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UNIONS AS GENDERED INSTITUTIONS:
*The Effects of Union Membership and Occupational Gender Composition
on Parental Leave Access*

BY

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THESIS

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On April 27th, 2023

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ABSTRACT

UNIONS AS GENDERED INSTITUTIONS:

*The Effects of Union Membership and Occupational Gender Composition
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Meghan Cormier-O’Leary

University of New Hampshire, May, 2023

In the absence of a national universal paid parental leave policy, access to parental leave is stratified in the United States. While several states have implemented paid family leave policies, workers typically rely on their employers to provide such a benefit. Previous qualitative research demonstrates that the share of women in labor unions may influence the provision of family-friendly benefits. I utilize two nationally-representative datasets—the 2017-18 American Time Use Survey and the 2013-2017 American Community Survey—to analyze the relationship between union membership, occupational gender composition, and their interaction on access to paid and unpaid parental leave. Using weighted logistic regressions, I find a significant and positive interaction between union membership and the share of women in an occupation on access to both paid and unpaid parental leave. Unionized workers in female-dominated occupations are the most likely to have access to parental leave, while unionized workers in male-dominated occupations are the least likely to have access. My results indicate that unions are gendered institutions that may implicitly reinforce gendered norms of childcare and caregiving through the differential provision of parental leave benefits.

INTRODUCTION

Despite widespread support for paid parental leave in the United States (Pew 2017), fewer than one-quarter of civilian workers report access to paid family leave (BLS 2021). Intended to help reconcile work and family responsibilities by allowing workers time off for the birth or adoption of a child, parental leave may also improve maternal and child health outcomes (Aitken et al. 2015; Berger, Hill, and Waldfogel 2005; Chatterji and Markowitz 2008; Dagher et al. 2014; Jou et al. 2018; Ruhm 1998), enhance the labor market attachment of new mothers (Berger and Waldfogel 2004; Byker 2016), ameliorate the motherhood wage penalty (Boushey 2008), and increase fathers' involvement in caretaking activities (Knoester, Petts, and Pragg 2019; Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel 2007; Petts and Knoester 2018; Pragg and Knoester 2017; Tanaka and Waldfogel 2007). In terms of paid maternity and paternity leave provision, the U.S. lags behind most other countries. The International Labor Organization (ILO) recommends that maternity leave policies provide a minimum of fourteen weeks of paid maternity leave with a wage-replacement rate at least two-thirds of the recipient's prior earnings (Addati, Cassirer, and Gilchrist 2014). Most member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) comply with this standard, except for the United States (Nandi et al. 2018). While less common (and often less generous in leave duration), many countries, aside from the U.S., also provide paid paternal leave (Addati et al. 2014).

Without a federally mandated and universal paid parental leave policy, paid parental leave is only accessible to workers whose employers provide the benefit or who live in states that offer paid family leave (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and the District of Columbia). In

the U.S., the only federally mandated leave policy is the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Through the FMLA, employees who work for eligible employers may receive up to twelve weeks of unpaid, job-protected parental leave. As of 2013, an estimated 59% of employees met all eligibility requirements for FMLA benefits (Klerman, Daley, and Wozniak 2013). Apart from employer and state provision, labor unions may also be a viable pathway through which workers access parental leave benefits.

Unions are typically conceived of as institutions that promote equality. Prior research indicates that unionization reduces income inequality (Western and Rosenfeld 2011), lessens working poverty (Brady, Baker, and Finnigan 2013), and narrows gender and racial wage gaps (EPI 2021). Because collectively bargained contracts provide more transparency and pay equity, union representation reduces the gender wage gap, such that unionized women workers earn wages that are 89.6% those of unionized men, compared to an earnings ratio of 82% between non-unionized women and men (IWPR 2023). Furthermore, unionized women earn wages 4.7% higher than women who are not represented by unions, and unionized workers in female-dominated service occupations earn 52.1% more than their non-unionized counterparts (EPI 2021). Unionization appears to similarly benefit Black and Hispanic workers. Compared to white unionized workers, Black and Hispanic unionized workers experience a higher wage premium. While unionized workers overall earn 10.2% more than non-unionized workers, unionized Black and Hispanic workers earn, respectively, 13.1% and 18.8% more than non-unionized Black and Hispanic workers (EPI 2021). Despite the democratizing effect of unions, they are nevertheless embedded within a larger gendered social context, and therefore, may both reflect and reinforce gender inequality.

Acker (1990) contends that workplaces are not gender-neutral organizations, but instead gendered institutions that reinforce a gendered division of labor. Informed by the ideology of separate spheres, workplaces presume that an ideal worker is a male free from family obligations and able to devote himself to work (Acker 1990; Blair-Loy 2003; Cha 2013). Given that labor unions have a gendered history, and that unionism developed around the ideology that wages should meet the needs of a male breadwinner supporting his family (Williamson and Baird 2014), unions may also be conceptualized as gendered institutions.

Qualitative research on unions suggests that the share of women in a union influences the provision of work-family benefits, such that unionized workplaces with higher proportions of women may have greater access to parental leave (Crocker and Clawson 2012; Gerstel and Clawson 2001; Rigby and O'Brien-Smith 2010). Furthermore, some scholars have found that the share of women in a workplace or occupation is positively associated with the provision of parental leave (Baird and Reynolds 2004; Budd and Mumford 2004; Osterman 1995). This paper seeks to answer two related questions: How does union representation affect access to parental leave benefits? Does occupational gender composition moderate the relationship between union representation and access to parental leave? Although we have some answers to the first, we have few—if any—answers to the second research question.

