Fathers at a Crossroads: The Combined Effect of Organizational and Cultural Factors on the Making of Gender-Related Policy

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Ideational explanations of social policy formation have gained a prominent role in the analysis of social policy formation in recent decades. Of late, researchers have taken up the task of creating explanations that combine ideational explanations with non-ideational ones. In this work, I will try to address this task at the intra-organizational level, creating an explanation for policy formation within a welfare state institution while taking into account both ideational and organizational factors. This method will be demonstrated using the legislative debate over the parental leave for fathers in Israel as a case study. The formation process of this program was long and complex, and included a struggle about the program's existence and its shape. This process allows us to look into the institutional interests of various participants shaping the struggle over the program. Coincidently, it offers a look into the cultural perceptions of those participants—operationalized as policy frames—and the effect these perceptions have on policy formation. This dual view provides an insight into the inter-relation and inter-dependence of both factors. This analytical framework creates a rich explanation, combining both types of analysis, showing how, at times, policy makers adopt perceptions most fitting their institutional interests, while at other times, policy frames serve as the basis for determining institutional interests.

Introduction

The role of culture as an explanatory mechanism of social policy formation has been receiving more attention in the last two decades. Until the 1980s, public policy and social policy analyses have focused on explaining policy formation using institutionalist or rational choice theories. Explanations

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based on ideational processes or on the role of culture have been sidelined, serving only to "fill in the gaps" in other explanatory mechanisms, when not disregarded entirely (Steensland 2008; Béland 2009a; Béland and Cox 2010).

Since the 1990s, however, feminist scholars began putting forward idea-based explanations for policy formation processes. Such explanations focus on the role of ideas, culture, and discourse on the development of social policy, rather than other factors, such as institutional pressures or economic factors (Padamsee 2009).

Three prominent examples are the works of Fraser and Gordon (1994), Lewis (1992, 1997) and Orloff (1996), all describing how gendered perceptions, terms, or discourses have influenced the formation of welfare states and of social policies.

Since the 1990s, explanations based on ideational processes have been common not only in gender-oriented explanations, but also in other fields (Béland 2009a; Padamsee 2009). Following this process, the task is now changing from posing ideational explanations as alternatives to other explanations, to creating combined explanatory mechanisms when accounting for the development of social policy (Béland 2009b; Padamsee 2009).

Parsons (2007) differentiates between types of arguments using two axes: whether the causes for actions were man-made (particular) or a given configuration (general); and whether they are based on an actor's position or on her interpretation. These two axes produce four explanations of action: structural, institutional, psychological, and ideational.

In this work, I will try to juxtapose explanations based on position—both organizational and institutional—with ideational explanations, which, according to parsons, are particular and based on interpretation.

In fields relevant to the area of study of this paper, there are two noteworthy examples of efforts to combine cultural and material explanations into a unified whole. The first is the volume "Making Men into Fathers" (Hobson 2002), describing social policy toward fathers in various European countries. The theoretical framework of the book stresses the importance of both the cultural aspects of fatherhood, fathers, and fathering ("the Fatherhood triangle") and of the institutional arrangement of the relationship between the state, market, and family ("the Institutional triangle") (Hobson and Morgan 2002, 9), and the book's chapters are dedicated to examining the various aspects of these relationships, and to the inter-relations between the Institutional and the fatherhood triangles.

The other example comes from the field of parental leave policy. Kamerman and Moss's "The politics of parental leave policies" (2009) focuses, as the title implies, on the political process of parental leave policy formation. However, as the authors stress (p. 8–10), understanding the political process requires the understanding both of institutional elements of policymaking and of ideational elements—or in their words, "conflicts or synergies are to some extent constructed" (p. 9).

Building a foundation for combining ideational and non-ideational elements of policy formation analysis, Padamsee (2009) points to four connection points that must be considered when attempting to position ideational explanations within the broader frame of social policy formation. The first is the *interaction* of ideational dynamics and other causal dynamics; the second is the *interdependence* of these two dynamics; the third is the existence of a *multiplicity* of competing ideational elements; and the fourth is integrating this multiplicity into the explanatory mechanism.

Following Padamsee, I wish to offer an explanation that answers those four questions, and provides a model of integration between ideational and non-ideational explanations to social policy formations, at least in a one specific level of policy formation.

The model provided by Pfau-Effinger (2005) provides a useful distinction between the levels of interaction of culture and other welfare state mechanisms. Its usefulness stems from two elements in the model, "welfare culture" and "welfare arrangements". The term "welfare culture", according to Pfau-Effinger, "comprises the stock of knowledge, values and ideals to which the relevant social actors, the institutions of the welfare state and concrete policy measures refer" (Ibid, p. 4). Its use allows us to refer to the way people, and specifically policymakers, think on specific welfare arrangements. The term "welfare arrangements" allows us to examine not only the part of the state in providing welfare to its citizens, but also the roles of other players in the field.

Building on these two concepts, Pfau-Effinger offers a model that dismantles the complex interrelations between culture and different elements of the welfare arrangement, thus allowing us to focus on a specific segment of this arrangement, while still enabling us to take into consideration the interaction of this segment with other segments of the model.

In this work, I wish to focus on one such segment—the interaction of the welfare system, and specifically the institutions of the welfare state, with the welfare culture, and the effect of this interaction on welfare state policies.

