



Universiteit Utrecht

Master's Thesis

Dutch fathers' preferences and capabilities for balancing work and care

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July 1th 2018

Key words: work-family balance, paternal involvement, the Netherlands, capability approach, preferences.

University: University of Utrecht

Programme: Social Policy and Social Interventions, 2017-2018

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Summary

The capability approach (CA) of Sen was used as a framework for studying the effects of working fathers' preferences and capabilities on the work-family balance (WFB) in the Netherlands. Survey data and time-diary information from 2011 were combined to obtain a dataset of 201 fathers in employment. The effect of the following variables was analysed using multiple regression analysis: (1) the number of hours fathers spend caring; (2) paid work preferences; (3) education; (4) age of the youngest child; (5) the number of partner's working hours; and (6) household disposable income. The results show that preferences for paid work only play a small part in explaining paternal involvement, although it is known that long hours on the job impinge on family time. Fathers who live in a household with an intermediate income tend to spend more time on caregiving activities than high income fathers, but the effect is insignificant. It is noted that Dutch paternity leave is rather short, which suggests that policymakers may consider lengthening it to create more gender equity.

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1. Introduction

Families in which both the father and the mother combine paid work with care work often appear to be burdened, especially when the children are of young age. In the work-family literature, there has been a particular focus on how women reconcile paid work and care because they were usually the ones who stopped working or reduced working hours after the birth of a child, while the father would continue working full-time (Fagan, 2004; as cited in Hobson, 2011). To ease work-family reconciliation for parents, countries have enacted policies for providing care leave benefits and care services (Hobson, 2011). To help women advance their careers and reduce inequality in the labour market, governments also enacted policies to stimulate or obligate organisations to help advance women to higher managerial positions and gain equal pay (Korpi, Ferrarini & Englund, 2013).

When women started working more hours in employment, it was expected that men would start working more inside the household. However, this assumption has not materialized (Gershuny & Robison, 1988). Even after men, in Western countries, reduced the number of paid working hours, they only slightly increased the time devoted to care work (Hook, 2006). The Dutch situation is similar. On average, Dutch fathers have slightly increased the time spent caring (13 and 17 minutes per day, in 1975 and 2000, respectively; Hook, 2006; see also Spruijt and Duindam, 2002). More recently, there have been no significant changes regarding the amount of time that Dutch fathers spent caring for their children between 2006 and 2011 (CBS, 2013).

It is not surprising that it is widely advocated that fathers take on more caring responsibilities at home in order to further negate the negative consequences endured by mothers who have to reconcile work and care (Craig, 2006). Not only would that help create a situation with more equal career opportunities for women, but Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid en Bremberg (2008) show that more engagement of the father with his offspring also has a positive influence on their social, behavioral and psychological outcomes. To understand what makes fathers spend more time caring for their children, researchers have been exploring determinants of paternal involvement. Factors include characteristics of the parents such as educational attainment, but also work hours, and earned income (Biggart & O'Brien, 2010; Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Jacobs & Kelley, 2006; Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean & Hofferth, 2001). Some studies looked at attitudes and behavior of the mother that might affect a man's involvement with his children, known as maternal gate-keeping (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride et al., 2005). Other studies focused on the children's characteristics, like gender, age and temperament (McBride, Schoppe & Rane, 2002) as well as the parent's relationship in terms of marital satisfaction (Feldman, 2000; Lee & Doherty, 2007). Moreover, research on maternal involvement has shown that attitudes, or preferences, are also relevant. According to Hakim (1998, 2006) women have preferences that help predict whether a woman will be focused on her family, work or both. However, this theory is widely critiqued and has not been tested for men. In general, only recently have scholars begun paying closer attention to men's own attitudes regarding parental roles (Keizer, 2015).

Increased interest of scholars in researching fatherhood notwithstanding, little research focuses on the opportunities of fathers who want to reconcile work and the care for their children. Therefore, the goal of this thesis is to gain a better insight into fathers' desires and opportunities in relation to work-

care outcomes. Broadening the knowledge base can further help policymakers to devise policies that enable both mothers and fathers to combine work and family and create more gender equity.

2. Theoretical framework

To research the wishes and opportunities of fathers concerning work and caregiving it is, firstly, important to differentiate between different notions of caring. Secondly, I will describe the capability approach (CA) and explain how it can be used as a framework for studying work-family balance (WFB). I will also show that the current use of the CA poses a challenge and suggest how this challenge can be overcome by paying specific attention to individual preferences.

2.1 Caring

There are different conceptualizations of caring. Fisher and Tronto (1990) differentiate between: *caring about*, *taking care of*, and *caregiving*. *Caring about* is about affection and love for the care-receiver. It is not about actual caring activities, but about what the care-receiver means to the care-giver in terms of love and affection. *Taking care of* is about taking responsibility in an organized way, which includes providing (financial) resources necessary for initiating care and maintaining it, without providing care in person. *Caregiving* is the hands-on taking care of the care-receiver by the care-giver. This typically involves time-commitment and adequate skills to give the needed care. In the context of this study a parent who engages in care (or wants to), is viewed as caregiving, involving personal hands-on kinds of activities; while of course not suggesting that a parent might not also care in the way of caring about or taking care of.

