FATHERS, CHILDCARE AND WORK: CULTURES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES

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FATHERS, CHILDCARE AND WORK: CULTURES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES

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FOREWORD

Changes in the way men perceive and practice fatherhood, particularly with regard to small children, are the main indicator of how the so-called gender revolution initiated by women is affecting men and ideals, as well as practices, of maleness. Initiated under the pressure of increasing mothers' participation in the labour market, these changes are mainly framed within a gender equality discourse, further specified in terms of a rebalancing mothers' and fathers' responsibilities with regard to childcare. As also the research presented in this volume shows, gender equality in parenthood practices is far from being not only achieved, but also fully supported by legal regulations and social policies and there are substantial differences across countries, even within the EU. National and local gender cultures, in combination with welfare state and enterprise arrangements shape different contexts within which norms and practices of parenthood are developed and negotiated, reducing, or on the contrary strengthening differences between mothers and fathers.

The gender equality discourse has been, and still is, necessary for destructuring stereotypes, making visible the implicit assumptions about men and women, fathers and mothers that are built in social arrangements, including social policies, workplace organizations, career structures and expectations and so forth. Since the beginning, the gender equality perspective made it explicit that in order to achieve equality also men, and assumptions about their roles and (in)capabilities should change. Since motherhood constitutes (better, is framed as being) the main handicap women experience in labour force participation, fatherhood has become the main focus of the needed changes in men's behaviour within the family and in the workplace. The turning point, not yet achieved to the same degree, everywhere, has been the introduction of paternity leaves and in particular of an individual fathers' entitlement to parental leave. Similar to working mothers, working fathers have thus been officially acknowledged as (potential) carers of their newborn children, therefore entitled to some 'time to care', and to be with their children. This change, however, as shown also in this book, is often little more than symbolic and meets constraints and even explicit disincentives, not only due to the persistence of traditional (female and male) gender models, but also to old and new work cultures and arrangements. Either because of high

competition in the high-skilled jobs or of the perceived risks in an insecure labour market, fathers often feel that they cannot afford to fulfill the idea of an equally shared parenthood. Furthermore, many fathers and mothers feel ambivalent with regard to the ideal itself of an equally shared parenthood, since they have no tradition to fall upon and fear to fail either as parents or as men or women. This ambivalence, in my opinion at least, is too easily dismissed as resistance, 'traditionalism' or 're-traditionalization' (when formerly egalitarian couples are involved). It might also suggest a resistance to an ideal of equality where fathers and mothers do exactly the same things in the same way, rather than exploring different patterns of division of labour, according to their, negotiated, perception of their capabilities and what is best for each one involved. In any case, this ambivalence, instead of being allowed to be elaborated, is often strengthened by the 'experts' and by public opinion makers, a role which is often underestimated and that it is rightly highlighted in this book.

While debating on the constraints in achieving an equal sharing fatherhood, it should not be forgotten that, although the process of redefinition of fatherhood has first developed under the pressure of women demands and within a gender equality discourse, is affecting also men, and social contexts, outside such a framework. The ideal of the 'caring father' is spreading irrespective of the support of policies and without necessarily involving a strive towards gender equality or a change in the gender division of labour. It involves rather the claim to (and/or encouragement to develop) dimensions of self and of the father-(small) child relationship – tenderness, pleasure – that previously were either suppressed or censored. While this change affects the use of time of the fathers involved, who devote more of their leisure time to their children, it does not affect either their working time or a reorganization of policies or of workplace arrangements. It represents a 'modernization' of the father as a 'secondary carer' that is very similar, actually symmetrical, to that which occurs when the mother becomes a 'secondary earner' and which is present also among many interviews in this book.

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INTRODUCTION: CARING FATHERS IN DISCOURAGING CONTEXTS? A MULTIDIMENSIONAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rosy Musumeci and Arianna Santero[1]

> In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die.
>
> –Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*, 1925

1. THE GOALS OF THIS BOOK

Contemporary fathers appear to be in a transitional phase. They are the sons of a long and complex social and cultural change that has not yet reached a conclusion.

