

Predictors of expectant fathers' parental leave-taking intentions before birth: Masculinity, fatherhood beliefs, and social support

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Abstract

Despite continuing progress, men remain underrepresented in childcare, domestic labor, and other care work. Because parental leave is discussed as a gateway to increasing men's childcare engagement, we aimed to gain insights into predictors of men's parental leave-taking intentions during the transition to parenthood. Using outcomes on a continuum from behavioral preferences to more behavior-oriented measures, we examine how masculinity and fatherhood beliefs as well as social support become relevant during men's formation of their leave-taking intentions. Planned analyses of data collected from 143 expectant fathers in Belgium and Germany revealed that the support men perceive from their partners for taking leave predicts their parental leave-taking desire, intention, and planned length of leave. Moreover, men's conception of a prototypical man, especially in terms of agency, was linked to their desire to take leave. Against expectations, father role attitudes and workplace support did not emerge as relevant predictors of men's intended leave-taking. Results of exploratory analyses suggest that care engagement of peers, expected backlash, and self-efficacy beliefs additionally play a role in men's intended leave-taking. We discuss parental leave as a negotiation process within couples and review the role of men's normative environment for their intended leave-taking.

1. Introduction

Involved, caring, and new – these are some of the terms that are frequently used when talking about fatherhood today. In fact, the shift towards a fatherhood ideal that expects fathers to be more involved in childcare and to develop closer emotional bonds with their children is not exactly new anymore but was already observed in Western cultures since the 1980s (Wall and Arnold, 2007; Dermott and Miller, 2015). Indeed, fathers have increased their engagement in childcare and household labor and continue to do so (Altintas and Sullivan, 2016, 2017). For example, more and more fathers across Europe are making use of their parental leave entitlement (Eurofound, 2019), and roughly a third of fathers in Belgium and Germany takes parental leave (Samtleben et al., 2019b; Koslowski et al., 2022). Nevertheless, women continue to be more affected by the transition to parenthood and after becoming a parent often reduce their work hours while increasing time spent on childcare and household tasks (Abele and Spurk, 2011; Baxter et al., 2015). Women across cultural contexts also at a young age already have higher intentions than men to take parental leave (Olsson et al., 2023) and continue to be overrepresented relative to men in actual leave uptake (Koslowski et al., 2022). A more equal share of parental leave among women and men has been discussed as a way to promote gender equality (Castro-García and Pazos-Moran, 2016; Meeussen et al., 2020), especially

46 during the transition to parenthood when gender-role attitudes and the gendered division of labor tend
47 to become more traditional (Baxter et al., 2015). In addition, men's increased care engagement can
48 have benefits on various levels, for example, for their own well-being, their partners' career
49 advancement, and their children's developmental outcomes (for an overview, see Croft et al., 2015;
50 Meeussen et al., 2020). Men's parental leave-taking specifically can lead to fathers being more
51 involved in childcare later on (Meil, 2013; Almqvist and Duvander, 2014; Bünning, 2015; Petts and
52 Knoester, 2018).

53
54 Various reasons for men's comparatively low interest in and uptake of parental leave have been
55 discussed in the literature. Whereas external barriers such as the lack of sufficient income
56 replacement during leave are often emphasized (e.g., Castro-García & Pazos-Moran, 2016; Karu &
57 Tremblay, 2018; Kaufman, 2018), a recent examination of young men's (and women's) intentions to
58 take parental leave across 37 nations suggests that individual-level factors such as men's gender role
59 attitudes outweigh country-level factors such as specific leave policies (Olsson et al., 2023). The goal
60 of the current study is to have a closer look at such psychological contributors to men's parental
61 leave-taking intentions before birth. By examining leave-taking *intentions*, we learn more about
62 precursors of men's leave-taking and possible pathways for interventions. Moreover, we examine the
63 different layers of men's intended leave-taking, namely whether they desire to take leave, whether
64 they intend and plan to do so, and if so, for how long. We assume that these dependent variables form
65 a continuum from behavioral preferences to behavioral intentions (Bagozzi, 1992; Perugini and
66 Bagozzi, 2001) and thus provide more insights into predictors of men's intended leave-taking at
67 various stages in their decision-making process. In addition, examining the hypothesized relations
68 cross-sectionally will provide suggestive evidence as to whether the relations can also be expected
69 longitudinally. Furthermore, we contribute to the current literature by simultaneously considering
70 men's gender beliefs regarding what constitutes a prototypical, ideal man and gender *role* beliefs
71 regarding men's role as a father for their intended leave-taking. Accounting for the normative
72 environment men find themselves in, we additionally focus on how active support or discouragement
73 from relevant others is related to men's intended leave-taking.

74
75 A starting point for understanding men's interest in care roles generally and parental leave
76 specifically are gender norms and stereotypes (see Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020).
77 According to social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly and Wood, 2012), such gendered beliefs develop
78 from observing a gendered division of labor and deriving expectations about male and female traits
79 and behaviors. Gender stereotypes can be divided into two fundamental content dimensions: agency
80 and communion (Bakan, 1966; Abele and Wojciszke, 2014). Traditionally, gender stereotypes
81 ascribe agentic traits and behaviors to men (e.g., being independent, assertive, or competent) and
82 communal traits and behaviors to women (e.g., being warm, caring, or helpful; Bakan, 1966; Burgess
83 and Borgida, 1999; Prentice and Carranza, 2002). However, recent examinations of change in gender
84 stereotypes found that men's self-descriptions are becoming less stereotypic and that men do
85 associate themselves with communion (Hentschel et al., 2019). Other findings suggest that women
86 and men do not ascribe communion more to men now than in the past and that women's higher
87 scores on communion persist or have even increased (Hentschel et al., 2019; Eagly et al., 2020).
88 Given the ambiguity in change of gender stereotypes, an important source of men's interest in
89 communal, care-oriented engagement is what *they* perceive as desirable and normative for their
90 gender group. We, therefore, examine men's conception of a prototypical man, the ideal-type
91 member of their gender group (Oakes et al., 1998; Wenzel et al., 2007). Prototypes, as described in
92 self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), have conceptual similarity to constructs such as
93 stereotypes or norms but better capture an *individual's* perception of a prototypical member of their
94 gender group (see Hogg et al., 2012). Such notions of what it means to be a man have already been

95 examined from a sociological and qualitative perspective with regard to men's parental leave-taking
96 (Brandth and Kvande, 1998; Almqvist, 2008; Johansson, 2011; Schmidt et al., 2015). For example, in
97 a study conducted in Austria, fathers' parental leave-taking decisions were made within work-
98 focused masculinity ideals and depended on fathers' personal wishes and whether external
99 circumstances allowed for leave (Schmidt et al., 2015). Moreover, Norwegian fathers who felt like
100 they did not have to prove their masculinity were more content during leave but also kept strong ties
101 to their breadwinning role (Brandth and Kvande, 1998). Thus, first evidence of how masculinity is
102 constructed in relation to men's parental leave-taking exists, but we know less about how male
103 gender stereotypes and gender norms contribute to whether men intend to take leave. From research
104 on father involvement more generally, we know that less traditional masculinity norms are related to
105 more care-oriented father involvement, such as showing more warmth and using less harsh discipline
106 (Petts et al., 2018; Shafer et al., 2020). In the present research, we aim to shed light on whether less
107 traditional (i.e., more communal and less agentic) notions of masculinity are also related to an
108 important precursor of father involvement, namely men's intended leave-taking. Thus, we examine
109 the link between intended leave-taking and the degree to which men associate a prototypical man
110 with the stereotypic dimensions of agency and communion (Bakan, 1966; Abele and Wojciszke,
111 2014).

