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Framing The Debate: The Role Of Gender, Beneficiaries, And Cost In Paid Parental Leave Policy Support

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FRAMING THE DEBATE: THE ROLE OF GENDER, BENEFICIARIES, AND COST IN PAID PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY SUPPORT

by

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DEDICATION

To the women who paved the way: Ida, Virginia, and especially Penelope,

To the men who were strong enough to encourage me to achieve: Anthony and Garrett,

To the girls who are the very best of me: Emma Anne and Eleanor…

the work was gladly mine, but this is for you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

myself. These friendships are my sanity and "gratitude" is not a word sufficient enough express what you all have done for me.

I was blessed with a family that while they may not always understand my pursuits have always stood by them and me. I am immeasurably lucky to have godparents in my Aunt Ginny and Uncle Dave who have never missed a major milestone and have always supported my endeavors large and small. My grandparents are all gone, but their love stays with me. My Nana, Ida, suffered only one fool: me. And my love for her is only matched in how much I miss her to this day.

My immediate family made me a better person. My headstrong nature is matched only by that of my brother Andy, who has carried more couches out of my house and helped me shoulder more burdens than I will admit to willingly. My desire to care for those around me is only possible because I was cared for by my mother Penny who is—and I cannot stress this enough—the most caring person I have or will ever meet. My wit—which can get me into and out of trouble in the blink of an eye—is only this sharp because I was trained by the master, my father who taught me the value of hard work, the frustration that life is not fair, and the intrinsic worth in doing the right thing anyway.

My home and heart are not complete without my children, Emma and Eleanor, who came into existence during this process. Your arrival may have technically stalled progress, but it was the sweetest setback I could have endured. The Bug and Goose Fellowship was the opportunity of a lifetime and I am so glad I took it. It is a blessing to have children to love, but to have children you truly *like* is a miracle. You teach me to be creative, to be excited, and to see the world so very differently. I am forever yours.

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My life would not be complete without the texture brought to it by the love and challenge of my life, Garrett. When I'd get injured or upset, my Grandpa Saks used to tell me that I'd "be okay" by time I "got married." Things have all too often not been okay in our 15+ years together. But you always know when I am looking for the next big achievement and you defy me to slow down and enjoy what I already have. It may be a bumpy ride, but you are my shotgun rider and I am yours and I would not have it any other way.

One day when I was four years old, I decided enough was enough and I decided to read an entire book on my own. I locked myself in my room for what felt like hours until I finished the last word of *Green Eggs and Ham*. When I emerged victorious, I realized that there were more books to read, more things to learn, more world to know. This moment is very similar and when I emerge victorious on the other side, I am comforted by and not confronted with the idea that there is more to be done. Perhaps that stubborn little girl who became a stubborn woman will let good enough alone one day, but I hope she never does because this journey and those who have taken it with me are worth the excitement. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women issued its final report, "American Women." The group, constituted in 1961 and led by former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt until her death, represented an attempt to grapple with the growing tension among the sexes and issues raised after the war. On page 27, at the end of the chapter on labor standards, the report critically notes that the lack of income security during pregnancy and childbearing times was "one of the major remaining gaps in the protection of workers against losses of income," (*American Women* 1963, p. 27). The report went on to say—in bold—that "[p]aid maternity leave or comparable insurance benefits should be provided for women workers; employers, unions, and governments should explore the best means of accomplishing this purpose," (Id). It has been 55 years since the report was published and this recommendation was issued, yet by some estimates only 13% of women have access to paid family leave through their private sector employer (FAMILY Coalition Letter, July 2017, p. 1; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014).

Despite the fact that paid parental leave policies have been on the national policy radar for over fifty years, the United States is one of only three countries that does not have a such a policy (OECD, 2017). This gap in the policy has been noted by activists and academics for decades, but the ways in which it has been raised have shifted over time. Opponents of such a policy and skeptics who doubt the potential for the U.S. to have a paid parental leave policy often point to legal and institutional barriers to paid parental leave at the national level. These barriers have not, however, stopped states and localities from experimenting with their own paid parental leave policies in the absence of a national framework (Zagorsky 2016). In 2016, for the first time

in a presidential election, both major party candidates had some version of a paid family leave policy to offer (Sholar 2016). Despite these developments, no national policy yet exists. Further, there is no empirical study that examines why this is the case in any systematic way.

How we talk about paid parental leave policy matters. When proponents of the Family and Medical Leave Act in the late 1980s and early 1990s were seeking enactment of unpaid protected leave, the strategy quickly became focused on rhetoric. The strategy was to argue for the policy on the broadest terms possible so as to ensure a wide array of ideological support. If the policy was framed as benefitting only the betterment of working women, the coalition was not likely to grow, and the policy would fail. Framing the benefits of the policy so as not offend gender norms became integral to enlarging the supporting coalition. Many of the policy's supporters at the time credited this tactic as being instrumental in the eventual enactment of the FMLA in 1993.

There are indications that at least some proponents of paid parental leave in the contemporary setting are using similar tactics to broaden support for this policy. This study is an attempt to determine whether such policy framing is persuasive in the modern context. Paid parental leave policy provides a unique policy domain in which to study the impact of gendered policy messaging on different groups of individuals, a topic that lacks adequate coverage in the framing effects literature.

An Overview of Parental Leave in the United States

The Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") of 1993 represents the first and only national policy response to the calls for maternity or parental leave policy after the birth or adoption of a child. The FMLA began as an attempt to institute maternity leave policy in the mid-1980s at a

national level, inclusive of pay during the time of the leave. Over time, the policy was stripped down to a core component: limited protected job status during leave associated with the birth or adoption of a child *or* for care of one's own illness or the illness of a spouse or dependent child. During his presidency, George H.W. Bush vetoed two previous iterations of the FMLA. Once elected, Bill Clinton used the FMLA as an early campaign promise fulfilled. On February 5, 1993, President Clinton signed the FMLA into law after a quick and easy passage by both chambers of Congress.

The FMLA was enacted, in part, because of its incremental nature, its limited burden on employers, and its usefulness to an incoming Democratic president as a campaign promise fulfilled. Supporters of the FMLA's passage have also noted the importance of an ideologically diverse coalition to help secure enactment. This support was obtained through the use of a broad "pro-family" message that centered the benefits of the policy on the family unit, rather than the individual taking the leave (often women) and did not overtly challenge gender norms about parenting or work. Because of the success of the FMLA's pro-family messaging, many proponents of paid parental leave policy have argued that the path to securing national paid parental leave requires similar tactical observations.

The history of public policy surrounding the accommodation of maternity and paternity leave in the United States is one in which future policies are built on previous successful enactments of policy. In other words, there is a bit of path dependency. Much of the history of paid parental leave policy is centered on the tension between women's growing role in the workforce and women's historical role in childbearing and child rearing. For much of the 20th

century, women were seen as proficient in the home and incompatible with workplace life by virtue of this tension.

This tension is echoed in the law. In *Muller v. Oregon* (208 U.S. 412, 1908), the Supreme Court offered that women's unique "physical structure and the performance of maternal functions place her at a disadvantage in the struggle for subsistence," and argued that, as such, the role of the law was to protect women "in order to preserve the strength and vigor of the race," (p. (421). While women were called upon to work outside of the home during World War II (and many women of color had worked outside of the home for centuries), more than half the women who entered the workforce during the war left soon after it ended (Goldin 1991, pp. 741-742). That said, those who stayed and those who were there prior to the war began to call into question the lack of protections surrounding the birth of a child.

In 1963, President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women echoed this call, noting that the quality of women's lives would be improved upon the provision of "[p]aid maternity leave or comparable insurance benefits," (Commission Report 1963, p. 27). The decades that followed saw the growth of liberal feminism and its pursuance of legal protections for women in the workplace, including protections regarding pregnancy. At the same time, liberal feminists sought to be treated the same as men without additional legal protections. The National Organization for Women, a liberal feminist organization, even argued against the California Fair Employment and Housing Act's requirement that employers extend disability benefits to pregnant women. (Brief for NOW in *Guerra*, 1987)

This message of equality meshed easily with civil rights protections that were being introduced in the 1960s. Language prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in employment,

for example, was included in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) A series of court cases helped to solidify that pregnancy was not covered under Title VII. As such, the law was changed to recognize such differences in a limited way when Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 ("PDA"). Notably, the effort to enact the PDA did not embrace the gender-neutral rhetoric of liberal feminism, but instead focused squarely on the differences inherent in the sexes for purposes of reproduction and attempted to shape the system to fit them (Diner 2014). Yet, because it did not provide special benefits or exemptions from other legal or contractual requirements, it did not challenge the status quo (Bernstein 2001, p. 59).

For 15 years, the PDA was the only federal legal protection for pregnant women in the workplace. While it prohibited discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, it did not require employers, the states, or the federal government itself to provide any affirmative benefits. Hence, on April 4, 1985, Representative Patricia Schroeder introduced the precursor to the FMLA in the United States House of Representatives (Parental and Disability Leave Act of 1985, HR 2020). After eight years, several reiterations, and two presidential vetoes, what would come to be known as the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 was signed by President Bill Clinton as the first bill he signed into law.

The struggle to pass and enact the FMLA is notable for various reasons. First, it survived two presidential vetoes without actually overriding those vetoes. While this might seem mere trivia, it is important because it suggests a strong and resilient group of supporters behind the measure. It also signals the importance and lasting nature of the subject matter involved.

More importantly, though, the success FMLA is the story of the diverse coalition supporting it. Catholic bishops joined forces with feminist organizations and workers groups to

eventually achieve enactment. The ideologically broad coalition and the rhetoric surrounding it is often credited with the FMLA's success. In fact, the language used to propel the FMLA from idea to law was specifically chosen to be pro-family by situating the nuclear family as the ideal source of childrearing and the primary beneficiary of the FMLA (Weber 2011, p. 93). This deliberate choice pushed to the side rhetoric about the FMLA providing an equal playing field for women in the workforce (Radigan 1998, p. 23). The gambit was successful.

The FMLA has been amended twice: once to cover certain airline employees and once to enlarge the amount of time that can be taken by caregivers of members of the military injured while in active duty. There have been a multitude of attempts to enlarge the scope of the FMLA from requiring that it cover more employees and shrink the number of hours required to be worked in the previous year. There have also been several attempts to provide some paid parental leave both to private and public sector workers at the federal and state level. To date, five states plus the District of Columbia have passed their own version of paid parental leave policy protections.

There are, however, many gaps in the system for working parents. Despite at least two Congressional acts that broadened the class of people able to utilize protected leave, many workers are not covered by the act. This may be because these workers do not work enough hours in a rolling calendar year or because their employer is not a covered entity. In fact, 43% of women of childbearing age are not eligible for FMLA protections (Klerman et al, 2012). Most importantly here, though, the law still lacks any provision for paid time off, leaving the burden of paying for such leave largely on the shoulders of individual workers, especially women.

The history of the FMLA is relevant because it demonstrates the power that rhetoric has to frame parental leave in a way that is more compatible with a variety of worldviews. This rhetoric relies on notions of parenting that are inherently gendered and place women, as mothers, at the heart of the policy without affording them any real voice in the policy's goals. This messaging continues to this day.

Legal scholars have begun to look at this messaging as part of a larger trend in the promotion of new forms of paid parental leave. Two such theorists, Mezy and Pillard (2012) identified a growing use of a certain type of rhetoric in the push for paid parental leave among certain women's rights groups. Whereas the pro-family rhetoric simply subsumed the policy's benefits to women in the benefits accrued to the nuclear family unit, this new rhetoric explicitly points to women's role as caregivers as a necessary part of any policy considerations. This "New Maternalism," as they call it, offers a vision of motherhood that is inherently feminine, domestic, and uniquely beneficial to children (Id., p. 259). While not overtly new, New Maternalism repackages these feminine ideals in new ways, often utilizing technology, the internet, and social media to do so. This gives the illusion of modernity while adhering to older gender normativity.

In this way, New Maternalism is both like the pro-family message surrounding the FMLA in that it is intended to broaden the audience, while also highlighting that such a policy would benefit the family unit through the work of women in the home by allowing women to be both caregivers in the home and members of the workforce. Other legal and policy scholars have noted the way in which a certain type of motherhood is uniquely entrenched in the pursuit of paid parental leave policy (Diner 2011, 2014; Hosein 2015).

Another large difference between the pro-family messaging and the rhetoric of New Maternalism is the matter of success. Where the pro-family messaging eventually found success, the messaging of New Maternalism has yet to produce a universal win for the paid parental leave movement. The question then becomes whether this rhetoric—whether this framing of the policy—as inherently gendered without explicitly benefiting women as workers is a persuasive way in which to move the needle forward.

Framing the Debate

The goal of paid maternity leave has not changed since the issuance of the President's Commission report in 1963. Yet the rhetoric clearly has. The way in which this policy is framed has had different levels of success throughout the post-war era and beyond. As such, these frames and the effects they have on policy perception provide a useful lens through which to view the problem of lack of paid parental leave in the United States.

Policy proposals are often conveyed to the public using frames to convey greater meaning. Frames are the way in which information is articulated to an audience so as to communicate additional meaning to help people "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" that information in a distinct way (Goffman 1974, p. 21). To that end, frames are heuristic devices that make unfamiliar information easily recognizable by reducing the complexity of human experience so as to render background information meaningful (Goffman 1974, p. 21). Frames implicitly provide context in a way that makes certain aspects of the content more salient to the audience (Entman 1993, p. 52). Instead of creating new information, frames activate information already at the disposal of the message's recipient to aid in the interpretation of new concepts (Nelson et al 1997, p. 225).

The effects on perception caused by exposure to certain frames may result in different policy preferences, amongst other things. Hearing affirmative action policy described as "reverse discrimination against whites," or "unfair advantages to blacks," for example, may have a small but important role to play in the recipient's perception of the underlying policy (Kinder and Sanders 1990, p. 270). These effects are referred to as "framing effects."

Framing effects research has been an extremely active area of interdisciplinary study over the past 50 years. Framing effects research has been done to determine efficacy of media and communication framing (Pan & Kosicki 1993, Scheufele 1999), the impact of framing on collective action and social movements (Snow and Beneford 1988), and most notably on individual decision making and psychological processes (Bateson 1972, Tversky & Kahneman 1981). In political science, much work has been done regarding framing effects on policy opinion. For example, policies such as affirmative action have been studied to determine that various value frames that invoke racial bias alter support for such policies (Kinder and Sanders 1990). Likewise, study of framing effects on support for welfare and housing policies has found that certain frames may elicit responses that rest on racial and other social biases (Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Carmines 1999, Goetz 2008).

The framing effects literature in political science, sociology and other disciplines has examined the ways in which framing can alter policy perception based on racial attitudes. That said, no comparable work has been with attitudes and experiences based on gender and policy preferences. There are some relevant studies that look at framing and same sex marriage (Simon and Jerit 2007, Pizmony-Levy and Ponce 2013, Djupe et al 2014) and those that look at abortion and reproductive rights (Ferree et al 2002, Rasmussen 2011). Beyond this, there is a dearth of

literature on the impact of gender and gender role beliefs in policies that involve gendered concepts, such as parenting and work.

Winter (2008) examined framing effects related to gender on specifically non-gendered issues such as healthcare. Winter found that the pervasiveness of beliefs about gender is so great as to influence how people feel about policies that have no direct relationship with gender. While illustrative of the role that gender has on policy preference, Winter's work does not directly address the effect of frames when the policies in question involve gender at a fundamental and historical level. Moreover, Winter was mostly concerned with mediation, not moderation of framing effects. No study to date has examined an issue as gendered as parental and maternity leave using frames that specifically target gendered beliefs.

Framing effects literature on moderation also fails to address the impact of gender role beliefs, experiences with traditional gender roles, and experience with the policy's underlying problem. The effectiveness of each frame varies from person to person, often hinging on various individual factors may alter or *moderate* the frame's effects on different groups of people. Ideology (Skitka and Tetlock 1993, Kim et al 2010, Lawrence 2013) and group identification (Gamson and Mogdalini 1989, Nelson and Kinder 1996) are two such moderating forces. Neither of these potentially moderating forces have been examined in the context of a gendered policy domain.

Focusing on the potential moderating impact of gendered experiences and gender role beliefs is especially important where, as here, the messaging appears to be tailored to grow a coalition of broad support by utilizing specific rhetoric to coincide with more traditional gender role beliefs. Policy entrepreneurs have utilized frames to gain support of otherwise unlikely

bedfellows, such as conservative organizations and those adhering to traditional gender norms. Inherently, these policy entrepreneurs are recognizing the potential for powerful moderation of a frame that leads to greater support from a more diverse coalition. The literature to date has not maintained pace with the reality on the ground in this regard.

Given that paid parental leave has been in the public discourse for well over half a century and that such policies are widely supported, the lack of such a policy in the United States appears to be an anomaly. General Social Survey data show high levels of support over the course of multiple decades for paid parental leave policy well above 80% in 1994 and 2012 (GSS 1994, 2012). National Election Survey data show at least a 67% support rate for a mandate on employers to provide paid parental leave (ANES 2016). Given this robust level of support, it is inconceivable that such a policy would not have yet come to fruition.

Institutional and historical explanations fail to account for the anomaly. The overwhelming public support cited above would seem to override the legal or bureaucratic status quo in most other cases. Moreover, the FMLA has been amended and enlarged since 1993. At the federal level, the law covers more people than it did upon passage. At a state level, five states and the District of Columbia have decided that paid parental leave is a necessary part of the policy prescription. Given these changes, institutional explanations for the lack of a federal paid parental leave policy are unpersuasive.

Analysis of the effects of framing of paid parental leave policy may be useful for evaluating potential rhetorical causes of this stalled policy agenda. The FMLA was framed as a pro-family policy in an explicit way so as to gain more support and eventual enactment. The way in which paid parental leave policy is being framed may not have similar resonance with those whom

proponents seek to persuade. In fact, such a failure would help to explain why such institutional and historical barriers have been overcome for some enlargements of the policy but not this one.

There are two gaps this research seeks to help to fill. First, this research adds to the academic discourse on paid parental leave in the United States from an empirical perspective rooted in political science. In doing so, it attempts to situate paid parental leave among the policies that are worthwhile to political scientists for further analysis. To date, there is no empirical review of framing involving paid parental leave and scant empirical research public opinion of paid parental leave at all.

Second, this study adds to the framing effects literature in particular by examining the effects from a frame that specifically calls upon gender norms and beliefs and whether those effects are universal or moderated by other factors. While gender norms have been implicated in non-gendered policy frames (Winter 2008), no empirical work has been done on policy frames that involve necessarily gendered subject matter.

Study Overview

Given the role that policy framing seems to have played in the enactment of the FMLA, the goal of this study is to investigate the effects of policy framing on policy support for paid parental leave policy. To do this, I created an experiment that had, at its core, a simple policy proposal: eight weeks of guaranteed paid parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child. To test the strength of framing effects overall and amongst different groups of respondents, I developed two manipulations related to the policy's beneficiaries and the entity that pays for such a policy.

The first manipulation involves the policy's beneficiaries. Using rhetoric of national organizations in support of a 2016 bill on paid parental leave, I developed two "benefits frames." The first, the Family Benefits Frame, echoes the language of New Maternalism as identified by Mezy and Pillard (2012) and centers the benefits of paid parental leave on the family unit, particularly children, through the protection and efforts of mothers. The second, the Economic Benefits Frame, presents the benefits of the policy as economically beneficial to the individual who receives the benefits and society at large.

The second manipulation involves the policy's costs and how they would be distributed. Given the attention paid to the FMLA by groups like the Chamber of Commerce and others with respect to the burdens on employers, this manipulation sought to determine if "cost setting" was a relevant factor in policy preference alongside beneficiary framing. This manipulation had three levels. The first called for the policy's costs to be paid solely by the government. The second called for the policy's costs to be paid solely by employers. Finally, the third called for the policy's benefits to be split evenly between government and employers.

The two manipulations were combined into a 2x3 factorial design where each participant received one of the six conditions or received a control treatment.[1] Respondents were presented with a condition that included a combination of both framing manipulations (a 2x3 factorial design), which allows for a more robust investigation of these frames and their interaction with each other and moderating forces. Each condition contained a manipulation of the benefits framing (Family Benefits Frame or Economic Benefits Frame) and a manipulation of the cost

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[1] Participants in the stand-alone control group were given a treatment that presents pros and cons of essential oil use for humans. Ultimately, the control group was not used for analysis in this study.

setting (100% government, 100% employer, 50/50 government-employer split). The treatment

design (including the control) can be seen below in Table 1.

Table 1: Treatment Design

	Government 100%	Employer 100%	50/50 Split	
Family Benefit Frame	Group 1: Government 100% + Family Benefit Frame	Group 2: Employer 100% + Family Benefit Frame	Group 3: 50/50 Split + Family Benefit Frame	
Economic Benefit Frame	Group 4: Government 100% + Economic Benefit Frame	Group 5: Employer 100% + Economic Benefit Frame	Group 6: 50/50 Split + Economic Benefit Frame	
				Group 7: Control

In addition to exposure to a combination of treatments and measuring the resulting policy

preference, various variables relating to ideology, worldview, and gender role beliefs were

measured. These variables help to identify possible moderation of the framing manipulations

based on certain individual characteristics. For example, if the pro-family rhetoric was particularly

successful in obtaining the support of conservatives for the FMLA, one would assume the Family

Benefits Framing would be likewise successful for conservatives and those with more traditional

gender role beliefs when dealing with paid parental leave policy.

To better situate these efforts in historical context, Chapter Two outlines the history of

parental leave in the United States. This chapter's focus on the historical and legal development

of protections surrounding the birth of a child, particularly maternity and pregnancy protections

for women, will provide the necessary context for understanding the way in which policy framing

was so integral to the efforts to enact the FMLA and likely remains integral to the efforts to enact a national paid parental leave policy.

Next, Chapter Three provides an overview of the literature on framing effects. Particular attention will be paid to the way in which framing effects shape policy preferences and to link the framing literature to the efforts here to show the impact of policy framing on parental leave policy. The specific hypotheses involved in this study will be outlined and the methods of the study will be discussed in greater detail.

Chapter Four presents the findings from the experiment. First, the overall framing effects are discussed of both the benefits framing manipulation and the cost setting manipulation. Second, specific moderators based on gender, views of gender roles, experiences with traditional family structure, experiences parenting while working, ideology, and more will be tested to see whether the framing manipulations have a stronger influence within certain groups based on these traits.

Finally, Chapter Five situates the results in a larger context and provides a framework for viewing this study in the framing literature as well as in a practical sense for those seeking to enact paid parental leave on a national level. The goal here will be to situate this study among the framing studies on policy preferences while also adding to the literature on paid parental leave in the United States. In addition, suggestions for future study will be outlined.

CHAPTER 2 THE LEGAL AND HISTORICAL STANDING OF PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE U.S.

Introduction

An understanding of the history of parental leave policy in the United States is integral to a complete understanding of contemporary public opinion surrounding paid parental leave. At the crux of this project is an attempt to answer the question of why. Why is the United States an outlier when it comes to paid parental leave policy? If one is to answer this, an examination of the history of the policy realm and attempts to initiate such a policy are relevant first steps. This chapter seeks to add to the discussion by providing such an historical backdrop.

In 2016, the issue of paid parental leave made its first appearance in the policy proposals of both major party candidates in the presidential election. Yet the potential beneficiaries of the proposed policy solutions in 2016 differed on the potential populations that each policy sought to benefit and how each policy's costs would be allocated. Nevertheless, in 2016 the appearance of competing paid parental leave programs in the presidential election opens an important question: when does paid parental leave become a desired governmental intervention in public opinion and is public opinion swayed by the way in which such policies are presented.

To date, the largest national policy movement toward parental leave was made in 1993 with the enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. The Act, or "FMLA," as it is commonly known, was the first signed by President Bill Clinton and represented the culmination of decades of work toward a national policy on parental leave. The FMLA did not guarantee a right to pay during the leave time and because of the myriad of legal requirements, only covers a fraction of U.S. adults, particularly leaving large swaths of women workers unprotected.

The FMLA is itself the product of compromise and reductions, leaving behind protections for pay, lower-income workers, and longer leave time. It has only been amended twice in the 24 years since it became law, neither time containing protections for pay. In the interim, some states have attempted to fill the void with localized policies. In the end, a fragmented system remains and the push for paid parental leave rests in the hands of advocates who echo the arguments for other legal protections for pregnancy and parenting in the past.

A History of Parental Leave Policy in the United States

The roots of paid parental leave policy stretch back as far as the Industrial Revolution and gained steam in the Post World War II era in which white middle-class women who had gained work experience during the war wished to continue working but felt the tug of home life responsibilities as an impediment to their professional lives. As early as 1963, the federal government recognized the need for a paid parental leave policy—then a paid maternity leave policy—to improve the economic and social conditions of women. Yet in 2017, no such national policy exists.

The story of paid parental leave in America—or rather, its absence for Americans—is a complex one that often is the result of compromised policies. It places the scant protections for women as an afterthought in the periphery of legal protections prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex and, later, pregnancy. What results—protected job status for some women but no pay protection on a federal level—is hardly surprising given the path that the current law took. This legal and political path does not exist in a vacuum and represents real choices made within the confines of a political and social system that have lasting repercussions for future policy and

public opinion that are integral to understanding whether a paid parental leave policy might ever take shape on a national level.

