; NZL = New Zealand; POL = Poland; ROU = Romania; RUS = Russia; SGP = Singapore; SRB = Serbia; SVK = Slovakia; SWE = Sweden; TZA = Tanzania; UKR = Ukraine; USA = U.S.A.

**Figure SI3**

*Men's Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Across Countries*



*Note.* ALB = Albania; AUS = Australia; BEL = Belgium; CAN = Canada; CHL = Chile; COL = Colombia; CZE = Czech Republic; DEU = Germany; DNK = Denmark; ECU = Ecuador; ESP = Spain; EST = Estonia; ETH = Ethiopia; FRA = France; GBR = U.K.; HRV = Croatia; IDN = Indonesia; IRL = Ireland; ITA = Italy; JPN = Japan; KAZ = Kazakhstan; KOR = South Korea; LTU = Lithuania; MKD = Macedonia; NLD = Netherlands; NOR = Norway; NZL = New Zealand; POL = Poland; ROU = Romania; RUS = Russia; SGP = Singapore; SRB = Serbia; SVK = Slovakia; SWE = Sweden; TZA = Tanzania; UKR = Ukraine; USA = U.S.A.

**Table SI5***Career Ambition by Gender and Country*

Country	Career ambition		Country	Career ambition	
	Women	Men		Women	Men
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Albania	5.96 (0.94)	6.06 (1.07)	South Korea	5.17 (1.17)	5.04 (1.45)
Australia	5.55 (1.25)	5.45 (1.40)	Lithuania	5.47 (1.32)	5.09 (1.66)
Belgium*	4.99 (1.12)	4.59 (1.25)	Macedonia	6.14 (1.22)	5.92 (1.04)
Canada	5.66 (1.18)	5.60 (1.29)	Netherlands	5.27 (1.10)	5.23 (1.32)
Chile**	5.85 (1.12)	5.40 (1.35)	New Zealand***	5.76 (1.19)	5.18 (1.22)
Colombia	6.14 (1.15)	6.23 (0.97)	Norway**	5.43 (1.09)	4.95 (1.39)
Croatia	5.25 (1.35)	5.11 (1.33)	Poland	5.56 (1.16)	5.39 (1.51)
Czech Rep.	4.62 (1.66)	4.96 (1.51)	Romania	5.82 (1.19)	5.60 (1.24)
Denmark	5.12 (1.39)	5.40 (1.10)	Russia	5.18 (1.38)	5.56 (1.44)
Ecuador	6.25 (1.04)	6.12 (1.11)	Serbia	5.57 (1.29)	5.64 (1.38)
Estonia	5.76 (1.02)	5.56 (1.29)	Singapore	4.91 (1.26)	4.89 (1.32)
Ethiopia	6.62 (0.80)	6.59 (0.69)	Slovakia	4.81 (1.46)	4.92 (1.63)
France	5.07 (1.42)	4.85 (1.47)	Spain**	5.49 (1.35)	5.00 (1.59)
Germany*	4.76 (1.27)	5.03 (1.48)	Sweden	5.35 (1.26)	5.63 (1.25)
Indonesia	5.30 (1.26)	5.15 (1.23)	Tanzania	6.01 (1.30)	6.26 (1.06)
Ireland	5.75 (1.20)	5.71 (1.07)	Ukraine	5.61 (1.35)	5.73 (1.18)
Italy	5.71 (1.16)	5.50 (1.17)	U.K.	5.33 (1.27)	5.28 (1.13)
Japan	4.16 (1.42)	4.30 (1.35)	U.S.A.*	5.95 (1.11)	5.84 (1.22)
Kazakhstan	5.57 (1.31)	5.42 (1.55)	Total**	5.53 (1.29)	5.45 (1.37)

*Note.* The significance of gender differences in each country is indicated by \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Additional Analyses with Country-Level Variables

### Model 3: Cultural Value Orientation

Below, we outline hypotheses and analyses examining the role of mastery value orientation and egalitarian value orientation on the gender gap in leave intentions.

#### *Hypotheses*

We predicted that the gender gap in intended leave would be smaller in countries oriented toward *egalitarianism* (H7), as men would be expected to share the role of the caregiver in these countries and thus report longer leave intentions. On the contrary, we predicted that the gender gap in intended leave would be larger in countries oriented toward *mastery* (H8), as men in these countries would be expected to take on the role of the breadwinner and thus report shorter leave intentions.