112
113 When men become fathers, they not only face masculinity ideals but also ideals regarding
114 fatherhood. In fact, the father role could provide leeway for men to engage in caretaking as
115 stereotypes of fathers are less restrictive in terms of communal aspects than those of men (Park &
116 Banchevsky, 2018; Ciaccio et al., 2021). These differing perceptions of men and fathers are likely
117 based on the added social role of being a parent, a role that implies some degree of communion and
118 caretaking. Thus, in addition to examining men's conception of their gender group and which
119 attributes constitute a prototypical man, we examine men's gender *role* of being a father and their
120 attitudes towards this role. First evidence for the relevance of gender role attitudes for men's leave-
121 taking exists across national contexts such as Sweden, the US, and Germany. Generally, less
122 traditional gender role attitudes were related to higher intentions to take leave, higher chances to do
123 so, and longer leave length (Hyde et al., 1993; Vogt and Pull, 2010; Duvander, 2014; Olsson et al.,
124 2023). However, in more recent research men's leave length was neither predicted by their own nor
125 by their partners' gender role attitudes (in a US context and German-speaking countries; Stertz et al.,
126 2017; Berrigan et al., 2021). An explanation could be the ambiguous measurement of gender role
127 attitudes in some of these studies, which mostly included attitudes towards women's gender roles
128 (Hyde et al., 1993; Stertz et al., 2017; for an exception, see Vogt and Pull, 2010). Yet, how men see
129 their own role as a father could be more closely related to their parental leave-taking intentions. In
130 addition, fatherhood does not have to be defined on a continuum from breadwinning to caregiving,
131 but men could see their responsibility in and identify with both. Thus, in the current study we
132 examine father role attitudes towards breadwinning and childcare separately (as suggested by Hyde et
133 al., 1993).

134
135 Men's parental leave-taking decision is, furthermore, shaped within a normative environment in
136 which social support (or lack thereof) can signal whether others approve or disapprove of their
137 communal engagement. As communal engagement is traditionally counter-stereotypic for men, men
138 can fear backlash and negative consequences, such as experiencing stigma or career disadvantages
139 for wanting to take leave (see role congruity theory, Eagly and Karau, 2002; Rudman and Mescher,
140 2013; Miyajima and Yamaguchi, 2017). However, when others signal that they support men's leave-
141 taking, this challenges what is perceived as normative and can alleviate such threat (for first evidence
142 on social support and men's communal orientation, see Schreiber et al., 2023).

143

144 For parental leave-taking decisions, especially the interactions and support between partners plays a
145 crucial role. In fact, negotiations are often focused on the partner's wishes (McKay and Doucet,
146 2010; Beglaubter, 2017; Kaufman and Almqvist, 2017; for an exception, see Schmidt et al., 2015),
147 especially when there is no earmarked leave available for fathers (McKay and Doucet, 2010; Castro-
148 García and Pazos-Moran, 2016). Nevertheless, mothers have been found to encourage fathers to take
149 longer leaves to achieve a more equal division of childcare and foster the bonding between father and
150 child (Kaufman and Almqvist, 2017). More generally, when mothers encouraged childcare efforts,
151 fathers' relative involvement as reported by both parents was higher, and fathers perceived that they
152 had a greater say in decisions regarding the child's health (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008; Zvara et al.,
153 2013). Besides their partners and others around them, men's normative environment and leave-taking
154 decisions are additionally shaped by their workplace. As a general trend, organizations are becoming
155 more supportive of men's leave-taking (Haas and Hwang, 2009; Brandth and Kvande, 2019).
156 Moreover, colleagues can be a facilitator of men's leave-taking as men are more likely to take longer
157 leave if colleagues have done so before them (Bygren and Duvander, 2006). However, in
158 organizations that emphasize ideal worker norms (i.e., prioritizing work over family and aiming for
159 high workload and output), men are less likely to take (longer) leave and report more negative career
160 consequences if they still do so (Haas et al., 2002; Haas and Hwang, 2019; Samtleben et al., 2019a).

161
162 Taken together, we investigate predictors of men's intended parental leave-taking before birth, with a
163 focus on men's conception of a prototypical man, father role attitudes, and social support. As
164 outcomes, we look at expecting fathers' general intentions to take leave, their desire to do so, as well
165 as for how long they expect to take leave (summarized as *intended parental leave-taking* in the
166 following). Looking at men's conception of a prototypical man, we expect communal prototypes of
167 men to be positively related to men's intended parental leave-taking (H1.1), whereas agentic
168 prototypes of men should be negatively related to men's intended parental leave-taking (H1.2).
169 Likewise, we expect father role attitudes regarding childcare to be positively related to men's
170 intended parental leave-taking (H2.1), whereas father role attitudes regarding breadwinning should be
171 negatively related to men's intended parental leave-taking (H2.2). Lastly, we investigate the role of
172 men's personal environment in their intended leave-taking. We expect partner support (H3.1) and
173 workplace support (H3.2) for leave-taking to be positively related to men's intended parental leave-
174 taking.

175

176 2. Materials and methods

177 The study was preregistered on Aspredicted (https://aspredicted.org/3HY_17Q) and received ethical
178 approval from the Social and Societal Ethics Committee of the University of Leuven. We describe
179 deviations from the preregistration and further included measures in the supplementary materials.

180

181 2.1. Procedure and context of data collection

182 We collected data from men in Belgium and Germany who were expecting their first child.
183 Participants were asked to complete an online survey around three months before birth¹. Importantly,
184 different national policies for protected paid leave apply in Belgium and Germany. In Belgium, men
185 can take parental leave ("*ouderschapsverlof*") for four months, and this leave cannot be transferred
186 between partners. Part-time leave regulations are available, but income replacement (provided
187 through government funding) is comparatively low, with roughly 800€ per month for full-time leave

¹ Data are part of an ongoing longitudinal study on men's parental leave-taking with data having been collected at roughly three months before birth, and planned measurement points at four months after birth and twelve months after birth. As the current study focuses on men's leave-taking intentions before birth and data collection for later measurement points is ongoing, we only present analyses on the data collected before birth.