The Post War Era

During World War II, women were called upon to work outside of the home to aid in the war effort. More than half the women who entered the workforce at this time left soon after the war ended (Goldin 1991, p. 741-742). Women's work was not a matter of self-sufficiency or economic independence at this time, but rather, "a carefully orchestrated campaign to associate their work with patriotism and, at the same time, to make it clear that their leaving the workforce after the war was over would be equally patriotic," (Bernstein 2001, p. 47). Many women did leave the workplace, but the need for some women to work and the desire of others, as noted in Betty Friedan's seminal work, *The Feminine Mystique*.(1963).

In 1963, the President's Commission on the Status of Women issued their comprehensive report, "American Women," (Commission 1963). President Kennedy formed the Commission in an attempt to move the discontent over women's lack of employment opportunities in the Post World War II era toward a productive yet contained end (Exec. Order 10980, December 14, 1961). The Commission, originally chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, represented a massive effort to study the status of women in American society and provide recommendations based on their assessment. The report, released after Roosevelt's death on what would have been her 79th birthday, began with a letter addressing President Kennedy's concerns outlined in the Executive Order giving life to the Commission:

> The quality of women's exercise of their capacities and responsibilities will be higher as American institutions become more suitable to contemporary life. We have considered the basic framework of the education and training of girls and women, the counseling through which they become aware of opportunities, the

conditions of their life in the home and outside of it in the years of their maturity. Our signed report conveys our major recommendations (p. iv).

In fact, the report contained many recommendations to advance the cause of girls and women, including recommendations for ensuring access to federal programs for women of color and the poor. Notably, on page 43, after assessing the lack of support for women in the workforce surrounding the birth of a child, noted the following:

> Paid maternity leave or comparable insurance benefits should be provided for women workers; employers, unions, and governments should explore the best means of accomplishing this purpose (p. 43).

Fifty-four years later, that recommendation still has not been fully implemented.

This recommendation, it seems, got caught up in the debates between feminists on the proper role of law and policy when it comes to feminist goals. Should the law offer a protectionist role to women so as to shelter them in at least some circumstances from the realities of life in the workforce? In 1908, the Supreme Court in *Muller v. Oregon* (208 U.S. 412) offered that women's unique "physical structure and the performance of maternal functions place her at a disadvantage in the struggle for subsistence," and argued that because of this the role of the law was to protect women "in order to preserve the strength and vigor of the race," (p. 421). Many Second Wave white feminists rejected such protectionism and pushed for equality under the law at all costs.

Led by Friedan and others, one branch of feminist thought was what Baxandall and Gordon (2002) call the "equal rights tendency," and many later called Liberal Feminism. Liberal feminists argued that the protectionism exhibited in cases like *Muller* led to the unacceptable inferior legal standing of women. This stream of feminist activism rose from the ashes of, "the New Deal Democrats and the Old Left," and focused on equal rights for women, which would

culminate in a ratified Equal Rights Amendment (pp. 2-3). While the tactics varied, the goal of this group of feminists, embodied by the National Organization for Women, headed by Friedan, was to enshrine equal status for the sexes in the law and ultimately the Constitution. Important to this endeavor was the rejection of any notion that women's reproductive roles led to differing needs and certainly that any reproductive function might warrant protection in the workplace environment (p. 3).

Liberal Feminism reached its zenith in NOW's amicus brief in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in a case regarding the extension of disability benefits to pregnant women in California. In that case, the issue was whether the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, which required employers to extend disability benefits to pregnant women, was preempted by federal law prohibiting discrimination based on pregnancy. In arguing against the California law and for preemption, NOW, along with the National Women's Political Caucus, argued that "[d]istinctions based on pregnancy tend to perpetuate the stereotype of women's primary role and function as childbearer," (Brief, p. 12). In other words, NOW argued that state policy that recognizes differences in women's reproductive roles was necessarily perpetuating inequality and therefore both preempted by Congress and unwise as a matter of practicality. Equality politics required the pure equal treatment of women under the law, not equal treatment except for times of childbearing.

Another group of feminist thought arose alongside Liberal Feminism. In the late 1960s in response to the lack of gender considerations in radical left politics, "women's liberation," movement arose from a rebellion against the equal rights proponents as well as a discontent with leftist politics that failed to examine gender in its critique of social and political norms (Baxandall

and Gordon, pp. 4-5). Black feminists and other feminists of color began their own critiques of both the white feminist groups that provided little more than lip service (if that) to the concerns of women of color as well as the dominant social hierarchy (pp. 5-6). While these groups all held their own beliefs, they almost uniformly challenged the belief of Liberal Feminists that legal equality alone would ameliorate the condition of women, arguing instead that the "social and political system was inadequate, that the whole system should become more democratic and participatory," (p. 6).

The Liberal Feminist message was easy to incorporate into the legal system as it stood, though, and made significant political gains during this time. Language prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations and employment was included in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. But this gain seemed to be short lived when it came to pregnant women. In 1972, Title IX of the of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 was passed, providing parity in educational pursuits based on sex (20 USCA. Sec. 168, Title IX. 1972).

Hope for equal treatment under the law was high. In 1971, the Supreme Court ruled in *Reed v. Reed* that a state law violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection guarantee where its probate code enshrined a legal preference for men over women in matters of inheritance. That hope was short lived when it came to pregnancy discrimination. In *Geduldig v. Aiello* (1974), the Court upheld a California law that excluded pregnant women from receiving disability benefits under a statewide disability plan, arguing that it was not a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to deny pregnant women from such protections as it would overburden the state to maintain such coverage. Two years later in *General Electric v. Gilbert* (1976), the Court shot down a challenge to an employer-provided disability program

under Title VII arguing that the protections in Title VII did not extend to discrimination based on pregnancy.

After being lobbied by a large coalition after the *Gilbert* decision, Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 ("PDA") (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e et seq; Gelb and Palley 1987, 167-168). The PDA amends Title VII of the Civil Rights Act so as to cover discrimination on the basis of pregnancy in employment and the provision of health and/or disability plans. Prior to the PDA, "neither employers nor states treated pregnant women as workers," (Diner 2014, 467). Pregnant women were excluded from disability programs and unemployment insurance programs. As a result of an increased rate of single motherhood, the increased growth of the workforce that was attributable to childbearing-age women, and the *Gilbert* decision, focused attention was paid to the effects of discrimination against pregnant persons in the workplace (Kamerman 1983, Diner 2014).

Notably, the effort to enact the PDA did not embrace the promises of Liberal Feminism, but instead focused on differences inherent in the sexes and attempted to reshape the system to fit them. (Dinner 2014) In that vein, it did not "provide any special benefits," meaning it was "ideologically acceptable to the [Liberal Feminists]." (Bernstein 2001, 59) This lack of positive action left the PDA as the only protection for pregnant women at a federal level. While it precluded employers and states from excluding pregnancy as a qualifying condition for receiving short-term disability benefits as a result of pregnancy-related matters, it did not *require* employers, the states, or the federal government to actually provide such benefits.

This legal ambiguity led to further legal case law. The Montana Supreme Court found that a Montana law that prohibited employment termination on the basis of pregnancy-related

disability and required that employers give pregnant women a "reasonable leave of absence for the pregnancy," added to rather than contradicted the PDA (*Miller-Wohl Company v. Commissioner of Labor and Industry*, 629 P.2d. 1243 (1984)). As such, the Montana law did not contradict the PDA. In 1987, the Supreme Court upheld a California law that provided greater job protection for pregnant women and new mothers than the standard disability protection allowed for other conditions (*California Federal Savings and Loan v. Guerra*, 479 U.S. 272, 1987). The Court argued that while the PDA set a "floor beneath which pregnancy disability benefits may not drop," it did not set a "ceiling above which they may not rise," (p. 285).

Notably, *Guerra* is the case in which NOW filed an amicus brief not on behalf of the side seeking to uphold the law, but on the side seeking to overturn the law. Liberal Feminism was officially at odds with pregnancy-related job protection. The schism in feminist thought that appeared in the 1960s was fully effective in the 1980s and shaped the formation and ultimately the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Compromise and the Family and Medical Leave Act

After *Guerra*, states were able to add to the protections offered by the PDA without violating the PDA. For better or worse, the history of pregnancy-related employment protections was now inextricably entangled with discrimination law, rather than enmeshed in a broader system of social welfare. Protection of time off and the potentiality of paid time off as was called for in the *American Women* report in 1963 was constrained by both social-economic forces but also by the path that previous pregnancy-related protections forged in the law.

The Introduction—HR 2020 (1985) and HR 4300 (1986)—99th Congress.

On April 4, 1985, Representative Patricia Schroeder introduced the ambitious HR 2020, the Parental and Disability Leave Act of 1985 (HR 2020). At the time, Rep. Schroeder was the senior woman in the House of Representatives and was "regarded as the foremost women's rights activist in Congress." (Radigan 1988, p. 13) The bill proposed a generous system of *unpaid* leave for both parental and medical purposes. Specifically, the bill called for the provision of 18 weeks of unpaid parental leave—defined as leave for birth, adoption, or serious illness of a child—over at 24-month period and 26 weeks over a 12-month period of unpaid medical leave for an employee's own serious health condition(s). The bill applied to all employers having five or more employees.

As Bernstein (2001) notes, "perhaps [the] most important compromise was not to propose paid leave," (148). In doing this, the bills' sponsors and advocates had hoped to gain credibility and utilize a passed unpaid leave protection bill to later scaffold into a paid leave plan. Evidence of this is the fact that the advocates' proposal that eventually led to HR 2020 also included recommendations for a commission to study national paid leave and/or a national disability policy and give recommendations within 2 years after passage of the bill (Radigan, 13).

Congress held hearings on HR2020. Ultimately, though, the bill stalled out when Schroeder voted against a bill sponsored by Representatives William Clay and Augustus Hawkins, who were then chairs of the education and labor committee (Bernstein 2001, p. 147). Other accounts note that the bill drew fire from organized labor who claimed the language may work against seniority systems in many collective bargaining agreements and disability rights activists who felt the use of the term "disability," in the bill was careless (Radigan, 16).

After consultation with labor organizations and key advocacy groups in the growing coalition for protected leave, a revised version of the bill was introduced in March 1986 (Radigan 16; HR 4300) as Clay as a principal co-sponsor of the bill along with Schroeder. The new bill—the Parental and Medical Leave Act of 1986—differed from HR 2020 in a few ways, the main difference being that HR 4300 applied to employers with 15 or more employees, changing the applicability of the act (HR 4300). Despite being flooded with organized opposition from the Chamber of Commerce (Radigan, 20), HR 4300 made it out of committee and had a rule approved for debate and voting on the floor. Congress adjourned before action was taken and the bill stalled. One thing became clear: the ability of the bill to survive in an otherwise unfriendly environment was "the willingness of the advocates to accept compromise." This compromise would continue to ensure the bill's passage but would also come at the cost of employee protections.

The Second Round—S 249 (1987), HR 925 (1987), S 2488 (1988)—100th Congress.

The coalition strengthened in the second round and bills were introduced in both chambers around the same time. On January 6, 1987, S. 249, the Parental and Temporary Leave Act of 1987 was introduced. On February 3, 1987, HR 925, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1987 was introduced. Both proposed 18 weeks of unpaid parental leave over a 24-month period and 26 weeks of unpaid medical leave over a 12-month period for an employee's own illness. Both applied to employers who had 15 or more employees. S249 only applied to parental leave—leave for the birth, adoption, or illness of a child—whereas HR 925 was more broadly drafted to include leave for the care of a parent.

HR 925 was identical to the version of HR 4300 that passed out of the Education and Labor Committee in the 99th Congress (Radigan, 23). The bills were promoted explicitly as "pro-family," measures and even "pro-life" by anti-abortion groups (Radigan, p. 23; Bernstein 152). This was strengthened by an explicit decision not to provide medical leave for abortion in the bills (Bernstein, p. 152). The United States Catholic Conference endorsed and lobbied for the bill, "helped to 'frame' family and medical leave not only as a feminist and labor issue, but also as a 'family values' issue that could be made attractive to pro-life social conservatives," (Bernstein, p. 153). As a result of the involvement of Catholic organizations, pro-life leader Rep. Henry Hyde agreed to support family and medical leave (Bernstein, p. 153).

The leaders in the House and the Senate convened hearings on their representative bills back-to-back to help bolster the cause. (Radigan, 24). But hearings proved somewhat difficult and the issue of leave time and employer size became points of contention again (Radigan, 24). A compromise was proposed by Republicans and accepted by the bill's sponsors: a phased-in employer size with the bill applying to employers with 50 or more employees in the first three years after enactment, moving to employers with 35 or more employees in the following year; provision of 10 weeks of family leave over a 24-month period and 15 weeks of medical leave over a 12-month period; the bill would not cover employees with less than 20 work hours per week or those whose salary was in the top 10 percent of the employer's workforce if that would prove to be a financial hardship for the employer (Radigan, p. 25).

The amended HR 925 was also joined by a new bill in the Senate (S 2488), which provided for 10 weeks of unpaid parental leave over a 24-month period and 13 weeks of medical leave over a 12-month period. This bill applied to employers with 20 or more employees. It was

favorably reported out of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources in July 1988 and filibustered on the Senate floor in September 1988.

The Third Round—S 345 (1989) and HR 770 (1989)—101ˢᵗ Congress.

While the second round of proposals was promising and gained key support from Republicans and Catholics, the bills still failed to gain adequate support to pass either chamber of commerce. On February 2, 1989 bills were introduced in both chambers of the house. S. 345 provided for 10 weeks of family leave in any 24-month period and 13 weeks of medical leave in any 12-month period for those at employers with 20 or more employees. HR 770 provided for 10 weeks of family leave time in a 24-month period and 15 weeks of medical leave in any 12-month period. For the first time, both the Senate and House versions had the same name: The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1989.

Both bills made it to and through committees in their respective chambers. The House bill extended coverage to congressional employees and addressed the coverage of school teachers. On the House floor, a proposed substitute—the Gordon-Weldon substitute—was approved. This substitute reduced the period of leave from 15 weeks per year for medical leave and 10 weeks every 2 years for family leave to 12 weeks per year for all circumstances covered in the bill. It moved employer coverage from 35 employees to 50 employees and expanded the conditions of family leave to cover spouses with serious health conditions. The bill was passed the House by a vote of 237-187. The Senate approved the House version with the Gordon-Weldon substitute by unanimous consent. However, in a blow to proponents of the bill, President George H.W. Bush vetoed the bill on June 29, 1990 and an attempt to override that veto failed in the House in July.

The Fourth Round—HR 2, S. 5—102nd Congress.

Stymied by a veto from then-popular President Bush, proponents of family leave moved to strengthen their case. They raised the number of hours an employee must work to be eligible for coverage to 1250 hours and retained the top earner exemption from previous rounds. Proponents rejected a compromise floated by President Bush to give tax credits to businesses that voluntarily choose to provide family and medical leave instead of mandating such leave (Bernstein, p. 160).

In January 1991, HR 2 and S 5 were introduced. Both bills proposed 12 weeks of unpaid family and medical leave for employees working for employers with 50 or more employees and who worked at least 1250 hours in the preceding year. The Senate Bill was amended to tighten notice and eligibility requirements and create an enforcement mechanism parallel to the Fair Labor Standards Act. The bills—both with this amendment—passed both chambers in the fall of 1991. A conference committee's proposed reconciliation of the bills was approved in August 1992 for the Senate and September 1992 for the House. President Bush once again vetoed the bill on September 22, 1992. The Senate was able to wrangle enough votes to veto, but the House was not able to do so. The election of President Bill Clinton—who had highlighted the issue on the campaign trail—proved to be a fortuitous moment for the coalition pushing for family and medical leave (Bernstein, p. 160).

The Fifth and Final Round—HR 1 and S 5—103rd Congress.

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After the FMLA

FMLA's Post-Enactment Life at the Federal Level

The substance of the FMLA has been amended twice, both times with limited effect. The first time was in 2008 within the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. The changes, proposed after Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom, created two types of military-specific leave: qualifying exigency leave, and military caregiver leave (Mayer, 2012, p. 6). Qualifying exigency leave includes 12 weeks in each 12-month period for dealing with a "short notice deployment," (seven days' notice or less), arranging for childcare, making legal or financial arrangements to address a military member's absence, attending official military ceremonies, counseling for one's self, the military member or child. It also includes five days of leave time to spend with a military member on temporary leave for rest within a deployment (pp. 6-7). Military caregiver leave provides 26 weeks of protected leave to care for a covered service member who is injured in the line of duty while on active duty (Mayer, p. 7).

The second amendment was made in 2009 in the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-119). This Act changed the way that the calculation of the 1250-hour

requirement was calculated for airline flight crews. Specifically, it provided protected leave for a covered airline flight crewmember in certain cases that worked less than 1250 hours. In other words, the Act clarified that work hours were to count not only the hours spent in flight, but also all hours spent on duty (Mayer, pp. 3-4).

The passed amendments to the FMLA do not depict the scope of the work that has been done to improve upon the protections of the FMLA since its enactment. These attempts can broadly be categorized into two categories. First, there have been a series of attempts to broaden the application of the FMLA by redefining what it covers more expansively. Second, there is a body of sponsored legislation that has intensified in the past five years to implement paid leave as part of or in addition to the protections of the FMLA.

There have been many attempts to broaden the impact of FMLA without necessarily changing the core protections it provides. Almost since immediately after its passage, attempts were made at bringing the protections of the FMLA in a robust way to more employees by broadening the number of employers covered (HR 3657, June 13, 1996), eliminating the marriage penalty for two spouses working for the same employer (HR 3296, April 23, 1996), and even allowing FMLA time to count toward pension accrual (HR 4178, June 26, 1998). Likewise, attempts were made to broaden the number and type of employees that were eligible by amending the time of service to include part time and contingent workers (HR 3657, June 13, 1996; HR 5496, June 16, 2016), bring railroad employees into line given time on the clock (HR 5944, July 29, 2010) or even eliminate entirely the 1250-hour rule (HR 3297, November 10, 1999).

Perhaps the largest area for innovation in the attempts to amend and broaden the FMLA was in the scope of covered events for which leave can be taken. Proposals have been routinely

made to allow the use of some FMLA time each month for the attendance of parents at their children's educational events (S 2145, September 27, 1996) and for use to attend to children's medical and dental appointments, including well visits (HR 109, January 7, 1997). Proposed changes also included FMLA coverage for the medical condition of a domestic partner, grandparent, adult sibling, or adult child. (HR 2104, June 9, 1999) Proposed changes also sought to cover time off for the death of a spouse (HR 1312, March 29, 2001) or the death of a child (HR 6673, December 17, 2012; S 1358, July 13, 2011). Often, FMLA provisions were looked at through the lens of other legal changes, such as the protection of leave time for survivors of domestic violence (S 367, February 26, 1997), victims of federal hate crimes (HR 6776, August 1, 2008), living organ donors (HR 1857, May 18, 1999), and service-connected disabilities for military veterans (HR 5165, May 3, 2016). Not all attempts to modify this coverage were an attempt to broaden, though, such as HR 3751 (April 29, 1998), which sought to limit the definition of "serious health condition" and require employees to take half days instead of full days off or utilize, flex time to avoid employer distress. Other attempts to use flextime to supplement, rather than detract from, FMLA protected time were also being proposed (HR 4301, December 6, 2007; S 2419).

Congressional attempts to provide some paid leave have taken many forms throughout the years. One set of attempts focuses on the use of tax credits to the employer for providing paid time off (S 2354, December 3, 2015) or for allowing for flexible work schedules or telecommuting (HR 3836, July 17, 1996). Likewise, tax credits for the employee to offset the costs of utilizing such time or staying at home for childcare purposes have also been explored. (S 18, January 22, 2001; HR 265, January 30, 2001) Other attempts have been made to make flexible

work schedules more possible for the purpose of helping families with their childcare obligations (HR 3836, July 17, 1996; HR 4301, December 6, 2007; S 2419).

The idea of a federally mandated paid leave benefit has been the subject of a great deal of legislative proposals. As early as 1999, attempts were made to provide for a federally guaranteed right to paid leave through a partnership with the states. The Family Income to Respond to Significant Transitions Insurance Act would have provided grants to the states to cover the federal share of the cost of carrying out a wage replacement program for families who used protected leave time for caregiving needs. (S 1355, July 13, 1999; HR 2500, July 13, 1999) The Paid Family and Medical Leave Act of 2005 (HR 3192, June 30, 2005) would have provided employees with 55% of their weekly basic earnings for 12 workweeks during a 12-month period through the creation of a Family and Medical Leave Trust Fund at the Department of Treasury to provide such benefits. More recently, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Representative Rosa DeLauro have introduced the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act or "FAMILY Act" would have provided 12 weeks of pay at 66% of the employee's weekly basic earnings by enacting a 0.2% payroll tax. (S 337, February 7, 2017; HR 947, February 7, 2017)

One other way in which there has been some policy innovation is with the federal government as a first mover of sorts. One early proposal would have had the Senate pay its employees for eight weeks of time for family and medical leave. (S 880, March 14, 2007) Another proposal enlarged that to include eight weeks of paid family and medical leave time for all federal employees. (HR 5781, June 19, 2008) Still other proposals have limited that paid time for federal employees to four weeks, such as HR 626 (June 4, 2009), which even passed the House in 2009.

More recently, the trend has been to propose six weeks of paid time. (HR 532, January 26, 2015; S 2033, September 15, 2015) To date, none of these proposals have been enacted.

FMLA's Post-Enactment Life at the State Level

Five states and the District of Columbia have passed paid parental leave laws since the passage of the FMLA. These states—California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New York, Washington—and the District of Columbia have had varying purposes and protections in their laws. Notably, only two states have had any experience with actually implementing these laws (Rhode Island and New Jersey) as the others phase into effectiveness between 2018 and 2020. (National Partnership for Women & Families, July 2017)

The states provide for differing amounts of paid leave and in different types. California (A.B. 908, 2015-2016 Leg. Reg. Sess. (Cal. 2016)) and New Jersey (N.J. Stat. Ann. § 43:21-38) provide for six weeks of paid family leave. Rhode Island's law (R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-41-35(h)) provides for four weeks of paid family leave but 30 weeks for an employee's own disability or a combination of family and disability. New York's law (S. 6406C, Part SS, 239th Leg., Reg. Sess.(N.Y. 2016)) has a phase in plan where there will be eight weeks of protected family leave in 2018, 10 weeks in 2019, and 12 weeks in 2021 plus 26 paid weeks of disability leave. The District of Columbia provides for eight weeks of paid parental leave, six weeks of paid family leave, and two weeks of paid disability leave. The only state to differentiate leave on the basis of pregnancy is Washington, whose law, the Family Leave Act (RCW 49.78.010 through 49.78.904), provides 12 weeks of paid family leave, 12 weeks of paid disability leave with a combined total of no more than 16 weeks of paid leave per year. If, however, the disability leave is on account of pregnancy, the disability leave itself is allowed 14 weeks and the combined total is 18 weeks.

Implementation and Application of the FMLA.

The FMLA's changes during the legislative process before enactment coupled with the limited revisions after enactment have led to a system of protected leave that has many gaps. In order to properly understand the gaps in the law, it is important to understand exactly how the FMLA is applied both legally and in practice. There are two key definitions that control most of the FMLA's application: covered employer and covered employee. A covered employer is one who employs at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the worksite for 20 calendar workweeks in the preceding year and who engages in interstate commerce (29 U.S.C. § 2611). A covered employee is an employee who has worked at least 1250 hours in the previous 12-month period at a worksite of a covered employer.

Once it is determined that an employer and employee are a covered employer and covered employee, the type of leave or qualifying event becomes relevant. The Act protects 12 weeks of the employee's time during any 12-month period for the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a spouse, child, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition, or to care for the employee's own serious health condition, including pregnancy. When leave is taken to care for one's own or a family member's serious health condition, the Act requires employees to provide medical "certification," so as to prevent abuse (Craig, p. 68).

When the Act was in its primordial state, it appeared that different eligibility reasons would call for different leave allowances. However, the Act has been construed to mean that a covered employee is provided up to 12 weeks unpaid protected leave *in total for all reasons* under the Act. Parents, for example, are not entitled to 12 weeks for each qualifying event (Craig,

p. 70). Thus, leave taken for a prenatal disability or sickness could and does count against persons seeking to take FMLA-protected time once a child is born.

An employer must restore a covered employee who takes FMLA-protected time to the same or an "equivalent" position. An equivalent position is defined as one with "equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment," (29 U.S.C. § 2614(a)(1)(B). This may mean that the employer has some room in reassigning an employee utilizing FMLA-protected leave and works against the intent to alleviate such concerns by those utilizing the protections of the Act.

The FMLA has several limitations. The first limitation is by specific design: leave under the FMLA is explicitly unpaid. While employers may decide to provide pay and some states may require it, there is no mandate that employers provide any pay to the employee during the leave time. The exception to this is that an employer must allow employees to utilize accrued paid leave time in the form of sick time and vacation time (Craig 73). However, the employer may specify how such time can be utilized in some circumstances, disallowing, for example, employees to utilize sick time to care for a sick family member (Craig, 74). In fact, employers can *require* substitution of paid leave for the unpaid leave protections of the FMLA, meaning that an employer may require an employee to utilize any paid accrued leave as a substitute for some or all of the FMLA unpaid time. As such, when accrued paid leave is available, employees may be mandated to utilize it to the point of exhaustion. Meanwhile, the employer can double-count FMLA and paid leave time so that the paid leave essentially substitutes for rather than supplements the FMLA protected time.

