

You Can't Get It and It's Unpaid Anyway: Statutory Partner Parental Leave in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Parental leave taken by secondary caregivers, especially when paid, is associated with better outcomes for children, families and the gender pay gap. However, secondary caregivers in New Zealand are not eligible for statutory paid parental leave (unless 'transferred' from the primary caregiver). They qualify for two weeks of statutory unpaid parental leave if they have been with one employer consistently for at least 12 months, or for one week of unpaid parental leave if they have had the same employer for six months. We conducted logistic regression analysis of Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) income data for the fathers of a cohort of 53,000 New Zealand babies one year on either side of the birth month, and estimated how many fathers were eligible for statutory secondary caregiver parental leave around the time of their baby's birth – as measured by their length of consistent payment by their main employer. We found that for fathers who worked for wages, nearly a third appeared ineligible for the full two weeks of statutory partner parental leave from their main employer when their babies were born, and one in six were likely ineligible for even one week. For Māori and Pasifika, over 40 per cent of waged fathers were likely ineligible for two weeks' partner parental leave, with one in four likely ineligible for one week of statutory leave. Low-paid precarious, casual or seasonal jobs and the big industries that rely on them, like construction, agriculture and admin temp agencies, are contributing to partner parental leave ineligibility. Māori and Pasifika fathers are more affected due to their concentration in these types of jobs. This study suggests the need to consider changing the eligibility requirements for statutory partner parental leave

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because of inadequate coverage of the target population and inequitable access to the entitlement.

Keywords: employer attachment, parental leave, partner parental leave, paternity leave, labour market, precarious work, ethnic inequality, Pasifika.

Whakarāpopotonga

E pātahi ana te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ina whakamahia e ngā kaitiaki tuarua, ina koa ki te utua, ki ngā putanga pai ake mā ngā tamariki, ngā whānau me te āputa utu ā-ira tangata. Heoi, kāore e taea e ngā kaitiaki tuarua i Aotearoa te whiwhi whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture e utua ana (engari rawa, ka 'whakawhitia' mai i te kaitaki matua). E māraurau ana rātou ki te rua wiki o te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture kāore e utua ana mēnā kua rite tonu tana mahi mō tētahi kaitukumahi mō te 12 marama i te iti rawa, ki te wiki kotahi rānei o te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture kāore e utua ana mēnā kua mahi ia mō tētahi kaitukumahi kotahi mō te 6 marama. I whakahaere mātou i tētahi tātaritanga whakaheke ā-taurangi whakamauru o ngā raraunga moni whiwhi IDI mō ngā matua o tētahi pūtoi o ngā pēpi 53,000 o Aotearoa i ngā taha e rua o te marama whānau, ka whakatau tata i te tokomaha o ngā mātua tāne e māraurau ana mō te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture hei kaitiaki tuarua i te takiwā o te whānautanga o tā rātou pēpi – e inea ana hei roanga o te utu ā-mahi rite e tō rātou kaitukumahi matua. I kitea e mātou, mō ngā mātua tāne e utua ana ā-haora, ko te āhua nei kāore e māraurau ana tata ki te hautoru kia whiwhi i te rua wiki o te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture i tō rātou kaitukumahi matua i te whānautanga mai o ā rātou pēpi, ā, ko te āhua nei kāore i te māraurau kotahi i roto i te tokoono mō te kotahi wiki noa iho. Mō te taha ki ngā matua tāne Māori me te Pasifika kāore pea e māraurau ana neke atu i te 40% o ngā mātua tāne e utua ana ā-haora mō te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture, rua wiki te roa, me te kotahi i roto i te tokowhā kāore e māraurau ana pea mō te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture kotahi wiki te roa. E whai wāhi ana ngā mahi wāhanga tau, waimori, pāhekeheke e iti ai te utu, me ngā ahumahi rarahi e whakawhirinaki ana ki aua momo mahi, pēnei i te hangahanga whare, te ahuwhehua, me ngā umanga whakarato kaimahi rangitahi, ki taua kore māraurautanga. He kaha ake te pāngia o ngā mātua tāne Māori, Pasifika rānei nā te tokomaha o rātou e mahi ana i aua momo mahi. Ka whakarato taunakitanga tēnei rangahau hei tautoko i te whakaumu i ngā whakaritenga māraurau mō te whakamatuatanga tiaki pēpi ā-ture nā te kapinga takarepa o te taupori hāngai, me te manarite kore o te whiwhi māraurautanga. Me mōhio he kitenga tōmua ēnei, ka mutu kia nui atu te mātāi i te hononga i waenga i ngā taurangi matua pērā i te ahumahi me te momo mahi, tae atu ki te pakeke me te mātauranga.

Stats NZ disclaimer

Access to the data used in this study was provided by Stats NZ under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Statistics Act 1975. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Stats NZ or individual data suppliers. These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI, please visit <https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/>.

The results are based in part on tax data supplied by Inland Revenue to Stats NZ under the Tax Administration Act 1994 for statistical purposes. Any discussion of data limitations or weaknesses is in the context of using the IDI for statistical purposes, and is not related to the data's ability to support Inland Revenue's core operational requirements.