2.2 The capability approach: combining work and family

To take into account the socio-ecological idea that a parent, who engages in paid work and/or caregiving, lives in and is influenced by his or her environment, I adopt the *capability approach* (CA). The CA has been pioneered and developed by Amartya Sen (see e.g. Sen, 1980, 2004) and Martha Nussbaum (see e.g. Nussbaum, 1992, 2004). The CA is a comprehensive normative framework for assessing individual well-being, social arrangements, design of current policies, and propositions regarding social change in society (Robyens, 2005). The CA is not a theory that can explain social phenomena like inequality, but rather it is a framework in which these phenomena can be conceptualized and evaluated. It provides a tool to examine agency: by (1) including individual agency into institutional settings, (2) recognizing differences in specific agency (variations in means and resources), and (3) designing a theory of agency that acknowledges the significance of the cognitive level of agency. In other words, whether someone can convert a set of resources into what one does and what one has reason to value (Hobson & Fahlén, 2009). The CA acknowledges that institutions, rules, and norms held by other people (communally) affect access to resources, as well as subjective states of efficacy. The main characteristic of the CA is its focus on what individuals are effectively able to do and to be. Sen suggests that this is what policies should focus on: evaluating people's capabilities in relation to their quality of life, and how obstacles in their lives can be removed so they have more actual freedom to live the kind of life they have reason to value (Robyens, 2005).

The things you want to do and who you want to be, doings and beings respectively, are what Sen calls *functionings* (Robyens, 2005). Together they represent what makes life valuable. Functionings

can include working, resting, being healthy, being educated, being part of a community, combining work and family, etc. *Capabilities* are the freedoms or desirable opportunities for leading a meaningful life. Sen makes an important distinction between *achieved functionings* on the one hand, and the capabilities on the other hand. The capabilities make up a capability set which encompasses the opportunities which an individual can choose from. The achieved functionings are the consequences of choices made based on the capability set. The capability set is however influenced by *means* and *conversion factors*. *Means* are the resources (financial, social, cultural) individuals have. Even when individuals have equal resources to reach a certain outcome, the CA recognizes that not all individuals may achieve this same outcome, due to differences in an individual's situated agency which is also dependent upon conversion factors, an individual's personal history, and also preference formation mechanisms (Kurowska, 2018). *Conversion factors* can have a constraining or enhancing effect on one's capabilities and are unique for every individual situation. They are made up by institutional factors (e.g. laws and policies), cultural factors (e.g. cultural practices and social norms), and individual factors (e.g. intelligence, skills and physical condition). Preference formation mechanisms, or preferences, indicate how much an individual values certain outcomes in life in relation to other outcomes.

The CA can be adapted to different or new contexts (Ararwal, Humphries & Robyens, 2003). It also has been adapted to fit the context of Work-family balance (WFB) (see e.g. Hobson & Fahlén, 2008). WFB is an example of a value that has become important in EU documentation and discourse on gender equality and the general well-being of families (Hobson & Fahlén, 2009). Governments, NGOs, and communities have been advocating in favour of it in policy discourse, mobilization and norm construction. work-family balance (WFB) has been used empirically to describe the trade-off between money and time in choosing paid work versus care (Crompton, 2006). Where WFB indicates the positive outcome of being able to combine employment and caring for a family, there is no academic consensus on what constitutes a good measure of balance between family life and work. The resulting debate among both academics and policy makers about which policies must be adopted to promote individuals' WFB, is partly due to different perspectives and interests amongst various stakeholders. While WFB has been used in EU and national discourse as a means to increase labour force participation and higher fertility, this study employs WFB as an end in itself. To use Sen's terminology: WFB becomes employed as a normative concept and evaluative space for assessing one's agency to achieve a value that is valued (Sen, 2004). Here, WFB is a quality of life issue for considering "substantive freedoms to choose the life one has reason to value" (Sen 1999, p. 74). I argue that WFB functions in Western countries because it is a basic desire to have and care for one's family.

In using CA as a framework for WFB, Hobson and Fahlén (2009, p. 219) differentiate between women and men. They suggest that: "for women, capabilities and agency for WFB can involve possibilities to reconcile employment with starting a family, [...] for fathers, inequalities are seen in work pressures and working times that do not permit active fathering, involvement in family life, and knowledge about and care for their children." Whatever may be the case, the core idea is that multiple constraints (e.g. financial, social, normative) can be used as a measure of capabilities for both women and men, no matter the specific configurations of work and family. Both mothers and fathers can

experience the conflicting push and pull of family and job demands, where the inability to achieve a satisfactory WFB results in a poorer quality of life.

