

Strengthening Health Systems by Empowering Women

Paternity Leave – Policy Analysis and Development Framework

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Dedication: A.N. would like to dedicate this paper to her father Dr. Garsevan Nioradze Ph.D., who has deeply inspired her work and life. For Ana, Dr. Nioradze has always been a role model of a father, and a dad a girl can only dream of. His love and support has been guiding Ana all her life and it will continue to do...

Table of Contents

Abstract:	3
Introduction:	4
Country Background	4
Georgia and Millenium Development Goals.....	4
Statement of Need	5
Methodology:	6
Results:	7
Situation in the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan (neighboring, similar countries) regarding the paternity leave.....	7
Table 2. Summary of health and development Statistics in 3 countries (general indicators).....	8
Table 3. Summary of the paternity laws (World Policy Forum).....	9
Is paid leave available for mothers of infants?	9
What is the maximum wage replacement rate of paid leave for mothers?	9
Is paid leave available for fathers of infants?	9
Is paid leave available for both parents of infants?	9
Table 4. The details of paternity law and uptake statistics in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan....	10
Is paid leave structured to incentivize working fathers to share infant caregiving responsibilities? ...	10
The role of constitutional rights and political environment in enacting paternity leave	11
Table 5. Constitution comparison part I.....	12
Table 6. Constitution Comparison part II.....	13
How should paternity leave policy be structured to maximize uptake and usage.....	14
Table 7. The structure of the policy, which maximizes the use	17
Discussion:	18
Conclusion:	20
Table 8. Main findings for the reader	21
Annex	23
Table 1. Variables	23
Is paid leave available for mothers of infants?	25
What is the maximum wage replacement rate of paid leave for mothers?	26
Is paid leave available for both parents of infants?	26
Acknowledgements	32
Bibliography	32

Abstract

As the year 2015 approaches, marking the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while numerous countries have made successful efforts towards achieving a number of the goals, progress towards MDG 3 (promoting gender equality and empowering women) has been relatively weak. Countries have used various ways to promote gender equality and empower women. One specific policy that could have an impact on MDG 3 is paternity leave. In this paper we research and analyze how paternity leave policy can have an impact on gender inequality and female empowerment through increased male participation in child rearing.

We focus the analysis on the post Soviet Union country, the Republic of Georgia, where according to the World Policy Forum, the paid paternity leave is not available to the fathers of newborns (World Policy Forum) while in neighbouring Armenia and Azerbaijan paternity leave can be taken for up to 14 weeks. Through communication with the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, the results show that paternity leave is not regulated by the law in the country and as proposed by ombudsman, the ministry is actively working on the revision of parental leave, in order to make it more gender inclusive. In addition, the Ministry is revising the experiences from other countries, to effectively address the issue of the paternity leave and make it available for the citizens of Georgia.

The purpose of this research paper is to discuss the paternity leave policy in depth, compare the practices from different countries and serve as a recommendation for the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia in the process of provisioning the law of paternity leave. The paper shares the examples and experiences from the countries with similar development backgrounds, discusses the macro environment related to a woman's constitutional rights and their link to the healthcare, which is the basement for gender inclusive policies and proposes the structure of the policy, which enforces the uptake and usage.

Finally, this paper shows the needs for a larger macro-supporting environment with acceptance of overall gender equity, which is associated with a higher level of paternity leave. This relationship is supported using data from 18 countries in the region. The discussion relates these results to the future steps for Georgia as they begin to formulate a specific policy for parental leave in the country.

Introduction:

Country Background

The republic of Georgia is a developing, lower-middle income country with the population of 4,341,000 and a gross national income per capita of \$7,040, located in Eastern Europe. Georgia shares borders with Turkey, Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (WHO, 2013). According to the Human Development Index, Georgia ranks 79th among 187 countries (Human Development Reports, 2014).

Georgia and Millenium Development Goals

Since 1990, United Nations Development programme has been monitoring the performance of Georgia towards the MDGs. Significant improvements have been made in the areas related to improving maternal and child health. The maternal mortality rate dropped from 23.4 in 2005 to 19.4 in 2010 (UNDP) and infant mortality dropped from 18.1 per 1,000 live births in 2005 to 11.0 in 2011 (UNDP). Georgia has already made progress in combating TB, HIV and malaria. However, the country is lagging behind in MDG3; promoting gender equality and empowering women. Domestic violence against women in Georgia has been gradually increasing for the past couple of years. In 2012, 308 women were reported as victims of domestic violence as opposed to 163, 166 and 253 cases in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2013). According to the UNDP, “despite the progress made in recent years, women are still under-represented at decision-making levels and disempowered economically“ (UNDP). Even though the female population of the country is 206.2 thousand more than male (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2013) the economical performance of women in Georgia is less by 20% than men and female seats in parliament account only for 6.6%. On average the job reimbursement of women is also 39% less than men in the country. According to the research report about the public perceptions on gender equality in politics and business 52% of men and women equally report that a woman can not be as successful in her career as man, due to the family responsibilities. 54 % of Georgian respondents also think that “politics is a dirty business, thus inappropriate for a woman” and 68% prioritize men as a presidential candidate. Economically empowered women though, contribute to the family welfare, reduce the economical burden for men as well as raise more educated and healthy generation (UNDP, 2013). Therefore, advancing towards MDG3 and creating the friendly environments for women at the workplace should also be the priority of men in the country.