Other limitations present themselves as well. Spouses who work for the same employer are required to pool their FMLA-protected time into a total of 12-weeks between the two employees for the birth or adoption of a child or for the care of a sick parent (29 U.S.C. § 26129(f)). Also, "key employees," or top earners at an employer are not entitled to FMLA-protections, and thus may not be restored to their position upon returning from leave (Craig, 75).

These gaps coupled with the piecemeal process by which legislative fixes and enhancements to the FMLA have been made make it unlikely that any one potential fix will wholly alter the content and effect of the existing protections. Yet the slow and disjointed proposals that have come forth make it less likely that the promise of truly protected and paid family and medical leave will come to fruition. Like the forces of coalition building that led to the FMLA's enactment after decades of knowledge that a paid parental leave policy was necessary for the full embrace of economic and social citizenship of all regardless of gender, the policy gets shaped by the discourse.

Equality or Equity in the Workplace and Among the Sexes

The battle for the FMLA makes one thing clear: the realms of reproduction and childrearing are inherently gendered territory. Decisions made to enlarge the rhetorical scope of the promise of the FMLA rested largely on gendered terms, couching benefits to mothers as benefits to children and families at large. Likewise, work and labor are gendered concepts—often invoking notions of typical gender roles even without the placement of gendered figures in them. The fact is that despite a long history of paid parental leave policy being nationally visible, no such national policy exists. This is unsurprising given the gender dynamics and uniquely positioned employment system in the United States.

Women who occupy space outside of the norm are often seen as deviant (Rosenthal 2008) or are not seen at all (Nacos 2005), echoing the biases that Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1988) identified. Moreover, work outside of the home is gendered, and women are more likely than men to spend time working in the home in addition to their professional responsibilities (Hook 2017).

Workplaces remain gendered and the lag in parental leave policy in the U.S. compared to other nations is an expected result from such an arrangement (Peterson and Albrecht 1999). The lack of a national paid maternity or parental leave policy can be seen as an expected result of these separate spheres. For most of the 20th century, "pro-family" policy was seen as a private need instead of a public problem (Kingston 1990, pp. 438-439). That change is not because women's struggles with the lack of such workplace policies became legitimate causes for concern in the dominant culture, but rather because of the overwhelming, "statistics about the prevalence of dual-income couples and single-parent families [that] have achieved common currency, almost moral weight, with the accompanying implication that changes in workplace practices are due," (p. 439).

In fact, employers have long had an easy time avoiding issues relevant to having women workers. Women have historically had less access to workplace benefits than have men (Berggren 2003, 2008). This includes a lack of access to employer-provided benefits (DeViney 1995; Hardy & Shuey 2000; Nelson 1994; Pearce 1987; Perman and Stevens 1989; Berggren 2008). One reason for this is the protectionism ensconced in the law when it comes to women as employees. In *Muller v. Oregon* (1908), the Supreme Court broke with its Industrial Era precedent in upholding an Oregon law that limited women workers to 10-hour days. Three years prior in *Lochner v. New*

York (1905), the Court held that a New York statute limiting working hours for bakers was an impermissible use of state regulatory power. Nevertheless, without much of a shift on the Court in personnel or ideology, the Court held in *Muller* that the protection of women as workers was an appropriate subject of state intervention. This was particularly important, the Court noted, because of women's status as mothers or potential mothers.

The gender disparities in working conditions and benefits continued after the *Muller* decision. The Social Security Act, a hallmark of employee benefits stemming from the New Deal, was explicitly based on the "breadwinner-homemaker family, in which the husband worked and earned enough money to support his wife who stayed home to raise the kids," and this was ensconced into the structure of the program which allowed men to "earn" their pensions and benefit at retirement, whereas women who did not have active wages could not earn such a benefit (Wisensale 2001, pp. 33-34). Under the Aid to Dependent Children program, the government paid women to stay at home with their children *only if* their husbands were deceased or otherwise absent for legitimate reasons (Id.).

Fringe benefits available through the private-market were just as lacking for women in many ways. Women have routinely had less access to employer-based healthcare programs, even when part time and full-time stats are taken into account (Perman and Stevens 1989). Likewise, women are less likely to have access to and be able to take advantage of employer-based retirement programs (Diviney 1995; Hardy and Shuey 2000). This is often because women are often on the margins of employment—lacking permanence and status (Pearce 1987). Moreover, women are more likely than men to have precarious employment through the service sector (Nelson 1994).

The gap left by a nation that has no unified maternity or parental leave policy as a remnant of policies based on these separate spheres of family and work life disproportionally affects women. Women's wages are depressed when they become mothers in a way that is cannot be explained by differences in labor-market forces and appears across professions (Waldfogel 1997). Women who do have access to some maternity leave protections express a not insignificant amount of stress surrounding the use of such protections as it places them outside of the (male) norm (Buzzanell and Liu 2005).

U.S. social policy on parental leave is not bolstered by a belief that caring for and raising children is a societal good, but rather that it is something expected to be done by women as a matter of responsibility (Bourne and Lentz 2009, p. 516). Instead, the U.S. reaction to women's entry into the workforce in larger numbers in the 1970s and 1980s was not to provide "changes that would support the needs of families with two working parents," but rather to respond "instead with the cultural myth of the supermom who can meet the demands of work and family with the assumption that the demands of the two will not compete for her time or energy," (Silverstein 1991, p. 1029, summarizing Hochschild 1989).

While the FMLA may have been a first attempt to deal with the issue, it was itself a gendered process that eliminated many of the provisions that would have been a unique benefit to women. One could argue that this is due to Americans' general ambivalence about social welfare policy (Feldman and Zaller 1992). Yet as has been seen by other forays into welfare policy reform, framing the recipients of a particular benefit may be just as strong an influence if not a stronger influence than the contest over the proper role of government in the provision of such benefits as a theoretical matter (Mead 2011).

The role of the gender dynamics within the FMLA's formation, implementation, and lack of thorough revision is pervasive. The success of the FMLA, its three-time passage, and eventually its enactment in 1993 was the story of reinforcing a pro-family message (Webber 2011). Specifically, the proponents' argument that "the family unit was the best equipped to meet the needs of its individual family members," allowed such groups as the Catholic bishops and more conservative politicians to sign on to support it. That message undermined, though, the power of the final product, creating a situation where the enacted law favored dual-income households and middle-class families over lower class families, single parent households, and those with precarious or shifting work hours (Webber, p. 93). As others have pointed out, the FMLA's rules in practice end up providing less of a benefit for women who may need more than 12 weeks per year for a difficult pregnancy or other health concern. In the end, the bill's path from conception to enactment weakened the protections for women in favor of a gender-neutral and family-friendly bill that could be supported by a wider variety of political actors.

One could argue that the result should still be a positive one. The FMLA does protect 12 weeks of work, albeit unpaid, for many women. And the coverage of men under the Act should lead to some more egalitarian parenting that eliminates the separate spheres of work and family. What has happened instead, though, is women's roles as mothers are still not adequately defined and protected outside of the largely inapplicable anti-discrimination law and men have failed to take advantage of the protections of the FMLA, thus solidifying rather than eviscerating the gender-differences in childrearing that lead to gender disparities in work-life balance. Men are less likely to take leave even when they and their families would benefit to it (Han and Waldfogel 2003; Prohaska and Zipp 2011). Moreover, despite overtures toward more women-friendly

workplaces, men in organizations tend to praise stay at home mothers and show hesitancy to promote and include women in organizational leadership (Tracy and Rivera 2010). Further, the courts' tendency to narrowly interpret the FMLA's coverage of an "eligible employee" has led to many women not being granted the right to take leave that might have been intended to be covered by the drafters of the Act (Magill 2014).

Reframing Policy Rhetoric in the Parental Leave Realm

The historical trek of paid parental leave from a formative promise of the 1963 President's Commission on the Status of Women's Report to a proposed national policy by both major party candidates in the most recent presidential election is instructive. It is, however, by no means dispositive to the question of why posed at the outset. If paid parental leave policy is to succeed in the United States at a national level, perhaps the path taken by the proponents of the FMLA in the early 1990s is worth taking again. In fact, it appears that many advocates for paid parental leave are doing just that: attempting to enlarge the support for such a policy by diminishing the differences between groups on issues like gender, work, and family.

What was necessary to enact the FMLA was a continual movement to the center that glossed over debates about the role of women in the home and the workplace and focused instead on the family unit as the beneficiary of the policy proposal. By doing this, proponents were able to enlarge the coalition of the willing and reframe the policy as pro-family rather than just equitable procedure. The changes made to attract such wide support were not substantive policy changes, but rather rhetorical changes that allowed every member of the coalition to see what they wanted from the policy without challenging underlying assumptions. In other words,

the family was the one that benefitted and the mother's ability to stay at home with her child was predicated on, rather than contrary to, well-established gender norms in society.

This balancing act between policy substance that furthers the economic and social parity of women and the predilection to favor policies that benefit the family is worth examining not only for its content but for its efficacy. Given that the system as it stands is disjointed and lacking behind other nations, does public opinion on paid parental leave necessitate finding that middle road that was found with the FMLA 25 years ago? If that middle road is found, is such a framing of the issue useful to bring the United States into parity with its peers around the world? This project attempts to investigate this to determine whether policy framing in the paid parental leave debate is enough to make strange bedfellows and forward policy surrounding paternity and maternity yet again. The framing literature investigated in the next chapter helps establish an empirical framework within which this investigation can occur.

CHAPTER 3 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The status of the United States as an outlier in the realm of paid parental leave policy has been an issue for advocates for equal rights for over fifty years. After the *American Women* report in 1963, it took 30 years to achieve *minimally protected* unpaid leave in the FMLA. As was noted in the previous chapter, this achievement was due, in large part, to the pro-family messaging that helped to convene the coalition supporting its enactment (Bernstein 2001, Webber 2011). Bolstered by the success of the FMLA's pro-family messaging, many proponents of paid parental leave policy have argued that the path to securing paid parental leave policy requires similar tactics and message framing so as to draw the maximum amount of support from as many diverse sources as is possible.

Fundamentally, this messaging must necessarily avoid direct challenges to gender role beliefs and norms that might otherwise divide such a diverse coalition. The fact that paid parental leave policy is fundamentally tied to reproduction and parenting means that such gender role beliefs are in the background even if they are not specifically referenced. To date, no empirical work has supported the notion that greater policy success can be achieved by promoting paid parental leave with language that is congruent with traditional family gender role beliefs. My research looks to fill that void by providing data regarding the usefulness of such frames for policy promotion. Specifically, I am attempting to determine if there is evidence to support the notion that promoting paid parental leave by centering the policy on protecting women's role as mothers is more persuasive than framing the policy in a way that supports notions of women's economic growth. To do this, I utilize an experimental design that frames an identical policy in two different beneficiary frameworks: one frame that emphasizes the policy's benefits to the

family unit by providing more time for women to be mothers and nurture children and one frame

that specifies the economic benefits that accrue to women and society at large from such a policy.

In addition, given the claims of structural barriers, I also test framing from a policy

structure standpoint. One of the barriers surrounding protected family leave in the debates

leading to the enactment of the FMLA was the burden on employers or the role of government

in such a policy. As such, I also have a second manipulation that frames the policy in three

different ways to test if a similar dynamic may be at work with respect to paid parental leave

policy: (1) 100% government funded; (2) 100% employer funded; and, (3) a 50/50 split of funding

between employers and the government.

Finally, the research on framing suggests that framing messages may be moderated by a

variety of factors that differentiate recipients of the frame. Therefore, my research adds to the

important and growing body of framing effects research in a unique way by considering beliefs

about gender role beliefs and gender group identity with respect to a policy that is so closely

linked with laws involving gender discrimination and equity. In addition, I look to see whether

experience with the policy's subject matter itself (e.g., working while having young children)

moderates the influence of these frames. Furthermore, previously researched variables such as

ideology and views on the determinants of success are measured to determine their moderating

influence, if any.

Framing and Policy Preference

The notion that policy preferences may be swayed by different presentations of the

contents and benefits of the same policy is known as framing effects. Framing effects occur when

the way in which a message is presented activates certain available information for a recipient

that conditions the receipt of that message (Nelson et al 1997). As a result, a person's policy preferences may be shaped just as much by what the policy is as they are by how the policy is presented.

The complexity of the human experience creates the need for shortcuts to create meaning and understanding. Frames provide order by draping a message in background information that would, "otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful" (Goffman 1974, p. 21). A frame is a heuristic, a description that makes the unfamiliar seemingly recognizable through the use of emotions (Conover and Feldman 1996, Nabi 2003, Gross and D'Ambrosio 2004, Gross 2008, Major 2011), code words (Kinder and Sanders 1990, Feldman and Zaller 1992, Skitka and Tetlock 1993, Jacoby 2000, Brewer 2001, 2002, Brewer and Gross 2005, Simon and Jerit 2007, Djupe et al 2014), depictions of responsibility(Stone 1989, Iyengar 1991, 1996, Weiner 1995, Kim et al 2010, Major 2011), and definitions of group belonging (Sears and Funk 1991, Callaghan and Schnell 2009, Leitz 2011), amongst other mechanisms.

Although the initial idea of frames is rooted in Bateson's (1952/1972) sociological work, the idea has spread to a variety of disciplines, including psychology (e.g., Minsky 1975, Tversky & Kahneman 1981), linguistics (e.g., Lakoff 1987), and communication studies (e.g., Iyengar 1992/1996, Scheufele 1999). In the political science literature, framing studies have appeared in both the political psychology research on opinion formation (e.g., Nelson et al 1997, Druckman 2001, 2004, Slothus 2008) and a connection to Tversky and Kahneman's (1979) "prospect theory" (Mercer 2005); and, the political sociology research on the use of frames as a method of political-social organization (e.g. Mogdalini and Gamson 1979, Gamson 1989, Snow et al 1996, Benford and Snow 2000). As a form of meta-cognition, frames are the "central organizing idea for making

sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue" (Gamson and Mogdalini 1989, p. 57). Frames act to highlight without directly mentioning those aspects. Robert Entman (1993) argued that framing plays off of individuals' perceptions of reality and to make certain aspects of that reality "more salient...in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52).

Frames do not and are not intended to convey new information but rather "operate by activating information *already at the recipients' disposal*, stored in long-term memory" (Nelson et al 1997, p. 225). The use of frames provides a guide or "interpretive schema, which focus[es] people's attention on particular elements of the discourse" (Leitz 2011, 237). Often this is done by explicitly or implicitly referencing shared cultural and social elements so as to provide what Snow and Benford (1988) called "narrative fidelity" that links the message to real life.

Framing effects occur when the importance of the information conveyed changes. This is known as the *belief importance change* process, which occurs when the frame alters "the weight of particular considerations" for individuals (Nelson et al 1997, p. 236). This process can be seen in the following equation:

$$\text{Attitude} = v_i, w_i$$

where v_i represents the value or belief about the attitude object of the attribute, and w_i represents the weight placed on that value or belief (Nelson et al 1997 at 225 citing Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). In this model, there are two ways to change the attitude held by the individual: by changing the information (v) or changing the way in which that information is perceived (w), which is done through framing. Brewer (2001) noted that frames do not merely elicit support or

opposition but invoke "thoughtful" consideration amongst recipients that based acceptance of the frame on how favorably the frame related to the recipients themselves.

Recently, scholars have also looked at the way in which frames may actually provide new information themselves, thus altering the receipt of the frame. This is known as the *belief content change* process, which "refers to the addition of new beliefs to an individual's set and alludes to one of the most established mechanisms in the media effects research—the persuasive effect" (deVreese and Lecheler, p. 298). Unlike the previous two processes, by "changing the content of the underlying considerations," (Slothus 2008, p. 2), this process looks at the ways in which frames present new information. In other words, the frame itself may convey new information depending on the recipient of that frame (Slothus, p. 7). Slothus also argued that this process may also act as a moderator or condition the way in which information is processed.

Values are important to the concept of framing effects because they represent strongly held beliefs that may influence policy preferences. Early framing studies looked at the way that policy preference was shaped by invoking various value frames. Kinder and Sanders (1990) used value language in assessing support or opposition to affirmative action policies by measuring the influence of frames that deemed the policy as "reverse discrimination against whites" or "unfair advantages to blacks." In altering the policy preference question based on value language— reverse discrimination or unfair advantage—a "subtle but consistent difference" in policy preference was found based on the way in which "people were invited to think about affirmative action" (p. 270).

One area in which values have been routinely scrutinized as moderators of framing effects is with respect to policies involving increased government spending and welfare. These policy

domains are often filled with value words that serve to activate different responses from individuals based on ideology and values (Jacoby 2000). Other issues more directly implicate values and morality. Simon and Jerit (2007) found that individual opposition to so-called "partial birth abortion" decreased when the question posed asked about fetuses rather than babies. Djupe et al (2014) found that perception of conservative candidates who invoke civil rights language was more favorable amongst liberals than those who utilized morality language. Likewise, Rasmussen (2011) relies on Lakoff's (1990) theory of categorization to argue that framing contraception as health care provides for differing views of the government's role in securing access to contraception.

The policy domain of same sex marriage demonstrates the importance of values. One study found that altering the language of a question to asking support for marriage rights for "same sex couples" versus "homosexual couples" had little influence on the opinions of respondents in relation to support for the overall proposition of same sex marriage (Pizmony-Levy and Ponce 2013). Another study, though, found that framing same sex marriage positions as consistent with civil rights movements made it more likely that participants had positive views of same sex marriage than other framings (Johnson 2012). At least some evidence can be found that the way in which same sex marriage is framed, while it may not necessarily influence the ultimate policy decision, may set the tone of the debate (Brewer 2002).

To connect the message content to values, frames often appeal to emotions. In fact, Nabi (2003) argues that emotions are frames in that they "help to mobilize and allocate mental and physical resources for certain types of person-environment interactions" (Nabi p. 226 citing Izzard 1993). Emotions, thus, trigger the way information is "gathered, stored, recalled, and used

to make particular attributions or judgements." (Id., p. 227) This accessibility only occurs, however, when those emotions are linked to the particular subject matter at hand.

Further, values may lead to the assigning of responsibility—both in terms of blame for the problem and construction of a solution. Stone (1989) argued that the construction of policy problems relied on this very type of additional information. Much research has looked at the way in which causal frames are used to shift attention or emotion from one position to another. This has been studied with relation to pollution (Kensicki 2004), poverty (Kensicki 2004; Kim et al 2010), elder abuse (Mastin et al 2007), mental health (Zhang et al 2015), parenting (Riley and Borgenschneider 1999), the so-called "obesity epidemic," (Kim and Willis 20017; Lee and Len-Rios 2015), business failure (Williams et al 2011) and more.

The existing literature on framing effects does not adequately cover context of paid parental leave. At a policy-domain level, there is no research on framing effects that looks at the policy domain of paid parental leave. Given the increasing rhetoric about such policies in the electoral context (Sholar 2016), it makes sense that this policy domain should be studied more empirically. Moreover, the bulk of the existing framing effects literature does not address gender related topics. The closest analogs to gendered issues in the empirical research are the work on abortion (Simon and Jerit 2007) and same sex marriage (Pizmony-Levy and Ponce 2013, Johnson 2012, Brewer 2002).While those studies provide some insight into how gendered policies fare with respect to framing effects, they also are not true comparators because the topics studied are so ideologically divisive and have existing regulation in various capacities.

Rasmussen's (2011) theory about contraception framing in the debates surrounding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is instructive. She argues that by grouping

contraception together with health, it made contraception more palatable to a wider audience (p. 947). Instead of supporters of such provisions having to claim that their goal was gender equality, they could claim it was adequate access to health care. Moreover, "framing an issue as a lifestyle good," she argues, "rather than a necessity can take an issue from becoming a mandated benefit to a private purchase" (p. 948). In other words, marketing contraception as a benefit rather than a necessity allowed its importance to be discounted. Framing contraception as a necessity included it in the panoply of healthcare requirements mandated by federal law ensured that it was thought of by more as a basic necessity. What Rasmussen hints at but does not fully engage, is that this move allowed proponents of the contraception mandate to eliminate gendered language from their messaging entirely, thus framing the mandate without the inconvenience of having to debate gender equity.

Not everyone receives frames in the same way. Instead, various facets of individuals' experiences, beliefs, identity, and ideology may *moderate* the effect of a given frame. This can occur either by heightening or lessening the influence of the frame based on individual characteristics. A person's ideology, for example, will serve an important role by raising or lowering the importance of certain parts of a message(e.g., Skitka and Tetlock 1993, Kim et al 2010, Lawrence 2013). Moreover, an individual's group identification may—through associational or experiential means—alter the receipt of a frame (e.g., Gamson and Mogdalini 1989, Nelson and Kinder 1996). Outside of the individual, a person's perception of who benefits from a policy proposal often serves to moderate the framing message (e.g., Skocpol 1991, Sniderman and Carmines 1997). Instead of a universal experience with a frame, moderators act

"to enhance, limit or even obliterate a framing effect" based on characteristics of the person receiving the frame (deVreese and Lecheler, p. 297).

Political knowledge has a strong moderating effect on framing effects, although that effect is not always in the same direction. Some studies have found that when people are less politically knowledgeable, they are more susceptible to framing effects (Kinder and Sanders 1990; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). Some have argued that this effect may be issue dependent, with "easy issues," as defined by Carmines and Stimson (1980), or issues that are more familiar and straightforward being more susceptible to framing effects, as opposed to "more technical, more difficult, and more detail oriented" issues (Lee and Chang 2009, p. 73). Others have challenged the generalizable nature of political knowledge as a straightforward moderator, finding that those with political knowledge may be more susceptible to framing effects, especially those from elite messengers (Druckman and Nelson 2003). Moreover, high information frames may lessen the extent to which political knowledge moderates framing effects (Kurklinski et al 2001).

An individual's perception of how the issue affects them directly may make an issue more salient. This can also mean that issues are related to things such as social group identity (Gamson and Mogdalini 1989). Nelson and Kinder (1996) argued that policy is "shaped in powerful ways by the attitudes that citizens possess toward the social groups they see as principal beneficiaries (or victims) of the policy" and that this group-centrism is "fundamental to public opinion" (pp. 1055-1056). Working as a heuristic to uncomplicate policy matters, group-centrism allows individuals to determine how they feel about a policy based on their perception of who benefits from it. Necessary to the functioning of this heuristic is the connection between the policy and

"visible social grouping" (p. 1056). Because this does not necessarily happen on its own, Kinder and Sanders offer that framing is integral to this process and derived from elite debate. While their frames necessarily call upon negative constructions of policy beneficiaries, they argue that frames can also function by calling positively on beneficiaries as deserving (p. 1074). Nevertheless, they find that frames that convey elite-driven messaging about group beneficiaries produces results wherein respondents give preference to the group(s) they belong to themselves.

There is a debate in the literature as to the influence that a policy's beneficiaries have on the overall perception of the policy. Some like Skocpol (1991) and Sniderman and Carmines (1997) have argued that policies that exhibit "universalism" or general applicability will find greater support than those that are targeted to benefit a specific group. For example, Sniderman and Carmines found that white respondents were more likely to support a policy that affected racial groups differently if the frame used did not reference race. Haley and Sidanius (2006) found additional support for Sniderman and Carmines's findings when they found that whites were more likely to oppose affirmative action policies if they felt threatened by the prospects for their own racial group.

Universalism has limits. Lawrence et al. (2013) found that universalism is not the cure all that Skocpol and others envisioned. Instead, their research shows that universalism is not equal amongst all respondents. First, liberals more than conservatives are likely to prefer universalist policies (Id at p. 211). Moreover, they found evidence that targeted policies were more popular than universally applicable policies when the targeted beneficiaries were positively viewed by respondents (Id at 213). The perception of worthiness of the target population may be implied. For example, Goetz (2008) found differing support for substantially similar housing policies based

on whether the policy was labeled as "affordable housing" because it insinuated a racially-motivated housing policy than when the same policy was framed as a more neutral "lifecycle housing" policy.

Beneficiary framing may not always have a universalist alternative. Schneider and Ingram (1993) outlined a group centric heuristic in which policy beneficiaries are assessed on measuring both strength and deservedness. Groups that are more likely to be looked favorably upon are deserving and strong (such as veterans) or deserving but weak (such as children). Undeserving groups that are strong (e.g., the rich) are labeled as contenders, while undeserving groups that are viewed as weak (e.g., drug addicts) are seen as deviants. In this typology, the weaker and less deserving a group is, the less likely a policy benefiting that group is going to be perceived as worthwhile. Groups recognize this and often use such message targeting to convey worthiness within social movements (Leitz 2011).

A person's ideology has been found to affect the perception of issues in a variety of ways. An individual's political ideology offers a processing shortcut that can be used consistent with or contrary to framing (Scheufele and Lewenstein 2005). The content of frames may combine with political ideology to produce stronger acceptance of frames (Domke 2001) and may do so by directly connecting with ideological concerns (Davis and Fisk 2014). Likewise, framing effects may differ based on the ideology of the recipients involved (Lahav and Courtemanche 2011). But ideology is not always a moderating factor. Clarke et al (2014) found evidence that ideology did not moderate framing effects regarding fracking activity in most instances. This demonstrates that while ideology is a powerful moderator, it is not replicating ideological predispositions of recipients.

