Social Politics 2023 Volume 30 Number 4

Parental Leave Reforms in South Korea, 1995–2021: Policy Translation and Institutional Legacies

Yeonjin Kim and Åsa Lundqvist*

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

This article aims to explore how policy translation and institutional legacies have shaped South Korean parental leave policies between 1995 and 2021. It draws on a document analysis of central political documents and interviews with a number of key policy actors in South Korea. The findings show that reforms of parental leave policies were implemented according to four major rationales: maternity protection; combating low-fertility rates; (working mothers) workfamily life reconciliation; and, finally, men's involvement in childcare. Swedish parental leave policies, especially the introduction of the quota system (the daddy month"), served as inspiration. The current design of Korean parental leave differs, however, from that of Sweden, and is analyzed as a result of localized reforms surrounding plummeting fertility rates and institutional legacies, mainly connected to the organization of the labor market.

Introduction

Since its industrialization in the 1960s, South Korea (hereafter Korea) has adopted policy ideas and utilized knowledge from a number of countries to craft its own policies and laws, which in turn has allowed Korea to develop a social security system in a comparatively shorter period of time than many other industrialized nations (Choi and Kwak 2012; Kwon 2009). These policies include Korea's public health insurance (Kwon 2009), pension reforms (Choi and Kwak 2012), and, of special interest to this article, family policies (Choi and Kim 2009).

Over the past twenty-five years, a number of family policy reforms have been introduced in Korea, mainly in response to rapidly declining fertility rates and changing family relations (Hong and Lee 2014). These reforms encompass various forms of family support, from cash benefits and allowances

Department of Sociology, Lund University, Lund 22100, Sweden
*asa.lundqvist@soc.lu.se

socpol: Social Politics, Winter 2023 pp. 1113–1136
https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxad008
© The Author(s) 2023. Published by Oxford University Press.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted reuse, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.
Advance Access publication April 21, 2023

(e.g. childcare allowance) and welfare services (e.g. childcare and elderly care services), to paid parental leave that allows parents—both mothers and fathers—to spend more time with young children.

When developing the parental leave system, policy translation (Stone 2017) has been a key feature in Korean debates. In this context, the Swedish family policy model has attracted significant attention. Korean policy advisors argued in favor of the Nordic model, with a particular emphasis on the Swedish family policy model as the best practice example (Choi and Kim 2009). The Swedish family policy system has since featured in key Korean political documents, including case studies and the National Assembly's records of debates. Hence, when developing the parental leave system in Korea, the Nordic (often Swedish) model was viewed in highly positive terms—not least as a way to prevent declining fertility rates—and served as a model for Korean policymakers.

Policy translation is a complex process, and the implementation of policy developed in other countries will depend not only on the policy's design, but also on differing economic, social, and cultural contexts. Hence, scholars argue that translated policies are filtered through "differing political contexts, cultural and social norms, local path dependencies, and institutional variation" (Prince 2010, 171). Policy translation has accordingly been described as a "messy" process with hybrid solutions (Stone 2017). This is due not only to the institutional foundations of a policy-adopting country, but the relationships between policy translation and local/national processes of policymaking, where locally perceived policy problems and rationales often mutate the original policy ideas.

The overall purpose of this article is to explore how policy translation, domestic reform rationales, and institutional legacies have shaped Korean parental leave policies between 1995 and 2021. The following questions guide the analysis: what policy ideas were translated and implemented between 1995 and 2021 and what were the main rationales behind these decisions? What institutional preconditions have shaped both the perceived and practical feasibility of the parental leave system?

Drawing on document analysis of key political documents, interviews with a number of key actors in Korea, and the literature on policy transfer and translation, as well as debates on how policymaking processes are shaped by reform rationales and institutional legacies of the local context, we argue that the development of parental leave policies in the Korean context stems from a complex combination of factors. These include the introduction of parental leave policies through policy translation in a context marked by a labor market structure that hinders gender equality and prevents fathers from spending time with their children. Our contribution to the existing literature includes an historical context-sensitive approach to further the understanding of why and under which political circumstances parental leave reforms have been introduced in Korea, with a specific focus on the evolution and consequences of

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

policy translation and reform rationales, and how the outcome of such processes and debates are framed by local and institutional legacies (Bertram 2020; Béland 2019; Choi and Kwak 2012; Choi and Kim 2009; Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Kwon 2009; Stone 2012, 2017; Prince 2010; Windwehr et al. 2022) .

In the following sections, we discuss our analytical framework, and subsequently develop our methodological considerations. As a reference point for the analysis how policy translation from Sweden to Korea took place, the development of Swedish family and parental leave reforms is then briefly presented. Our empirical analysis, in which we analyze the development of Korea's parental leave policy, is presented in two sections. First, we investigate the main political arguments related to policy translation and reform rationales in the development of the parental leave system between 1995 and 2021. Second, we examine the institutional legacies, especially the situation in the labor market, which have influenced the implementation of the parental leave system and their impact on its feasibility and accessibility. In the conclusion, we discuss how Korean parental leave policy development can be understood within the context of policy translation, reform rationales, and local institutional legacies.

Analytical Framework: Policy Translation and Institutional Legacies

Korea has a long history of adopting policy reforms from other countries. Dolowitz and Marsh's (2000) definition of this process is useful; they describe it as "a process by which knowledge of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions, and ideas in one political system is used in the development of similar features in another" (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000, 5). In this article, we also take inspiration from context-sensitive research, which focuses on hybridity and "messiness" as central features when exploring the process of adopting a policy reform from another context (Bertram 2020). In particular, we find the concept of policy translation as developed by Diane Stone (2012) fruitful in a process-oriented, context-sensitive analysis. She argues that rather than a direct and linear transfer, the process of adopting policies from other countries might better be understood as translation processes: "Transfer can take place across time, within countries and across countries although it is unusual to observe straight-forward copying of legislation or direct pinching of techniques. Instead, intermediaries 'mutate' policy ideas in a process of policy translation" (Stone 2012, 483). This conceptual lens-focusing on how ideas mutate rather than being linearly imported/exported-may help to dismantle the binary lens often applied to policy outcomes (Stone 2017). Instead, it encourages investigation of the means by which imported policy ideas evolve and adapt over time within their local context.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Accordingly, understanding locally perceived problems and policy rationales is important to these meaning modification processes, showing how to best frame various political issues in a way that assumes a need to reform in a local context. This is because "the 'suppliers' [e.g. policymakers] of ideas—various epistemic communities—have their own limitations, blind spots, preferences, assumptions, and motivations" (Hadjiisky, Pal, and Walker 2017, 10). For instance, Windwehr et al. (2022), through a comparative study of Germany, Slovenia, and Japan, found that the Nordic model of "father quota" in parental leave policies has influenced all these countries, but their domestic policy rationales differ slightly from one another. Consequently, when a country is translating a policy from one context to another, local variations occur, and the translated policy takes on a partially new form tailored to address local problems. However, although analyzing policy translation is "analyzing the interplay between foreign influence and domestic policy processes" (Kang, Dieperink and Hegger 2022, 2), little research on family policies has so far attempted to explore how locally perceived policy reform rationales have interacted with foreign influence in-depth and in the long term.