The promotion of gender equality has broad economic, social and political elements. The president of Georgia declared 2015 the year of women and announced gender equality as one of the state priorities. In the patriarchal society like Georgia, involving men in women empowerment is one of the most effective ways to achieve the behavior change, which is the result of changed attitudes and perceptions. According to the International Labor Organization, paternity leave is the most effective policy among a range of “family-friendly” policies, which has proven to account for a rapid behavior change. Therefore, the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia was advised by the ombudsman to provision the necessary actions towards paternity leave (Public Defender of Georgia, 2014) in order to enhance the gender equality at the workplace.

Statement of Need

According to World Bank, female participation rate in the labor force has been on a rise in Georgia since 2009 and equals to 57% (World Bank, 2015). Every year, more women are involved in the labor force, but the burden of unpaid labor at home hasn't been observed to be changing so far.

The research by the UNDP Georgia showed that women are mainly responsible for taking care of sick family members as well as children, cooking, taking care of the house, cleaning and laundry. As for the childcare, more than 65% of those surveyed reported that they take care of children's everyday activities, entertainment and help them with education, while men are mostly involved in driving a child to doctor with mother. Consequently, 46% of surveyed population does not find it necessary to regulate the law on paternity leave in the country (UNDP Georgia, 2013). Even though a more accepting environment for sharing the family responsibilities for women in Georgia might incorporate a policy such as paternity leave.

The International Labor Organization defines paternity leave as “a short period of leave for the father immediately following childbirth, which aims to enable fathers to assist the mother to recover from childbirth, which is also crucial in establishing breastfeeding, take care of the newborn as well as other children, attend to the registration of the birth and other family-related responsibilities” (International Labor Organization, 2014, P. 52). While the duration of maternity leave in Georgia is 18 weeks reimbursed by 100% of previous earnings, there is no specific law or regulation on paternity leave in the country (International Labor Organization, 2014). Moreover, recently the duration of maternity leave has increased in Georgia, which may lead to a higher discrimination towards women from the side of employers. According to the

Gornick and Hegewisch, in the countries, where the leave for women are widely available, there is more room for discrimination towards them from the side of employers. Authors claim that in this case, managers tend to hire men more, especially on highly responsible jobs, as long as they fear that women might leave for a longer period of time due to the availability of maternity leave (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011).

This paper explores the paternity leave, discusses its benefits, analyzes the situation regarding the policy in neighbouring countries, and provides the success stories of policy enactment from the OECD countries. Later in the paper, we also analyze the recent gender environment of Georgia and based on the analysis, argue that the absence of provision for paternity leave discriminates against men as well as women.

This paper proposes paternity leave policy as a mechanism to incentivize fathers in participation of infant care and motivate them to contribute to a more gender equal society that embraces female empowerment. The main questions of our research are:

1. What is the situation regarding the paternity leave in the similar, neighboring countries, which have the same standards of development?
2. What are the macro conditions/environment necessary for a paternity leave policy to be enacted?
3. What does the literature and experiences of different European countries say about how paternity leave policy should be structured in order to maximize uptake/usage so the law has the greatest impact?
4. What is the cultural context and how the different country experiences regarding paternity leave can be transferred to Georgia?

Methodology:

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to answer the above mentioned research questions. In order to compare the availability and structure of the paternity leave in the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan we extracted data from the World Policy Forum and the reports of ILO. Variables assessed are summarized in the table 1 (Annex). The information about the macro environment such as constitutional rights to health and protection and availability of breastfeeding were collected from the World Policy Forum's Constitutions and Work-Family datasets (Variables are summarized in Annex table 1).

Table 2 summarizes the health and development Statistics in 3 countries: Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. General indicators and Human Development Indexes were retrieved from Human Development Reports and World Health Organization websites.

The Ministries of the Republic of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were contacted for the quantitative data about the uptake and usage and for the detailed description of the paternity leave policies.

Finally, a literature review was conducted on OECD countries about the structure of paternity policy that maximizes uptake and usage and has the greatest impact. Materials consisted of academic articles, which were located using the PubMed platform as well as reports obtained through Internet searches and a review of the official webpages of EU and OECD organizations including Eurofound, United Nations and ILO.

Results:

Situation in the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan (neighboring, similar countries) regarding the paternity leave

During the last 10 years the most significant changes in paternity leave policies have been observed in the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region. In 1994, none of the countries had laws regulating paternity leave, while the number increased in 2013 to five (International Labor Organization, 2014). According to Gornick and Hegewisch, there is a lack of evidence-based research on the transferability of the work and family policies across different countries, due to the social, political and cultural diversities, which affect the traditional gender roles (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011). Therefore, we decided to choose Armenia and Azerbaijan, two neighboring countries, which according to different indicators (summarized in Table 2) are reported to be on the same scale of development and hypothesize that their experiences could be transferable to Georgia. Table 2 provides the summary of the health and development statistics in 3 countries as well as shows the progress towards the indicators of MDG3.