However, focusing on the institutions of the welfare state poses a challenge to combining cultural and non-cultural explanations. Culture is usually analyzed at the societal level, discussing the perceptions and attitudes of the general public. This is how Pfau-Effinger (2005, e.g., p. 11 and 13) and Padamsee (2009, e.g., p. 433) themselves treat culture, explicitly or implicitly. In order to follow Padamsee's (2009) notion of bringing the multiplicity of ideational positions into the explanatory mechanism, we have to adopt a tool that will allow us to distinguish different ideational positions within organizations.

In order to find such a tool, let us first unpack the term "ideational explanations". Campbell (2002) provides a typology that lays out ideational explanations across two axes. The first is the foreground/background level, referring to the difference between underlying and taken-for-granted assumptions

(background), and explicitly articulated ideas (foreground). The second is the cognitive/normative level, dividing between paradigms—ideas about how the world *works*, and frames—ideas about how it *should* work.

As noted, I wish to explore the multiplicity and competition of ideational explanations within organizations; this leads us to the foreground level, where ideas are tested and confronted, rather than taken for granted.

As I wish to examine the effect of perceptions of gender, fatherhood, and family on policy formations, I will focus on the normative level, and not on the cognitive one. The central difference between opposing sides lies not in the way they perceive the current societal situation (differing paradigms), but in the way in which they perceive the desired outcome of policy (differing frame). This leads me to the discussion of frames, as a tool that enables the combination of ideational and organizational explanations at the intra-organizational level.

Policy Frames at the Intra-Organizational Level

The notion of "framing" has been used in social sciences for many years. A notable starting point is the influential work of Goffman (1974). However, the rise of theories of framing began in the 1990s, when they become prominent in both sociology and communications studies (Benford and Snow 2000)

Frames, much like schemas, are filters through which we see and interpret reality. However, unlike schemas, frames exceed the scope of the individual. They are not just the consequence of inner psychological processes, but are the result of a constructive process, incorporating several societal players, which ultimately leads to the production of a common frame, shared by several participants (Benford and Snow 2000).

Policy frames, the frames people hold on policy issues, relate to three questions: what is the problem the policy is intended to solve? What solutions are fitting to those problems? And what social values are related to the discussion at hand? Actors may share a frame while disagreeing on the preferred policy, as long as their answers to these three questions are the same (Steensland 2008).

According to this perspective, in order to convince the public of one's opinion, one must either make one's claims within the policy frame common to this public, or make the public change the frame through which they conceive the problem. Therefore, policy frames define the boundaries of discussion on policy issues, and the political feasibility of various policy programs, and thus influence policymaking.

Notable prior studies examining the role of policy frames in policy formation include the pioneering work of Hobson and Lindholm (1997), using Snow and Benford's (1992) application of frames to social movement analysis to better understand the development of welfare policy; Steensland's (2006) discussion of the frames employed in the debate over Guaranteed Minimum

Income in the Unites States; and recently, Stryker and Wald's (2009) discussion of framing as a tool in changing the meaning of concepts such as compassion, in the process of policy change.

However, my use of frames will deviate from those examples on three points: first, I will apply frames to the intra-organizational level; Second, I will claim that the use of frames by policy makers and political actors is not a cynical political maneuver, but that policymakers themselves are subject to framing; and third, I will apply frames analysis not to competing programs, but to different attitudes toward a single program.

First, frames, and specifically policy frames, are commonly used in relation to public opinion, especially in the context of mass media. Framing refers to the way policy programs are presented to the public, in order to garner support. However, I wish to follow the path laid down by Steensland (2006) and use framing in order to understand cultural influences not only in the media, but also on intra-organizational debates. Relating to the programs aimed at achieving a Guaranteed Annual Income program for all Americans, Steensland shows how frames used by bureaucrats trying to promote those programs in intra-organizational debates were crucial to understanding both the partial success of those programs and their eventual failure.

Second, most frames-based analyses assume that frames are a tool to be used by policymakers. Sometimes explicit, but more often implicit, the assumption is that policy makers use framing as tools—they select the frame that will bring them advantage, and use it.

My analysis, however, is based on the assumption that policy makers, like the public, do not use framing simply as a tool to manipulate public opinion. Rather, they adopt frames, and understand policy programs using those frames, in a manner similar to the understanding of the public. Framing *can* be used manipulatively for political aims, but this is not *always* the case.

This assumption serves in the creation of a combined organizational–ideational explanation, as it places the framing done by policy makers inside the explanatory mechanism—influencing other parts of this mechanism, but also influenced by them. Understanding frames in this manner makes the question "why did a policymaker adopt a specific frame" a legitimate one, allowing for discussion of the influence of non-ideational elements on frames and frame adoption.

My third deviation from the literature on frames is the application of frame analysis in the context of the debate over a single program as opposed to the evaluation of competing programs. This is essential in the field of study, described below, where only one policy program is discussed, and the question is its continuation. I believe this use is merited, as will be shown below, because different players understand the same program in very different ways. Thus, frames analysis allows us to understand the differing positions of those players.

The analysis of intra-organizational discussions using policy frames achieves the task defined above—bringing ideational processes into the level of the organization. Frames are a manifestation of cultural perceptions, applied to policy issues (Steensland 2008). Identifying different frames used by intra-organizational actors will put the culture into the level of the organization.

However, as stated above, I do not wish to simply describe the effect of culture – or frames – on policymaking, but to interweave cultural explanations with institutional ones. Here I will take one step further beyond what Steensland is suggesting, and will use policy frames as one of the explanatory mechanisms—at the intra-institutional level.

The Field of Research—Parental Leave for Fathers in Israel

This paper is part of a bigger project, aimed at examining the interaction of ideational and institutional factors by way of focusing on the role of perceptions of fatherhood in the formation of family policy in Israel.

