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Silke Büchau, Marie-Fleur Philipp, Pia S. Schober, C. Katharina Spiess

Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB) – Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 4 – 65185 Wiesbaden – Germany

Day care availability and awareness of gendered economic risks: How they shape work and care norms

Silke Büchau[1], Marie-Fleur Philipp[1], Pia S. Schober[1], C. Katharina Spiess[2]

Abstract

Family policies not only provide money, time and infrastructure to families, but also convey normative assumptions about what is considered desirable or acceptable in paid work and family care. This study conceptualises and empirically investigates how priming respondents with brief media report-like information on existing day care policy entitlements and the economic consequences of maternal employment interruptions may change personal normative beliefs about parental work-care arrangements. Furthermore, we analyse whether these effects differ between groups of respondents assumed to vary in their degree of affectedness by the information as well as previous knowledge. The theoretical framework builds on the concept of normative policy feedback effects (Soroka and Wlezien, 2010; Gangl and Ziefle, 2015) combined with social norm theory (Bicchieri, 2017) and human cognition theories (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Evans and Stanovich, 2013). The study is based on a fully randomized survey experiment in Wave 12 of the German Family Panel (pairfam) and applies linear and ordinal logistic regressions with cluster-robust standard errors to a sample of 5,783 respondents. Our results suggest that priming respondents with information on day care policy and long-term economic risks of maternal employment interruptions increases acceptance of intensive day care use across the full sample and especially for mothers with children below school entry age. It further increases support for longer hours spent in paid work among childless women and mothers with school-aged children. Norms regarding paternal working hours are largely unaffected by the information given in this survey experiment.

Keywords: gender beliefs, gender division of labour, parental employment, family policy, day care, priming, survey experiment, Germany

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[1] Corresponding author: M.A. Silke Büchau, Department of Sociology, University of Tübingen, Wilhelmstraße 36, 72074 Tübingen, Germany, +49 7071 2978383, silke.buechau@uni-tuebingen.de

[2] Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB) and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)

1. Introduction

Despite significant changes over the past decades, large gender differences between mothers and fathers with young children persist in time spent on employment and childcare (England, 2010; Craig and Mullan, 2010; Kühhirt, 2012). This has significant long-term consequences for mothers in terms of lower life-time earnings and pension contributions (Bettio et al., 2013; Sigle-Rushton and Waldfogel, 2007; Jessen, 2021), as well as for fathers in terms of restricted choices regarding work-family balance (Gerson, 2009).

To reduce these gender inequalities, many countries have introduced family policy provisions such as day care, paid parental leave and "father quotas" for parental leave in order to facilitate work-family balance, increase maternal employment, and fathers' childcare involvement (Gornick and Meyers, 2003). A large international body of literature has provided evidence that day care policies impact maternal employment behaviour (for a comprehensive review on maternal employment see Ferragina (2020)) and take-up of different types of childcare (Ellingsæter et al., 2017). Studies on fathers' employment are rather rare and suggest that it is rather inelastic and independent of day care supply (Müller et al., 2013). Most of this previous literature has concentrated on how economic incentives set by family policies explain variations in work-care arrangements.

A large feminist literature as well as recent works by normative policy feedback theorists and sociologists stress the ideological nature of such policies and suggest that family policies also affect individuals' work-care beliefs through conveying and legitimizing moral normative assumptions of what is desirable or acceptable in the area of paid work and family care (Pfau-Effinger, 2013; Kremer, 2007; Gangl and Ziefle, 2015). Some international quantitative studies provided observational or experimental evidence that day care policies affect individuals' gender ideologies or preferences for work-care arrangements among the target groups of such policies as well as the wider public (e.g., Zoch and Schober, 2018; Bünning and Hipp, 2022).

In the light of increasing policy support for dual-earner-carer families in Germany and other countries and the substantial media attention paid to this topic, we are interested in further exploring the legitimizing norm-setting effects of day care policies on work-care beliefs. Germany is an interesting case because it has undergone a major expansion of day care provision since the mid-2000s (Zoch and Schober, 2018), yet maternal employment and take-

up of (full-day) care for children below age 3 has risen only slowly (Schober and Spiess, 2015). The recent family policy reforms have been accompanied by media campaigns that may have additionally promoted changes in work-care beliefs. For example, two of the largest German newspapers ("Süddeutsche Zeitung" and "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung") published between 336 and 598 articles per year on day care and related terms around the implementation of a recent day care reform in 2013 (see Table A1). Roughly a third of all reports in these two newspapers since 2000 addressed not just day care but also specifically the consequences of take-up for parents' employment, careers, and incomes.

We contribute to the literature by investigating how policy-related information similar to short media reports about a recent day care policy reform in 2013 and the economic consequences of its take-up may change normative beliefs regarding work-care arrangements in families with young children in Germany. We connect normative policy feedback concepts (Gangl and Ziefle, 2015; Kremer, 2007) with social norm theory (Bicchieri, 2017) as well as human cognition theories (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Evans and Stanovich, 2013) to model how priming and thereby increasing the attention paid to the policy-related information may be incorporated into respondents' normative judgements about parental work-care arrangements. We rely on a fully randomized survey experiment developed and implemented in Wave 12 of the German Family Panel (pairfam) and apply linear and ordinal logistic regressions with cluster-robust standard errors to 5,783 respondents. The large representative sample allows for a better understanding of how the policy-related information is differentially diffused across groups, such as by gender and parental status. Groups that are likely to differ in their degree of affectedness as well as salience of the policy information. Our results show that priming respondents with information on the day care policy reform in 2013 and economic consequences of maternal employment interruptions are associated with higher support for intensive day care use among the full sample and especially among mothers with children below school entry age. The priming further increases support for longer maternal working hours among female respondents and among women who are childless or have school-aged children. By contrast, normative judgements of paternal working hours are largely unaffected by the priming information.