Issue salience or the importance an individual places on a given issue can also be an important moderating factor. Salience may act as a moderating factor by directly altering the relationship between information availability and information accessibility (Boninger et al 1995, Lecheler et al 2009). Moreover, issue salience can lead an individual to have more existing information about a policy overall that creates consistency across framing affects (Boninger et al 1995, p. 159-161). This may connect with ideology and, particularly, partisanship. If issues are salient to the public at large they may be salient because of the efforts of political elites, which necessarily have political and partisan influences (Zaller 1992, Zaller and Feldman 1992). This is especially true when it can be seen that the frame itself is being delivered from a member of the political elite (Druckman 2001, 2004, Druckman and Nelson 2003). Likewise, while frames may not directly mention political actors or the positions of different political parties or groups, they may call upon ideas that are known to be more conservative or liberal and thus activate different information in different individuals based on ideology.

There is a gap in the literature as to whether gender and the perception of appropriate gender roles and norms mediate the influence of framing. This is especially true when the subject matter directly implicates gender role beliefs. There is some evidence to show that perceptions of gender with regard to non-gendered public policy influences the perception of that policy.

Nicholas Winter (2008) argued that the most influential gender frames were those that are "the most symbolic and covert and that drew attention to public-private distinctions and hierarchical role division," (p. 8). Specifically, Winter investigated whether unconscious beliefs about race and gender can affect how policy opinion is formed when "neither the issue itself nor the framing rhetoric touch overtly on racial or gender matters" (p. 4). Specifically, he was looking

at the ways in which issues can tap into what he calls "group implication" or "the process through which ideas about social groups—specifically race and gender—can be applied to political issues that do not involve either directly" (p. 19) Winter did this in two ways. First, he conducted an experiment in which he used fictitious newspaper articles on three issues unrelated to race or gender to determine whether those with specific ways of thinking of gender looked at the issues differently based on which frame they received. The results showed some influence of these schemas on issue interpretation but were mixed as to whether the differences in interpretation could be attributed wholly or predominately to those schemas or other ideological predispositions. Second, Winter also looked at nationally representative longitudinal data to determine whether gender schemas influenced perception of health care reform in the early 1990s and whether race schemas influenced perception of welfare and Social Security in the 1980s and 1990s. He found support for both propositions.

While Winter provides a theoretical framework that touches on gender and framing, there are significant differences from this study that make Winter's work informative but not dispositive. Winter's notion of subtle and explicit are two polar opposites, allowing for little variation and ranging from no mention of gender whatsoever to explicit conveyance of a directive of how to think of an issue based on gender. While his issues only hinted at gendered implications, the issue of paid parental leave policy is steeped in gender and gender role beliefs, differing it from the issues that Winter investigated. Moreover, Winter was not measuring differences between groups of individuals based on treatment presented but rather differences within groups of people based on exposure to the same treatment. Finally, Winter was concerned

with the ways in which people interpret issues more than support for a specific policy prescription.

Notwithstanding these differences, Winter's work is helpful in structuring this study in a variety of ways and situating it among the larger literature. It provides a point of departure for studying the influence of gendered frames on policy broadly. Further, it provides support for the notion that frames can be gendered. While this last point may seem pedantic, it is relevant in large part because there is not as much research done on gendered frames as one might imagine. Thus, Winter helps locate this current study in the framing literature with specific respect to gender.

The Pro-Family Message Reframed—A Theory

The issue of paid parental leave falls squarely into this gap in the literature. The pro-family language that was used to enlarge the coalition surrounding the FMLA and to secure enactment presupposes that such issue framing is useful at least to some key people. The messaging from activist groups that are strong advocates for paid parental leave policy have found a new pro-family message in New Maternalism (Mezy and Pillard 2012). In fact, New Maternalism doubles down on the pro-family language and actively uses femininity, domesticity, and maternity as a way to avoid the traps of traditional feminist policy by centering women's roles as appropriately in the home and in need of legal and political assistance to remain there. Instead of challenging the role of the woman as different assigned in *Muller v. Oregon* (1908), New Maternalism asks for help to secure that role. In doing so, it seeks to diminish or eliminate the scorn for women acting in ways deviant to the masculine norm (Rosenthal 2008). But does it work?

In this study, I theorize that such frames do affect the support for a policy. Specifically, I believe that there are two relevant levels on which the framing of such policies becomes influential to policy support. First, if the proponents of New Maternalism are correct, frames that promote benefits to the family unit, to children, and do so through the role of women as mothers are more persuasive than frames that do not. In other words, it is not enough to frame paid parental leave policy as economically beneficial to society or to those individuals involved, but it is necessary that the frame remain congruent with—and in fact support—traditional gender beliefs about women's integral role in the nuclear family unit.

Second, the way in which parental leave policy is paid for is likely to influence policy support for this policy. While it is clear that structural explanations are not the sole reason that there is no national paid parental leave policy in the U.S., the burden of cost may be relevant to the lack of such a policy. In other words, a policy that is framed as placing the burden entirely on employers or entirely on government may be less likely to find public support that a policy in which the costs are evenly distributed between the two entities.

These two variations in framing have potential interaction effects. In other words, depending on whether someone receives a benefits frame that emphasizes benefits to children and the nuclear family may have interaction effects with various cost setting frames. Likewise, the lack of a frame that relies on traditional gender roles in benefit description may be more likely to elicit support for the policy when the costs are borne in whole or part by the government than when they are borne by employers solely.

While many have studied values and responsibility, there have been no significant studies of the effects of gender roles as a value or of beliefs about childrearing responsibility with respect

to a gendered policy. Gender role beliefs represent a significant way in which individuals view the world around them. Given the research that has been done on same sex marriage (Brewer 2002; Johnson 2012; Pizmony-Levy and Ponce 2013), "partial birth abortion" (Simon and Jerit 2007), and affirmative action (Kinder and Sanders 1990; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Haley and Sidanius 2006), I suspect that beliefs about gender roles play a similar role in moderating certain frames for individuals. If a person holds traditional gender role beliefs, they may be more likely to support paid parental leave policy when exposed to a frame that relies upon traditional notions of gender and family than when exposed to a frame that explains the benefits of such a policy in purely economic terms.

This is implicit in the work done by groups like MomsRising, who appear to want to do the same type of coalition building that occurred in the lead up to the enactment of the FMLA. This framing allows the frame to escape the notion that women working outside of the home are "deviant" (Hook 2017) and instead focuses on children as a common beneficiary.

Methods

In order to investigate whether the messaging of New Maternalism is correct about the utility of their framing of paid parental leave as a family issue, I started with Mezy and Pillard's (2012) poster child for the movement: MomsRising. The MomsRising's website (www.momsrising.org) and book they produced, *The Motherhood Manifesto* (Blades and Row-Finkbeiner, 2006), provide a sense of the language used by the proponents of New Maternalism. I was able to discover a letter to members of Congress dated June 29, 2016 drafted by members of a 348-member coalition supporting Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (S.786/H.R.1439). The letter advocates for the passage of the FAMILY Act and is signed by 111

national and 237 state-based organizations or state or local chapters of national organizations. These organizations are wide-ranging from policy groups to religious organizations to reproductive rights groups and labor unions. The language of the letter remained more neutral than MomsRising's own rhetoric but did center the need for the FAMILY Act on the assumption that the female parent would provide a bulk of the early childrearing work.

The letter's signatories represented a coalition of supporting organizations for the FAMILY Act. Given that the use of framing seems to be connected to the coalition building deemed necessary to pass relevant parental leave legislation, I looked to those signatories as members of the coalition and used their messaging on the FAMILY Act as a shortcut to seeing whether there was a consistent message that was distinctly that of New Maternalism or whether other messages were being used to advance the cause. Using the list of signatories, I reviewed the websites of 17 of the national organizations for their position stances on paid parental leave policy. A list of the organizations whose website I reviewed can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Signatories to FAMILY Act Letter Whose Websites Were Reviewed

9 to 5	NARAL
Catalyst	National Partnership for Women & Families*
Center for American Progress Action Fund	National Women's Law Center
Center for Parental Leave Leadership	Network Advocates for Justice
CLASP	Shriver Poverty Law Center
Demos	The Main Street Alliance
Family Equality Council	United Steel Workers
Family Values @ Work	US Women's Chamber of Commerce
MomsRising.org	
*Denotes organization whose website hosts the letter	

Source: FAMILY Act Letter, June 29, 2016

It should be noted that this is not, by any means, an exhaustive content analysis. Rather, this was an exploratory exercise to determine the common themes of the policy promotion based

on the work of Mezy and Pillard (2012). Two distinct forms of messaging emerged. First, there was the messaging that was based in family values and norms, echoing the work of Mezy and Pillard, that mothers are uniquely feminine and offer unique things to families and that policies that provide paid parental leave promote superior outcomes for the families involved because of this. These organizations included those like MomsRising, 9 to 5, National Advocates for Justice, NARAL, Catalyst, Family Equality Council and others. The second group posed the need for paid parental leave policy as an economic issue insofar as the provision of such a benefit would secure better economic wellbeing for the individuals involved and society at large. Organizations in this group included the National Women's Law Center, the Center for American Progress Action Fund, the Shriver Poverty Law Center, the United Steelworkers, and others.

I then used the language in each group to construct two broad frames about paid parental leave. The first frame is the Family Benefits Frame. This frame uses the language of the first group in that it centers the benefits of paid parental leave on the family as a whole and children in particular. It highlights the role of breastfeeding, bonding, and child development. Notably, it does not mention the role of career advancement or monetary gain to mothers but rather focuses on the benefits of domesticity of the female parent rather than professional gain.

The second frame is the Economic Benefits Frame. This frame uses the language of the second group to advocate for paid parental leave policy. The frame identifies paid parental leave as part of a broader economic strategy both in terms of equity and economic growth. It stresses that paid parental leave helps to alleviate the burden on other social welfare programs while also arguing that it helps to achieve individual economic growth.

Again, it is important to note that a decision was made in this project to use the concept of the gender-neutral "parental leave," rather than "maternity leave," or the broader concept of "family leave." Methodologically, studying the effects of gendered language on an already gendered concept presents not insignificant issues with isolating the true cause of policy preference. Eliminating the gendered nature of a policy proposal while still relating the policy proposal to family dynamics helps to cut down on the background noise that might be solicited by the very term "maternity" over "parental." Second, almost all of the policies being suggested at a national level have used gender-neutral language since the enactment of the FMLA. In part, such neutrality is expected in order to mitigate concerns over discrimination on the basis of sex. The choice to continue that pattern here is reflective of this history. Finally, while many policy proposals concern the broader concept of family leave, which allows for leave to take care of one's spouse, parent, or other family member due to medical issues, the focus here is squarely on the protection of parental leave, not for other types of related leaves. For all of these reasons, parental leave was chosen as the key concept of study and the treatments were based on those concepts alone.

To test for the effectiveness of the frames, I layered the messaging of both frames over an identical policy proposal for paid parental leave. It is important to note that I focused specifically on the term paid parental leave and not maternity leave or family leave, as both are value-laden concepts that might otherwise muddy the waters. Furthermore, most policy proposals have already chosen the language of paid parental leave. Therefore, even if the choice of the term is evidence of a value decision (which it likely is), at least the term remains the same in both frames.

The proposed policy would require government mandated paid leave for eight (8) weeks after the birth or adoption of a new child. In order to test for possible interactions based on the belief of the government's role in this policy domain, six treatments were developed. The treatments varied how the policy was framed on two dimensions. The first manipulation was the value framing (Family Benefits Frame or Economic Benefits Frame), or what I call here the "benefits framing." The second manipulation was the setting of the policy's cost (employer 100%, government 100%, or an even split of both). Table 3 outlines all six treatments in the 2x3 factorial design.

Table 3: Treatment Design

	Government 100%	**Employer 100%**	**50/50 Split**
Family Benefit Frame	Group 1: Government 100% + Family Benefit Frame	Group 2: Employer 100% + Family Benefit Frame	Group 3: 50/50 Split + Family Benefit Frame
Economic Benefit Frame	Group 4: Government 100% + Economic Benefit Frame	Group 5: Employer 100% + Economic Benefit Frame	Group 6: 50/50 Split + Economic Benefit Frame

The participants were drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk or "M-Turk." While M-Turk still provides less than a nationally-representative sample, it has been found to be more representative of the national population than college student convenience samples (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012). Many experimental studies have been successfully replicated using M-Turk (Berinsky et al. 2012; Horton et al, 2011; Suri and Watts 2011). As Goodman et al (2012) note, "[e]xcept for one study showing that MTurk workers were more risk-averse than non-MTurk participants (Paolacci et al., 2010) in the Asian Disease problem (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981), research has not identified significant differences between MTurk participants and

traditional samples" (p. 213). Thus, while a nationally representative sample would be preferred, resource limitations being what they are, an M-Turk pool is preferred to another type of convenience sample and likely will show the same patterns we would expect to see in the larger national population.

Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the six treatment conditions or the control group. Based on this assignment, the participants in the treatment groups were then asked to read a short three-paragraph statement that lays out a governmental mandated parental leave policy. Each condition contained a manipulation of the benefits framing (Family Benefits Frame or Economic Benefits Frame) and a manipulation of the cost setting (100% government, 100% employer, 50/50 government-employer split). Participants in the stand-alone control group were given a treatment that presents pros and cons of essential oil use for humans.

In the posttest, participants were asked a variety of questions to test for demographics and other belief measures. These measures include exposure to different family structures in childhood and adulthood and beliefs about gender roles related to childrearing. Participants were also specifically asked whether the policy they read about should be passed and also asked questions of support again for various governmental measures, including a repeated measure of whether the government should pass a law requiring a paid 8-week leave period after the birth or adoption of a child. This repeated measure in the posttest is the dependent variable in this study.

Hypotheses

Overall, I expect to find through this study that the proponents of New Maternalism are correct and that, on average, individuals are more likely to support a paid parental leave policy

when such a policy is framed using the Family Benefits Frame than when such a policy is framed using the Economic Benefits Frame.

> ***H1: Overall, individuals are more likely to support paid parental leave policy when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame.***

This hypothesis is based on the assumption that the proponents of paid parental leave have had some success with this framing in the past that encourages them to continue using it.

Moreover, cost setting should matter and provide insight into when individuals are more likely to support a paid parental leave policy. Theoretically, when costs are shared equally between government and employers, individuals are able to more easily justify the intrusion into both business and government affairs for a policy proposal. Therefore:

> ***H2: Overall, individuals are more likely to support paid parental leave policy when exposed to the 50/50 split cost setting frame than when exposed to either the 100% government or 100% employer cost setting frames.***

Additionally, I believe that the cost setting will interact with the benefits setting in such a way that those who receive the Economic Benefits Frame will be more likely to support the policy when the costs are framed as a 50/50 split between government and employers. Thus:

> ***H2a: When exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame, Individuals are more likely to support paid parental leave policy when exposed to the 50/50 cost setting frame than when exposed to either the 100% government or 100% employer frames.***

I believe exposure to the Economic Benefits Frame will make considerations of cost more easily accessible to recipients than the Family Benefits Frame, which does not reference monetary matters. As a result, those who are given a frame that references the fiscal concerns related to the policy will be more attentive to cost and therefore more likely to support the policy when costs are evenly split between government and employers.

Benefits Framing, Sex, and Gender Role Beliefs

I also expect to find that the policy itself and the framing of the benefits of this policy will also be influenced by respondents' sex and gender role beliefs. First, I anticipate that the respondent's sex will have an effect on acceptance of the policy proposal. Specifically, I hypothesize that women will be more likely than men to accept the policy proposal but that men more than women will be influenced more strongly by the Family Benefit Frame as it strengthens more traditional and male-centric notions of work and power. Thus:

> **H3: Females are more likely than males to support paid parental leave policy regardless of framing effects.**
>
> **H4: Males will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame.**
>
> **H5: Females will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame.**

Specifically, I believe that females will be more likely to support the policy proposal when it is framed as providing economic rather than family benefits. This hypothesis is based on the notion that females will be less likely to seek congruence between gender norms and the policy and more likely to support the policy when they see themselves benefitting economically from such a policy in the Economic Benefits Frame.

Second, I expect to find that gender role beliefs will moderate benefits framing effects. Perception of appropriate gender roles is integral to a group identification dynamic. In other words, those who believe in typically traditional gender roles where a woman stays home from at least birth to school age for childrearing and a man works outside of the home are anticipated to be more likely than those who do not hold such beliefs to be resistant to paid parental leave

policy overall. In other words, all else held constant, a message that specifically taps into these beliefs and shows that such a policy may be congruent with them, such as the Family Benefits Frame, may elicit greater support from those who hold such beliefs than a message that, like the Economic Benefits Frame, does not.

Three measurements of gender role beliefs were used to assess an individual's adherence to traditional gender role beliefs. The first measured whether the respondent believed that women are more biologically suited to care for children than men. The second measured whether at least one parent should stay home to care for children from birth to at least five years of age. The third measured whether it was not good if a man stays at home with the children while a woman works. It was hypothesized that respondents who held these beliefs would be less likely to support the policy proposal overall. Thus:

> ***H6: Overall, those who have traditional gender role beliefs will be less likely to support the policy proposal than those who do not.***

These beliefs were also hypothesized to have a moderating effect on framing effects. In other words, those who have traditional gender role beliefs may be more likely to accept the policy proposal when it is framed in a way that is congruent with those beliefs (Family Benefits Frame) than when it is framed in a way that neither references not reinforces those beliefs (Economic Benefits Frame). Thus:

> ***H7: Overall, those who have traditional gender role beliefs will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when given the Economic Benefits Frame.***

Third, I predict that gendered experiences in childhood matter and work to moderate the benefits framing effect. Specifically, those respondents who have experienced traditional gender role arrangements in the home in childhood (mother stays home and cares for children while

father works outside of the home) will be more likely to support the policy when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame.

> ***H8: Those respondents who have experienced traditional gender role arrangements in the home during childhood will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame.***

Fourth, I predict that adulthood experiences with childcare are likely to matter as well. Specifically, those who have experienced having to navigate work-life balance with regard to family and parenting responsibilities will likely be more willing to support the policy proposal overall.

> ***H9: Those who have experienced balancing work (Respondent and Spouse) while having preschool aged children will be more likely than those who did not work while having a child who is pre-school aged to support the policy proposal.***

Moreover, those who have experienced having to navigate work-life balance with regard to family and parenting responsibilities in adulthood will be likely more to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than the Economic Benefits Frame.

> ***H10: Those who have experienced balancing work (Respondent and Spouse) while having preschool aged children will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when Exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame.***

Ideology, Trust, Success as Moderators of Benefits and Cost Setting Framing

Ideology, trust, and perceptions of how one achieves success are all ways in which any framing effects may be moderated for recipients. Ideology, for example, has been regularly found to be important moderating forces in framing effects literature. The relatively high public support for paid parental leave policy in national studies has not resulted in the existence of a national paid parental leave policy. One reason for this may be attributable to division over the costs of

such a policy. Right now, the costs of no policy are effectively borne by private individuals who have to deal with its absence. This represents a distinctive choice about the role of government in this policy domain that may be more or less based on a respondent's ideology. Additionally, the cost setting and gender role beliefs described above may at times be correlated with political ideology and notions of responsibility and trust in government, though they are different concepts.

I suspect that ideology, trust, and how an individual views success are relevant factors here. First, I suspect that ideology moderates both the benefits framing effects and the cost setting framing effects. Second, I suspect that three key measures of identity or worldview—trust in the federal government and support for the idea that success is determined solely or wholly by hard work—also moderate both the benefits framing effects and the cost setting framing effects. Each is discussed below in more detail.

Ideology

Respondents' ideology was measured by self-reporting on a scale and is predicted to moderate any framing effects of the two manipulations. The benefits framing effects are at the heart of why the pro-family coalition developed in support of the FMLA in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Given that the initial push for the FMLA and contemporary attempts at paid leave are largely driven by liberal politicians, it is stands to reason that conservatives in this study will be less likely than liberals to support the policy proposal overall. Thus:

> **H11: Overall, conservatives will be less likely than liberals to support the policy proposal regardless of framing exposure.**

Ideology alone is not enough to explain the historical path of paid parental leave policy in the United States. Ideology alone cannot explain the way in which the FMLA was eventually

supported by an ideologically diverse coalition. More recently, ideology cannot explain the existence of a paid parental leave policy in the policy proposals set forth by both candidates for president from the two major parties. Thus, there must be additional interplay between ideology and how the issue is framed.

Conservatives tend to espouse more traditional family values. In fact, it was this reality that lead the messaging behind the FMLA to change in the lead up to the law's enactment. This shift in rhetoric was specifically so as to allow more conservative members of the coalition to align their more traditionalistic understandings of family structure to remain unchallenged by the proposed FMLA. It can be argued then that a policy for paid parental leave which is framed in such a way that can be seen as supportive of a traditional conception of family is more likely to be more successful amongst conservatives than one that does not reinforce this view. Therefore, I predict that the Family Benefits Frame will be more persuasive amongst conservatives than the Economic Benefits Frame. Thus:

> *H12: Conservatives will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame.*

With regard to ideology, the cost-setting framing also should become relevant. Perhaps the reason why there is not currently a national paid parental leave policy is because the cost setting for such a policy has not been satisfactorily organized. As conservatives tend to be less friendly to policy proposals that place the burden of cost entirely on the government or entirely on business, I suspect that the 50/50 cost setting will be the most persuasive framing in this regard. Thus:

> *H13: Overall, those who are more ideologically conservative will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the 50/50 cost-sharing setting than when exposed to either the 100% employer or 100% government cost setting.*

Trust

Because paid parental leave policy involves greater involvement of government, trust in government is a potential moderating force. If a respondent does not believe that the federal government can be trusted, it is likely that they would also not support the policy proposal because of the increased involvement of government in what has been historically a matter of an individual's private life. Thus:

> ***H14: Overall, those who believe that you cannot trust the federal government some or all of the time will be less likely to support the policy proposal than those who believe you can trust the federal government some or all of the time.***

Trust in government (and a large governmental program such as paid parental leave) might moderate the impact of framing on support for the policy. First, if one does not trust the federal government, it is possible that they might be more likely to be persuaded by the Economic Benefits Frame than the Family Benefits Frame because the stated outcomes in the Economic Benefits Frame are those that are mentioned to cause less reliance on government welfare benefits and other types of spending. Thus:

> ***H15: Those who believe that you cannot trust the federal government some or all of the time will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame.***

Those who believe you cannot trust the federal government may also be more willing to accept the policy when the costs are evenly split so that it does not entirely burden employers, but it does have another entity involved other than the government. Thus:

> ***H16: Those who believe that you cannot trust the federal government some or all of the time will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the 50/50 cost-sharing setting than either the 100% employer or 100% government cost setting.***

Attribution of Success

Another measure of worldview that may be relevant is a person's belief on how one becomes successful. Historically, paid parental leave policy is an attempt to even the playing field between men and women in the workplace and allowing for gender parity in achieving success. Individuals who believe that success can be attributed at least in part to help of others or luck may be more likely than those who believe that success is purely determined by hard work to see the role of a government-sponsored paid parental leave policy. Thus,

> ***H17: Overall, those who believe that it takes hard work to get ahead will be less likely to support the policy proposal than those who believe that it takes luck or help of others to get ahead.***

This, too, may moderate the impact of both manipulations. First, the respondent's belief about the source of success might moderate the beneficiary framing in that those who believe that the Family Benefits Frame may be more persuasive for those who believe hard work is more important than help or luck in that it does not rely on measurements of economic success as policy benefits, which does not run counter to notions of success being congruent with hard work and not a policy that rewards not working. Thus:

> ***H18: Those who believe that it takes hard work to get ahead will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame.***

Moreover, the effect of the cost setting manipulation may be moderated by beliefs about what determines success as well. Thus:

> ***H19: Those who believe that it takes hard work to get ahead will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the 50/50 cost-sharing setting than either the 100% employer or 100% government cost setting.***

The analysis of these hypotheses using the data from an experimental survey will be discussed in the Chapter 4. Implications of these findings and suggestions for future research can be found in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Introduction

The proponents of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") felt that it was necessary to enlarge the coalition supporting its enactment. To do this, they used broad language in a way to appease both social conservatives who believed in the importance of family values and feminist activists who longed for leave protections for women after the birth of a child. The thrust of New Maternalism and its use in messaging about paid parental leave policy in the 21st century follows a similar logic: if a national paid parental leave policy is to be successful, the policy must be marketed in a way that is comfortable and nonconfrontational about its impact on gender roles. This chapter examines the impact of that messaging from an empirical perspective. The goal here is to determine whether the way in which the policy is framed leads to greater support for the policy both on dimensions of who the policy seeks to help as well as who pays for the policy.

The Study

Respondents were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk or "M-Turk," and offered compensation ($1.10) for completion of the experiment. The text of the study instrument can be found in the Appendix. Each respondent was first asked a series of questions about ideology and policy preferences, followed by one of seven treatment exposures (including a control) and finally a post-test that measured policy preference based on the treatment as well as other foundational ideological and biographical questions.