Furthermore, it is also important to note that local problems and policy rationales that justify the introduction of a certain reform measure alone cannot create the conditions for a country to implement new policies. We need to acknowledge that policy translation is conditioned not only by policy rationales, but also institutional legacies (Béland 2019). As Windwehr et al. (2022, 192) note, purported best solutions often fail when introduced in new institutional settings, especially "[d]ue to complexity of welfare state programs, path dependencies, including institutional and structural restraints, ideological differences, and the technical, financial, administrative resources, etc." This likely holds true in the case of Korea. For example, while studies have emphasized that men are more likely to use parental leave if they have the support of their employers (Haas and Hwang 2009; Holter 2007), evidence suggests that Korea holds a deeply established business-friendly culture that may prevent policymakers from being able to nudge corporations towards a family-friendly environment (Kim 2020). Instead, long working hours (Kim et al. 2018) and a highly stratified labor market (Schauer 2018) still characterize Korean society.

Methods and Empirical Material

The analysis is based on document analysis and a number of semi-structured interviews with key actors in Korea, as well as previous research in the field. First, this study examines documents from a variety of sources, spanning newspaper articles, parliamentary records (bills and meeting minutes), and state commission reports published by national think tanks.[1] The examined newspaper and parliamentary meeting minutes range in date from January 1990 to June 2021. The document analysis begins in 1990 in order to

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

include the historical backdrop to the first fathers' quota, which was introduced in 1995. The parliamentary meeting minutes include the General Assembly plenary, two special committees, and three standing committees (more detailed information follows in table 1). In order to cross-examine the chronological order of events and public narratives in general, the news articles published by all nineteen metropolitan newspapers were also reviewed with the keywords "parental leave AND (father OR men OR quota)." The national bills and various reports commissioned by the central government, such as the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Employment and Labor, and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, were also referred to alongside the main strand of research.

Official documents are useful since they encompass recorded information that reflects social changes in laws, discourses, main actors and groups, and public opinion. However, document analysis presents challenges regarding transparency, especially biased selectivity of data (Bowen 2009; Hard, Lee, and Dockett 2018). This study is likely to have the same limitations given two aspects. First, it used keywords, such as parental leave, father, father quotas, and a combination of the keywords to sort out parliamentary meeting minutes and newspaper articles over almost three decades. Through this method, the research process became more efficient, but there are risks that the search criteria omit critical discussions and facts. Also, the documents examined in this study range from laws to newspaper articles, but the information therein tends

Table 1. Overview of meeting minutes sources

Committees and plenaries		Time Period
General Assembly plenary		February 20, 1990–May 13, 2021
Special committee	Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy	August 19, 2005 – February 9, 2017
	Special Committee on Budget & Accounts	June 18, 1990 – November 2, 2020
Standing committee	Gender Equality & Family Committee	June 25, 1994 – March 18, 2021
	Environment & Labor Committee	September 14, 1992 – May 6, 2021
	Health & Welfare Committee	September 14, 1992 – April 26, 2021

Notes: The Environment & Labor Committee and the Health & Welfare Committee were the Labor Committee and the Society & Welfare Committee, respectively, until 1992. The Gender Equality & Family Committee was the Women's Special Committee in 1994.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

to be only what is publicly accessible. Detailed and rich narratives and debates on policy agendas are often hidden and difficult to assess, which is also a well-known limitation of document analysis (Bowen 2009). This limitation has partly been managed through the use of semi-structured interviews.

The analysis includes semi-structured interviews with four policy actors. These consist of Professor A, Researcher B, Policy executor C (at the municipal level), and Policy administrator D (at the central government level). Each interviewee, who was or is (in)directly involved in a different stage of policy-making or practice process, was specifically selected to gain in-depth information about the rationales behind policy decisions. Professor A was an active policy adviser for the family policy reform under the Roh administration (2003–2008). Researcher B is an active advisor at the Presidential Committee on Aging Society and Population Policy (2017–). Policy executor C provides consultation services for companies in Seoul regarding how to best facilitate work environments that are conducive to parental leave. Policy administrator D was a central official in developing the fifth master plan (2013–2017) for the Act on Equal Employment and Support for Work–Family Balance, within which incentives for fathers taking parental leave were first proposed.

The Interviews lasted from forty minutes to one hour and thirty minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. We deployed a thematic analysis strategy, and for the purpose of this article, we especially looked at how the interviewees articulated their views on how policy translation emerged and developed, as well as how institutional legacies affected parental leave reforms.

Family and Parental Leave Policies in Sweden

In the following section, we briefly present the development of Swedish family and parental leave policies and key rationales behind them. The aim is to provide a better understanding of the policies translated from Sweden to Korea.

In the Nordic countries, family policies have long facilitated women's participation in paid work, for example, not only through expanded public childcare, but also through various benefits and insurances, such as earnings-related parental leave for both parents including father quotas (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006; Leira 2002). In addition, gender equality has been a key rationale in family and labor market policy reforms since the 1970s, thus increasing the possibility for both mothers and fathers to engage in paid work and caring responsibilities (Lundqvist 2017). Hence, as noted by Anne-Lise Ellingsæter and Arnlaug Leira (2006, 7), gender equality "is an important part of policy thinking. Ideologically, the promotion of gender equality policies is legitimated as central to the promotion of the continuing processes of democratisation."

Importantly, in this context, is that over the past five decades gender equality policies in the Swedish context also included the ambition to facilitate men

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

becoming gender-equal fathers. This has not only included the introduction of parental leave but also the expansion of tax-funded and publicly organized childcare. Hence, the aim of governments has been to challenge traditional forms of masculinities (e.g. those ingrained in the "male breadwinner model") by emphasizing gender equality as a fundamental policy concern (Lundqvist 2011; Ellingsæter and Leira 2006).

