



23 MARCH 2023
SKY LOUNGE
(TOP FLOOR),
OSKAR MORGENSTERN
PLATZ 1, 1090 VIENNA

UNIVERSITY OF
VIENNA

CONFERENCE 2023

**PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES
AND GENDER INEQUALITIES
IN THE UPTAKE
OF PARENTAL LEAVE**

Conference 2023: 'Parental Leave Policies and Gender Inequalities in the Uptake of Parental Leave'

23 March 2023, 12:30 pm - 6:00 pm
Sky Lounge (top floor), Oskar Morgenstern Platz 1, 1090 Vienna

Program

12:30 pm	Entry	
1:00-1:15 pm	Welcome speech and introduction	Gerlinde Mauerer Izabela Janssen-Wnorowska
1:15-1:45 pm	Keynote: 'Inequalities in Access to Parental Leave in Europe: Challenges for Fathers and Mothers'	Margaret O'Brien
1:45-2:15 pm	Keynote: 'The impact of employment precariousness on parental leave benefits: Evidence from Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece)'	Susana Atalaia
2:15-2:45 pm	Coffee break	
2:45-3:30 pm	'What makes a good mother? Practices and social norms around good motherhood'	Eva-Maria Schmidt
3:30-4:15 pm	'Parents' dual reconciliation of gainful employment and childcare: Empirical evidence from Austria'	Gerlinde Mauerer

4:15-5:15 pm	Panel discussion 'Shared childcare benefit claims: How parents profit from new childcare benefits, future perspectives'	Moderation: Gerlinde Maurerer Participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ulrike Zartler (Sociology of Family, University of Vienna)• Erich Lehner (Masculinity Studies, Umbrella Association of Men's Work Austria)• Bernhard Riederer (Family Research, Vienna Institute of Demography/ Austrian Academy of Sciences)• Nadja Bergmann (Gender and Labour Market, L&R Social Research)
5:15-6:00 pm	Informal conversations, a small buffet to close the event	

Speakers

Margaret O'Brien, University College London



Margaret O'Brien is a Professor in Child and Family Policy at UCL's Thomas Coram Research Unit. Her research focuses on fathers, parental leave and family life on which she has published widely. She is Vice-Chair of the EU Cost Action CA21150 Parental Leave Policies and Social Sustainability (2022-2026) and is a UK representative of the International Network on Leave Policies and Research. In this lecture she will draw on one of her EU funded projects which examines inequalities in access to parental leave across the EU.

Susana Atalaia, University of Lisbon (ICS-ULisboa)

Susana Atalaia is a researcher at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon (ICS-ULisboa), member of the LIFE Research Group and the Observatory on Families and Family Policies (OFAP). She has participated in several national

and international scientific projects, developing research on stepfamilies, public policies, parenting and gender. She is co-author of the 'WHITE BOOK Men and Gender Equality in Portugal' (2016), of the book chapter 'Why are caring masculinities so difficult to achieve? Reflections on men and gender equality in Portugal' (2018) and the article 'The gender(ed) division of labour in Europe: patterns of practices in 18 EU countries' (2019).



Eva-Maria Schmidt, Austrian Institute for Family Studies

Eva-Maria Schmidt is a sociologist and ethnologist. She has been a research associate at the Austrian Institute for Family Studies (OIF) since 2017. Her



research and publications focus on the topics of unpaid and paid work, parental leave organization, gender roles, parenthood and social norms, intergenerational relationships in families and non-marital cohabitation. Eva-Maria Schmidt is i.a. a member of the Parental Leave Network and spokesperson for the Family Research Section of the Austrian Association for Sociology (ÖGS). Together with Andrea E. Schmidt, she is

the author of the 'Austrian Country Note' in the annual report of the Parental Leave Network.

Gerlinde Mauerer, University of Vienna

Gerlinde Mauerer works in the empirical social research at the Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna. She is currently working on her new research project 'Gender and Family in Motion' (<https://genfam.univie.ac.at/>). She is an associate member of the international Parental Leave Network and has been teaching at universities of applied sciences and universities in Austria since 2002.