#### *Measure*

The degree to which cultures are oriented toward mastery and egalitarianism is based on data from multiple samples of students and teachers collected between 1988 and 2007. These data represent the degree to which individuals in a country rate a given value “as a guiding principle in MY life” (scores aggregated at the country level; Schwartz, 2008). Sample values include *success* (mastery value orientation; range: 3.72 to 4.21) and *equality* (egalitarian value orientation; range: 4.19 to 5.27). Scale ranges from -1 (*opposed to my values*) to 7 (*very important*).

#### *Results*

In Model 3, we tested whether cultural value orientations (egalitarianism and mastery) predicted gender differences in intended leave uptake (see Table SI7). Model 3’s total explanatory power was substantial (conditional  $R^2 = .30$ ) and the fixed effects alone explained 16% of variability (marginal  $R^2$ ).

**Egalitarian Value Orientation.** We predicted that the gender gap in intended leave would be smaller in countries more oriented toward egalitarianism (**H7**). With mastery value orientation held constant, egalitarian value orientation significantly moderated gender differences in intended uptake,  $b = 22.11$ ,  $SE = 5.50$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [11.51, 32.70]. Specifically, the gender gap was smaller in countries that are relatively more (+1 *SD*) oriented toward egalitarianism,  $b = -12.69$ ,  $SE = 2.40$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-17.17, -8.20], than in those that are less (-1 *SD*) oriented toward egalitarianism,  $b = -24.18$ ,  $SE = 2.02$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-27.96, -20.39]. Simple slopes analyses indicated that this cross-national variation seemed to be driven by women's (not men's) leave intentions: In countries with higher egalitarian value orientation, leave intentions were lower for women,  $b = -21.53$ ,  $SE = 7.13$ ,  $p = .006$ , 95% CI [-34.90, -8.17], but not men,  $b = 0.57$ ,  $SE = 3.61$ ,  $p = .856$ , 95% CI [-6.19, 7.33].

**Mastery Value Orientation.** We also predicted that the gender gap would be larger in countries that are more oriented toward mastery (**H8**). However, a marginally significant interaction between gender and mastery values,  $b = 25.45$ ,  $SE = 13.88$ ,  $p = .089$ , 95% CI [-1.35, 52.13], indicated that, with egalitarian value orientation held constant, the gender gap in intended leave is not strongly associated with the degree to which a country is oriented toward mastery.

**Table SI6***Correlations between Country-Level Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Father-exclusive leave <sub>a</sub>	–												
2. Gender imbalance in exclusive leave <sub>a</sub>	-.39*	–											
3. Available leave length <sub>a</sub>	-.02	.04	–										
4. Financially generous leave <sub>a,b</sub>	.34*	-.24	.38*	–									
5. Global index score of gender equality	.61***	-.12	-.004	.12	–								
6. Women's labor force participation <sub>c</sub>	.40*	-.24	.24	.21	.53**	–							
7. Women's income <sub>c</sub>	.56***	-.21	.20	.33†	.52**	.59**	–						
8. Women's representation in politics	.53**	-.09	-.14	.04	.89***	.38*	.33*	–					
9. Women's representation in management <sub>c</sub>	.28	-.19	.12	-.01	.45**	.37*	.47**	.12	–				
10. Egalitarian value orientation <sub>d</sub>	.31†	-.23	-.22	-.08	.58***	.28	.15	.67***	.13	–			
11. Harmony value orientation <sub>d</sub>	.35*	-.12	.20	.31†	.20	.26	.15	.32†	-.19	.46**	–		
12. Mastery value orientation <sub>d</sub>	-.025	.18	-.22	-.07	-.13	-.26	-.15	-.17	-.03	-.26	-.63***	–	
13. Hierarchy value orientation <sub>d</sub>	-.041*	.09	.04	-.24	-.50**	-.35*	-.20	-.53**	-.05	-.64***	-.66***	.38*	–

*Note.* The correlations were run on each of 10 imputed datasets of country-level variables and then averaged across these imputed datasets.

Correlations computed using Pearson-method with pairwise-deletion. † $p < .07$  \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ , two-tailed.