188 (Koslowski et al., 2022; RVA, 2022)². In 2021, 34% of leave-takers in Belgium were fathers (vs.
189 mothers) who predominantly used it as a flexibility measure to combine work and family. Sixty-three
190 percent of fathers took one day of leave per week, and 20% took half a day per week or one day
191 every two weeks (Koslowski et al., 2022). In Germany, parents can divide paid parental leave
192 (“*Elterngeld*”) of up to twelve months between each other, with an additional period of two months
193 not transferrable to the other parent. Regulations for part-time leave also exist, and combining work
194 and childcare is encouraged by an additional four months of part-time leave if both parents work
195 part-time. Income replacement is higher than in Belgium, with parents receiving 65% of the average
196 Net income of the last 12 months before the birth (capped at 1800€, provided through government
197 funding; BMFSFJ, 2022; Koslowski et al., 2022). In 2016, 37% of fathers took parental leave in
198 Germany. However, in 2018, 72% of those took parental leave at most for the duration of the non-
199 transferable period of two months (Samtleben et al., 2019b).

200

201 We recruited participants through people and places that we expected to be in touch with expectant
202 parents (e.g., prenatal classes, hospitals, gynecology practices, midwives, shops for baby equipment,
203 parenting and baby fairs, professional organizations for midwives or gynecologists, companies in
204 male-dominated industries etc.). Furthermore, we used social media (Facebook, Instagram, and
205 Twitter) and encouraged snowball sampling. We invited participants to take part in a study on how
206 the birth of the first child affects the work and family situation of men (and their partners). At the
207 beginning of the online survey, participants received a detailed information letter on the procedure of
208 the study and gave informed consent online. Afterwards, we assessed and implemented the exclusion
209 criteria specified above. Eligible participants then read a short summary of the current leave policies
210 in their respective countries before completing the main survey measures, suspicion and quality
211 checks, and demographic information. At the end, participants could indicate special circumstances
212 of, for example, their work or family situation. Lastly, we thanked participants and asked them for
213 help with recruiting additional participants. For each referred participant who filled in the first
214 survey, participants (and others) could receive a 10€ gift card. Moreover, participants themselves
215 received a 10€ gift card for each completed survey and had the chance to win a family weekend trip
216 at the end of the study.

217

218 **2.2. Sample and sensitivity analysis**

219 In total, 171 participants completed the survey who met the preregistered criteria of identifying as
220 male, being at least 18 years old, expecting their first child, and being eligible to receive parental or
221 paternity leave. We excluded the data of eight participants from the analyses because they failed
222 attention or quality checks. We also excluded 20 multivariate outliers based on the MCD75
223 (Minimum Covariance Determinant with a breakdown point of 0.25), with a chi-square at $p = .001$
224 (Leys et al., 2019; see supplementary materials for results including outliers). Among the final 143
225 participants, 115 resided in Belgium and 28 in Germany. Participants were, on average, 31 years old
226 ($SD = 3.60$; range: 25 – 42). Most were married (69%) or in a committed relationship (26%) and
227 identified as heterosexual (98%; 2% identifying as bisexual). Participants were, on average, highly
228 educated, with 43% having a university degree, 27% higher professional education, and 17%
229 secondary education. In terms of relative income, 18% had a much higher income than their partner,
230 35% a higher income, 23% more or less equal income, and 15% a lower income than their partner.
231 They worked, on average, 41 hours per week ($SD = 7.32$), and the majority did not have any
232 leadership responsibility (66%). Their political orientation was moderate to slightly left ($M = 4.56$ on

² A paternity leave of an additional 20 days (15 days until 2022) is available for fathers only (FOD, 2023). As no equivalent exists for Germany and because of ceiling effects in our data for the intended uptake (almost all fathers intend to take the full amount), we do not present results for paternity leave.

233 a 9-point scale, $SD = 1.65$), and they were not religious on average ($M = 2.48$ on a 9-point scale, SD
234 $= 2.07$).

235

236 We conducted a sensitivity analysis with G*Power 3 (Faul et al., 2007) to learn which effect sizes we
237 were able to detect given a sample size of $N = 143$ ($\alpha = .05$, $1 - \beta = .95$). In analyses with up to 11
238 predictors, we were able to detect effect sizes for regression coefficients of $f^2 = .09$ (i.e., small- to
239 medium-sized effects).

240

241 **2.3. Measures**

242 Unless otherwise indicated, we used 7-point scales ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 =
243 “strongly agree”. For measures we suspected to be prone to ceiling effects (and, for consistency, for
244 those situated in close proximity to them within the survey), we implemented 9-point scales to ensure
245 adequate differentiation at the higher end of the scale.

246

247 **2.3.1. Prototypes of men**

248 We assessed participants’ idea of a prototypical man by asking what it means to them to be a man
249 and to what extent four agentic (e.g., assertive, $\alpha = .64$) and six communal (e.g., compassionate, $\alpha =$
250 $.77$) traits describe an ideal man in their opinion (adapted from Van Grootel et al., 2018; Hentschel et
251 al., 2019; see supplementary materials for results excluding items for which no gender differences
252 were found in past research). We used a 7-point scale from 1 = “not at all” to 7 = “very much”.

253

254 **2.3.2. Father role attitudes**

255 We asked participants what it means to them to be a father and how they see the responsibility of a
256 father for his child, adapted from the Caregiving and Breadwinning Identity and Reflected-Appraisal
257 Inventory (CBIRAI; Maurer et al., 2001; using a 9-point scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 9 =
258 “strongly agree”). Five items focused on physical and social caregiving, with only two items
259 sufficiently correlated to form a scale ($r = .66$; e.g., “A father should NOT be very involved in the
260 day-to-day matters of caring for his child.”; recoded). Four items formed a scale focusing on
261 breadwinning ($\alpha = .65$; e.g., “A father has a strong responsibility as a parent to be the financial
262 provider for his family.”). The results of factor analyses can be found in the supplementary materials.

263

264 **2.3.3. Social support for leave-taking**

265 We measured the social support men perceived with one item pertaining to the support from their
266 partner and one from people at work (e.g., their boss or colleagues). Participants indicated how much
267 support or discouragement they experienced from their partner [people at work] to take up parental
268 leave (adapted from Schreiber et al., 2023) on a 9-point scale (1 = “lots of discouragement”, 5 =
269 “neither much discouragement nor support”, 9 = “lots of support”).

270

271 **2.3.4. Others’ leave-taking, others’ childcare engagement, expected backlash for leave-taking, 272 expected parental self-efficacy**

273 We included additional predictors in the analyses that have been linked to men’s parental leave-
274 taking before. Focusing on men’s personal environment, we asked participants how many men in
275 their surroundings who became fathers during the past years took parental leave (9-point scale from 1
276 = “very few” to 9 = “almost all”) and how much these fathers engage in childcare (9-point scale, 1 =
277 “very little as compared to their partner”, 5 = “as much as their partner”, 9 = “much more than their
278 partner”). For expected backlash effects, participants answered the item “I worry about being labeled
279 negatively for putting my career on hold to care for my young child.” (adapted from Vogt and Pull,
280 2010; Rudman and Fairchild, 2004), omitting a second item due to low correlation (for links to men’s
281 leave-taking, see Samtleben et al., 2019a). Lastly, we measured expected self-efficacy for childcare

282 with two items ($r = .82$; e.g., “I feel like I will be capable of taking care of my child.”; adapted from
283 Črnčec et al., 2008). Although general self-efficacy beliefs were not related to men’s leave-taking
284 (Horvath et al., 2018), evidence exists for the relation between *parental* self-efficacy and father
285 involvement as well as parental competence (Jones and Prinz, 2005; Trahan, 2018).