BACKGROUND

Access to Paid and Unpaid Parental Leave in the U.S.

In the U.S., access to paid parental leave is contingent upon employer provision and state paid family leave programs. An outlier among high-income countries, the U.S. does not have a national paid parental leave program that covers all workers (Gault et al. 2014; Heymann and McNeill 2013). While the U.S. lacks a federal paid leave policy, workers may access unpaid

leave through the FMLA. Eligibility for FMLA leave is contingent on several factors. The law covers private-sector workers who work for employers with fifty or more employees, as well as all public sector workers. Additionally, eligible employees must have worked at least 1,250 hours in the year before leave.

Although there is no national paid parental leave policy, eleven states and D.C. have enacted paid family leave programs funded through employee-paid or employer-paid payroll taxes (NCSL 2022). Leave duration varies across states, with most offering up to twelve weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child. Two states (California and Rhode Island) offer fewer than twelve weeks of paid parental leave. Research on California's paid family leave program indicates that the program increased the use and length of leave-taking for new mothers, particularly those disadvantaged in terms of education, marital status, and race-ethnicity (Rossin-Slater, Ruhm, and Waldfogel 2012). Additional research suggests that the same program decreases the mothers' risk of poverty in the year following childbirth and increases household income, especially for low-income and less-educated single mothers (Stanczyk 2019).

Previous research suggests that access to paid parental leave also varies according to human capital attributes. Women in professional and managerial occupations are more likely to receive paid maternity leave than women in less skilled positions (Miller 1992). Similarly, low-wage workers are less likely to have access to paid family leave than high-wage workers (Sawhill, Nzau, and Guyot 2019).

How Does Union Membership Affect Access to Paid Parental Leave?

Existing frameworks of the relationship between unions and employment posit that unions affect the availability and use of employer-provided benefits through three mechanisms: (1) monopoly power, (2) collective voice, and (3) facilitation (Budd and Mumford 2004;

Freeman and Medoff 1984). Freeman and Medoff (1984) argue that labor unions have two distinct, yet co-occurring “faces:” monopoly power and collective voice. Unions, in part, function as monopolies that use collective bargaining and the threat of striking to negotiate for the provision of compensation packages above competitive levels (Budd and Mumford 2004; Freeman and Medoff 1984). Labor unions can also win concessions from employers using the collective voice mechanism, whereby unions provide a protected avenue through which employees can communicate workplace grievances, advocate for benefits, and achieve desired workplace conditions (Freeman and Medoff 1984). The monopolistic power and collective voice mechanisms of unions suggest that unionized workers may have greater access to paid parental leave, particularly when a large portion of the workplace desires and pushes for paid leave.

Prior research presents conflicting evidence that unionized workers have greater access to paid leave benefits than non-unionized workers. While some scholars have found that union members are not more likely than non-union members to report access to family leave benefits (Baird and Reynolds 2004), and that unionization does not affect the likelihood that a workplace offers paid or unpaid maternity leave (Guthrie and Roth 1999; Kelly and Dobbin 1999), others have found that unionized workers or workplaces are more likely to have parental or family leave benefits than their non-unionized counterparts (Budd and Brey 2003; Budd and Mumford 2004; Glass and Fujimoto 1995; Milkman and Appelbaum 2004).

Occupational Gender Segregation and Access to Leave Benefits

Similarly, occupational gender segregation, which refers to the clustering of men and women in different occupations, may influence the availability of parental leave, although previous research presents conflicting evidence. Some scholars have found that there is a positive relationship between the share of women in an occupation and access to parental leave or other

family-friendly benefits (Baird and Reynolds 2004; Budd and Mumford 2004; Osterman 1995). However, others have found either no evidence of a significant relationship between the share of women in an industry and the provision of maternity leave benefits (Guthrie and Roth 1999) or evidence of a negative relationship between the share of women in an occupation and leave availability (Glass 1990).

Despite documented declines in occupational gender segregation since the 1970s, it remains a persistent feature of the labor market (Blau, Brummund, and Liu 2013) and contributes to gender and racial wage gaps (Zhavoronkova, Khattar, and Brady 2022). Overall, working women earn 73 cents for every dollar a white, non-Hispanic man earns, with Black women and Latina women earning even less per dollar (58 cents and 49 cents respectively) (Zhavoronkova et al. 2022). As of 2019, the top 10 highest-paying occupations disproportionately employ white men, while the top 10 lowest-paying occupations disproportionately employ women, particularly women of color (Zhavoronkova et al. 2022). For example, 65% of dentists are white men, while 61% of childcare workers are white women. Another 13% of childcare workers are Black women and 21% are Hispanic/Latina women (Zhavoronkova et al. 2022).

While gender and racial wage gaps persist, declines in occupational gender segregation have contributed to women's increased earnings since the 1980s (Blau and Kahn 2017; Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014). The ratio of women's earnings relative to men's improved in the 1980s, when declines in occupational segregation were strongest, but improvements slowed and then stalled as rates of occupational integration decelerated in the 1990s and stagnated in the 2000s (England et al. 2020; Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014). Researchers attribute declines in occupational segregation to women moving into male-dominated managerial and professional occupations, rather than men entering female-dominated occupations (Blau et al. 2013). Cultural

biases tend to devalue traditionally feminine work, as evidenced by the lower wages associated with predominantly female occupations (England 2010). Consequently, men have had little incentive to desegregate female-dominated occupations (England 2010; Moskos 2020).