2. Background: Theory & literature on the relation between family policy & work-care norms

In contemporary sociology, gender is widely understood as a social structure (Risman, 2004) that is embedded at different interrelated levels of society and shapes gendered beliefs about parental work-care arrangements. At the institutional level, family policies are based on gendered cultural logics or ways of regulating economic resource distributions. At the individual level, men and women develop gendered identities through the internalization of social gender norms, which influence the work-care contributions they consider appropriate for themselves. At the interactional level, such cognitive gender biases in beliefs contribute to the reproduction of gender inequalities in everyday life (Risman, 2004).

Normative policy feedback theory suggests that family policies can affect individuals' ideologies or norms regarding the gender division of labour through both the economic regulations and cultural meanings they convey (Gangl and Ziefle, 2015; Kremer, 2007; Soroka and Wlezien, 2010). Gangl and Ziefle (2015) offer two main explanatory mechanisms. At the micro-level, individuals change their gender ideologies through preference adaptation because family policy instruments create economic incentives for specific role behaviours. At the macro-level, cultural diffusion and norm-setting effects likely not only affect the target group of family policies but also the wider public (see also Bicchieri, 2017). Following cultural diffusion processes, preference adaptation may be further stimulated over time through altered role perceptions and expectations within social networks based on observable behavioural changes by other mothers and fathers as a result of the policy reform. Norm-setting processes assume that family policies convey social norms regarding work-care arrangements and serve as legitimising normative anchors in the process of individual preference formation and change.

A rather small body of international literature has analysed the relationship between day care policies and beliefs regarding the gender division of work and care. For instance, two cross-national studies found a positive correlation between a composite measure of family policies, including publicly funded day care and level of public childcare spending, and more egalitarian attitudes towards female employment (Neimanns, 2021; Sjöberg, 2004). Pollmann-Schult (2016) found that the difference in preferred working hours between mothers of young children and childless women was smaller in European countries with higher levels of day care

availability for children under 3 years. Others use differences in family policies, including day care availability, in the former East and West Germany to explain attitudes towards maternal employment (Jessen, 2021). Based on two representative surveys before and after a major day care expansion in Norway, Ellingsaeter et al. (2017) revealed that partnered mothers with children below school entry age shifted their preferences in the direction of greater day care use between 2002 and 2010. Most studies found significant associations between day care policy availability and general attitudes towards maternal employment and day care use, but were unable to explore underlying mechanisms. Improving on the (repeated) cross-sectional designs of most other studies, a quasi-experimental panel study by Zoch and Schober (2018) showed that variation in the regional expansion of day care provision for children under 3 years between 2007 and 2013 was associated with greater support for maternal employment among West German mothers, including mothers of school-aged children, while no effects for fathers or East German mothers were found. The former effect points to norm-setting or cultural diffusion mechanisms that go beyond changes due to role exposure among the target group of day care policies.

A few survey experiments from the United States and Germany have investigated how hypothetical family policy improvements may change work-care preferences of the potential target population (Pedulla & Thebaud, 2015; Thebaud & Pedulla, 2016; Bünning & Hipp, 2021). Thébaud and Pedulla (2015, 2016) analysed the effect of priming with hypothetical policies supporting the reconciliation of employment and family care on the preferred future work-family arrangements of young childless adults in the United States. Women were more likely to prefer gender-egalitarian work-care arrangements when supportive work-family policies were available compared to the status quo in the United States (Pedulla and Thébaud, 2015). For men, supportive work-family policies only had an impact when they believed that other males also preferred gender-egalitarian relationships (Thébaud and Pedulla, 2016). For Germany, Bünning and Hipp (2022) analysed, as one of three hypothetical policy scenarios, how greater availability of high-quality affordable day care affected working hours preferences among parents with young children. They found that mothers would want to work slightly longer hours in the presence of greater day care availability. By focussing mostly on personal (hypothetical) preferences among specific target populations of family policies, these experimental survey studies were unable to disentangle whether the effects were driven by

changes in economic incentives or institutional legitimizations of certain work-care arrangements.

We extend the literature on normative family policy feedback effects by exploring a specific theoretical mechanism of norm-setting. We examine whether priming respondents with information about the day care policy entitlements and the economic consequences of their uptake - similar to what may be presented in media reports about day care policies - has the potential to change personal normative beliefs about parental work-care arrangements. By relying on a fully randomized survey experiment implemented in a large long-running representative panel, we are able to provide experimental evidence for this mechanism across different population groups. We further contribute to the literature by testing for subgroup differences in norm-setting effects by respondents' gender and parental status, as these characteristics are likely to impact the degree of affectedness as well as salience of the policy-related information.