Each respondent was exposed to one of six treatments that consisted of three paragraphs of text. Although a standalone control group was also used, though the results are not included

in this analysis. Each respondent in the six treatment groups received the same text about the length of time covered by the policy after the birth or adoption of a new child: eight weeks of paid leave at 100% pay and continued protected job status for 12 weeks under the FMLA.

The six treatment groups represented variations of exposure to two manipulations: (1) benefits framing; and, (2) cost setting framing. The benefits framing manipulation had two levels: the Family Benefits Frame and the Economic Benefits Frame. The Family Benefits Frame conveyed the benefits of the policy proposal in a way that centered the benefits of the policy on the family as a whole and children in particular by highlighting the policy's potential support of breastfeeding, bonding, and child development. The Economic Benefits Frame, on the other hand, centered the benefits of the policy proposal on broader economic growth and self-reliance, stressing the proposal's potential to alleviate the burden on other social welfare programs while increasing individual economic growth.

The cost setting framing manipulated who paid for the policy's enactment. Specifically, the frames were based on whether the cost was 100% borne by the government, 100% borne by the employers, or split 50/50 between the government and the employers. Six variations of the treatments resulted in a 2x3 factorial design as can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Treatment Design Without Control

	Government 100%	**Employer 100%**	**50/50 Split**
Family Benefit Frame	Group 1: Government 100% + Family Benefit Frame	Group 2: Employer 100% + Family Benefit Frame	Group 3: 50/50 Split + Family Benefit Frame
Economic Benefit Frame	Group 4: Government 100% + Economic Benefit Frame	Group 5: Employer 100% + Economic Benefit Frame	Group 6: 50/50 Split + Economic Benefit Frame

The Sample

Excluding the control group, the sample was comprised of 322 total cases. The sample was more heavily populated by males (N=193) representing 60.7% of the sample than females (N=125) representing 39.3%. The average age was 35.61 years old, but participants ranged in age from 19 to 74 years old. The sample was predominantly populated by white respondents with 73.8% (N=237) versus nonwhite respondents with 26.2%(N=84). Over 89.4% of the population indicated that they had at least some college education. Most respondents indicated that their family income ranged between $0 and $49,9999 (73.0%, N=233) while 23.2% (N=74) indicated that their income ranged between $50,000 and $109,999, and only 3.8% (N=12) indicated that their family income was over $110,000. Most respondents had no children (61.1%, N=196) while 38.9% (N=125) had one or more child.

Ideologically, most respondents identified as some variation of liberal (69.2%, N=222) than conservative (30.8%, N=99). A majority of respondents voted for Barack Obama (51.7%, N=165) in 2012 compared to Mitt Romney (17.9%, N=57) or any other candidate (8.5%, N=27). That said, 21.9% (N=70) did not vote at all for president in 2012.

Dependent variables

To measure policy preference, respondents were asked whether the preceding policy proposal should be adopted. This question was posed as a binary after the presentation of the treatment. This was done to best represent real life conditions wherein individuals are asked to support or not support any given policy. Their preference as to whether the paid parental leave policy should be adopted or not is referred to below as "policy preference."

Independent variables

The two primary independent variables are the treatment manipulations: the benefits framing and the cost setting framing. The benefits framing variable conveyed whether the respondent was exposed to either the Family Benefits Frame or the Economic Benefits Frame. I hypothesized that individuals are more likely to support the paid parental leave policy when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H1). Given the way in which this messaging seems targeted to build a coalition, I hypothesized that these frames would be received differently amongst various groups of people. Therefore, I also hypothesized that men (H4), those who have traditional gender role beliefs (H4), those who have experienced traditional gender role arrangements in childhood (H8), and those who experienced balancing work and child care (H10), ideological conservatives (H12), and those who believe it takes hard work to get ahead (H18) would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame. I had also hypothesized that women (H5) and those who do not trust government (H15) would be more likely to support the policy when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame.

The cost setting framing variable conveyed whether the respondent was exposed to the 100% government, 100% employer, or 50/50 split cost setting frame. I also created a recoded dichotomous variable to determine whether the respondent received the 50/50 split or either of the 100% cost setting manipulations. I had hypothesized that individuals are more likely to support the paid parental leave policy when exposed to the 50/50 split cost setting frame than either the 100% government or 100% employer frame (H2). I had also hypothesized that these

frames would not be equally persuasive amongst all groups of people. As such, I hypothesized that conservatives (H13), those who do not trust the federal government (H16), and those who believe that hard work rather than luck or help is the primary reason people get ahead (H19) would be more likely to support the policy proposal when the costs were framed as being split 50/50 between employers and the government.

The frequencies for each moderating variable are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Frequencies of Moderating Variables

Moderator	=0		=1		=2	Total
Sex	193	60.7% (male)	125	39.3% (female)	N/A	318
Women more biologically suited to care for children	133	43.5% (no)	173	56.5% (yes)	N/A	306
One parent should stay home with children	100	32.8% (no)	205	63.7% (yes)	N/A	305
It is bad if the woman works while the man stays home with children	255	82.0% (no)	56	18.0% (yes)	N/A	311
Traditional gender arrangements in childhood, age 0-5	152	51.0% (no)	146	45.3% (yes)	N/A	298
Traditional gender arrangements in childhood, age 6-18	219	75.0% (no)	73	25.0% (yes)	N/A	292
Traditional gender arrangements in childhood from 0-18	222	77.35% (no)	65	22.65% (yes)	N/A	287
Respondent worked while having preschool aged child	218	67.7% (no)	104	32.3% (yes)	N/A	322
Respondent's spouse worked while having preschool aged child	219	68.0% (no)	103	32.0% (yes)	N/A	322
Both R and spouse worked while having preschool aged child	238	73.91% (no)	84	26.09% (yes)	N/A	322
Ideology (Conservative)	222	69.2% (no)	99	30.8% (yes)	N/A	321
Trust in federal government	271	84.4% (yes)	50	15.6% (no)	N/A	321
Determinants of success	217	67.6% (luck or help)	104	32.4% (hard work)	N/A	321

Gender-related variables

An individual's gender is hypothesized to have a main effect on policy support and a moderating effect on benefits framing. Gender was measured as a female/male/non-binary/prefer not to say scale.[2] Only two respondents chose the latter two categories and for purposes of this analysis, both were treated as system missing values. I had hypothesized that overall, females would be more likely than makes to support the policy proposal (H3). I also hypothesized that males would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H4) but that females would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame (H5).

In addition to measuring respondents' gender self-identification, I measured several other gender-related variables. First, respondents were asked a series of questions about gendered experiences in childhood. By gendered experience in childhood, I specifically am interested in whether a respondent's parents exhibited a traditionally gendered work-childcare arrangement during the respondent's youth, wherein the father worked outside of the home while the mother provided the primary childcare duties in the home. I asked about two key time periods: the preschool years (0-5 years of age) and the school aged years (6-18 years of age). It is anticipated that a more extensive experience with a traditional family structure in childhood may make a respondent more likely to support the policy proposal when it is presented in a way

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[2] The coding of gender as male/female and omitting any non "male" or "female" responses was a conscious choice based on best practice advice as published by the Human Rights Campaign (2016) (https://www.hrc.org/resources/collecting-transgender-inclusive-gender-data-in-workplace-and-other-surveys). Moreover, given the results, the omission of non-binary responses was necessary in order to complete this statistical analysis. Had there been more non-binary results, that may have warranted a difference in coding and statistical analysis.

that does not offend the gender role norms experienced in childhood. I also constructed a scaled variable that measured whether a respondent had multiple experiences of a traditional gender arrangement in childhood to determine whether there was an amplified effect of having a more extensive history with traditional gender arrangements. To this end, I had hypothesized that those who have experienced traditional gender role arrangements in childhood would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H8).

I also measured whether respondents had worked while having a child or had a spouse who worked while having a child that is preschool aged (0-5 years old). I had hypothesized that those who have experienced working while having a preschool aged child and those who have experienced a spouse working while having a preschool aged child (H9) would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame. In the sample, 38.9% of the respondents (N=125) reported having at least one child. Most of those who reported having children also reported having experienced both having a child and having worked while the child was preschool aged (0-5 years old) (32.4%, N=104). Also, most of those who reported having children also reported having experienced a spouse working while the child was preschool aged (32.0%, N=103). I also created a scaled variable that measured whether a respondent and respondent's spouse or partner worked while having a preschool aged child. The idea with the scaled variable is to determine whether there is an effect of having two parents working that is different from one parent working with a preschool aged child in the home.

Next, three gender role beliefs were measured from each respondent. The first measured whether the respondent believed that women are more biologically suited to care for children than men are. The second measured whether at least one parent should stay home to care for children from birth to at least five years of age. The third measured whether it was bad if a man stays at home with the children while a woman works. Al three beliefs were measured on five-point Likert scale on which 1="Strongly Agree," 2="Agree," 3="Somewhat agree," 4="Somewhat disagree," and 5="Strongly disagree." These results were recoded into a dichotomous variable with responses of 4 and 5 being condensed into 0=No agreement and 1,2, and. Being condensed into 1=some agreement. An additive index or composite variable was considered so as to analyze gender role beliefs as one variable. In conducting the appropriate factor analysis, it appeared that the variables were not easily interchangeable in a way that lent itself to this type of combination and had a Cronbach Alpha of only .419. As such, the results relating to the individual belief measures will be dealt with here rather than a scaled variable.

Overall, I had hypothesized that those who held these beliefs would be less likely to support the policy proposal overall than those who did not. (H6) I had also hypothesized that those who held these beliefs would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H7).

Ideology and Worldview

Views of politics, success, and trust in government were measured along with a self-identification of race so as to determine their moderating effect on the framing manipulations. Respondents were asked about their ideology on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from Extremely Conservative (7) to Extremely Liberal (1). Because the key element of my inquiry was

whether or not someone identified as a conservative, all of those who identified as such (7=Extremely Conservative, 6=Conservative, 5=Slightly Conservative) were condensed into one "Conservatives" category while those who expressed no conservative leanings (4=Moderate, 3=Slightly Liberal, 2=Liberal, 1=Extremely Liberal) were deemed to be "Non-Conservatives."

I had several hypotheses regarding political ideology. First, I hypothesized that conservatives would be less likely than liberals to support the policy proposal regardless of framing exposure (H11). I also hypothesized that conservatives would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H12) and when exposed to the 50/50 cost setting frame than when exposed to either of the 100% funding frames (H13).

Three relevant measures of worldview and identity were taken. The first variable measures respondents' trust in the federal government This was measured so as to ascertain whether those who did not trust in government were less likely to support the policy proposal and/or more likely to be susceptible to different framing manipulations. I had hypothesized that those who do not believe that the federal government can be trusted would be less likely to support the policy proposal overall (H14) but more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame (H15) and when exposed to the 50/50 cost setting than either of the 100% cost setting frames (H16).

The second variable measured a respondent's view of whether primarily luck and help or hard work leads to success. This measure was seen as providing greater context for a respondent's attitudes towards government interventions in economic success. I hypothesized that those who believe that hard work is more important than help from others or luck in getting

ahead were less likely to support the policy overall (H17) and more likely to support the policy when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than the Economic Benefits Frame (H18) and the 50/50 cost setting frame than either of the 100% cost setting frames (H19).

Findings

The experiment used random assignment into groups, theoretically controlling for alternative explanations for results. Analysis of demographic and sociopolitical characteristics for which preliminary tests suggest that randomization worked. ANOVAs revealed no significant differences for any pre-test measure across all conditions. Covariate analysis was conducted, and it was determined that age, income, and education were appropriate covariates and were included in all subsequent analyses. As such, the results were analyzed using analysis of variance testing or ANOVA. Use of ANOVA allowed for clear comparison of means within the manipulation being examined. A resulting statistically significant difference in means in an ANOVA indicates an effect of the factors being tested. The results herein use ANOVA for this reason. For purposes of all of the analyses below, I omitted the control group. The correlations among the study moderator variables can be found in the Appendix.

Benefits Framing Manipulation

Overall, the benefits framing did not have a significant main effect on policy position. An ANOVA showed that the effect of benefits framing on support for the policy proposal yielded an F ratio of $F(1,266)=1.378$, p=.241. Thus, there is not support for H1 which posits that support for

paid parental leave policy would be higher when respondents were exposed to the Family Benefits Frame rather than the Economic Benefits Frame.[3]

Cost Setting Framing Manipulation

The cost setting manipulation—whether government, employers, or a mix of both were responsible for the costs of the policy—did have a statistically significant effect on policy position, yielding an *F* ratio of $F(2,266)$-7.664, p=.001, indicating that the mean change score was significantly greater for at least one of the treatment conditions. The 50/50 split condition appeared to be more persuasive (*M*=.9667, *SD*=1.81) than either the 100% government condition (*M*=.8200, *SD*=.386) or the 100% employer condition (*M*=.7765, *SD*=.419).

In order to determine whether it was, in fact, the strength of the higher means for the 50/50 condition than the other two conditions, I constructed a recoded variable. This binary variable combined both 100% conditions (employer and government) into one value and left the 50/50 condition as the other value. An ANOVA yielded a significant main effect at the p=<.000 level ($F(1,268)=14.746$, p=<.000). The mean score for the combined 100% condition (*M*=.8000, *SD*=.401) was significantly different than the 50/50 split condition (*M*=.9667, *SD*=.181). The statistically significant higher mean policy support among those receiving the 50/50 split condition suggests that this variant, not either 100% condition, is responsible for the significance of the result overall.

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[3] One important piece of *a priori* analysis is relevant. Support for paid parental leave was high across the entire sample. Overall, 86.6% of respondents favored adoption of paid parental leave after exposure to a treatment. The difference in means for policy support between those who received the Family Benefits Frame and those who received the Economic Benefits frame was small at just 5.16%. As such, analysis of potential moderating factors that make relevant the framing effects may prove to be important indicators as to why the policy often is promoted one way over another.

Overall, there was no significant interaction between the two framing manipulations. An ANOVA yielded a F ratio of $F(1,268)=.691$, p=.407. That said, there are groups for whom the interaction was relevant, as is discussed below.

Moderating Forces

Sex

One variable that was hypothesized to have a moderating effect on the framing manipulations was that of gender or, as I label it here, sex. Sex itself did not have an overall effect on policy preference ($F(1,256)=.021$, p=.884). Men were hypothesized to be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H4) and vice versa for women (H5). The results indicated that sex alone did not moderate the benefits framing. The interaction effect between sex and the benefits framing manipulation was insignificant ($F(1,256)=.022$, p=.881) as was that between sex and the cost setting manipulation ($F(2,256)=.487$, p=.615).

There was, however, a significant three-way interaction between sex, benefits framing, and cost framing ($F(2,256)=5.520$, p=.004).   In order to better analyze this, I separated males from females and conducted ANOVA on both. For males, the interaction between the benefits framing manipulation and the cost setting manipulation was marginally statistically significant ($F(2,158)=2.664$, p=.073). For females, the interaction between the benefits framing manipulation and the cost setting manipulation was significant ($F(2,95)=4.673$, p=.012).

So as to better understand the interactions, I continued this segregated analysis. First, I investigated the results for males. For males, the three-way interaction was not significant when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame ($F(2,72)=1.027$, p=.363) but was significant when exposed

to the Economic Benefits Frame ($F(2,83)=3.550$, p=.033). The data indicates that the mean policy support amongst males exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame was higher for those who received the 50/50 split condition (M=.1.000, SD=.000) than for those who received the 100% government condition (M=.8788, SD=.331) or the 100% employer condition (M=.7742, SD=.425).

In order to evaluate whether the 50/50 condition was driving the statistical significance, I utilized the condensed cost setting treatment variable. For males exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame, exposure to the 50/50 split cost sharing condition was statistically significant ($F(1,84)=5.403$, p=.023). The mean policy support among those who received the 50/50 split cost setting was unanimous (M=1.000, SD=.000) whereas the mean policy support among those who received the combined 100% cost setting was lower (M=.8281, SD=.380).

For females, the three-way interaction was significant both when exposed to both benefits framing conditions. When exposed to the Family Benefits Frame, the mean change between the cost setting conditions was significantly ($F(2,42)=5.219$, p=.009) higher for those who received the 50/50 split condition (M=1.000, SD=.000), than either the 100% government condition (M=.9375, SD=.250) or 100% employer condition (M=.6111, SD=.502).

Given the means, it appeared that there was a strong and significant effect of the 50/50 condition. As such, I utilized the condensed variable discussed above that placed both 100% conditions into one value and left the 50/50 condition separated for clearer analysis. When exposed to the Family Benefits Frame, the interaction is marginally insignificant ($F(1,43)=2.600$, p=.110). The mean policy support within the 50/50 condition (M=1.000, SD=.000) is unanimous and noticeably higher than that within exposure to the condensed 100% government or employer condition (M=.7647, SD=.431). Thus, it appears upon further investigation that while

there is the suggestion that the 50/50 split and the Family Benefits Frame result in a higher means, there is not enough of a statistical significance to rule out the null hypothesis.

There was also a statistically significant interaction for females exposed to the Economic Benefits frame, the (F(2,50)=3.325, p=.044). The policy support was again higher for the 50/50 cost setting (M=1.000 SD=.000) than for the 100% government cost setting (M=.7222, SD=.461) or the 100% employer cost setting ((M=.8889, SD=.323). Again, given the distinct difference between the means associated with the 100% conditions and the 50/50 split condition, I utilized the condensed cost setting manipulation variable. When exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame, the interaction remains statistically significant (F(1,51)=4.445, p=.040). The mean for the condensed 100% conditions group is nearly 20% lower (M=.8056, SD=.401) than that of the 50/50 split group ((M=1.000, SD=.000). The 50/50 split does seem to drive the interaction here.

There does appear to be a stronger influence of the Economic Benefits Frame within the three-way interaction for females than there is for males. The difference in support from the 50/50 condition to the combined 100% condition for males in the three-way interaction when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame is .1719. The same difference in support for females is .1944. This difference is illustrated in Figure 1 below.
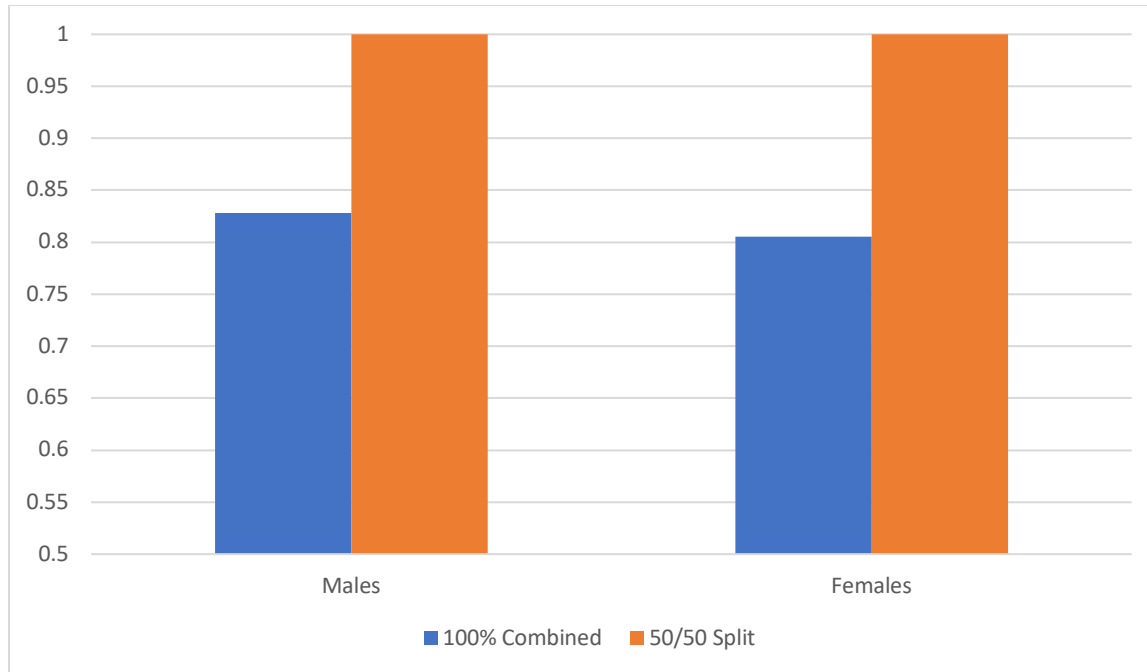
Figure 1. Mean support for policy proposal by condensed cost setting within Economic Benefits Frame by gender

The above results indicate that sex itself provides mixed support for the hypothesis that was originally offered. First, contrary to H3, there is no main effect of sex on policy support. This is surprising given the way in which gender is so intrinsically connected to paid parental leave policy. Even so, women often do not have uniformly similar policy attitudes across all walks of life. Given the results later in this chapter about ideology and gender role beliefs, perhaps gender is important in less clean-cut ways.

There is, however, support for the idea that gender offers a moderating force in some framing exposures, though it is more complex than what was hypothesized. In H4, I had hypothesized that men would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than the Economic Benefits Frame. There is no support for this hypothesis in the data.

In H5, I had hypothesized that females would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame. When exposed to either benefits framing conditions, females are statistically significantly more likely to support the policy when exposed to the 50/50 cost setting condition. The mean support difference between the 50/50 split cost setting and the combined 100% cost setting exposure is actually higher for females within the Family Benefits Frame than it is within the Economic Benefits Frame. This can be seen in Figure 2 below.
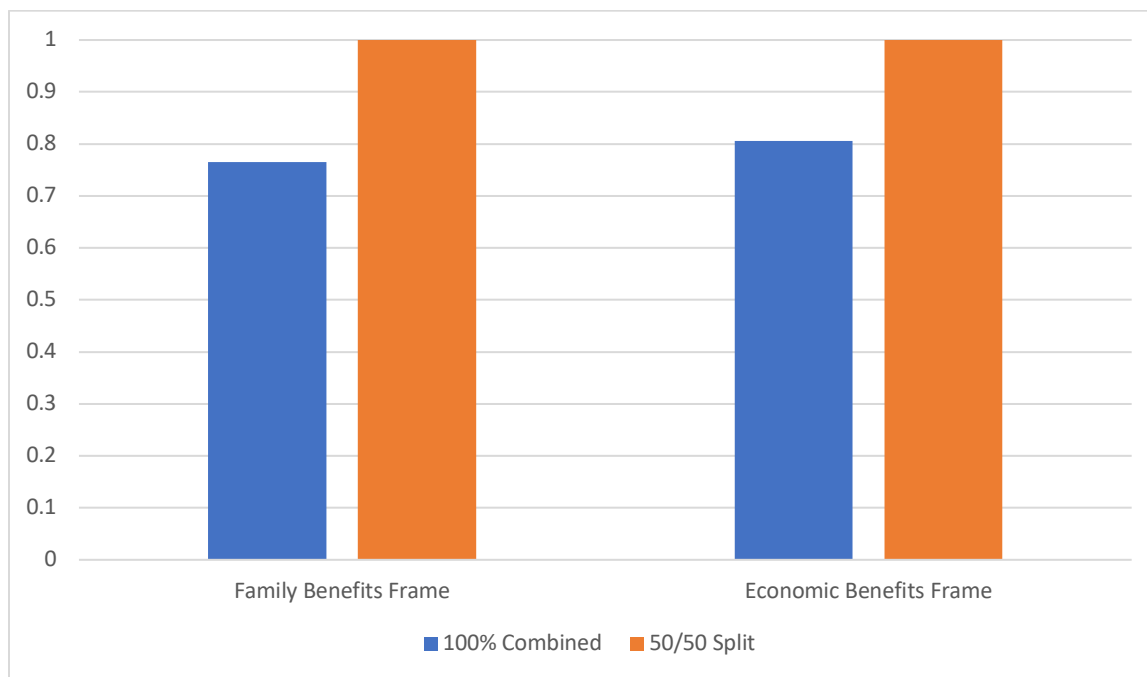
Figure 2. Mean support for policy proposal by condensed cost setting for females

Thus, not only is there no data to support H5, there are data that run contrary to it. As such, sex itself is not playing the moderating role that was anticipated.

Gender Role Beliefs

Those who hold traditional gender role beliefs were hypothesized to be less likely to support a paid parental leave policy as such a policy would be contrary to their worldview that

women should not need such a leave from work as they should not be working while having young children. There are three measures of gender role belief available. As discussed above, post-hoc analysis suggested that it was improper to condense the variables into an index scale or composite variable as they did not necessarily demonstrate the same set of beliefs in the same direction. As such, each belief is dealt with separately below.[4]

Belief that women are more biologically suited to care for children than men. The first belief is that women are more biologically suited to care for children than men are. This echoes the themes found in New Maternalism that women are biologically more suited for the job of parenting and therefore deserve special recognition as such. Overall, this belief did have a significant main effect on policy support (F(1,247)=3.178, p=.076), which supports H6a. Among those who hold this belief, 88.39% (M=.8839, SD=.322) support the policy proposal compared to 82.00% (M=.8200, SD=.385) support among those who do not hold this belief.

The interaction between the benefits framing manipulation yielded an F ratio of F(1,247)=.115, p=.735, indicating that the difference in means was insignificant. Thus, the hypothesis that those who believe that women are more biologically suited to care for children than are men will support the policy proposal more when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H7a) is not supported by the evidence.