The Interaction Between Union Membership and Occupational Gender Composition

Previous research regarding the association between the share of women in an occupation and the provision of parental leave is mixed, as is research regarding the relationship between unionization and access to parental leave. Yet, few have researched the interaction between union status and occupational gender composition on parental leave availability. Glass and Fujimoto (1995) found a positive interaction between the share of women in a workplace and union membership on access to parental leave, but Kelly and Dobbin (1999) found that feminized, unionized workplaces were not more likely to adopt maternity leave policies. Despite these contradictory findings, qualitative research on unions suggests that the concentration of women in a unionized workplace moderates the availability of family-friendly benefits.

In interviews with key informants at major unions, participants suggested that women's presence in unions affects the inclusion of work-family benefits in contract negotiations (Gerstel and Clawson 2001). Additionally, Gerstel and Clawson (2001) find limited quantitative evidence that the gender composition of union membership influences the level of available work-family benefits. Of the three unions in their study with low female membership (less than 25% women), all had low levels of work-family benefits. In contrast, the five unions with high female membership (more than 50% women) enjoyed either medium or high levels of such benefits (Gerstel and Clawson 2001). This research indicates that the gender composition of unionized workplaces may influence the availability of family-friendly benefits, such as parental leave.

Likewise, gender essentialism, which refers to the belief that men and women have different and immutable qualities rooted in biology, may shape collective bargaining and influence what unions prioritize during contract negotiations. A comparison of union contracts in two highly gendered occupations—nursing and firefighting—suggests that workers may use collective bargaining to advocate for workplace policies that enable them to fulfill traditional gender roles (Crocker and Clawson 2012). Nurse union contracts stipulated fair scheduling rules and leave policies, which allowed for the fulfillment of caregiving responsibilities. In contrast, firefighter contracts mandated access to paid overtime opportunities, which enabled firefighters to maximize their breadwinning capabilities. Therefore, unions may implicitly reinforce and provide support for gendered norms regarding childcare and other caregiving responsibilities through the differential provision of paid leave benefits in unionized workplaces.

In the absence of a universal paid parental leave policy, access to parental leave is stratified in the U.S. Given that unions have mechanisms through which their members can advocate for desired benefits, union members may have greater access to parental leave benefits than their non-union counterparts. However, research shows that there may be variation among union members regarding access to family-friendly benefits. I expect to find that union members will be more likely than non-unionized workers to report that they receive paid parental leave benefits. Since family-friendly benefits tend to be associated with and more valued by women, I anticipate that union members in female-dominated occupations will have greater access to paid parental leave than union members in male-dominated occupations.

DATA AND METHODS

To analyze the relationship between union representation, occupational gender composition, and access to paid parental leave, I link data from the 2017-2018 American Time

Use Survey's Leave and Job Flexibilities Module to data from the 2013-2017 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) sample. Sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) is an ongoing and nationally representative survey of time use in the United States. Since 2003, the ATUS has collected detailed information about the amount of time respondents spend on various life activities, including paid and unpaid work, in a 24-hour period. The ATUS sample is drawn from the Current Population Survey (CPS), for which only civilian, non-institutionalized residents at least 15 years of age are eligible. Participants in the ATUS are randomly selected from households completing their 8th and final interview for the CPS. Those selected for the ATUS complete a telephone interview between two and five months after the last CPS interview.

From January 2017 through December 2018, the ATUS fielded the Leave and Job Flexibilities Module. Respondents who were coded as employed wage and salary workers (excluding self-employed workers) and completed the 24-hour time diary were eligible for participation in the Leave Module. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, the Leave Module included questions regarding workers' schedules and job flexibility, as well as their access to and use of paid and unpaid leave. I accessed ATUS data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS; Flood et al. 2002), which facilitates analysis of ATUS data by harmonizing data from different years of data collection and providing a data extraction tool that allows users to create files with specific variables. Because the ATUS sample is drawn from outgoing rotation groups of the CPS, IPUMS includes some information collected from the final CPS interview, including union membership. Some information, like the respondent's occupation, was collected during the CPS and updated in the ATUS.

There are 10,071 respondents in the Leave Module. I restricted my sample to those of working age (18-65 years old), dropping 645 respondents. Because data regarding union membership came from the final CPS interview and data on parental leave came from the ATUS, I dropped respondents whose main occupation in the CPS did not match their main occupation in the ATUS (1,486 respondents). In some cases, the respondent for the ATUS was not the same respondent for the 8th and final CPS interview. To ensure that my final sample contained only respondents who participated in both the final CPS interview and the ATUS Leave Module, I dropped the 2,451 observations with different respondents for the two surveys. Finally, I dropped the 71 respondents with missing data on union membership, which left me with a final sample size of 5,418 respondents.

To calculate the percentage of women in each occupation, I used microdata provided by IPUMS USA from the 2013-2017 5-Year file of the ACS, which combines single-year files from 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 and covers approximately 5 percent of the population. Conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, the ACS is a nationwide survey that collects social, economic, housing, and demographic information every year. While both the ACS and the ATUS use the same four-digit Census occupational codes, the ACS combines some codes due to confidentiality requirements. For example, the ATUS provides two different codes for chief executives (0010) and legislators (0030). The ACS combines these two categories into a single code—chief executives and legislators (0010). To ensure a match between datasets, I recoded 9 occupations in the ATUS dataset that were coded differently in the ACS dataset. Using occupation as the linking variable, I merged the ACS with the ATUS. Sixty-seven occupations appeared in the ACS, but not in the ATUS.

Dependent Variables

Access to paid parental leave.