In Sweden, the parental leave scheme was introduced in 1974, replacing the former maternity leave insurance. Regardless of employment status, all parents became eligible for a certain amount of parental leave benefits. In 1995, to enhance fathers' take-up, the government introduced a quota system. The reform meant that parents with shared custody could allocate most of the parental leave freely between them (at the time, twelve months with an income replacement of 90 percent), except for thirty days. In effect, one month of parental leave was reserved for the father, hence the popular parlance "daddy month" (Duvander & Johansson 2019). In 2002, the quota was extended to sixty days and in 2016 to ninety days. The parental leave system has changed over time, both in terms of days and compensation levels. As of 2021, parents together receive 480 days' parental leave benefits per child. For 390 days, the compensation is income-based and the parents are entitled to nearly 78 percent of their income. For the remaining ninety days, the compensation is at the minimum level. In 2020, fathers averaged around 30 percent of all paid parental leave (Försäkringskassan 2022).

We will now turn to the Korean case and analyze how policy translation was used when reforming parental leave policies.

The Development of Parental Leave in Korea, 1995–2021: Policy Translation and Reform Rationales

In the following section, we analyze the development of parental leave policies in Korea, with a specific focus on policy translation and the rationales that have shaped it. This section addresses our first research question: what policy ideas were translated and implemented between 1995 and 2021 and what were the main rationales behind these decisions? The analysis shows that the policy development process can be divided into four phases based on the major rationales that informed the policy reforms: (1) maternity protection, 1995–2003; (2) overcoming the national crisis, 2003–2008; (3) (working mothers') work–family life reconciliation, 2008–2013; and (4) men's care work, 2013–2021. In table 2, we provide an overview of the development of Korean parental leave, analyzed in more detail below.

Maternity Protection, 1995–2003

In 1995, the Korean government implemented unpaid parental leave rights for parents of both genders. Before then, only employed mothers had the right

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Table 2. The development of Korean parental leave policies, 1995–2021

Year	Measure	Rationale (1)
1995	Introducing unpaid parental leave for fathers for one year (in place of their working spouse)	To ensure equal opportunity for both men and women
2001	Strengthening maternity protection (from sixty days to ninety days), introducing paid parental leave for both parents (with a flat sum benefit of KRW 0.2 million) (2) until the child turns one	To prevent declining fertility rates and increase gender equality, provide income support for employees on parental leave, and promote welfare
2006	Raising the maximum children's age to three as the period when parents can take parental leave	To encourage the use of parental leave
2008	Introducing three days of unpaid paternity leave	To establish a gender-equal culture and encourage men to use parental leave
2010	Raising the maximum children's age to six as the period when parents can take parental leave	To increase fertility rate in anticipation of low-fertility and aging trends and to encourage women's economic activities by providing multifaceted measures conducive to work-life balance
2011	Introducing a fixed-rate benefit for parental leave (40 percent of a regular salary, with a cap of KRW 1 million and a minimum of 0.5 million)	To increase opportunities to take parental leave in order to promote an environment conducive to work-family life balance*
2012	Extending paternity leave to five days, including full-time paid benefit for three days by employer	To provide the expanded measures conducive to work–life balance in response to a trending low birth rate and aging society
2014	Introducing a bonus incentive scheme for the second leave-taker, called "daddy's month" (100 percent of the salary is paid for the first month) (3) and raising the maximum children's age to eight as the period when parents can take parental leave	To reduce income loss during parental leave to encourage fathers to take parental leave and ease women's responsibilities for childcare*

Continued

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Table 2. *Continued*

Year	Measure	Rationale (1)
2016	Extending the length of bonus incentives ("daddy's month") for the second leave-taker to three months	To increase fathers' use of parental leave (which remains low compared to that of mothers) (Jang 2015)
2017	Increasing the benefit of parental leave for the first three months to 80 percent (with a cap of KRW 1.5 million and a minimum of 0.7 million) (4) and increasing the cap of bonus incentives for the second leave-taker to KRW 2 million	To encourage both mother and father to take parental leave, even if not in its entirety, by increasing the benefits for the first three months; to promote an environment that guarantees gender-equal opportunity for parental leave and prevents women's career interruption*
2019	Increasing the benefits after three months to 50 percent of a regular salary (with a cap of KRW 1.2 million and a minimum of 0.7 million), increasing the cap of bonus incentives for the second leave-taker to KRW 2.5 million, and extending paternity leave to ten days (full-time pay, split between the government and employer)	To minimize income loss, encourage men's use of parental leave, and maximize the amount of the time that parents can spend with their children*
2020	Introducing the possibility for both parents to simultaneously take parental leave	To encourage fathers' use of paternity leave*

Sources: Sexual Equality Employment Act 1995, 2006; Employment Insurance Act 2001; Enforcement Decree of the Employment Insurance Act 2001, 2011, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020; Equal Employment Opportunity and Work–Family Balance Assistance Act 2008, 2010, 2012, 2019, and 2020.

Notes: (1) This column refers to three types of official resources: the intentions of the amended acts that include the corresponding measures, the second and third Master Plan for Low-fertility and Aging Society (marked by *) and a newspaper article that includes an interview with a section chief of the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) who was in charge of planning the corresponding policy. (2) The level of the benefit increased to 0.3 in 2003, 0.4 in 2004, and 0.5 in 2007. (3) It comes with a cap of KRW 1.5 million. (4) The amount of benefits for the rest of time remains at 40 percent with a cap of KRW 1 million and a minimum of 0.5 million.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

to take unpaid parental leave, as a result of the policy being initially introduced under the banner of improving women's maternity protections, as part of the Equal Employment Act in 1987. In 1995, Korean fathers gained the right to take unpaid parental leave for one year, separately from their partners. However, among policymakers, rationales regarding how to enhance equal opportunities for women and men still revolved around maternity protection, rather than emphasizing gender equality and the role of father's involvement in caring relations. This reform rationale was reflected in the policy design and political discussions. For example, the right to take parental leave for employed fathers was only granted to those with working wives; men with housewives, who at the time amounted to about 56 percent of total households, were excluded (Chang 2009). Indeed, policymakers explained that the purpose of the reform was "to enable male workers to take leave for a year *instead* of their partners" (authors' own emphasis).[2]

The centrality of maternity protection continued to manifest in the political decisions of the early 2000s. In 2001, for instance, the government introduced paid benefits of a flat sum of 0.2 million KRW for parental leave, which was equivalent to 16 percent of the average monthly salary in Korea at the time (Statistics Korea 2021a). This reform was implemented as part of a package of measures to increase maternity protection, which required the revision of three laws: the Labor Standards Act, the Sexual Equality Employment Act, and the Employment Insurance Act. Even though both parents were eligible for parental leave benefits, the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) distributed employers' information of parental leave policies in a document entitled "Maternity Protection Policies that Employers Need to Know" (MOEL 2006). Until today, both paternity leave and parental leave policies are informed to the public as a maternity protection system (www.ei.go.kr).