He Karo nā Tatauranga Aotearoa

He mea whakarato te urunga ki te raraunga i whakamahia ki tēnei mātai e Tatauranga Aotearoa i raro i ngā āhukatanga i hoahoatia kia whai pānga ai ngā whakaritenga o te Ture Tatauranga 1975. Nā te kaituhi ngā huanga i tāpae ki tēnei mātai, ehara i a Tatauranga Aotearoa, ehara rānei i tētahi o ana kaiwhakarato raraunga. Ehara ēnei kitenga i te tauanga ōkawa. Kua hangaia mō ngā take rangahau mai i te Tūāhanga Raraunga Kōmitimiti (IDI) e āta whakahaeretia ana e Tatauranga Aotearoa. Mō ngā kōrero anō mo te IDI haere ki <https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/>.

Ko te pūtake o ngā kitenga kei ngā raraunga i whakaratohia e Te Tari Taake ki Tatauranga Aotearoa i raro i te Ture Whakahaere Tāke 1994 mō ngā take tauanga. Ko ngā kōrerorero mō ngā whāititanga me ngā ngoikoretanga o ngā raraunga kei te horopaki o te whakamahi i te IDI mō ngā take tauanga, ā, kāore e whai pānga ana ki te kaha o te raraunga ki te tautoko i ngā whakaritenga whakahaere matua a Te Tari Taake.

A wealth of evidence shows that supporting fathers and secondary caregivers to take parental leave benefits children, mothers and whole families. Much of this kind of research is possible because the majority of OECD countries provide some form of paid parental leave for fathers and secondary caregivers (OECD Family Database, 2019). However, New Zealand does not.¹ While there has been recent expansion of parent entitlements in New Zealand,² there has been no expansion or creation of either universal or paid leave entitlement for partner parental leave, despite its typically very short duration and evidence of its positive impacts.

Literature: Why focus on secondary caregiver parental leave entitlements?

Studies that have focused on fathers have shown that higher levels of involvement from all possible parents is good for children's development and long-term outcomes (Cabrera et al., 2018; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Sarkadi et al., 2008). The mental health and stress levels of primary caregivers improves with higher levels of co-parenting responsibilities taken on by partners (Mallette et al., 2020), while the maternal wage penalty lessens. Greater partner involvement also protects children from the impact of poor maternal mental health (Petts & Knoester, 2018; Sarkadi et al., 2008). Fathers who take parental leave have higher levels of engagement and involvement throughout childhood (Knoester et al., 2019; Petts & Knoester, 2018; Tamm, 2019). There is mounting evidence that the act of taking paternity leave itself, regardless of pre-existing attitudes and involvement during the pregnancy, gets fathers used to doing hands-on tasks early on in the care of their babies. This seems to result in more direct involvement in childcare and family decision-making from fathers later on, including for low-income and non-resident fathers (Centre for Longitudinal Research, 2017; Pryor et al., 2014; Tamm, 2019).

In short, partner parental leave – especially when paid – is a social good. It is good for children, parents of all kinds, and family functioning as a whole. It is also increasingly seen as a private good by fathers, even if unpaid. Research using the Growing Up in New Zealand survey has highlighted how the current cohort of fathers in New Zealand has a much higher expectation and intention of involvement in child-raising and new baby support than previous generations had (Cabrera et al., 2004; Cooper, 2017; Kane et al., 2015; Knoester et al., 2019).

Changes to state-mandated eligibility for partner parental leave encourages take-up of leave by fathers (Bartel et al., 2017; Druedahl et al., 2019; Patnaik, 2019; Tamm, 2019). However, the opportunity for secondary caregivers to take any parental leave in New Zealand is limited by employment criteria eligibility (see Growing Up in New Zealand, 2014), and is also unpaid. Secondary caregivers in New Zealand are eligible for one week of unpaid parental leave if they have worked for at least 10 hours a week for the same employer for the previous 26 weeks (i.e. six months), and they are eligible for two weeks of unpaid parental leave if they have worked at least 10 hours a week for the same employer for 12 months.

Uptake is therefore likely skewed towards families who can afford it, and the policy itself is tailored for couples where the secondary caregiver has one consistent employer. Connection to single employers is also an issue for those who work several jobs. If a parent has a lengthy period of employment with a part-time employer but not another, leave from a part-time job does not allow a parent to spend most of their time taking care of a baby. As labour markets become increasingly casualised and fragmented, it has been unclear whether this policy adequately covers the relevant population.

Research questions: How many parents are likely to be missing out on statutory partner parental leave, and why?

1. What proportion of secondary caregivers have less than twelve and less than six months' work history with their main employer, at the month of their baby's birth?
2. What predicts shorter periods with one consistent employer, and do predictors have different effects on employment duration for different subgroups, occupations and industries?

Methodology*Data sources*

Our analysis included data from various sources from the Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). Fathers were extracted from Department of Internal Affairs' (DIA) life events data. Dependent and independent variables of interest were derived from following data sources:

- Inland Revenue – employer monthly schedule (EMS) records
- Stats NZ – Census 2018
- Ministry of Education – school enrolments, tertiary enrolments, industry training and qualifications data
- Fabling-Maré Labour Tables – these are derived tables based on EMS records (Fabling & Maré, 2015)
- DIA life events – birth records and marriage records
- Stats NZ derived tables – address notifications, personal details and estimated resident population table
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment – visa records
- Ministry of Social Development – benefits data.