A description of this field must begin with a description of family policy in Israel. According to Peled (1992, 2008), Israeli citizenship discourse is based on two layers: the first is a thin liberal layer, providing basic rights on a universal basis; the second is the ethno-republican layer, providing rights and allocating resources according to a group contribution to the Jewish-Zionist common good.

While Peled understands this contribution mainly as the military service of men, Berkovitch (1997) extends this explanation to women's citizenship and to family policy. The principle of a "Jewish and Democratic State", basic to the definition of Israel, can only be maintained by securing a sizeable Jewish majority. Thus, Berkovitch claims that women are granted rights and allocated resources according to two principles, matching Peled's two layers. According to the equality principle, the state must work to obtain gender equality; the contribution principle requires that women be rewarded for contribution to the common good—through childbearing.

This frames a family policy, and gender equality policy, which strives for gender equality—as long as it does not harm the perceived main role of women, motherhood. Thus, women are drafted for compulsory military service, in a manner similar to men—but are released as soon as they are married or are pregnant. Thus, "The Women's Equality Act" says, in essence, that women are entitled to equality in all fields of life—as long as they remain within a marriage.

Other writers (Ajzenstadt and Gal 2001; Helman 2011; Herbst and Benjamin 2012) claim that despite major change to the Israeli citizenship regime, a version of this situation still persists. Israeli women's citizenship is still based primarily on their role as mothers, turning to the principle of

equality only when it does not interfere with this role. In family policy, this manifests in programs that allow women to seek equality in the labor market only after they have fulfilled their maternal role.

The effects of this pattern on women, and especially single mothers, are well-documented (See especially Helman 2011; Herbst and Benjamin 2012). However, the effects of this citizenship regime on fathers have not been widely documented (Perez 2010). In this paper, I will take parental leave for fathers in Israel as a case study. This case is suitable for such exploration, for two reasons. First, the category of fathers is a category which policymakers in Israel find hard to handle. This category brings together "masculinity" with "childcare", two concepts which are not usually connected. As this program is the only one aimed at fathers who are part of a heterosexual couple,[1] it uncovers the contradictions between the concepts of masculinity and childcare, as they are used in Israel (Perez 2007).

The second reason for choosing this program is the extended duration of its legislative process, over a decade long, described below. This lengthy debating period supplies extensive, detailed data both of the institutional interests of various actors, and of the policy frames used in the process. This process also featured changes of stance from several actors, providing an opportunity to further look into the mechanics of policymaking.

The first draft of the fourteenth Amendment of the Women's Labor Act, allowing men to share their spouse's birth leave,[2] was placed before the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, in 1994. The amendment allowed men to take 6 weeks of the 12 weeks long leave, and receive wage replacement in a manner similar to women's leave.

Passing this legislation was a long process, which included softening opposition from both politicians and professional civil servants, and re-submitting it following the election of a new Knesset. The amendment was finally passed in 1997, and was enacted as a temporary measure for three years, in order to gauge it effects before making it permanent.

As this period had elapsed, in 2001, Member of the Knesset (MK) Naomi Hazan brought the amendment again to the table of the Knesset. This time the legislation faced fierce opposition, mainly from the National Insurance Institute (NII) and from the ministry of labor, which threatened to oppose the law and work towards its annulment. As a compromise, the amendment was passed, but again as a temporary measure for 3 years, and with two restrictions—men's compensation could not pass double the average wage (as opposed to five time the average wage for women and all other NII pensions), and the women had to return to work for their spouses to go on leave.

As those three years passed, the amendment was extended again for three years. This extension, in 2004, was government-initiated, was backed by both the NII and the Ministry of Labor and Welfare (later Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor), and encountered no opposition in the Knesset. As part of

this extension, and following an appeal to the Supreme Court, the cap on men's compensation was removed.

In 2007, this amendment was made permanent, in a legislative act that was regarded as technical and attracted no opposition and little interest.

Looking at the program usage, the most distinctive feature is very low take-up rates. The number of Israeli fathers taking parental leave ranged from 150 to 300 during this entire period, amounting to less than 0.3 percent of birth leaves taken by women. That is, a take-up rate by Israeli fathers that is virtually negligible (Eliav 2001; Toledano 2008).

This state of affairs raises several questions: Why was the path leading to the passage of this amendment so lengthy and convoluted? What caused the frequent changes in the position of the NII? Why, while having so many assessment points, were the negligible take-up rates not taken into consideration?

As will be shown below, these questions cannot be answered either by using an ideational explanatory mechanism, or by using an institutional one. Therefore, this test case provides an opportunity to create an explanation which weaves together those two kinds of explanatory mechanisms.

Another question that might be asked, in light of the low usage data, is: why would one focus on a policy that had no significant influence on society. I hold that such a program supplies an interesting opportunity to look at policy formation from an unusual perspective – considering reasons for failure, and reassessing past mistakes. In other words, the question of why did the program fail to achieve its goals is no less important than the question why did it succeed.

The body that administers birth leaves in Israel is The National Institute of Insurance (hereafter NII). It is the social insurance agency in Israel and is responsible for most social security pensions. It is funded by mandatory contributions by workers, employers, and the state. These funds are distributed to the various sections of the institution according to an index defined by law, and each section is supposed to balance this income with payments it has to make, again according to the law.

It is charged with receiving and assessing claims for birth leave, and with awarding leave compensation, paid out of its treasury. Unsurprisingly, the main discussion of this program comes from within the NII, and this is the main arena that will be described below.