The ATUS asks several questions regarding access to paid leave, including paid parental leave. To measure access to paid parental leave, the ATUS asks whether the respondent can take paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child in their current job. Respondents who reported receiving paid parental leave were coded as 1. I coded as 0 respondents who do not receive paid leave for any reason or do not receive paid leave specifically for the birth or adoption of a child. Four hundred and twenty-three respondents reported not knowing whether they receive paid leave at all or for parental leave; I coded these respondents as 0. To ensure that combining respondents who report that they do not receive parental leave with those who report not knowing whether they receive parental leave benefits did not bias my results, I re-ran my analyses excluding those who did not know (see Appendix). My results were consistent with analyses that combined those groups, which suggests that those who do not know whether their employers provide paid parental leave are not markedly different than those who indicate it is not available.

Access to unpaid parental leave.

Similarly, the Leave Module asks participants if they can take unpaid leave for the birth or adoption of a child. Respondents could select from the following choices: yes, no, it depends, or don't know/refuse to answer. I coded those who responded either "yes" or "it depends" as 1 and those who responded "no" as 0. Additionally, I coded as 0 any respondents who reported not receiving unpaid leave for any reason. I coded as 0 the 859 respondents who did not know whether they receive unpaid leave for any reason or for the birth or adoption of a child.

Key Independent Variables

Union membership.

Data on union membership comes from the final interview of the CPS. Respondents who reported being in a union or being covered by a union contract were coded 1 (754 respondents), while those who were not in a union were coded 0.

Percent female in each occupation.

Following prior research (Cha 2013; Jacobs 1989; Kmec 2005), I used a cut-off point of 30% women or fewer to indicate a male-dominated occupation (coded as 1). Gender-integrated occupations are those with more than 30% women and less than 70% women (coded as 2), while female-dominated occupations have 70% or more women (coded as 3). To make regression results of the interaction effects between union membership and occupational gender composition easier to interpret, I also include a centered version of this variable in my analysis, where male-dominated occupations are coded as -1, gender integrated occupations as 0, and female-dominated occupations as +1.

Control Variables

I also include several demographic controls that may be correlated with access to paid parental leave, such as race-ethnicity, U.S. citizenship, marital status, parental status, and age. Race-ethnicity was coded as a categorical variable: white, non-Hispanic (1; reference category), Black, non-Hispanic (2), Hispanic (3), and other races (4; includes Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial respondents). The ATUS asks respondents to report the number of their own children under 18 in the household. I created a dummy variable to measure parental status. I coded as 0 any respondents who reported having no children under 18 in their household, and I coded as 1 those respondents who reported having at least one child under 18 in the household. Additionally, I controlled for various human capital

characteristics that are correlated with both union membership and access to paid and unpaid parental leave: geographical region, educational attainment, full-time work, industry, public sector, and weekly earnings.

Furthermore, I control for the presence of state laws that affect either the provision of parental leave or the ability of unions to bargain for desired benefits. Prior to 2017, three states had enacted and implemented paid family leave laws: California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. Five states (California, Hawaii, Maine, Minnesota, and Vermont) implemented unpaid family leave laws before 2017. I created two separate dummy variables to measure whether one lived in a state with paid or unpaid family leave laws, and I coded as 1 any respondents who reported living in these states. Right-to-work (RTW) laws mandate that labor unions cannot require all workers of a unionized workplace to join the union or pay dues. Thus, RTW laws may limit union power and the extent to which unions can mobilize workers and negotiate contracts (VanHeuvelen 2020). As of 2017, 26 states had implemented RTW laws. To control for the presence of such laws, I constructed a dummy variable and coded as 1 any respondents who lived in a state with a RTW law.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the weighted sample means for the entire sample and according to the share of women in an occupation. There is little variation in access to both paid and unpaid parental leave. Workers in gender-integrated occupations report the greatest access to paid and unpaid parental leave (58% and 64%, respectively). Comparatively, only 55% of workers in male-dominated occupations and 54% of workers in female-dominated occupations have paid parental leave. More workers in female-dominated occupations (66%) report access to unpaid

Table 1. Weighted Sample Means for Full Sample and by Occupational Gender Composition

	Male-Dominated	Gender-Integrated	Female-Dominated	Full Sample
Access to paid parental leave	0.55	0.58	0.54	0.56
Access to unpaid parental leave	0.61	0.64	0.66	0.64
Union Membership	0.14	0.11	0.17	0.14
Percent female in occupation	0.15	0.49	0.84	0.49
Race-ethnicity:				
White, non-Hispanic	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
Black, non-Hispanic	0.09	0.13	0.16	0.13
Hispanic	0.17	0.14	0.14	0.15
Other	0.09	0.08	0.05	0.08
U.S. citizenship	0.88	0.92	0.96	0.92
Marital Status	0.51	0.48	0.48	0.49
Parent	0.35	0.34	0.37	0.35
Age (years)	41.61	41.60	42.34	41.81
Female	0.14	0.50	0.83	0.49
Region:				
Northeast	0.15	0.17	0.18	0.17
Midwest	0.26	0.24	0.26	0.25
South	0.36	0.37	0.39	0.37
West	0.23	0.22	0.17	0.21
State-provided paid parental leave	0.12	0.13	0.09	0.12
State-provided unpaid parental leave	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.12
Right-to-work state	0.51	0.48	0.51	0.50
Educational attainment:				
HS or less	0.40	0.24	0.26	0.29
Some college	0.25	0.22	0.29	0.25
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.35	0.54	0.45	0.46
Full-time work hours	0.95	0.89	0.79	0.88
Industry:				
Agriculture, Mining, Construction	0.16	0.02	0.01	0.06
Manufacturing	0.24	0.10	0.03	0.12
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.10	0.15	0.06	0.11
Transportation and Utilities	0.09	0.04	0.01	0.05
Information	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02
Finance activities	0.03	0.09	0.04	0.06
Professional & business services	0.16	0.16	0.08	0.14
Educational & health services	0.05	0.21	0.59	0.27
Leisure, hospitality, & other services	0.06	0.14	0.12	0.11
Public Administration	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.06
Public Sector	0.12	0.19	0.27	0.19
Weekly earnings	1220.30	1189.96	833.70	1097.54
<i>N</i>	1,553	2,291	1,574	5,418

Sources: 2017-18 American Time Use Survey; 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey

parental leave than workers in male-dominated occupations (61%). In the full sample, more workers report access to unpaid parental leave (64%) than paid parental leave (56%).