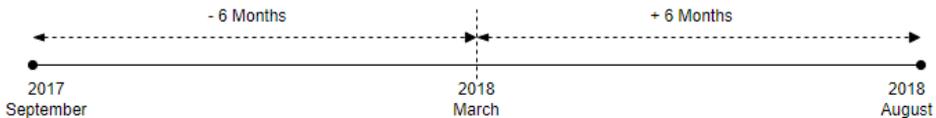
Sample

Policymakers working on parental leave issues should be interested in conditions for all partners of primary caregivers having babies in New Zealand, and all secondary caregivers of babies being born, regardless of whether they are partnered with the primary caregivers. The Centre for Longitudinal Research's expansive

definition of ‘dads’ as including “biological fathers, step-fathers, co-mums, foster and adoptive parents as well as other family members who have a father role” is a good one (Centre for Longitudinal Research, 2017). However, due to data limitations, the study is limited for the most part to males registered as a parent on birth certificates and is thus limited by a heteronormative approach. This excludes many possible kinds of dads, while including biological fathers not co-habiting with their babies or partnered with the mothers.

A further key limitation with the IDI is the lack of information identifying households in administrative data. Currently the only source available on a population level is Census 2018. Given the uncertainty in knowing who the actual caregivers were, we decided to not conduct household-based analysis.

For our subject population, we chose to use one year of birth cohort with census month (March 2018) as the centre and six months on either side of the census date.



For estimates of household income, we only used birth parents as a proxy for household due to limitations of finding other caregivers in the IDI. We investigated whether we could find other potential caregivers like stepfather, stepmother, caregiver (MSD), caregiver (visa records), and caregiver/grandparent in a caregiver role (census data). However, due to the small time period of interest after birth of the child and the small numbers of other caregivers, we chose to not use these in our analysis.

We explored a period of 25 months (1 year on either side of birth) for most of the variables of interest. Variables that were derived from the census do not change throughout this period of interest, but variables from administrative data have been set up to show monthly snapshots.

Variables

Dependent variables

Income-derived measures made up most of the dependent variables. Income variables were derived using Stats NZ's income tables, the Ministry of Social Development's tier 2 and tier 3 payments data, and Inland Revenue's income tax records. We did not include income from student loans and recoverable benefits in this analysis.

For income-derived variables, we explored:

- individual income from wages – taxed income earned from wages and salaries
- individual income from wages and self-employment – total income earned from wages and salaries and self-employed income (from sole trader, shareholder salary, director salary, etc.)
- individual total income from all sources – total income earned from wages and salaries, self-employment and benefits. As a proxy for eligibility for statutory secondary caregiver parental leave, we examined continuity of payment from a 'main employer' as a proxy for eligibility for parental leave.

We used the Fabling-Maré labour tables to get employment spells. Most fathers only had one employer each month; however, for those with multiple employers, we took the employer who paid them most consistently in the 12-month lead-up to birth and categorised this as their main employer.

The length of employment was determined based on how long the current employer had been paying the individual. Once the length of employment was derived, we classified eligibility as:

- Two weeks – if an individual was earning consistently from same employer for at least 12 months at the month of interest
- One week – if an individual was earning consistently from same employer for more than 6 months but less than 12 months at the month of interest
- No leave – if an individual was earning consistently from same employer for less than 6 months at the month of interest
- No eligibility – if an individual is not earning income at the month of interest.

Independent variables

South Auckland was included as a dummy variable in all models, as this research was originally commissioned by local and central government agencies as a continuation of a project focusing on better social service design for South Auckland experiences around childbirth (The Southern Initiative and Social Wellbeing Agency, 2020). For this analysis, South Auckland fathers were viewed as a conceptual starting point from which to explore possible structural barriers and enablers to uptake of leave entitlements relevant nationally. Assumptions based on existing community-based research were that ethnic inequities experienced and identified by South Auckland families preparing for having a baby are the culmination of a lengthy history of colonial and structural racism that has resulted in limited employment options and therefore parental leave options for many Māori and Pasifika fathers (Auckland Co-design Lab, 2018; Auckland Council, 2020; The Southern Initiative et al., 2020; The Southern Initiative & Social Wellbeing Agency, 2020; Treasury, 2018). Nested models would allow us to see whether and what demographic and socio-economic factors significant across the whole population of fathers ‘net out’ or explain any possible independent South Auckland effect.

Occupation and industry are a key focus of the analysis, as this may provide some useful insights for how labour market policy and practices affect parental leave uptake. Occupational type and status tend to vary widely within individual industries, and as such, are considered independent from each other. They are included as categorical dummy variables. ‘Labourer’ is treated as the baseline for occupation, and ‘Construction’ as the baseline for industry – the largest categories. The variable for occupation is used with caveats, in that it is provided by the 2018 Census, with substantial missing data even after Stats NZ’s post-Census imputation. Occupation imputation for the 2018 Census has been found to have high inaccuracy at more-detailed levels, particularly for Māori and Pasifika ethnic groups, and the broadest possible occupational

grouping, which has performed better in analysis (Boven et al., 2021), is therefore used. Fathers for whom there was no occupation imputed are included as their own category of ‘no occupation recorded’. The industry of the main employer of fathers was used from Inland Revenue data, and is therefore of higher quality, although of course excludes fathers not in employment and some who were self-employed.