Belief that at least one parent should stay home with preschool aged child. The second belief measured was whether respondents agreed that at least one parent should stay home with

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[4] A completed factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha of .419 suggested that scaling these variables was not prudent. Further examination of the questions asked of respondents in this regard supports these being left as separate variables. While all help to complete a larger picture of a respondent's views on women and work with respect to the childcare, they do so in different ways. As such, they do not add to one another in a way that makes sense for scaling in a single variable.

a preschool aged child. Overall, there was no main effect on policy support for either the belief that one parent should stay home with preschool aged children ($F(1,247)=.229$, $p=.633$). As such, there was no support for H6b.

There was no significant interaction effect between this belief and the benefits framing manipulation ($F(1,247)=.724$, $p=.396$). Thus, the hypothesis that those who believe that at least one parent should stay home with a preschool aged child will support the policy proposal more when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H7b) is not supported by the data.

Belief that it is bad if man stays home with children while woman works. The belief that it is bad if the man stays home to care for children while the woman works had a marginally statistically significant effect ($F(1,252)=.2.873$, $p=.091$) on policy support overall. This supports H6c. This belief also had a marginally statistically significant interaction effect with the benefits framing manipulation ($F(1,252)=3.387$, $p=.067$). The mean support for the policy proposal among those who hold this belief and who were exposed to the Family Benefits Frame ($M=.8306$, $SD=.377$) and those who were exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame ($M=.8811$, $SD=.325$) is significant. That said, the difference is in the direction *opposite* to the one hypothesized. The results are shown in Figure 3 below.
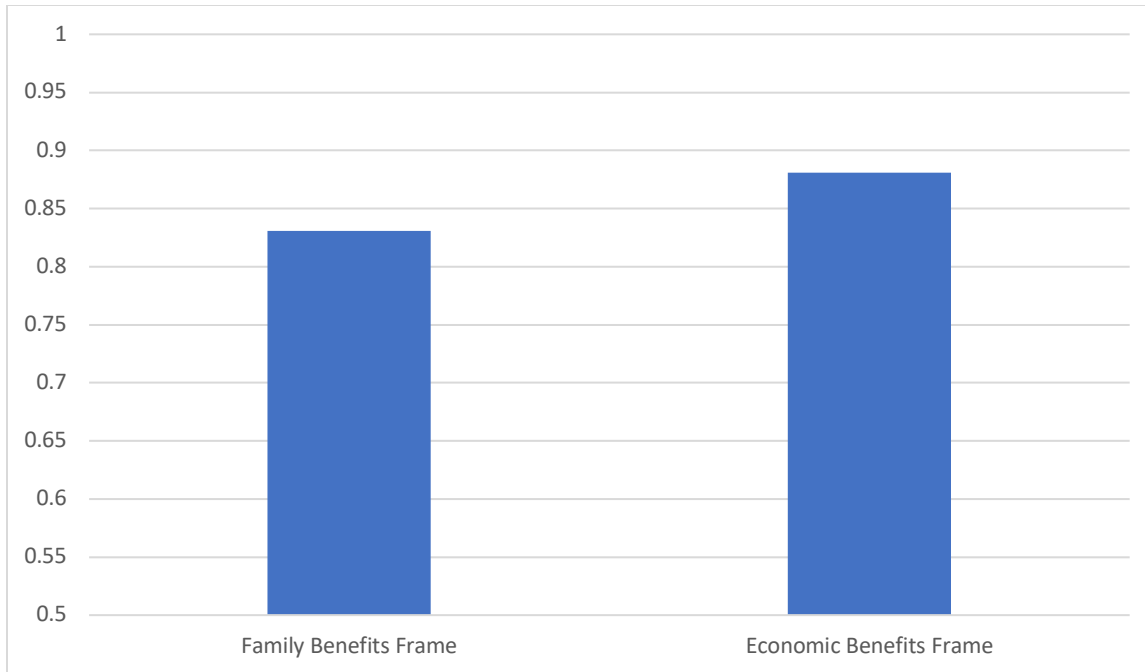
Figure 3. Mean support for policy proposal based on benefits exposure amongst those who believe it is bad if men stay home with children while women work

As such H7c can be said to be rejected, though the finding is significant.

First, it should be noted that these gender role belief measures are likely unreliable and gender beliefs as moderators of framing messages in this policy domain warrant further investigation. These measures provided inconsistent results and would likely benefit from greater refinement and investigation.

The first measure—whether women are more biologically suited to care for children than men—does show a main effect but no interaction effect that would suggest framing moderation. While this belief may impact policy support overall, it surprisingly does not seem to engage the language of the Family Benefits Frame. This could be because the Family Benefits Frame does not *explicitly* call upon this belief so as to trigger such an interaction.

The second measure—whether one parent should stay home with preschool aged children—showed no main or interaction effects. This belief does not appear to be tapping into

the language of either benefits framing condition. Considering the already high levels of support for paid parental leave, perhaps this relatively non-gendered belief is, in hindsight, already embodied in how people view paid parental leave in the first place.

The third and final measure of gender role beliefs shows more promise as both a predictor of policy preference and, more importantly, a moderator of the benefits framing manipulation. The direction of the mean policy support ran counter to the hypothesized support, meaning that while it did moderate, it did so in the opposite direction. It is possible that specifically referencing the belief within the framing manipulation may offer a significant result. Of all three of the measures, this one has the most promise to do any moderation whatsoever.

Gender Role Experiences in Childhood and Parenting Experiences in Adulthood

Formative experiences in childhood with traditional gender role arrangements may have the effect of creating certain gendered expectations of work and child care in adulthood. By "traditional gender role arrangements," I mean those in which the father works outside of the home while the mother cares for children. I have hypothesized that experiencing this arrangement as a child moderates the benefits framing in a way that makes it such that a Family Benefits Message would render higher support for the policy proposal than an Economic Benefits Message (H8).

I tested this hypothesis using two primary measures of traditional gender role experiences in childhood: traditional gender role experience from age 0-5 and traditional gender role experience from age 6-18. The reason behind breaking up the ages is to determine if there is a difference between a traditional arrangement in the preschool years where childcare may be more precarious than in the school aged years when childcare may be less of a day-to-day issue.

I also created a scaled variable that determined the level of an individual respondent had to a traditional gender role arrangement in childhood based on the two variables listed above.

Neither of the two primary measures of traditional gender role experiences in childhood nor the scaled measure had a direct effect on policy support. Moreover, neither of the two primary measures of childhood gender role experiences had an interaction effect with the benefits framing manipulation. The scaled variable did, however, have a marginally significant interaction with the benefits framing manipulation ($F(2,222)=2.693$, $p=.070$) and a marginally significant interaction with both the benefits framing manipulation and the cost setting manipulation ($F(4,222)=2.693$, $p=.083$). Both of these require further analysis.

I first examined the three-way interaction between cost setting, benefits framing, and childhood experiences. To do this, I separated out the cases by level of experience with traditional gender roles in childhood (0=no experience, 1=experience either from 0-5 or 6-18 years old, 2=experience both 0-5 and 6-18 years old). Reviewing the three-way interaction this way, the significance diminishes almost completely. For those having no experience with traditional family roles and one experience with traditional family roles there is a marginally insignificant interaction between the benefits framing manipulation and the cost setting manipulation ($F(2,112)=2.208$, $p=.115$ and $F(2, 61)=2.276$, $p=.111$ respectively). The result for those having experience from age 0-5 and age 6-18 with traditional gender roles is statistically insignificant ($F(2, 43)=.912$, $p=.409$).

Given the lack of robust findings within the three-way interaction, I then moved to analyze the two-way interaction. The interaction between the benefits framing alone and childhood experience with traditional gender roles reveals a more significant finding. While the interaction

between the two variables was insignificant for those having no experiences or only one experience with traditional gender roles in childhood, it was significant for those having two experiences with traditional gender roles in childhood ($F(1, 43)$-4.356, $p=.043$). These results show mean policy support among those who had childhood experience with traditional gender roles from age 0-5 and age 6-18 to be higher when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame ($M=.9231$, $SD=.271$) than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame ($M=.6923$, $SD=.471$). These results can be seen in Figure 4 below.
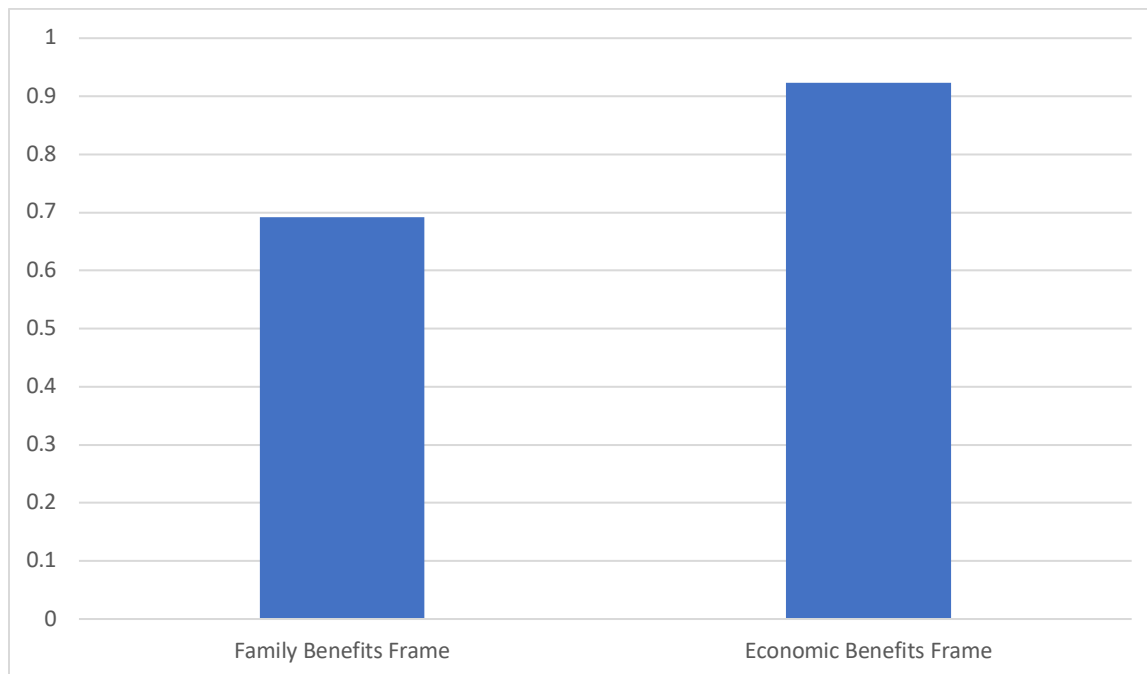
Figure 4. Mean support for policy proposal based on benefits exposure amongst those who have multiple experiences with traditional gender role arrangements in childhood

These results provide evidence that childhood experiences with traditional gender roles do moderate the benefits framing but in the direction *opposite* that which was hypothesized. Thus, the hypothesis that these experiences would moderate the benefits framing manipulation (H8) has been rejected as the direction is contrary to that hypothesized.

Given these results, it appears that experiences in childhood can have a significant moderating impact of frames on support for paid parental leave if those experiences are long enough. This makes sense given the fact that the longer such an arrangement is experienced, the more normal it becomes. Moreover, while earlier preschool aged experiences with traditional gender arrangements may be more relevant for the policy domain, they likely are not as well remembered as those that occurred during the school aged years. The moderation, however, is not in the direction expected. Those who have had experience with traditional gender arrangements in the preschool and school aged years are more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame. This may signal that exposure to the Family Benefits Frame stimulates memories that complicate the reception of this frame that do not exist for the Economic Benefits Frame.

Adult experiences balancing work and children were hypothesized to moderate the benefits framing manipulation. Overall, having worked while having a preschool aged child had a marginally significant main effect on policy support ($F(1,260)=3.168$, p=.076), which supports H9. There was not a significant interaction effect, however, between having worked while having a preschool aged child and the benefits framing manipulation ($F(1,260)=.973$, p=.325). Having a spouse who worked while having a preschool aged child had a marginally significant main effect on policy support ($F(1,260)=3.532$, p=.061). There was no significant interaction effect, however, between a spouse working while having a preschool aged child and the benefits framing manipulation ($F(1,260)=1.444$, p=.231).

In order to determine if there was a combined effect of having worked and having a spouse or partner who worked while having a preschool aged child, I created a scale variable. As

was true with both of the underlying variables, the scale variable had a marginally significant main effect on policy support (F(1,254)=2.430, p=.090). There was no significant interaction effect between the scale variable and the benefits framing manipulation. Therefore, while H9 finds support in the data, H10 can be rejected.

As for the adult experiences, there does appear to be a significant impact of working while having a preschool aged child and having a spouse who worked while having a preschool aged child and the combined effect of both that predicts support for paid parental leave. Neither set of experiences have any interaction with the benefits framing, though. Again, as with gender role beliefs, this is potentially because neither frame directly calls upon these experiences and instead relies more heavily upon the frame's recipient to activate them. Frames that directly reference the more individualized difficulties associated with childcare and work-life balance may bring these experiences into relevancy.

Political Ideology

When it came time to create the pro-family messaging to grow the coalition around the FMLA's enactment, political ideology worked hand-in-hand with gender role beliefs to form the basis of that language. Unsurprisingly, then, ideology in this experiment produced several statistically significant results with regard to policy support and framing moderation. Conservative ideology was hypothesized to have a significant effect on both policy support overall as well as a moderating effect on the framing manipulations. Given the importance placed on gaining acceptance by conservatives in the FMLA-era, my hypotheses were driven by the role of conservative ideology on policy support in this study. As was discussed above, two measures of ideology were used: self-identification compressed into conservative/non-conservative.

First, I hypothesized that, overall, conservatives would be less likely than non-conservatives to support paid parental leave policy (H11). Overall, there is support for this hypothesis with conservativeness having an effect on policy support ($F(1,259)=14.422$, p<.000).

Second, I had hypothesized that conservatives would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame (H12). There was a statistically significant interaction effect of ideology with the benefits framing manipulation ($F(1, 259)=4.012$, p=.046). The mean support for the policy higher among those exposed to the Family Benefits Frame (M=.9096, SD=.288) than among those who received the Economic Benefits Frame (M=.7442, SD=.438).

Among those who were exposed to the Family Benefits Frame, there was a statistically significant moderation of the frame via ideology ($F(1, 117)=11.998$, p=.001) that was not present within exposure to the Economic Benefits Frame. Within the Family Benefits Frame, those who identified as non-conservative supported the policy nearly 30% more (M=.9121, SD=.285) than conservatives (M=.6286, SD=.490). This can be seen in Figure 5 below.
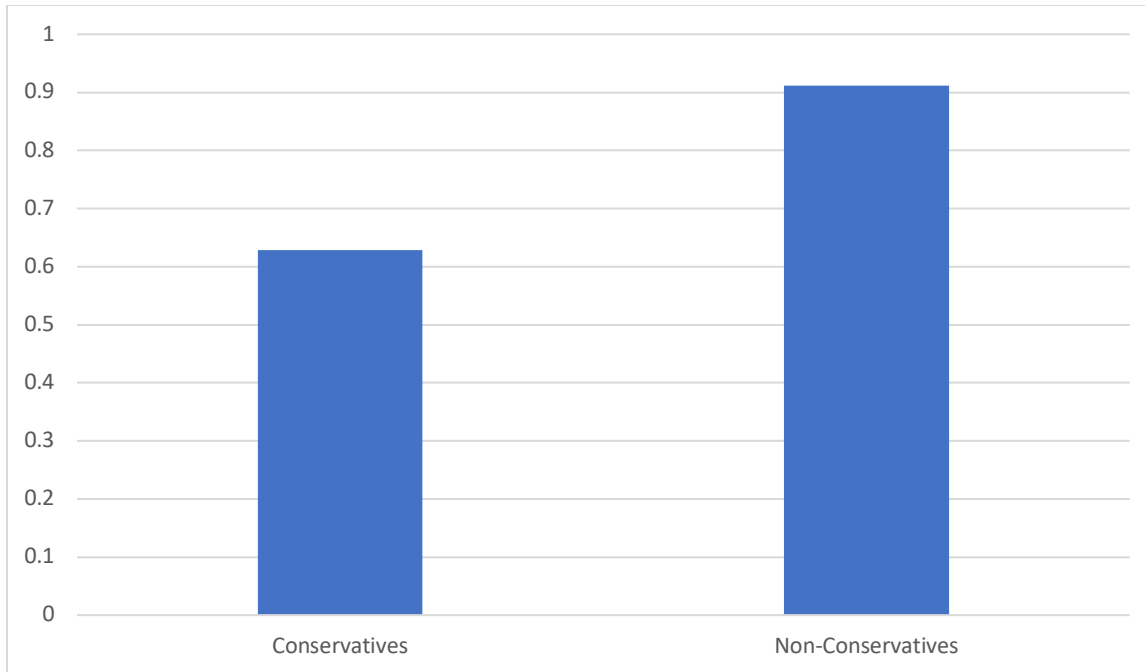
Figure 5: Mean support for policy proposal based on benefits framing exposure amongst conservatives

These results require rejection of H12, though there are significant results in the opposite direction.

Third, I had hypothesized that those who were more ideologically conservative would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the 50/50 cost sharing setting than either the 100% government or 100% employer cost settings (H13). There are mixed results for this. Ideology did not have a statistically significant interaction effect with the cost sharing setting (F(2,259)=.216, p=.806). Nor was there a significant three-way interaction between self-identification of ideology, the benefits framing manipulation, and the cost setting manipulation (*F*(2,259)=.583, p=.559). Therefore, H13 can be rejected.

Ideology had a statistically significant main effect on policy support in the direction hypothesized. This supports H11. Ideology did not appear to be a factor within the Economic Benefits Frame, it did seem to have a strong impact on policy preference within the Family

Benefits Frame, though it was opposite than what was predicted (H12). Moreover, ideology did not appear to have a significant interaction with the cost setting manipulation (H13).

Trust in Government

I hypothesized that those who do not trust the federal government some or all of the time would be less likely to support the policy proposal than those who do trust the federal government some or all of the time (H14). Overall, trust in government did not have a statistically significant effect on policy preference ($F(1,259)=.063$, $p=.802$). Thus, overall, there is not support for H14.

I had also hypothesized that those who do not trust the federal government some or all of the time would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame (H15). There is a marginally insignificant interaction effect between trust in government and the benefits framing condition ($F(1, 259)=2.614$, $p=.107$). Among those who do trust in government, there is an insignificant effect of beneficiary framing ($F(1,229)=.044$, $p=.834$). Among those who do not trust in government, however, there is a statistically significant effect of beneficiary framing (($F(1,27)=5.612$, $p=.025$). The differences in support based on benefits framing can be seen in Figure 6 below.
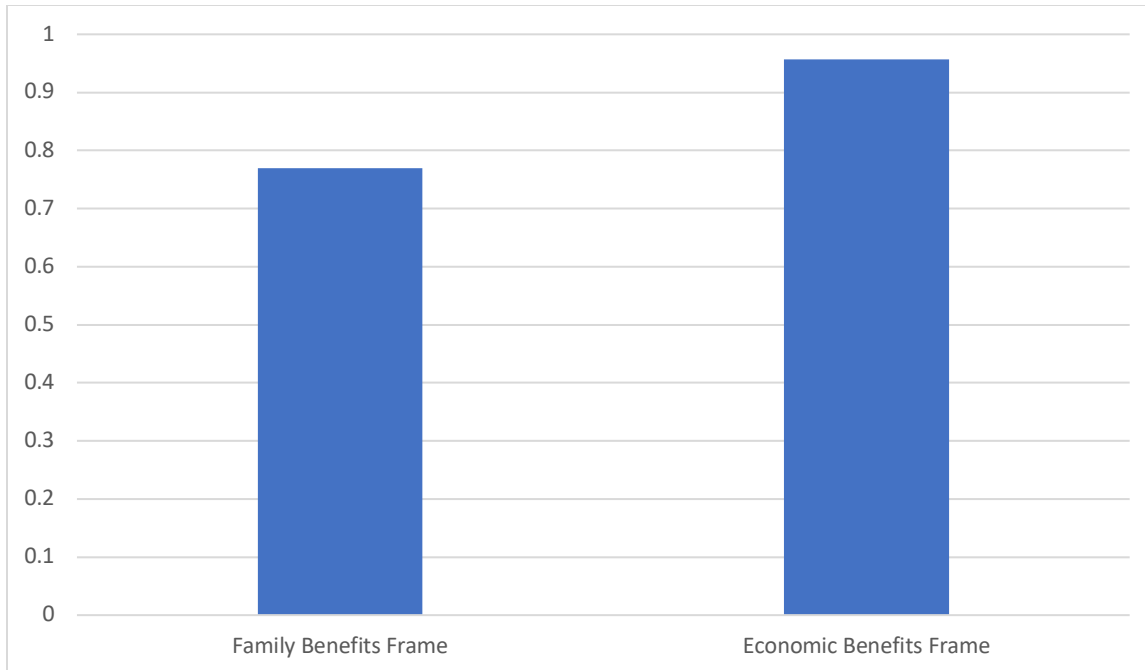
Figure 6: Mean support for policy proposal based on benefits frame received amongst those who do not trust federal government

The mean average support was lower among those who received the Family Benefits Frame (M=.7692, SD=.434) than those who received the Economic Benefits Frame (M=.9565, SD=.209). These results support the hypothesis that those who do not trust in government will be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame (H15).

I had also hypothesized that those who do not trust the federal government some or all of the time would be more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the 50/50 cost sharing setting than either the 100% government or 100% employer cost settings (H16). Overall, there was not a significant interaction effect between trust in government and cost sharing setting (F(2,259)=.690, p=.503). Thus, there is no support for H16.

Trust in government appears to interact with the benefits framing as predicted but not the cost setting framing as predicted. While it does not provide a statistically significant predictor

of policy support, contrary to H14, for those who do not have trust in the federal government, the Economic Benefits Frame does appear to be persuasive, providing support for H15. That said, there is no interaction with the cost setting framing (H16). One potential explanation for this is that respondents did not view the policy as being something that required considerable government effort. Another explanation could lie in the fact that those who do not trust the government would actually be inclined to trust the government more if paid parental leave policy were enacted. That is that perhaps respondents who indicated that they do not trust the federal government to do the right thing feel that way because of the lack of policies such as paid parental leave that they see relevant and timely.

Determinants of Success

It was hypothesized that those who believe that hard work rather than luck or help is the most important factor in how to get ahead would be less likely to support the policy proposal overall (H17), but more likely to support it if exposed to the Family Benefits Frame (H18) or the 50/50 cost sharing setting (H19). Overall, this variable did have a statistically significant main effect on policy preference ($F(1,259)=12.370$, p=.001). Thus, there is some support for H17. There was, however, no significant interaction effect between the benefits framing manipulation and the determinants of success variable ($F(1,259)=.515$, p=.474). Thus, there is no support for H18.

There was, however, a significant interaction effect, $F(2, 259)=2.678$, p=.071, between the cost sharing manipulation and the determinants of success variable. Among those who believe that success is determined either primarily or partially by luck and/or help from others, there was a marginally insignificant effect of cost sharing setting on policy support ($F(2,170)=2.255$, p=.108). The mean average policy support was higher among those who were exposed to the 50/50 split

cost setting (*M*=.9687, *SD*=.175) than either the 100% government (*M*=.9104, *SD*=.288) or 100% employer (*M*=.8542, *SD*=.357) cost settings.

Among those who believe that success is determined solely by hard work, there was a statistically significant effect of cost sharing setting on policy support (*F*(2,86)=4.301, p=.017). The mean average policy support was higher among the 50/50 split cost sharing setting (*M*=.9600, *SD*=.200) than either the 100% government (*M*=.6364, *SD*=.489) or 100% employer (*M*=.6757, *SD*=.475) cost settings.

In order to determine the effect of the 50/50 split cost setting more accurately, I again used the condensed cost setting variable. Among those who believe that success is determined by luck and/or help from others, there was a statistically significant effect of cost sharing setting on policy support (*F*(1,172)=3.650, p=.058). The mean average policy support was higher among those exposed to the 50/50 split cost sharing setting (*M*=.9687, *SD*=.175) than the combined 100% cost sharing setting (*M*=.8870, *SD*=.318).