<sub>a</sub> Missing values (*NAs*) in the ILO (2014) report were not imputed but recoded as 0 (i.e., no leave available). Information about parental leave policies was transformed into numeric data (for an overview of transformations:

[https://osf.io/ewzpc/?view\\_only=1a24faca3db949ad89e97a3248c65c95](https://osf.io/ewzpc/?view_only=1a24faca3db949ad89e97a3248c65c95)).

<sub>b</sub> If the ILO report stated flat rate benefit, we computed the % of previous earnings based on OECD data on average salary in the respective country.

<sub>c</sub> 1 imputation.

<sub>d</sub> 7 imputations.

**Table S17***Model 3: Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Predicted by Gender and Cultural Value**Orientations*

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Fixed Effects</b>			
Gender	-21.50	1.66	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Egalitarian value orientation	-13.53	5.49	<b>.021</b>
Mastery value orientation	-8.83	13.87	.543
<b>Cross-level interactions</b>			
Gender × Egalitarian	22.11	5.50	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Gender × Mastery	25.45	13.88	.089
<b>Random Effects</b>			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Intercept variance (site-level)	0.40	0.63	
Intercept variance (country-level)	91.78	9.58	
Slope variance	85.41	9.24	

*Note.* Gender (the only Level 1 variable reported above) was coded -0.36 for women and 0.64 for men.  $N = 13,942$  at Level 1 (individuals),  $N = 99$  at Level 2 (sites), and  $N = 37$  at Level 3 (countries). Effects of individual- and site-level control variables can be found in Table 2.

**Full Model.** When testing the significant interaction effect (between participant gender and egalitarian value orientation) from Model 3 together with the significant interaction effects from Models 1 and 2, only the interaction between gender and length of available leave statistically predicted intended uptake of parental leave. All other hypothesized cross-level interaction effects were reduced and statistically non-significant (see Table SI8). Thus, although women intended to take less parental leave in countries that are oriented toward egalitarianism or have more women in power, longer available parental leave was still associated with the amount of shared leave that women intended to take when controlling for these effects.

**Year of Parental Leave Availability.** It is possible that for policies to affect attitudes of young people, they must have been in place for some time. To explore this possibility, we assessed whether the gender gap in leave intentions varied as a function of how long parental leave (i.e., leave that is available to *both* mothers and fathers, and partners choose how to distribute the leave between themselves) had been available (see Table SI9). To compute a variable for *year of parental leave available*, we coded countries with no parental leave available as 0, countries that had parental leave available since 2013 as 1, and countries that had parental leave since 1994 as 2. The gender gap in intended leave did not significantly vary as a function of how long parental leave had been available in a country,  $b = -0.79$ ,  $SE = 2.57$ ,  $p = .760$ , 95% CI [-5.99, 4.37].



**Table SI8**

*Full Model: Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Predicted by Gender, Financially Generous Leave, Available Leave Length, Women's Relative Representation in Politics, and Egalitarian Value Orientation*

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Fixed Effects</b>			
<b>Level 1</b>			
Intercept	33.37	1.62	<b>&lt;.001</b>
HEED major	1.85	0.38	<b>&lt;.001</b>
STEM major	-0.65	0.44	.139
Soc Sciences major	0.12	0.75	.869
Business major	-0.97	0.64	.129
Age	0.25	0.10	<b>.017</b>
Subjective SES	-0.54	0.13	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Gender role attitudes toward leadership	-0.59	0.19	<b>.002</b>
Gender role attitudes toward childcare	-0.07	0.14	.606
Gender	-16.64	1.83	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Gender × attitudes toward leadership	-1.22	0.37	<b>.001</b>
Gender × attitudes toward childcare	-1.98	0.30	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<b>Level 2</b>			
Age (site average)	0.31	0.34	.374
Subjective SES (site average)	-3.71	0.91	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<b>Level 3</b>			
Financially generous leave	0.17	0.07	<b>.032</b>
Available leave length	0.07	0.02	<b>.004</b>
Relative representation in politics	1.56	13.60	.882
Egalitarian value orientation	-10.22	5.67	.085
<b>Cross-level interactions</b>			
Gender × Generous leave	-0.11	0.08	.185
Gender × Leave length	-0.08	0.03	<b>.004</b>
Gender × Politics	18.91	15.36	.240
Gender × Egalitarian	5.37	6.44	.438
<b>Random Effects</b>			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Intercept variance (site-level)	0.39	0.62	
Intercept variance (country-level)	55.34	7.44	
Slope variance	65.16	8.07	