Methodology

In order to create the explanatory mechanism described above, data were collected on discussions of this amendment from its initial presentation in 1994, up until its eventually becoming permanent in 2007. Israeli governmental archives are closed to the public for the first 30 years, so most archival data were not available for analysis. Collected data came from various open sources:

minutes of discussions in the Knesset plenum and committees, court proceedings relevant to the program, such correspondence and policy papers coming from bureaucrats which were accessible to the public or given to me by informants. The main source was interviews with several sources—bureaucrats in the NII; Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor (MOITAL), and its predecessor, the Ministry of Labor and Welfare; the Ministry of Justice; MKs involved in the legislation process; and civil society activists who lobbied in favor of this amendment.

Those interviews had to be conducted so as to allow both institutional and cultural analyses. This necessitated interviewing at two very different levels in the same interview: On the one hand, data had to be extracted concerning the actual institutional occurrences: who supported the amendment and who opposed it, what were the (presumed) interests of each, and so on. On the other hand, the interview had to provide data on cultural perceptions and positions, in order to analyze frames.

To achieve both these goals, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The interviewees were asked to relate to three subjects: what, in their opinion, is the preferable solution for parental leave for fathers; what have they done to promote this solution; and what obstacles have they encountered in trying to promote the solution. Interviewees were given free rein to answer those three questions as they saw fit, and were later asked complementary follow-up questions needed to gather fuller information. Interview durations were 45 min on average.

The data collected amounted to 17 in-depth interviews, 30 intra-organizational letters and research reviews, 500 pages of minutes, and 200 pages of court proceedings.

Data gathered from all sources were then analyzed; once again, on two levels. On one level, the data were analyzed at "face value"—registering players mentioned, their interests, positions, and actions, in order to create a full picture of the institutional story.

On another level, the data were analyzed to recognize the policy frame held by the source. Frame analysis was performed by looking for answers to the three questions that comprise a frame—what is the problem the policy is intended to solve? What solutions are fitting to those problems? And what social values are related to the discussion at hand? Answers to those questions, explicit or implicit, were located in the texts, and the various answers were sorted into two main frames, which will be presented below.

A historic analysis of frames, trying to determine the change in the frames adopted by various players, is straightforward when analyzing written texts. However, determining changes in frames from interviews is problematic, as the interviews bring forward the frame which the interviewee currently holds, and not those held in the past (although reports on change in the interviewee's position, which could be read as change of frame, do occur).

To overcome this obstacle, several measures were taken. First, whenever possible, interviews were checked against policy papers and letters issued by the interviewee in the past, to identify changes of the frame. Another indication of changes in the frame adopted by institutions or departments was taken from the position of former officials in those bodies, the assumption being that officials will maintain the frames held at the time of their retirement.

The Rise and Fall of the Opposition: The Institutional Story

During the initial legislative process (1994–97), the discussions on the amendment were rather theoretical and were conducted mainly between Knesset members. State organs had no decisive position on the proposed program, and did not play any important role in its legislation.

The role of the NII begins to be substantial during the first extension, in 2001. When MK Naomi Hazan brought that extension to the table of the Knesset, it faced fierce opposition from the minister of labor and welfare Shlomo Benizri, who based his position on the opposition of the NII. They demanded the cancelation of the amendment, and consented to prolonging it only under severe restrictions, and following massive political pressure from MKs and women's organizations.

This position against the program was reached after much debate within the institution. The parties involved in this discussion were the pensions administration, and the motherhood pensions section within it—charged with operating the program, who opposed the program, and the legal bureau and the research administration who supported it.

The opposition of the motherhood pensions section can be explained by the high deficit this department was facing during that period.

As mentioned before, each section in the NII has a separate budget, which it is expected to balance. During the late 1990s, changes were made to two main programs under the purview of the motherhood pensions section—Birth Leave Pensions were raised from 75 to 100 percent of wage before birth, and payments to hospitals per child delivery were increased. At the same time, the allotted share of contributions to this section—its income, so to speak—remained unchanged. As a result, the deficit faced by the motherhood pensions section rose from 12 percent in 1993–94 to above 30 percent in 1998 and beyond (NII 2011).

Considering this deficit, any program requiring additional financial resources was objectionable to the section—and the fathers' birth leave program entailed the risk of higher spending, since couples were entitled to compensation commensurate with the salary of the parent on leave, which was typically higher in cases where the father was the one staying home from work.

Another source of concern for the section was the "Feminist Offensive", as it was described by one of the leaders of this offensive, MK Naomi Hazan. During the late 1990s and the early 2000s, a group of feminist female legislators identified the Women's Labor Act as an appropriate vehicle for passing a multitude of initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in the labor force. This move put NII bureaucrats on the defensive—wary and trying to head off every new initiative, especially those originating in the parliament.

The support of the research administration could be understood mainly via the conceptual mechanism of inter-country learning, very popular in the research administration of the NII at the time (Bar 2000). Parental leaves for fathers, first initiated in Scandinavia in the 1970s, became popular in Europe during the 1990s, and by 2001, were promoted as a policy of choice to promote gender equality (Featherstone 2004; Lappegard 2008; Lewis *et al.* 2008). As a consequence, the research administration promoted its adoption in Israel. The legal bureau, holding deep institutional and personal ties to the research administration, adopted the same position.

This intra-institutional disagreement was brought before the steering committee of the institution, which backed up the motherhood section in not supporting the extension of the program—mainly, according to reports from that meeting, due to pressure from the chair of the institution, Yochanan Shatsman, and the Minister of Labor and Welfare, Shlomo Benizri—both from the ultraorthodox religious party of Shas.