3. Day care policy and work-care arrangements in the German context

Germany is an interesting context because major reforms in day care and parental leave policies have been instituted since the 2000s, shifting the country's welfare state from a familialist model towards greater support of gender equality and improved compatibility of employment and family care (Zoch and Schober, 2018). While half-day care slots have been guaranteed to all children between ages 3 and 6 since 1996, day care availability for children under age 3 has been traditionally low, especially in West Germany (Spiess et al., 2008). Since the mid-2000s, Germany increased day care provision for children under 3 years, and since August 2013, all children aged 1 year or over have been granted a legal entitlement to a day care place (Zoch and Schober, 2018). In parallel, a 2007 reform to the country's paid parental leave policy instituted a shorter but better-paid parental leave period as well as two months of non-transferable leave reserved for each parent (Zoch and Schober, 2018).

About thirty years after German reunification, behaviours and ideologies towards maternal employment and day care use in the former East and West Germany have converged somewhat, and part-time employment has become the most prevalent arrangement of combining employment and family care for women (Zoch and Schober, 2018). However,

differences between East and West Germany remain in terms of approval and usage of (full-day) care as well as maternal working hours in families with young children (Schober and Spiess, 2015). The percentage of children under the age of 3 attending day care in East and especially West Germany remains low in international comparison (51.5% and 29.4%, respectively, in 2018) (Federal Statistical Office, 2019). Parents' main reasons for not using day care are the desire to raise their child themselves, believing that the child is too young for institutionalised day care, or informal grandparental care being available (Schmitz and Spiess, 2018). Hence, West Germany is a particularly interesting context to explore norm-setting effects of day care policies and of drawing people's attention to the long-term economic risks of intensive labour market interruptions and part-time employment for mothers.

4. The conceptual framework and experimental design

Following social norm theory (Bicchieri, 2017), interventions, educational, or media campaigns might be a tool to promote individuals' reflection on their beliefs and social expectations, which Bicchieri (2017) assumes to be a prerequisite for changing gender norms. We aim to analyse how providing brief information about a recent day care reform and the economic consequences of its take-up might function as reference point for individuals' subsequent personal normative beliefs towards work-care arrangements and reduce cognitive bias in gender beliefs. Personal normative beliefs are defined as individuals' beliefs concerning how they themselves or others should behave (Bicchieri, 2017), and might lead to different normative judgements depending on the specific work-family situation under evaluation.

Our short experiment provides respondents with information about the legal entitlement to a day care place for all children beginning at age 1 in Germany since August 2013 and further points to empirical evidence on the long-term economic consequences of maternal employment interruptions. The process of showing respondents brief, high-quality information before they make normative judgements about parental work-care arrangements can also be called priming. Priming is a mechanism through which information can alter the salience of and attention to specific criteria (Druckman and Holmes, 2004). The criteria to which individual pay most attention most likely serve as the basis for their overall evaluations.

Thus, priming may influence individuals' personal normative beliefs about the appropriate combination of employment and institutional day care.

Dual-process theories of human cognition (Evans and Stanovich, 2013) as well as the elaboration likelihood model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) distinguish between faster, more automatic Type 1 processes, which may strongly activate gender-stereotypical beliefs, and Type 2 processes of slower, controlled and hypothetical thinking, reflective reasoning and decision-making. We expect that priming respondents with evidence-based information on the day care entitlement and long-term economic risks of maternal employment interruptions is likely to increase the salience of, attention paid to and reflection on these economic criteria in respondents' evaluations of parental work-care patterns compared to other factors. This likely moves respondents away from automatic, fast, intuitive judgements that mobilize gender-stereotypical beliefs about work-care arrangements towards greater support for day care use and maternal employment. **As in Germany, it is typical for mothers rather than fathers to adjust their preferred and actual working hours to childcare duties (Kühhirt, 2012; Bünning and Hipp, 2022), we assume that priming with information on day care availability and the economic consequences of its take-up will increase respondents' support for intensive day care use as well as longer maternal working hours, and not necessarily affect support for paternal working hours (Hypothesis 1).**

Personal relevance and previous reflective reasoning about the policy-related information

Furthermore, normative policy feedback theory supposes that the impact of policy-related information varies between different population groups depending on the proximity and visibility of the policy (Ellingsæter et al., 2017). Similarly, theories of human cognition (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) suggest that previous knowledge and level of reflective reasoning about an issue, such as motivation to actively process the information, are likely to moderate effects on beliefs.

The motivation to actively process arguments about family policy take-up is likely to be related to the relevance and consequences of the policy for individuals' lives, often referred to as **policy proximity** (Ellingsæter et al., 2017: 152). The relevance or self-interest in the day care entitlement and economic risks of maternal employment interruptions likely increases reflective reasoning on the information and thus contributes to reducing cognitive gender

bias. The relevance may be strongest for families with young children, who are the direct beneficiaries of day care policies and have the strongest self-interest in using the policy and avoiding adverse long-term negative economic consequences. The information is likely to be more relevant to mothers than fathers, as women more often organize childcare and adapt their working hours to childcare responsibilities (Kühhirt, 2012). Our dataset includes childless women at childbearing age. The information about day care and long-term economic risks might be more relevant for childless women who intend to become parents in the near future than for women without this intention. Previous research supports the argument that day care policy effects are stronger for women than men (Zoch and Schober, 2018), but has not tested for interactions with parenthood status.