286

287 **2.3.5. Intended parental leave-taking**

288 We measured men’s intended leave-taking via three operationalizations: desired parental leave-
289 taking, parental leave-taking intentions, and expected length of parental leave. We assessed desired
290 parental leave-taking with one item (“I would like to take leave.”), adding two items on parental
291 leave-taking intentions ($r = .88$; e.g., “I intend to take leave.”; adapted from Yzer, 2012; Miyajima
292 and Yamaguchi, 2017). For the expected length of parental leave, participants indicated how long
293 they expected to take parental leave in full-time weeks (Belgium) or months (Germany). Those
294 planning to take leave part-time thus recalculated their intended length into full-time weeks or
295 months. We then calculated a percentage measure, indicating how much of the available leave
296 participants expected to take (see supplementary materials for results using absolute expected leave
297 lengths).

298

299 **3. Results**

300 **3.1. Descriptive statistics**

301 Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations for all predictors and dependent
302 variables. Notable here are the high means for father role attitudes regarding childcare and support
303 from the partner for taking leave, suggesting a comparatively egalitarian sample. Moreover,
304 participants had a relatively strong wish to take parental leave, whereas average leave-taking
305 intentions were slightly lower. On average, participants expected to take roughly 58% of the
306 available leave length. Descriptive statistics per country of data collection can be found in Table S1
307 in the supplementary materials.

308

309 **3.2. Analytical approach**

310 We first screened the data and checked the statistical assumptions, followed by hierarchical
311 regression analyses conducted separately for the three dependent variables *desired parental leave-*
312 *taking* (Table 2), *parental leave-taking intentions* (Table 3), and *expected length of parental leave*
313 (Table 4). We used the R package *lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012) for the regression analyses because robust
314 estimation methods are available given assumption violations as well as full information maximum
315 likelihood estimation for treating missing data. Missing data were mainly present for the dependent
316 variables and for predictors related to men’s normative environment (i.e., social support from
317 partners and workplaces and other men’s leave-taking and childcare engagement; 9-13% of
318 missings). Participants with and without missing data did not differ significantly in terms of
319 demographic characteristics (all $ps > .078$). Due to the sample size, we do not present more complex
320 models such as multivariate regression or structural equation models. For regression models,
321 interpreting fit indices in *lavaan* is not informative due to the presence of saturated models. In the
322 supplementary materials (Table S2), we present F-tests (which are not available in *lavaan*) for
323 regression models using the R package *lm* (however, accordingly without treatment of missing data
324 and assumption violations).

325

326 In the first set of models (Models 1), we included the covariates age, country of residence (dummy-
327 coded with 1 = Germany and 0 = Belgium), educational level (dummy-coded with 1 = university
328 education or higher and 0 = below university education to reduce number of predictors), relative
329 income, and weekly work hours. We decided on these covariates before data analyses due to prior
330 evidence for relations to men’s parental leave-taking (e.g., Trappe, 2013a, 2013b; Stertz et al., 2017;

331 Geisler and Kreyenfeld, 2019; Marynissen et al., 2019). In the second set of models (Models 2), we
332 added beliefs regarding masculinity and fatherhood, namely communal and agentic prototypes of
333 men, and father role attitudes regarding childcare and breadwinning. In the third set of models
334 (Models 3), we added the social support men received from their partners and their workplace for
335 taking parental leave, and in a fourth step (Models 4), additional predictors related to men's intended
336 leave-taking for which we did not generate hypotheses (others' leave-taking, others' childcare
337 engagement, expected backlash for leave-taking, expected parental self-efficacy). Lastly, we present
338 parsimonious models (Models 5) with only those predictors included that were significant (or tended
339 to be) in Models 4.

340

341 **3.3. Covariates**

342 The covariates explained 12% of variance in desired parental leave-taking, 14% in parental leave-
343 taking intentions, and 13% in the expected length of parental leave (Models 1). Age only emerged as
344 a significant predictor of intended leave-taking in some models, but if so, older age was associated
345 with higher intended leave-taking. Residing in Germany was associated with a higher desire and
346 intention to take leave (but these relations did not hold in later models). In contrast, Belgian residence
347 was related to planning to take a higher percentage of available leave, possibly because the available
348 leave is shorter than in Germany (average expected absolute leave lengths were ten out of 16 weeks
349 in Belgium, $M = 10.09$, $SD = 6.63$, and four and a half out of 12 months in Germany, $M = 4.48$, $SD =$
350 4.45). A higher educational level was negatively related to men's desired parental leave-taking and
351 parental leave-taking intentions. Men's income relative to their partners was not significantly related
352 to their intended leave-taking. Lastly, longer weekly work hours were related to men expecting to
353 take shorter percentages of parental leave (and in Models 1 and 2 also to lower intentions to take
354 leave).

355

356 **3.4. Hypothesis tests**

357 We found partial support for Hypothesis 1.1, that men's beliefs that an ideal man has communal
358 attributes would be related to higher intended leave-taking (operationalized in the present research as
359 desired parental leave-taking, parental leave-taking intentions, and expected length of parental leave).
360 Communal prototypes of men were positively related to men's desired parental leave-taking but not
361 to any other dependent variable. Also, relations were weaker with increasing numbers of predictors,
362 possibly due to correlations amongst predictors (see Table 1). Hypothesis 1.2 postulated that men's
363 beliefs that an ideal man should have agentic attributes would be related to lower intended leave-
364 taking. We again found support for desired parental leave-taking but none of the other
365 operationalizations of intended leave-taking. Thus, the degree to which men think an ideal man
366 should have agentic attributes was negatively related to their wish to take parental leave. In contrast
367 to communal prototypes of men, relations were stronger in later models.

368

369 We did not find support for Hypothesis 2.1, that father role attitudes regarding childcare would be
370 positively related to men's intended leave-taking. For father role attitudes regarding breadwinning
371 (H2.2), we found significant negative relations in Models 2 between father role attitudes regarding
372 breadwinning on the one side and parental leave-taking intentions as well as the expected length of
373 parental leave on the other, indicating that the more men think it is a father's role to be involved in
374 breadwinning, the lower their intentions and expected length of parental leave. These relations did
375 not hold when additional, partly correlated (see Table 1) predictors such as social support were
376 added. Yet, only *perceived* support was measured, and men could perceive more or less support from
377 their partner or people at work depending on their father role attitudes. Hence, we possibly did not
378 find support for Hypothesis 2.2 in later models due to correlated measures or even mediation effects.