Following this decision, representatives of both the NII and the Ministry of Labor and Welfare fiercely opposed the extension in the Knesset, and accepted it only under the conditions that compensation for fathers' wages be capped at no more than twice the average wage, and that mothers would be required to return to work.

The basic positions of both parties within the NII had not changed at the time of the next extension of the amendment, in 2004, but the institutional environment had. By then, two things had happened: both the minister and the institution's chair had changed, removing major sources of opposition. Moreover, the High Court of Justice was discussing an appeal against the capping of fathers' wage replacement, claiming it was in breach of the principle of equality. Facing these two changes, the balance of power at the institution's steering committee tipped in favor of supporting the 2004 extension, which passed with little to no opposition as a consequence.

The story told here is a typical story of institutional struggle, leaving all cultural factors aside. However, this story leaves two questions open: Why, after such a fierce debate during the first two extensions, did the final extension—the one making the amendment permanent, in 2007—pass without any debate at all? And why, if the forces supporting the program gained the upper hand in 2004, did they not try to make the program more attractive, seeing as the negligible take-up rates were common knowledge by then?

A Fight over Frames: The Cultural Perspective

For answers to these questions, we must now look at the cultural level, and track the frames that various players hold in relation to this program.

As mentioned above, two very distinct frames arise from the corpus of texts analyzed: the maternal frame and the egalitarian frame. These frames relate to the same program, but differ on the three questions that define a frame, as displayed in Table 1.

The first frame, "The Maternal Frame", sees birth leave for fathers as an integral part of birth leave for mothers. The problem to be solved is the detrimental effect of 12 weeks of birth leave on a woman's career—especially for women in managerial or other top positions.

The fathers' birth leave program is framed here as a solution to this problem. As some women cannot care for their newborns, an alternative caretaker is needed—and the most available caretakers are the fathers. Therefore, the father should be able to replace his spouse.

The emphasis on "replacement" is not coincidental, and it originates in texts adopting this frame. This frame sees birth leaves as benefiting two—the mother and the baby. The father's role here is but instrumental, coming in when the "regular" program cannot provide for the best interest of the mother and the baby:

> You know, I've been here when this act was initiated. And the point of departure was to solve [a problem] for career women.[3] That they will have this option, of returning to work and having someone who will be there [to care for the baby]. (E, pension section NII official)

The social values attached to this frame put the emphasis on the mother and the baby: women's employment on the one hand and children's well-being on the other, and the program is seen as a way of reconciling the two.

The egalitarian frame differs on all the three questions. First, the problem to be addressed relates not to mothers in the labor force, but to fathers in the

Table 1. Frames Content

	The maternal frame	The egalitarian frame
Problem addressed	Birth leaves damage mothers' careers	Unequal distribution of household labor
Solution offered	Fathers will replace mothers in caring for babies, enabling them to return to work	Fathers will care for their newborns, creating enduring ties and care patterns
Social values	Proper care for children, Women's employment	Equality in the household, Choice

home; the problem is inequality in the division of household labor. Fathers spend much less time caring for children and doing household chores than do their spouses (Sullivan *et al.* 2009; Bianchi and Milkie 2010), and this situation has detrimental effects on both equality and fathers' connections with their children.

This is how MK Poraz describes the appeal that made him initiate the amendment:

> He told me: "Listen, I have a new child now, and I would very much like to take a leave, to help my wife and that she will return to work after a while, but the law doesn't allow for this. It gives only her the option of taking three month, and leaves no leave for me.

The birth leave for fathers provides a solution to this problem, when adopting this frame, by allowing fathers to spend more time with their children in the first formative weeks following childbirth, leading thereby to a more egalitarian pattern of childcare.

The first social value connected to this frame, then, is equality in household labor. The other is choice—this solution is not promoted as an attempt to force equality on fathers, but as a way for couples seeking to establish an egalitarian household to achieve that aim:

> Every family is constituted from choice. And there is indeed a change in patterns of life and education, [parents] sharing tasks between them. And if a father really wants to go on leave, and spend time with his children—be it a newborn child or bigger children for a period following childbirth, there's no reason to deny him that. There's something very . . . how would we call it? Compulsive, when one says no, I want you to sit at home the full three months. We know of many women who simply won't fit that pattern (R, NII legal bureau former official).

As mentioned earlier, in common usage of policy frame analysis, each frame relates to a different policy solution. I, however, wish to apply this analysis to differing perceptions of the same solution.

I believe this is merited for two reasons. First, although the two frames relate to the same program, they perceive it in very different ways, as demonstrated above. As all three questions relevant to frame analysis are answered distinctively, the frames can be treated as different.

Second, the frames should be treated as different because they lead to different outcomes. While both were originally used to support the program, this changed at a later stage. The low usage data, available since the first extension of the amendment, lead to very different conclusions when interpreted through each frame. From the maternal frame, it is a proof that the program is not needed, and should be canceled. If the aim of the program is to allow women an early return to work, and they choose not to use it—they probably do not require that option. From the egalitarian frame, the low usage data are a

proof that the road is long, and that efforts should be redoubled—as the aim is to change deeply ingrained social practices. Hence, supporting each frame leads to different conclusions on the policymaking level—and thus frames analysis fulfills its purpose, to allow for better understanding of support or objection to a program.