The conversion factors that are relevant for WFB operate at institutional, cultural, and individual levels. Institutional factors consist of: care benefits such as paternity leave; child care services; social security such as child benefits; security and flexibility of the labour market; workplace autonomy or flexibility; job security; and working time regimes (Hobsen & Fahlén, 2009; Keizer, 2015). Formerly, with the introduction of the Work and Care act (Wet Arbeid en Zorg) enacted in 2001, Dutch fathers received only two days of paid leave after the birth of a child (Yerkes, 2009). This law also gave women and men the right to take up thirteen weeks of parental leave, in which it however depends on the employer if the employee gets any remuneration. In 2009 parental leave was extended to 26 weeks. In 2015 the laws were further modernized (Wet Moderniseren Verlof en Arbeidstijden) and extended the paternity leave with three days of unpaid leave (Yerkes & Den Dulk, 2015). In the new Dutch coalition agreement (2017-2021) it is decided that, from 1 January 2019, the five days of paternal leave will be paid in full (Cabinet of the Netherlands, 2017). Additionally, as of 1 July 2020, an entitlement to supplementary partner leave will be introduced that amounts to five weeks (allowance at 70% of the period's pay). Furthermore, in 2017, an average full-time week was 41 hours and an average part-time workweek was 20 hours (Eurostat, 2018). Cultural factors may consist of norms created by society, community, family, friends, media, public debate, and social movements (Hobsen & Fahlén, 2009). Generally, the Dutch adhere to gender-traditional norms (Keizer, 2017), as expressed in the one-and-a-half breadwinner model. In this model the father works full-time, and the mother works part-time and shoulders the majority of the childcare responsibilities at home. An important individual factor is disposable income. For example, money is needed to afford relatively expensive child care services in the Netherlands (Yerkes, 2004). Other relevant factors are employment status, educational attainment, age of children and presence of a partner (Hobsen & Fahlén, 2009; Keizer, 2015). If a partner is present, his or her employment status and working hours also effect one's capabilities to combine work and family.

2.3 The neglected role of preferences: active fatherhood

Researchers can apply the CA by selecting one of a range of approaches (Kurowska, 2018). The policy-oriented approach focuses mostly on providing the necessary means (e.g. childcare benefits, paternal leave rights). The regime-oriented approach looks at different types of conversion factors at the level of the individual (e.g. income), culture (e.g. norms), or institutions (e.g. policies). The outcome-oriented approach emphasizes achieved functionings (e.g. employment rate, gender pay gap, share of fathers in parental leave). However, none of these approaches consider people's preferences (Kurowska, 2018), therefore researchers rarely pay much attention to this aspect. A possible reason is that people's preferences can be considered to be embedded in the social and institutional context, preventing a clear separation of their influence. A second explanation is that theories about preferences such as Hakim's preference theory (1998, 2006), despite being highly influential, are also controversial (García-Faroldi, 2017; Lewis & Simpson, 2017).

Preference theory asserts that women in advanced post-industrial societies are not homogeneous in their work-family preferences due to significant social change such as the rising importance of personal attitudes and preferences on lifestyle choices. Not only do they have genuine

choices about how they want to live, but also do they not experience major constraints that limit their choices, while the individual attitudes and preferences are more important than constraints related to social structure or class or other influences on the macro level (McRae, 2003). Preference theory has had an impact on academic debate as well as in public media and political discourse (Lewis & Simpson, 2017). It was criticized because many studies have shown that institutional, cultural, and individual factors do play a considerable role in shaping women's behaviour in the labour market. Factors include affordable childcare (Gash, 2008), flexibility of working hours (Yerkes, 2013), class-based differences (James, 2008), educational attainment (García-Faroldi, 2017), and income (McRae, 2003). A second criticism is that women's preferences have not appeared stable (Campillo & Armijo, 2017; Nilsson, Hammarström, and Strandh (2017), which suggests that women's choices are not only influenced by individual preferences but also by other environmental factors. Both criticisms are in line with Sen's socio-ecological principles arguing that the real choices of an individual are affected by institutional, cultural, and individual factors, all of which are subject to change.

Using preferences in the CA when assessing WFB may have theoretical and methodological shortcomings, yet it remains important to consider them, because the way in which men view paid work and caregiving is thought to affect the division of childcare responsibilities in the family and active fatherhood. Proponents of gender ideology theorize that gender attitudes influence parents' beliefs concerning the tasks that are appropriate for women and men (Bulanda, 2004). In turn, these beliefs influence the division of childcare responsibilities within the family (Gaunt, 2005, 2006). Additionally, *fatherhood status salience* may matter, which implies that when a man considers parenthood important in his life, this will result in an increased probability of him to be a more active father (Cabrera, Fagan & Farrie, 2008).

