

Did Parental Leave Make The Family Happier in The Netherlands ?

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Abstract

Since the seminal works of Booth and Van Ours (2008, 2009 2013), Gash, Mertens and Gordo (2010), Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson (2000) and Lepinteur, Fleche and Powdthavee the impact of part-time work on Subjective Well-being (SWB) is a crucial issue.

Research has mainly focused on a gender approach explaining that women and men experience part-time work differently because of an asymmetric specialization between domestic and market work. The aim and the originality of our research is to analyse how parenthood shapes the relationship between life satisfaction and part-time work. Parental leave in the Netherlands is characterized by a reduction of working time. Thus, we are interested in the impact of parental leave on men and womens well-being.

Using LISS panel data for the Netherlands for the period 2008 to 2015, we empirically examine the impact of the interaction between having a child younger than eight and taking a parental leave on life satisfaction. We also look at the impact of partners leave on SWB. Using fixed effect model, we provide robust evidence that people with a young child are more satisfied with their life when they take a parental leave irrespective of gender.

According to those results, we attempt to understand how access to childcare and family income may mediate the impact of parental leave on subjective well-being. These results encourage us to rethink how family policies may give new incentives to impact parental well-being.