Panel discussion

Ulrike Zartler (Sociology of Family, University of Vienna)

Ulrike Zartler has been a university professor for family sociology at the University of Vienna since 2022. Her research focus in the sociology of family

includes childhood and youth sociology, transition processes in families and in the course of life, separation/divorce and its consequences, sociological analysis of family and child law and social media in childhood, youth and family. Ulrike Zartler has been Vice President of the Austrian Association for Sociology (ÖGS) and a member of the Austrian Children's Rights Monitoring Board since 2017 as well as head of the Sociology Study Program since 2018. She is also the editor of the Journal of Family Research.



Erich Lehner (Masculinity Studies, Umbrella Association of Men's Work Austria)

Erich Lehner is chairman of the Umbrella Organization for Men's Work in Austria (DMÖ) and a psychoanalyst in private practice. In 1997 he received his doctorate on the subject of masculinity research. He is currently involved in research and teaching in the field of masculinity and gender studies and in the field of palliative care.



Bernhard Riederer (Demography and Family Research, Vienna Institute of Demography/Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Bernhard Riederer studied social and economic sciences (sociology and economics) at the University of Graz. He is part of the research group Demography of Austria at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. His research focuses on fertility, the quality of life in families and the consequences of parenthood. He is interested in comparisons of Austria with other European countries as well as regional comparisons within Austria and Europe. At present, he analyses urban-rural differences in fertility in Austria and Europe as well as consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and fertility.



Nadja Bergmann (Gender and Labour Market, L&R Social Research)

Nadja Bergmann is co-head of the non-university research institute - L&R Social Research. She studied sociology and political science at the University of Vienna. She has been working as a researcher since 2000, first at the Austrian Institute for Vocational Education Research (öibf) and since 2001 at L&R Social Research. Her main areas of research include labor market, gender, social affairs, digitization, sustainability.



Presentations

1:15-1:45 pm

Inequalities in Access to Parental Leave in Europe: Challenges for Fathers and Mothers

Margaret O'Brien, University College London

Abstract

The late 20th century has witnessed a global expansion of job-protected care leave for working parents. Contrary to expectations even market-oriented countries have seen an expanding role for governments in developing parental leave policies, extending their duration, and increasing the payment level, for fathers as well as mothers.

Within the European Union, the objective of achieving gender equality has been a key motivation as the social value of gender equality has been enshrined in the legislative treaties binding member states since the original Treaty of Rome in 1957.

The 1996 EU Parental Leave Directive was a landmark act towards a more inclusive and gender egalitarian framework as it signalled post-birth leave as a measure of care to which fathers, or second parents, were eligible as well as mothers. It was hoped that a 3-month parental leave provision would support mothers' meaningful participation in the labour market, after maternity leave, by enabling continued secure connection to a job while caring for a young child. Its mandate that one of the 3 parental leave months be non-transferable to the other parent was a gender egalitarian incentive to encourage greater take-up by fathers.

More recently the new EU Work-life Balance Directive (2019) stipulated that parental leave should be paid and added an additional incentive to encourage greater take-up by fathers. It increased the number of non-transferable parental leave months to two from one of the now 4- months parental leave provision. Also 10 working days of paid paternity leave was legislated for the first time in the EU although many countries already had this post-birth leave for fathers.

This presentation focuses on *eligibility to access* parental leave as concerns have increased about the impact of changes in global labour markets, notably declining permanent jobs and rising insecure employment contracts and practices.

Actual eligibility to access the benefit of parental leave is of course a prerequisite to take-up. Without an estimate of non-eligible groups and individuals, studies of

leave utilization could be overly directed towards selective groups obscuring appreciation of wider variability of work-care policies for parents of young children.

I will present findings from a European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) funded project which estimated the proportion and characteristics of men and women across the EU-28 who could be eligible to access parental leave if they so needed. The study used EU policy eligibility rules in 2017 and applied microsimulation methods to nationally representative samples of “potential parents”, men and women aged 20-49 years.

The findings show that the young are particularly disadvantaged as are the self-employed and those who have been in employed less than one year before childbirth. In terms of access to parental leave, it is clear that some EU countries are more gender equal than others.