2.4 Research questions and hypotheses

Using the CA as normative framework applied to WFB, I shall examine the effect of fathers' preferences on paternal involvement. As mentioned before, the way fathers view their role as earner and as a father is assumed to have an influence on how active they will be as a father in caretaking activities. From the CA it is also known that available resources, such as income, often play an important role in restricting or enhancing one's capabilities (Robeyns, 2005). The research questions are therefore: (1) "*What is the effect of fathers' paid work preferences on parental involvement?*" and (2) "*What is the effect of income on the relationship between paid work preferences and paternal involvement?*" In addressing these questions I will also control for a number of variables. In the literature review I discussed numerous variables which have an effect on paternal involvement, but I will limit them to the following three: (1) the age of the youngest child, because younger children generally require more care than older children; (2) number of partner's working hours, because when the partner is not employed or only works a few hours a week and can therefore spend many hours in caregiving activities, this results in fewer caregiving tasks for the participant; and (3) education, because this is considered as a proxy for class which reflects unequal access to resources, rights and power in a society. It is hypothesized that (1) fathers' preferences for paid work are negatively associated with parental involvement, so that a weak preference for paid work leads to more paternal involvement; and (2) that

income plays a significant positive moderating role, so that the parental involvement increases with a higher income.

3. Research design

3.1 Choice of methods

To answer the research questions, it is necessary to retrieve data about (1) fathers' working preferences on paid work and (2) the amount of time they spend on caregiving activities. To be able to draw conclusions about the significance of hypothesized effects and to generalize findings it is necessary to have a sufficiently large number of participants, which excludes the likelihood of using qualitative measures, such as observation. Considering different quantitative measures, it is possible to use questionnaire information to obtain the required data. However, time-diaries are preferred for information about how people spend their days because time-use information results in fewer systematic errors (Bonke, 2005 & National Research Council, 2000). Bonke also found that people who used the time diaries reported information on paid work and unpaid work more reliably than people who were administered questionnaires. Another advantage of the time diaries that I used for my research, is that participants could enter an activity as primary or secondary activity. Craig (2006) argues that this is methodologically better than when people only can enter one activity, because people often multitask (e.g. preparing dinner and supervising children).

Time diary methods have limitations. They rely on respondent's memory and truthfulness when registering their activities, which is a possible source of error (National Research Council, 2000). A further limitation has to do with possible sampling bias. Usually response rates of time-diaries are lower than questionnaires (Bonke, 2005), possibly due to the meticulousness required of the participant. While Bonke (2005) does not find any specific pattern or deviance concerning the most common socio-economic characteristics, high non-response rates have caused academics to question whether the results can be generalized to the target population (Abraham, Maitland, & Bianchi, 2006). The response rate of the dataset used in this study is 40%, which is low. The possible implications of this low response rate will be addressed in the discussion.

3.2 Data

The analysis reported here uses data from the TBO (Tijdsbestedingsonderzoek) combining surveys and time-diary information on how the Dutch spend their time daily. The TBO was first conducted in 1975, with subsequent data collected every 5 years by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). This paper draws on data from 2011 (data from 2016 were not yet available at the time of the present study). Since 2006 the research has been in conformity with the HETUS (Harmonized European Time Use Studies) guidelines from Eurostat. The TBO is further enriched by data from several other databanks: Postaal Wijkregister (PWR), Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie (GBA) and data from CBS itself. Data from these databanks provide information on variables such as: number of children, marital status, and household income.

Sampling of the TBO data was done using a stratified two-stage sampling technique. Every month (March 2010 – March 2011), a sample of people was generated from the GBA. In the first stage, a selection of municipalities was made, followed by a random selection of people from the selected

municipalities in the second stage. In total 4,976 individuals had been approached (final response rate of 0.403). The final dataset contains data on 2,005 individuals (aged ten and older) who live in the Netherlands, of which 947 were men (47.2%) and 1,058 were women (52.8%). All those to be approached received a letter to announce the visit of an interviewer and to explain the purpose of the study. During the starting surveys individuals were asked whether they were prepared to write in a time diary for seven days straight, and also whether their partner would be willing to do the same. The starting surveys were conducted by the interviewers. The survey consisted of questions about 20 general topics, such as: type of house, property, leisure, and religion. In the diaries the participants wrote down what they were doing for a full week, starting on Monday. For every ten minutes they wrote down what their primary activity was, as well a possible most important secondary activity. The diaries for the partners and children collected the same information but questions were adjusted to their respective roles. After the writing period the interviewers went back to collect the time diaries and conduct an exit survey.

Sample selection. Based on the theoretical framework in this study, of the 2,005 participants (aged ten and older) in the TBO 2011 study, I selected only men who performed paid work, who had a partner and one or more children (aged 0-17) living in the same household. Also, 6 participants with missings were dropped. This resulted in a final sample of 201 fathers (aged 25 – 59).

3.3 Measures

Dependent variable. The *number of hours fathers spend caring* for their children is measured as the sum of time spent on ten items related to child care, including: (1) care of children, unspecified, (2) caring and supervise/monitor, unspecified, (3) to feed, (4) to wash and/or dress, (5) bring to bed, (6) caring and supervise/monitor, other, (7) help with school and homework, (8) read, play and talk, (9) accompany child, and (10) care for child, other. This was registered caring as either a primary or a secondary activity. This variable is taken to be an achieved functioning in the capability approach (CA). Fathers spent on average 6.18 hours/week on caregiving activities, as compared to 11.27 hours/week by mothers (only parents in employment).