Moreover, the priming effects also likely depend on the **policy visibility,** "the degree to which a policy is salient to mass publics" (Ellingsæter et al., 2017: 152). Providing information about the day care entitlement and the long-term economic implications of maternal employment interruptions is likely to particularly increase visibility and attention for respondents who otherwise would not have incorporated the information into their evaluations and for whom the information is relatively new. For childless women or mothers of older children born before the day care reform of 2013, we expect that priming decreases information barriers and encourages them to actively reflect on the information, thereby reducing cognitive gender biases. By contrast, parents who have had a young child since the day care reform have probably already integrated the day care entitlement into their beliefs about work-care arrangements. We expect the long-term risk information on maternal employment interruptions to be particularly salient to childless women, whereas mothers may have already included the economic consequences in their work-care judgements based on their own experiences.

As a combination of policy proximity and visibility, we expect that the effects of the priming information on personal normative beliefs about parental work-care arrangements are especially high when the priming information is personally relevant and salient for a particular subgroup. **Specifically, we expect that the policy proximity mechanism is more important than policy visibility for women relative to men. Therefore, the priming is expected to increase normative support for day care use and maternal employment more strongly for female compared to male respondents (Hypothesis 2). Among subgroups of female**

respondents for whom the information is generally personally relevant, we assume policy visibility differences in the sense that the information is more salient for childless women or mothers with older children than for mothers with children below the age of school entry. Therefore, we assume that the priming effect will be strongest for childless women, followed by mothers of older children and mothers of young children (Hypothesis 3). Variations among childless men and fathers are difficult to predict a priori.

5. Data

We use data from the 12th wave of the German Family Panel *pairfam* ("Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics") (release 12.0, 2019/2020) (Brüderl et al., 2021a) (cite vignette data when published in 2022 release 13.0). The panel initially started in 2008 with a nationwide random sample of the German population register for three age cohorts born in 1971-73, 1981-83, and 1991-93 (15-17, 25-27, and 35-37 years old, respectively, in 2008), summing up to 12,402 interviews in total in the first wave. CAPI interviews of the main respondents and their current partners, parents, and children have been conducted annually since. Following the inclusion of replenishment and additional step-up samples in Waves 11 and 12, pairfam contained about 8,197 respondents in Wave 12. A detailed description of the study can be found in Huinink et al. (2011).

To investigate effects of priming with policy-related information, we developed a short **information experiment** in cooperation with the pairfam coordinators, which was included in Wave 12 of the panel, conducted between October 2019 and April 2020 (see Schober et al., 2022). A randomly selected half of respondents were presented a short evidence-based information stimulus at the beginning of the experiment, which reads as follows.

"Before you start, here is some important information: Since 2013, every child has an entitlement to a spot in a day care centre or at a childminder beginning at age one. This allows both parents - if they wish - to pursue employment. For mothers, in particular, earning an income of their own can improve their financial situation in the long term. Scientific studies show that shorter employment interruptions tend to result in higher long-term wages for mothers, which can reduce the risk of poverty in old age."

The information experiment contained two elements. First, it increased the visibility of the legal entitlement to a day care slot since 2013 for all children in Germany beginning at age 1. Second, it sought to raise awareness that mothers experience lower life-time earnings and old-age poverty significantly more often than fathers, which is partly due to mothers' longer employment interruptions, and that shorter employment interruptions help to overcome these risks. The information stimulus was approved by the ethics commission of the University of Tübingen as well as the scientific committee of the pairfam panel and was based on the results of several peer-reviewed studies. Afterwards, all respondents were asked to form judgements about the work-care arrangements of fictitious couples with a 15-month-old child. The age of 15 months was chosen because the maximum period of paid full-time parental leave following the birth of a child is 14 months in Germany. We did not conduct a manipulation check for whether the respondents recalled the priming information. However, the survey experiment was conducted in face-to-face mode, so we expect that the majority of respondents read and understood the priming information.

The survey experiment was combined with a **vignette experiment** (for further information, see Schober et al., 2022). Each respondent received three descriptions of a hypothetical family that varied on seven dimensions (parental income ratio, division of childcare/parental leave, child temperament, day care centre quality, standard of living, career prospects, and family friendliness of jobs), with each dimension containing different categories. By experimentally controlling for these factors, we made sure that respondents built their normative judgements about parental work-care arrangements on the basis of comparable situations.

Operationalization of variables

Work-care arrangements. Our dependent variables are respondents' normative judgements about the extent of day care use as well as mothers' and fathers' weekly hours in paid work. The extent to which the child should attend day care was measured with the four categories "no day care", "a few hours on some days", "a half-day every day", and "a full-day every day" and is treated as a categorical variable. Half-day care was preferred in half of the observations (56%), followed by full-day care (22%) and a few hours on some days a week (19%). Respondents were asked to make normative judgements about mothers' and fathers' ideal working hours on a seven-point scale: "0 hours per week", "1-8 hours per week", "9-17 hours per week", "18-25 hours per week", "26-32 hours per week", "33-40 hours per week" and

"more than 40 hours per week". Whether respondents first had to rate the mother's or father's working hours was randomly varied. The most frequently chosen category for mothers was "18-25 hours" (31%), and close to half (46%) of respondents indicated that fathers should work "33-40 hours". We recoded the working hours into interval variables, using the middle value of each category. Additionally, we use the mother's working hours as a share of the sum of both parents' working hours (ranging between 0% and 100%).

Experimental condition. Our main independent variable is the policy-related priming, which distinguished between respondents who received the policy information (priming group) and respondents who did not receive this information (control group). Despite the random assignment of the groups, the priming and control group significantly differed with respect to a few demographic variables (see Table A2). Respondents in the priming group were less frequently women, partnered, from cohort 1971-1973 or 1981-1983, and had less frequently completed tertiary education than respondents in the control group. Subsequent regression models control for these demographic characteristics to make sure that differences between the priming and control groups can be allocated to the priming effect.