Ethnic group is not analysed as mutually exclusive categories. As such, we do not use a baseline group, and dummy variables are included in models for each of the six Level One Stats NZ derived ethnic categories (Māori, NZ European, Pacific, Asian, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA), and Other groups), with some examination of interactions specifically for the Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā categories. Given the smaller sample sizes for key dependent variables, specific ethnic groups within the Pasifika category are unfortunately not analysed in this study.

Other control variables include continuous age in years (‘Parent age at birth’), educational qualifications (Categorical dummy variable: 1. ‘NCEA 3 and below’ (baseline); 2 ‘NCEA 4–6’; 3. ‘Degree-level and higher’), and sibling order for the child (Categorical dummy variable: 1. First baby (baseline); 2. Second baby; 3. Third baby; 4. Fourth or more baby). Dummy variables for whether the father was on a benefit in birth month (‘Receiving main benefit’), or was self-employed (‘Receiving sole trader income’) were included as both mediated consistent payment from an ‘employer’.

Analytic approach

Simple descriptive statistics were used to examine the personal characteristics, occupations and industries associated with likely eligibility for parental leave.

Stepwise cross-sectional binary logistic regressions were used to test the extent to which various characteristics and conditions mediate, confound or ‘explain’ the overall picture.

Table 1: Formula used in the stepwise cross-sectional binary logistic regression analysis

LOG ODDS OF HAVING BEEN WITH EMPLOYER LESS THAN 6 MONTHS IN BIRTH MONTH = a + SOUTH AUCKLAND + PARENT AGE AT BIRTH + 2ND BABY + 3RD BABY + 4TH OR MORE BABY + PĀKEHĀ + MĀORI + PASIFIKA + ASIAN + MELAA + OTHER ETHNIC GROUP + NCEA 4-6 + UNDERGRAD DEGREE OR HIGHER + RECEIVING SOLE TRADER INCOME + RECEIVING MAIN BENEFIT + OCCUPATION (9-categorical dummy, baseline=labourers) + INDUSTRY (19-category dummy, baseline=construction) + LOG_ANNUAL_INCOME + LOG_ANNUAL_INCOME*PĀKEHĀ + LOG_ANNUAL_INCOME*MĀORI + LOG_ANNUAL_INCOME*PASIFIKA + e

Based on the final full model, margins were generated for some illustrative examples of low-, middle- and high-income occupations for different ethnic groups (Figure 5).

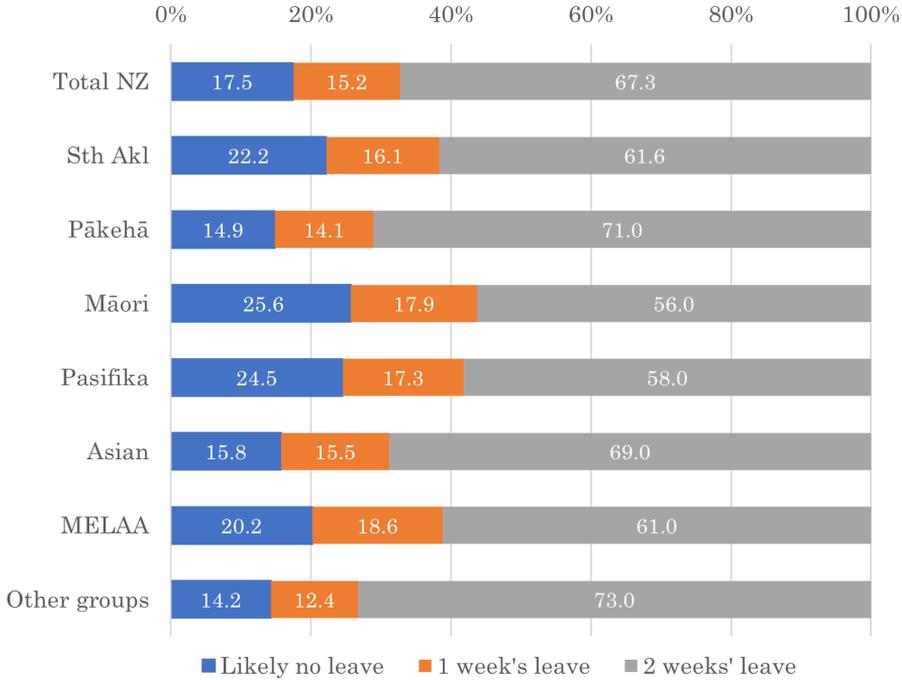
The outcomes being measured are those of fathers; however, the regression analysis is based on the child. This means some fathers are counted multiple times – once for each baby born in the sampled period. This should not have any significant impact on the results as the number of fathers repeated was very low. Our conclusions should be interpreted as being child-centred in that sense; for example, babies born in our cohort had fathers with particular characteristics.

Findings

How many parents may be ineligible for statutory partner parental leave due to short periods with a main employer?

Presented here are simple descriptive statistics for the proportion of different categories of waged fathers who had shorter or longer durations with employers, and how the eligibility cut-off would affect them. Nearly one in three waged fathers may be ineligible for the full two weeks of statutory unpaid partner parental leave due to short periods of time with their employers (see Figure 1) and around one in six waged fathers may not be eligible for even one week. This affects low-income fathers the most. Over 40 per cent of Māori and Pasifika waged fathers may be ineligible for the two weeks, and one in four may be ineligible for even one week.