Independent variable. *Paid work preferences.* Before participants started using the diaries, an interviewer would have administered a starting questionnaire dealing with a range of topics, among them is paid work. Ideally, I would have used statements in which participants would indicate their preferences on parental involvement, but such statements were not included in the survey. Instead, I had to rely on statements that indicate participants' preferences for paid work. While there are other studies that have used paid work preferences (e.g. Kangas & Rostgaard, 2007; Yerkes, 2013), they operationalize paid work preferences in a way that does not match my data. They ask, for example, if a woman should work outside the home (under a number of different circumstances), or they ask if the participant wants more, fewer or the same working hours. However, my study uses statements inquiring how a person values paid work. So, for the present analyses it was necessary to create a new scale based on a number of those items and this study will therefore be of an exploratory nature. In attempting to create a valid and reliable scale, a factor analysis and a reliability analysis were performed. From the TBO six statements were taken that related to paid work: (1) paid work is necessary to live a fulfilled life; (2) paid work is important for my self-development and self-actualization; (3) paid work is important to me because of the social contact with others; (4) paid work is important to me because it allows me to contribute to

society; (5) I want to make a career; and (6) I find it important to earn a lot of money. The responses to each statement ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*), hence lower scores indicate that fathers have a stronger preference for paid work. Based on the concept of fatherhood status salience and looking from the perspective of WFB in which time can be used either for paid work or for family, I expect that fathers who have less strong preferences for paid work, spend more time on caregiving activities. The independent variable is considered as a preference formation mechanism, or preference, in the CA. As mentioned before, people's preferences are (1) embedded in a social and institutional context and (2) are not fixed but can change throughout one's life course, preventing a clear separation of their influence. However, it is possible to look at individuals' preferences as an independent factor that influences how one lives one's life, recognizing that preferences can change, but also by assuming they remain fixed throughout the week in which participants use the time diaries.

Before running the factor analysis, the data were checked for meeting the required assumptions. Allen and Bennet (2010) advise to check for independence, sample size, normality, linearity and multicollinearity. All participants (n=201) have only participated once in the research and have not influenced the participation of others; therefore the dataset meets the requirement of independence and sample size. The Shapiro-Wilk Tests of Normality indicate that the six items may not be normally distributed. The histograms show this is indeed the case, since they are all skewed. However, because Allan and Bennet (2010) suggest that the factor analysis is robust to violations against normality, I have considered the non-normality not to be a problem. Bivariate correlation values, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy value, the Barlett's Test of Sphericity value, and values from the anti-image matrices are all acceptable, thereby meeting the requirements of linearity and multicollinearity.

When running the factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis), the rotated factor matrix showed that the items 1-4 load onto factor 1 and items 5 and 6 load onto factor 2 (See Appendix 1). To obtain adequate internal consistency reliability, a scale needs a minimum of at least three items (Hinkin and Schriesheim, 1989; Robinson, 2017). During the analysis I examined whether items 5 and 6 had, individually, a significant effect. Item 5 was not significant and item 6 was significant only without controlling for the control variables. Therefore, a scale ($m = 2.09$) was created out of the four first items only, taking the mean of the four scores ($\alpha = 0.72$). It can be argued that this scale is valid, not only because the factor analysis and reliability analysis indicate so, but also because all four items are about the meaningfulness of paid work and what people get out of it on a personal level. For example, employment can: create motivating challenges which allows for learning new things both professionally as well as personally; offer autonomy and discretion which can be used to achieve a level of mastery or expertise; create an opportunity for social engagement; allow people to make a difference in the world (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Furthermore, because items 5 and 6 are about prestige it might explain why they load onto a different scale. Moreover, the fact that different items about paid work preferences load onto different factors shows (as became clear in the theoretical framework), that the use of preferences is not straightforward and needs more research to improve the conceptualization and operationalization of preferences and also to improve research that uses the CA as a framework.

Control variables. The *fathers' Educational attainment levels* are expressed as (1) low (basisonderwijs, vmbo, mbo 1, avo onderbouw), (2) medium (havo, vwo, mbo 2, 3, 4) or (3) high (hbo

bachelor, wo bachelor, wo masters, doctor). I have used the categorization of low, medium and high because it is common and allows for comparability across country contexts. The percentages of each category show that this sample is not representative for the population, because the lower educated (11%) are underrepresented and the highly educated (57%) are overrepresented; this is addressed in the discussion. A dummy variable was created, using the group with low education as reference. The TBO research used the following age groups for the *Age of the youngest child*: (1) aged 0-2 years, (2) aged 3-4 years, (3) aged 5-7 years, (4) aged 8-10 years, (5) aged 11-14 years, and (6) 15 years or older. Group 1 is the largest group (31%). The *Number of partner's working hours* is determined by the question: 'How many hours does your partner work on average during a normal week, including overtime and work done at home?' The partners work, on average, 19.4 hours/week.