Both definitions and practices of fatherhood have changed, in the last decades, especially in western countries. More and more contemporary fathers express the need to be more involved in childcare than their forefathers (Cowan & Cowan, 1992). They are 'permeable', 'porous' fathers opting for the strategy of emotional accessibility, exchange and sharing of transparency and visibility in childcare (Ghiglione, 2015). Caring practices

(Doucet, 2006; Featherstone, 2009; Miller, 2010; Ranson, 2015) and 'intimate' emotional bonds (Dermott, 2008) have been increasingly acknowledged at social and cultural levels as crucial components of 'good fatherhood'. This belief has also been reinforced by the findings of a part of the so-called expert knowledge demonstrating the positive outcomes for children's development and well-being of such an involvement/father–children relationship beyond fathers' economic support (see e.g. Coltrane, 1996; Lamb, 2004; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000), especially in the case of cooperative relations between partners (Featherstone, 2009).

At the same time, in spite of the rise in job insecurity in most of the post-fordist globalized economies and the increased – even if still comparatively disadvantaged and nationally/territorially jeopardized – presence of women and mothers in the labour market, ideals about fathers as (the main) breadwinner persist across countries, with different meanings, within wider – changing – 'hegemonic masculinities' (Connel, 1987, 1995; Connel & Messerschmidt, 2005). Fathers in many countries still have to be the main breadwinner. At the same time, the issue of reconciliation also is increasingly seen also as a male issue. Reconciling paid work and care responsibilities is becoming one of the main challenges for (at least western) contemporary fathers as well as for family policies oriented towards the dual earner – dual carers model. Thus, growing attention has been recently dedicated in political and academic debates worldwide on fathers' (and not only mothers') work–life balance (Crespi & Ruspini, 2015) and their 'dilemmas' (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007) in reconciling paid work and care responsibilities.

However, cross-country research on these new fathers, especially involving non-western countries, is still limited (Crespi & Ruspini, 2016; Pattnaik, 2013), with exceptions of Europe and North America (Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015; Hobson, 2002; Hobson & Fahlén, 2009). By using a global perspective, the book brings together qualitative and quantitative empirical analyses on how fathers achieve and represent their gendered work–care balance and how national policies, enterprises and experts, in nationally specific institutional contexts, provide formal and informal resources, constraints, expectations and social norms shaping fathers' practices. On the one side, it examines how fathers, with different social origins/positions, fulfill their roles both within the family and at the workplace and what kind of (public) support they can rely upon in combining these roles; on the other, it explores an area of research that has been little investigated: the role played by the cultures at both the company level and experts' level (e.g. obstetricians, gynaecologists, paediatricians and psychologists) in shaping the notions of 'good' fatherhood

and fathering, to which individuals are required to conform, and to which they comply or, on the contrary, resist.

2. THREE ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS TO CONCEPTUALISE FATHERS' WORK-FAMILY BALANCE ACROSS COUNTRIES

The first analytical dimension we consider to understand why changes and persistence around fathers work-family balance vary cross-nationally is at the macro-institutional level, 'fatherhood regime'. This concept was originally coined by Hobson and Morgan (2002) to analyse country-specific obligations (to support children economically after divorce) and rights (related to work-family balance and access to children after divorce). Following Gregory and Milner's (2005, 2011) subsequent development of this concept, in this book we consider three factors shaping fathers' rights and obligations within a national institutional framework: the normative public discourse; the state family laws and policies; and the (fathers') employment-related rights and the national working time regime. Since these three vectors are country-specific, fatherhood is cross-nationally configured in different ways. For example, looking at work-family policies, nationally based differences in opportunities for fathers, to reconcile paid work and care responsibilities through parental and paternity leaves, emerge in the European context (O'Brien, Brandth, & Kvande, 2007), although fathers in all the countries wish to spend more time with their children (Hobson & Fahlén, 2009).

The second (related) analytical dimension we consider is at the micro-individual level: the gender mechanisms behind the fathers' (and mothers') gendered practices, decisions and 'strategies' (Hochschild, 1989) concerning work-family balance and care arrangements (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). This dimension has been proposed and developed particularly within the European literature on transition to parenthood (e.g. Fox, 2009; Grunow & Evertsson, 2016). According to this literature, both parental expectations and beliefs on what is 'best for the child' are oriented towards cultural and social gender norms as well as economic and material considerations of the available resources (i.e. Fox, 2009; such as wage gender gap) and of expected impact of motherhood and fatherhood penalties in the paid labour market. Moreover, doing (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and undoing (Deutsch, 2007) gender processes stand behind individuals' and couples' decisions, practices, plans and negotiations on work-family balance. In fact, fathers'

narratives and expectations (Miller, 2011; Musumeci, Naldini, & Santero, 2015; Plantin, Månsson, & Kearney, 2003) also contain – and are tools to cope with – gaps between ideals and practices (Hochschild, 1989; Santero & Naldini, 2017).