Indicators defined by World Bank were identified in order to compare the progress towards gender equality in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. The indicators are as follows: Girls education, literacy level among women, increased early childhood development interventions, increased women's labor force participation and strengthened labor policies affecting women, improved women's access to credit, land and

other resources, promotion of women’s political rights and participation, expansion of reproductive health programs and family support policies (The World Bank, 2015). We found that literacy level is very high in 3 of the countries, but as shown in the table 2 the ratio of female to male labor participation rate is the highest in Azerbaijan.

As for the fourth indicator Armenia and Azerbaijan have already advanced since the countries introduced paternity leave, which is considered as a labor policy, which affects women. The last indicator “expanding reproductive health programs and family support policies” is discussed later in the paper as one of the major association between paternity leave and women empowerment.

Table 2. Summary of health and development Statistics in 3 countries (general indicators)

	Georgia	Armenia	Azerbaijan
Population	4,341,000	2,977,000	9,413,000
Life Expectancy at birth M/F	70/78	67/75	69/75
Human Development Index (HDI)	79	87	76
Gini Coefficient	42.1	31.3	33.71
Gross Domestic Product (GDP per capita 2013)	7,176.4	7,776.3	17,143.5
Total expenditure on health as % of GDP *WHO	9.2	4.5	5.4
Total expenditure on health per capita (Intl \$, 2012) *WHO	561	299	572
Literacy Level	99.7	99.6	99.8
Total Fertility Rate	1.8	1.7	1.9
Ratio of female to male labor force participation	75	75	90

rate (%) *The World Bank			
Under-five mortality rate (U5MR) (per 1000 live births)	20	16	35
Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	27.6	14	24.3

Source: Human Development Reports

According to the World Policy Forum, both the republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan provide paternity leave for the fathers of infants. As can be seen from the Table 3, the duration of leave for fathers in both these countries is 14 weeks or more, and the employers are reimbursed by the flat rate (World Policy Forum).

Table 3. Summary of the paternity laws (World Policy Forum)

	Georgia	Armenia	Azerbaijan
Is paid leave available for mothers of infants?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What is the maximum wage replacement rate of paid leave for mothers?	75-100%	75-100%	75-100%
Is paid leave available for fathers of infants?	No paid leave for fathers	14 weeks or more	14 weeks or more
What is the maximum wage replacement rate of paid leave for fathers?	No paid leave for fathers	Flat Rate	Flat Rate
Is paid leave available for both parents of infants?	Mothers only	Both Parents	Both Parents

In order to acquire the more detailed information about the parental policies in Georgia and uptake level of paternity leave in Armenia and Azerbaijan, we contacted the Ministries of Labor, Health and Social Security. As can be seen from the Table 4, the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia stated that fathers are eligible to take parental leave, but there is no specific law in the country regulating the paternity policy, therefore as a result in 2013-2014 only one man used the parental leave in the whole country. As for the Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ministries responded that the citizens are entitled to the specific paternity leave regulated by the labor code, but the country does not keep the record of men who actually used the leave. In terms of the incentives, according to the World Policy Forum, in Armenia and Azerbaijan fathers “only have access to paid parental leave, which is leave available to either parent. Research shows that women are more likely than men to use paid parental leave” (World Policy Forum) therefore countries do not provide any incentives for fathers in order to foster the uptake.

Table 4. The details of paternity law and uptake statistics in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

	Georgia	Armenia	Azerbaijan
The law which regulates the paternity leave	No law precisely for paternity leave	Labor code of the Republic of Armenia, Article 173	Labor code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Article 130
Is paid leave structured to incentivize working fathers to share infant caregiving responsibilities?	No paid leave for fathers	Parental leave but no incentives	Parental leave but no incentives
Uptake (2013-2014)	One father used the parental leave in the whole	The statistical information is not available	The statistical information is not available

	country		
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Later in the paper we will discuss the examples of successful enactment of paternity policies, which foster uptake, and introduce countries, which provide numerous incentives for fathers in order to motivate them to use the leave. In general, Huerta et.al., states that despite the duration and the length of the leave, the evidence from the Nordic countries, where family-friendly policies have been in place for more than 40 years, shows that views towards the division of work and care are more “gender equal” (Huerta, et al., 2013, p.14).

As mentioned above, Azerbaijan is one of the few countries, which provides paternity leave but doesn't offer any monetary incentives for fathers, while 90% of the countries with this policy provide some level of cash benefits or wage replacement. Therefore, in the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan we hypothesize that the uptake might be low due to the absence of incentives. But still, as we saw from the MDG3 indicators, countries which have paternity leave policy in place have already advanced towards gender equality by strengthening labor policies affecting women and expanding family support policies.

The role of constitutional rights and political environment in enacting paternity leave

According to the World Policy Forum, the constitution in Armenia broadly guarantees the women and girls' health rights, while in Azerbaijan women and girls' rights are specifically guaranteed. In other words, to quote directly from the World Policy Forum “Guaranteed to women means that the constitution explicitly guarantees the right to medical services to women in authoritative language. For example, constitutions in this category might guarantee citizens' right to medical services and guarantee that women enjoy equal social and economic rights as men” (World Policy Forum, 2015). World Policy Forum summarizes that the constitution of Armenia broadly guarantees the protection of health for women. In contrast, Georgia, according to the same source, is classified under the “general guarantee” which means that the health rights are guaranteed generally to all citizens of the country, and women are not mentioned “specifically”, therefore the provision of equal rights is not addressed (World Policy Forum, 2015).