In contrast with the 2017 union membership rate in the United States (10.7%; BLS 2017), my sample is disproportionately unionized. Fourteen percent of respondents are either union members or covered by a union contract. Similarly, workers in female-dominated and male-dominated occupations in my sample are more unionized than the overall U.S. population. Seventeen percent of workers in female-dominated occupations and fourteen percent of workers in male-dominated occupations are represented by a union. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that the two occupation categories with the highest union density in 2017 included education, training, and library occupations (37.2% represented by unions) and protective service occupations (37% represented by unions) (BLS 2017), which are both highly gendered occupations. In 2017, women made up approximately 75% of the workers in education, training, and library occupations, compared to close to 22% in protective service occupations (BLS 2017). Only gender-integrated occupations mirror the national union membership rate, with 11% of workers in gender-integrated occupations belonging to a union.

Of note, workers in female-dominated occupations report lower weekly earnings and are less likely to work full-time than workers in male-dominated occupations. Workers in female-dominated occupations earn, on average, \$834 per week, while those in male-dominated occupations earn approximately \$1220 per week. Seventy-nine percent of workers in female-dominated occupations work full-time, compared to 95% of workers in male-dominated occupations. However, employees in female-dominated occupations are more highly educated than those employed by male-dominated occupations. Forty-five percent of workers in female-

dominated occupations have earned a bachelor's degree or more, compared to only 35% of workers in male-dominated occupations.

Regression Results

Table 2 displays odds ratios from weighted logistic regressions that predict access to paid and unpaid parental leave. Models 1 and 2 present results from analyses of access to paid parental leave on union membership and the share of women in occupations, but only Model 2 includes their interaction. In Model 1, union membership and percent female are not significant. Similarly, the main effects of union membership and percent female in Model 2 are not significant. While the main effects are not significant, Model 2 shows a significant and positive *union x percent female* interaction, which indicates that union membership strengthens the relationship between the share of women in an occupation and access to paid parental leave. Likewise, the share of women in an occupation appears to bolster the effect of union membership on access to paid parental leave.

Models 3 and 4 present the results of weighted logistic regression analyses of access to unpaid parental leave on union membership and the share of women in an occupation. As in the previous two models, Model 3 shows the results without the interaction between union membership and percent female, while Model 4 includes this interaction. In Model 3, the effect of union membership is not significant, but percent female is significant and positive, which indicates that the odds of access to unpaid parental leave increases as the share of women in an occupation increase. Like Model 2, Model 4 shows the interaction between union membership and the share of women in an occupation is significant and positive, which means the effects of union membership on access to unpaid parental leave are different for workers in male-dominated, gender-integrated, and female-dominated occupations.

Table 2. Odds Ratios from Weighted Logistic Regressions Predicting Access to Paid and Unpaid Parental Leave

	Paid Parental Leave		Unpaid Parental Leave	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Union Membership	0.88	0.89	1.05	1.06
Percent female in occupation	1.09	1.04	1.17**	1.13
Union Membership x Percent female in occupation		1.38**		1.31*
Female	1.07	1.07	1.18	1.18
Race-ethnicity:				
Black, non-Hispanic	0.92	0.92	0.87	0.87
Hispanic	0.71**	0.71**	0.86	0.85
Other	0.54***	0.53***	0.69**	0.69**
U.S. citizenship	1.85***	1.87***	1.55***	1.57***
Marital Status	1.25**	1.25**	1.18*	1.18*
Parent	1.18*	1.18*	1.19*	1.19*
Age	0.98***	0.98***	0.98***	0.98***
Region:				
Northeast	0.92	0.92	0.97	0.97
South	1.13	1.12	1.07	1.06
West	1.43**	1.42**	1.48***	1.47***
Educational attainment	1.15**	1.14**	0.98	0.98
Full-time	3.36***	3.35***	0.68**	0.68**
Industry:				
Agriculture, Mining, Construction	0.45***	0.45***	2.14***	2.11***
Manufacturing	0.90	0.90	1.38**	1.37*
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.74*	0.73*	1.66***	1.65***
Transportation and Utilities	1.05	1.08	1.07	1.09
Information	0.71	0.70	0.94	0.93
Finance activities	2.00***	2.01***	1.31	1.31
Professional and business services	0.92	0.91	1.36**	1.35*
Leisure, hospitality, and other services	0.56***	0.56***	1.63***	1.63***
Public Administration	1.66**	1.78**	1.19	1.27
Public Sector	1.64***	1.55***	1.08	1.03
State-provided paid parental leave	0.82	0.82		
State-provided unpaid parental leave			0.96	0.96
Right-to-work state	1.02	1.03	1.11	1.12
Logged weekly earnings	2.34***	2.35***	1.22***	1.22***