Figure 1: Likely eligibility for partner parental leave in birth month due to continuous income being received from main employer for less than 6 months (no statutory leave), 6–11 months (1 week’s leave), and 12+ months (2 weeks’ leave) (%)

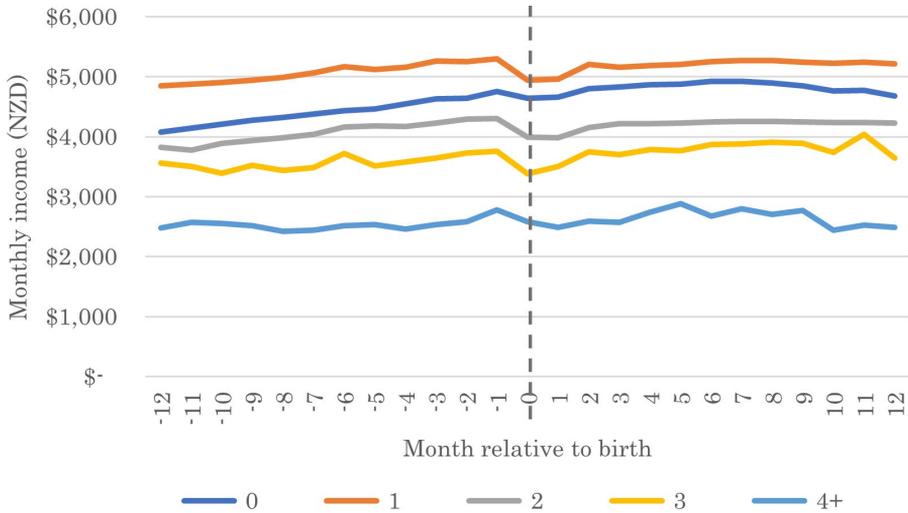


Source: Fabling-Maré labour tables.

Employer change is associated with both low income and high income, but to different degrees. In Figure 2, we see those who had one change of main employer in this period were the highest paid workers, who are secure enough to be able to take advantage of job transitions every few years to get pay progression.

Those with no employer change are the second most highly paid, comprising around 83 per cent of the sample ($n = 44,724$). Those with two or more employer changes ($n = 8605$) represent smaller and increasingly low-paid segments, indicating more precarious labour situations.

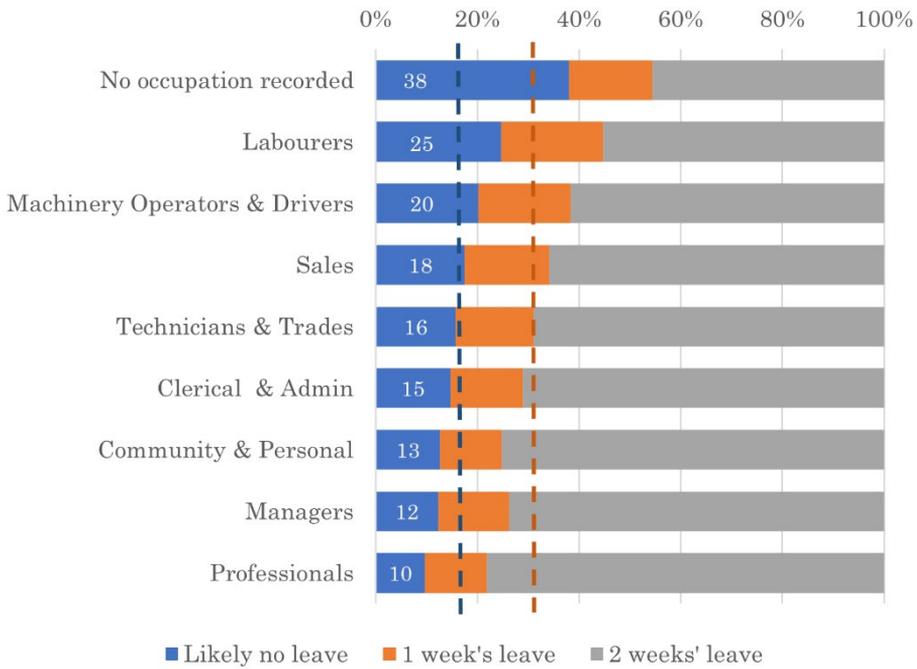
Figure 2: How does switching jobs relate to income? Income trajectories by number of employer changes



Sources: Stats NZ derived tax records; Fabling-Maré labour tables.

As demonstrated in Figure 3, those who are more likely to have had shorter periods with a consistent employer at birth month or at any time, are also more likely to be in the lower-paid occupations known for casualised labour. This is further highlighted in the rest of the report when examining industries.