While causality cannot be determined, it is interesting to hypothesize whether a broader, macro commitment to right for women and girls is related to micro policies such as paternity leave. More broadly, does the process of promoting gender equality and women empowerment necessitate a macro environment created and strengthened by the policies in the constitution? Azerbaijan, with specific guarantees for women and girls, was one of the countries in the region which established paternity leave policy during the years of 1994-2013, while in 1997 according to the newly adopted healthcare act the healthcare rights of women and men were declared equal and several articles in the law addressed the specific rights of women’s health (United Nations, 2004), Moreover, consistent with their apparent support of gender equality, Armenia and Azerbaijan working women “are guaranteed paid maternal leave for at least 6 months and paid breastfeeding breaks for at least 6 months, which allows women who choose to return to work before the duration of their maternal leave entitlement expires to continue breastfeeding their infant” (World Policy Forum, 2015), whereas women in Georgia have only one option, and have to choose “either guaranteed at least 6 months of paid breastfeeding breaks, but no or less than 6 months of paid maternal leave or guaranteed at least 6 months of paid maternal leave, but no or less than 6 months of paid breastfeeding breaks” (See the Table 5).

Table 5. Constitution comparison part I

	Georgia	Armenia	Azerbaijan
Does the constitution guarantee women and girls’ health rights?	General Guarantee	Broadly Guaranteed	Specifically Guaranteed
Does the constitution take any approach to the protection of health for women?	General approach	Broad Approach	Specific Approach
Are working mothers guaranteed paid options to facilitate exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months?	Only one option	Both	Both
Is paid leave available for fathers of infants?	No paid leave	14 weeks or more	14 weeks or more

In order to explore this relationship further, the link between the macro environment for rights for women and girls (constitutional approaches) and how this links with more specific micro policies, such as paternity leave, we examined this relationship across a larger number of countries; 18 countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regional group according to the International Labor Organization (International Labor Organization, 2014). As a result, according to the data obtained from the World Policy Forum, we found that the situation in 13 countries out of 18 supports our argument. In other words, like Azerbaijan and Armenia, Serbia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Russian Federation, Uzbekistan and Croatia offer “14 weeks or more” paternity leave as well as specifically guarantee women and girls health rights as indicated in the constitution (only the constitution of Serbia states “broadly guaranteed”). Bosnia and Herzegovina offers less than 3 weeks leave for fathers and broadly guarantees women and girls health rights, while the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has the same length of the paternity leave and specific approach to the protection of health for women. The situation in Turkmenistan is similar to the one in Georgia, the paid leave is not available for fathers and the constitution takes a general approach to the protection of health for women. Neither Turkey nor Kyrgyzstan offer paid leave for fathers, and according to the World Policy Forum, their approach to guaranteeing women’ and girls’ health rights is aspirational, meaning that “the constitution protects the right to health, public health or medical services for women but does not use language strong enough to be considered a guarantee” (World Policy Forum, 2015).

From these findings we can state that there may be an association between the paternity leave policy and the constitutional protections and guarantees. As we can see above, countries, which have designed the macro environment in a gender inclusive way and their constitution recognizes the specific health needs for women are more likely to provide paternity leave for the families. Therefore, the role of constitutional rights and political environment is crucial in enacting paternity leave.

Table 6. Constitution Comparison part II

	Length of paternity leave	Does the constitution take any approach to the protection of health for women?	Does the constitution guarantee women and girls’ health rights?
Ukraine	14 weeks and	Specifically	Specifically Guaranteed

	more	Guaranteed	
Serbia	14 weeks and more	Broadly Guaranteed	Broadly Guaranteed
Croatia	14 weeks and more	Specifically Guaranteed	Specifically Guaranteed
Russian Federation	14 weeks and more	Specifically Guaranteed	Specifically Guaranteed
Uzbekistan	14 weeks and more	Specifically Guaranteed	Specifically Guaranteed
Tajikistan	14 weeks and more	Specifically Guaranteed	Specifically Guaranteed
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Less than 3 weeks	Broadly Guaranteed	Broadly Guaranteed
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Less than 3 weeks	Specifically Guaranteed	Specifically Guaranteed
Turkmenistan	No paid leave	General guarantee	General guarantee
Turkey	No paid leave	Aspirational	Aspirational
Kyrgyzstan	No paid leave	Specifically Guaranteed	Aspirational

How should paternity leave policy be structured to maximize uptake and usage

It is important to note that cross-national comparisons are challenging, especially looking at the countries with different income levels and development indicators, though some general conclusions can still be drawn about the structures of the policies that are associated with higher uptake and has proven to be foundational elements for behavior change. Therefore, the lessons learned from different countries, can be applicable to Georgia, if we would control for the specific environment and take into account the political,

cultural and economical differences. Unlike maternity leave, there are no well-established and agreed-upon standards for the structure of paternity leave, however, in 2009 ILO recommended that all the governments revise their workplace policies in order to encourage more balanced sharing of parental responsibilities after childbirth, and recommended the provision of incentives to increase men's use of parental leave and employer's full enforcement of existing policies.