However, maternity protection was not the rationale emphasized by researchers, who initially adopted policy ideas from abroad before the reform in 1995. Their arguments were instead based on gender equality itself. More specifically, in 1993, two years before the amendment of the Equal Employment Act, the Ministry of Political Affairs commissioned the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) to conduct a comprehensive study on parental leave that provided the baseline data for the policy reform. In this study, the common stance of international organizations, such as the UN, ILO, and EC, was considered along with a brief comparison of leave schemes across twenty-nine countries. The team also conducted in-depth case studies of seven countries (France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

The study highlighted gender equality as the primary benefit of policy reform for Korean society. It also called attention to the fact that international organizations proclaimed that childrearing must be a shared responsibility between mothers and fathers, that men were equally capable of caring for children, and that childrearing differed from pregnancy and childbirth (KWDI 1993). The KWDI (1993, 171–72) thus criticized that "[the current parental

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

leave system in Korea] lacks understanding of what maternity protection means globally, and reflects the thinking that childcare is a woman's distinct role or where she is the primary person in charge." Citing the aims of global feminist movements, the researchers emphasized the importance of "dismantling traditional notions and legal systems that produce and maintain gendered division of labor and allowing both men and women to engage in paid and unpaid labor" (KWDI 1993, 11).

In the report, Sweden and Japan were highlighted as inspiring cases for the policy reform in that their policy design incorporated men. Particularly, the researchers highlighted Sweden as having "an advanced parental leave system" (KWDI 1993, 173) and noted that the Swedish system aimed "to promote women's labor market participation, which inevitably required men's emancipation from gender stereotypes" (KWDI 1993, 91). Although the researchers acknowledged that it was still rare for men to take parental leave in Sweden, the inspiration from the policy design remained and served as proxy for the following reform. In an interview with Professor A, who was a family policy adviser to the government in the early 2000s, it was clear that the principle behind the decision to introduce one-year paid parental leave for each mother and father in 2001 was inspired by Nordic family policies:

> [The Korean government] introduced parental leave for each parent in 2001 based on the quota system in the Nordic countries, which allotted thirty days for each parent. When we adopted the leave measure, the government thought it should be even more generous. That's why it became one year. (Professor A)

Overall, the analysis indicate that the Korean government was inspired by policy design in Nordic countries such as Sweden from the beginning, but there were gaps between the initially adopted policy ideas and rationales.

Combating Low-Fertility Rates and the National Crisis, 2003–2008

In 2002, Korea's total fertility rate (TFR) dropped below 1.3, which was deemed ultra-low (or lowest-low) (see figure 1). The reform rationale surrounding parental leave policies accordingly centered around its efficacy for increasing fertility rates. Under the Roh administration (2003–2008), politicians, researchers, and the media began to pay attention to the rapidly dropping fertility rate and the increasingly aging population. These groups tried to alert the public to the fact that economic growth would be unsustainable if the fertility rates continued to decline. This evolved into a discourse of national crisis that continues today, employing terms such as "population extinction," "calamity," "cliff," etc. (Kim 2018, 105).

A series of institutional countermeasures were implemented. In 2003, the Framework Act on Healthy Families was introduced as a base law for family policy (Yoon 2004). In 2005, the Ministry of Gender Equality was restructured

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

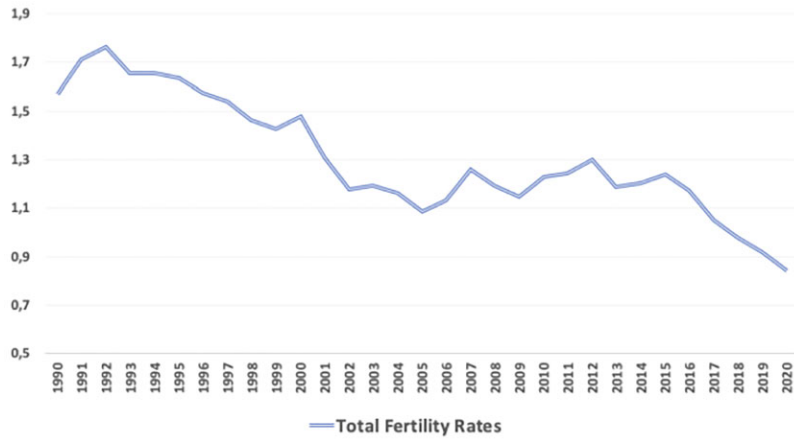

Figure 1. Total fertility rates in Korea.

Source: Statistics Korea (2022), Total fertility rates. http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1428

and renamed the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF). Additionally, the Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy was launched, with the President serving as chairperson. In the same year, the government also enacted the Framework Act on Low Birth Rate in an Aging Society (FALBRAS) and began the practice of developing five-year plans, which continues to this day.

During these years, the central reform rationale of parental leave policies therefore revolved around overcoming the national crisis by seeking solutions for falling fertility rates. The discourse around the fertility crisis in Korea arguably provided a solid foundation for the overall development of parental leave schemes, rendering such development inevitable. For instance, three days of unpaid paternity leave were included in the first plan of FALBRAS and came into effect in 2008 without major disputes. When a National Assembly member advocated to extend the period in which parents could apply for parental leave from one year after the child's birth to three years, he framed the problem of the low fertility rate as "an existential matter for the nation."[3] The crisis also served as a sensible motive for introducing and strengthening fathers' leave benefits, which in turn faced little resistance from the entrepreneur communities. Professor A emphasized that a lack of resistance from this group of users ultimately resulted from their concerns about the negative impact of a reduced population on their long-term business growth.

> [T]he policy was presented to the public as a solution to the population crisis, not gender inequality. There were concerns that the mantra for

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

> gender equality would not be maturely accepted by Korean society, in which growth-first belief had prevailed for a long time. ... Consequently, no interest groups, such as the Federation of Korean Industries and the Korea Enterprises Federation, contested the proposed measures regarding parental leave. One could interpret this lack of resistance as a positive reaction to parental leave policies, but that was not really the case; the low fertility rate and the resulting population crisis were seen by interest groups as existential threats to economic growth, and thus warranted policy solutions they otherwise would have found unpalatable. (Professor A)

Based on this predominant discourse surrounding the national crisis, the Roh administration focused on finding examples of countries that have sustained a relatively high birth rate and high employment rates among women (Choi and Kim 2009). Therefore, during this period, as noted by Choi and Kim (2009) and Peng (2011), the Nordic family policy model and childcare systems-particularly Sweden's-strongly influenced think-tank researchers and government officials. Professor A recalled how Sweden caught the eye of policy experts at the time:

> The scholars commissioned by the committee started conducting research on other countries' family policies. They focused on finding successful cases of controlling population issues. The Nordic family policies drew our attention, especially the Swedish history of overcoming their low birth rate in the 1930s. (Professor A)

As a notable example, in a National Assembly meeting, a researcher introduced France and Sweden as "cases that successfully restored fertility rates." She particularly emphasized the Swedish case, where "the environments conducive to reconcile work and care made a significant contribution to fertility rates" in order to stress that the Korean government also needed to "enhance support for birth and childcare for the sake of women and family."[4] Overall, as fertility rate was the central concern, the adopted policy ideas tended to be emphasizing women as the key group to be reformed. Men's roles and responsibilities were instead implicitly noted, through terms such as the "family," "society," and "nation".