Gender and parenthood subgroups. To test for heterogeneous effects by policy proximity and visibility, we include a binary variable for respondents' gender. Based on respondents' parental status and the age of the youngest child living in their household, we also distinguished between the categories of childless women, mothers with their youngest child under age 6, and mothers whose youngest child was age 6 or over. We further controlled for children not living in the household.

Control variables. We controlled for a small number of respondent characteristics. Two binary variables measure whether respondents currently live in a partnership and have acquired tertiary education or not based on the CASMIN-1999 classification. An interval variable accounts for respondents' weekly working hours, including overtime. We included the birth cohort, i.e., whether the respondent was born in 1991-1993, 1981-1983, 1971-1973, or a so-called "step-up", born between 1994-2003, a former adolescent respondent who became a main respondent in Wave 11 or 12. We further controlled for whether respondents currently lived in the former West or East Germany. We further accounted for the context in which the normative judgements were made by including the categorical vignette dimensions regarding

parental income ratio, partners' division of childcare, child temperament, day care centre quality, standard of living, career prospects and family friendliness of the jobs.

Sample selection and method

In total, 6,285 respondents (18,855 observations) took part in the survey experiment. We restricted our analytical sample to observations with valid answers on all dependent variables, thereby excluding 2,055 (10.90%) observations. We further excluded 93 (0.5%) observations with missing values on the respondent level control variables. Our final analytical sample consists of 16,707 observations nested in 5,783 respondents. To examine the average effects of priming information on normative judgements of work-care arrangements, we use linear and ordinal logistic regression models with cluster-robust standard errors to account for vignettes nested in respondents. To assess the moderating influence of respondents' characteristics, we run separate models by subgroups regarding gender and parenthood status. All data analyses were conducted in the statistical software Stata16.

6. Results

Table 1 shows the average priming effects on normative judgements about day care use and parental employment in the full sample (results for the control variables are shown in Table A3). We expected that priming respondents with information on day care policy availability and economic consequences of maternal employment interruptions would result in greater support for intensive day care and longer maternal working hours compared to the control group (Hypothesis 1). We indeed found that respondents in the priming group were significantly less likely to choose "no use of day care" and more likely to select "full-day care" than those in the control group. For respondents in the priming group, the odds of selecting full-day care were 1.1 times that of respondents in the control group (column 2). The average marginal effects additionally show that respondents in the priming group were significantly less likely to choose "no" or "few hours" of day care and more likely to select "half-day" and "full-day" care; for example, they were about 1 percentage point more likely to select "full-day" care (column 3-6). In line with Hypothesis 1, the relatively short priming message led respondents to increase their support for extended day care use in the full sample. Contrary

to Hypothesis 1, the priming effects with regard to normative judgements about maternal working hours were not statistically significant.

Table 1. Ordered logistic regression and average marginal effects of normative judgements about day care use on policy information and OLS regression of normative judgements about parental working hours on policy information

	Day care	No day care	A few hours on some days	Half-day every day	Full-day every day	**Mother's working hours**	**Father's working hours**	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Odds ratio	Average marginal effects of coeff.				**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Priming (ref. control)	**1.100***	**-0.004***	**-0.012***	**0.001†**	**0.014***	**-0.021**	**-0.078**	**0.136**
	(0.048)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.007)	(0.206)	(0.171)	(0.300)
Women (ref. men)	0.961	0.002	0.005	-0.000	-0.006	-0.082	-0.122	0.230
	(0.044)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.007)	(0.217)	(0.183)	(0.310)
Childless (ref.)								
Child under 6	1.212*	-0.007*	-0.024*	0.001†	0.030*	-0.720*	0.986***	-1.613**
	(0.096)	(0.003)	(0.010)	(0.001)	(0.013)	(0.357)	(0.295)	(0.526)
Child 6+ years	1.119	-0.004	-0.014)	0.002	0.017	-0.001	1.065***	-0.888
	(0.097)	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.013)	(0.389)	(0.318)	(0.565)
Child outside HH	1.262	-0.009†	-0.029†	0.001	0.037	0.131	-0.013	0.084
	(0.179)	(0.005)	(0.017)	(0.002)	(0.023)	(0.642)	(0.579)	(0.902)
Constant						15.479***	35.406***	28.962***
						(0.487)	(0.407)	(0.741)
Cut 1	-2.320***							
	(0.107)							
Cut 2	-0.317***							
	(0.098)							
Cut 3	2.443***							
	(0.102)							
N evaluations	16,707					16,707	16,707	16,707
N respondents	5,783					5,783	5,783	5,783

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Furthermore, we expected the priming information to have larger positive effects on support for intensive day care use and maternal employment among female compared to male respondents (Hypothesis 2). Among female respondents, we expected the strongest effects for childless women, followed by mothers of school-aged children and mothers of children below school entry age (Hypothesis 3). Table 2 shows the priming information effect separately by respondents' gender and parenthood status.