379

380 Lastly, we examined whether the support men perceive to receive from their partners and people at
381 work for taking parental leave was related to their intended leave-taking (H3.1 and 3.2). Across
382 dependent variables and models, support from the partner was a significant predictor, supporting
383 Hypothesis 3.1. The more support for their leave-taking men perceived receiving from their partners,
384 the more they desired to take leave, the more they intended to take leave, and the longer they
385 expected to take leave. In contrast and contradicting Hypothesis 3.2, the support men perceived from
386 people at work was not significantly related to their intended leave-taking. Yet, examining bivariate
387 correlations revealed that partner support and workplace support were significantly correlated (see
388 Table 1). Apparently, perceiving much support from the partner was positively related to perceiving
389 much support from people at work for the expectant fathers in our sample. This could, on the one
390 hand, suggest a selection effect (i.e., one also selects the places where one works and continues to
391 work as fitting) or, on the other hand, wishful thinking of the care-oriented fathers to receive support,
392 generalized to the social environment.

393

394 **3.5. Robustness checks and exploratory analyses**

395 As a robustness check for the partner support findings, we ran additional analyses in which we
396 controlled for men's perception of their partner's prototypes of men and father role attitudes (see
397 Table S3 in supplementary materials). Including these measures did not affect the results for partner
398 support on men's intended leave-taking (β s = .26 - .40), suggesting that active support or
399 discouragement from partners plays a role for men's intended leave-taking beyond the partner's
400 general gender egalitarianism. Moreover, we repeated the analyses for the expected length of parental
401 leave, now also controlling for whether participants intended to take leave part-time or full-time (see
402 Table S4 in supplementary materials). For that, we excluded participants from the analyses who did
403 not intend to take any leave and added a dummy variable for part-time versus full-time leave-takers.
404 This exclusion reduced the sample size to 107, but the results of hypotheses tests were not affected.
405 Still, the support men perceived from their partners for taking leave was the main robust predictor of
406 their expected length of parental leave ($\beta = .29, p = .007$).

407

408 As exploratory analyses, we examined further predictors that could be related to men's intended
409 leave-taking based on past research: other men's leave-taking in their personal environment, other
410 men's childcare engagement, expected backlash for leave-taking, and expected parental self-efficacy
411 (see Tables 2-4, Models 4). For all dependent variables, we found small positive relations with men's
412 expected parental self-efficacy: The more men expected to be capable of taking care of their child in
413 the future, the more they wished and intended to take leave and the longer they expected to take
414 leave. Counterintuitively, how much other men engaged in childcare was negatively related to men's
415 parental leave-taking intentions and expected length of parental leave. Thus, the less men perceived
416 other men to be engaged in childcare, the more and the longer they intended to take leave (or
417 perhaps: the more and the longer the participants intended to take leave, the less they perceived other
418 men to be engaged in childcare – suggesting a contrast effect). Others' leave-taking and expected
419 backlash for leave-taking were additionally related to men's parental leave-taking intentions: The
420 more other men took leave before them, and the less they expected backlash for leave-taking, the
421 higher were men's intentions to take parental leave.

422

423 However, the models including exploratory predictors were rather complex given the sample size and
424 could be prone to overfitting and lack of generalizability to other datasets. Therefore, we aimed to
425 check whether the predictors that appeared relevant for intended leave-taking in the larger models
426 also hold in more parsimonious models (Models 5) including only predictors that were significant in
427 Models 4 or showed trends. For desired parental leave-taking, especially the support men receive
428 from their partners for leave-taking seemed to be related to their wish to take leave. In addition, we

429 found a small relation between agentic prototypes of men and desired parental leave-taking,
430 suggesting that the less men saw an ideal man as agentic, the more they wished to take parental leave.
431 Communal prototypes of men and the expected parental self-efficacy were not significantly related to
432 desired parental leave-taking in the parsimonious model. Overall, these predictors, including
433 covariates, explained 35% of variance in desired parental leave-taking. For parental leave-taking
434 intentions, again, partner support emerged as an important predictor with a medium-sized relation,
435 besides small relations for others' leave-taking, others' childcare engagement, expected backlash for
436 leave-taking, and expected parental self-efficacy beliefs. We were able to explain the largest amount
437 of variance in parental leave-taking intentions (47% of variance explained). Lastly, the support men
438 perceived receiving from their partners for taking leave, how much other men in their personal
439 environment engaged in childcare, and their expected parental self-efficacy were also predictive of
440 the percentage of parental leave men expected to take. For this more behavior-oriented dependent
441 variable, we were able to explain 25% of variance in the parsimonious model.

442

443 **4. Discussion**

444 Parental leave has been discussed as a tool to foster men's engagement in communal roles with
445 benefits for men themselves as well as their personal environment. However, men continue to take
446 less parental leave than their partners, raising the question of how their intentions to take parental
447 leave are shaped. In the current paper, we investigated predictors of men's intended parental leave-
448 taking before birth, using data from soon-to-be fathers in Belgium and Germany. To gain a deeper
449 understanding of men's intended leave-taking, we examined different operationalizations on a
450 continuum of behavioral preferences to more concrete behavioral intentions.

451

452 The findings provide support for the hypothesized positive relation between partner support and
453 men's intended leave-taking (H3.1). The more support men perceived from their partners to take
454 parental leave, the more they desired to take leave, intended to do so, and aimed to take a higher
455 percentage of available leave. We additionally found partial support for the expected negative
456 relation of agentic prototypes of men and men's intended leave-taking (H1.2) and, to a lesser degree,
457 for the expected positive relation of communal prototypes of men and men's intended leave-taking
458 (H1.1). That is, the more men thought an ideal man has agentic attributes (e.g., being independent or
459 assertive) the less they wished to take parental leave. Seeing an ideal man as communal (e.g.,
460 communicative or emotional) tended to be related to a stronger wish to take parental leave. Yet, we
461 did not find any significant relations of prototypes with other operationalizations of men's intended
462 leave-taking besides their wish to take leave. Moreover, the results provided partial support for the
463 hypothesized relation of father role attitudes regarding breadwinning and intended leave-taking
464 (H2.2). Men with more breadwinning-oriented father role attitudes partially intended less to take
465 leave and a lower percentage of the available leave. Father role attitudes regarding childcare and
466 perceived workplace support for leave-taking were not related to men's intended leave-taking,
467 providing no support for Hypotheses 2.1 and 3.2.

468

469 However, exploratory analyses suggested that men's parental leave-taking intentions were also
470 predicted by other men's engagement in childcare and their take-up of parental leave, the backlash
471 participants expected to receive for taking parental leave, and participants' expected self-efficacy as a
472 parent and caregiver. Moreover, how much other men engaged in childcare was also negatively
473 related to how long men expected to take leave. Lastly, the more capable men felt of taking care of
474 their child in the future (i.e., their expected parental self-efficacy), the longer they expected to take
475 leave.