(Working Mothers') Work–Family Life Reconciliation, 2008–2013

Despite the actions taken during the early 2000s, fertility rates continued to decrease. Accordingly, when the Lee administration (2008–2013) gained power, the policy focus weighed more on emphasizing and facilitating work–family life reconciliation (Shin 2010). For this purpose, in 2011, the government changed the parental leave benefit system from a flat sum to a fixed rate of 40 percent of a regular salary. This occurred despite opposition from the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who claimed that it could increase the financial burden of employers. The official shift was triggered by a

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

number of reports published by Statistics Korea, mainly emphasizing lingering inequalities between women and men, such as that women were spending far more time on housework and childcare than men (KWDI 2015). The work–life balance discourse tended to put more emphasis on well-educated and career women than before. Therefore, in policymaking discussions surrounding parental leave policies, promoting gender equality was now considered equal to lifting working women's double burden from the home and the workplace.

Consequently, the necessity of men's cooperation became more explicitly discussed, and was framed as a measure to promote women's work–family life reconciliation and thereby encourage childbirth. For instance, in a 2009 National Assembly meeting, a member suggested the introduction of a thirty-day mandatory parental leave for fathers, calling this measure "a groundbreaking turning point for fertility problems with low cost."[5] Indeed, between 2010 and 2012, several assembly members submitted a joint bill proposal for thirty or sixty days paid leave for fathers. In a 2011 Assembly plenary session, the Minister of the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) considered a policy suggestion that entitled fathers to thirty days of paid parental leave. Skeptical of the scheme that included thirty days of paid leave for fathers, he was concerned about its effectiveness in "increasing the TFR and women's work and family life reconciliation," rather than seeing it as a valuable measure for fathers to exercise their own rights and duties.[6]

However, none of these bills were actually enacted as law. This was strongly related to the fact that these policy ideas were inspired by a distorted understanding of the father quota system in the Nordic countries, especially that of Sweden. For instance, the 2011 bill referred to Sweden as "an exemplary case for overcoming a low fertility rate" by introducing "a mandatory 30 days of parental leave for fathers in 1995 and extending it to 60 days in 2002" (Act on Equal Employment and Support for Work–Family Balance Bill, no. 10550, 2011). According to Policy administrator D, who was involved in designing the fifth plan of the FALBRAS, there were also similar demands of the mandatory father quota from feminist NGOs referring to the Swedish father quota. The demands from NGOs and policymakers were so strong that the government even considered implementing a mandatory quota for fathers, first for public officials working in the Seoul metropolitan government. However, the officials strongly resisted the idea due to concerns about disadvantages in their opportunities for promotions.

It is important to note that the father quota system in Sweden is not actually mandatory. Rather, it operates on a "take-it or leave-it" basis, which is the same principle on which the Korean parental leave policies for both parents are based. This result reflects that the one-year quota for fathers in Korea was so highly unrealistic that even policymakers did not realize its advancement in design, and also how adopted policy ideas in Korea were translated and employed to inform local reform rationales.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Men's Involvement in Childcare, 2013–2021

During the last decade, reform rationales changed from emphasizing work–family reconciliation to the role of men as fathers, through incorporating gender equality principles. The Park administration (2013–2017) featured Korea's first female president, and the public held high expectations for government initiatives on gender equality (Oh 2014). In 2015, the government introduced the Framework Act on Gender Equality, which represented a paradigm shift in family policy, changing the focus from simply supporting women towards embracing gender equality. However, it remained debatable whether the changes in parental leave policies truly reflected gender equality.

A year previously, in 2014, the government introduced a parental leave incentive scheme for the second leave-taker (usually fathers). This scheme was a revised vision of Park's pledge as a presidential candidate, in which she promised to introduce a so-called "daddy's month," which provided fathers with thirty days of paternity leave while receiving their full regular salary, that could be taken within ninety days of childbirth. However, when the bill was actually proposed, the "daddy's month" was merged with the existing parental leave scheme and the benefits were designed to go only to the second leave-takers, who were mostly fathers, and they became eligible for one month of parental leave at 100 percent of their regular salary, with a cap of KRW 1.5 million.

Researcher B, who engaged in outlining the initial proposal of the reform, highlights the limitations of the Korean "daddy's month." She noted that the final policy decision reflects a distorted vision of gender equality, as it only the second leave-taker—defined in Korea as the father—who benefits, rather than providing an overall improvement for both parents.

> At first, there was a suggestion that we increase benefits for men, which was an obvious form of discrimination. So now we use the gender-neutral term, "the second leave taker" instead of fathers. [We borrowed this term from Sweden] … It seems like some strange misunderstanding is going on.

Nevertheless, after introducing the "daddy's month," policy debates continued to revolve around how to encourage men's participation in childcare, and the Swedish case continued to serve as a role model. The following year, the minister of MOGEF stated in an interview, "In Sweden, even the princess's husband proudly takes parental leave," emphasizing that Korean society should acknowledge that parental leave is not only for women (Park 2015, January 25). In 2016, the government increased the cap for the second leave-taker to KRW two million and expanded the period from one to three months. Society's interest in promoting fathers' involvement in childcare has continued to increase. Indeed, most of the 2017 presidential candidates pledged to increase parental leave benefits, extend paternity leave, prohibit overtime for

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

"working daddies," and, *again*, make fathers' parental leave mandatory (Lee 2017, March 21).