Those two frames appear in the first public debate on this program—when MK Avraham Poraz first brought the amendment before the Knesset.[4] When presenting the amendment, he uses both frames, arguing that the program will address both the problem of "long[5]" birth leaves, and of lack of opportunity for fathers to bond with their newborns:

> First I wish to say [. . .] that one of the main reasons that women are not promoted at work the way men are is, in my opinion, that women are absent for a long period, a birth leave of three month.

> [. . .] A leave of three month is too long a period to keep the position unfilled, without bringing in a replacement. And the result is that [employers] are saying, well, a woman, she can't be promoted, because anyway each year, two years, three years, she will give birth and be absent for long periods. So let's keep her in a lower position[. . .].

> The other issue is the masculine aspect of it. I can't see a reason why, after the woman has taken the rest needed from childbirth itself, [. . .] why not let the woman, after a month and a half, to go to work, and in the very same period let her spouse, her husband, return home and care for the newborn?

> I think that in today's society there's a growing tendency of fathers to care for babies, it doesn't look inferior. Maybe in the past it did not look inferior either. Today, men can derive great pleasure from taking a leave to care for a newborn. (MK Avraham Poraz, 414th meeting of the 13th Knesset, January 29th, 1996)

The discussion following this amendment—the first discussion of the program—adopts both frames alternatively, many times in the same person's words, together with short-term appearances of other frames—appearing once or twice, never to be mentioned again.

During the second discussion of the law—the first extension in 2001—the two frames are already very distinct, with a distinct institutional pattern of occurrence—which, unsurprisingly—matches the lines of institutional disagreement described above.

The position of the supporters of the program—coming from the legal bureau and the research administration—adopts the Egalitarian Frame, while the opposition—the pensions administration and the motherhood pensions section—adopt the Maternal Frame. In both cases, it is used in justifying the position based on institutional interests, as described earlier.

The supporters use the Egalitarian Frame in order to justify support for the program in face of the low usage data, already known by then. This frame allows for this in two distinct ways. First, if a change of behavior as deep as the pattern of caring for children is the goal, it cannot be expected to happen overnight. Second, if the aim of the program is to give parents the choice to share caretaking, low take-up is not problematic—what's important is that fathers wishing to go on leave do so. And indeed, the importance of choice is greatly emphasized from this point on.

The opposition adopts the Maternal Frame, but it does so while claiming that the program has failed in achieving its goals, and is therefore not needed. The maternal frame claims that the program is aimed at allowing fathers to serve as a replacement to mothers wishing to return to work. However, according to this position, this aim is not well served.

> In the times before the amendment, a woman would announce that she returns to work, anyway the [woman's] mother or a caretaker would care for the baby. So what does the father need to stop working for? (V. NII pension section official)

Indications of the program's failure to provide an alternative for women are found in two places. First, the low take-up rates indicate failure. Since the program aims to offer a solution for women caught between the demands of career and childcare, a viable way out would be used extensively. This program is not used, and therefore in those women's eyes it does not represent a viable solution.

The other indication of failure is gathered from evidence that those maintaining this position read as showing that even the few who use this program, do so not "as the legislator intended". This evidence includes high proclaimed levels of abuse (data called into question by the other side), and the fact that most leave takers earn more than their spouses, a fact allegedly indicating that this is not a case of high-ranked women who need substitution in the household.

The issue of "abuse" is worth looking into, as it is indicative of the power of frames to shape opinions about the program. Holders of the Maternal Frame point to two kinds of alleged abuse: the first is straightforward fraud, self-employees claiming to be on leave but still working, a practice which violates the program terms and may lead to pension payments being withdrawn. Evidence for the existence of such a phenomenon in high numbers is shaky at best, and the data are highly disputed and, mostly, insufficient to determine the true extent of fraud. This does not stop opposers from using this population as a main argument for the discontinuation of the program.

The second type of alleged abuse does not break the law, but—according to this frame—does not align with "the spirit of the law", or the way it was meant to be implemented. Those are fathers who earn more than their spouses, but still choose to go on leave. This, allegedly, indicates that the women are not

career-oriented, eager to return to work (as their spouses, apparently, hold higher positions in the labor market, hence the higher wage). Since they are not taking leave to replace their spouses, they are (according to this reasoning) taking it for some unspecified economic gain.

This line of reasoning shows how the frame held changes the perception of the facts, even to the point of not allowing for consideration of the alternative frame. Adopting the Egalitarian Frame, the acts of those fathers are not a failure of the program, but ultimately a success—fathers taking leave in spite of their advantage in the labor market, in order to change the division of labor in the household. However, the commitment to the Maternal Frame does not allow its holders to accept this explanation.

Thus, although the two frames relate to the same program, and supposedly explain its benefits, we see how frames analysis allows us to understand the differing opinions on the program's success.

Institutional actors adopting frames fitting their institutional interests should not come as a surprise anyone familiar with the Marxian adage "Being Shapes Consciousness", or even with the basic cognitive mechanism of Cognitive Dissonance. However, the influence here is far from being one-directional. After the initial fixation of the frames according to institutional interests, those frames took on a life of their own, and began influencing and shaping institutional interests.

While the political–institutional battle described above was raging, both sides trying to move the formal institutional standpoint to fit their own, another battle was taking place—the battle over frames. Besides trying to influence decision makers to reach the right decision, actors were also attempting to make them look at the problem through the correct frame.

And this battle ended differently. Documents dating from before the second extension of the amendment (2004), including the court hearings (2003) and the discussion of the amendment itself, display both frames, to varying degrees of accentuation. Slowly but surely, however, the Egalitarian Frame disappears and the Maternal Frame remains the only one through which the legislation is understood.