476

477 The perceived support men receive from their partners for taking parental leave played a crucial role

478 in their intended leave-taking in the current study. This finding suggests that parental leave decisions
479 are shaped through negotiations in partnerships. As the transition to parenthood is often experienced
480 as a couple, the new life tasks have to be negotiated and distributed interpersonally. Qualitative
481 research on men's leave-taking has focused on the decision-making process of couples who shared
482 parental leave before, concluding that often only limited negotiations were taking place (Beglaubter,
483 2017). Even when men desired to take leave, decisions were often based on a strong sense of
484 mothers' entitlement for leave-taking, which placed fathers' leave-taking as a "bonus" to the
485 mothers' share. Nevertheless, within these boundaries, the female partners' point of view remained
486 an important driver for determining parental leave shares, for example, when partners wanted to
487 return to work soon or were not eligible to take leave. Brandt (2017) also discussed men's leave-
488 taking as a matter of negotiation in partnerships. However, there the negotiation process was
489 examined implicitly by looking at distributions of economic resources in partnerships, working
490 conditions of partners, and gendered values, suggesting, for example, that partners' family orientation
491 hinders, whereas fathers' family orientation helps their take-up of leave. While the role of economic
492 considerations or gender ideologies has thus been discussed before, the current paper goes one step
493 further in showing that partners' active support or discouragement can contribute to men's intended
494 leave-taking beyond relative income shares or gender role attitudes. Even though this provides a
495 tangible parameter for influencing men's leave-taking (i.e., partners' active encouragement), the
496 conclusion of the current findings should not solely be that the responsibility for men's leave-taking
497 lies with their partners. This would make women responsible for yet another aspect and add to the
498 pressures on women when combining family and career and facing intensive motherhood norms
499 (e.g., Meeussen and Van Laar, 2018). Nevertheless, mothers can play a key role, functioning as
500 gatekeepers for men's leave-taking, especially in the case of transferable leave periods between
501 partners (Allen and Hawkins, 1999; Cannito, 2020). Thus, the perceived role of partners for men's
502 leave-taking is crucial given specific policy designs, but decision-making processes remain a joint
503 task for couples in which women *and* men carry responsibility.

504
505 Besides partner support for leave-taking, no other variable was consistently related to all
506 operationalizations of men's intended leave-taking. This suggests that different predictors may be
507 relevant for men's leave-taking the more concrete their intentions become. Men's conception of an
508 ideal, prototypical man (especially in terms of agency) was related to their desire to take parental
509 leave but not to the more behavior-oriented operationalizations of intended leave-taking, such as their
510 expected length of leave. It is intuitive that prototypes of men as more abstract masculinity ideals are
511 relevant for shaping behavioral preferences because they prescribe what is desirable for group
512 members (Oakes et al., 1998; Wenzel et al., 2007; Hogg et al., 2012). Yet, when looking at more
513 behavior-oriented outcomes, reality constraints are introduced, which require going beyond
514 behavioral preferences based on ideal circumstances. As found in the current paper, outside
515 influences and men's broader normative environment (e.g., how much other men before them
516 engaged in leave-taking and childcare, or the negative consequences men expect to face for wanting
517 to take leave) additionally contribute to their concrete intentions for taking parental leave. Also,
518 men's expected parental self-efficacy, as the degree to which they perceived themselves as *able* to
519 take care of their child independently, provides a reality check and was found to be related to how
520 long men planned to take leave in the current study. Still, explaining correlates of more concrete
521 leave-taking plans remained more difficult, and we were able to explain the smallest amount of
522 variance in men's expected length of parental leave ($R^2_{adj} = .25$ compared to .35 for desired leave-
523 taking and .47 for leave-taking intentions), in line with general models of attitudes, behavioral
524 intentions, and behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Likely, the specific length of the planned leave depends more
525 strongly on individual circumstances within the relationship and external reality constraints than
526 behavioral preferences or intentions do.

527

528 Besides masculinity ideals, we also included father role attitudes, but results were mixed and only
529 significant in a few models in line with hypotheses. An explanation for that could be a self-selection
530 process within our sample: Highly identified expectant fathers, who may relate to current norms of
531 involved fatherhood, could have been more motivated to participate in the study than traditional,
532 work-focused expectant fathers. The general high orientation towards care (i.e., high ratings on
533 childcare-related father role attitudes and intended leave-taking) underline this assumption, making it
534 more difficult to find significant relations due to restricted variance. In a more diverse sample,
535 internal contributors such as attitudes towards fatherhood likely are more relevant next to external
536 influences like social support. Moreover, in a similar study on predictors of men's leave-taking in the
537 US, only maternal essentialism emerged as a correlate of men's leave-taking in contrast to parenting
538 role beliefs (a similar measure to our father role attitudes; Berrigan et al., 2021). Thus, whether men
539 think women are *naturally* better caregivers could be more closely related to childcare decisions
540 regarding newborns than more general parenting beliefs. This is in line with evidence on the
541 relevance of breastfeeding for parental leave-taking decisions (Beglaubter, 2017; Bueno and Grau-
542 Grau, 2021). A strong endorsement of breastfeeding puts mothers in the role of primary caregivers
543 and reduces men's claim for taking parental leave because of biological differences. Hence, future
544 research should examine more closely how essentialist, compared to general beliefs toward parenting
545 roles, are related to men's leave-taking, using more representative samples.

546

547 Furthermore, we did not find evidence for the relation between workplace support and men's
548 intended leave-taking. This contrasts with past research that stresses the importance of the workplace
549 for men's leave-taking decisions (Bygren and Duvander, 2006; Kaufman and Almqvist, 2017;
550 Brandth and Kvande, 2019; Haas and Hwang, 2019). However, other studies also failed to find
551 consistent relations for men's higher workplace support as compared to their partner (Brandt, 2017)
552 or for supervisor support with men's leave-taking (whereas workgroup support and workplace norms
553 were related to men's leave-taking; Haas et al., 2002; Samtleben et al., 2019a). The latter finding
554 suggests that, in future research, workplace support should be measured separately for colleagues and
555 supervisors instead of using a combined measure like in the current study. Moreover, participants
556 could have selected their workplace partly based on correspondence with their personal values, such
557 as family orientation, reducing the relevance of workplace support for predicting men's intended
558 leave-taking. In addition, workplace support was correlated with other predictors in the models,
559 namely others' leave-taking and expected backlash effects. When asking expecting fathers how much
560 other men in their personal environment took leave, colleagues are likely an important reference
561 group. Moreover, being encouraged or discouraged by people at work signals whether men could
562 expect negative consequences and backlash for taking leave. Future longitudinal research could
563 therefore shed light on the interplay and temporal order of these constructs and how they contribute
564 to men's leave-taking decisions. In addition, some participants commented that they filled in the
565 survey earlier than three months before birth and had not made concrete plans regarding parental
566 leave yet. Possibly, conversations with people at work take place at later stages in men's decision-
567 making process, and there had not been much room for receiving support from the workplace yet.