Among those who believe that success is determined by hard work, there was a statistically significant effect of cost sharing setting on policy support (*F*(1,88)=8.775, p=.004). The mean average policy support was higher among those exposed to the 50/50 split cost sharing setting (*M*=.9600, *SD*=.200) than the combined 100% cost sharing setting (*M*=.6571, *SD*=.478). These findings are summarized in Figure 7 below.
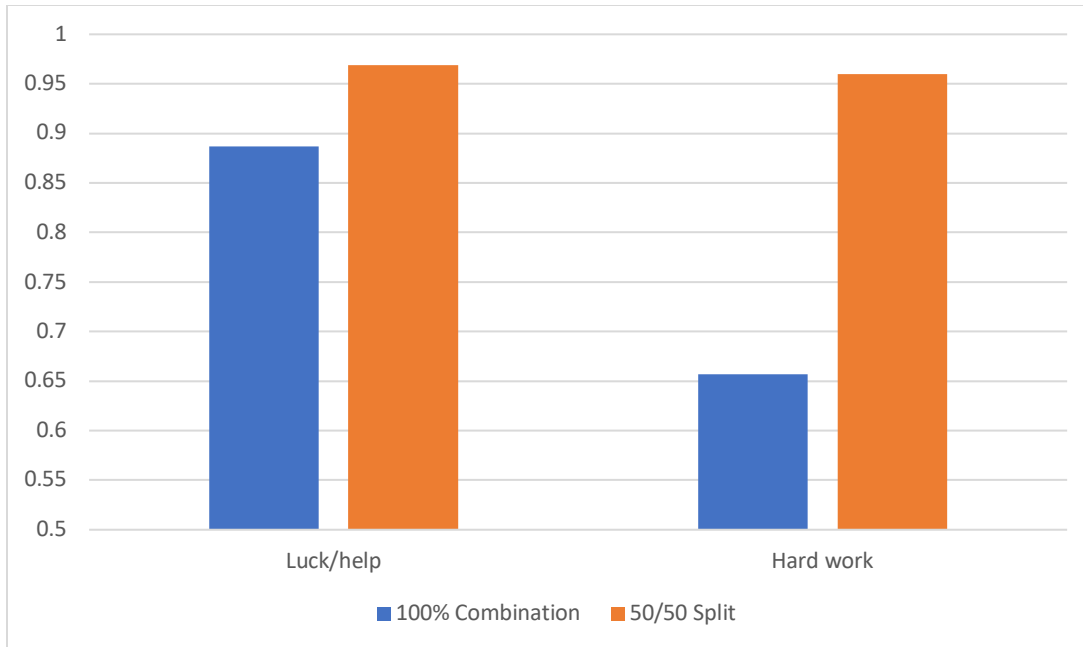
Figure 7: Mean support for policy proposal by combined cost setting and determinants of success

Overall support for the policy proposal within the 50/50 cost setting exposure is slightly (6.87%) lower among those who believe that success is determined primarily by luck. That said, the difference in means between the 50/50% cost setting and the combined 100% cost setting is only 8.17% greater amongst those who believe that luck or help primarily determine success whereas the difference is 22.12% among those who believe that hard work determines success. As such, it appears that the 50/50 cost split is extremely important among those who believe that hard work primarily determines success in establishing support for the policy proposal.

Given the above results, there is support for H19. Those who believe that hard work and not luck or help from others is the primary determinant of success are more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the 50/50 split cost sharing setting than either of the 100% cost sharing settings. Nevertheless, those who believe that luck and/or help from others is the primary

determinant of success are also more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the 50/50 split cost sharing setting than other of the 100% cost sharing settings.

With regard to cost setting, these results are not surprising. The 50/50 cost setting is unsurprisingly the favorite of those who believe that hard work—not luck or help—is the predominant determinant of success. Given the disposition to believe that things should be even—including a playing field for those who wish to succeed—this is right in line. Moreover, it is not surprising that the difference in support is more profound for those who believe that hard work is the primary determinant of success (30.29% greater for the 50/50 split condition than either 100% condition) than those who believe that luck or help of others is the primary determinant of success (only 8.17%).

Moreover, what is also distinguishable here is that these are not mere replications of political ideology or vote choice. While there might be overlapping elements of a conservative political ideology and the tendency to view success as determined by hard work, the results are not uniform with regard to moderating effects with these framing manipulations. That suggests that for some there may be a benefit to the 50/50 split cost setting that is smaller (or nonexistent) for others.

Conclusion

There is no support to the two overall hypotheses about the framing manipulations. The benefits framing manipulation did not have a significant main effect on policy support (H1). That said, the benefits framing manipulation did have a significant interaction effect with various moderating variables in two-way interactions (belief that women are more suited than men to care for children (H7), multiple experiences with traditional gender roles in childhood (H8),

ideology (H12), and trust in government (H15)), though these results were not always in the direction hypothesized. There was not a significant two-way interaction with two of the gender role beliefs (H7), adult experiences with work and child care (H10), or determinants of success (H18). There was one significant three-way interaction with the cost setting manipulation and sex. Therefore, while H1 is not supported, there are more nuanced findings with interactions.

The cost setting manipulation did have a main effect on policy support (H2). When framed as a joint venture between employers and the government with the costs evenly split between both entities, respondents were more likely to support the policy proposal. There was only one significant two-way finding with the cost setting manipulation, determinants of success (H19). There was no significant two-way interaction with ideology (H13) or trust in government (H16) as predicted.

Overall, most of the variables that were hypothesized to have a main effect on policy support did. The moderating effects of these variables were less consistent, however, often only found in certain cross-sections and sometimes in directions different than what was hypothesized. Ultimately, there is no evidence that a consistent Family Benefits Framing message is helpful to enlarge support for paid parental leave. If anything, there is evidence that with some populations, such as Republican-leaning individuals, this may be counterproductive.

There was one frame that appeared repeatedly as relevant: that of the 50/50 split cost setting. This condition repeatedly showed significant results amongst a variety of respondents, sometimes in combination with one or more of the benefits framing conditions. It is clear that the respondents preferred that the costs be borne equally between employers and the

government. Given the already high support for the policy overall, this increase is even more impressive.

These results indicate that gendered framing is not uniformly applied and often becomes significant only upon interaction with other elements, such as provision of costs. Moreover, the results indicate that framing messages that may have been successful in the past are not universal and static overtime, but rather are dynamic and play off of current considerations as much as they play off of beliefs and ideologies. The larger implications of these results on the literature in this area and for practical policy purposes are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5   CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON THE STATE OF THE ATTEMPTS TO FRAME PAID PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY AS PRO-FAMILY

Introduction

Fifty-five years ago, President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women recommended national paid parental leave policy. A great deal of the rhetoric supporting such a policy in the contemporary context often highlights the role of women in the family unit as the uniquely qualified providers of child care. As has been highlighted throughout this dissertation, the history of paid parental leave has involved coalition building based on expanded rhetoric surrounding the role of the family and, in particular, women's place in the family unit. Contemporary attempts to use similar tactics amongst proponents of paid parental leave can be found with recently introduced legislation. This dissertation shows, however, that this type of rhetoric may actually be, on the whole, harmful to the creation of a modern coalition in favor of paid parental leave based on the way in which gender, ideology, beliefs, and experiences moderate such frames.

The history of parental leave policy in the United States suggested that the framing of such policy as family-centric would be a positive move for the policy's proponents. As is shown in Chapter 2, the enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) required this type of traditionally gendered rhetoric about family leave policy. The growth of protections that ultimately led to the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 focused on remediating differential treatment based on reproductive differences at the employer level (Diner 2014) but did not challenge the lack of thought put toward supporting women in reproductive roles at work (Bernstein 2001). The eight-year battle that ensued over what would become the FMLA from 1985 to 1993 was only successful by the building of a coalition of unlikely bedfellows that united

around a proposal that was framed as being explicitly "pro-family" and implicitly unable to differentiate between the needs of women as workers from women as mothers (Weber 2011, Radigan 1998). This framing of protected leave that ignored the reality of many female workers lasted long after the 1993 enactment of the FMLA, leading to the result that many women are not eligible for the limited protected leave that the law offers (Klerman et al 2012).

The contemporary use of such policy seems to have doubled-down on the efforts of the pro-family FMLA messaging in placing the policy's benefits squarely in the family unit and instead of minimizing women's role in the family and workforce, explicitly calling into relevance women's role as mothers in the family unit (Mezy and Pillard 2012). This type of framing of the policy echoes the way in which motherhood is uniquely entrenched in the pursuit of paid parental leave policy (Diner 2011, 2014; Hosein 2015).

This study has attempted to measure the effectiveness of such a message in the push for paid parental leave policy without much success. Contrary to the messaging utilized by what Mezy and Pillard (2012) call "New Maternalism," that focuses benefits of such policies on the ability of women to utilize them in order to successfully partake in their rightful role as mothers, the results of this study find that such messaging at best is unsuccessful and at worst is determinantal to the cause. Moreover, this study has demonstrated that for particular people who may be otherwise predisposed to be difficult wins for the proponents of paid parental leave, the framing of the policy in terms that explicitly benefit families through women may make it more difficult to build the type of coalition that was necessary to enact the FMLA in 1993.

Reflection on Findings

Overall, the benefits frames used in this study were not, on their own, significant. Framing paid parental leave policy as explicitly benefiting families did not have a significant effect on policy support, nor did framing it as an economically beneficial policy (H1). Despite this, the benefits framing manipulation did have significant interaction with various variables that provides relevant context for the utility (or lack thereof) of a family benefits message. Moreover, when combined with the findings about the cost-setting manipulation, there may be additional tools for proponents of paid parental leave to use for promotion of such a policy.

Perhaps the biggest area of improvement in future iterations of this study would be to use an ordinal variable rather than a dichotomous one for measuring the dependent variable, in this case whether the respondent believed the policy presented should be adopted. A Likert scale that allowed respondents to show not just approval or disapproval of the policy but also strength of that approval or disapproval would allow for greater analysis of the findings in this study. In particular, this might make certain moderators that were borderline or slightly insignificant more significant and worth further analysis.

Sex of Respondents

Sex of respondents alone does not predict policy support, nor does it provide a universal moderating force on framing effects in this experiment. While there is support for the notion that sex moderates the framing manipulations, it is not consistent with the hypotheses offered. Men are not more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame, contrary to H4. Conversely, women are not

more likely to support the policy proposal when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame, contrary to H5.

The story does not end there, however. A statistically significant three-way interaction between sex, benefits framing, and cost-setting framing provides more nuanced results. There, it appears that the 50/50 cost setting framing may interact with the Economic Benefits Frame for males and both the Economic Benefits Frame and the Family Benefits Frame for females to create greater support for the policy proposal. In other words, the 50/50 cost setting makes relevant the Economic Benefits Frame for males and both benefits frames for females. This was an unexpected finding that implies that the benefits framing matters only when the costs are evenly split.

If the overall goal is to see whether the messaging of New Maternalism is working based on gender, it appears that at least when the cost setting is evenly split between government and employers, such a framing works better with females than males. This may reflect that the rhetoric of New Maternalism makes females feel more empowered within the context of paid parental leave policy whereas such empowerment is not necessary for men who tend not to utilize such leave even when offered to them. It may also highlight that New Maternalism's language fails to resonate with males, making coalition building more difficult. Overall, the benefits framing does not seem to be a strong moderating force that can be easily used by proponents of paid parental leave based on sex alone.

Beliefs About Appropriate Gender Roles

It was hypothesized that respondents who held traditional gender roles would be less likely to support the policy proposal overall and more likely to support the policy proposal when

the benefits were framed in a way consistent with those traditional gender roles via the Family Benefits Frame. Two of the three measures of gender role beliefs—that women are more biologically suited to care for children than men and that at least one parent should stay home with preschool aged children—showed no moderating effect on the benefits frame. One gender role belief—that it is bad if men stay home with children while women work—did moderate the benefits framing. The fact that all three measures were not appropriate for scaling reflects that they may have been measuring different things.

The two measures did not show any moderation of the framing effects. The belief that women are more biologically suited to care for children than men does show a main effect on policy support but did not condition the effect of the benefits framing manipulation. The lack of moderation with respect to the Family Benefits Frame may be due, at least in part, to the fact that the Family Benefits Frame does not *explicitly* call upon this belief and therefore does not trigger such an interaction. The second gender role belief—that it is good if at least one parent stays home with children—is not reliant upon traditional gender beliefs at all and may actually reflect an egalitarian view of parenting in which parents should trade of child care responsibilities regardless of gender. Moreover, it may be a reflection of the already high support for paid parental leave policy overall.

The findings involving the third measure of gender role beliefs—that it is bad if men stay home with the children while a woman works—predictably moderates the benefits framing in a way that the first measurement did not seem to capture. Perhaps the fact that the proposal in both benefits frames seems to accrue to the benefit of women's role as mothers at some level helps to lessen the impact of the first belief but not the overtly specific language of the third

belief. Those that hold the third belief are more likely to support the policy when it is framed without reference to women's roles as mothers and in the Family Benefits Frame and with reference to economic factors in the Economic Benefits Frame. One explanation might be that the difference between the two frames is small and may be explained by some other intervening variable not measured here. Another explanation might be that the way in which the Family Benefits Frame and the belief coincide may result in some believing that the policy would lead to more men caring for children while women worked rather than less. Further testing of this particular variable would provide useful data about its ability to moderate benefits framing in a wider population.

Overall, these gender role belief measures need further exploration and testing alongside other measures of gender role beliefs. The inconsistency between the measures could possibly be explained or eliminated with the refinement of the language of each measure and the addition of other measures of gender role traditionalism. More than likely, the measures simply capture different things, which is reflected in the fact that they are not easily scalable. Future replications of this study or in studies of related policy domains should take care to include both more and better measures of gender role beliefs.

Childhood Experiences With Traditional Gender Roles and Adult Experiences with Child Care and Work

Two sets of formative experiences were hypothesized to have a moderating effect on the receipt of the benefits frames. First, it was hypothesized that childhood experiences with traditional gender role arrangements would moderate the receipt of the benefits framing in that such experiences would make people more likely to support the policy if they received the Family Benefits Frame (H8). Second, adult experiences balancing work and child care were expected to

moderate the benefits framing by making respondents more likely to support the policy if they received the Family Benefits Frame than the Economic Benefits Frame (H9). Neither hypothesis was supported by the data.

While childhood experiences did not have a direct effect on policy support, multiple childhood exposures to traditional gender roles did provide some moderation of the benefits framing but in the direction *opposite* that which was hypothesized. Instead of being more likely to support the policy when exposed to the Family Benefits Frame, those with more extensive experience with traditional gender roles in childhood were more likely to support the policy when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame. Adult experiences balancing child care and work did not have any moderating effect on the benefits framing, despite having a marginally significant effect on policy support overall.

The ability of experience to moderate framing effects with respect to paid parental leave policy may be limited. The findings with respect to childhood experiences suggest the potential that framing paid parental leave policy in a family-centric and mother-specific way has a negative effect on policy support. There are no significant findings with respect to moderation of adult experiences. Given this, proponents of paid parental leave policy should seek to use care in utilizing benefits frames, particularly family-centric benefits frames that might reference experiences in childhood. It might be that triggering such experiences may be counterproductive for coalition building around a national paid parental leave policy. In either event, neither benefits frame is aided by recipients' exposure to traditional gender roles in childhood or experience with child care and work in adulthood.

Ideology and Trust in Government

Aside from specifically gendered experiences or attributes, it was hypothesized that other measures of worldview would have an effect on the receipt of benefits and cost setting frames about paid parental leave policy. There was mixed support for these hypotheses. The benefits framing manipulation did have a significant interaction with ideology (H12) and trust in government (H15). The cost setting framing, though, did not have a significant interaction effect with ideology (H13) or trust in government (H16). These results provide important signals for those seeking to use such framing to promote paid parental leave policy.

Ideology and Trust in Government seem to work somewhat in tandem with one another. Both have significant interaction effects with benefits framing and both fail to have significant interaction effects with cost setting framing. Surprisingly, though, the results contradict traditional wisdom on ideology and paid parental leave policy. Only the Family Benefits Frame interacted with ideology. Amongst those exposed to the Family Benefits Frame, conservatives were 30% *less* likely to support the paid parental leave policy than non-conservatives. While many believe that conservatives will be more likely to support paid parental leave policy when it is framed as being family-centric, these results actually signal the contrary. This shines a light on a potential point of failure for proponents of paid parental leave who use New Maternalism's rhetoric to gather support for the policy: it may not work in the same way that the pro-family messaging surrounding the FMLA did.

There is a significant interaction effect between the benefits framing and trust in government. Support for the policy proposal is higher for those who do not trust in the federal government when exposed to the Economic Benefits Frame than when exposed to the Family

Benefits Frame. Unlike with ideology, perhaps the congruency between this belief and a policy proposal that highlights as a benefit the increased lack of dependence on government for economic needs. Thus, the findings on government trust and the benefits framing make sense if viewed from the light of government's role in promoting work over utilization of government benefits for economic sustenance.

These findings are complicated by the lack of significant interaction between ideology and trust in government with the cost setting manipulation. I would have expected that such findings with respect to the benefits framing would be coupled with significant interactions between ideology and trust in government with the cost settings framing and even perhaps three-way interactions between them. This may signal that the role of government may be relevant for moderation in terms of the purpose of the policy but not relevant in terms of the cost setting for the policy. I do wonder, though, whether the questions of cost are being priced into the decisions based on the determination of appropriate purpose for the policy and whether future study may seek to clarify the interaction between these two moderating variables, the purpose of paid parental leave policy, and the ways in which such policy can be paid for and by whom.

Determinants of Success

A respondent's belief on how one gets ahead in life—whether it is primarily through luck or hard work—was anticipated to moderate both the benefits framing and the cost setting framing. In fact, it was of great surprise that this belief did not interact with the benefits framing manipulation in any significant way (H18). I had anticipated that beliefs about the nature of how to get ahead or succeed that were more individualistic in nature would signal receptiveness to the frame that highlighted benefits outside of traditional notions of economic success and

instead highlighted the importance of the policy to the family unit. There was no evidence that this was the case, however. Nor was there evidence that there was a negative interaction between the holding of such beliefs and the Economic Benefits Frame which tends to situate paid parental leave policy in the role of leveling the playing field for all. As such, I question the wording of this measurement and its ability to capture the essence of respondents' worldviews in this matter. Perhaps a multi-item scale may have provided additional detail that the three-category variable did not.

Nonetheless, views on determinants of success did have a significant interaction with the cost setting variable. Unsurprisingly, support for the policy was higher among those who believed that success was determined solely or in part by hard work when exposed to the 50/50 cost setting than either of the 100% cost settings. It seems intuitive that those who believe success is determined by hard work would be more likely to support the policy when the costs are shared equally between government and employers because it does not risk the policy sounding like special treatment from or a burden to either government or employers. This also signals another way in which the way in which the variable was measured in this study provided an incomplete picture of the state of affairs with respect to this potential moderating factor.

Potential Sample Issues

There is the potential that the sample here may not be representative of those that policy entrepreneurs and politicians seek to influence in a few distinct ways. First, the sample contains more men than women, potentially raising concerns that it is not equally distributed between genders. While that alone does not likely warrant further study, it is worth noting. The case could

be made, however, that the sex that likely needs more persuading regarding paid parental leave policy is men, not women, thus making the composition of this sample more relevant.

Second, the average age of the sample was relatively young (M=35.66 years), meaning many respondents may not have had the experiences in certain categories such as work/child care balance that may be helpful in discussing those factors as moderators. Given that age was identified as a covariate, it is clear that age matters to this analysis. Age is also a relevant factor with respect to electoral participation and other political engagement. Thus, a younger sample may not help to illustrate what policy entrepreneurs would need to do to engage an older and more politically active demographic. Moreover, given the greater propensity for older Americans to reliably vote, their opinions may outweigh those of younger Americans with respect to swaying otherwise undecided elected officials.

Third, the overall n of the study needs to be enlarged by at least half. This can be seen most starkly in the fact that there were not enough conservatives to engage in some of the more robust analyses of moderators in each condition. The results strongly suggest that ideology is an integral moderating force. That said, in some cases, the analysis was stopped short of its natural conclusion simply because there were not enough cases in each condition to allow for further analysis. It is not guaranteed that a larger sample would solve this problem. It may be that the results are the way they are because conservatives and non-conservatives reliably split in ways that do not allow for such analysis when the manipulations are broken down and separated out. It stands to reason, though, that a larger sample would at least alleviate some of these concerns.

Even with these considerations in mind, I do not think the use of Amazon's M-Turk makes the results of this study any less compelling. The issues with the sample above are issues that

would have likely been present in a sample gathered another way and even exacerbated in convenience sample taken at a university, for example. However, future research on this policy domain and studying these particular moderators would be wise to include some prescreening measures which are now available through M-Turk and other services like it at an extra cost. This could potentially help evenly distribute the sample with a. few simple prescreening questions some of these key areas. Again, enlarging the overall sample size would likely help ameliorate these concerns about the sample.

Overall Reflection on Findings and Design

This study provides a complicated picture for proponents of paid parental leave policy who use the messaging of New Maternalism to promote such a policy. Simply put, there is limited support that this framing of the policy at all works to gather support in the wider public or in specific groups relevant to the building of a bipartisan, cross-ideological coalition in support of such a policy. More importantly, there is evidence that the messaging may actually work against such coalition building in a very real way, as the results with respect to ideology, trust in government, and experiences with traditional gender roles in childhood indicate.

It is possible that the way in which this study is designed complicated analysis of this question. One way in which the research was originally conceived of dealt with the difference in support for parental leave versus maternity leave. Over time, given the writing of Dinner (2010) and Mezy and Pillard (2012), it seemed as if the research question was better focused on the proposed benefits of such a policy than the implicit question of who the policy covers. Perhaps that implicit nature of the difference between maternity policy and parental leave policy is more relevant for study than was thought. Future studies would be well served to explore this

distinction in conjunction with these framing messages about paid parental leave. Perhaps there is already some amount of baked in support for paid parental leave that does not exist for paid maternity leave or even paid paternity leave. A study could easily test for differences between the same frames utilizing the maternity and parental as another manipulation in the treatment.

Another possibility is that the way in which coalition building was done in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the fight for the FMLA is not relevant to a more contemporary context. In part, this may be due to the way in which messaging is delivered to the public by elites and by the public to elites. The importance of internet, social media, meme culture, and more may not be relevant to how people have nuanced the issue of paid parental leave policy. In particular, this study did not address the issue of the framing messenger's identity. In a hyper-polarized and fast paced communication environment, this is likely to matter. If the message were explicitly being delivered by a partisan source or by an interest group itself, that might make a difference in its reception, especially given the moderators that were relevant in this study.

Two important findings in this study lead me to believe that there is a temporal element to when benefits framing becomes activated, namely after the costs of such a policy are determined to not be overly burdensome to either government or employers. The first piece of evidence for this is that there is little indication that the policy's support is directly affected by benefits framing in and of itself. In fact, this study confirms what the General Social Survey has reliably found for years: public support for paid parental leave policy is overall quite high. Given this high level of overall support, there is limited room for change in policy support levels overall.

The question then becomes why such a policy is not yet in place. Overwhelmingly, this study seems to indicate that the question of how such a policy is organized is relevant. Not only

is the cost setting framing relevant, it has been shown to interact with the benefits framing in certain situations, namely when the costs are evenly split between government and employers. The importance of the 50/50 split cost setting is not just how people are able to justify the costs, but actually *makes relevant* the other framing manipulation in this study when interacting with sex, for example. This may lend support to the coalitional building theory of policy proponents insofar as benefits messaging is relevant to some people when certain conditions are at play. In other words, it is only when the structural conditions are solved that the benefits framing is at all relevant. Further testing of the way in which cost setting acts as a precursor to the relevancy of benefits framing may confirm these results.

That said, support for the policy actually occurs when the benefits are framed as providing an economic good (the Economic Benefits Frame) rather than a benefit to the family unit (Family Benefits Frame). This suggests that the intuition on the ground of groups like MomsRising and others is incorrect. Instead of situating mothers at the center of the policy's benefits, it would be wise to frame the issue in terms of economic gains to individuals, families, and the nation as a whole. In this way, it is not just that many of the hypotheses in this study are not supported by the data, but that the current promotional strategies of policy entrepreneurs are not supported by the data.

There is significant support for the idea that an evenly split cost setting for paid parental leave policy is integral both to the success of the policy and to any attempts to build a coalition in support of such a policy. First, the 50/50 cost setting yielded significantly higher support than either of the two 100% cost settings. Second, this finding is heightened by the interaction with sex in both benefits manipulations for females and in the Economic Benefits Frame for males.

Finally, those who believed that hard work was the primary determinant of success were more likely to support the policy when its costs were framed as spit 50/50 between government and employers than when they were borne 100% by either entity. This is strong evidence that the cost setting matters immensely among some groups, even in the face of null results with respect to ideology and trust in government. This can be seen in the fact that there is near or exact unanimous support for the policy proposal among many who are exposed to the 50/50 cost setting in various moderating variables. Given these results, proponents of paid parental leave may find their time better suited toward working on a policy that has a more egalitarian cost setting than in trying to frame the policy in a way that appeals to traditional notions of gender and motherhood.

Impact and Future Direction

This study adds to the framing effects literature in a few key ways. First, it represents the first study of its kind on this policy domain of paid parental leave. Given the lack of empirical research done on this policy domain, this is important in and of itself. It is also important because there are few framing effects studies on topics that explicitly call into question gender roles in the policy domain itself like is done with paid parental leave. This helps expand the discussion of gender in framing effects literature based on policy domain alone.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the framing effects literature is that of the moderators tested here for the first time. While much has been studied about the ways in which frames create effects that evoke racial tensions and rely on racial and ethnic belief structures, there is a significant gap in the research when it comes to gendered beliefs. Winter (2008) comes closest to addressing this gap by seeking to understand when frames are mediated by gendered

attitudes. This is the first study to explicitly ask whether gendered attitudes can moderate framing effects in terms of gender role beliefs and gendered experiences. Moreover, this study seeks to ascertain the role of experience—whether childhood gender role experience or adult child-work balance experience—in moderating framing effects. The results and methods here open the gate for future paths of framing effects research on moderating forces related to gender and experience.