According to the report provided by Eurofound, which discusses the trends in the uptake of paternity leave, there are core characteristics of the law, influencing the usage of the leave. Such as: "amount of compensation, duration, provisions for sharing between the two parents and flexibility" (Eurofound, 2015, p.5). Eurofound researchers also emphasize that in addition to other abovementioned factors, the level of uptake is highly influenced by whether the implementation of a new paid leave policy ensures both employees and employers receive timely information about the leave, and takes into consideration the fear of employees to be isolated from work for a long time. Job security is one of the major determinants which influences the usage level, while fathers also take into consideration the employment of their partners (Eurofound, 2015).

Recent evidence suggests that although there has been increased albeit gradual enactment of paternity leave policies, usage and uptake is still low even in nations, which have long had policies in place (Huerta et.al (2013).

According to Huerta et al., as shown in the table 7, the research in Austria, Czech Republic and Poland found that paternity usage is relatively low, due to the fully transferable nature of the policy (Huerta, et al., 2013). In contrast, in countries, which have implemented compulsory paternity leave policies, such as Chile, Portugal and Italy, uptake has increased significantly (International Labor Organization, 2014).

The highest level of uptake has also been reported in the countries where leave is paid well and the number of days are lost if not taken by the father. These countries include Sweden, Iceland and Norway where around 90% of fathers use some part of the leave at least (Huerta, et al., 2013) (Heymann & McNeill, 2013).

As summarized in table 7, a few examples illustrate the range of ways that nations have used to increase uptake by men. In France, new law is in place, which allows each parent of a child to use the non-transferable parental leave. This condition maximizes the benefit for the family in terms of the length of the leave, while the penalty is the days lost if not taken. Finland has also followed the path of France, as they have seen that while granting a freedom of choice of parental leave, mothers were the one who would use it,

therefore according to the new regulation in the policy, if a parent doesn't take a leave which is specifically granted to them, family ends up losing these days.

In Sweden, the situation is slightly different. The family is granted by 480 days of leave, from which parents could take only 30 days simultaneously. According to the Eurofound report this regulation has proven to be successful, again because of the "exclusiveness". It is also worth mentioning that in case of equally sharing the parental leave Swedish couples are granted equality cash bonuses. Italy, decided to respond the problem of the law uptake in the country by providing €400 per month to fathers who take the leave immediately after the childbirth, during the first year. The benefit is increased by €50 if the duration of leave is 3 months or more. And again, Italy is one of the countries, which used strong enforcement tools of the policy and made the leave mandatory for the fathers. Finally, in Portugal, where the policy is compulsory as well, the take up rate of paternity leave has increased significantly, by 21.4 percentage points from 2008 to 2013 (Eurofound, 2015).

As for the outlier, United States is one of the countries where "statutory leave entitlements" are not available for fathers. In case of need, citizens have an access to a "12 weeks, unpaid, job-protected leave through the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)" (Moss, 2011, p.255). According to Huerta et.al., despite the absence of the legal provisions, 80% of fathers in United States still took the days off from work, following the childbirth. The difference though, between U.S. and the countries, which have entitled statutory leave, was observed in the amount of days taken off. 90% of fathers took two or more weeks off in Denmark, while in U.S. only 33% could afford to do the same (Huerta, et al., 2013). Authors claim that this trend can be attributed to the difference in leave entitlements. The evidence from Portugal, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway show that the policy is more effective, when the leave is explicitly reserved for fathers. According to Heymann, Iceland witnessed more than 30% increase in the uptake level of the paternity policy, when it introduced the 3 months non-transferable leave. Author claims that, when leave is specifically allocated to fathers, men are more likely to take it (Heymann & McNeill, Children's Chances, 2013).

The funding for payment during the leave varies. In some cases, it is the federal government, in others it is a social insurance fund to which some combination of employers, employees and government make contributions (Heymann & Earle, Raising the Global Floor, 2010).

Table 7. The structure of the policy, which maximizes the use

Study	Countries studied	Main findings re: uptake
Huerta et al., 2013	Sweden, Iceland and Norway	Paternity policy is the most effective when its non-transferable between the parents of infants
Eurofound, 2015; Jorge Cabrita and Felix Wohlgemuth	France, Finland, Croatia, Sweden	
Moss, 2011	Austria, Czech Republic and Poland	When the paternity leave can be fully transferred to mothers of infants, the uptake level from fathers is less than 3%
Eurofound, 2015; Jorge Cabrita and Felix Wohlgemuth	OECD Countries	Policy is the most effective when the compensation is relatively high and job protection is in place
Huerta et al., 2013	Australia, Denmark, United Kingdom, United States	Fathers are more likely to be involved in childcare activities if the leave is available for 2 or more weeks
Eurofound, 2015; Jorge Cabrita and Felix Wohlgemuth	Austria	In Austria, the income dependent payment scheme provides the compensations up to 80% of previous income. Fathers tend to favor shorter leaves and income dependent option
Eurofound, 2015; Jorge Cabrita and Felix Wohlgemuth	Italy, Sweden, Austria	Policy is the most effective if fathers are incentivized (cash benefits or extra leave days) to share the leave with mothers of infants
Huerta et al., 2013		When the payments are low, the usage of the paternity leave is low and fathers tend to stay at home shorter period of time

