

Subtle Reminders of Child-Raising Intentions and Men and Women's Perception of Paid
Parental Leave Policies in the United States

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Abstract

The United States is the only developed country that fails to provide paid parental leave (PPL) for employees, despite the financial and health benefits it has for both parents and newborn children. The present study sought to better understand one factor that might contribute to increased voter interest in PPL: reminding young men and women of their family-raising intentions. In our pre-registered study, we asked half of our participants whether they had children or expected to have them in the future; the other half of our participants were asked whether they had pets or expected to have them in the future. Participants (N = 312) were then presented with a variety of equitable and inequitable PPL policies and asked to indicate their interest and approval toward each. Taking into account past research findings and the distinct gendered roles men and women are often socialized to perform, we predicted that college-aged men who were asked about plans to have children in the future would view inequitable paid parental leave policies less favorably than college-aged men who were not asked about future family plans. We also expected that college-aged women would prefer more equitable paid parental leave policies than men regardless of the prime they received. Overall, results indicated that reminders of family raising intentions did not influence perceptions of equitable PPL policies; we did, however, find a main effect in which women preferred equitable PPL policies significantly more than men.

Keywords: parental leave, paid, unpaid, equitable, inequitable, sexism, family salience

Subtle Reminders of Child-Raising Intentions and Men and Women's Perception of Paid Parental Leave Policies in the United States

When Claire Prestwood found out that she was going to have a child, she knew she would be under significant financial strain; because her company did not provide paid parental leave, Claire had no choice but to take 12 weeks of unpaid work to care for her newborn child (Lincoln, 2015). She could barely afford to take the 12 weeks and managed to just scrape by with budgeting and generous donations, planning on returning to work immediately after her unpaid leave time was up (Lincoln, 2015).

One may be surprised to learn that the United States is the *only* developed country that does not guarantee paid leave for new parents. The country's 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act, entitles only "eligible employees to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with the continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave" ("Family and Medical Leave Act"). The act permits heterosexual birth parents, adoptive parents, and most recently, same-sex parents (an amendment passed in February, 2015) to take 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period ("Family and Medical Leave Act"). The decision to provide *paid* leave (the more economically feasible option) is determined on a state-by-state, company-by-company basis, inevitably resulting in acute inequity across the country. As of now, only three of 50 states (California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island) have decided to implement paid parental leave (PPL) policies (Gillett, 2015). Furthermore, according to a recent National Compensation Survey, only 13% of all private industry workers currently have access to paid family leave ("The Economics Daily," 2016). Thus, far too often, parents like Claire Prestwood are forced to choose: either

return to work prematurely, or make significant financial sacrifices to spend adequate time with their newborn children.

Emblazoned across the top of a central Wage and Hour Division page of the United States Department of Labor site, a confident statement reads: “FMLA Is Working” (“Wage and Hour Division FMLA Surveys”). While the very act of allowing parents to take time off for their newborn children is progress and surely makes “a positive impact on the lives of workers” (“Wage and Hour Division FMLA Surveys”), the FMLA does nothing to alleviate the financial strain under which so many new parents are placed. Negative attitudes towards the United States’ unpaid parental leave (UPL) policy certainly exist, yet the FMLA has remained in place for almost 25 years. One factor that allows an inadequate policy to endure is a lack of effective advocacy for its alternative: paid parental leave (PPL).

This lack of advocacy for PPL is especially surprising, given the significant benefits of a PPL policy. One meta-analysis explored the body of work on work-family support policies (which included paid parental leave) scattered throughout the United States; researchers found that such support policies were positively related to employees’ higher job satisfaction, commitment, and intentions to stay at their place of employment (Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013). Businesses that provide PPL also benefit in other ways; in California (one of the few states with a state-wide PPL policy) an average of 92% of employers reported that PPL had a positive effect or no noticeable effect on productivity, profitability and performance, and employee morale (Appelbaum & Milkman, 2011). Finally, PPL can positively affect the baby’s health; another study conducted in Europe among a population of parents who received a 10-week paid extension, found that the paid parental leave resulted in significantly decreased post-neonatal deaths and child fatalities, while also increasing the child’s average birth weight (Ruhm, 2000).

It is clear that PPL has a variety of benefits for children, parents, *and* businesses that provide such leave, yet UPL is still the norm in the United States. Why is this the case? The present study seeks to explore how people's attitudes might be shifted in approval of this type of leave.

The Social Role Theory: Implications for Parental Leave

When considering the division of labor in the United States, one may immediately recognize the distinct positions women and men hold in society. According to the Social Role Theory, women and men are socialized to fulfill positions that most clearly align with their gender construct; while women are expected to fulfill the role of primary caregiver, men are the designated primary breadwinners (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). Because of this gender dynamic, the introduction of a child into a heterosexual family may encourage the woman to prioritize her position as a mother (and in doing so, sacrifice her professional career), while her male partner continues (or becomes) the primary wage-earner of the family.

The perpetuity of this dynamic is supported by two studies in particular, whose results indicate that college students expect to fulfill gender-specific roles in the future. One study asked American Midwestern college students to think about what they might be like in 10 to 15 years, finding that more women than men listed identities categorized as "family selves" (Brown & Dieckman, 2010). Another study delved more deeply into the idea of the "family self." By reminding men of their intentions to have children in the future, researchers found that those who were low in hostile sexism were more likely to prefer more family friendly careers (as compared to men who were not reminded of family-raising intentions) (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016). Comparatively, the family raising reminder had no effect on women's career choice (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016).

The Social Role Theory provides one very plausible explanation for this gender difference. Women may be likely to think about family when considering career options (due to their socialized caregiver role), so reminders of family raising intentions have no effect on them; comparatively, men are less likely to think about family when considering their careers (due to their socialized breadwinner role), so a reminder about their intent to have children actually *does* have a noticeable impact on their career choices. Interestingly, this lack of concern shown by some men about how they will balance future career and caregiving responsibilities may be due to an unintentional failure to *remember* that caregiving is a substantial time investment rather than an intentional assumption that female partners will shoulder the majority of the responsibility (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016).

Parental leave provided by the FMLA is one significant factor that reinforces this disparate gender dynamic, purely by the fact that the leave is unpaid. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in 2015, the labor force participation rate for married fathers stood at 93.7 percent; comparatively, the labor force participation rate for married mothers was much lower, at 67.6 percent (“Employment Characteristics of Family Summary”). Thus, in the average nuclear heteronormative family, the father performs paid work while the mother cares for the child(ren) and household (though this trend is changing, it is still the most prevalent in the United States). After the birth of a child, the father—the sole “breadwinner”—is faced with the choice to take unpaid time off, or to continue earning money for his family. In most families in which only the father works, it is simply not financially feasible to entirely halt the flow of money when there are bills to pay and mouths to feed. Thus, the father continues his paid work and the mother continues her unpaid work at home with the child(ren).

Even dual-earner couples tend to fall back on the gendered caretaker/breadwinner arrangement, with the birth or adoption of a child who requires consistent care from at least one of the parents. A 2004 study surveyed 98 dual-earner parents of infants, finding that mothers took significantly more time off than fathers; while mothers took an average of 11.6 weeks, fathers took an average of only 6.5 days (Feldman, Sussman, & Zigler, 2004). Furthermore, it is of worth to note that a longer paternity leave was positively correlated with a more positive reaction of the father's employer to the childbirth; however, there was no correlation between the *mother's* leave length and *her* employer's reaction to the childbirth (Feldman, Sussman, & Zigler, 2004)— most likely because mothers are expected to take time off, while a father's leave-taking is less expected and thus more commendable.

Equitable Paid Parental Leave: Benefits to Dual-Earner Couples

The number of dual-earner couples in the United States is increasing and, with it, the increased need for a PPL policy that diminishes the gap between women's and men's distinct and inequitable social roles. According to the Pew Research Center, in 1960 only 25% of married couples with children under 18 were dual earners; fast-forward 42 years and in 2012 this number rose to 60%, a percentage forecasted to continue increasing as more time passes (Kent, 2015).

Since there is no national standard for PPL, companies that choose to provide PPL are left on their own to decide how much leave they should allow, and to whom, they should give that leave. What might otherwise be considered "parental leave" is often parsed into maternity and paternity leave and, not surprisingly, mothers tend to receive more paid leave than fathers. Johnson and Johnson, for example, provides 17 weeks of paid leave for mothers and nine weeks for fathers (Fasolo, 2015). Yahoo follows this trend, offering 16 weeks of paid maternity leave,

but only 8 weeks of paternity leave (O'Brien, 2016). Thus, the gendered allocation of paid parental leave (PPL) picks up where UPL leaves off. Companies with PPL that favor the mother are implicitly communicating that it is the woman's role, more so than the father's, to care for a child. Thus, the sexist social roles of breadwinner and caregiver are continuously validated and perpetuated.

The implementation of equitable paid parental leave policies— specifically, policies that apportion an equal amount of leave to both mothers and fathers— have the potential to reduce the disparity between men and women's social roles by giving men a greater opportunity to participate in family life and to make this participation more socially acceptable, while simultaneously allowing women to participate longer and more permanently in the workforce. Thus, the present study seeks to understand how not only approval of, and interest in, *paid* parental leave might be increased among a population of young adults, but also how interest in *equitable* paid parental leave may be increased.

The Present Study

One way to increase approval of equitable PPL is to emphasize the possibility of having future children. The present study builds off of the research of Gutsell and Remedios (2016), employing the same manipulation (subtly asking participants whether they plan on having children or pets) to increase participants' unconscious awareness of their own family-raising intentions. As one may recall, the researchers used this manipulation to see if it had any effect on women and men's career choices, finding an effect for only men: those who were low in hostile sexism and reminded of family raising intentions were more likely to prefer more family friendly careers (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016). In the present study, we seek to study the effects of the family prime on women and men's perceptions of both equitable and inequitable PPL policies. If

one expects to take on even some of the caregiving responsibilities, one may have stronger feelings about the importance of equitable PPL policies.

Men's social roles, in particular, are the focus of this study's hypothesis. Despite the gender imbalance in UPL and PPL, current trends indicate that an increasing number of fathers are beginning to prioritize their young families over their careers. The number of stay-at-home U.S. fathers has risen to around 2 million (Livingston, 2014), and nine out of ten fathers now take time off (in varying amounts) for the birth or adoption of a child ("DOL Policy Brief," 2012). Furthermore, Friedman and Weissbrod (2005) found that it is currently desirable for *both* men and women to be highly involved with family life. With this research in mind, it is reasonable to suggest that paid parental leave may be something that not only women, but also men, value.

The present study aims to better understand one factor that might contribute to increased interest of PPL: the salience of family-raising intentions, especially for men. While these intentions may be chronically salient for women (since women are socialized for the role of future caregiver), they are less likely to be chronically salient for men (whose socialization tends to place less emphasis on future children and fatherhood). Half of our participants were asked whether they had children or expected to have them in the future, and the other half of our participants were asked whether they had pets or expected to have them in the future. They were then presented with a variety of equitable and unequitable PPL policies and indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements expressing approval and interest toward the company.

Recalling the social roles to which women and men expect to adopt in the future, we acknowledge that because women tend to expect future caregiving responsibilities more so than

men, women may already have PPL in the back of their minds when considering different companies. Thus, our hypothesis focuses specifically on men. We predict that college-aged men who are asked about plans to have children in the future will view inequitable paid parental leave policies less favorably than college-aged men who are not asked about future family plans. We expect that college-aged women will prefer more equitable paid parental leave policies than men regardless of the prime that they receive.

Method

Pre-registered procedures, hypothesis, and data analysis plans are included in the appendix of this paper. This study was pre-registered with the Open Science Framework (OSF).

Participants

The present study chose to double the sample size collected by Gutsell and Remedios (2016) to account for more variation in a sample composed of online participants from around the country (as opposed to Gutsell and Remedios' sample of students from two similar Northeastern universities). We decided a priori to collect data from 400 participants (200 women) via Amazon Mechanical Turk. We excluded 88 participants from further analysis because of missing data ($n=1$), because they did not self-identify as women or men ($n=1$), and because they did not pass the study's attention check ($n=86$). Our resulting sample consisted of 312 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 22.83$, $SD = 1.87$; 173 women, 137 men). Participants were compensated with 50 cents for completing the study.

Materials

This study included several materials: a questionnaire-based manipulation, a questionnaire capturing participants' career preferences, a short answer estimation of average UPL and PPL in the participants' state, information about PPLs from 10 different (anonymous)

companies, a questionnaire gauging participants' interest of the PPL policies, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), the Collective Self Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), and the measure Inclusion of Gender in the Self (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Because they are not relevant to the primary research questions explored in this particular paper, the last three measures will not be explained in the following text but can be found in full in the appendix.

Family Reminder Manipulation. Family salience was manipulated by asking half of the participants the following question: "Do you have any kids or are you planning to have kids in the future?" The other half of participants were asked, "Do you have any pets or are you planning to have pets in the future?" The manipulation question was hidden among additional filler demographics and preference questions (e.g., siblings, sports, state of residence). Filler questions were the same across conditions.

Career Desirability Ratings. Participants rated the desirability as a future career of 20 different professions (see Appendix A) that varied in how time-consuming and flexible they seemed to a separate pilot sample of 36 participants (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016). Stimuli came from a list of 49 professions sourced from a web search for diverse and popular occupations. Participants responded to the question: "Please rate the following professions in regards to how desirable they are for you as a future career" using a 7-point scale (1=not at all, 7=extremely). We included this measure of career desirability in order to replicate the findings from Gutsell and Remedios (2016).

Paid Parental Leave Company Information: Participants were presented with a list of companies (Companies A-J), and each company's respective PPL policy. Each policy corresponded to the actual current policy of a company in the United States; for example,

according to its website, Goldman Sachs provides mothers with 16 weeks of paid leave, and fathers with 4 weeks of paid leave. In this study, participants knew Goldman Sachs only as Company A, and saw the following text representing Company A's PPL policy: "16 weeks for mothers, 4 weeks for fathers." Participants were presented with Companies B through J in the same format, and the identities of all companies were concealed and replaced by letters; it was important to keep participants as impartial as possible, so that their indicated interest of a company was based *only* on knowledge of its paid leave policy.

The PPL policies included in this study were selected based on the equitable or inequitable number of weeks apportioned to the mother versus the father. A total of five companies had PPL policies favoring the mother, and another five companies had PPL policies providing equal time for both mothers and father. Seven of the 10 companies were presented in the straightforward format of: "# weeks for mothers, #weeks for fathers"; three of the 10 companies were presented with a more realistic paragraph of text describing the company leave, as it was found on the company website. Those three companies presented in paragraph format were also presented in the straightforward format.

For example, the PPL of the company Adobe was presented as Company H in paragraph format, copied verbatim from the company website: "If you have both eligibility and entitlement for FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) leave and are acting as the primary caregiver for the child, Adobe will grant up to sixteen (16) weeks of paid Parental Leave separate from, and in addition to, any physician-certified FMLA or Medical Leave resulting from pregnancy or childbirth-related disabilities. The entire sixteen (16) week period of paid primary care parental leave must be taken continuously, and completed within six (6) months of the birth or placement

of the child” (“Adobe Leave Policy,” 2015). For future analysis purposes, the PPL of Adobe was *also* presented as Company G in the straightforward format: “16 weeks for mothers and fathers”.

It is important to note that Company C, which offers 16 weeks of paid leave to mothers but 0 weeks of paid leave to fathers, is the only company does *not* correspond with a specific leave policy found online. While such companies can certainly exist, they are less inclined to advertise that PPL online because such a policy would most clearly discriminate in women’s favor.

For a comprehensive list of companies A-J and the sources from which their PPL policies were gathered, please refer to the Appendix.

Paid Parental Leave Interest Measure: Participants will be asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements that express interest toward the company. We will sort these statements into an *interest-self* measure: (1) “I approve of this company” and (2) “I would work for this company” and an *interest-other* measure: (1) “I would encourage my partner to work for this company” (2) “I would encourage my friends to work for this company.” Participants will indicate their agreement or disagreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly disagree).

Procedure

This study had a 2 (Participant Gender: female, male) × 2 (Prime: family, pets) between-subjects design. Data for this study were collected from workers on Amazon Mechanical Turk, who accessed the survey via their personal computers, laptops, or phones. Those who were interested in completing the survey were told that it would take no more than 30 minutes of their time, and were first asked to respond to several questions to determine their eligibility for the experiment. In a fill-in-the-blank question, participants provided their age; those who did not list

an age between 18 and 25 were redirected to a screen indicating their ineligibility for the study. Participants who *did* list an age between 18 and 25 were redirected to the consent form detailing the requirements and optional nature of the questions. They were also asked to provide their Worker ID for payment at the conclusion of the study.

After consenting, participants received (among a series of filler questions) either the manipulation question (“Do you have any kids or are you planning to have kids in the future?”) or the control question (“Do you have any pets or are you planning to have pets in the future?”). They then completed the career desirability rating task and the PPL policy interest task. The order in which these two tasks were presented to participants were randomized to avoid potential bias. The order of the careers in the career desirability task and the companies in the PPL policy approval task, respectively, were also randomized. Participants then completed the ASI, Collective Self Esteem Scale, and the measure Inclusion of Gender in the Self. Participants were thanked, debriefed, and provided a completion code to receive compensation via MTurk.

Results

Attention Check

In order to ensure that participants were fully attending to all questions the study, we asked participants to select “neutral” on the Likert scale, for the fifth item under Company F in the PPL interest measure. A total of 86 participants failed this attention check, and their data was thus excluded; it was likely that those participants failed to attend to other vital portions of the study, and their responses could no longer be accepted as credible.

Pre-registered planned analysis

We hypothesized that college-aged men who were asked about plans to have children in the future would view inequitable paid parental leave policies less favorably than college-aged

men who are not asked about future family plans. We expected that college-aged women would prefer more equitable paid parental leave policies than men regardless of the prime that they received.

Two separate 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) \times 2 (Prime: family, pets) between-subjects ANOVAs, were conducted for both equitable and inequitable PPL policies. For equitable policies, we originally predicted a significant interaction, which was not confirmed by the current analysis, $F(1,308)=.305, p=.581$. We also predicted a main effect in which college-aged women preferred more equitable PPL than men regardless of condition, which *was* confirmed by the current analysis, $F(1,308)=5.323, p=.022$. For women and equitable policy interest ratings, $M=5.682, SD=0.868$. In comparison, for men and equitable policy interest ratings, $M=5.447, SD=0.981$. No other effects were significant (all $ps>.05$). For inequitable policies, there was neither a significant interaction, $F(1,308)=1.346, p=.247$ nor significant main effects (all $ps>.05$).

We were curious to see if the prime would produce a significant result that the PPL policy interest ratings had not, so we moved onto ratings of family-friendly careers. We conducted four separate 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) \times 2 (Prime: family, pets) between-subject ANOVAs for careers with (1) Low flexibility, high hours (2) Low flexibility, low hours (3) Low flexibility, high hours and (4) High flexibility, high hours. We found one significant main effect for gender for the high-flexibility, high-hour career (HF, HH) category, $F(1,308)=7.281, p=.007$. Men preferred HF, HH careers more than women. For women's rating of HH, HH careers, $M=3.099, SD=1.272$; comparatively, men's ratings of HH, HH careers resulted in $M=3.495, SD=1.202$.

Discussion

Given the shortcomings of the UPL provided by the FMLA, and the incredibly positive impact of PPL for employers and the child (Appelbaum & Milkman, 2011; Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Ruhm, 2000), it is a mystery as to why a nation-wide PPL policy has not garnered sufficient support for enactment. The implementation of a PPL policy that apportions an equal amount of leave to both mothers and fathers has the potential to reduce our society's sexist and imbalanced caregiver/breadwinner gender dynamic (Bianchi, 2011; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000; Zaikman & Marks, 2014). An equitable PPL policy would give men a greater opportunity to participate more in family life and would make it more socially acceptable for men to do so, while simultaneously allowing women to participate longer and more permanently in the workforce. The present study attempted to address one factor that might contribute to increasing people's interest in equitable PPL: reminding men, particularly, and women of their family raising intentions.

Previous literature has demonstrated that women more so than men think of their future selves in the context of family (Brown & Dieckman, 2010); Gutsell and Remedios (2016) found that when they increased the salience of family raising intentions (thereby activating those "family selves"), men who were low in hostile sexism¹ preferred more family-friendly careers.

Thus, the aim of this study was to examine how men and women's attitudes might be further shifted in approval of equitable PPL policies, by increasing the saliency of their family raising intentions. Overall, results indicated that reminders of family raising intentions did not influence perceptions of equitable PPL; we did, however, find a main effect in which women preferred equitable PPL significantly more than men. Thus, our hypothesis was partially supported.

¹ Although we measured hostile sexism, including the variable in the analysis was beyond the scope of this thesis. Hostile sexism was an integral part of the Gutsell and Remedios (2016) study, and it very well may be so for the present study as well.

One reason for this main effect is the possibility that women, more so than men, are aware of the negative impact inequitable PPL may have on their childcare responsibilities. In a heterosexual partnership, the greater the father's absence (i.e., the father has less PPL than the mother, and thus takes less time off for his new baby) the more childcare the mother must shoulder alone. Women are often socialized to fulfill this future "caretaker" role (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000), and current mothers are overburdened because of the duties associated with this role; according to a 2011 poll investigating 1200 moms' co-parenting and experiences with their partners, the majority (70% working moms and 68% stay at home moms) expressed resentment toward their partner because of unbalanced household and parenting responsibilities (D'Arcy, 2011). With these statistics in mind, it is reasonable to suggest that the salience of a hypothetical partner's absence might be greater for women than men; this gendered distinction in salience could lead women to favor equitable PPL policies more than men.

There are several possibilities as to why we did not observe an interaction. First, our analysis did not take sexism, as gauged by the ASI, into account. Had we done so, men with low hostile sexism may have rated equitable PPL more highly, just as men low in hostile sexism preferred more family friendly careers in the Gutsell and Remedios (2016) study. Furthermore, another study interviewed 550 U.S. men whose partners were pregnant, finding that fathers who held egalitarian sex role attitudes and were high in family salience took longer leaves than fathers who did not have this same combination of sex role attitudes and family salience (Hyde, Essex, & Horton, 1993). Thus, the present study's inclusion of participants with *all* levels of sexism in the analysis could certainly have influenced the results. This further cements the possibility that the ASI's inclusion in analysis was essential to a significant interaction outcome.

Our study's unbalanced sample of participants may have also negatively impacted the results. The total number of participants in the family prime condition ($n=169$) was much higher than those in the control condition ($n=143$). Furthermore, within each condition, the number of participants who identified as female outweighed the number of participants who identified as male.

One limitation of the present study is that it did little to measure participants' previous background knowledge or experience of UPL and PPL policies in the United States; this prior familiarity may have influenced participants' perceptions of the PPL companies, regardless of the family salience prime. Though we did include a question asking participants to estimate the length (in weeks) of PPL and UPL provided by their state of residence, we provided a blank space for participants to type their answer, rather than ranges encompassed in a multiple choice format; this resulted in a variety of responses, some of which listed numerical outliers like 500 or 150. One might assume that those participants listed the number of days, rather than weeks; however it is impossible to know for sure. Thus, there were no clear grounds upon which to eliminate the participants' answers from the data pool for data analysis that is not severely skewed.

Another limitation is that the present study measured participants' interest in only *paid* parental leave policies. Added measures of interest of unpaid parental leave policies could have more fully captured how the family prime might affect men and women's perceptions on parental leave as a whole. Measures of participants' interest in UPL policies would have also provided a helpful comparison; if participants' interest in UPL was significantly lower than their interest in PPL, their data would place even more emphasis on the imperativeness of a nationwide PPL policy.

With these limitations in mind, there are several directions that future studies might pursue. First and foremost, it would be essential to properly gauge participants' previous knowledge of PPL and UPL; this might be achieved not only by providing multiple choice options for parental leave estimations, but also by asking participants a series of other yes/no/unsure questions including: "Does paid parental leave exist in your state?", "Does the United States have a mandated, nation-wide unpaid leave policy?", and "Does the United States have a mandated, nation-wide paid leave policy?". Awareness of PPL remains limited; even in states like California that *do* have a policy in place, half of the workers who experienced a life event that the state's program was designed to cover did not know the program existed (Appelbaum & Milkman, 2011). This lack of knowledge must be even more prevalent in a broader U.S. population sample. Appelbaum and Milkman (2011) also found that one-third of respondents who were aware of paid parental leave did not apply for it, in part because they felt the level of wage replacement was too low. The present study focuses on PPL policies without specifying the wage replacement percentage, and thus fails in this regard to accurately reflect the PPL policies that exist now and will be created in the future. Thus, future studies would benefit by measuring participants' interest in PPL with varying levels of wage replacement.

It is important to note that availability and indicated interest do not necessarily imply utilization. A company may offer a paid parental leave policy, but heteronormative and sexist expectations in the United States may impede some employees from actually taking that leave. Indeed, a survey conducted by Deloitte among 1,000 of its United States employees found that more than one-third of respondents felt that taking parental leave might jeopardize their position at work. More tellingly, 57 percent of male respondents indicated that their parental leave-taking would be perceived as a lack of commitment to their work; 41% of male respondents felt they

would lose opportunities on projects (“Deloitte U.S. Parental Leave Survey,” 2016). Future research might want to redirect its focus, exploring not only people’s perceptions of the parental leave a company offers, but also of the company culture itself. Casper and Harris (2008) studied the signaling theory, finding that the simple availability work-life policies (including paid parental leave) influenced work attitudes, because employees perceived the policy as a sign of organizational support. What factors might increase employees’ perceptions of organizational support? At what point are employees comfortable enough to actually accept the PPL their company offers? Might a greater amount of PPL offered positively correlate with the number of employees to take time off to care for their newborn children? Any, and all, of these questions are worth investigating further.

The installation and actual utilization of equitable paid parental leave around the United States may be a daunting task, but it is absolutely necessary for the health and welfare of our nation’s employees and newborn children. The present research strove to examine one factor that might influence approval of PPL (and thus support its future implementation): reminders of men’s and women’s intentions to have children in the future. Although the results did not support our hypothesis that men, in particular, would show a stronger preference for equitable paid leave policies when reminded of child-raising intentions (versus control), they do suggest that men and women differ in that women approve more of equitable paid leave policies than do men. As the number of dual-earners increases, the need for an equitable paid parental leave policy, which allows both mothers *and* fathers to spend comparable amounts of time with their child, also increases. It is essential to understand the interests and perceptions working for and against the implementation of such a policy in the future. With enough research, advocacy, and policy change, it is our hope that equitable PPL will one day become a reality.

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Table 1. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between condition, gender, and interest in equitable paid leave companies.

| Effect | df | <i>F</i> | <i>P</i> |
|----------------|-----|----------|----------|
| Gender | 308 | 5.323 | 0.022 |
| Prime | 308 | 0.511 | 0.475 |
| Gender x Prime | 308 | 0.305 | 0.475 |

Note. N = 312

Table 2. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between condition, gender, and interest in inequitable paid leave companies.

| Effect | df | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------------|-----|----------|----------|
| Gender | 308 | 0.119 | 0.730 |
| Prime | 308 | 2.550 | 0.111 |
| Gender x Prime | 308 | 1.346 | 0.247 |

Note. N = 312

Table 3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between condition, gender, number of work hours, and flexibility of work hours on career ratings.

| | Effect | df | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---------------|----------------|-----|----------|----------|
| LF, HH | Gender | 308 | 1.780 | 0.183 |
| | Prime | 308 | 0.115 | 0.734 |
| | Gender x Prime | 308 | 2.285 | 0.132 |
| LF, LH | Gender | 308 | 0.212 | 0.645 |
| | Prime | 308 | 0.680 | 0.410 |
| | Gender x Prime | 308 | 1.417 | 0.235 |
| HF, HH | Gender | 308 | 7.281 | 0.007 |
| | Prime | 308 | 0.015 | 0.902 |
| | Gender x Prime | 308 | 1.014 | 0.315 |
| HF, LH | Gender | 308 | 0.025 | 0.874 |
| | Prime | 308 | 0.000 | 0.989 |
| | Gender x Prime | 308 | 2.267 | 0.133 |

Note. N = 312; LF = low flexibility; HF = high flexibility; LH = low hours; HH = high hours

Appendix A
Career Desirability Ratings

Low Flexible, High Hours (LFHH)

Chemical Engineer
Electrical Engineer
Human Resources Manager
Business Executive
Sales Manager

Low Flexible, Low Hours (LFLH)

School Administrator (Principal)
Public School Teacher
Pharmacist
Optometrist
Production Manager

High Flexible, High Hours (HFHH)

Web Designer
Marketing Director
Lawyer
Business Analyst
Statistician

High Flexible, Low Hours (HFLH)

Interior Designer
Software Developer
Personal Financial Advisor
Computer Systems Analyst
Clinical Psychologist

Appendix B

Paid Parental Leave Companies A-J

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I approve of this company.
- I would work for this company.
- I would encourage my partner to work for this company.
- I would encourage my friends to work for this company.

Agree/Disagree Scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree

Inequitable Policies

Company A: 16 weeks for mothers, 4 weeks for fathers | **Goldman Sachs**

Company C: 16 weeks for mothers, 0 weeks for fathers | **Unspecified Company**

Company E: 16 weeks for mothers, 8 weeks for fathers | **Yahoo**

Company F: 20 weeks for mothers, 12 weeks for fathers | **Microsoft**

Company I: For maternity leave, new birth mothers receive 8 weeks of paid maternity disability leave, and may also take short-term disability leave starting 2 weeks in advance of their scheduled due date. For parental leave (births, adoptions, or foster placements), parents will receive 12 weeks of fully paid parental leave to bond with their new family. | **Microsoft**

Equitable Policies

Company B: 52 weeks for mothers and fathers | **Netflix**

Company D: 24 weeks for mothers and fathers | **Spotify**

Company G: 16 weeks for mothers and fathers | **Adobe**

Company H: If you have both eligibility and entitlement for FMLA leave and are acting as the primary caregiver for the child, we will grant up to sixteen (16) weeks of paid Parental Leave separate from, and in addition to, any physician-certified FMLA or Medical Leave resulting from pregnancy or childbirth-related disabilities. The entire sixteen (16) week period of paid primary care parental leave must be taken continuously, and completed within six (6) months of the birth or placement of the child. | **Adobe**

Company J: All full-time Spotify employees will be offered up to six months' parental leave with 100% pay. Parents will be able to take their leave up to the child's third birthday, with all Spotify employees who had children from

the beginning of 2013 also eligible for the benefit. Mothers and fathers are encouraged to take the full time off, with the added flexibility of splitting their leave into separate periods. | **Spotify**

Appendix B References

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Appendix C

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1997)

The following is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale: 0 - disagree strongly; 1 - disagree somewhat; 2 - disagree slightly; 3 - agree slightly; 4 - agree somewhat; 5 - agree strongly.

1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.
2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for equality.
3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.
4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist
5. Women are too easily offended.
6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.
7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.
8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.
9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.
10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.
11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.
12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.
13. Men are complete without women.
14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.
15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.
16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.
17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.
18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.
19. Women, compared to men, tend to have superior moral sensibility.
20. Please select “disagree strongly” for this item
21. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

Appendix D

Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992)

Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can.

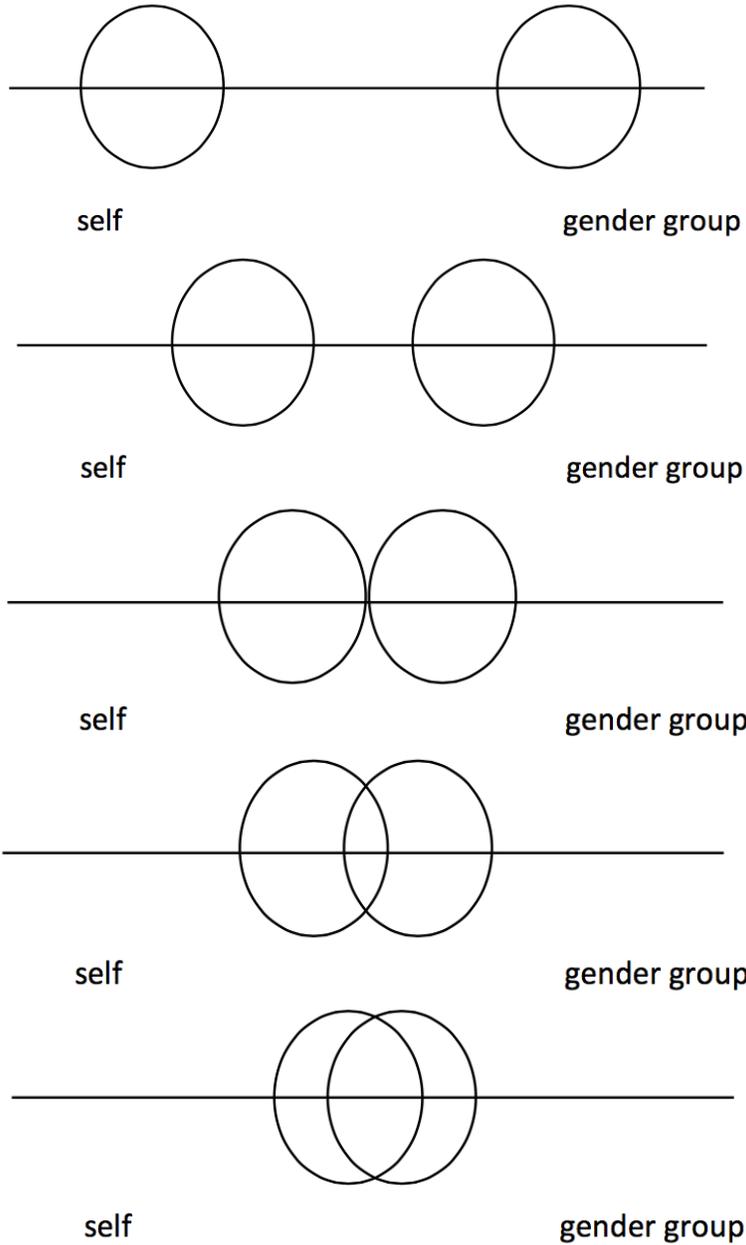
1. Overall my gender group membership has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
2. The gender group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.
3. The gender group I belong to is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
4. In general, belonging to my gender group is an important part of my self image.

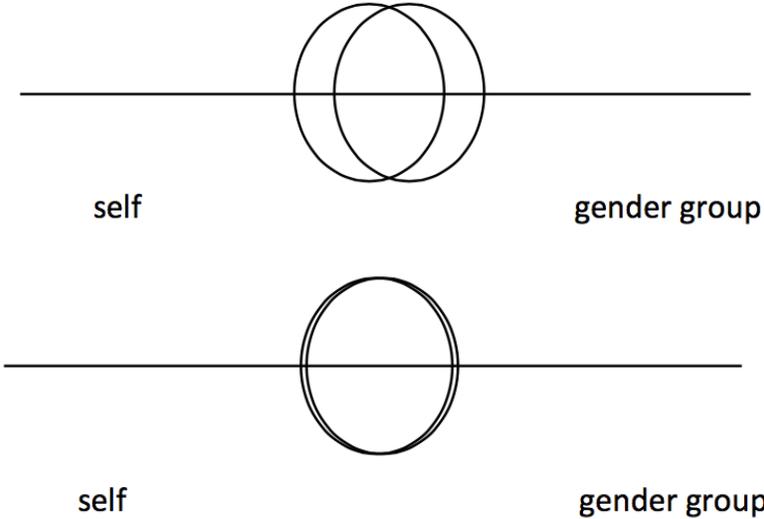
| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---------|---|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | | | Neutral | | | Strongly Agree |

Appendix E

Inclusion of Gender in the Self (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)

Please choose the ONE picture below that best describes the closeness of yourself to your GENDER group.





Appendix F

Pre-Registration Materials

Overview

In what follows, we describe a study that manipulates thoughts about future family plans to investigate whether being primed with thoughts about potential future kids may affect young men and women's perceptions of paid parental leave policies. We will develop a list of companies that offer varying amounts of paid parental leave to its male and female employees; this list will be based on policies that real companies (such as Netflix and Yahoo) advertise and maintain. To assess effects on paid parental leave policy approval, we will have participants indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements expressing approval toward the company. We predict that college-aged men (but not college-aged women) who are primed with thoughts about future children will view inequitable paid parental leave policies less favorably than college-aged men who have not been primed with thoughts about future children, particularly when men are low in hostile sexism.

Methods

Subjects and Design

We plan to collect data from 500 participants (250 women). Participants will be workers on Amazon Mechanical Turk with a maximum age of 25, who will participate for monetary compensation. The study will have a 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) \times 2 (Prime: family, pets) \times 4 (Support: Approve, Work, Encourage Partner, Encourage Friends) mixed design with repeated measures on the last factor.

Procedure

Upon entry into the study online, participants will provide informed consent and will then be randomly assigned to either a family prime condition or a pet prime control condition. Following, participants will fill out a short prime questionnaire that contains a series of filler questions asking about participants' age, sex, place of birth, number of siblings, year of studies, favorite TV show, and favorite sport in addition to the prime question. Depending on condition participants will be either asked the prime question: "Do you have any kids or are you planning to have kids in the future?" (Family prime condition) or the control question: "Do you have any pets or are you planning to have pets in the future?" (Control condition). Following the manipulation, participants will be given a list of occupations and will be asked to evaluate them based on how desirable they are as a future career and to provide reasons for their top choice professions. Participants will then be given a list of companies (Companies A-J) and will be asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements that express approval toward each company's paid parental leave policy, respectively. Finally, participants will fill out a series of scales assessing sexism and gender identity as potential moderators. Participants will then be debriefed and redirected to collect their compensation online.

Measures

Occupation Evaluation Task:

Ratings: To assess career preferences, participants will receive a list of 20 professions that vary in how much they have previously been rated as being time consuming and flexible by a different sample in an earlier pilot study. For each of the professions, participants will be asked to do the following: "Please rate the following professions in regards to how desirable they are

for you as a future career.” Participants will rate the professions on a 7-point Likert scale (1=not at all desirable, 7= extremely desirable).

Open responses: Participants will be asked to list their top three career choices whether they have been on the previous occupation list or not. Following, they will be asked to provide reasons for each of their choices in an open-ended essay response format.

Parental Leave Policy Approval Task: Participants will be asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements that express approval toward the company. We will sort these statements into an *interest-self* measure: (1) “I approve of this company” and (2) “I would work for this company” and an *interest-other* measure: (1) “I would encourage my partner to work for this company” (2) “I would encourage my friends to work for this company.” Participants will indicate their agreement or disagreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly disagree).