Figure 3: Likely eligibility for partner parental leave based on time with main employer, by occupation (%)

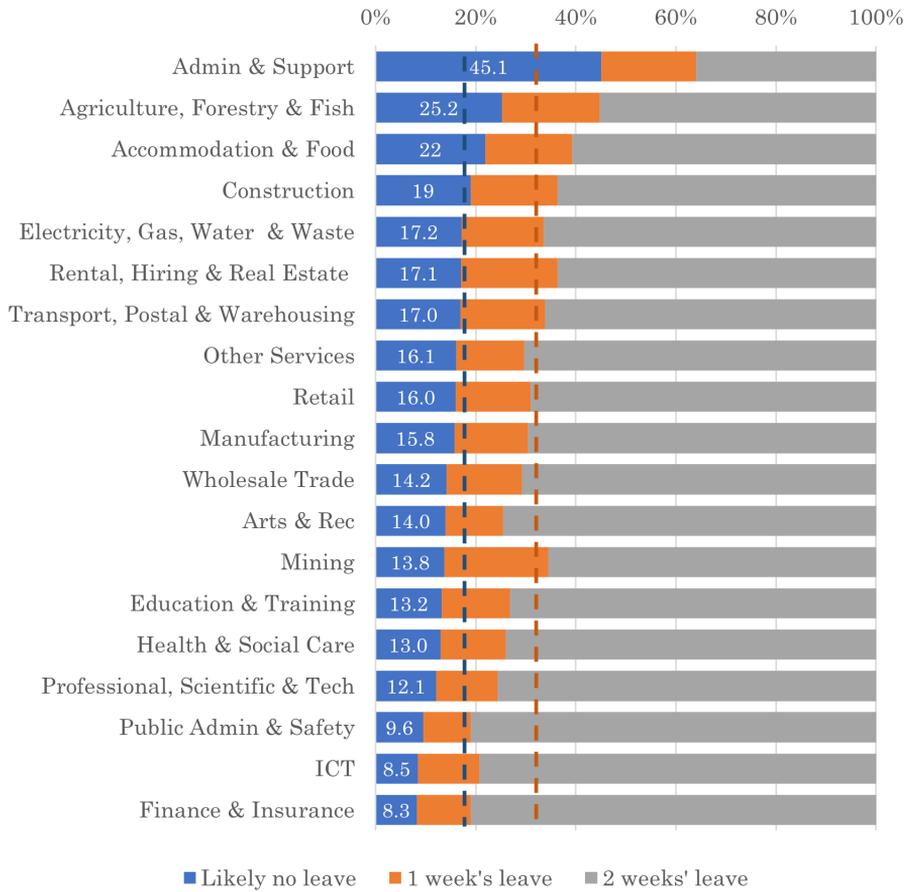


Sources: Census 2018; Fabling-Maré labour tables.

Note: Dotted lines indicate national average for less than 6 months (likely no leave) (17.5) and 6–11 months (1 week’s leave) (32.7) as per Figure 1.

In contrast to occupation, the industry sector that was the most overrepresented was not construction or manufacturing, but administrative support services (see Figure 4). This underlines the importance of making a distinction between occupation and industry in the model. Fathers employed by businesses in the administrative support sector comprised a small percentage of working fathers (5%) but a substantial percentage of those with less than six months in the job (13%). This likely reflects the industry context of temping agencies (as opposed to fathers working in clerical roles in other sectors) and highlights a particular category of working fathers that are often missed out in a focus on male-dominated industries.

Figure 4: Likely eligibility for partner parental leave based on time with main employer by industry (%)



Sources: Stats NZ derived tax records; Fabling-Maré labour tables.

Note: Dotted lines indicate national average for less than 6 months (likely no leave) (17.5) and 6–11 months (1 week's leave) (32.7) as per Figure 1.

Figure 5: Predicted probability of being ineligible for statutory unpaid parental leave when baby is born, for low-, middle- and high-income fathers from different ethnic groups and occupations (Fitted values from ethnic-income interaction Model 5)

Values fitted for:	 Working in South Auckland part-time as a minimum-wage construction labourer	 Working as a technician in a freezing works for around the 2019 living wage	 A South Auckland health professional earning \$150,000
Pasifika father	61%	22%	2%
Māori father	58%	23%	3%
Pākehā father	53%	23%	4%
Statistical significance	Marginal statistical significance (10% level) for Pasifika vs Pākehā	No statistically significant difference	Statistically significant difference for Pasifika vs Pākehā

What independently predicts short periods with a main employer in birth month?

Using nested binary logistic regression models, we estimated the log odds of fathers having less than six months consistent payment from a single employer in the birth month of their baby, which is our proxy for statutory partner parental leave eligibility.

As Table 2 shows, the near-empty ‘South Auckland’ model (Model 1) is included to show that much of what is experienced locally as unique community disadvantage (The Southern Initiative & Social Wellbeing Agency, 2020), in this case can be elaborated and explained by demographic factors and multiple forms of socio-economic inequality between ethnic groups that are part of a nationally relevant pattern. Model 2 includes demographic characteristics of father’s age, birth order and ethnic group. Model 3 includes socio-economic characteristics of highest qualification, occupation, industry, and sole trader or beneficiary status. Model 4 introduces log cumulative total income, and Model 5 interacts income with ethnic group for three groups.

The strongest and most consistent predictor of shorter periods of employment with single employers in the full models was younger age. Other significant and expected predictors were lower levels of education, low pay and the occupations and industries already discussed.

As shown in the descriptive chart at Figure 1, Māori fathers on the face of it have the lowest likelihood of being able to access statutory parental leave in birth month, and this pattern holds in Model 2, controlling for demographic factors such as age and birth order. In models 3 and 4 which control for socio-economic factors, we see evidence that this is entirely driven by Māori concentration in low-paid work, including occupations and industries likely to be offering casual or insecure jobs.