The Moon administration (2017–2022) has declared a paradigm shift in policy principles from birth encouragement to improving the quality of life of both parents and children. This shift included proposed measures to address the deeply rooted culture of long work hours, such as prohibiting working more than fifty-two hours per week, as well as strengthening paternity leave and the overall parental leave benefits. As of 2021, fathers are now eligible for ten days of fully paid paternity leave. Parents are eligible to receive 80 percent of their regular salary for the first three months (with a cap of KRW 1.5 million) and 50 percent for the rest of the time they take leave (with a cap of KRW 1.2 million). Additionally, parents are entitled to take parental leave after just six months working for an employer, as opposed to the previous requirement of one year. The main argument behind these last changes has been to promote gender-equal opportunities for both parents to take parental leave (table 2). At the same time, the "daddy's month" scheme has continued and the incentives for the second leave-taker (and single parents) increased to 100 percent of their regular salary (with a cap of KRW 2.5 million) for three months.

To sum up: parents are eligible for different levels of benefits depending on the length of leave they take and the order in which the parents take leave (see table 2). Inspired by the Swedish system, the Korean government introduced a "daddy's month," but as shown in the analysis, the two designs differ: while the Swedish "daddy month" is based on a quota system, the Korean version is based on an incentive system. Finally, unlike in Sweden, gender equality was not the leading principle in Korea until the 2010s. In policy debates, the reform rationales were instead based on maternity protection, birth encouragement, and work–life reconciliation.

When Parental Leave Reforms Meet Institutional Legacies

In this section, we turn our attention to the institutional preconditions that have conditioned both the perceived and practical feasibility of the parental leave system. We approach this question by discussing how the leave policy is coupled with individual employment status, as well as the interdependent measures implemented by the Korean government to encourage cooperation among private corporations.

Parental leave policy has always fallen under the purview of the Ministry of Employment and Labor. Korean parental leave benefits are funded through the national employment insurance fund, and only workers who are registered in the employment insurance system are eligible for parental leave. The coverage of the employment insurance has gradually expanded to temporary workers. However, the problem of insufficient coverage of employment insurance,

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

coupled with the large number of temporary workers, still remains (Nahm 2018). As of August 2020, about 89 percent of regular workers are registered in the insurance system compared with 46 percent of irregular workers (Statistics Korea, 2021b).

This disparity between the employment insurance scheme and the labor market structure has played a role in constraining reforms to promote both accessibility and the feasibility of fathers' parental leave. Researcher B shared her opinion on the dilemma:

> At the beginning, everyone was okay with expanding parental level benefits because we had almost nothing. But now that the level of benefits has continued to increase, even though their usage rate still remains low, people have begun to criticize it, saying things like, "Why do you continuously raise the benefits? The benefits only go to those working in large companies and the government. I cannot use them anyway." (Researcher B).

In fact, as of 2020, about 62 percent of the benefits went to those who work for companies with more than 300 employees (Statistics Korea 2021c)—where only about 9 percent of the total ensured employees were engaged (Korea Employment Information Service 2022). Some researchers and Assembly members have pointed to the fact that a contributions-based system of parental leave leaves parents outside the system with a sense of deprivation, making them feel like they are shut out of the social good. The amendment has accordingly been introduced; however, fathers have not been at the center of the discussion. Rather, since this policy constraint applies to mothers as well, it has been mainly female parents who have been the focus of policy debates.[7] In 2019, the government decided to provide a fixed maternity allowance (KRW 0.5 million per month) for three months to those without employment insurance, such as those who were self-employed without employees, freelancers, workers in special employment types (e.g. golf caddy, life planner, door-to-door salesman), and so on. However, paternity leave benefits, let alone parental leave, are still only given to those registered in the employment insurance system.

To this end, it is important to emphasize that "the ethos in the Korean workplace involves working long hours, which aggravates work–family tensions. In Korea, how much time an employee spends in the workplace is a critical indicator of his or her commitment to work" (Lee et al. 2016, 280). In such a work culture, the establishment of a work–life balance tends to be difficult for both mothers and fathers. One obvious problem that comes with this culture, which is also discussed in political contexts, is the feeling of discomfort among employees when applying for parental leave. Indeed, the take-up rates of parental leave policies among parents with newborns in 2020 was about 63 percent for mothers and 3.5 percent for fathers (Statistics Korea

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

2021c). In 2009, for instance, the Minister of the MOEL admitted that when it comes to the use of parental leave, "Korea's biggest problem is that companies run with tight manpower. Despite lawful [parental leave] benefits many don't take them because they [employees] feel uncomfortable."

Moreover, in 2011, an expert adviser in the MOEL rebuffed a bill proposed by seven Assembly members that would introduce seven-day paternity leave, remarking that "It requires a careful review given its potential burden to the employment insurance fund and companies' financial situations."[8]

The consequences of a business-friendly environment are, to a certain extent, acknowledged by the government. For instance, in 2008, the government introduced the Act on the Promotion of Creation of Family-Friendly Social Environment along with a certification system that assigns "Best Family Friendly Management" to companies that abide by the rules of the Labor Standards Act, which include enforcing working hour limits and offering maternity leave, and the Act on Equal Employment and Support for Work–Family Balance, which includes paternity and parental leave. As of 2021, companies certified as family-friendly enterprises gain advantages from the central government, municipalities, and banks. This incentive-focused-orientation is so assertive that some even put forward the paradoxical argument that the way to increase compliance was not through stricter inspection but by offering even larger incentives.[9] The effect of these was also questioned in the interview with Policy Executor C:

> Of course, there are fines and penalties for those companies which discourage employees from taking maternity or parental leave since it is a worker's legal right. However, it is the companies which are in the position of power, consequently they think along the lines that: "there are plenty of workers who can replace you in your position." So, the companies allow the employees to take their parental leave and then secretly encourage them to quit their job themselves. Their mindset is "Report us if you want. Then you won't be able to work in our business field again." There are many invisible threats like this made, or at least employees feel it that way. (Policy Executor C)

However, until the Moon administration was elected in 2017, the discussions in the National Assembly rarely addressed the status quo of Korea's demanding work culture, such as long work hours. The problem of the current system, which has its roots in understaffing within companies (Nho 2013), has remained unchallenged, and the narrative of its inevitability is still deep-seated, particularly among small and middle-sized companies. In an interview, Policy Executor C added that the topic of employees' work–life balance frequently failed to attract the attention of CEOs and that her offers to consult with them about it had often been rejected from the very beginning. Although she managed to succeed in raising the CEOs' and employees' awareness of the issue, their understanding was limited to the promotion of a couple of "band-

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

aids" as part of employee welfare programs, rather than an overhaul of their foundational approaches.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

We have analyzed the main reform rationales surrounding parental leave reforms, the policy design the Korean government chose to implement, and embedded limitations in the policy advancement. The analysis shows that while the ideas shaping parental leave policies have been inspired by Nordic countries, particularly Sweden, the current policy design differs in many respects. This discrepancy is in fact indicative of the importance of using a historical context-sensitive approach when studying policy translation.