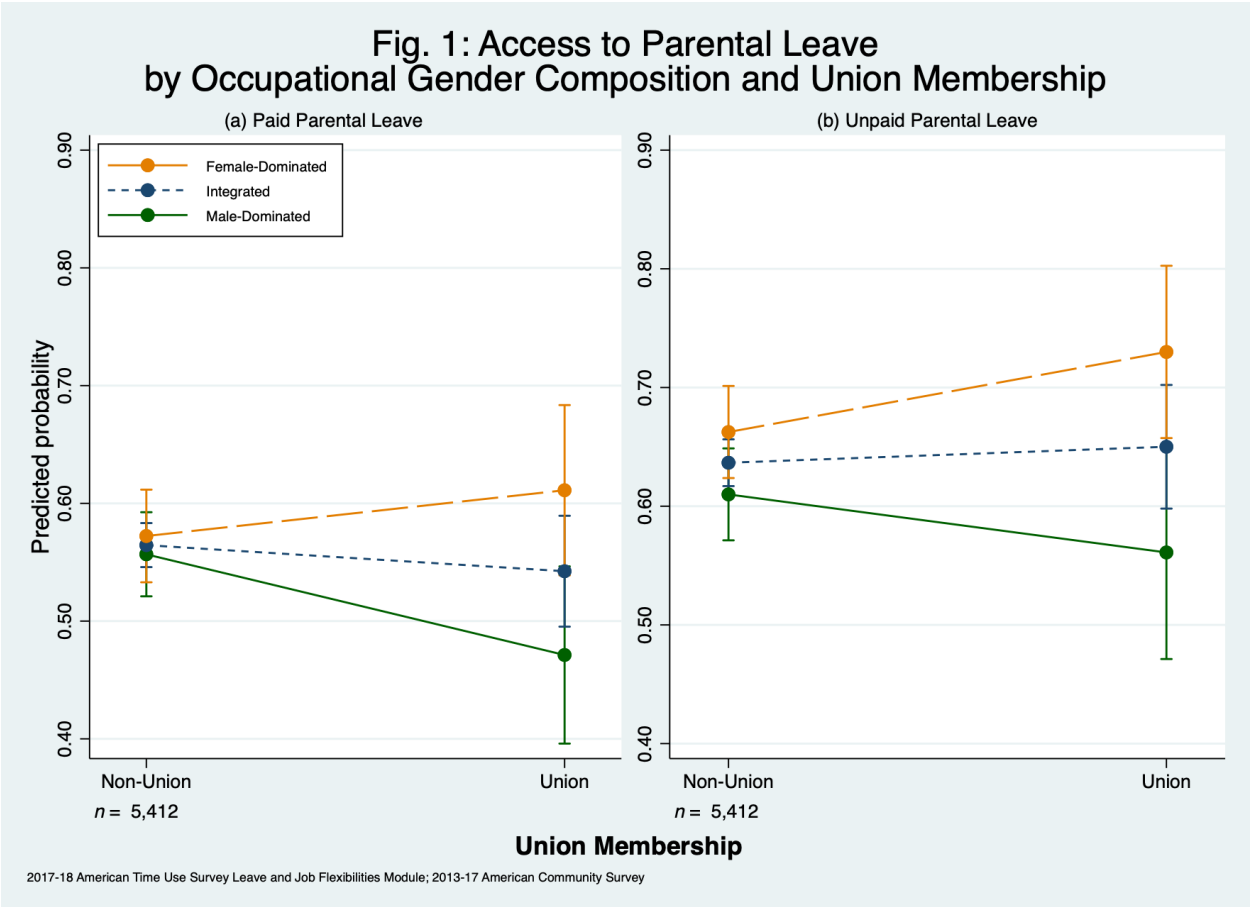
Sources: 2017-18 American Time Use Survey; 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey.

Notes: References = White, non-Hispanic, Midwest, and Educational and Health Services.

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1

Figure 1 depicts the interaction between union membership and occupational gender composition on access to paid and unpaid parental leave. Overall, workers have greater access to

unpaid parental leave than paid parental leave, which is consistent with prior research that civilian workers have more access to unpaid family leave than paid family leave (BLS 2019). Workers in female-dominated occupations have greater access to paid and unpaid parental leave compared to workers in gender-integrated and male-dominated occupations. Interestingly, union members in gender-integrated and male-dominated occupations have less access to paid parental leave than their non-unionized counterparts. Union membership appears to increase access to paid and unpaid parental leave benefits for workers in female-dominated occupations, as well as access to unpaid parental leave for workers in gender-integrated occupations. Consequently, the gap in access to paid and unpaid parental leave is widest among unionized workers in female-dominated occupations and unionized workers in male-dominated occupations.



My results also show differences in access to paid and unpaid parental leave according to demographic characteristics. Across all four models, age is negatively associated with access to both paid and unpaid parental leave. Compared to white, non-Hispanic people, Hispanic people have lower odds of having access to paid parental leave. Conversely, U.S citizens have higher odds of access to paid and unpaid parental leave. Marital status is positively associated with access to both paid and unpaid leave.

As expected, certain job-related controls are associated with higher odds of having access to parental leave. As educational attainment increases, the odds of access to both paid and unpaid parental leave also increase. This finding supports previous research that women with more education are more likely to have paid leave than women with no more than a high school diploma (Boushey 2008). Full-time workers and public sector workers have significantly higher odds of reporting access to paid parental leave than their counterparts. The provision of paid and unpaid parental leave varies according to industry, as well. Compared to workers in the education and health services industry, workers in agriculture, mining, construction, trade, and hospitality industries are less likely to report access to paid parental leave but are more likely to have unpaid parental leave. Conversely, workers in finance and public administration are significantly more likely to have access to paid parental leave. Consistent with prior research that finds workers who earn higher wages are more likely to have access to paid leaves (Boushey 2016; Milkman and Appelbaum 2013), I find wages are significantly and positively associated with higher odds of access to both paid and unpaid parental leave.