The third and last interrelated dimension that we analyse in this book is at the meso-level. It refers to how the gendered cultures and ideologies of work organizations on the one hand (Acker, 1990; Gerson, 2009; Lewis, 1997; Murgia & Poggio, 2009, 2013) and childcare experts on the other hand (Faircloth, Hoffman, & Layne, 2013; Furedi, 2001; Hays, 1996) may contribute to reinforce or reduce both the fathers' 'sense of entitlement' around work-family supports (Lewis, 1997; Gatrell & Cooper, 2016), as well as ideals and norms of a 'good' father as (primary/autonomous) caregiver (Faircloth et al., 2013). The two main findings from previous studies that are important to mention here, even if based (mainly) on global North countries, are as follows. First, at least in the United States, 'fathers appear to be most closely affected by intensified workplace cultures, as men with infant children are shown in particular to work longer hours than at any other point in their careers' (Gatrell & Cooper, 2016, p. 136; Halford, 2006; Hochschild, 1997). In other countries (and social classes), hours of employment (Fagan & Norman, 2016) and atypical or asocial working time may affect fathers' work-family reconciliation problems in a 24/7 global economy. Moreover, fatherhood penalties in the paid labour market are observable when fathers reduce their working time (i.e. Coltrane et al., 2013) – similar to the well-documented – far from being resolved – motherhood penalties. Second, while ideals on 'intensive mothering' tend to be globally widespread (Faircloth et al. 2013; Hays, 1996), ideology on the caring roles of fathers as an 'assistant' (Habib, 2012) seems to be persistent in the – yet non-homogeneous – cultures regarding 'proper' parenting (Faircloth & Murray, 2015; Martin, 2015; Saraceno, 2016).

By integrating these three macro-, micro- and meso-dimensions – namely, the 'fatherhood regimes', the doing–undoing gender mechanisms and the cultures of workplaces and infant experts – the theoretical background of this book is rooted in a fluid notion of structure, also including individual agency, as understood by Risman (2004) and Giddens (1984) terms, respectively considering gender as a social structure operating at various levels, and also how this structure is changeable by human agency (for studies on fathers using such an approach, see e.g. Doucet, 2006). This will help us to explore which aspects are under-investigated, particularly in the 12 countries involved in this book, both across these contexts and within the country, taking into account socioeconomic and multicultural diversities.

Within this frame, the book addresses the following questions: Is it possible to identify similar processes or factors encouraging fathers' involvement in childcare in different contexts at institutional, organizational–cultural and individual levels? Is it possible to identify 'global' trends shaping contemporary fathers' work-family balance?

3. DATA AND METHODS FOR RESEARCHING FATHERS' CARE ARRANGEMENTS

In order to answer these research questions, the book empirically explores, through both quantitative and qualitative methods developed mainly (but not only) in the context of a sociological approach, the interplay between individual, meso and macro levels in influencing the fathers' care arrangements. Part of the chapters in this book use quantitative data on fathers' attitudes and behaviour. On the other hand, other chapters use qualitative methods to investigate the meanings of the fathers' experiences.

For example, González, Lapuerta, Martín-García and Seiz, and Rosy Musumeci and Arianna Santero use comparative longitudinal qualitative interviews from the transparent research network collected respectively in Spain and Italy. This is a particularly precious source of data since it collects information pre- and post-childbirth from both mothers and fathers. It allows us to investigate the gender dynamics within the couples, the discrepancies between plans, desires and expectations before the child's birth and the practices after it, and the role of the contextual factors. The chapters by Manuela Naldini and Cristina Solera, and Olga Nešporová and Kristýna Janurová combined the transparent qualitative longitudinal interviews with quantitative data respectively from the Italian National Institute of Statistics 'Family and Social Subjects' survey and surveys on parenting and work–life balance in the Czech Republic.

Teresa Jurado-Guerrero, Jordi M. Monferrer, Carmen Botía-Morillas and Francisco Abril present an analysis based on discussion groups with working fathers in Spain, while Krista M. Brumley explores the experiences of fathers employed at multinational manufacturing corporations Michigan (USA) by using qualitative in-depth interviews. Gerlinde Mauerer combines information from guided interviews with fathers on paternal leave, female partners, human resources managers, as well as part-time working men and women living in Austria. On the other hand, Olga Lorena Rojas Martínez and Mario Martínez Salgado analysed quantitative data from the National Time Use Survey of Mexico.