*Note.* Gender was centered at the grand mean (coded -0.36 for women and 0.64 for men). *N* = 13,942 at Level 1 (individuals), *N* = 99 at Level 2 (sites), and *N* = 37 at Level 3 (countries). HEED = majors in fields associated with health care, early childhood education, and domestic roles: Psychology (General); Psychology to be a clinical practitioner; Medicine to become a doctor; Other Health Care/Social Work professions; Education/Teaching). STEM = majors in Science (Chemistry, Biology, etc.); Technology (e.g., Computer Science), Engineering, and Mathematics/Statistics. The remaining clusters included Social Sciences

majors (History, Sociology, etc.); Business majors; and Other majors (Law; Sport Sciences; Fine Arts; Theology/Religious Studies). Four variables used standard effects coding (Aiken & West, 1991) to represent five clusters of academic majors, with the named group coded 1, “Other” majors (the base group) coded -1, and remaining clusters of majors coded 0.

**Table SI9***Year Parental Leave was Available by Country*

Country	1994	2013	Country	1994	2013
<b>Albania</b>	***	Yes	<b>South Korea</b>	No	Yes
<b>Australia</b>	***	Yes	<b>Lithuania</b>	***	Yes
<b>Belgium</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>Macedonia</b>	***	Yes
<b>Canada</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>Netherlands</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Chile</b>	No	Yes	<b>New Zealand</b>	No	Yes
<b>Colombia</b>	No	No	<b>Norway</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Croatia</b>	***	Yes	<b>Poland</b>	No	Yes
<b>Czech Rep.</b>	***	Yes	<b>Romania</b>	No	Yes
<b>Denmark</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>Russia</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Ecuador</b>	No	No	<b>Serbia</b>	***	No
<b>Estonia</b>	***	Yes	<b>Singapore</b>	***	No
<b>Ethiopia</b>	No	No	<b>Slovakia</b>	***	Yes
<b>France</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>Spain</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Germany</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>Sweden</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Indonesia</b>	No	No	<b>Tanzania</b>	No	No
<b>Ireland</b>	No	Yes	<b>Ukraine</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Italy</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>U.K.</b>	No	Yes
<b>Japan</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>U.S.A.</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	***	Yes	–	–	–

*Note.* \*\*\* = information is not available, could not be identified or is not applicable. The information presented in this table has been adapted from information presented in Appendix IV in the ILO (2014) report.