This process can be seen in two ways: through documents presenting a uniform "institutional position", and through interviews with bureaucrats holding certain positions at certain times.

Documents presenting the position of the NII, as well as speakers presenting this position to outside sources, adopt frames differently than do internal papers, meant for the eyes of NII workers only. While the latter kind usually adopts one frame consistently, according to the institutional position of the writer, texts intended for audiences outside the institution adopt both frames, and use them interchangeably.

My assumption is that while internal documents are aimed at convincing fellow bureaucrats, and thus convey the frame held by the writer, external-bound texts seek to present what the writer sees as "the institutional position",

and therefore present the balance of power, so to speak, between the two frames—presenting both usually, but to varying degrees, which can indicate the change of discourse within the institution.

And this change takes a clear path. As time goes by, the prevalence of the Maternal Frame rises and the Egalitarian Frame declines. In the Knesset discussions of the first amendment (2001) and in court discussions defending the differentiated attitude towards capping fathers' wage benefits (2002)—both frames are used pervasively. This, for example, is how the aims of the amendment are described in the state's response to the appeal, written by the NII legal bureau:

> [The amendment's] main aim is to expand women's freedom of choice, and to allow women seeking to return to work to do so, given certain conditions. The amendment was also meant to enable more egalitarian parenting between a man and a woman, in a case where the women waives her leave and the man is interested (Friedman VS Minister of Labor and welfare And the National insurance institute, 2003)

However, in the Knesset discussions of the second extension of the amendment (2004), the Egalitarian Frame is all but absent, as it simply is not referenced to by the NII representatives.

This pattern goes against the aims those texts are supposed to serve. The 2001 Knesset discussions and the court hearings both tried to defend the limitation on fathers' ability to go on leave, and would be aided greatly by adopting the Maternal Frame, which—as explained above—gives the foundation to this limitation. The 2004 discussion had the opposite intention—to explain why the institution now supported the lifting of these limitations, and for this, the Egalitarian Frame would have been much better suited.

This counter-intuitive use of frames, I propose, shows a change in the internal discourse at the institution. Until 2002, one could not claim to present "The Institutional Position" without referencing both frames. By 2004, the Maternal Frame was so pervasive that speakers for the institution saw fit to present it as the formal position of the institution.

This trend of the Maternal Frame achieving primacy can be seen through interviews as well. The interviews conducted included three types of interviewees: former officials, who were involved in one or more of the stages of the programs and had since retired; current officials, who held a position—usually, a minor one—during the relevant stages of legislation, and now hold a higher position; and current officials who began working only after the formation of the program (that is, after the second amendment in 2004).

These interviews show a pattern of frame change, differing by location within the institution. All interviewees from the motherhood pensions section—the base of opposition to the program—adopt the Maternal Frame. However, while those who held high-ranking positions during the struggle over the program hold this position with much fervor, defending it against competing frames—those who were not part of the struggle hold this frame

naturally, as though it were the only way to view this program. They are not aware of other ways to interpret the program, and therefore do not try to defend their position against competing frames.

The bases of support for the program—the legal bureau and the research administration—present a very different pattern. Here, the old timers hold the Egalitarian Frame with as much fervor as pension section old-timers hold the Maternal Frame. However, those that remained in the organization after the struggle show a pattern of mixed frames, at times using the Egalitarian Frame and at other times the Maternal Frame. Newcomers to the organization use the Maternal Frame almost exclusively, even at those (former) bases of support for the program, and for the egalitarian frame.

These evidentiary exhibits–the disappearance of the Egalitarian Frame from texts addressed outward, and the rise in prevalence of the Maternal Frame among newer employees—indicate that the Maternal Frame attained hegemony, or at least, near hegemony, in the original Gramscian sense, of something so deeply rooted that it is not only considered right, it is not considered at all, rather it is seen as the natural and only way to look at the facts.

The near hegemony of the Maternal Frame affects not only the cultural level, but has influence over the institutional level as well. This brings us back to the two questions which were left open at the end of the institutional analysis: if supporters of the program won the institutional battle, why did they not work to expand the program and make it more effective? If the program was so heavily disputed, why did it pass in 2007 without discussion?

The program was not expanded because the institutional victory did not suffice, in the face of a defeat in the field of frames. While the promotion of the 2004 extension required passing a one-time resolution, amending the program to reach higher take-up rates would necessitate looking into the needs of fathers, and their reasons for abstaining from going on leave. But that would require the adoption of the Egalitarian Frame—of seeing the problem as inequality in the household. The prominence of the Maternal Frame suggests a predominant concern with the interests of career-oriented women. The failure of the program indicated—through this frame—that at that level no problem existed, and thus the expansion of the program would lead to more abuse, without yielding any positive outcomes.

This explains, also, the lack of resistance to the 2007 extension. Since expanding the program was off the table, following the near-hegemonic adoption of the Maternal Frame, this program no longer held the potential for an increase in the amount of pensions paid, but would remain a tiny program, with no prospect of being expanded, not worth the trouble to fight against:

At a certain stage, there was no more opposition [to the amendment]. We have seen: no tragedy has happened. The numbers are minimal. [. . .] that is, this whole amendment, with all the ceremony it involved, did not cause more men to go on birth leave.

The outcome of this struggle over frames can be related to broader aspects of Israeli family policy. As mentioned earlier, this policy stresses the role of women as mothers in the first place and equality only second. As the maternal frame aligns with the aspiration to enable mothers to fill their role, it takes precedence over the egalitarian frame.