Eurofound, 2015; Jorge Cabrita and Felix Wohlgemuth	Belgium, Portugal, Italy	Policy is the most effective when couple of days immediately following the childbirth are mandatory to take
Heymann & McNeill, Children's Chances, 2013	Portugal, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway	“Fathers are more likely to take leave when it is specifically allocated paternity leave”

Discussion:

As mentioned in the previous section, drawing conclusions from the cross-national comparisons can be challenging, especially looking at the countries with different income levels and development indicators. Moreover, it is hard to discuss the transferability of the paternity policy elements, due to a patriarchal Georgian culture, which highly affects traditional gender roles in the country.

In this section, we will discuss the benefits of paternity leave and their applicability to Georgia, introduce the reader with the specifics of Georgian culture and accordingly propose the policy customization strategies, which also encompass the structure of the paternity policy that is associated with higher uptake and behavior change.

Behavior change is probably one of the most challenging aims a policy maker can have. In the patriarchal societies like Georgia with strong cultural, traditional and religious believes promotion of gender equality can only be based on a collective impact which ultimately aims for changing attitudes.

Paternity leave policies have become more prevalent as some countries began to recognize the importance of both paternal and maternal bonding with a new baby especially in the time just after childbirth. According to Huerta et.al., since the paternity leave is associated with the critical and highly important point in life, such as the childbirth, it is more likely to affect the behavior of the parent, then other policies. Authors claim that fathers who utilize the leave following the childbirth are more likely to be involved in childcare activities, such as: changing diapers, bathing, getting up at night, etc. Therefore, introducing the compulsory paternity leave in Georgia, for couple of days immediately following childbirth can turn out to be double effective, since it will increase the uptake level as well as suggested by Huerta et al.,

sharing the caregiving responsibilities from the beginning may lead to a continued engagement of fathers in the childcare and therefore challenge the stereotyped gender roles associated with it (Huerta, et al., 2013).

As discussed in the introduction, according to UNDP research report about the public perceptions on gender equality in politics and business, in Georgia, mothers are perceived as solely caregivers and fathers - breadwinners, therefore according to Walzer the mental approaches of parents and social expectation differentiates mothers from fathers and creates patterns based on the “gender” of a caregiver (Walzer, 1996). By introducing non-transferable paternity leave in Georgia, exclusively reserved for fathers can challenge these stereotyped roles. Additionally, as experts claim father’s involvement in the caregiving process will not only contribute to the better family relationships but also will create more gender equal environment at homes, influencing other children in the family, which consequently can lead to more sustainable impact for the future (Huerta, et al., 2013).

Even though “culturally” women in Georgia are not expected to be breadwinners for the family, in most of the cases they contribute to the revenue of the household, play a crucial part in the organizational issues and have the caregiving responsibilities as discussed earlier in the paper. Childbirth additionally is associated not only with physical but also mental labor. In an observational study of 50 new parents (25 couples) Walzer examined the association between the mental health and the division of infant care and found that, according to 3 main categories: worrying, acquiring the information and management of care, women tend to be more involved and mentally burdened in infant care than men. Author suggests that shared responsibilities in childcare will decrease the frustration levels women experience in marriage and reduce the stress resulting from the mental labor of child care (Walzer, 1996).

The known benefits of paternity leave according to the International Labor Organization also includes fostering the establishment of breastfeeding (International Labor Organization, 2014), which can be very helpful for working mothers in Georgia, since as we saw in table 5, they do not have efficient environment to facilitate exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months.

As we saw in the previous section, the evidence from different countries, which have paternity policy in place aligned with incentives, suggests that the following, fundamental characteristics are associated with higher male uptake: 1) specific entitlement - the leave exclusively reserved for fathers 2) compulsory paternity leave for couple of days, immediately following the childbirth, 3) Non-transferable days, which will be lost if not taken by the father, 4) Adequate income replacement and job-protection. We believe that these

are the core characteristics that might be transferable to Georgia, since they concentrate more on human behavior other than the economical strength of the country.

Given the current economic environment in the Republic of Georgia, organizations might face financial challenges, while offering cash benefits for promoting paternity leave. But since, one of the main goals of the policy is to change the attitudes and challenge the stereotyped gender roles, we suggest allocating specific entitlements for paternity leave, prioritizing the enforcement of the law and making it non-transferable and compulsory for couple of days immediately following the childbirth. Clear communication of the leave benefits and provision of robust information to the employee as well as employer, can also contribute to the dissemination and increased usage of the policy. All this, accompanied by adequate income replacement and job-protection can lead to the rapid increase in the uptake level.

Hence, high level of law uptake doesn't necessarily guarantee the high involvement of fathers in the infant caregiving taking into account the strength of gender roles in Georgia, therefore future studies are needed to ascertain if and how the increased uptake has changed men's role in childrearing.