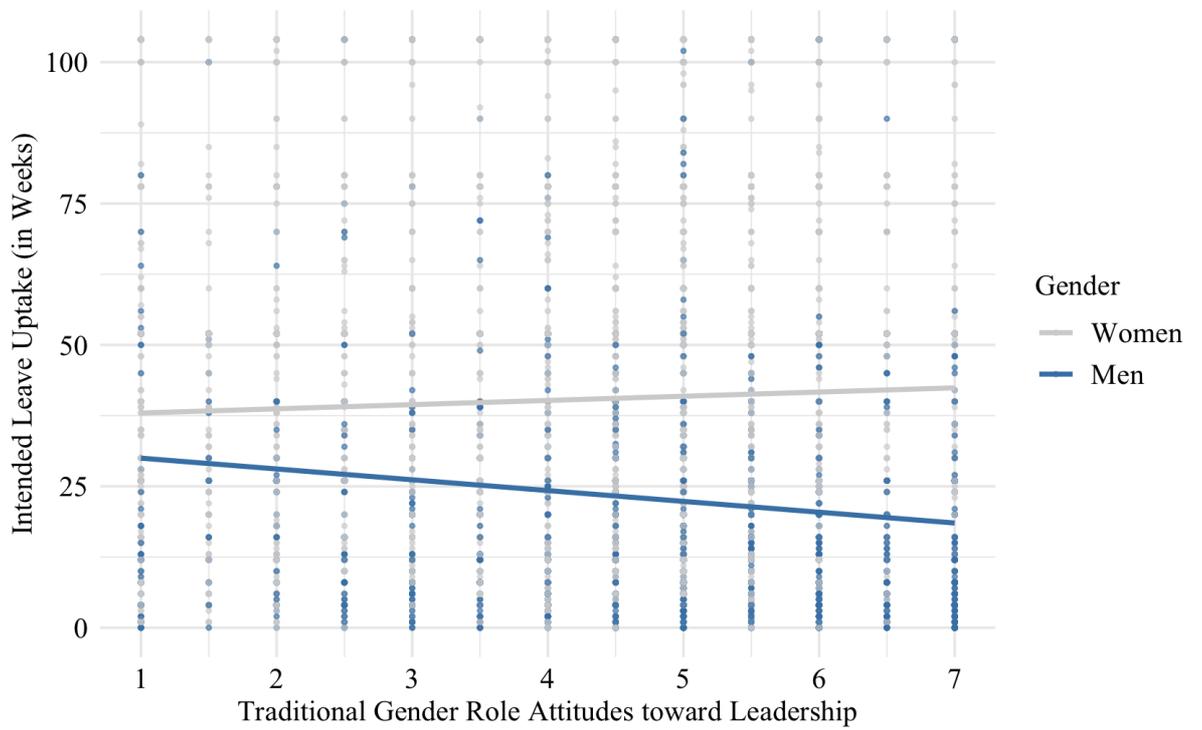
## Additional Analyses with Individual-Level Variables

### Gender Role Attitudes toward Leadership

We controlled for individual-level gender role attitudes toward leadership in the full model (see Table SI8). Gender role attitudes toward leadership significantly interacted with gender in predicting individual intentions to take parental leave,  $b = -1.22$ ,  $SE = 0.37$ ,  $p = .001$ , 95% CI [-1.93, -0.49]. Simple slopes analyses exploring this interaction indicated that gender role attitudes toward leadership corresponded with men's (but not women's) leave intentions: The slope was negative and significant for men,  $b = -1.37$ ,  $SE = 0.26$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-1.88, -0.87], but non-significant for women,  $b = -0.15$ ,  $SE = 0.26$ ,  $p = .559$ , 95% CI [-0.67, 0.36]. Thus, men who endorsed more traditional gender role attitudes toward leadership intended to take less leave (see Figure SI4).

**Figure SI4**

*Intended Uptake of Parental Leave Predicted by Gender and Attitudes toward Leadership*



*Note.* Dots represent the relationship between women’s and men’s individual intentions to take parental leave and gender role attitudes toward leadership without additional covariates.

## **Robustness Checks for Key Results**

To assess the robustness of our reported findings, we ran a series of robustness checks.

### **Parental Leave Variables**

First, due to the combination of our large sample and the lack of financially generous and gender egalitarian parental leave policies across the world, some parental leave policies were non-normally distributed. To check that our findings were not due to non-normality, we recoded these parental leave variables into categorical variables and replicated the analyses. We categorized available leave length into 4 categories: 0 weeks (no leave), 2-17 weeks (short leave), 26-104 weeks (moderate leave), and 156 weeks (long leave), and created 3 effect codes comparing each of the first 3 categories to the last category. In line with the findings with available leave length as a continuous predictor, the gender gap was significantly smaller in countries that offer no leave as opposed to long leave ( $p = .044$ ). However, there was no significant difference in the gender gap between countries that offer short as opposed to long leave ( $p = .265$ ), nor between countries that offer moderate as compared to long leave ( $p = .961$ ). We also categorized the rate at which parental leave is compensated into 4 categories: 0% (no compensation), 13-40% (low compensation), 50-80% (moderate compensation), and 100% (completely compensated), and created 3 effect codes comparing each of the first 3 categories to the last category. Contrary to the findings with length of parental leave compensated at 100%, neither effect code significantly interacted with gender in predicting intended uptake ( $ps > .283$ ).