1:45-2:15 pm

The impact of employment precariousness on parental leave benefits: Evidence from Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece)

Susana Atalaia, University of Lisbon (ICS-ULisboa)

Abstract

In Southern European countries, entitlement to parental leave benefits (maternity, paternity, and parental leave) is mainly an employment-based benefit and varies according to the mother’s and the father’s insurance contributions. However, continued labour market constraints, such as precarious work and atypical working conditions, have led to the introduction of a non-contributory scheme generally less generous in length, often as a flat-rate benefit and below the workers’ average wage. To understand the impact of employment precariousness on access to parental leave benefits, this presentation analyses the employment situation of women and men in four Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece) in relation to the eligibility criteria for maternity and paternity benefits.

2:45-3:30 pm

What makes a good mother? Practices and social norms around good motherhood

Eva-Maria Schmidt, Austrian Institute for Family Studies

Abstract

Over the past decades, there has been an increasing differentiation of social norms around motherhood in Western societies. At the same time, persistence in

long-standing norms has led to inconsistencies in normative expectations towards mothers and thus to very heterogeneous strategies of mothers to deal with them. But not only mothers are challenged to react to these normative expectations. Various actors in the social reference networks of mothers are also involved in the construction of these social norms and thus in their reproduction or change. In my talk, I will analyze these collectively constructed social norms on the basis of 24 group discussions with women and men (n=173) across Austria. Moreover, I will examine how these actors discursively negotiate these social norms and adopt strategies in dealing with mothers' behavior. I will show how certain social norms around motherhood lead to utopian expectations in the context of neoliberal demands and perpetuate gender inequalities.

15.30-16.15 Uhr

Parents' dual reconciliation of gainful employment and childcare: Empirical evidence from Austria

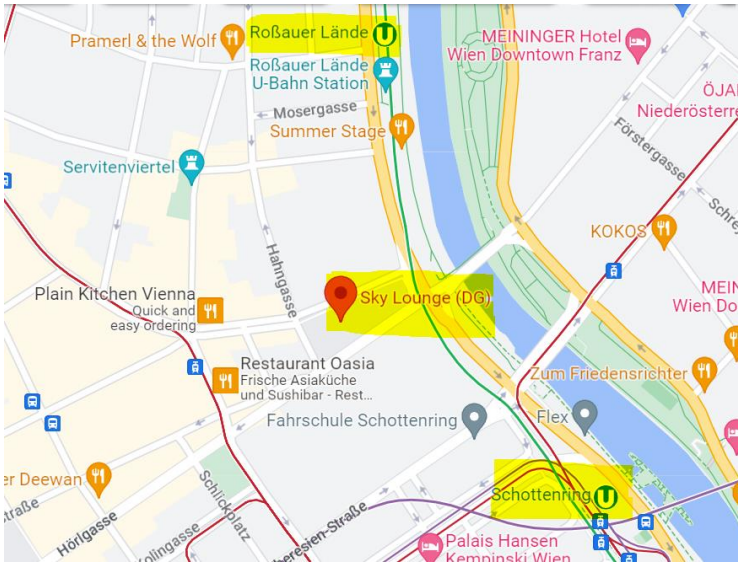
Gerlinde Mauerer, University of Vienna

Abstract

Since the agreement of the Member States of the European Union in 2000, measures promoting parents' dual reconciliation of employment and childcare have been implemented. Thereafter, a childcare allowance model including benefits for both parents has been introduced in Austria. In the presented research, 'Gender and Family in Motion. Parental Arrangements', we conducted 42 interviews with couples living in Austria, in which both parents had claimed parental leave or childcare benefits for at least five months. In the presentation, first results of the empirical study from 2021 to 2022 will be presented. On the one hand, they show a progressive, partnership-based division of labor in individual parental arrangements. On the other hand, they point to tendencies of continuing gender-specific inequalities. These are particularly evident in the area of mental load, in the challenges in dual arrangement of both childcare and housework, and in structural presumptions regarding parental arrangements at the workplace.

Genfam Conference 2023 Parental Leave Policies and Gender Inequalities in the Uptake of Parental Leave

How to get there?



The Sky Lounge is located on the 12th floor:

