

Immigrants and the ‘caring father’: Inequality in access to and utilisation of parental leave in Norway

Ethnicities

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Abstract

How do parental leave rights and interacting societal structures influence immigrant fathers’ compliance with the ‘caring father’ model—typifying Nordic welfare states? Nordic parental leave schemes differ; this study investigated the impact of the Norwegian policy. Strong, stratifying effects related to access, particularly unfavourable for non-Western immigrant fathers, were demonstrated. These effects stemmed not only from the scheme being based on work performance criteria, but also from fathers’ rights being conditioned on mothers’ economic activity. Moreover, the observed gap between eligible immigrant and native-born fathers in the take-up of the father quota (the part of leave earmarked for fathers) was explored further. The gap was associated with weaker individual resources; however, ethnic labour market segregation played a significant role. The gap narrowed with the increased duration of stay of these fathers, suggesting that adaptation processes also are involved. The analysis is based on high-quality register data of all partnered men who became fathers in Norway in 2011, following them until their child was three years old in 2014.

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Keywords

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Introduction

Immigrant parents' social rights and utilisation of benefits have recently been addressed in a number of studies (e.g. Kil et al., 2018; Mussino and Duvander, 2016; Mussino et al., 2016; Sainsbury, 2019; Tervola et al., 2017). Policy constructions appear to have major implications for immigrants, determining the scope of inclusion or exclusion in access to benefits and services (Sainsbury, 2019). Thus, expanding knowledge about how immigrant parents fare under different welfare regimes is crucial.

The purpose of the present study of fathers and parental leave in Norway was to investigate how the construction of parental leave rights and interacting societal structures influence immigrant fathers' compliance with the 'caring father' model—typifying the Nordic welfare states. Among the key goals of these countries are full employment and gender equality, reflected in the so-called 'earner-carer' family policy model, in which both parents are expected to be both workers and carers. Comprehensive parental leave arrangements and publicly subsidised childcare services support these goals. However, increasing immigration over the past decades is seen as a challenge to both welfare state sustainability and gender equality (Grødem, 2017; Kavli, 2015). In Norway, low employment rates and higher use of family-oriented benefits among women immigrants from some non-Western countries are of significant concern (Kavli, 2015).

By contrast, the relationship between immigration and the other key element of the earner-carer model—the caring father—has received little attention. The Nordic welfare states were pioneers in politicising the father's role as carer (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006). In support of active fatherhood, part of parental leave was earmarked for fathers, on a use-it-or-lose-it basis. Norway introduced a father quota of four weeks in 1993, the first country to do so. The father quota, considered one of the main policy instruments for strengthening gender equality, redistributes care from the mother to the father in the family. It is also regarded as an important means for early establishment of the father-child relationship, through which fathers are expected to play a crucial role in their children's development (Kvande and Brandth, 2017).

In Norway, the public debate often portrays immigrant men as not being oriented towards gender equality or the caregiving role of fathers (Hoel, 2013). However, knowledge about immigrant fatherhood is scarce, including immigrant fathers' access to, and take-up, of parental leave. The Norwegian parental leave scheme comprises a particular combination: it is earnings-related, and the father's entitlements are, in part, derived from the mother's rights. There is little prior

knowledge about the implications of this specific construction. This knowledge gap prompted the first research question: how does this particular leave scheme impact immigrant fathers' access to leave? Moreover, studies examining conditions that influence eligible fathers' take-up of leave have established that immigrant fathers use parental leave to a lesser degree than native-born fathers (Schou, 2019). However, there is limited knowledge about the reasons for this gap as well. Accordingly, the second research question is as follows: what mechanisms contribute to the gap in take-up of the father quota between eligible immigrant and native-born fathers?

The empirical analysis utilises high-quality Norwegian register data to examine how parental leave rights and take-up differ between immigrant and native-born fathers. We look at all partnered men who became fathers in 2011 and follow their parental benefit use until the child turned three in 2014, covering the maximum period for leave take-up.

Norway context: Immigration and the earner-carer model

Most Nordic research on fatherhood focuses on the majority population (Liversage, 2014). However, like the other Scandinavian countries, Norway has become more ethnically and culturally diverse due to large-scale immigration in recent decades. Immigrants account for about 14% of the total population, with an additional 3% comprising Norwegians born to immigrants (Statistics Norway, 2019a). Immigrants from Western countries make up 45% of the immigrant population; those from non-Western countries constitute 55%. The first large-scale wave of immigrants arrived in the late 1960s, consisting mainly of young, unskilled non-Western male labour migrants (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli, 2008). After a stop of labour migration was effectuated in 1975, immigration carried on through family reunification, and, from the late 1970s, by immigrants who fled from war or persecution (Pettersen and Østby, 2013). However, the eastward expansion of the EU in 2004 opened up substantial labour migration from this region. Since 1990, 34% of immigrants have entered as labour immigrants, 36% through family reunification, and 19% as refugees (Statistics Norway, 2019b).

Developments in Norway towards more gender equal parenthood practices reflect a noticeable change from what most immigrants experienced in their country of origin. The extent to which immigrants adapt to the earner-carer model has become an important political issue (e.g. Kavli, 2015; Nadim, 2016). In the majority population, women's employment rate is now nearly as high as men's, and fathers spend more time on housework and childcare than previously (Kitterød, 2016). About 90% of children aged 1–5 are enrolled in childcare, and attitudinal support for mothers' full-time work and the use of childcare services for young children is high (Ellingsæter et al., 2017).

In comparison, immigrants from some non-Western countries (e.g. Somalia, Eritrea, Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey) have the lowest employment rates and the most pronounced gender differences in employment (Revolv, 2017). Lower

employment rates partly reflect disparities in educational attainment, length of residence and reason for immigration. However, the enrolment of immigrant children in childcare has increased considerably. Nevertheless, the rate is still lower than that of the majority population, particularly among the youngest children (Statistics Norway, 2018). Among parents with a one-year-old child, 43% of those with an immigration background received the cash for care benefit, a benefit conditioned on non-use of childcare, while the corresponding share among parents with native backgrounds was 15% (Statistics Norway, 2017).

Immigrants from certain countries, especially those from Somalia and Pakistan, are less supportive of mothers of young children having paid employment than the population as a whole (Blom, 2017; Kavli, 2015). However, significant changes are taking place between generations in the Pakistani group (Nadim, 2016). In general, most immigrant and majority populations believe that men and women should be equally responsible for housework and childcare (Blom, 2017). About three in four mothers and fathers from Asia, Africa and Latin America support the father quota (Schou, 2019). This suggests that some immigrants have adapted to the earner-carer norm.

Construction of the parental leave scheme

Norwegian paid parental leave is relatively long and generous. It has an earmarked part (quota) for the father and the mother, and a joint part that parents can share as they prefer; the earmarked quota cannot be transferred to the other parent.¹ Since its enactment in 1993, the father quota has been extended several times. In 2011, when men in our sample became fathers, the father quota was 10 weeks for births prior to July 1, and 12 weeks for births after July 1.² The total parental leave was then 46 and 47 weeks, respectively, with 100% wage compensation.³ Prior to 1993, very few fathers took any paid parental leave, while take-up has increased in tandem with increasing quotas (Schou, 2019).

Employment status is critical for parental leave rights. A first important feature of the scheme is that it is *earnings-related*. Access and compensation are conditioned on prior employment and earnings. The access criterion is not very strict, requiring employment in 6 of the 10 months prior to take-up with an income equivalent to half the National Insurance basic amount.⁴ Moreover, periods when parents have received a wide range of social benefits/allowances are considered equivalent to employment. As for level of compensation, there is a cap equivalent to six times the National Insurance basic amount. Leave take-up is flexible; it may be used in one or more blocks and on a full- or part-time basis, until the child's third birthday.

A second important feature of the scheme is that the father's access to leave is *conditioned on the mother's economic activity* before and after the birth of the child. First, to be eligible for the father quota, both the father and the mother have to fulfil the requirement of prior employment. Thus, even if the father fulfils the employment and income requirements, he cannot make use of the quota unless

the mother has earned rights to parental leave. Mothers who do not fulfil the parental benefit requirements receive a lump sum.⁵ While most mothers meet the eligibility criteria for parental benefit, only 8% of native-born mothers received the lump sum, 45% of mothers born in Asia and 64% of mothers born in Africa were recipients (Schou, 2019). Second, the father can take up the shareable part of leave only if the mother after birth is employed or enrolled in education for at least 75% of what constitutes full-time, or if she has severe health limitations.

Immigrant fathers and parental leave: Previous research

A review of studies on male migrants as fathers found that literature on transnational fatherhood is overshadowed by studies of transnational motherhood and, when studied, the research considered the fathers as the breadwinners (Souralová and Fialová, 2017). This results in stereotypical images, concealing variety and diversity. Therefore, more research on immigrant fathers' caregiving roles is needed.

Caring masculinities is an emergent, multi-layered concept, with men's care practices offering the potential for change in gender relations (Elliott, 2016). The construction of fatherhood is complex, shaped at the intersection of gender, class, ethnicity and generation, within different societal framework conditions of working life and welfare arrangements (Brandth and Kvande, 2003). Men's greater involvement in childcare benefits women's career development and has a positive effect on men's health and children's social, emotional and cognitive functioning (Żadkowska et al., 2018).

Parental leave schemes are considered important for facilitating caring fatherhood. While research on immigrant fathers' use of parental leave in Norway is scarce (cf. Kvande and Brandth, 2017), general studies of fathers' leave take-up identify mechanisms, such as educational resources and labour market position, that may influence immigrant fathers in particular ways. Moreover, a few qualitative studies provide deeper insights into the situation and adaptation of some groups of immigrant fathers (Bjørnholt and Stefansen, 2019; Hoel, 2013; Kvande and Brandth, 2017; Pustulka et al., 2015; Walle, 2005; Żadkowska et al., 2018).

Access: Construction of parental leave rights

Sainsbury (2019) highlighted how policy constructions typical for different welfare state regimes affect immigrants' rights through the basis of entitlement and eligibility rules. She argued that, in social policy designs, a main difference is between a universal policy construction versus a work performance construction. The design of benefits can lead to stratification, and benefit levels may influence decisions to claim benefits. Moreover, gender relations are encoded in policies, that is, principles and norms that prescribe the tasks, obligations and rights of women and men.

Nordic studies suggest that the parental leave design influences immigrant fathers' access to leave. The Swedish parental leave combination model of universal flat-rate benefits and work-performance benefits secures immigrant access parity with that of the rest of the population (Duvander and Johansson, 2015; Sainsbury, 2019). In comparison to the Norwegian scheme, the Swedish structure does not require previous employment, and fathers' rights are not conditional on mothers' rights. Moreover, a comparative study found that the immigrant–native gap in take-up was narrower in Sweden than in Finland (Tervola et al., 2017), which was primarily attributed to the fact that the Swedish scheme was more flexible in take-up options and the least conditional on mothers' leave use.

Few studies outside the Nordic countries have investigated immigrant fathers' access to leave. However, studies of mothers' access to leave suggest that labour market conditions are crucial determining factors. For example, a UK study disclosed considerable social and ethnic variation in access to parental leave caused by new types of employment contracts (e.g. zero hours) and increasing self-employment (Twamley and Schober, 2019). Moreover, a Belgian study revealed that access to stable employment and non-universal eligibility were major factors explaining migrant–native differentials in mothers' parental leave use (Kil et al., 2018).

Take-up: Educational resources and labour market segregation

Studies of eligible Norwegian fathers' take-up of leave have shown that the father quota is widely used by fathers in most occupations, sectors and industries (Østbakken et al., 2018). Most fathers make use of the number of weeks that are included in the quota. The parental leave register (NAV) shows that in recent years only 7–8% of eligible fathers had not taken up any leave by the time their child turned three (Schou, 2019). In most couples, the mother uses most of the sharable leave. However, fathers' own resources, as well as their partners' labour market position, education and income, are associated with their use of parental leave benefits (Østbakken et al., 2018; Schou, 2019). Fathers' take-up is less likely when the mother works short hours and has low levels of education (Østbakken et al., 2018; Schou, 2019). Similar patterns are found in Sweden (Duvander and Johansson, 2015).

A qualitative study indicated that Norwegian employers are positive towards parental leave (Hagen, 2017). Still, some fathers experience greater job-, career- and income-related risks in connection with the take-up of leave than others do. Non-users are overrepresented in occupations and industries with high shares of non-standard work contracts and among self-employed fathers (Østbakken et al., 2018). For self-employed fathers, parental leave may be expected to have negative consequences for future business. Fathers in management positions have lower take-up of the father quota. Lower take-up also is disclosed among fathers with low education, low or very high income, or a very high or very low share of the total family income (Østbakken et al., 2018).

Immigrants' labour market positions reflect an ethnically segregated labour market. They are overrepresented in occupations with low educational requirements, more often have temporary employment contracts and have higher part-time rates than other groups (Revold, 2017). Immigrant fathers in these types of jobs may be more reluctant to exercise their rights because they fear job- or income-loss or slower career-progression (Walle, 2005). They are also less likely to be in jobs with full income compensation beyond the ceiling.⁶

Take-up: Cultural adaptation

Traditional work–family orientations among immigrants have been seen as obstacles to adaptation to the Nordic earner-carer model for some immigrants. However, immigrants to Europe seem to adapt to the prevailing attitudes in the host country; thus, work–family orientations depend strongly on the normative societal context of the host country (Breidahl and Larsen, 2016). Attitudes towards women's paid work in the host country were the key to understanding cross-national variation in attitudes towards women's paid work among immigrants.

Adaptation takes time. Mussino et al. (2016) found that, in Sweden, the difference in leave take-up between immigrant and native-born fathers diminished as the immigrants spent more time in the country; immigrants adjusted to the leave-use patterns of native-born fathers. Still, even immigrants who have spent more than 10 years in Sweden were less likely to use parental leave than were native-born fathers. Moreover, access to information about benefits and services may be part of the adaptation and integration process and improve over time. Norwegian studies have suggested that some native-born fathers missed the entire/part of the quota because they misunderstood the application procedures, while the required documentation and paperwork hindered some fathers from taking up more than the father quota (Kitterød et al., 2017; Schou, 2019). Lack of information is likely to affect immigrant fathers more than native-born fathers (Kil et al., 2017; Mussino et al., 2016).

Still, qualitative studies indicate wide variation in adaptation among fathers from different countries. The reasons for migration and the resources immigrants bring with them shape immigrants' lives (Liversage, 2014). Their practices may, to a varying degree, align with the parental practices of the relatively egalitarian majority. The understanding of immigrant fatherhood, thus, must consider norms and practices in both the country of origin and in the post-migration context (Liversage, 2014). Moreover, fathers' class position is of crucial importance.

Studies have indicated that middle-class immigrant fathers strongly support the father quota. A study of fathers from southern Europe considered that the earmarking, non-transferability and generosity in the parental leave system was important for their taking up leave (Kvande and Brandth, 2017). They emphasised that, as a statutory right, fathers' parental leave is not conditioned on the employer's good will.

Another qualitative study, including middle-class fathers with backgrounds from Asia, Latin America and Africa, also found fathers to be supportive of the father quota (Hoel, 2013). They saw the opportunity to spend time at home with their children as a positive development. However, this attitude was associated with the needs of the father and the child, and less with gender equality concerns relative to the mother. Care was viewed as primarily the responsibility of mothers. The existence of the father quota also affected immigrants' norms for what is appropriate and desirable. Those who did not use the father quota still participated in the care of their children. A few fathers opposed the ideal, believing it was biologically more natural for women to take care of young children. Work-life conditions figured prominently in fathers' stories about the use of the father quota. Hindrances were related to hostile employers and self-employment. Support from colleagues was found to influence take-up positively. One father, who did not have the right to quota because his partner did not work, was disappointed with the system. He could not practise his father ideal of staying at home with the child. Hoel (2013) maintained that class better explains practices of middle-class minority fathers than ethnicity and country of origin.

A study of Polish labour migrant fathers disclosed heterogeneity in parental practices (Pustulka et al., 2015). The fathers could not escape redefinition of their roles as fathers in the culturally and institutionally different context of Norway. They benefited from better opportunities to combine work and family life, but their strong ties with their country of origin subjected them to the continued influence of the more traditional Polish models of fatherhood and motherhood. Yet another study found that Polish fathers took up the role of father in a passive way. They left decisions about parental leave to their female partners, in contrast to Norwegian fathers whose decisions reflected a deeper understanding of the long-term benefits of being an involved father (Żadkowska et al., 2018). Another comparison of native-born Norwegian parents and Polish immigrant parents concluded that all parents embraced the earner-carer ideal, but the Polish parents were more eclectic in creating new practices (Bjørnholt and Stefansen, 2019).

Immigrants relocating to Norway through asylum or family reunification predominantly originated from the Middle East and parts of Africa and Asia labelled the 'patriarchal belt' (Liversage, 2014), where complementary gender roles dominate, and a central value is attributed to the father as breadwinner. Nevertheless, the non-Western minority ethnic groups are very diverse with a wide range of fatherhood practices (Liversage, 2014). The gender division of work from the country of origin may be difficult to recreate, and men with more education may be unable to regain their former status (Liversage, 2014).

Data and variables

The analysis for this study was based on all men who became fathers in 2011, with data linked from several administrative registers from Statistics Norway. This is the most recent cohort of fathers at hand that we could observe for the entire

parental leave take-up period, until 2014. The fathers were identified by linking all children born in 2011 and their mothers to a registered male partner.⁷ Couples are required to be cohabiting or married in the year of their child's birth, but not in the subsequent years.⁸ This sample included 44,820 fathers and their female partners. The sample was matched to other registers containing information on parents' age, educational attainment, income, immigration status, duration of stay, take-up of other social benefits and labour market position.

The two dependent variables—fathers' access to leave and eligible fathers' take-up of leave—were constructed by information from the parental leave register, in combination with other available register data. The parental leave register contains information about eligible parents' take-up of leave but contains no information about eligible non-users. If both the father and the mother are users of paid parental leave, the father is eligible for the father quota, but non-users may also be eligible. To identify eligible non-users, we used the legal requirements and available information on fathers' employment, as well as mothers' parental leave take-up. We imposed two criteria. First, the father was eligible for the quota if both the mother and the father were users of parental leave. Second, the father was eligible if the mother took paid parental leave and the father satisfied the requirement of prior employment or self-employment or had been unemployed or on social security benefits prior to the child's birth. In total, 37,793 fathers were eligible for the father quota, according to our calculations, which amounted to 84% of fathers in the sample. A very small group of fathers took advantage of parental leave when the mother was a non-user. We considered these fathers as ineligible for the father quota, although they may have been eligible for the sharable weeks of parental leave. The rest were defined as non-eligible, that is, without access to parental leave. The analysis of eligible fathers' take-up of leave was based on the group identified as having had access to the father quota.

In addition to our main independent variable, which was father's origin, other variables included educational level, income, labour market status and duration of stay.

Four origin groups based on country of birth were defined: the group *native born* included all individuals born in Norway (or by a Norwegian resident mother); *Nordic immigrants* included individuals born in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Faroe Islands or Greenland; *Western immigrants* were born in Europe (except in the Nordic countries), Canada, the United States, Australia or New Zealand. The group *non-Western immigrants* included individuals born in Africa, Asia, Oceania, South America and Latin America. Norwegian-born fathers made up 79% of the sample, while Nordic and Western immigrants made up 12% and non-Western immigrants comprised 9%. It is noteworthy that heterogeneity is likely to have existed among fathers within each category. Still, the immigrant groups reflected different reasons for migration, associated with differences in individual resources and labour market opportunities. Western immigrants were more likely to have entered Norway as labour migrants; a large group came from Poland and other East European countries, while those from non-Western

countries immigrated as refugees or through family reunification, often from the Middle East and parts of Asia and Africa.

Education was split into five levels: (1) no or unknown mandatory education; (2) primary education; (3) high school (ref. group); (4) college/university, lower level (BA); and (5) college/university, higher level (MA).⁹ Duration of stay measured the number of years the immigrant was registered as a resident in Norway. Labour market status was defined as: (1) employed: persons registered as employees in 2010; (2) self-employed: persons registered with a net business income of at least 40% of total taxable income in 2009, 2010 and 2011; (3) benefits: persons with social benefits or unemployment benefits exceeding 90% of annual total income; and (4) other: persons who were not registered in any of the above categories (for instance, students or persons outside the workforce without benefits). Income was logged according to total income in 2010, which was the sum of earnings, capital income, net business income and benefits. We included a dummy to indicate whether the father or the mother earned more or less than six times the basic amount in 2010 ($6BA^{10} = 448,326$ NOK yearly). We also included age-group dummies (<30 years, 30–40 years, >40 years) and parity (first child = 1). For employees, we included one-digit occupation codes (STYRK98/ISCO88). These definitions applied to the partner's education and labour market attachment as well.

Immigrant fathers' access to parental leave

The distinction between fathers with and without leave entitlements allowed us to investigate how the construction of the parental leave scheme affected immigrant fathers' access to leave benefits, which addressed our first research question. We used this variable to compare the proportions of immigrant and native-born fathers who gained father quota entitlements in Table 1. Among non-eligible fathers, we distinguished between couples where only the mother or both parents lacked entitlement.

Nearly 16% of all fathers lacked entitlement to the father quota, according to our specifications. Importantly, the share of entitled fathers varied within the origin group. Among native-born fathers and Nordic immigrants, about 90%

Table 1. Access to parental leave and the father quota: Percentage of fathers, all and across origin groups.

	All	Norwegian born	Nordic immigrants	Western immigrants	Non-Western immigrants
Eligible	84.3	90.2	87.3	72.7	47.9
Non-eligible:					
Mother entitled, father not	1.6	1.0	2.2	3.3	4.2
Father entitled, mother not	0.8	0.6	0.3	1.1	2.9
Neither are entitled	13.3	8.2	10.3	22.9	44.9
Observations	44,820	35,266	1091	3639	4824

were entitled to the father quota; while the share was 73% among Western immigrants, it was only 48% among non-Western immigrant fathers. Hence, almost half of the non-Western immigrant fathers did not have access to the father quota, which is considered a very important instrument to promote the ‘caring father’ ideal. Among fathers not eligible for the father quota, it was highly unusual that the father met the requirements while the mother did not, or the other way around. In most couples, when the father was not eligible for the father quota, both lacked entitlement.

Eligible immigrant fathers’ use of the father quota

In order to explore the second research question, that is, factors contributing to the gap in use of the father quota between eligible immigrant and native-born fathers, we distinguished between eligible fathers who did not take any parental benefit and four groups with various amounts of leave take-up (see Table 2). It was evident from the analysis that the father quota had a strong normative effect on the duration of parental leave. Half of all eligible fathers took the exact quota, and nearly 30% took more than the quota. On the other hand, less than 15% of fathers took up less than the exact quota, while 10% were registered with no take-up. Again, the use of the father quota varied between origin groups. While 8% of eligible native-born fathers did not take any of the reserved father quota, this applied to nearly one-quarter of the eligible, non-Western, immigrant fathers. Minor differences were noted across origin groups in the share of fathers who took the whole or part of the quota. In the analysis of differences in leave take-up across origin groups, we, therefore, distinguished between fathers who did not take any leave and fathers who took at least some leave.

Compositional socio-economic differences across the origin groups may correlate with the use of the reserved father quota among eligible fathers. We present descriptive statistics for *eligible* fathers separated by origin group in the left panel of Table 3, while descriptive statistics for all fathers are presented in the right panel. It is apparent that eligible fathers were a positively selected group of fathers, especially among non-Western immigrants, which was essential to consider when

Table 2. Parental leave uptake among eligible fathers: Percentage of fathers, all and across origin groups.

	All	Norwegian born	Nordic immigrants	Western immigrants	Non-Western immigrants
No quota uptake	9.9	8.4	10.3	15.1	24.1
<50% of the quota	2.6	2.4	3.0	3.1	3.9
50–99% of the quota	10.8	10.8	11.0	11.6	10.9
Exact quota	48.4	48.7	42.1	48.9	45.9
More than the quota	28.3	29.7	33.5	21.3	15.2
Observations	37,793	31,808	952	2856	2177

Table 3. Descriptive statistics: Eligible fathers and all fathers, separate origin groups.

	Eligible fathers				All fathers			
	Native-born	Immigrants			Native-born	Immigrants		
		Nordic	Western	Non-Western		Nordic	Western	Non-Western
No or unknown education	0.00 (0.03)	0.10 (0.30)	0.13 (0.34)	0.13 (0.33)	0.00 (0.03)	0.12 (0.32)	0.16 (0.37)	0.14 (0.35)
Primary school	0.11 (0.32)	0.10 (0.30)	0.14 (0.34)	0.27 (0.44)	0.13 (0.33)	0.11 (0.31)	0.15 (0.36)	0.33 (0.47)
Secondary school	0.45 (0.50)	0.32 (0.47)	0.28 (0.45)	0.23 (0.42)	0.45 (0.50)	0.31 (0.46)	0.29 (0.45)	0.21 (0.41)
Higher education, BA	0.28 (0.45)	0.26 (0.44)	0.23 (0.42)	0.22 (0.42)	0.27 (0.44)	0.25 (0.43)	0.21 (0.41)	0.19 (0.39)
Higher education, MA	0.16 (0.37)	0.22 (0.42)	0.21 (0.41)	0.15 (0.36)	0.15 (0.36)	0.22 (0.41)	0.19 (0.39)	0.12 (0.33)
Age	33.97 (5.50)	34.90 (5.57)	34.21 (5.79)	35.33 (6.24)	34.04 (5.82)	34.94 (5.77)	34.08 (5.89)	35.37 (6.68)
Employee	0.90 (0.30)	0.90 (0.30)	0.86 (0.35)	0.80 (0.40)	0.88 (0.32)	0.88 (0.33)	0.80 (0.40)	0.68 (0.47)
Self-employed	0.06 (0.23)	0.06 (0.23)	0.05 (0.23)	0.07 (0.26)	0.06 (0.23)	0.06 (0.23)	0.07 (0.25)	0.08 (0.26)
Social security recipients	0.01 (0.10)	0.01 (0.09)	0.02 (0.13)	0.04 (0.21)	0.02 (0.13)	0.01 (0.11)	0.02 (0.14)	0.05 (0.22)
Other	0.03 (0.18)	0.03 (0.18)	0.07 (0.26)	0.08 (0.27)	0.05 (0.21)	0.05 (0.23)	0.11 (0.31)	0.19 (0.39)
Log total income	13.06 (0.74)	12.97 (0.97)	12.68 (1.44)	12.47 (1.83)	13.02 (0.84)	12.85 (1.40)	12.45 (1.99)	12.17 (2.39)
Earnings > 6BA	0.58 (0.13)	0.40 (0.14)	0.41 (0.17)	0.31 (0.19)	0.53 (0.50)	0.47 (0.50)	0.31 (0.46)	0.23 (0.42)
First child	0.33 (0.47)	0.40 (0.49)	0.41 (0.49)	0.31 (0.46)	0.33 (0.47)	0.40 (0.49)	0.39 (0.49)	0.29 (0.45)
Duration of stay in Norway		12.37 (11.57)	8.70 (9.23)	13.67 (10.00)		12.16 (11.52)	8.09 (8.89)	11.78 (9.08)
Observations	31,808	952	2856	2177	35,266	1091	3639	4824

Note: Means and standard deviations in parentheses.

our results were interpreted. Since eligibility requires previous employment or equivalent economic activity, the share of employed fathers was higher among eligible fathers than among all fathers. The difference was particularly significant for non-Western immigrants, where about 81% of the eligible fathers were either employees or self-employed, compared to about 69% of all fathers. Moreover, eligible fathers were somewhat better educated than all fathers and had somewhat

higher earnings. The average log total income was slightly higher among eligible than among all fathers, as was the share of fathers with earnings beyond the 6BA threshold. Again, the difference was more pronounced for immigrants than for native-born fathers. We also noted that eligible immigrant fathers had a longer duration of stay in Norway than all immigrant fathers did; the difference was most pronounced for non-Western immigrants (13.7 vs. 11.8 years).

Table 3 reveals that, even though eligible immigrants constituted a more positively select group than eligible native-born fathers, they were still somewhat less educated and had lower earnings than eligible native-born fathers had. For instance, the majority of native-born fathers and Nordic immigrants had secondary school or higher educational levels, while 40% of non-Western immigrants were reported as having a primary school or no education or their education level was unknown. The share of self-employed was almost the same across groups, but the number of social security benefit recipients was higher among non-Western immigrants, and the same is true for the percentage that fell into the 'other' category, which means that they were neither employees, self-employed nor social security recipients. Immigrants also had lower log earnings than native-born fathers, and a smaller share had earnings beyond 6BA. For instance, 31% of non-Western immigrants earned more than 6BA, compared to 58% of native-born fathers. We also noted that duration of stay varied with origin. Western immigrants accumulated less time in Norway, compared to those from non-Western countries and Nordic immigrants, probably due to their relatively short history as work immigrants.

Individual and partner resources

We used a multivariate framework to investigate the differences in parental leave take-up between eligible native-born fathers and eligible immigrant fathers, and to determine the extent to which those differences resulted from different individual resources and labour market positions. Here the focus was on whether fathers used parental leave, not how much of the reserved quota they used. The dependent variable was, therefore, a dummy, taking value one if the father took parental leave (less than the reserved quota, the exact quota or more than the quota) and zero if the father took no leave. We specified a linear probability model in equation (1)

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 Z_i + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

where Y_i equalled 1 if the father took any parental leave, and 0 otherwise. X_i denoted observable characteristics of father i , and Z_i denoted the observable characteristics of his partner. In linear probability models, coefficients are easy to interpret. In the case of dummy variables, the estimated coefficients are interpreted as percentage point changes in the probability that the father

took any parental leave, if the covariate switched from 0 to 1, i.e. compared to the reference group. However, linearity may result in predicted probabilities outside of the [0,1] interval. Since we were primarily interested in the difference between native-born and foreign-born fathers, and whether inclusion of relevant observable characteristics affected the correlation between origin and the probability of taking parental leave, the possibility posed less of a problem.

We undertook two separate analyses to investigate how the take-up of parental leave differed between native-born and immigrant fathers. First, we entered individual and partner resources, including labour market status, as control variables, and examined the role of different resources for the gap in take-up. Secondly, we included employees only in the analysis and investigated the role of ethnic labour market segregation for the gap in take-up. As for our principal explanatory variable, origin group, we collapsed fathers from the Nordic countries and from other Western countries into one single group (Western) due to group size.

We started by investigating how differences in individual resources related to the difference in parental leave take-up. We used the empirical specification from equation (1) and estimated a linear probability model by ordinary least squares regression (OLS). Table 4 presents the estimated coefficients from three specifications where we controlled for individual and partner characteristics. In Model 1, we controlled only for origin. Native-born fathers were our reference group. The estimated constant in Model 1 indicated that 92% of all native-born fathers who were eligible for the father quota took parental leave. Western immigrants were 6% less likely to take parental leave, while non-Western immigrant fathers were 16% less likely. In Model 2, we included controls for the father's education, labour market status, earning above the 6BA threshold and age group. The gap between Western immigrants and native-born fathers was reduced to 3% (halved), and the gap between non-Western immigrants and Norwegians was reduced to 10%. Hence, native-born and immigrant fathers demonstrated different individual resources that explained part of the disparity of take-up rates across groups, although a large gap remained. When we included family controls and controls for the partner's resources as well, such as whether the focal child was the firstborn, the origin of the partner and her education and labour market status (Model 3), the gap between native-born and Western immigrant fathers was marginally reduced, but the gap with the non-Western immigrants was reduced to 6%. Thus, differences in partner resources explained some of the parental leave gap between native-born and non-Western immigrant fathers.

Since the father quota may be transferred to the mother if/when the couple separates, we ran a separate analysis for couples who were still cohabiting or married in 2014 (results not shown, but can be obtained from the authors).¹¹ Excluding couples that separated did not affect our results. Thus, differences in separation behavior did not explain the gap in take-up.

Table 4. Differences in parental leave uptake: Eligible fathers.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Western immigrant	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)
Non-Western immigrant	-0.16*** (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
No or unknown education		-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)
Primary school		-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
Higher education, BA		0.01* (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Higher education, MA		0.03*** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.00)
Self-employed		-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
Social security recipient		-0.46*** (0.02)	-0.44*** (0.02)
Other		-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)
Earnings > 6BA		0.03*** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.00)
Partner: Western immigrant			-0.02** (0.01)
Partner: Non-western immigrant			-0.04*** (0.01)
Partner: No or unknown education			-0.04*** (0.02)
Partner: Primary school			-0.04*** (0.01)
Partner: Higher education, BA			0.01*** (0.00)
Partner: Higher education, MA			0.01** (0.01)
Partner: Self-employed			-0.01 (0.01)
Partner: Social security recipient			-0.06*** (0.02)
Partner: Other			-0.04*** (0.01)
Partner: Earnings > 6BA			0.00 (0.00)
Constant	0.92*** (0.00)	0.92*** (0.00)	0.92*** (0.00)
Observations	37,793	37,793	37,793
R-squared	0.02	0.08	0.08

Note: Regressions also include controls for age group and a dummy for first child. Robust standard errors in parentheses *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Labour market position

As we see in Figure 1, the occupational distribution of native-born fathers and immigrant fathers varied along several dimensions. First, the share of leaders and professionals (1–3) was substantially higher among native-born fathers than among non-Western immigrants. These occupations require higher education,

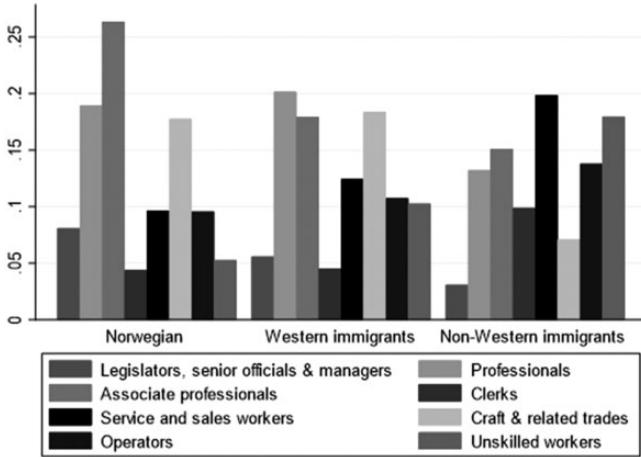


Figure 1. Occupational distribution by group of origin. 1-digit occupational code. Eligible and employed fathers. Note: Main job in 2010 based on annual wage.

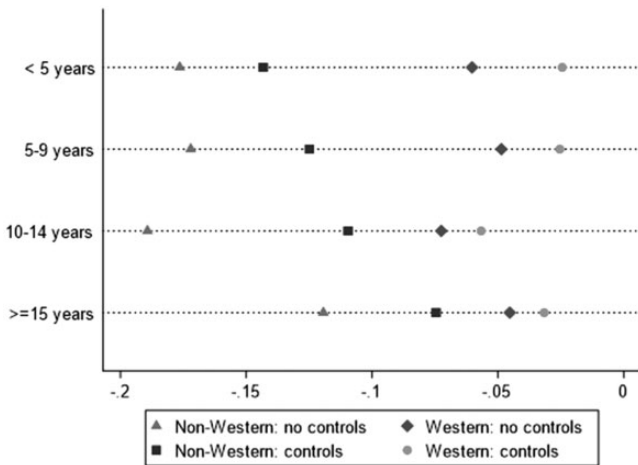


Figure 2. Differences in parental leave uptake. Across groups of duration of stay. Eligible fathers. Note: The markers in the graph correspond to the estimated coefficients of fathers’ origin with and without the full set of controls from Model 3 in Table 4.

pay better and generally have better working conditions than occupations further down in the occupational distribution. Non-Western immigrants were overrepresented in unskilled occupations and among operators, such as plant or machine operators, garbage collectors or labourers in construction, manufacturing and maintenance. The ethnic segregation in the labour market may undermine the development of immigrant fathers' aspirations of active fatherhood manifested in the take-up of leave.

We investigated the association between ethnic segregation in the labour market and fathers' take-up of leave in Table 5, including employed fathers only. Results showed 93% of employed native-born fathers took parental leave, while the rate was 5% and 13% lower among Western and non-Western immigrants, respectively. Model 2 added controls for individual resources and occupation (reference group = associate professionals), which revealed significant differences in the parental leave take-up across occupations. Low-skilled employees, such as service and sales workers, operators and workers in unskilled occupations, showed a significantly lower probability of take-up compared to associate professionals. The same held for legislators, senior officials and managers. Thus, take-up was lower on both ends of the occupational hierarchy. The fact that native-born and immigrant fathers generally work in different occupations and different sectors, opportunities for parental leave take-up may be unequal, which was identified as an important factor behind the observed gap. When differences in individual resources and differences in the occupational segregation were both controlled for, the gap was reduced for both Western and non-Western immigrants to nearly half of the initial gap.

Adaptation processes

Turning to the question of whether immigrant fathers' lower leave take-up was due to adaptation processes, we explored the role of their duration of stay in Norway. Since the analyses were based on register data, we had no information about the fathers' values and attitudes or their knowledge about the Norwegian parental leave system and the application procedures but, like Mussino et al. (2016), we anticipated that the longer the father had resided in the country, the greater his support for the earner-carer family model and the greater his knowledge of parental leave regulations would be. All eligible fathers were included, as in Table 4, and the sample was divided into four groups based on duration of stay: less than 5 years, 5 to 9 years, 10 to 14 years and 15 years or more. Native-born fathers were included in all regressions as the reference group. Then we estimated the gap in parental leave take-up for Western and non-Western immigrant fathers separately for the four groups: one model without controls, and one in which we controlled for individual and partner resources (i.e. the full set of controls from Model 3 in Table 4). The estimated coefficients are shown in Figure 2.

Independent of duration of stay, non-Western immigrant fathers indicated a substantially lower probability of taking parental leave than Western immigrant

Table 5. Differences in parental leave uptake: Eligible and employed fathers.

	(1)	(2)
Western immigrant	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)
Non-Western immigrant	-0.13*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
No or unknown education		-0.06*** (0.02)
Primary school		-0.06*** (0.01)
Higher education, BA		-0.00 (0.00)
Higher education, MA		0.01*** (0.01)
Public sector		0.01** (0.00)
Legislators, senior officials and managers		-0.04*** (0.01)
Professionals		0.00 (0.00)
Clerks		-0.01 (0.01)
Service and sales workers		-0.03*** (0.01)
Craft and related trades		0.00 (0.01)
Operators		-0.02** (0.01)
Unskilled occupations		-0.03*** (0.01)
Primary sector		0.01 (0.02)
Manufacturing and construction		0.01** (0.01)
Retail, transport, hotels and restaurants		0.00 (0.01)
Private services		-0.00 (0.01)
Earnings > 6BA		0.02*** (0.00)
Partner: Western immigrant		-0.01** (0.01)
Partner: Non-western immigrant		-0.03*** (0.01)
Partner: No or unknown education		-0.04**

(continued)

Table 5. Continued.

	(1)	(2)
		(0.02)
Partner: Primary school		−0.04***
		(0.01)
Partner: Higher education, BA		0.01**
		(0.00)
Partner: Higher education, MA		0.01
		(0.01)
Partner: Self-employed		−0.01
		(0.01)
Partner: Social security recipient		−0.07***
		(0.02)
Partner: Other		−0.04***
		(0.01)
Partner: Earnings > 6BA		0.01**
		(0.00)
Constant	0.93***	0.93***
	(0.00)	(0.01)
Observations	33,699	33, 699
R-squared	0.01	0.04

Note: Regressions also include controls for age group and a dummy for first child.