Conclusion:

As we saw from the example of neighboring Azerbaijan and Armenia, family-friendly policies, which affect women, can advance the country towards creation of the gender inclusive environments. Paternity leave, already discussed on a larger scale is micro policy associated with macro environments. If Georgia would follow the path of its neighbors and introduce paternity leave without any incentives, then it is more likely that the uptake level in the country will be low, which wouldn't necessarily lead to a changing stereotypes and behavior. This paper recommends that Georgia enact the paternity leave law, transfer the fundamental elements of the successful structure proposed from different countries and regulate the policy by aiming at maximizing the usage. Moreover, in order to advance in the process of women empowerment, we propose the revision of the gender roles in the constitution, which are formally correlated with paternity leave, in order to establish the effective macro environment for the practice of gender equality in the country.

In its review of maternity and paternity policies at work in 185 countries and territories, the International Labor Organization concludes that paternity leave alone cannot challenge the traditional

gender roles that still exist in most countries, but such policies are an important first step in that they publicly recognize the responsibilities of the society as a whole to build the gender equal environment at the workplace and declare that the caregiving work of men is valued as much as of women (International Labor Organization, 2014).

Finally, as the gender environment is highly sensitive in Georgia, further research is needed to study the effectiveness of the leave in the country context, considering its cultural norms, attitudes and believes. Moreover, future behavioral studies are needed for studying the efficiency of the paternity leave in Georgia, which stands for fair division of childcare responsibilities, making sure that the policy directly affects behavior change and the leave is not used for personal matters by majority of men.

Table 8. Main findings for the reader

The Research Question	Variables Assessed	Results
What do neighboring, similar countries do in terms of paternity leave policy;	Does Azerbaijan and Armenia have paternity leave law? If yes, how it is structured? What is the level of uptake and usage?	Azerbaijan and Armenia provide paternity laws for their citizens. Men are entitled to take 14 weeks or more paid parental leave. But paternity leave specifically is not paid, therefore even though the countries do not record the uptake, we can assume from the examples of other countries that the usage is very low. Lessons learned: Without law enforcement and provision of incentives for fathers, the policy won't be as effective.
What macro conditions are supportive and necessary for paternity leave to be effective?	Do the constitutions of the countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia region guarantee women and girls health rights? Do the constitutions take any approach to the	13 countries out of 18 support our argument that in the countries where paternity law is available, constitution is more gender inclusive and takes specific approach to the protection of health for women.

	protection of health for women?	
How should Georgia's policy be structured based on other countries' experiences on how to structure the pat leave for maximum uptake	What are the mechanisms to increase the uptake level?	Lessons learned: the policy is the most effective when its non-transferable between the parents of infants, when couple of days immediately following the childbirth are mandatory to take, when the compensation is relatively high and the job protection is in place.

Annex

Table 1. Variables

Variable	Source	Definition	Codes
Life Expectancy at birth M/F	WHO	“Average number of years that a newborn is expected to live if current mortality rates continue to apply”	Number of years
Human Development Index (HDI)	Human Development Reports	“The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. The HDI is the geometric mean of normalized indices for each of the three dimensions”.	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP per capita 2013)	The World Bank	“GDP is gross domestic product converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity rates”.	Current International \$
Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate (%)	The World Bank	“Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period”.	%
Is leave available for fathers of infants?	World Policy Forum	“Paid leave for fathers includes both paid paternity leave, which is leave reserved for fathers of infants, and paid parental leave, which is leave for either parent of an infant, that can be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Paid Leave • Less than 3 Weeks • 3-13 Weeks

			<p>taken by men”</p> <p>“We report the leave available in weeks under normal conditions, excluding extended leave periods under extraordinary circumstances”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 Weeks or more
<p>What is the maximum wage replacement rate of paid leave for parents?</p>	<p>World Forum</p> <p>Policy</p>		<p>“In cases where wage-replacement rates vary during leave, the maximum rate shows the highest level of wage replacement available over the course of the leave”.</p> <p>“A flat rate means all mothers receive the same amount while taking paid leave, regardless of previous salary”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No paid leave • Flat rate • 30% - 65% • 66% - 84% • 85% - 100%
<p>Is paid leave structured to incentivize working fathers to share infant caregiving responsibilities?</p>	<p>World Forum</p> <p>Policy</p>		<p>“No paid leave for fathers means that fathers do not have access to paid paternity leave, which is leave reserved for fathers of infants, or paid parental leave, which is leave available to either parent”.</p> <p>“Parental leave but no incentives mean that fathers only have access to paid parental leave, which is leave available to either parent. Research shows that women are more likely than men to use paid parental leave”.</p> <p>“Two weeks or fewer reserved for fathers means that fathers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No paid leave for fathers • Parental leave but no incentives • 2 weeks or fewer reserved for fathers • More than 2 weeks reserved for fathers • Leave length or payment bonus for