568

569 In addition to hypotheses tests, we explored further predictors of men's intended leave-taking.
570 Results confirmed the relevance of fearing backlash (e.g., Vogt and Pull, 2010; Samtleben et al.,
571 2019a): The more men expected negative consequences when taking leave, the less they intended to
572 take leave. Furthermore, these explorations yielded additional evidence for how men's leave-taking
573 decision appears to be shaped within a normative environment and how others' behavior is related to
574 their own intentions. Here, other men can function as role models who show the feasibility of taking
575 leave as a man, for example, by reducing the perception of external barriers (Morgenroth et al.,

576 2015). In fact, backlash effects and career consequences following men's leave-taking are often less
577 negative than expected (Fleischmann and Sieverding, 2015; Samtleben et al., 2019a; see also mixed
578 evidence in the review by Steffens et al., 2019). Moreover, seeing other men take leave can reduce
579 self-stereotyping and facilitate the consideration of counter-stereotypic engagement – which parental
580 leave-taking traditionally is for men (Morgenroth et al., 2015; also see Asgari et al., 2010). Lastly,
581 role modeling is especially effective in the case of similarity and shared group membership, speaking
582 again to the inspirational role of male colleagues' leave-taking (Bygren & Duvander, 2006). Whereas
583 we found this motivational relation of other men's leave-taking with participants' leave-taking
584 intentions, other men's childcare engagement was negatively related to participants' leave-taking
585 intentions and expected length of parental leave. It is possible that other men who engage less in
586 childcare than their partners function as negative role models (see Lockwood et al., 2002), showing
587 men what they would miss out on. Alternatively, given the correlational data and unclear causal
588 order, men with stronger leave-taking intentions could perceive other men as engaging comparatively
589 little in childcare. Lastly, the negative relation could also be interpreted inversely as perceiving other
590 men to be highly engaged in childcare being related to lower leave-taking intentions. In fact, men
591 who do more childcare than their partners, like in the case of stay-at-home dads, indeed often
592 experience backlash (Steffens et al., 2019), which could deflate men's leave-taking intentions.

593

594 **4.1. Strengths and limitations**

595 The current results should be viewed in light of the following limitations. Most importantly, we
596 report on cross-sectional correlational data and are therefore not able to draw causal conclusions
597 about precursors of men's intended leave-taking. Although experimental designs allow for such
598 conclusions, they can be ethically questionable and difficult to implement for life decisions such as
599 parenthood and parental leave-taking (for experimental evidence for hypothetical leave-taking, see
600 Rudman and Mescher, 2013; Scheifele et al., 2021). The current study adds to existing research by
601 examining intentions of men who are actually becoming parents and are facing parental leave-taking
602 decisions. Naturally, an interesting avenue for future research is to gain more insight into predictors
603 of men's actual leave-taking instead of mere intentions. Still, by zooming in on men's intended
604 leave-taking and different nuances from preferences to more concrete plans, we gain a deeper
605 understanding of which factors are related to men's leave-taking decisions before birth. In addition,
606 analyzing cross-sectional data on men's leave-taking intentions enables us to make better predictions
607 for a longitudinal assessment of men's leave-taking decisions across the transition to parenthood.

608

609 Although the current study goes beyond student samples, we still rely on a convenience sample with
610 limited representativeness in terms of socio-economic status or gender and parenting attitudes.
611 Therefore, the current findings cannot easily be generalized to the population of expectant fathers in
612 Belgium and Germany. Nevertheless, one could argue that it is particularly interesting and a more
613 conservative test to look at how, for this sample, leave-taking intentions are shaped through attitudes
614 and normative environments because external factors such as whether parents can financially afford
615 men's leave-taking play a minor role here. Also, if there is limited variance in our sample, the
616 correlations we found likely are lower boundaries of true correlations in more diverse samples,
617 including more traditional fathers.

618

619 Another limitation can be found in the start of the data collection at the end of 2021 when the global
620 COVID-19 pandemic was ongoing. However, only few participants completed the surveys when
621 measures such as mandatory teleworking were still implemented. In addition, although the pandemic
622 had consequences for parents' division of labor, with men increasing their time spent at home,
623 mothers continued to shoulder the majority of childcare and housework (Hipp and Bünning, 2021;
624 Kreyenfeld and Zinn, 2021; Petts et al., 2023; Van Tienoven et al., 2023; Yerkes et al., 2020;

625 research conducted in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, Canada, and the US).
626 Researchers in Belgium concluded that changes in the division of household labor were rather
627 temporal and that the inertia of gender roles is still evident (Van Tienoven et al., 2023). Thus, while
628 the unique period in which parts of the data were collected should be considered, we do not think that
629 the current findings are caused by this period but likely generalize to other periods as well.

630
631 Methodologically, we used several non-validated measures due to a lack of validated alternatives,
632 resulting in issues with internal consistencies and ceiling effects. Lastly, we did not reach the
633 required sample size based on an a-priori power analysis. As a result, we were not able to detect
634 small effects and, at times, only found trends in the data. Moreover, sample sizes varied across
635 countries of data collection which could lead to biased estimates and impeded cross-national
636 comparisons. Such examinations would have been interesting though based on the differing results of
637 country of residence across dependent variables, speaking to the role of policy design for men's
638 intended leave-taking. We, therefore, encourage future longitudinal studies on the relations between
639 men's parental leave-taking intentions and actual leave-taking, including larger, more representative
640 samples and validated measures.

641 642 **4.2. Conclusion**

643 We see the contribution of the present research in gaining first insight into the parental leave-taking
644 intentions of expectant fathers while addressing different facets of the studied constructs and carving
645 out the role that men's social setting plays in their orientation towards care. Across analyses, higher
646 levels of partner support were accompanied by a higher desire and intention of expectant fathers to
647 take (longer) leave, illustrating the role of partners as gatekeepers for men's leave-taking. Other
648 predictors were more relevant for different facets of intended leave-taking, speaking to a nuanced
649 assessment of such. Notions of what it means to be a man tended to be linked to whether expectant
650 fathers wished to take parental leave, whereas men's broader normative environment was especially
651 predictive of their behavioral intentions to take leave. Taken together, these findings advance current
652 knowledge on predictors of men's intended parental leave uptake but also of men's involvement in
653 childcare more generally, as parental leave can represent a gateway for continuous father
654 involvement.

655 656 **5. Contribution to the field**

657 Research on changing gender roles predominantly studied women's engagement in traditionally
658 male-dominated fields such as leadership or occupations in STEM (science, technology, engineering,
659 and mathematics). Only recently, attention shifted to men's underrepresentation in traditionally
660 female HEED domains (health care, elementary education, and the domestic domain). This also
661 concerns men's engagement in childcare and their take-up of parental leave, which can be a gateway
662 for continuous father involvement. In the present research, we collected data from men expecting
663 their first child and examined predictors of their intended parental leave-taking, namely masculinity
664 and fatherhood beliefs and the social support men receive from their partners and the workplace. By
665 this, we simultaneously examine beliefs about men's gender group and their gender role as fathers
666 and gain insights into the role of men's normative environment for their intended leave-taking. We
667 further zoom in on different facets of intended leave uptake to gain a clearer picture of which
668 predictors are relevant at which stage in men's decision-making process. The findings can represent
669 potential starting points for interventions to increase men's engagement in care to reap the associated
670 benefits for men themselves, their partners, children, and society as a whole.