Moreover, the last two chapters in this book are a contribution to the understanding of the past and current developments on public supports for fathers. Hideki Nakazato discusses the changes occurred in child-rearing publications, as well as national time-series statistics on attitudes and practices around fatherhood, in the context of state interventions increasingly promoting fathers' involvement in childcare in Japan. Guðný Björk Eydal and Tine Rostgaard examine in comparative perspective the content and timing of legislation and policies influencing fatherhood in five Nordic European countries, as well as the data on the usage of the measures analysed.

The diversity of approaches contributes to develop a productive dialogue to explore the three analytical dimensions influencing fathers' care arrangements identified in this book. Moreover, each country considered in this book will be discussed as a single case that includes considerations on the country-specific nexus between cultures, practices and policies as well as a focus on one of these three dimensions.

Even if we are aware that data collection has involved especially hetero-sexual dual parent families from predominantly western societies (mostly dual earner ones and belonging to the middle class), the book also includes reflections and findings on same-sex fathers, migrant fathers, upper and lower class families, unemployed fathers, as well as South American and Eastern contexts.

Such an approach, involving 21 contributors around the world, allows us to offer original insights on the interconnections between individuals, family, market and State. Firstly, it allows us to investigate the (lack of) support, the formal and informal resources fathers look for and receive, in combining childcare and work with work-family reconciliation policies at both public (national or local) and company levels. Secondly, it helps to explore the role played by the workplace cultures, and in some cases the prenatal and infant experts, in shaping the notions of child's well-being on the one side and the expectations and social norms on 'good fatherhood' (and motherhood) on the other side in country-specific contexts. Finally, by integrating the three dimensions of individual meanings and practices, cultures of workplaces and childcare experts and national policies, this approach enriches the studies on work-family balance from a global perspective on fathers as caregivers, taking into account not only gender relations but also socioeconomic and ethnic inequalities. Indeed, unlike most studies which have focussed on middle-class fathers living in western (Anglo-Saxon) societies, here we analyse different geographic and socio-cultural contexts in Europe, Asia and America. The following 12 countries are specifically studied in this book, and are characterized by different gender norms, labour markets and welfare regimes: Austria (with its neo-Bismarkian continental-corporativist welfare legacies);

the United States (chosen as an example of a western neoliberal context); the Czech Republic as an example of an eastern European post-communist country; Italy and Spain, the two Mediterranean and 'familialistic' welfare state contexts (Saraceno & Keck, 2011) that are increasingly going towards diverging directions (Naldini & Jurado, 2013); Japan, an Asian country moving – partially – towards a policy addressed to support fathers' involvement in childcare (Rush, 2015; Tan, 2016); Mexico as a case from South America recently experiencing intense changes; and five northern European countries where public measures for caring fathers have a long history, with internal differences (Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015): Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

4. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK[2]

The book is organized as follows:

Part I: Fathers' Experiences, Attitudes and Beliefs focusses on men's experiences regarding fatherhood and reconciliation between paid work and childcare.

More specifically, Chapter 1 by González et al. examines the relationship between prenatal anticipation and the development of 'positive parental involvement' (i.e. an engaged, accessible and responsible type of fatherhood) in Spain. The authors' analysis reveals the importance of paternal anticipation during pregnancy – that is, the development of an identity as a father and of explicit plans for employment adaptations – in facilitating men's greater involvement in care. The empirical findings also show that non-traditional gender attitudes and favourable working conditions facilitating the involvement of fathers are not enough in themselves to guarantee the development of a positive type of fatherhood covering the above-mentioned dimensions of 'positive fatherhood'. In terms of recommendations, the authors underline that achieving the latter in Spain will likely require the encouragement of shared parenting responsibilities through normative changes in workplaces, the revision of parental leave policies and the integration of fathers-to-be in prenatal education classes, shedding new light on the elements that favour a positive parental involvement, which has the potential to enhance both children's well-being and gender equality.

Chapter 2 by Naldini and Solera focusses on couples with young children in transition to the first child and explore what happens in the Italian case when partners have discordant attitudes on gender divisions of paid and

unpaid work. The findings show that the division of domestic and care work appears more resistant to change, and, when couples have discordant attitudes, more responsive to his attitudes towards the division of paid work, for which her education and her attitudes are the strongest drivers. The findings also show that very few couples overtly disagree and, if they do so, the main issue is the allocation of domestic work, with a 'leading' role of women in voicing and finding solutions, which, however, consist more in hiring an external help than obtaining the men's greater involvement. The allocation of care, such as the division of parental leave, seems less disputed, and, when women activate negotiations for a more equal sharing, men are more responsive. Yet, when the desired greater sharing is not achieved, the couple's narratives give much more importance to his constraints rather than hers and to the redefinition of her work preferences rather than his for the family's best interest.