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Unskilled occupations include both codes 6 (agricultural, forestry and fishery workers) and 9 (elementary occupations).

fathers in the same duration of stay group. However, there seemed to be a shift in behaviour as their length of stay continued to increase. Non-Western immigrant fathers with a duration of stay of 15 years or more showed a 7% lower probability of taking parental leave than native-born fathers, whereas the difference was 12% for non-Western, newly arrived fathers. For Western immigrants, the difference was less than 5% independent of length of residence in Norway.

When we controlled for individual resources and labour market position, the gap reduced for both non-Western and Western immigrants, but the analysis clearly indicated that non-Western fathers' resources correlated with less parental leave take-up to a larger degree than Western immigrant fathers' resources for all groups, since the distance between the estimated gap with and without controls was larger for non-Western fathers.

Conclusion

The social rights of migrants are becoming important in more ethnically diverse societies as a result of international migration (Morrisens and Sainsbury, 2005). The purpose of this study was to investigate caring fatherhood in Norway by

examining immigrant fathers' access to parental leave benefits and mechanisms behind the gap in utilisation of parental leave between eligible immigrant and native-born fathers. The analysis contributes to growing literature displaying how different parental leave designs may generate particular disadvantages for immigrant fathers, and how inequalities in individual resources and labour market positions may widen disparities even further.

The 'caring father' is high on the political agenda in Norway, and earmarking parental leave for fathers is seen as an important policy instrument for furthering involved fathering practices. However, the Norwegian parental leave scheme has strong stratifying effects on fathers' access. The scheme's two major components—its work performance requirements and fathers deriving entitlements based on the mothers' rights—are particularly disadvantageous regarding access for non-Western immigrant fathers, compared to native-born fathers and immigrant fathers with different origins. About half of the non-Western immigrant fathers were not entitled to take up the father quota. In most of these couples, mothers also did not have any parental leave rights. Weak labour market attachment among both fathers and mothers is the main explanation. When eligibility was connected to labour force attachment, parental leave reinforced labour market disadvantages by providing leave benefits only to those established in the labour market (Kil et al., 2018). Deriving fathers' rights from the mothers' rights implies that some fathers who are motivated to take care of their new-born child do not have the access to do so. This criterion has been criticised from several quarters, including the Gender Equality and anti-Discrimination Ombud (Official Norwegian Reports, 2017). However, abolishing the element of derived rights would not help non-Western immigrant fathers who lack access because, in most couples, the father had not accumulated his own leave rights. This illustrates that many immigrant families find themselves outside the labour market, and that the work towards gender equality is made difficult by this exclusion (Johansson and Klinth, 2008). Without incentives for fathers to take leave, traditional norms of men as earners and woman as carers may remain unchallenged.

The analysis of utilisation of leave among fathers who were eligible to take up the father quota disclosed differences among immigrant and native-born fathers. Eligible non-Western immigrants stood out, with one in four not taking up any leave, even if fathers in this group had relatively more resources than the rest of the non-Western immigrant group. The gap between non-Western immigrant fathers and native-born fathers was, in part, associated with differences in individual resources, such as education, earnings and partner's resources; the gap was reduced when these factors were considered. However, ethnic labour market segregation played a major role: when considering that immigrant fathers and native-born fathers work in different sectors and occupations, the gap was significantly reduced. Therefore, unequally distributed work conditions and labour market uncertainties are likely to affect the social distribution of parental leave benefits (cf. Kil et al., 2018).

In general, non-Western immigrants' specific life conditions in terms of individual resources and structural positions shape their views on fatherhood. Gender issues are interwoven with issues of economy and class (Johansson and Klinth, 2008). After considering such inequalities between non-Western and native-born fathers, a small gap remained. However, the gap narrowed with an increase in duration of stay, suggesting that adaptation processes also are involved. Migration can change individuals' lives and may result in gender, class and ethnic relations being transformed over time (Liversage, 2014). The existence of the father quota affects immigrants' norms about what is appropriate and desirable (Hoel, 2013). Over time, cultural preferences may change, and knowledge about how the parental leave system works may broaden.

A main strength of the present empirical analysis is the decomposition of structural inequalities generating immigrant fathers' lower parental leave take-up. This demonstrates that immigrant fathers' life conditions shape their fatherhood practices, breaking with stereotyped images of the 'immigrant man'. However, this is also a limitation, as the immigrant categories applied conceal wide variation and heterogeneity in caring fatherhood. To bring down stereotypes further, there is a call for more systematic and comprehensive studies of transnational fatherhood practices.


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Notes

1. Except under special circumstances.
2. Tests showed that the quota extension in 2011 had no effect on fathers' decisions to take parental leave or on the probability that the father took more than the quota (results not shown but can be obtained from the authors).
3. In 2019, the total length of the leave was 49/59 weeks with 100/80% wage compensation.
4. In 2019, 1 BA was approximately 97,000 NOK/10,200 euros.
5. 2019: Approximately 83,000 NOK/8300 euros.

6. Employees in the public sector and about 60% of those in the private sector have collective agreements that guarantee full income compensation beyond the ceiling (Dale-Olsen, 2018). Full compensation varies between 80% in business/finance and 43% in building/construction.
7. We did not have the exact link to the child's other parent, so we excluded mothers who changed partner in $t = -2$ and $t = -1$, since there was some uncertainty (for us) on the fathers' identities.
8. We also performed a separate analysis on stable couples; our results were not sensitive to this sample restriction.
9. Education, duration of stay and age refer to the status in 2011.
10. 1 BA = 74,721 NOK in 2010.
11. Of the couples in our sample, 4% split up before 2014, 3.5% of couples that included native-born fathers split up, 8% of couples that included Western immigrant fathers split up and 6% of couples that included non-Western immigrant fathers split up.

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