671 672 **6. Conflict of interest**

673 The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial

674 relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

675

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680

681 **8. Data availability statement**

682 Filtered raw data omitting demographic information are available on the Open Science Framework
683 (<https://osf.io/f7jeh/>).

684

685 **9. Author contribution**

686 CS, CVL, and MCS contributed to the conception and design of the study. CS spearheaded data
687 collection, performed the statistical analyses, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors
688 contributed to manuscript revision, read, and approved the submitted version.

689

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695

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Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations of study variables

| | | <i>M (SD)</i> | | <i>Correlations (N = 124 – 143)</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------|-------|---------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. | 11. | 12. | 13. | |
| 1. | Prototypes of men – Communion ^a | 5.10 (0.79) | .22** | .13 | .07 | .10 | .17* | .11 | .07 | -.09 | .20* | .26** | .15 [†] | .10 |
| 2. | Prototypes of men – Agency ^a | 5.21 (0.82) | | -.03 | .22** | .11 | .05 | -.05 | .05 | .10 | .07 | -.04 | -.03 | -.16 [†] |
| 3. | Father role attitudes – Childcare ^b | 8.22 (0.95) | | | -.10 | .29*** | .08 | -.03 | -.05 | -.09 | .13 | .15 [†] | .15 [†] | .08 |
| 4. | Father role attitudes – Breadwinning ^b | 4.46 (1.53) | | | | -.31*** | -.01 | -.19* | .23** | .05 | -.17* | -.15 [†] | -.22* | -.27** |
| 5. | Partner support ^b | 7.89 (1.50) | | | | | .35*** | .23** | -.10 | -.08 | .17 [†] | .48*** | .45*** | .25** |
| 6. | Workplace support ^b | 6.36 (1.76) | | | | | | .36*** | -.04 | -.37*** | .12 | .24** | .31*** | .08 |
| 7. | Others’ leave-taking ^b | 5.44 (3.01) | | | | | | | .02 | -.10 | -.05 | .26** | .32*** | .07 |
| 8. | Others’ childcare engagement ^b | 4.56 (1.24) | | | | | | | | .11 | .02 | -.10 | -.20* | -.17 [†] |

Table 2. Hierarchical regression models (with standardized regression coefficients) for desired parental leave-taking

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 |
|---|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Step 1: Covariates | | | | | |
| Age | .07 | .02 | -.00 | -.05 | |
| Country of residence | .23* | .26** | .21** | .13 [†] | .13 |
| Education level | -.27** | -.26** | -.26** | -.22** | -.26** |
| Relative income | .07 | .04 | .08 | .08 | |
| Work hours | -.22 [†] | -.15 | -.13 | -.10 | |
| Step 2: Masculinity and fatherhood beliefs | | | | | |
| Communal prototypes of men | | .26** | .21* | .17 [†] | .19 [†] |
| Agentic prototypes of men | | -.08 | -.15 [†] | -.16* | -.19* |
| Father role attitudes – Childcare | | .11 [†] | -.01 | -.02 | |
| Father role attitudes – Breadwinning | | -.13 | .01 | .08 | |
| Step 3: Social support | | | | | |
| Partner support | | | .41** | .42*** | .38** |
| Workplace support | | | .02 | -.06 | |
| Step 4: Additional predictors | | | | | |
| Others' leave-taking | | | | .14 [†] | .13 [†] |
| Others' childcare engagement | | | | -.09 | |
| Expected backlash | | | | -.13 | |
| Expected parental self-efficacy | | | | .15* | .13 [†] |
| Adjusted R^2 | .12 | .19 | .30 | .35 | .35 |
| R^2 change | | .07 | .11 | .05 | |

Notes. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .10$.

Table 3. Hierarchical regression models (with standardized regression coefficients) for parental leave-taking intentions

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 |
|---|---------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| Step 1: Covariates | | | | | |
| Age | .17* | .13 [†] | .10 [†] | .05 | |
| Country of residence | .26** | .27** | .21** | .08 | |
| Educational level | -.26** | -.26** | -.24** | -.16* | -.14* |
| Relative income | .09 | .05 | .10 | .10 | |
| Work hours | -.19* | -.16* | -.13 | -.08 | |
| Step 2: Masculinity and fatherhood beliefs | | | | | |
| Communal prototypes of men | | .14 | .09 | .02 | |
| Agentic prototypes of men | | -.01 | -.06 | -.06 | |
| Father role attitudes – Childcare | | .14 [†] | .05 | .03 | |
| Father role attitudes – Breadwinning | | -.23* | -.11 | .03 | |
| Step 3: Social support | | | | | |
| Partner support | | | .32** | .31** | .30*** |
| Workplace support | | | .11 | -.03 | |
| Step 4: Additional predictors | | | | | |
| Others' leave-taking | | | | .24** | .27*** |
| Others' childcare engagement | | | | -.21** | -.20** |
| Expected backlash | | | | -.25** | -.28*** |
| Expected parental self-efficacy | | | | .21** | .22** |
| Adjusted R^2 | .14 | .21 | .30 | .46 | .47 |
| R^2 change | | .07 | .09 | .16 | |

Notes. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .10$.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression models (with standardized regression coefficients) for expected length of parental leave in percent of available leave

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| Step 1: Covariates | | | | | |
| Age | .18* | .13 | .13 | .09 | |
| Country of residence | -.23** | -.23** | -.28** | -.37*** | -.33*** |
| Educational level | -.09 | -.10 | -.09 | -.06 | |
| Relative income | .09 | .04 | .07 | .08 | |
| Work hours | -.21** | -.17* | -.15* | -.14 [†] | -.22** |
| Step 2: Masculinity and fatherhood beliefs | | | | | |
| Communal prototypes of men | | .06 | .03 | -.00 | |
| Agentic prototypes of men | | -.07 | -.10 | -.12 | |
| Father role attitudes – Childcare | | .09 | .02 | .01 | |
| Father role attitudes – Breadwinning | | -.24** | -.15 | -.05 | |
| Step 3: Social support | | | | | |
| Partner support | | | .25** | .25** | .28*** |
| Workplace support | | | .02 | -.03 | |
| Step 4: Additional predictors | | | | | |
| Others' leave-taking | | | | .14 | |
| Others' childcare engagement | | | | -.18* | -.22** |
| Expected backlash | | | | -.07 | |
| Expected parental self-efficacy | | | | .14 [†] | .14* |
| Adjusted R^2 | .13 | .18 | .22 | .27 | .25 |
| R^2 change | | .05 | .04 | .05 | |

Notes. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .10$.