There are at least three major pathways for future research on the framing effects involved in paid parental leave policy. First, repeated measurement of current variables such as adult experiences with child care and work and childhood experiences with traditional gender roles may provide more robust results in a larger context. Second, there is significant room for improvement of the variables on and greater understanding of traditional gender role beliefs and how they interact with framing of paid parental leave policy. I would also suggest measuring other elements of personality as a way in which to supplement these beliefs. Finally, refined measurement of beliefs on determinants of success should also provide greater understanding of the role of worldview on success and its interaction with frames surrounding paid parental leave policy.

Another more substantial undertaking would be to conduct a variation on the benefits framing while holding constant the 50/50-split of the costs between government and employers so as to study the effect of benefits framing in a more nuanced way. Once the way in which the policy is paid for is no longer an issue, it seems like four conditions within the benefits framing manipulation present themselves: (1) maternity leave framed with the Economic Benefits Frame; (2) maternity leave framed with the Family Benefits Frame; (3) parental leave framed with the

Economic Benefits Frame; and. (4) parental leave framed with the Family Benefits Frame. This would do two things. First, it serves to lessen the importance of the role of government in the policy's implementation so that participants can focus on the benefits of such a policy. Second, it allows for testing of the more implicit distinction between maternity leave and parental leave.

This study is of paid parental leave policy and may require creativity in applying these methods (and specifically these frames) to other policy domains. Paid parental leave is a unique policy domain in that it does not tap into some of the more difficult discussions about women's reproductive freedoms and timing that may evoke more emotional responses. In fact, given the American desire to support work and labor, paid parental leave policy may be an issue area that is easier to solve than many others in the long run.

The results contained in this study provide a more complete understanding of how rhetoric surrounding paid parental leave policy works in a contemporary setting to encourage or discourage support for the policy. While these results may aid those seeking to make practical policy change on the ground, they also provide new directions for research on framing effects in the political psychology literature about the limited influence of benefits frames when cost setting for a policy is an open question. The interaction between sex, benefits framing, and cost setting framing, for example, suggest a way in which gender may act as a moderating force that has not yet been fully explored. While the gender role belief measures here require reworking and retesting, there is at least support for the ability of one of those measures to moderate the benefits framing manipulation, suggesting that gender norms provide another area of study when it comes to moderation of framing effects. Likewise, the experience of having a traditional gender role-adhering family in childhood is a new addition to the political psychology research.

Proponents of policy change frame their messages in ways they believe will aid in gathering support for the policy. When those frames are built on antiquated notions of politics or on supposition alone, they may in fact be providing resistance to the very policies that are being promoted. This research helps provide context for this type of situation both within the literature about framing effects and moderation as well as for practical policy entrepreneurs attempting to make relevant and successful their policy proposals in the real world.

APPENDIX A: Study Instrument

Info Sheet and Consent

Research Information Sheet
Title of Study: *Assessing the Impacts of Psychological and Social Components on Policy Preference*

Principal Investigator (PI):   Kimberly Saks McManaway

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                                     248-791-2520

Funding Source: Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics

                                     Iowa State University

Overview

You are being asked to take part in a research study of social and policy preferences. This study is being through Wayne State University but will be conducted exclusively online. The estimated number of study participants to be enrolled is about 500 throughout the United States. **Before taking part in this study, please read the consent form below and click on the "I AGREE" button at the bottom of the page if you understand the statements below and freely consent to participate in the study.**

Purpose

In this research study, we will be looking at the ways in which people react to various policy proposals. This is a web-based study, meaning that it occurs entirely online. We are interested in understanding why people prefer certain policies over others. You will be asked for some demographic information (about yourself) as well as policy and political preference questions.

This study is being conducted by Kimberly Saks McManaway, a PhD candidate at Wayne State University, and it has been approved by the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board. The study involves minimal risk to the participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life). Responses will be anonymous and will not be connected to your name, IP address, or any other personally identifying information.

Participation

Participation in the study typically takes 10-15 minutes and is confidential. Participants begin by answering a series of questions about their beliefs. After reading the passage, participants will be asked a series questions following up on their experience and understanding of the passage. Finally, some demographic questions will be asked.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there may be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

Risks

By taking part in this study, you may experience the following risks:

- There is a small risk that your responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties not associated with the study (e.g., computer hackers).
- There is a minimal risk of emotional discomfort such as confusion or anxiety.

There may also be risks involved from taking part in this study that are not known to researchers at this time.

Study Costs

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

For taking part in this research study, you will be paid for your time and inconvenience in the form of an MTurk payment through Amazon for $1.10.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be kept by the study. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. MTurk worker IDs will only be collected for the purposes of distributing compensation and will not be associated with survey responses. MTurk worker IDs will not be shared with anyone outside of the
research team, will be removed from the data set, and/or will not be linked to survey/study responses.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. You

are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time. Your decisions will not change any present or future relationship with Wayne State University or its affiliates, or other services you are entitled to receive.

The data that you provide may be collected and used by Amazon as per its privacy agreement. Additionally, participation in this research is for residents of the United States over the age of 18; if you are not a resident of the United States and/or under the age of 18, please do not complete this survey.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Kimberly Saks McManaway at (248) 791-2520. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at (313) 577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, click on the "I Agree" button to begin the study.

I AGREE   I DISAGREE

○   ○

PreTest

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Browser Meta Info

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Part 1: General Information and Belief Statements
Please respond to all of the questions in this section to the best of your ability.

We are interested in learning more about how people believe the world should work. This group of questions will gauge your social and political beliefs on a variety of measures. Please select the response that best represents your viewpoint on each question. This section should take about 5 minutes to complete. Be assured that the answers that you provide will be kept confidential.

On a seven-point scale on which political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal--point 1--to extremely conservative--point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

1-Extremely liberal	2-Liberal	3-Slightly liberal	4-Moderate	5-Slightly conservative	6-Conservative	7-Extremely conservative	Don't know
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right -- just about always, most of the time only some of the time, or almost never?

◯ 1-Almost always

◯ 2-Most of the time

◯ 3-Some of the time

◯ 4-Almost never

◯ 8-Don't know

In 2012, Obama ran for President on the Democratic ticket against Romney for the Republicans. Did you vote for Obama or Romney?

◯ 1-Obama

◯ 2-Romney

⚫ 3-I voted for another candidate

⚫ 4-I didn't vote for president

⚫ 8-Don't know

The next set of questions contains a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with each statement by selecting the response that best represents your viewpoint.

Do you agree or disagree:

Government should finance projects to create new jobs.	⬍
Government should pass a law to ensure paid protected leave time for eight weeks following the birth or adoption of a new child.	⬍
Government should reduce regulation of businesses.	⬍
Government should do more to improve our educational system.	⬍
Government should do more to spend more on the military, armaments, and defense.	⬍
Government should provide assistance for childcare.	⬍

Group1

Part 2: A Scenario

Please read the following passage carefully and answer the question at the end of the passage. Then click continue.

Only 13% of America families have access to paid family leave through their employer. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides job *protection* for some employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but it covers less than 60% of employees, including many women. American children whose mothers return to work within 12 weeks of giving birth are: (1) less likely to meet their schedules for doctors visits and immunizations; (2) less likely to be breastfed; (3) more likely to have behavioral problems; and, (4) more likely to have lower cognitive test scores at age 4.

A law has been proposed that would provide the following benefits following the birth or adoption of a new child:

· Eight (8) weeks paid leave at 100% pay for new parents after the birth or adoption of a new child

· Continued protected job status for 12 weeks under FMLA

· Benefits will be paid with government funds directly to the new parent

Should this law be passed?

○ 1--Yes

○ 2--No

Group2

Part 2: A Scenario

Please read the following passage carefully and answer the question at the end of the passage. Then click continue.

Only 13% of America families have access to paid family leave through their employer. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides job *protection* for some employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but it covers less than 60% of employees, including many women. American children whose mothers return to work within 12 weeks of giving birth are: (1) less likely to meet their schedules for doctors visits and immunizations; (2) less likely to be breastfed; (3) more likely to have behavioral problems; and, (4) more likely to have lower cognitive test scores at age 4.

A law has been proposed that would provide the following benefits following the birth or adoption of a new child:

· Eight (8) weeks paid leave at 100% pay for new parents after the birth or adoption of a new child

· Continued protected job status for 12 weeks under FMLA

· Benefits will be paid by the employers with employer funds directly to employees as part of the normal payroll process

Should this law be passed?

○ 1--Yes

○ 2--No

Group3

Part 2: A Scenario

Please read the following passage carefully and answer the question at the end of the passage. Then click continue.

Only 13% of America families have access to paid family leave through their employer. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides job *protection* for some employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but it covers less than 60% of employees, including many women. American children whose mothers return to work within 12 weeks of giving birth are: (1) less likely to meet their schedules for doctors visits and immunizations; (2) less likely to be breastfed; (3) more likely to have behavioral problems; and, (4) more likely to have lower cognitive test scores at age 4.

A law has been proposed that would provide the following benefits following the birth or adoption of a new child:

·   Eight (8) weeks paid leave at 100% pay for new parents after the birth or adoption of a new child

·   Continued protected job status for 12 weeks under FMLA

·   Benefits will be paid through a cooperative insurance program administered by the government and in which employers and the government will each pay for 50% of the benefits of the program.

Should this law be passed?

○   1--Yes

○   2--No

Group4

Part 2: A Scenario

Please read the following passage carefully and answer the question at the end of the passage. Then click continue.

Only 13% of America families have access to paid family leave through their employer. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides job *protection* for some employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but it covers less than 60% of employees, including many women

Paid leave has a many economic benefits. Employers benefit from paid leave programs as paid leave improves worker retention. Paid leave raises the probability that parents return to employment later, particularly, women, and then work more hours and earn higher wages. This

adds to the overall national economy and lowers reliance on government welfare programs by as much as 40%.

       A law has been proposed that would provide the following benefits following the birth or adoption of a new child:

·   Eight (8) weeks paid leave at 100% pay for new parents after the birth or adoption of a new child

·   Continued protected job status for 12 weeks under FMLA

·   Benefits will be paid with government funds directly to the new parent

Should this law be passed?

  ◯ 1--Yes

  ◯ 2--No

Group5

Part 2: A Scenario

Please read the following passage carefully and answer the question at the end of the passage. Then click continue.

Only 13% of America families have access to paid family leave through their employer. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides job *protection* for some employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but it covers less than 60% of employees, including many women

       Paid leave has a many economic benefits. Employers benefit from paid leave programs as paid leave improves worker retention. Paid leave raises the probability that parents return to employment later, particularly, women, and then work more hours and earn higher wages. This adds to the overall national economy and lowers reliance on government welfare programs by as much as 40%.

       A law has been proposed that would provide the following benefits following the birth or adoption of a new child:

·   Eight (8) weeks paid leave at 100% pay for new parents after the birth or adoption of a new child

·   Continued protected job status for 12 weeks under FMLA

Benefits will be paid by the employers with employer funds directly to employees as part of the normal payroll process

Should this law be passed?

◯ 1--Yes

◯ 2--No

Group6

Part 2: A Scenario

Please read the following passage carefully and answer the question at the end of the passage. Then click continue.

Only 13% of America families have access to paid family leave through their employer. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides job *protection* for some employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but it covers less than 60% of employees, including many women

Paid leave has a many economic benefits. Employers benefit from paid leave programs as paid leave improves worker retention. Paid leave raises the probability that parents return to employment later, particularly, women, and then work more hours and earn higher wages. This adds to the overall national economy and lowers reliance on government welfare programs by as much as 40%.

A law has been proposed that would provide the following benefits following the birth or adoption of a new child:

· Eight (8) weeks paid leave at 100% pay for new parents after the birth or adoption of a new child

· Continued protected job status for 12 weeks under FMLA

· Benefits will be paid through a cooperative insurance program administered by the government and in which employers and the government will each pay for 50% of the benefits of the program.

Should this law be passed?

◯ 1--Yes

◯ 2--No

Group7

Part 2: A Scenario

Please read the following passage carefully and answer the question at the end of the passage. Then click continue.

Many people are using essential oils for therapeutic purposes. Essential oils are natural oils that are generally formed by distillation and have the characteristic fragrance of the plant or source material. Many essential oils have become common in the United States, including tea tree oil and lavender.

Proponents of essential oil use claim that the oils serve many purposes in nature and that such benefits can be translated for human use. Essential oils, they claim, can help promote good health with the natural defenses of the source material, including antifungal and antibacterial properties.

Opponents caution the use of and reliance on any proclaimed benefit of essential oils. There have been many studies that have found little to no benefit in the use of essential oils and some have been shown to aggravate underlying breathing issues, such as asthma and allergies.

The American Medical Doctors Association is proposing a position statement on essential oils that says that doctors should discourage the use of such oils for therapeutic purposes until and unless scientific research supports their use in humans.

Should this position statement be adopted?

○ 1--Yes

○ 2--No

PostTest

Browser Meta Info

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Part 3: Follow Up

Please respond to all of the questions in this section to the best of your ability.   After having read the previous passage, we want to know more about your beliefs on family, work, and life by asking a series of questions about society, work, and policy. Please select the response that best represents your viewpoint on each question. This section should take about 10 minutes to complete. **Be assured that the answers that you provide will be kept confidential.**

Some people say that people get ahead by their own hard work; others say that lucky breaks or help from other people are more important. Which do you think is most important?

○ 1-Hard work

○ 2-Luck or help

○ 3-Both hard work and luck/help equally

○ 8-Don't know

Women are more likely than men to take care of children in addition to or in lieu of a job outside of the home. Do you agree or disagree that this is because of societal pressures on women and men to continue this practice?

○ 1--Strongly agree

○ 2--Agree

○ 3--Somewhat agree

○ 4--Somewhat disagree

○ 5--Strongly disagree

○ 8--Don't know

The next set of questions contains a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with each statement by selecting the response that best represents your viewpoint.

Do you agree or disagree:

Government should pass a law to ensure paid protected leave time for eight weeks following the birth or adoption of a new child.

Government should reduce regulation of businesses.	⬍
Government should provide incentives for using alternative fuel sources	⬍
Government should do more to improve the state of our highways and bridges.	⬍
Government should provide assistance for childcare.	⬍

Do you agree or disagree:

I sleep less than one hour a night.

- ⚪ 1 Strongly agree
- ⚪ 2 Agree
- ⚪ 3 Somewhat agree
- ⚪ 4 Somewhat disagree
- ⚪ 5 Strongly disagree
- ⚪ 8 Don't know

Do you agree or disagree:
Women are biologically better suited to care for children than men are?

- ⚪ 1--Strongly agree
- ⚪ 2--Agree
- ⚪ 3--Somewhat agree
- ⚪ 4--Somewhat disagree
- ⚪ 5--Strongly disagree
- ⚪ 8--Don't know

Do you agree or disagree:
At least one parent should stay home to care for children from at least birth to entry into school at 5 or 6 years old.

- ⚪ 1--Strongly agree
- ⚪ 2--Agree
- ⚪ 3--Somewhat agree
- ⚪ 4--Somewhat disagree

⭕ 5--Strongly disagree

⭕ 8--Don't know

What was the topic of the passage you just read in the last section?

⭕ 1 Essential oils

⭕ 2 Cell phone injuries

⭕ 3 Environmental law

⭕ 4 Television shows

⭕ 5 Maternity leave policy

⭕ 8 Don't know

After reading the passage, are you more or less likely to support the policy proposed?

⭕ 1 Much more likely

⭕ 2 Slightly more likely

⭕ 3 Neither more or less likely

⭕ 4 Slightly less likely

⭕ 5 Much less likely

⭕ 8 Don't know

Which level of government did you believe was being represented as debating the law in the passage you read on the previous page?

⭕ 1 Federal government

⭕ 2 State government

⭕ 3 Local government

⭕ 4 Other

⭕ 8 Don't know

Who do you think should primarily cover the costs of childcare for children under school age?

⭕ 1--The family

○ 2--The government/public funds

○ 3--A mix of family and government

○ 4 --The employers of the parents of children

○ 8--Don't know

Do you agree with the following statement:

It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work.

○ 1--Strongly agree

○ 2--Agree

○ 3--Somewhat agree

○ 4--Somewhat disagree

○ 5--Strongly disagree

○ 8--Don't know

Can a working mother have a warm relationship with her children?

○ 1—Yes

○ 2—No

○ 3—Not Sure/Don't know

Can a working father have a warm relationship with his children?

○ 1—Yes

○ 2—No

○ 3—Not Sure/Don't know

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DemoBlock

Part 4: About You

Now we would like to ask you some questions about yourself. Remember, <u>your answers are confidential</u> and are not linked with your name or any other identifying information for purposes of this study.

What year were you born?

[▲▼]

What is your current marital status?

○ 1 Single, never married

○ 2 Married

○ 3 Divorced

○ 4 Separated

○ 5 Widowed

What age were you when you married your current spouse?

Is your current spouse your first spouse?

○ 1--Yes

○ 2--No

What age were you when you married your first spouse?

What race do you consider yourself to be?

○ 1-Black or African American

○ 2- White

○ 3-American Indian or Alaska Native

○ 4-Asian

○ 5-Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

○ 6-Latino/Hispanic

○ 7-Two or more races

○ 8-Prefer not to say

What is your gender?

○ 1-Female

○ 2-Male

○ 3-Non-binary/third gender

○ 4-Prefer not to say

Do you agree or disagree:

I worked to the best of my abilities in this study.

○ 1 Strongly agree

○ 2 Agree

○ 3 Somewhat agree

○ 4 Somewhat disagree

○ 5 Strongly disagree

○ 8 Don't know

What is your approximate household income from any source over the past year?

[▲▼]

Compared with American families in general, would you say your family income is far below average, below average, average, above average, or far above average?

1 Far below average	2 Below average	3 Average	4 Above average	5 Far above average	8 Don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

What is the highest level of school that you have completed? (If currently enrolled, select highest degree received.)

○ 0 Less than high school

○ 1 High school

○ 2 Associate's degree

○ 3 Bachelor's degree

○ 4 Graduate degree

○ 8 Don't know

Are you currently working for pay?

○ 1 Yes

○ 2 No

In the past year, have you worked at all for pay for more than four weeks at a time?

○ 1-Yes

○ 2-No

How many children have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive.

[▲▼]

How old were you (in years) when your first child was born?

[▲▼]

What year was your oldest child born?

[▲▼]

What year was your youngest child born?

[▲▼]

Did you work outside of the home for pay when any or all of your children were between the ages of 0-5 years old?

○ 1 Yes
○ 2 No

Did your partner or spouse work outside of the home for pay when any or all of your children were between the ages of 0-5 years old?

○ 1 Yes
○ 2 No
○ 8 Don't know
○ 0 Not applicable

Last week was your spouse working full time, part time, going to school, keeping house, or what?

○ 1 Working fulltime

○ 2 Working part time

○ 3 Temp not working

○ 4 Unempl, laid off

○ 5 Retired

○ 6 School

○ 7 Keeping house

○ 8 Other

○ 0 Not applicable

What is your spouse's gender?

○ 1 Female

○ 2 Male

○ 3 Non-binary/third gender

○ 4 Prefer not to say

What was the highest level of schooling that your FATHER completed before you turned age 18?

○ 0 Less than high school

○ 1 High school

○ 2 Associate's degree

○ 3 Bachelor's degree

○ 4 Graduate degree

○ 8 Don't know

Did your FATHER work outside of the home for pay when you were 0-5 years old?

○ 1--Yes, full time

○ 2--Yes, part time

○ 3 --No

○ 8--Don't know

○ 0--Not applicable

Did your father work outside of the home for pay when you were 6-18 years old?

○ 1--Yes, full time

○ 2--Yes, part time

○ 3--No

○ 8--Don't know

○ 0--Not applicable

What was the highest level of schooling that your MOTHER completed before you turned age 18?

○ 0 Less than high school

○ 1 High school

○ 2 Associate's degree

○ 3 Bachelor's degree

○ 4 Graduate degree

○ 8 Don't know

○ 26 Refused

Did your MOTHER work outside of the home for pay when you were 0-5 years old?

○ 1--Yes, full time

○ 2--Yes, part time

○ 3--No

○ 8--Don't know

○ 0--Not applicable

Did your MOTHER work outside of the home for pay when you were 6-18 years old?

○ 1--Yes, full time

○ 2--Yes, part time

○ 3--No

○ 8--Don't know

○ 0--Not applicable

I Disagree Exit

Thank you. Because you indicated "I DISAGREE" on the previous page, your information has not been recorded.

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Appendix B: Correlations Among Study Moderator Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
(1) Sex	1	-.165**	.003	-.111*	-.038	-.118*	-.081	.103*	.332**	.236**	-.073	.071	-.101
(2) Women more biologically suited to care for children	-.165**	1	.200**	.208**	.008	.073	.056	.000	-.034	-.018	.295**	.090	.141**
(3) One parent should stay home with children	.003	.200**	1	.191**	.096	.133*	.137*	-.026	.016	-.006	.088	.068	-.003
(4) It is bad if the woman works while the man stays home with children	-.111*	.208**	.191**	1	.027	.047	.046	.017	-.018	.000	.275**	.075	.047
(5) Traditional gender arrangements in childhood, age 0-5	-.038	.008	.096	.027	1	.484**	.882**	-.037	-.033	-.038	.058	-.023	.004
(6) Traditional gender arrangements in childhood, age 6-18	-.118*	.073	.133*	.047	.484**	1	.839**	.106	-.004	.056	.139*	.073	.021
(7) Traditional gender arrangements in childhood from 0-18	-.081	.056	.137*	.046	.882**	.839**	1	.029	-.024	.003	.118*	.024	.017
(8) Respondent worked while having preschool aged child	.103*	.000	-.026	.017	-.037	.106	.029	1	.679**	.919**	.079	.113*	.074
(9) Respondent's spouse worked while having preschool aged child	.332**	-.034	.016	-.018	-.033	-.004	-.024	.679**	1	.914**	.035	.082	-.005
(10) Both R and spouse worked while having preschool aged child	.236**	-.018	-.006	.000	-.038	.056	.003	.919**	.914**	1	.063	.107*	.038
(11) Ideology	-.073	.295**	.088	.275**	.058	.139*	.118*	.079	.035	.063	1	.134**	.172**
(12) Trust in federal government	.071	.090	.068	.075	-.023	.073	.024	.113*	.082	.107*	.134**	1	.049
(13) Determinants of success	-.101	.141**	-.003	.047	.004	.021	.017	.074	-.005	.038	.172**	.049	1

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ABSTRACT

FRAMING THE DEBATE: THE ROLE OF GENDER, BENEFICIARIES, AND COST IN PAID PARENTAL

LEAVE POLICY SUPPORT

by

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In 1963, President John F. Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women found that the lack of income security during pregnancy and childbearing "one of the major remaining gaps in the protection of workers against losses of income," (*American Women* 1963, p. 27). Despite popular support for such a policy, the United States remains one of only three countries that does not have a such a policy (OECD, 2017). Commentators have argued that the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 was successful due to the diverse coalition behind it which included feminist groups and conservative religious organizations alike. The coalition was built largely on rhetoric that framed the benefits of the FMLA—which offered unpaid but protected job leave to certain workers—as being pro-family, specifically by allowing women to maintain their duties as mothers while still being able to work. The coalition's work led to the enactment of the FMLA despite being stymied by two presidential vetoes along the way.

Many contemporary policy entrepreneurs believe such messaging about the benefits of paid parental leave is essential to the success of any potential national policy. No empirical study

exists that examines why the United States is such an outlier in this area and what type of policy framing is more persuasive when it comes to paid parental leave policy. In accordance with the push behind the FMLA and more contemporary movements, the overall hypothesis of this study is that individuals are more likely to support a paid parental leave policy when it is framed as benefitting families than when the policy is framed as being economically advantageous.

To test this hypothesis, I conducted an experiment using Amazon's MTurk platform. Participants were exposed to one of six conditions (or a control) that contained a variation of two manipulations: a beneficiary manipulation and a cost setting manipulation. I also utilized a pretest and posttest to measure demographic attributes, sociopolitical characteristics, experiences with traditional gender roles, and gender role beliefs. I find that there is little if any support for the use of a family benefits frame that centers the benefits of paid family leave on the family. Instead, there is support that among some groups such as conservatives and those who have experienced traditional gender roles in childhood that an economic benefits frame garners more policy support. The results of the study also indicate that the costs associated with a paid parental leave policy are salient and that there is significantly more support for the policy when such costs are split evenly between employers and government rather than borne exclusively by either one.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Kimberly Saks McManaway is a Ph.D. candidate at Wayne State University. Her research focuses on the intersection of political psychology and public policy. She also engages in research on the teaching and learning of political science and civic education more broadly. Prior to beginning her Ph.D. studies, Kimberly earned a Juris Doctorate from the University of Detroit Mercy and a Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science and French from Eastern Michigan University. She is licensed to practice law in the State of Michigan and has practiced labor and employment law as well as disability and equal opportunity law in educational settings. She currently teaches at the University of Michigan-Flint as a Lecturer IV where she also serves as the Director of the Master of Public Administration Program. In her free time, Kimberly likes to listen to podcasts, travel, read, and spend time with family and friends. She currently resides in southeast Michigan with her husband, their 6-year-old twin daughters, a cat named Spencer and a dog named Brooklyn.