Moderating variable. With respect to the annual *household disposable income*, three aggregates were computed out of six groups to ensure normality: (1) 0.00-30.000 euros, (2) 30.000-50.000 and (3) more than 50.000 euros. A dummy was created, with the low-income group used as baseline. I expect that a higher income enhances one's capabilities to combine work and family, thereby enabling a father to spend more time caring for children. Table 1 provides descriptive analyses for the abovementioned variables.

Table 1

Variables used in the analysis: means and standard deviations (n=201)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean or %</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>
Number of hours fathers spend caring	6.18	5.74	0-26
Paid work preferences	2.09	0.71	1-5
Education			
Low	0.11	-	-
Intermediate	0.32	-	-
High	0.57	-	-
Age of the youngest child			
Group 1: aged 0-2 years	0.31	-	-
Group 2: aged 3-4 years	0.09	-	-
Group 3: aged 5-7 years	0.18	-	-
Group 4: aged 8-10 years	0.15	-	-
Group 5: aged 11-14 years	0.14	-	-
Group 6: aged 15-17 years	0.13	-	-
Number of partner's working hours	19.41	12.74	0-80
Household disposable income (ref: low)			
Low	0.14	-	-
Intermediate	0.49	-	-
High	0.36	-	-

Source: TBO 2011

3.4 Regression and assumptions

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is well suited for analysing the relationship between one dependent variable and multiple independent variables, including several control variables (Allen & Bennett, 2010). Therefore, multiple regression analyses were chosen to test the hypotheses. To be able to draw conclusions about a population based on a sample, several assumptions must be met when using regression analyses (Berry, 1993; as cited in Field, 2009). One assumption is about the sample

size (n) and the number of predictors (k). The sample contains 201 participants. According to Green (1991; as cited in Field, 2009), this can be considered sufficient, using either the formula $n = 50 + 8k$ or $n = 104 + k$. Concerning collinearity, Allen and Bennett (2010) state that tolerance values should not be below 0.1 and that VIF values should not exceed 10. Predictor values in the model are well within range, except for the interactive variables that both have very low tolerance values and very high VIF values. However, multicollinearity can be expected here, because an interactive variable is the product of two other variables. Therefore, it is not necessary to address this case of multicollinearity. Analysis for the residual statistics show multiple outliers that exceed critical values. The implications will be addressed in the discussion. Furthermore, the scatterplot of the residuals shows that the dataset has met the assumptions of normality and linearity, but not of homoscedasticity. Implications of heteroscedasticity do have implications for generalizability, which are also addressed in the discussion. However, heteroscedasticity does not prohibit the use of regression analysis.

4. Results

To assess the relationship between fathers' preferences and paternal involvement and to examine if this relationship is moderated by the economic characteristics of the parents' household, I ran four models (see Table 2). The first model strictly takes into account fathers' preferences on paid work. In line with my expectations, the findings show that fathers who have lower scores on paid work preferences – indicating they have a stronger preference for paid work – spend significantly less time caregiving. In other words, fathers who value paid work less strongly, spend more time on caregiving activities. This first model, without any control variables, explains only a part of the variance ($R^2 = 0.023$). So, while paid preferences do have a significant effect, the first model offers little predictive value. In the second model I added three control variables. When looking at the fathers' education, the results show that, compared to those with a low education, fathers with an intermediate education spend fewer hours caregiving and that fathers with a high education spend more hours caregiving. However, both effects are insignificant. The age of the youngest child does have a highly significant effect. The younger the child is, the more hours fathers spend on caregiving activities. Thirdly, a higher number of partner's working hours is insignificantly associated with a higher number of hours spent on caregiving activities by the father. This second model explains almost half of the variance ($R^2 = 0.489$). So, while the second model has more predictive value, adding the control variables however, renders the effect of variable paid work preferences insignificant. Thus, the number of hours fathers spend caregiving is better explained by looking at the age of the youngest child than by their paid work preferences. This less significant effect of paid work preferences in the second model contradicts my expectations and will be further addressed in the discussion. Also, I expect that paid work preferences remain insignificant after adding variables about the economic characteristics in the following models, because adding variables normally does not increase the significance of a previously included variable.