### **Control Variables**

Second, we re-ran Models 1-3 controlling for traditional gender role attitudes toward leadership and gender role attitudes toward childcare, and excluding individual- and site-level controls. Testing all models with these robustness checks generated comparable findings to

those reported (see Table SI10), with one exception. Namely, when excluding individual- and site-level control variables, we found that the (previously marginal) interaction between gender imbalance in exclusive leave and gender was significant. The gender gap in anticipated leave uptake was larger in countries with a relatively larger (+1 *SD*) gender imbalance,  $b = -21.98$ ,  $SE = 1.96$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-25.83, -18.13], than in those with a smaller (-1 *SD*) gender imbalance,  $b = -15.64$ ,  $SE = 2.25$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-20.04, -11.24]. Simple slopes analyses indicated that this cross-national variation in the gender gap seemed to be driven by women's (not men's) leave intentions: The slope of the gender imbalance in exclusive leave was non-significant for men,  $b = 0.005$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ ,  $p = .701$ , 95% CI [-0.02, 0.03], but positive and significant for women,  $b = 0.05$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $p = .035$ , 95% CI [0.005, 0.10], such that women reported longer leave intentions in countries with more leave available exclusively to mothers over fathers.

### **Outcome Variable**

Third, with respect to our outcome variable 'intended uptake of parental leave,' one collaborating team (from Slovakia) indicated that they opted to omit 'non-medical' from the item description to facilitate comprehension. In addition, one collaborating team (from Spain) indicated that they had asked respondents to report the amount of leave they would like to take in the first three (rather than two) years of their child's life to better reflect the parental leave policy in that country<sup>7</sup>. We re-ran all models excluding countries that had made changes to the description of the outcome variable. Furthermore, it is possible that some of our participants imagine having children (for example through surrogate, adoption, or sperm donation) and raising them on their own or with friends. Therefore, we also re-ran all models

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<sup>7</sup> In line with preregistered procedures, any values that exceeded 104 weeks (2 years) were recoded into missing values prior to hypothesis testing.

excluding participants who indicated that they did not see themselves raising a child with a partner in the future by responding *Not Applicable* to the question: How much of the childcare (taking care of children, spending time with them and fulfilling their physical and psychological needs) do you expect you and your partner will do respectively? Testing all models with these robustness checks generated comparable findings to those reported (see Table SI11), with one exception. Namely, when excluding Slovakia and Spain (i.e., countries that had modified the item description of the outcome variable), we found that the effect of the interaction between financially generous leave and gender was reduced and statistically non-significant ( $p = .095$ ).

### **Sample**

Fourth, we re-ran all models adding participants who identified as *gay/lesbian* or *mostly gay/lesbian* to the sample. Testing all models with this sample generated comparable findings to those reported (see Table SI11).

### **Variables with Low Reliability**

Fifth, we re-ran the full model, including the significant interaction effects from Models 1, 2, and 3, without two countries where items for gender role attitudes toward childcare were not highly correlated (i.e., Croatia  $r = .14$  and Macedonia  $r = .32$ ). We also re-ran this model without countries where the scale reliabilities for gender role attitudes toward childcare were below the recommended Cronbach  $\alpha$  threshold of  $.70$  (i.e., Ethiopia  $\alpha = .45$  and Japan  $\alpha = .68$ ). Testing this model with these robustness checks generated comparable findings to those reported (see Table SI12).



**Table SI10***Models 1-3 with Robustness Checks*

	Controlling for gender role attitudes			Excluding individual- and site-level control variables		
	<i>b</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	95% CI	
		LL	UL		LL	UL
<b>Model 1</b>						
Gender × Gender imbalanced leave	-0.04	-0.08	0.0002	-0.05	<b>-0.09</b>	<b>-0.002</b>
Gender × Father-exclusive leave	0.09	-0.09	0.28	0.13	-0.07	0.33
Gender × Available leave length	-0.08	<b>-0.12</b>	<b>-0.03</b>	-0.07	<b>-0.12</b>	<b>-0.02</b>
Gender × Financially generous leave	-0.18	<b>-0.35</b>	<b>-0.009</b>	-0.19	<b>-0.38</b>	<b>-0.01</b>
<b>Model 2</b>						
Gender × Politics	33.93	<b>13.62</b>	<b>70.65</b>	43.00	<b>14.33</b>	<b>71.84</b>
Gender × Income	-6.40	-49.80	38.27	-5.52	-50.01	38.82
<b>Model 3</b>						
Gender × Egalitarian value orientation	17.11	<b>11.51</b>	<b>32.70</b>	22.02	<b>11.23</b>	<b>32.78</b>
Gender × Mastery value orientation	23.02	-1.35	52.13	23.99	-3.28	51.11

*Note.* Effects of individual- and site-level control variables can be found in Table 2.