		<p>have less than two weeks of paid paternity leave. In these cases, they may have additional leave available through shared parental leave”.</p> <p>“More than 2 weeks reserved for fathers means that fathers have more than two weeks of paid paternity leave”.</p> <p>“Leave length or payment bonus for fathers sharing leave means there are incentives for parents to share their parental leave. Parents may receive additional leave if both parents use parental leave or a higher payment while they are on leave. These measures encourage fathers to take parental leave”.</p>	<p>fathers sharing leave</p>
<p>Is paid leave available for mothers of infants?</p>	<p>World Policy Forum</p>	<p>“Paid leave for mothers includes both paid maternity leave, which is leave reserved for mothers of infants, and paid parental leave, which is leave for either parent of an infant, that can be taken by women”.</p> <p>“We report the leave available in weeks under normal conditions, excluding extended leave periods under extraordinary circumstances such as childbirth complications”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No paid leave • Less than 14 weeks • 14 - 25.9 weeks • 26 - 51.9 weeks • 52 weeks or more

			<p>“International Labor Organization standards state that women should be guaranteed at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave”.</p> <p>“The World Health Organization recommends at least 6 months of breastfeeding, which is facilitated by paid leave”.</p>	
What is the maximum wage replacement rate of paid leave for mothers?	World Forum	Policy	<p>“In cases where wage-replacement rates vary during leave, the maximum rate shows the highest level of wage replacement available over the course of the leave”.</p> <p>“A flat rate means all mothers receive the same amount while taking paid leave, regardless of previous salary. One country, China, uses an adjusted flat rate. The flat rate is set at the level of the average wage of the company”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No paid leave • Flat rate or adjusted flat rate • 25% - 65% • 66% - 84% • 85% - 100%
Is paid leave available for both parents of infants?	World Forum	Policy	<p>“No, neither parent means that there is not at least 4 weeks of paid leave available for parents of infants”.</p> <p>“Fathers only means that only paid leave specifically designated for fathers of infants is available for at least 4 weeks and there is no gender-neutral leave or maternity leave available for at least 4 weeks. There are no countries that only</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, neither parent • Mothers only • Both parents

		<p>provide paid leave for fathers”.</p> <p>“Mothers only means that only paid leave specifically designated for mothers of infants is available for at least 4 weeks and there is no gender-neutral leave or paternity leave available for at least 4 weeks”.</p> <p>“Both parents means that there is at least 4 weeks of paid leave available for either parent to take, whether it is through maternity or paternity leave specifically for mothers and fathers, gender-neutral parental leave that can be used by either parent, or a combination of these types of leave”.</p>	
Uptake level	<p>The ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia</p> <p>Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia</p> <p>Ministry of Labor</p>	<p>The number men in the country who took the paternity leave during the year 2013-2014-2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The official statistical information is not available •The number of men

	<p>and Social Protection of Azerbaijan</p>		
<p>Does the constitution guarantee women and girls' health rights?</p>	<p>World Policy Forum</p>	<p>“Approaches to health include the right to health, public health, or medical services”.</p> <p>“No, none means that the constitution does not explicitly mention health protections for women. This does not mean that the constitution denies these protections, but that it does not explicitly include them for women or all citizens”.</p> <p>“General approach to health, not specific to women means that the constitution explicitly guarantees the right to health, public health, or medical services to citizens, but does not specifically guarantee any of these rights to women or broadly protect women from discrimination”.</p> <p>“Aspirational for women means that the constitution protects the right to health, public health or medical services for women but does not use language strong enough to be considered a guarantee. For example, the nation will endeavor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, none • General guarantee • Aspirational • Broadly guaranteed • Specifically, guaranteed

		<p>to provide the right to health for women or the state intends to provide medical services to citizens and women enjoy equal rights as men”.</p> <p>“General approach to health and broad protection from gender discrimination means that the constitution guarantees the right to health, public health, or medical services to citizens and provides general protection against discrimination based on gender, but does not specifically guarantee any approach to health for women”.</p> <p>“Guaranteed to women means that the constitution explicitly guarantees the right to health, medical services, or public health to women in authoritative language. For example, constitutions in this category might guarantee women’s right to health or make it the state’s responsibility to ensure the protection of public health and women enjoy equal rights as men”.</p>	
<p>Does the constitution take any approach to the protection of health for women?</p>	<p>World Policy Forum</p>	<p>See Above*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, none • General guarantee • Aspirational • Broadly guaranteed

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifically, guaranteed
<p>Are working mothers guaranteed paid options to facilitate exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months?</p>	<p>World Policy Forum</p>	<p>“Paid leave for mothers includes both paid maternity leave, which is leave reserved for mothers of infants, and paid parental leave, which is leave for either parent of an infant, that can be taken by women”.</p> <p>“No, none means that women are not entitled to at least 6 months of paid maternal leave or paid breastfeeding breaks at work. Women may be entitled to shorter periods of paid maternal leave or paid breastfeeding breaks, but these are too short to support the WHO recommendation of at least 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding”.</p> <p>“Either maternal leave or breastfeeding breaks only means that women are either guaranteed at least 6 months of paid breastfeeding breaks, but no or less than 6 months of paid maternal leave or that women are guaranteed at least 6 months of paid maternal leave, but no or less than 6 months of paid breastfeeding breaks”.</p> <p>“Both means that women are guaranteed paid maternal leave</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • Only one option • Both

		for at least 6 months and paid breastfeeding breaks for at least 6 months. This allows women who choose to return to work before the duration of their maternal leave entitlement expires to continue breastfeeding their infant”.	
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