Table 2
 The effects of predictors on the time fathers spend in caregiving activities (n=201)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B (SE)	β	B 95% CI [LL, UL]	B (SE)	β	B 95% CI [LL, UL]	B (SE)	β	B 95% CI [LL, UL]	B (SE)	β	B 95% CI [LL, UL]
Paid work preferences	-1.24 (.57)	-.15*	[-2.37, -.12]	-.68 (.43)	-.08	[-1.56, .15]	-.68 (.43)	-.08	[1.53, .18]	-.51 (1.03)	-.06	[2.55, 1.53]
Education (ref: low)												
Intermediate	-	-	-	-.83 (1.02)	-.07	[2.84, 1.18]	-.80 (1.02)	-.07	[2.81, 1.22]	-.70 (1.03)	-.06	[2.73, 1.33]
High	-	-	-	.61 (.96)	.05	[-1.28, 2.50]	.82 (1.01)	.07	[1.17, 2.81]	.81 (1.01)	.07	[-1.18, 2.81]
Age of the youngest child	-	-	-	-2.07 (.17)	-.65***	[2.40, -1.74]	-2.03 (.17)	-.64***	[2.37, -1.70]	-2.04 (.17)	-.64***	[-2.38, -1.70]
Number of partner's working hours	-	-	-	.01 (.02)	.03	[.03, .06]	.01 (.03)	.03	[-.04, .06]	.01 (.03)	.03	[-.04, .06]
Household disposable income (ref: low)												
Intermediate	-	-	-	-	-	-	.80 (.93)	.07	[-1.02, 2.63]	2.09 (2.73)	.18	[-3.30, 7.48]
High	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.23 (1.03)	-.02	[-2.26, 1.79]	-.66 (2.81)	-.06	[-6.21, 4.89]
Preferences*income (ref: low)												
Intermediate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.60 (1.20)	-.12	[-2.98, 1.77]
High	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.23 (1.24)	.04	[-2.21, 2.67]
R ²	2.3%			48.9%			49.6%			49.8%		
Adjusted R ²	1.8%			47.6%			47.8%			47.4%		

* $p < .05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Correlation matrix in Appendix 2.

To assess whether the economic characteristics of the parents' household have a moderating effect on the relationship between fathers' preferences and the number of hours spent on caregiving activities, I have run two additional models. In model 3 ($R^2 = 0.496$) I consider the main effect of household disposable income. The findings show that, as expected, paid preferences are again not significant anymore. Furthermore, compared to those with a low household income, fathers who live in a household with an intermediate income spend more time on caregiving activities and fathers who live in a household with a high income spend less time on caregiving activities. But both effects are insignificant, indicating that the household income probably will have no significant interaction effect on the relationship between preferences and hours spent caregiving, which is indeed confirmed in model 4 ($R^2 = 0.498$). Also, in model 4, the age of youngest child remains significant. The finding that the interaction effect of income is insignificant is not in accordance with my expectations and will be discussed in the section below. Finally, the insignificant role of income, which is also demonstrated by stagnated percentages of R^2 , means that models 3 and 4 provide no better predictive value, rendering both models redundant.

5. Discussion

Although the literature on paternal involvement is expanding and scientific consensus is consolidating on how various external factors play a role in explaining differences in fathers' caregiving behaviour, our understanding of fathers' own preferences and attitudes (internal factors) remains limited. Fathers, like mothers, experience problems reconciling work and family. In the Dutch context, many fathers today are full-time breadwinner which limits their opportunities to engage with their children. This thesis sought to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons why fathers vary in their parental involvement by examining fathers' own preferences. The study used the TBO 2011 to obtain information about fathers' preferences and time-diary data on caregiving activities with their children. The two research questions were: (1) "*What is the effect of fathers' paid work preferences on parental involvement?*" and (2) "*What is the effect of income on the relationship between paid work preferences and paternal involvement?*"

It was found that fathers who have stronger preferences for paid work, spend less time on caregiving activities. This effect was only significant without applying the control variables education, age of the youngest child and the number of partner's working hours. On including those control variables into the regression model, paid work preferences were no longer significant in explaining differences in the number of hours fathers spend caring for their children. These results refute the hypothesis that preferences can be used to explain significant differences in paternal involvement. There are several explanations for the rejection of my hypothesis. Firstly, the sample counted only 201 participants. While this is enough for running the analyses, it is considered low when looking for significant results (Field, 2009). A larger sample might have resulted in more significant results. Secondly, as mentioned in the research design, the available statements only concerned preferences about paid work and not about caregiving. Preferences about caregiving or a combination of both might well have been more suitable for explaining caregiving behaviour. Earlier research on women's preferences has shown that the effects of paid work preferences are limited (Yerkes, 2006). It could also

be that the insignificant effect should be attributed to the embeddedness of preferences in the social and institutional context (Kurowska, 2018), which prevents a clear separation of their influence.

The effect of income as a significant moderator on the relationship between paid work preferences and parental involvement was also examined. Contrary to what was hypothesised, the results clearly show that income had no significant effect. This could be explained, again, due to the small sample size. However, a more plausible explanation might be the role that income plays in the gendered context of work-family balance (WFB). In the one-and-a-half breadwinner model, mothers need a substantial amount of money to be able to afford childcare in order to work more. For fathers it could be that money plays a smaller role and that they are more dependent on the willingness of the employer to reduce working hours, as argued by Hobson and Fahlén (2009).

In interpreting my results, a number of limitations should be addressed. Next to being an explanation for insignificant effects, the small sample size of 201 prohibits the generalization of the findings. Not only did the TBO 2011 study have a low response rate, but also the sample had multiple outliers, could not meet the assumption of homoscedasticity, and was not representative of the population with regard to individual characteristics such as education. The implication of these limitations is that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the larger population. Since the study was exploratory in nature by using a new operationalization of paid work preferences, generalization is not an issue at the present moment, but there will be a need for verification by future research. The second limitation of this study concerns the conceptualization of preferences. The goal of this thesis was to gain a better insight in the fathers' desires and opportunities in relation to work-family outcomes. The TBO data only allowed the study of preferences about work and not about family, fatherhood or caregiving.