Chapter 3 by Rojas Martínez and Martínez Salgado investigates whether there are significant differences in the time spent on child raising between rural and urban fathers. The authors show that recent qualitative social research about Mexican families and gender relations underlines the fact that changes in male involvement in domestic life have occurred and that significant changes in paternal responsibilities have been reported, especially among younger fathers with high educational levels and living in urban settings; while significant lags have been detected in rural and indigenous communities regarding women's status and the reduction in gender gap. Rojas Martínez and Martínez Salgado used a regression model to measure the effect of the place of residence and other socio-demographic characteristics of Mexican fathers' level of involvement in raising their children. The results of their analysis update the indicators on the generational change in fathers' collaboration in childcare and show that fathers living in urban settings are more involved, as measured in the time effectively spent in child raising compared to their rural counterparts.

Chapter 4 by Nešporová and Janurová draws on recent scientific findings on the participation of fathers in childcare and the perception of the role of fathers by both men and women in the Czech Republic. It uses a mixed method approach, combining qualitative data from longitudinal research on transition to motherhood and fatherhood with data from quantitative surveys on the topics of parenting and work–life balance. The data are examined for the incidence of the breadwinner father and the involved father models in Czech families. They focus on the earliest stage of the family life course, that is, when the children are aged between 0 and 4 years. The results of Nešporová's and Janurová's analysis show that fathers of young children still predominantly assume the breadwinner role, leaving most childcare to mothers. However, the growing

number of parents expressing a preference for a more equal sharing of child-care indicates a shift in both the perception of fatherhood and the value placed on the active participation of fathers in early childcare in the Czech Republic. As recommendations, the chapter suggests that fathers' greater involvement in childcare could be stimulated by policy measures such as the introduction of paternal leave or the broadening of the range of (public) childcare services for younger children.

Part II: Work Organizations and Childcare Expert Cultures focusses on the role of work organizations and infant experts in influencing the fathers' experiences concerning childcare and work-family balance. While psychological studies show that the organizational support is very important for parents' sense of entitle-ment, a few studies consider this issue in a multi-layered sociological perspective; moreover, there is a lack of studies exploring the role of infant experts' cultures and interactions in influencing fathers' experiences and work-family balance.

Chapter 5 by Jurado-Guerrero et al. analyses how fathers, who are involved caregivers, are supported or hindered in attaining a work–life balance by their workplaces in Spain. This chapter explores three ques-tions: (1) Why fathers value some job adaptations over others compared to mothers? (2) How organizational cultures influence the work–life balance of *new fathers*? (3) What differences exist across public and private sectors as well as large versus small companies? To explore these issues for large com-panies, public sector workplaces and small businesses, the authors used a qualitative approach with discussion groups and involved fathers. The results show that tight time schedules, flexitime, telework, scheduled control and fully paid non-transferable leaves of absence constitute policies that favour involved fatherhood, while measures without wage replacement generate fear of penalization in the workplace, and do not fit the persistent relevance of the provider role. In addition, dissimilar supervisors, envy, lack of understanding and gender stereotypes amongst co-workers and clients constitute cultural barriers at the workplace level. Contrary to the expectations, small businesses may offer a better work–life balance than large companies, while the public sector is not always as family-friendly as assumed.

Chapter 6 by Musumeci and Santero (1) analyses meanings and prac-tices regarding the work-family balance of fathers from different social and cultural backgrounds and (2) explores how infancy experts and workplace culture can influence the paid work and childcare reconciliation practices of native and immigrant fathers in Italy, especially from the point of view of the fathers making the transition to parenthood, based on a qualitative analysis of qualitative interviews with native Italians and immigrant fathers.

The analysis of the interviewees' accounts shows that something that both Italian and foreign respondents took for granted – seeing it as natural and normal – was the mother's presence to take care of the baby (with all the consequences that this means, like e.g. taking parental leave); the authors show, moreover, that it is largely legitimized and promoted by both infant experts and work organization cultures, as more 'acceptable' or at least perceived as 'normal'. Duties and parental roles were conceived as distinct and implying a gender perspective. The chapter shows, however, that these prevailing normative discourses in some cases clash with the preferences and desires of fathers to be more involved in childcare. Some fathers have also sought experts to confirm these individual attitudes, showing that infancy expert cultures may be less 'monolithic' than workplace cultures, that are typically based on the hegemonic adult worker model.