The positive effects of the priming information on normative judgements about day care use in the full sample seems to be driven by female respondents. For male respondents, no such priming effects were found, confirming Hypothesis 2 with regard to day care use. More specifically, the positive effect of the information priming on normative judgements about day care among women seems to be driven by mothers of young children, indicated by marginally significant and positive associations for this subgroup. For these mothers, the odds of selecting "full-day care" in the priming group were 1.3 times that of respondents in the control group. These mothers were about 4 percentage points more likely to support "full-day care". This result contradicts Hypothesis 3, which expected the strongest information priming effects for childless women and mothers of older children compared to mothers of children below school entry age. We expected that mothers with children below school entry age would already know some of the information about the day care policy. However, the day care entitlement and maternal employment interruption information might have had the highest personal relevance for these women and induced a more careful reflective reasoning of the information, which in turn resulted in higher support for intensive day care use.

With regard to maternal employment, in line with Hypothesis 3, we found that the priming information increased normative support for intensive maternal working hours among childless women and mothers whose youngest child was above age 6. The strength of these effects was modest, with roughly 1 additional working hour per week preferred. For childless women and mothers of school-aged children, the policy information on the reduced economic risks associated with more intensive maternal employment probably contained some novel or relevant elements, increasing the likelihood of reflection and a shift toward more egalitarian normative judgements regarding maternal employment. Unexpectedly, the priming information decreased support for longer maternal working hours among men (especially among fathers of small children) to a small extent, by half an hour per week, which may relate to personal experiences with work-family conflicts in this group (Tables 2 and A6).

To test whether the priming effects in the subgroups were statistically significantly different from each other, we conducted interactions of the priming information with the gender or parenthood status variable. In line with Hypothesis 2, the priming had significantly stronger positive effects on normative judgements about maternal employment among women compared to men, but not on judgements regarding day care use (Table A4). Contrary to

Hypothesis 3, we did not find that the priming effects on normative judgements about day care differed significantly between the three groups of women. However, in line with Hypothesis 3, the priming had significantly stronger positive effects on normative judgements about maternal employment for childless women and mothers with children above age 6 compared to mothers with young children (Table A5).

Table 2. Ordered logistic regression and average marginal effects of normative judgements about day care use on policy information and OLS regression of normative judgements about parental working hours on policy information by subgroups of respondents

	Day care	No day care	A few hours on some days	Half-day every day	Full-day every day	**Mother's working hours**	**Father's working hours**	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Odds ratio	Average marginal effects of coeff.				**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Women	**1.164***	**-0.006***	**-0.019***	**0.003***	**0.022***	**0.505†**	**0.121**	**0.516**
Priming (ref. control)	(0.070)	(0.002)	(0.007)	(0.001)	(0.009)	(0.274)	(0.232)	(0.397)
N evaluations	8,837					8,837	8,837	8,837
N respondents	3,059					3,059	3,059	3,059
Men	**1.033**	**-0.001**	**-0.004**	**0.000**	**0.005**	**-0.642***	**-0.267**	**-0.345**
Priming (ref. control)	(0.066)	(0.002)	(0.008)	(0.000)	(0.010)	(0.309)	(0.251)	(0.451)
N evaluations	7,870					7,870	7,870	7,870
N respondents	2,724					2,724	2,724	2,724
Childless women	**1.100**	**-0.003**	**-0.013**	**0.004**	**0.012**	**0.749***	**0.340**	**0.707**
Priming (ref. control)	(0.090)	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.004)	(0.011)	(0.382)	(0.342)	(0.541)
N evaluations	4,595					4,595	4,595	4,595
N respondents	1,592					1,592	1,592	1,592
Mother of child under 6	**1.309†**	**-0.014†**	**-0.028†**	**0.001**	**0.041†**	**-0.897**	**-0.167**	**-1.011**
Priming (ref. control)	(0.189)	(0.008)	(0.145)	(0.003)	(0.021)	(0.605)	(0.487)	(0.919)
N evaluations	1,684					1,684	1,684	1,684
N respondents	575					575	575	575
Mother of child 6+	**1.147**	**-0.005**	**-0.015**	**-0.002**	**0.022**	**1.013***	**-0.085**	**1.428†**
Priming (ref. control)	(0.139)	(0.005)	(0.014)	(0.002)	(0.100)	(0.509)	(0.411)	(0.743)
N evaluations	2,266					2,266	2,266	2,266
N respondents	790					790	790	790

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Analogous tests for subgroups of men by parental status generally pointed to mostly non-significant effects of the priming information on normative judgements of day care use or parental employment (Table A6 and A7). Possibly, most men did not feel sufficiently personally affected to incorporate the information on the day care entitlement and long-term economic consequences of maternal employment interruptions into their judgements about parental work-care arrangements.

Robustness tests

We conducted several robustness checks for the main priming effects. First, we tested a binary (no day care vs. some day care) measure of day care use and binary and categorical specifications of maternal and paternal working hours and found similar priming effects as in the main analysis, except for an insignificant result for the binary day care specification (Table A8). We reran all models additionally including respondents' ideologies towards maternal employment (item "A child under 6 will suffer from having a working mother") from the previous Wave 11 to control for respondents' baseline level of gendered beliefs towards the division of labour, and the main results remained unchanged (Table A9). Next, we tested whether the priming effects depended on respondents' level of education, which might be correlated with policy visibility or level of policy information (Hermes et al., 2021) and only few significant effects among respondents with tertiary education were found (Table A10). Moreover, the priming effects did not depend on the specific family-work context, as the majority of interactions between the priming information and the seven vignette dimensions were not significant (for the significant interactions see Table A11). Finally, we reran our analyses using calibrated design weights, which adjust the data to the target population and control for baseline survey participation and panel attrition bias (Brüderl et al., 2021b). These weights were only available for the main pairfam respondents, so we had to exclude the step-up respondents (444 respondents). The unweighted and weighted results were very similar, which suggests no major problems due to design, non-response, or attrition biases (Table A12).