These limitations notwithstanding, the findings provide evidence that preferences do play a role in fathers' choices concerning work and family. Moreover, as previous research (e.g. Lewis & Simpson, 2017) and this study make plausible, individuals' preferences are not the primary variable in predicting how somebody's time is divided between work and family as Hakim (2006) argued it to be. This suggests that future research will look not only at preferences about work, but also at preferences about caregiving, because they are part of the same equation. Furthermore, both this study and previous research show that scientists conceptualize and operationalize both preferences and their effects on individuals' outcomes for work and family in different ways. This lack of consensus among researchers may be due to concessions in research design as well as the complexity of the studied preferences. A case in point is where researchers resort to Likert-scale questions because they cannot always use time diaries to measure how much time a parent spends in employment or caring. The multifaceted and contradictory complexity becomes clear when comparing the different studies. Hakim (2000) measures women's preference with rather normative statements such as "It is the man's job to earn money, and a woman's job to look after the household and the family", while Yerkes' (2006) research involves questions asking whether women want to work more, fewer or the same number of hours, whereas in this study I tried to measure fathers' preferences using more personal statements like "paid work is important for my self-development and self-actualization." Clearly, the quantification of preferences is anything but straightforward. And while people's preferences on work and family change, are complex hard to measure, and only play a modest explaining role, they should not be dismissed. The reasons

why it remains crucial to further develop and refine both the conceptualization and operationalization of preferences and related work-family outcomes can be linked to Sen's capability approach and social policy in general.

In this study I have used the capability approach as a normative framework to research and evaluate WFB. Amartya Sen argues that policies should focus on evaluating people's capabilities, their quality of life, and the removal of obstacles so individuals have more actual freedom to live a life they have reason to value (Robyens, 2005). Poverty, but also lack of time can affect the quality of life for both, men and women. The responsibilities of work and family produce stress which may result in poor health (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering & Semmer, 2011). The present study of men in WFB shows that preferences only play a small part in explaining parental involvement. However, long hours on the job impinge on family time, which is a quality of life issue for modern fathers, who increasingly favor bonding with their children over job-related activities (Hobson and Fahlén, 2009, 2011). Work intensification and financial pressures to devote oneself to one's place of work restrict the capabilities of fathers who want to play a more active role in the family, resulting in agency inequalities (Jacobs & Gerson 2004). Consequentially, in researching preferences it could also be worthwhile to include employers' policies and practices with regard to fatherhood and work times. Future research is not only of importance to scholars, but is also crucial for policy makers who aim to develop policies that enable parents to combine work and family and create more gender equity. For example, in the theoretical framework I mentioned that in the Netherlands the duration of paternity leave is rather short. However, research has shown that longer paternity leave provisions result in increased capabilities for fathers which they often use to spend more time in caregiving (Arnarson & Mitra, 2010; Rehel, 2014). So, if policy aims to increase both fathers' and mothers' capabilities to combine work and care, increased paternal leave schemes, besides being an important normative signalling function, are required to empower and encourage fathers to not only become more involved but also to be a more active and responsible co-parent which in turn will support mothers by shouldering childcare responsibilities more equality.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Rotated component matrix

Table 3

Varimax Rotated Factor Structure of the Six Items on Paid Work Preferences

<i>Item</i>	<i>Loadings</i>	
	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>
1. Paid work is necessary to live a fulfilled life.	0.605	
2. Paid work is important for my self-development and self-actualization.	0.743	
3. Paid work is important to me because of the social contact with others.	0.743	
4. Paid work is important to me because it allows me to contribute to society.	0.784	
5. I want to make a career.		0.796
6. I find it important to earn a lot of money.		0.877

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Appendix 2. Correlation matrix

Table 4

Correlation matrix (pearson correlation)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Hours spent caregiving	1.000									
2. Paid work preferences	-.153*	1.000								
3. Education low-intermediate	-.249***	.265***	1.000							
4. Education low-high	.269***	-.244***	-.782***	1.000						
5. Age of the youngest child	-.681***	.052	.181**	-.220**	1.000					
6. Number of partner's working hours	.088	-.053	.003	-.016	-.087	1.000				
7. Household disposable income low-intermediate	.138*	-.003	.074	-.103	-.101	0.026	1.000			
8. Household disposable income low-high	-.092	-.009	-.161*	.263***	.088	.197**	-.744***	1.000		
9. Preferences*income low-intermediate	.072	.273***	.176**	-.182**	-.088	-.010	.911***	-.678***	1.000	
10. Preferences*income low-high	-.099	.236***	-.134*	.228**	0.087	.156*	-.683***	.918***	-.622***	1.000

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < 0.001$.