DISCUSSION

As shown in Figure 1, the gaps in access to paid and unpaid parental leave are larger between unionized workers in male-dominated and female-dominated occupations, compared to

their non-unionized counterparts. This indicates that unionized workers experience different levels in the provision of parental leave according to the share of women in their occupation.

Given that there is substantial evidence that unions positively benefit their members (Buchmueller, Dinardo, and Valletta 2002; Elvira and Saporta 2001; Milkman 2017), it is interesting that access to paid and unpaid parental leave is stratified among unionized workers. Public policies may act as a floor from which unions can negotiate (Berg et al. 2013). Research demonstrates that the lack of a national paid leave policy requires labor unions to use collective bargaining to institute workplace leave policies. This creates a tension between the provision of paid leave and family-friendly benefits with other bargaining priorities, including wages and health insurance (Berg and Piszczek 2014). Since union density has declined from 20.1% in 1983 to 10.7% in 2017, unions, in general, may lack the bargaining power necessary to negotiate for both improved wages and the provision of leave policies.

Additionally, the gendered history of labor unions in the U.S. might influence the likelihood of whether unions negotiate for family-friendly benefits. Milkman (2016) argues that there are four distinct union waves, each with a different historical relationship to women that influences the degree to which unions bargain for demands from women. Craft unions established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as those in the building trades, tended to view women as a threat and excluded them from membership. According to Milkman, these unions tend to be most hostile to women today, in part because of their combative relationship to women when they formed. In contrast, the public and service sector unions that emerged after World War II, a period in which gender equality gained traction, recruited members from female-dominated occupations. Today, such unions engage in concerted efforts to address issues pertaining to women, such as pay equity (Milkman 2016). As such, the period in which a union

was formed, as well as the nature of the relationship between the union and women during these formative years, may impact how unions in different occupations negotiate for paid parental leave.

Considering the advantages that unions tend to confer to their members, it is interesting that unions appear to be stratified in the provision of leave benefits according to occupational gender composition. Unexpectedly, union members in gender-integrated and male-dominated occupations are less likely to have access to paid parental leave compared to their non-unionized counterparts. My results indicate that unions may implicitly reinforce gendered norms of caregiving through the differential provision of leave benefits in male-dominated and female-dominated occupations.

LIMITATIONS

Important limitations to this study should be noted. First, my analysis does not control for firm size, which is shown to be correlated with both access to paid and unpaid leave and unionization. Smaller firms (fewer than 100 employees) are less likely to offer work-family benefits than larger firms (Glass and Estes 1997; Grossman 1992). Similarly, smaller employers tend to offer less generous leave policies (Glass and Estes 1997; Miller 1992; Wiatrowski 1994). Unionized workers also tend to be concentrated in larger firms (Elivra and Sapporta 2001).

Furthermore, both the CPS and the ATUS rely on self-reported measures of union representation and access to parental leave benefits. Because self-reports may be subject to error, it may be more accurate to say that my dependent variable measures the respondent's perception of their access to parental leave, rather than their actual receipt of parental leave. As a result, it is unclear whether workers are entitled to employer-provided parental leave or whether they think they are entitled to such benefits (Park et al. 2019). Scholars argue that unions aid employees

beyond collectively bargaining for increased wages and benefits, in that they promote employee awareness of existing employer-provided benefits (Budd and Mumford 2004; Park et al. 2019). Union members are also more likely to be aware of the availability of unpaid parental leave through the FMLA (Kramer 2008). Collective bargaining priorities typically reflect the preferences of the average worker (Budd and Mumford 2004), and because women continue to bear the burden of most unpaid household labor and caregiving responsibilities (e.g., Bianchi et al. 2012; Daminger 2019), unionized female workers may be more aware of workplace policies that mitigate work-family conflict than men. Consequently, my results may be more reflective of which groups of workers are more aware of their entitled benefits, rather than which groups have access to parental leave.

Finally, while the gender composition of a union typically reflects the composition of the occupation or industry in which the union is embedded (Milkman 2016), it may be that the gender composition of bargaining units and locals is more consequential to leave access than the gender composition of occupations. A largely female bargaining unit may be more incentivized to prioritize paid leave policies during negotiations (Berg and Piszczek 2014). Despite the advancement of women into top-level union leadership roles, locals may still be male dominated. Consequently, labor unions may have difficulty obtaining benefits traditionally associated with women, including parental leave (Berg and Piszczek 2014). Because I lack data on the gender composition of the unions to which participants in my sample belong, I am unable to test this potential explanation.

Future research should address these limitations through the collection of establishment-level data on unions and workplaces, with important demographic details and workplace characteristics, such as firm size and benefit availability. Additionally, research on comparative

institutions suggests that states are polities that shape policies, the distribution of resources, and the institutional environment for unions (Brady et al. 2013). Future research should expand upon the literature of comparative institutions by incorporating controls for state-level union density.

CONCLUSION

Despite these limitations, this research contributes to the existing literature by providing a quantitative analysis of the interaction between union membership and occupational gender composition on access to paid and unpaid parental leave using a nationally representative dataset. While unions are important pay-setting institutions and offer advantages to workers, my results show that union members may experience stratified access to certain work-family benefits. These results highlight that unions may be an important pathway to parental leave for some workers, but also point to the potential need for improvement among unions to reduce gaps in access to parental leave.