Table 2: Estimated log odds of fathers being with an employer for less than six months at the time of baby's birth (nested binary logistic regression models)

	MODEL				
	(1) Sth Akl	(2) Demog	(3) SES	(4) Income	(5) Ethnic interactions
South Auckland	0.294*** (6.35)	0.00595 (0.12)	-0.0336 (-0.62)	-0.00823 (-0.14)	-0.00569 (-0.10)
Parent age at birth		- 0.0600*** (-21.10)	-0.0397*** (-13.92)	-0.00982*** (-3.51)	-0.00908** (-3.23)
First baby		0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Second baby		-0.177*** (-5.15)	-0.194*** (-5.43)	-0.0358 (-0.95)	-0.0377 (-1.00)
Third baby		0.0247 (0.56)	-0.0617 (-1.34)	0.0719 (1.48)	0.0788 (1.61)
Fourth or more baby		0.297*** (6.07)	0.0489 (0.94)	0.0677 (1.24)	0.0819 (1.48)
Pākehā father		-0.384*** (-8.92)	-0.182*** (-3.97)	0.0161 (0.33)	-0.742 (-0.97)
Māori father		0.341*** (9.01)	0.185*** (4.59)	-0.0193 (-0.44)	3.082*** (3.66)
Pasifika father		0.0907 (1.75)	0.0578 (1.05)	-0.0743 (-1.28)	4.977*** (4.40)
Asian father		-0.170** (-2.96)	-0.0381 (-0.62)	-0.133* (-2.05)	-0.0916 (-1.35)

	MODEL				
	(1) Sth Akl	(2) Demog	(3) SES	(4) Income	(5) Ethnic interactions
Middle Eastern, Latin American or African father		0.268*	0.227†	0.108	0.144
		(2.47)	(1.94)	(0.84)	(1.12)
Other ethnic group father		-0.110	-0.0231	-0.0541	-0.0447
		(-1.06)	(-0.21)	(-0.47)	(-0.39)
NCEA 3 and below			0	0	0
			(.)	(.)	(.)
NCEA 4-6			-0.200***	-0.0181	-0.0223
			(-5.48)	(-0.47)	(-0.58)
Degree and above			-0.160**	0.140**	0.124*
			(-3.25)	(2.68)	(2.38)
Father receiving sole trader income			0.629***	0.598***	0.607***
			(7.04)	(6.21)	(6.34)
Father receiving main benefit			2.017***	1.112***	1.086***
<i>Father's occupation</i>			(20.85)	(10.88)	(10.46)
Clerical & admin			-0.206*	-0.0857	-0.0786
			(-2.31)	(-0.92)	(-0.84)
Community & personal services			-0.418***	-0.511***	-0.514***
			(-4.39)	(-5.07)	(-5.05)
Labourers			0	0	0
			(.)	(.)	(.)
Machinery operators & drivers			-0.0419	0.142*	0.153*
			(-0.68)	(2.19)	(2.33)
Managers			-0.448***	0.000264	-0.0115
			(-8.01)	(0.00)	(-0.19)
Professionals			-0.559***	-0.0907	-0.106
			(-8.55)	(-1.32)	(-1.53)
Sales			-0.0783	-0.0189	-0.0249
			(-0.95)	(-0.21)	(-0.28)
Technicians & trades			-0.269***	-0.0673	-0.0642
			(-4.96)	(-1.20)	(-1.13)
No occupation recorded			0.601***	0.435***	0.426***
<i>Father's industry</i>			(11.09)	(7.57)	(7.30)
Accommodation & food			0.330***	-0.190*	-0.180†
			(3.79)	(-2.01)	(-1.89)
Admin & support			0.973***	0.631***	0.599***
			(15.21)	(8.97)	(8.38)

	MODEL				
	(1) Sth Akl	(2) Demog	(3) SES	(4) Income	(5) Ethnic interactions
Agr. Forests & fish			0.290*** (4.94)	0.206*** (3.35)	0.201** (3.26)
Arts & recreation			0.0399 (0.29)	-0.147 (-0.93)	-0.157 (-0.98)
Construction			0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Education & training			0.154 (1.61)	-0.377*** (-3.49)	-0.360*** (-3.35)
Power & utilities			0.0524 (0.35)	0.236 (1.49)	0.220 (1.39)
Finance & insurance			-0.513*** (-4.18)	-0.129 (-1.03)	-0.158 (-1.26)
Health & social care			0.105 (1.08)	0.0653 (0.62)	0.0622 (0.59)
ICT & media			-0.455** (-3.00)	-0.276† (-1.71)	-0.296† (-1.85)
Manufacturing			-0.305*** (-5.83)	-0.220*** (-4.12)	-0.222*** (-4.14)
Mining			-0.188 (-0.79)	0.452† (1.90)	0.417† (1.78)
Other services			0.0225 (0.26)	-0.251** (-2.70)	-0.249** (-2.69)
Prof, scientific & technical			-0.0206 (-0.28)	0.141† (1.79)	0.114 (1.45)
Public admin & safety			-0.467*** (-5.10)	-0.327*** (-3.56)	-0.334*** (-3.62)
Rental & real estate			0.107 (0.87)	0.112 (0.86)	0.114 (0.87)
Retail			-0.151* (-2.15)	-0.336*** (-4.47)	-0.330*** (-4.39)
Transport postal & warehousing			-0.173* (-2.27)	-0.0924 (-1.14)	-0.0994 (-1.21)
Wholesale			-0.281*** (-3.76)	-0.274*** (-3.45)	-0.284*** (-3.56)
Log total cumulative income				-1.653***	-1.562***
Pākehā * income				(-45.66)	0.0719 (1.00)
Māori * income					-0.289*** (-3.66)