Ambivalent Sexism: Ambivalent sexism is a form of bias that is composed of both hostile and benevolent attitudes toward women. Hostile sexism is characterized by negative attitudes toward women, who are often viewed as trying to control men through feminist ideology or sexual seduction. Benevolent sexism is a chivalrous attitude toward women that often appears positive but casts women as weak and in need of men's protection. To assess ambivalent sexism, participants will be asked to complete the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1995), a 22-item scale that assesses hostile (e.g.: Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for “equality”.) and benevolent sexism (e.g.: Women should be cherished and protected by men.) using a 6-point Likert scale (0 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly).

Gender Identification: Participants will complete two measures of gender identification. First, the Identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), a 4 item subscale that asks participants' level of agreement with statements such as: "Overall my gender group membership has very little to do with how I feel about myself." on a 7-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Second, participants will indicate their feeling of closeness of their self to their gender group by selecting one of seven depictions of two overlapping circles representing the self and the gender group that vary in the degree of overlap.

References

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Hypotheses

H1. We hypothesize that college-aged men who are asked about plans to have children in the future will view inequitable paid parental leave policies less favorably than college-aged men who are not asked about future family plans. We expect that college-aged women will prefer more equitable paid parental leave policies than men regardless of the prime that they receive.

H2. We hypothesize that hostile, but not benevolent, sexist attitudes will moderate the effects of participant gender and the future family plans prime on how favorably inequitable paid parental leave policies are viewed. Specifically, among men who are asked about future family plans, those who are low in hostile sexism are expected to report less interest in inequitable paid parental leave than men who are high in hostile sexism.

H3. In addition, replicating past research (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016), we hypothesize that hostile, but not benevolent, sexist attitudes will moderate the effects of participant gender on how much interest participants report in careers that are low in flexibility (LF) and high in weekly workload or hours (HH). Specifically, among men who are asked about future family plans, those who are low in hostile sexism are expected to report less interest in LFHH careers than men who are high in hostile sexism.

H4. We hypothesize that gender identification as measured by the identity importance subscale of the CSES (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), as well as self-group overlap (Tropp & Wright, 2001) will not moderate the effects of participant gender and inquiries about future family plans on how favorable companies that offer equitable paid parental leave are viewed.

H5. Similarly, replicating past research (Gutsell & Remedios, 2016), we do not expect gender identification to moderate the effect of the family planning prime on interest in LFHH careers.

Data Analysis Plan

Design. Our study will adopt a 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) × 2 (Prime: family, pets) between-subjects design.

Data collection. We plan to collect data until 500 participants have completed the study. Two hundred and fifty participants will be women, and 250 will be men. One hundred and twenty-five men and women will be randomly assigned to each of the future family prime or the future pet prime conditions. Data collection will occur online, through Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Exclusions. We will recruit only participants under the age of 25, and will exclude any participants over the age of 25 who nevertheless access and complete the study. We aim to

examine how long-term plans to have children affect how young men and women think about paid parental leave policies; older participants who plan to have children are likely to view plans to have children as goals they have for the near future. We will also exclude participants who do not self-identify as either male or female.

Data analysis. We will designate careers as high or low required work hours and as high or low in flexibility based on pilot test data about perceptions of different careers. Pilot data will be collected prior to the start of the main (pre-registered) study. We will designate family leave policies as gender-equitable or gender-inequitable, based also on pilot data collected prior to the start of the main study.

To test H1, we will submit ratings of self-interest in parental leave policies to a 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) \times 2 (Prime: family, pets) \times 2 (Interest: self, other) mixed model ANOVA with repeated measures on the last two factors. We will conduct planned contrasts to decompose the expected 4-way interaction.

To test H2, we will submit average self-interest ratings in inequitable family leave policies to hierarchical regression analyses. Participant gender will be coded so that female=0 and male=1. Prime condition will be coded so that family=0 and pets (control)=1. Hostile and benevolent sexism will be standardized. The relevant main effects will be entered into Step 1, 2-way interactions will be entered into Step 2, and 3-way interactions will be entered into Step 3, and the 4-way interaction will be entered into Step 4. We expect to find a significant Participant Gender \times Prime \times Hostile Sexism interaction. We will use the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) to decompose the interaction.

To test H3, we will submit average interest ratings in LFHH careers to hierarchical regression analyses. Participant gender will be coded so that female=0 and male=1. Prime

condition will be coded so that family=0 and pets (control)=1. Hostile and benevolent sexism will be standardized. The relevant main effects will be entered into Step 1, 2-way interactions will be entered into Step 2, and 3-way interactions will be entered into Step 3, and the 4-way interaction will be entered into Step 4. We expect to find a significant Participant Gender × Prime × Hostile Sexism interaction. We will use the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) to decompose the interaction.

To test H4, we will submit average self-interest ratings in inequitable family leave policies to hierarchical regression analyses. Participant gender will be coded so that female=0 and male=1. Prime condition will be coded so that family=0 and pets (control)=1. CSES-gender and IOS-gender will be standardized. The relevant main effects will be entered into Step 1, 2-way interactions will be entered into Step 2, and 3-way interactions will be entered into Step 3, and the 4-way interaction will be entered into Step 4. We do not expect to find significant main effects or interactions.

To test H5, we will submit average interest ratings in LFHH careers to hierarchical regression analyses. Participant gender will be coded so that female=0 and male=1. Prime condition will be coded so that family=0 and pets (control)=1. CSES-gender and IOS-gender will be standardized. The relevant main effects will be entered into Step 1, 2-way interactions will be entered into Step 2, and 3-way interactions will be entered into Step 3, and the 4-way interaction will be entered into Step 4. We do not expect to find significant main effects or interactions.