7. Conclusion and discussion

We extend the literature on normative family policy feedback by exploring a specific mechanism of norm-setting effects. This study conceptualized and investigated how priming respondents with brief media report-like information on the existence of a day care entitlement policy and economic consequences of maternal employment interruptions has the potential to change normative judgements about day care use and the parental division of employment. We drew on normative policy feedback theory, social norm theory, and models of human cognition (Bicchieri, 2017; Evans and Stanovich, 2013; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Gangl and Ziefle, 2015) to formulate our assumptions. By relying on a fully randomized survey experiment implemented in a large representative survey of the German population, we are able to provide experimental evidence for this mechanism in the wider population as well as among specific subgroups.

Drawing respondents' attention to the day care entitlement and long-term economic risks of maternal employment interruptions increased the normative acceptance of more intensive use of day care, but did not affect support for maternal and paternal working hours in the full sample. The results regarding day care judgements are in line with a (repeated) cross-sectional Norwegian study finding positive effects of a day care reform on mothers' preferred intensity of childcare use (Ellingsæter et al., 2017).

Moreover, we found some evidence of heterogeneous priming effects between subgroups of respondents by gender and parental status, who likely differ in their policy proximity (degree of affectedness by the policy) as well as in their policy visibility (salience of the policy). In line with the Norwegian study, the positive priming effect on support for more intensive day care use was driven by female compared to male respondents, as women were likely most directly affected by the day care policy information. Among women, the priming had larger effects for mothers with children below school entry age, again pointing to personal relevance as an important explanatory mechanism. Moreover, the priming led to higher support for intensive maternal working hours among women who were childless or had older children compared to mothers of young children. The priming may have included more novel and relevant information about the economic benefits of labour market participation for the former two groups of women; therefore, policy visibility seemed important above and beyond a certain

level of personal affectedness that all women might share. Alternatively, these women might have been more open to incorporating these aspects into their normative judgements, as they may confront fewer obstacles to pursuing employment and a career in their own lives.

We find little evidence that the priming information affected normative judgements regarding fathers' working hours. These findings are in line with priming studies on men's preferred work-care arrangements in the United States (Pedulla and Thébaud, 2015; Thébaud and Pedulla, 2016) and fathers' preferred working hours in Germany (Bünning & Hipp, 2021). Future research should continue to explore potential mechanisms that hinder or foster flexibility in normative judgements about paternal employment patterns.

The rather modest sizes of the priming effects on normative judgements regarding day care usage and maternal employment are in line with previous priming survey experiments (Pedulla and Thébaud, 2015; Bünning and Hipp, 2022), and probably partly due to the fact that our priming information was very short and embedded in a large survey that also covered other family-related topics. Our priming text contained two separate pieces of information regarding the day care entitlement and the economic risks of maternal employment interruptions, and we were only able to hypothesize about how each of these aspects was incorporated into respondents' judgements. Future studies should ideally also assess respondents' prior knowledge and beliefs about family policy and the consequences of take-up as well as their perceived level of personal relevance.

Our results extend the existing evidence on how family policies affect norms regarding work-care arrangements (Gangl and Ziefle, 2015; Kremer, 2007; Soroka and Wlezien, 2010). Specifically, we provide experimental evidence for a practical channel of how short, high-quality report-like information about day care policy - which could be widely transmitted by policy-makers via media or online social networks - may change personal normative judgements about day care arrangements and maternal employment within a short time frame. Even if these changes are small and temporary, repeated exposure via different media channels may produce longer-lasting effects and shape work-care norms among the wider public over time. Future research should also identify the reference networks of people whose behaviour and expectations matter most for making personal normative work-care judgements, which also might affect changes in personal normative judgements (see Thébaud and Pedulla, 2016).

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Appendix

Table A1. Frequency of reports on day care and related terms published between 2000 and 2021 in two of the largest German newspapers

Number of newspaper articles on day care and related terms	Süddeutsche Zeitung	Day care in combination with terms related to employment, careers, incomes, and pensions	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	Day care in combination with terms related to employment, careers, incomes, and pensions	Average across both newspapers
2000	812		296		554
2001	1,174		331		752.5
2002	1,082		340		711
2003	809		293		551
2004	932		321		626.5
2005	1,031		431		731
2006	1,188		512		850
2007	1,214		1,007		1,110.5
2008	1,057		481		769
2009	964		419		691.5
2010	619		439		529
2011	375		427		401
2012	378		506		442
2013	383		598		490.5
2014	336		364		350
2015	323		393		358
2016	309		286		297.5
2017	336		322		329
2018	384		331		357.5
2019	359		275		317
2020	359		346		352.5
2021	281		260		270.5
Sum	14,705	3,598	8,978	3,716	11,841.5

Note: own search in the online archives of the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” and the “Süddeutsche Zeitung”.