	MODEL				
	(1) Sth Akl	(2) Demog	(3) SES	(4) Income	(5) Ethnic interactions
Pasifika * income					-0.472*** (-4.42)
Constant	-1.538*** (-106.07)	0.562*** (5.85)	0.0828 (0.79)	16.75*** (43.47)	15.72*** (21.99)
Observations	35673	35673	35673	35673	35673

In Model 4, which controls for socio-economic factors including income (but without the interaction between ethnic group and income), only Asian fathers had significantly higher odds of longer employer attachment. No other ethnic group was statistically significantly associated with longer or shorter periods of being with an employer, independent of different conditions of work available to them.

However, when interacting income with ethnic group, a significant interaction affected both Māori and Pasifika fathers in the same way, in contrast with Pākehā. Model 5's ethnic group interaction with income showed that Pasifika and Māori fathers appear more attached than other ethnic groups to employers and jobs that pay a decent wage. This is most statistically significant for Pasifika fathers. Using Model 5, marginal values were generated, and some values fitted to illustrate how this interaction could play out for different ethnic groups in low-, medium- and high-income jobs.

The models also reinforce insights from the Pacific People's Workforce Challenge report on Pasifika people's exceptional loyalty to workplaces (The Southern Initiative & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2018). Pasifika fathers have the second-lowest average tenure of employment on the face of it, and like Māori fathers, still have similarly low estimates in the regression model taking demographics into account. However, when taking the precarity of low-paid occupations into account and holding all else equal, Pasifika fathers were estimated to be more likely to have *longer* periods of consistent employment than non-Pasifika by the time of their baby's birth, although the coefficient is not statistically

significant. In an alternative model that looked at payment from *all* employers, rather than just the ‘main’ employer, findings of Pasifika fathers having longer employment tenure were more pronounced and statistically significant. This is likely due to the phenomenon of Pasifika workers being more likely than other ethnic groups to have more than one regular job at a time. However, as discussed earlier, being eligible for unpaid leave from one part-time job does not allow you to spend most of your time at home in the birth month.

Conclusions

This study constructed an indicator for likely eligibility for statutory partner parental leave due to at least six months income from a main employer. We found that a large proportion of waged employees were likely not meeting the employment period threshold for either one or two weeks’ partner parental leave. Precarious, casual or seasonal jobs, and the big industries that rely on them, like construction, agriculture and admin temp agencies (Department of Labour, 2009; Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2021; Pacheco et al., 2016), are likely contributing to fathers missing out on statutory partner parental leave entitlements – which are unpaid anyway.

There are clear policy implications of these findings. Fathers on low incomes and in precarious occupations are being excluded from eligibility for statutory partner parental leave. Precarious or insecure attachment to employers is essentially a symptom of the overall structure of the New Zealand economy and the labour market, meaning that the current policy settings based on continuity of employment with a single employer are not adequate, and the gap in entitlements cannot be bridged with micro-level solutions. Laws, policies and funding are needed to incentivise the universal uptake of partner parental leave due to the strong social and well-being outcomes it supports, as per primary caregiver parental leave.

This analysis also highlights clear opportunities to better support whānau around the birth of a baby through targeted policy

and legislative changes. It also opens up questions that would benefit from further qualitative research with employers and employees, particularly in occupations and industries highlighted in the report and with Māori and Pasifika employees who are predominantly affected, to see how to best support access to statutory partner parental leave.

There were additional findings relevant to research into the ethnic pay gap. Not only were the very lowest incomes associated with shorter employer spells for Māori and Pasifika fathers compared with other groups, but higher incomes were associated with longer employer spells for those fathers too, all else being equal. Meanwhile, Asian fathers of all income levels had longer employer spells. If Pasifika and Māori fathers are relatively more attached than other ethnic groups to workplaces where they have the opportunity for higher-paid and stable employment, and Asian fathers generally leave their jobs less, this would mean that employers are paying less for Asian, Māori and Pasifika staff loyalty and retention than for workers of other ethnic groups.

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Notes

- 1 Of 42 countries in the OECD Family Database, only New Zealand, Canada, Israel, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, the United States and Costa Rica do not have paid partner or father-specific leave.
- 2 Recent New Zealand government policies increasing support for families, such as the extension of paid parental leave for primary carers, and the

Families Package (Campbell, 2018; Hannif & Lamm, 2005; Laß, 2020; Pacheco et al., 2016; Plum et al., 2019; Plum & Pacheco, 2019; Standing, 2011; Tucker, 2002) are premised on evidence that more money in the home is better for children, especially in the crucial early years, where it protects parents from a range of stressors that end up having an impact on children's brains, bodies and behaviours, while increasing capacity for the time and resource investment that nurtures them (Arnesen & Wilson, 2019; Berentson-Shaw, 2017; Cooper & Stewart, 2013, 2020).

- 3 Employment spells are defined using start and end of a job unique to an employer. More details on technical details of employment spells can be found [here](#).

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