Policy translation processes indeed entail complicated dynamics of factors such as multiple actors (Stone 2012), time (Dussauge-Laguna 2012), and culture (Bertram 2020). Also, as Freeden (2009, 6) stresses, "[u]nintended consequences, ineffective intentions, and misinterpretations of the message are equally valuable insights into political language."

In line with these thoughts, Korean parental leave policy reforms can be viewed as an example of translating policies into a local context where a number of variations between the systems occurs. Particularly, this demonstrates two distinct features of Korean policy translation: (i) travelled policy ideas are modified, and the modification of the meaning creates new meanings, designs, and knowledge in the locale (Mukhtarov 2014); and (ii) this circulating knowledge implicitly and explicitly informs how policymakers assess policy alternatives and select particular policy options (Prince 2010).

These two features, integrated with a closer look at local reform rationales, can further enhance the understanding of the localization of policy development. As Stone (2017, 66) highlights, "[a]t some point, the policy transfer process ends and endogenous forces of mutation take over." Policy aims are redefined by locally perceived policy problems, often shaping reform rationales. As discussed in this article, over the past three decades, parental leave reforms in Korea have been based on different rationales. The first included the need to reform traditional gender relations with the aim to facilitate women to combine work and family life. As discussed, in the 1990s and early 2000s, Korean national think-tanks and policymakers defined a number of problems associated with women's low participation in the labor market, mainly due to caring responsibilities. As a response, they advocated for the introduction of gender-neutral parental leave policies to facilitate women's status in the labor market. However, in the early 2000s, when the fertility rates decreased, previous policy rationales changed direction. Central in all public and policy debates was now the perceived national crisis tied to declining fertility rates, and the reform rationales shaped at the time focused on how to best facilitate women to have children. The explanation for declining fertility

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

rates was articulated in terms of inequalities between women and men in the home and in the labor market, and as a solution the government introduced a parental leave system which was inspired by the Swedish parental leave system. However, the Korean parental leave policy differed in some important aspects. First, eligibility and compensation levels varied from the Swedish system. Second, Swedish parental leave policies were mainly reviewed as a successful case of overcoming the population crisis, rather than pursuing gender-equal relations as an overarching policy goal.

Nevertheless, Korean governments have regarded gender-equal parental leave as a practical means to get the rapidly dropping fertility rates under control. Citing declining fertility rates, Korean policymakers legitimized further reforms of parental leave policies as a response to "an existential matter of the nation" and avoided resistance from entrepreneur communities. Furthermore, policy debates shifted the focus of blame from women who avoid birth to men who were not equally engaged in childcare. This was mostly manifested in debates where policymakers discussed the introduction of a mandatory father quota, which led to today's "daddy's month."

Lastly, despite all these processes of policy translation and locally evolved reforms, the design of Korean parental leave policies has remained selective, and the take-up rate low. This is mainly because leave benefits have historically been provided only for those registered in the employment insurance system, while a large number of temporary workers do not have access to benefits. Aside from a mismatch between the employment insurance scheme and the labor market structure, profit-oriented attitudes among companies and the government have also restrained proactive and radical measures to demand cooperation from companies—whether they are large or small—to create a work environment conducive to the utilization of parental leave, especially among fathers. This status quo manifests how institutional legacies have served as a restrainer for further policy reforms in Korea.

In conclusion, this article provides a case study demonstrating the localization process of how adopted policy ideas from abroad became modified (i.e. policy translation) and informed policy debates, and how reformed policy design was conditioned by institutional legacies. As Dussauge-Laguna (2012, 568) argues, in the field of policy transfer studies, questions such as "'when', 'for how long' or 'in what sequence' cross-national borrowing exercises happened are questions which have not been fully addressed in scholarly debates." Through this research, we emphasize that further understanding of how the process of an adopted policy idea becomes local practice requires a longitudinal comprehension of localization processes embracing its divergence over time, going beyond a temporary and often binary assessment of whether the policy adoption was successful or not.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our colleagues in the Department of Social Work and the Department of Sociology at Lund University for helpful and constructive comments on previous drafts. A special thanks to Kristina Göransson for careful and important feedback. We are also grateful to the reviewers for excellent and constructive comments.

Notes

1. All the quotes in the text were originally written or spoken in Korean. These were translated by Yeonjin Kim.
2. Assembly plenary session meeting minutes, July 12, 1995. 7th during the 176th session of the National Assembly: 26.
3. Environment & Labor Committee meeting minutes, November 30, 2005. 12th during the 256th session of the National Assembly.
4. Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy meeting minutes, August 18, 2005. 2nd during the 255th session of the National Assembly: 6–7.
5. Special Committee on Budget & Accounts meeting minutes, December 9, 2009. 10th during the 284th session of the National Assembly: 42.
6. Assembly plenary session meeting minutes, March 2, 2011. 7th during the 297th session of the National Assembly: 62.
7. See Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy meeting minutes, August 18, 2005. 2nd during the 255th session of the National Assembly. 34.
8. Environment & Labor Committee meeting minutes, June 22, 2011. 4th during the 301st session of the National Assembly: 69.
9. See Gender Equality and Family Committee meeting minutes, February 12, 2018. 1st during the 356th session of the National Assembly.

References

Béland, Daniel. 2019. Narrative stories, institutional rules, and the politics of pension policy in Canada and the United States. *Policy and Society* 38 (3): 356–72.

Bertram, Daniel. 2020. Accounting for culture in policy transfer: A blueprint for research and practice. *Political Studies Review* 20 (1): 83–100.

Bowen, Glenn A. 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal* 9 (2): 27–40.

Chang, Kyung Sup. 2009. "한국가족의 사회경제적 구조 변화와 사회재생산 문제 [Changes in socioeconomic structures in Korean families and social reproduction problems:]" Paper presented at *Double-income household support policy debate,* Koreana Hotel, October 29, 2009.

Choi, Young Jun, and Jin Wook Kim. 2009. So near, yet so far: Connecting welfare regime research to policy learning research. *Policy & Politics* 37 (3): 335–52.