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APPENDIX

Table 3. Odds Ratios from Weighted Logistic Regressions Predicting Access to Paid and Unpaid Parental Leave, Don't Know Responses Excluded

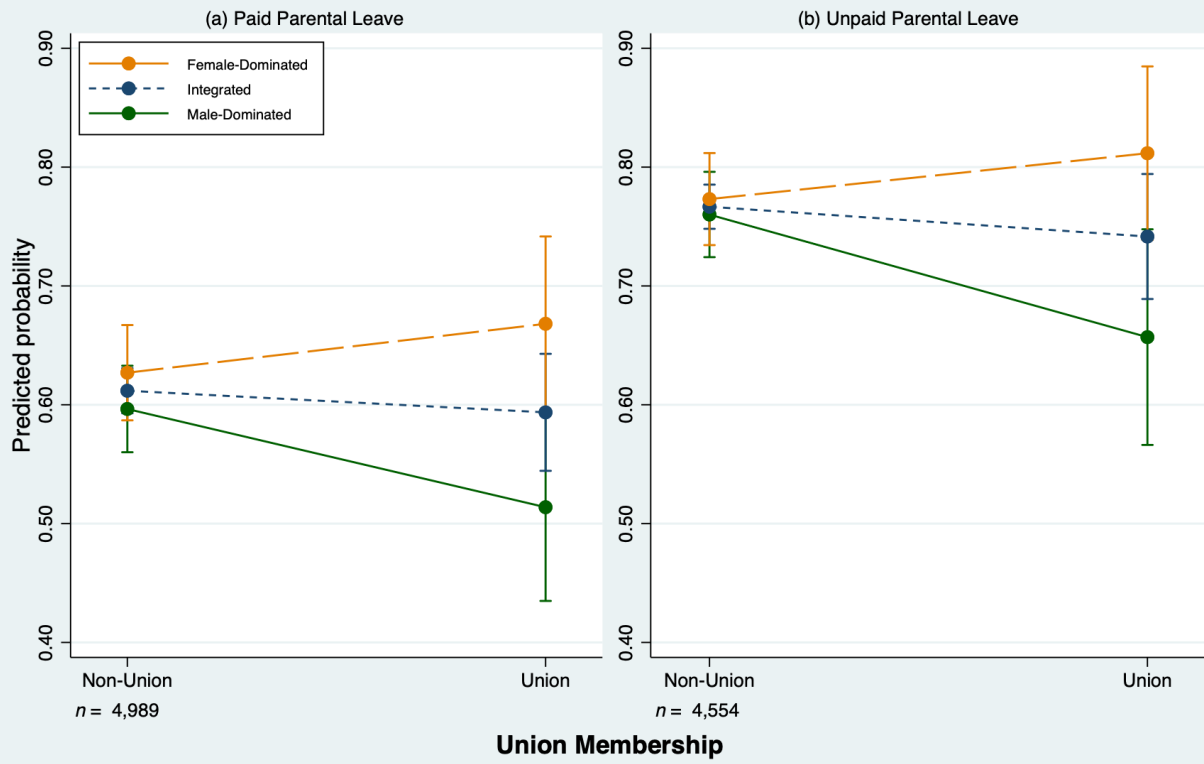
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Union Membership	0.89	0.90	0.83	0.87
Percent female in occupation	1.14	1.09	1.11	1.04
Union x percent female		1.40**		1.47**
Female	1.05	1.05	1.39***	1.39***
Race-ethnicity:				
Black, non-Hispanic	0.81	0.81	0.82	0.82
Hispanic	0.63***	0.62***	0.68**	0.68**
Other	0.55***	0.55***	0.66**	0.65**
U.S. citizenship	1.75***	1.78***	1.68***	1.70***
Marital Status	1.17	1.17	1.18	1.18
Parent	1.03	1.03	0.99	0.99
Age	0.98***	0.98***	0.98***	0.98***
Region:				
Northeast	0.95	0.96	1.19	1.19
South	1.11	1.11	1.16	1.15
West	1.55***	1.53***	1.45**	1.44**
Educational attainment	1.17**	1.16**	1.15**	1.14*
Full-time	3.65***	3.63***	0.89	0.89
Industry:				
Agriculture, Mining, Construction	0.41***	0.41***	2.03***	1.98***
Manufacturing	0.89	0.88	1.18	1.17
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.75	0.74	1.68***	1.66**
Transportation and Utilities	0.96	0.99	0.83	0.85
Information	1.06	1.05	1.10	1.09
Finance activities	2.08***	2.10***	1.38	1.37
Professional and business services	0.83	0.82	1.29	1.27
Leisure, hospitality, and other services	0.50***	0.50***	1.47*	1.47*
Public Administration	2.11***	2.26***	1.00	1.08
Public Sector	1.66***	1.57**	1.16	1.08
State-provided paid parental leave	0.82	0.83		
State-provided unpaid parental leave			0.98	0.97
Right-to-work state	1.02	1.03	1.03	1.04
Logged weekly earnings	2.41***	2.42***	1.19**	1.19**
<i>n</i>	4989	4989	4554	4554

Sources: 2017-18 American Time Use Survey; 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey.

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; References = White, non-Hispanic, Midwest, and Educational and Health Services.

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1

Fig. 2: Access to Parental Leave by Occupational Gender Composition and Union Membership, Don't Know Responses Excluded



2017-18 American Time Use Survey Leave and Job Flexibilities Module; 2013-17 American Community Survey