**Table SI11***Models 1-3 with Robustness Checks*

	Excluding Slovakia and Spain			Excluding participants who do not expect to share childcare with a partner			Including participants who identify as (mostly) gay/lesbian		
	<i>b</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	95% CI	
		LL	UL		LL	UL		LL	UL
<b>Model 1</b>									
Gender × Gender imbalanced leave	-0.04	-0.08	0.007	-0.04	-0.08	0.0005	-0.04	-0.09	1.14
Gender × Father-exclusive leave	0.12	-0.08	0.31	0.13	-0.05	0.32	0.12	-0.08	3.10
Gender × Available leave length	-0.08	<b>-0.13</b>	<b>-0.02</b>	-0.07	<b>-0.11</b>	<b>-0.02</b>	-0.07	<b>-0.12</b>	<b>-2.37</b>
Gender × Financially generous leave	-0.16	-0.34	0.03	-0.19	<b>-0.36</b>	<b>-0.01</b>	-0.18	<b>-0.36</b>	<b>-7.13</b>
<b>Model 2</b>									
Gender × Politics	38.01	<b>9.78</b>	<b>66.35</b>	44,94	<b>18,07</b>	<b>72,02</b>	42.46	<b>14.44</b>	<b>70,65</b>
Gender × Income	-5.34	-48.21	37.39	-15,28	-57,73	27,05	-6.67	-50.15	36.69
<b>Model 3</b>									
Gender × Egalitarian value orientation	21.35	<b>10.79</b>	<b>31.90</b>	22,63	<b>12,7</b>	<b>32,58</b>	21.99	<b>11.61</b>	<b>32.36</b>
Gender × Mastery value orientation	20.43	-3.31	46.47	20,41	-4,68	45,62	26.21	-0.04	52.33

*Note.* Effects of individual- and site-level control variables can be found in Table 2.

**Table SI12***Full Model with Robustness Checks*

	Excluding Croatia and Macedonia			Excluding Ethiopia and Japan		
	<i>b</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	95% CI	
		LL	UL		LL	UL
Full model						
Gender x Financially generous leave	-0.09	-0.26	0.07	-0.10	-0.26	0.06
Gender x Available leave length	-0.08	<b>-0.13</b>	<b>-0.03</b>	-0.07	<b>-0.12</b>	<b>-0.02</b>
Gender x Politics	17.78	-10.13	48.15	16.16	-13.11	45.61
Gender x Egalitarian value orientation	5.91	-7.03	17.35	7.17	-5.23	19.50

*Note.* Effects of individual- and site-level control variables can be found in Table 2.

## Exploratory Country-Level Confounds

In line with our preregistered procedures, prior to hypothesis testing we assessed whether to control for potential country-level confounds in the final model. We assessed whether the following country-level variables interacted with participant gender in predicting intended uptake of parental leave: *Communal norms* (Global Preference Survey, 2012<sup>8</sup>; <https://www.briq-institute.org/global-preferences/downloads>); *Affective autonomy values* (Schwartz, 2008); *Intellectual autonomy values* (Schwartz, 2008); *Embeddedness values* (Schwartz, 2008); *Wage equality for similar work* (WEF, 2017); *log GDP per capita*<sup>9</sup> (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>); and *Human Development* (HDI, 2017; [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018\\_human\\_development\\_statistical\\_update.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf)). The above-mentioned country-level variables did not significantly moderate gender differences in intended leave uptake ( $ps > .168$ ) and hence were not included as control variables in the final model.

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<sup>8</sup> Country-level preferences for altruism and positive reciprocity were averaged into a composite score of country-level communal norms.

<sup>9</sup> Since GDP per capita may spike from one year to another, we averaged values from 2015 to 2017, which gives us a better estimate of the country's economic activities over recent years. To address positive skew in the GDP per capita data (skewness = 0.44), the scale was logarithmic (log) transformed (i.e., one unit change on the GDP scale corresponds to a GDP ten times higher).

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