Choi, Young Jun, and Sook Young Kwak. 2012. Role of policy transfer in formulating the Korean welfare state-theory and practice. *Journal of World Politics* 17: 249–90.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Dolowitz, David P., and David Marsh. 2000. Learning from abroad: The role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making. *Governance* 13 (1): 5–23.
Dussauge-Laguna, Mauricio I. 2012. The neglected dimension: Bringing time back into cross-national policy transfer studies. *Policy Studies* 33 (6): 567–85.
Duvander, Ann-Zofie, and Mats Johansson. 2019. Does fathers' care spill over? Evaluating reforms in the Swedish parental leave program. *Feminist Economics* 25 (2): 67–89.
Ellingsæter, Anne Lise, and Arnlaug Leira. eds. 2006. *Politicising parenthood in Scandinavia: Gender relations in welfare states*. Bristol: Policy Press.
Freeden, Michael. 2009. Failures of Political Thinking. *Political Studies* 57 (3): 141–64.
Försäkringskassan (2022) https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatperson/foralder/det-som-ar-bra-delar-man-lika-pa
Haas, Linda, and C. Philip Hwang. 2009. Is fatherhood becoming more visible at work? Trends in corporate support for fathers taking parental leave in Sweden. *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers* 7 (3): 303–21.
Hadjiisky, Magdaléna, Leslie Pal, and Christopher Walker. 2017. *Public policy transfer: Micro-dynamics and macro-effects*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
Hard, Natasha, Paige Lee, and Sue Dockett. 2018. Mapping the policy landscape of Australian early childhood education policy through document analysis. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* 43 (2): 4–12.
Holter, Øystein Gullvåg. 2007. Men's work and family reconciliation in Europe. *Men and Masculinities* 9 (4): 425–56.
Hong, Seung-Ah, and In-seon Inseon Lee. 2014. Fathers' use of parental leave in Korea: Motives, experiences and problems. *Gender Studies and Policy Review* 7 (January): 55–69.
Kang, Yi Hyun, Carel Dieperink, and Dries Hegger. 2022. Policy translation and dynamics: The role of Dutch ideas in developing South Korea's coastal management policies. *Ocean and Coastal Management* 221 (February): 106102.
Kim, Sehoon, Gary N. McLean, and Soyoun Park. 2018. The cultural context of long working hours: Workplace experiences in Korea. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* 30 (2): 36–51.
Kim, Wonjung. 2020. Patriarchal familism and family-friendly policies of Korean companies. *Journal of Korean Women's Studies* 36 (1): 95–137.
Kim, Young Mi. 2018. Gender analysis on the plan for ageing society and population for reconstruction of the discourses on low fertility. *Journal of Critical Social Welfare* 59: 103-52.
Korea Employment Information Service. 고용보험 적용사업체수 및 근로자수 [Number of establishments and employed covered by employment insurance]. https://gsis.kwdi.re.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=338&tblId=DT_1Y0318&conn_path=I2
Korean Women's Development Institute. 1993. 각국의 육아휴직제도와 우리나라 제도의 개선방향 [Parental leave system in the world and suggestions for the improvement of Korean system].
——. 2015. 생활시간조사를 통해본 가족시간 변화 추이 분석 연구 [Study on the change of family time based on Time Use Survey]. 66.
Kwon, Huck-ju. 2009. Policy learning and transfer: the experience of the developmental state in East Asia. *Policy & Politics* 37 (3): 409–21.
Lee, Jaedeok. 2017. 대선주자들의 3대 육아정책 [Three major parenting policies of the presidential candidates]. *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, March 21.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Lee, Soomi, Ann-Zofie Duvander, and Steven H. Zarit 2016. How can family policies reconcile fertility and women's employment? Comparisons between South Korea and Sweden. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 22 (3): 269–88.

Leira, Arnlaug. 2002. *Working parents and the welfare state: Family change and policy reform in Scandinavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lundqvist, Åsa. 2017. *Transforming gender and family relations. How active labour market policies shaped the dual earner model*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

——— 2011. *Family policy paradoxes. Gender equality and labour market regulation in Sweden, 1930–2010*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ministry of Employment and Labor. 2006. Maternity protection policies that employers need to know. https://www.moel.go.kr/local/seoulnambu/common/downloadFile.do;jsessionid=PIO0wn2gTVTewPLj90PwF57WmOB5r05fgW1b18avJPztFqPNJu0LIARUIkqsvBaM.moel_was_outside_servlet_wwwlocal?file_seq=21171348778&bbs_seq=56576&bbs_id=LOCAL1 (accessed September 29, 2022).

Mukhtarov, Farhad. 2014. Rethinking the travel of ideas: Policy translation in the water sector. *Policy and Politics* 42 (1): 71–88.

Nahm, Jaewook. 2018. The growth of the Korean welfare state and its implications for redistribution: Who has been excluded? *Korean Social Policy Review* 25 (4): 3–38.

Nho, Yongjin. 2013. On the determinants of overtime. *Korean Journal of Industrial Relations* 23 (3): 67–87.

Oh, Yoo-seok. 2014. An analysis of women policies of the Park Geun-Hye government. *Democratic Society and Policy* 26: 201–32.

Park, Soyeon. 2015. 김희정 여성가족부 장관, "남성인력 활용만으로는 국가경제 유지하기 힘들다" [Heejung Kim, Minister, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family," It is difficult to maintain the national economy by using male manpower alone." *Financial News*, January 25.

Peng, Ito. 2011. The good, the bad and the confusing: The political economy of social care expansion in South Korea. *Development and Change* 42 (4): 905–23.

Prince, Russell. 2010. Policy transfer as policy assemblage: Making policy for the creative industries in New Zealand. *Environment and Planning A* 42 (1): 169–86.

Schauer, Johanna. 2018. Labor Market Duality in Korea. *IMF Working Papers* 18 (126): 1.

Shin, Kyung-Ah. 2010. Issues and dilemmas of population policy in Korea: Gender policy without gender perspective. *Issues in Feminism* 10 (1): 89–122.

Statistics Korea. 2021a. Labor conditions by employment type. https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=118&tblId=DT_PAYN013&conn_path=I2

——. 2021b. *2020년 8월 경제활동인구조사 근로형태별 부가조사 결과* [August, 2020 Results of supplementary survey on economically active population by employment type].

—— 2021c. *육아휴직 통계 결과 (잠정)* [(Preliminary) Result of statistics on parental leave].

——. 2022. Total fertility rates. http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1428

Stone, Diane. 2012. Transfer and translation of policy. *Policy Studies* 33 (4): 1–17.

——— 2017. Understanding the transfer of policy failure: bricolage, experimentalism and translation. *Politics and Policy* 45 (1): 55–70.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026

Windwehr, Jana, Ann-Zofie Duvander, Anne Lise Ellingsæter, Gudny Björk Eydal, Ziva Humer, and Hideki Nakazato. 2022. The Nordic model of father quotas in leave policies. *Social Politics* 29 (1): 190–214.

Yoon, Hongsik. 2004. Understanding and responding to changes in family and directions of family welfare policy. *Korean Journal of Family Welfare*. 14: 263–93.

Downloaded from academic.oup.com/sp/article/30/4/1113/7136011 by guest on 17 October 2026