However, while the opposition within the NII was defeated, sources outside the NII continued to promote legislation expanding the birth leave for fathers. Two such initiatives reached the table of the NII in the following years: in 2006, NAAMAT (Working Women's Movement) proposed shortening the minimum length of leave taken by fathers, from 21 days to 7—offering flexibility that has been shown to make such programs more attractive for fathers (Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2008). On another occasion, MK Michael Melkior tried to promote legislation reserving two (additional) weeks of leave solely for the father.

Both these programs were firmly rejected by the NII, leading to government opposition and to their withdrawal. The rejection was justified using terms taken straight from the Maternal Frame, focusing mainly on the lack of support in these proposed programs for women's labor on the one hand, and on their allegedly being open to more abuse, on the other. This is how a legal bureau official put his objection to the added flexibility of the NAAMAT proposal:

> Even as of now, the eligibility criteria are relatively "breached", and enable abuse. Review of the number of rejections and their cause shows that rejection rate is 8–10 times higher than those of women's birth leave compensation, where most of the rejections come from the fact that the claimant kept working during the leave, In contradiction to the legislation. (Letter from Roee Keret, NII legal bureau official, to MOITAL legal bureau)

By 2007, this firm opposition to the expansion of parental leave for fathers could not be justified in institutional terms. The deficit did not return to previous levels, but has remained stable (NII 2011), and ceased to trouble the pensions section. The "feminist offensive" was long-gone. The two original reasons for opposition disappeared.

And indeed, on other relevant subjects officials in the pensions section have adopted the Egalitarian Frame, or one very similar. Such is the case with birth leaves for couples adopting a baby through surrogacy, and for same-sex couples both receiving full birth leaves, in spite of their deviation from "normative" family models.

Indeed, officials in the pensions section point to those very examples as evidence of their open-mindedness. It's not that we are against feminist goals—they claim—we support the same-sex couples. But the birth leave for fathers just is not working.

Discussion: Weaving a Story of Institution and Culture

The adoption of the Egalitarian Frame on other subjects, while maintaining the Maternal Frame on the subject of leave for fathers, shows the power frames hold beyond institutions, as the two frames play an intricate game.

The first part of the struggle emphasized the importance of institutional interests, under severe threat at the time. Frames were not deeply ingrained at this point, as the program was new and experimental. With strong interests and weak frames, the institutional battle took the leading role, and institutional interests and power balance came to the fore.

However, this institutional victory was short-lived, as it was accompanied by a cultural defeat. In the second phase of the struggle over the program, when interests became weaker and frames more deeply rooted, the battle was decided by frame dominance rather than institutional interests.

This brings us back to the four questions posed by Padamsee (2009). The *interaction* of ideational and other causal dynamics is shown in the ways frames are both adopted according to organizational interests on the one hand, and dictate the way actors perceive their interests on the other; the *interdependence* expresses itself in the fact that we cannot understand the evolution of frames without institutional analysis, nor can we understand the institution without referring to frames; the *multiplicity* is, of course, the two competing frames; and it is part of the explanatory mechanism as the competition explains the policy outcomes.

Béland and Cox (2010) draw a distinction between ideas as either *explanans* (the explanation) or *explanandum* (what needs to be explained). In this work, I claim that in the same explanatory mechanism, ideas can serve as both explanas and explanandum—at times shaping the organizational landscape, at times shaped by it.

Conclusion

I tried here to contribute to the evolving framework of research on the interaction of ideational and non-ideational elements of social policy formation, focusing on a level as yet unexplored: the operation of ideational elements in the intra-organizational level.

It remains, however, but a first sketch—yet to be filled in with color and detail. This case study has not touched upon all possible interactions of frames and organizational interests, and many questions remain open.

The balance of power between frames and interests needs to be drawn more carefully. When do actors follow their interests, and when do they act according to their adopted frame? What happens when a crucial interest collides with a deeply ingrained frame? Does one or the other take precedence, or does another mechanism resolve this collision?

What is the detailed mechanism of frame change? I have pointed out to two such mechanisms: the creation of an "institutional position" and generational change of position holders within an institution. However, neither of these mechanisms can explain the actual direction of change, and it is probable that other such mechanisms exist.

And finally, frame and interest were described here as separate, but they may not always be so. As Weber reminds us, "World images have, like switch-men, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest" (Quoted by Steensland 2006). As Béland and Cox (2010) noted, interests do not directly reflect objective economic situations. Rather, interests are themselves ideas, concerning the ways in which actors interpret the economic reality. Thus, interests can be shaped by other ideas. In the terms used in this work, interests are not only set against frames, or mold frames—frames are the basis for the interpretation of the economic situation by actors, and thus can shape interests themselves.

Notes

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1. This work will focus on fathers being in a heterosexual relationship, and will not deal with fathers in a same-sex relationship or with single (custodial or non-custodial) fathers, except when compared to heterosexual non-single fathers by interviewees. As I will claim below, dealing with this 'normative' category allows the inspection of 'mainstream' frames.

2. The term used for the vacation following the birth of a child in Israel is חופשת לידה, 'Hufshat Leida', literally Birth Leave, and not a parental leave. The choice of terms here does have consequences.

3. As noted below, this is not correct. Both the Maternal and the Egalitarian frames where present from the very first stages of legislation.

4. Avraham Poraz, Address to the Knesset plenum, February 8th, 1995.

5. The reference to a 12 or 14 weeks of birth leave as long may raise an eyebrow to anyone familiar with parental leaves in Europe, but it is common in Israeli settings.

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