Chapter 7 by Mauerer reveals the results of a qualitative research on paternal leave practices and fathers' family involvement in Austria. The author investigates effects of long-term leave arrangements on the distribution of family work, paid employment and individual interests and explores best practice models in un-doing gender in family and work arrangements. The results of this chapter reveal qualitative gains for fathers on parental leave, especially regarding long-term parental leave and parental part-time work, but women's average lower income is still a barrier to an equal distribution of family work, childcare and housework. Until this continuum remains unbroken, a perpetuation of dependencies and the conservation of gender-dichotomous family and work relations can hardly be avoided. The more the fathers make the conscious decision to spend more time with their family, children, partners and friends, the more the development of caring identities. As a recommendation, the chapter states that family policies must be strongly connected with social and gender policies to set a course for all men and women with children to share family work, care work and to maintain equal job opportunities.

Chapter 8 by Brumley analyses the interplay between fathers' perceptions of the workplace and how they enact fatherhood in the United States. The results of this qualitative analysis show how the persistence of the ideal worker norm and penalties for using work-family policies perpetuate the gendered division of paid and unpaid work. First, fathers who are ideal workers are rewarded; fathers who are not face criticism and obstacles to promotions. Second, management and supervisor's discretion results in uneven access to work-family policies, thus penalizing fathers for asking and preventing most from using them. Third, fathers express a desire to be 'involved', but their engagement is largely a visible fatherhood. The starting point of the analysis of this chapter is that of elite fathers who have been parenting for at least

three years, and live and work in circumstances that seemingly would allow them to disrupt normative expectations of work and family. In the United States, reconciliation issues are largely left to employees and their families. Public and individual company policies are not enough; as a recommendation, the author suggests that there must be a corresponding supportive family-friendly culture – supervisor support and penalty-free work-family policies – to disrupt gendered work and family.

Part III: Changing Fatherhood, Changing Policies? contributes, to the current debate on policies supporting the involvement of working fathers in childcare, by exploring national policy changes and the influence of these changes on fathers' experiences.

Chapter 9 by Nakazato is focussed on the factors that might have affected gender division of labour in Japan by investigating the interaction between policies, culture and practices on gender equality and fathers' involvement in childcare, and examines whether there is a possibility to move towards a more equal share of paid work and care as in other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries. The author explores the changes in the discourse of the experts and policy makers on the role of fathers and mothers in the childcare, on legislation aimed at the resolution of gendered division of labour and larger involvement of fathers in childcare and on the resulting change (or persistence) in the individual attitudes and practices of fathers and mothers. The results show that in Japan, cultures, institutions and practices related to fathers' involvement in childcare interact with each other at different places and entail a greater involvement of fathers in childcare. The increase in fathers' time in childcare and housework only proves to be a much shorter time than what fathers spend in most of the European countries. As a recommendation, the chapter highlights that although the rapid increase, after 2010, in the proportion of mothers who continue to work after childbearing may trigger a breakthrough in the persistent gendered division of labour in Japan, this would also require other components of gender arrangements such as effective regulation of working time.

In Chapter 10, Eydal and Rostgaard investigate if the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have developed a similar set of policies on active fatherhood or if they have taken different paths. The chapter examines three main policy areas affecting fatherhood: family law, family cash benefits and paid parental leave. They take a comparative Nordic perspective and discuss when and how the policies frame and promote active fatherhood while also considering how fatherhood is shaped in the interaction between policies, cultures and the daily practices of fathers. The results show

that while all Nordic governments promote a dual earner/dual carer social democratic welfare state model emphasizing the active participation of fathers in the care of their children, variations in policy and family practices exist. Differences are connected to historical and cultural legacies as well as different political landscapes within and among these five countries. Thus, while it can be stated that all the Nordic countries promote the dual earner/dual carer model, there are also residues of the breadwinner ideology that work against the goals set out in family and gender equality policies. Regarding the outcomes – that is, the practices of fathers in the Nordic countries – the findings of this chapter show that Nordic fathers are making use of their quota and gradually increasing their share in taking leave for the care of their young children, hence the policies clearly support active fatherhood.

The volume closes with some final considerations on the caring fathers' entanglement in the nexus of cultures, practices and policies.

NOTES

1. This Introduction chapter is the result of a fruitful collaboration between the co-editors. However, the final version of Sections I and IV can be attributed to Rosy Musumeci, and that of Sections II and III to Arianna Santero.

2. In this paragraph, we based ourselves on the abstracts and conclusions provided by the authors to write the description of the content of each chapter.

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