Table A2. Descriptive statistics overall and for priming and control groups (mean/%)

	All	Priming group mean	Control group mean	Difference
Women	0.529	0.519	0.539	-0.020*
Childless	0.582	0.587	0.577	0.010
Child under 6	0.174	0.171	0.177	-0.006
Child 6+ years	0.206	0.208	0.205	0.003
Child outside HH	0.037	0.035	0.040	-0.005
Partnered	0.659	0.649	0.668	-0.019*
Tertiary education	0.258	0.251	0.266	-0.015*
Working hours	25.490	25.214	25.766	-0.552†
Cohort (1991-1993)	0.252	0.259	0.245	0.014*
Cohort (1981-1983)	0.278	0.269	0.287	-0.018**
Cohort (1971-1973)	0.206	0.199	0.213	-0.014*
Cohort (2001-2003)	0.188	0.194	0.182	0.012†
Step-up (1994-2003)	0.076	0.079	0.073	0.006
Living in East Germany	0.254	0.253	0.254	0.001
N evaluations	16,707	8,359	8,348	
N respondents	5,783	2,899	2,884	

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Table A3. Ordered logistic regression of normative judgements about day care use on policy information and OLS regression of normative judgements about parental working hours on policy information (controls shown)

	Day care	**Mother's working hours**	**Father's working hours**	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Odds ratio	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Priming (ref. control)	1.098	-0.021	-0.078	0.136
	(0.048)	(0.206)	(0.171)	(0.300)
Individual level controls				
Women (ref. men)	0.961	-0.082	-0.122	0.230
	(0.044)	(0.217)	(0.183)	(0.310)
Childless (ref.)				
Child under 6	1.212*	-0.720*	0.986***	-1.613**
	(0.096)	(0.357)	(0.295)	(0.526)
Child 6+ years	1.119	-0.001	1.065***	-0.888
	(0.097)	(0.389)	(0.318)	(0.565)
Child outside HH	1.262	0.131	-0.013	0.084
	(0.179)	(0.642)	(0.579)	(0.902)
Partnered	1.072	0.492	0.293	0.374
	(0.057)	(0.262)	(0.219)	(0.377)
Tertiary education	1.029	1.697***	-2.154***	3.924***
	(0.058)	(0.251)	(0.202)	(0.379)
Working hours (weekly)	1.001*	0.027***	0.031***	0.006
	(0.001)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.010)
Cohort (1991-1993) (ref.)				
Cohort (1981-1983)	1.127	-0.146	0.343	-0.627
	(0.080)	(0.335)	(0.278)	(0.489)
Cohort (1971-1973)	1.151	-0.425	-0.152	-0.556
	(0.105)	(0.411)	(0.335)	(0.606)
Cohort (2001-2003)	1.079	0.016	-1.619***	1.453**
	(0.081)	(0.384)	(0.324)	(0.546)
Step-up (1994-2003)	1.051	-0.563	-1.027*	0.182
	(0.097)	(0.478)	(0.416)	(0.679)
Living in East Germany (ref. West)	3.794***	4.893***	1.271***	4.250***
	(0.209)	(0.231)	(0.192)	(0.300)
Vignette dimension controls				
Mainly mother cares for child (ref.)				
Mainly father	0.962	1.551***	-1.596***	3.359***
	(0.035)	(0.187)	(0.164)	(0.313)
Equally	1.018	0.617***	-0.147	0.771**
	(0.038)	(0.180)	(0.157)	(0.291)
Child difficulties in adapting (ref.)				
Adapts easily	1.334***	0.492**	0.351**	0.222
	(0.042)	(0.150)	(0.132)	(0.244)
Day care quality mediocre (ref.)				
Very high quality	1.572***	0.750***	0.663***	0.229
	(0.050)	(0.148)	(0.130)	(0.241)
Father earns more (ref.)				
Mother earns more	1.019	2.693***	-2.413***	5.342***
	(0.038)	(0.187)	(0.167)	(0.309)

↓

Table A3. continued

	Day care	Mother's working hours	Father's working hours	Mother's share of working hours
	Odds ratio	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
About equal income	1.031	0.972***	-0.874***	1.805***
	(0.037)	(0.185)	(0.152)	(0.295)
HH income not sufficient (ref.)				
HH income sufficient	0.810	-1.332***	-1.213***	-0.442
	(0.025)	(0.153)	(0.132)	(0.248)
Only father career prospects (ref.)				
Only mother career prospects	1.106*	6.611***	-5.763***	12.674***
	(0.047)	(0.222)	(0.197)	(0.381)
Both	1.130**	2.940***	-2.092***	5.167***
	(0.049)	(0.212)	(0.174)	(0.338)
None	1.074**	2.611***	-2.301***	4.962***
	(0.046)	(0.215)	(0.179)	(0.343)
Only mother part-time support (ref.)				
Only father part-time support	0.995	3.079***	-3.365***	6.408***
	(0.043)	(0.219)	(0.197)	(0.375)
Both	0.9777	1.264***	-1.412***	2.634***
	(0.041)	(0.206)	(0.175)	(0.330)
None	1.046	1.229***	-1.280***	2.305***
	(0.045)	(0.212)	(0.184)	(0.351)
Constant		15.479***	35.406***	28.962***
		(0.487)	(0.407)	(0.741)
Cut 1	-2.320***			
	(0.107)			
Cut 2	-0.317***			
	(0.098)			
Cut 3	2.443***			
	(0.102)			
N evaluations	16,707	16,707	16,707	16,707
N respondents	5,783	5,783	5,783	5,783

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A4. OLS regression of normative judgements about maternal working hours on interaction between policy information and respondents' gender

	Mother's working hours
	Coeff.
Priming (ref. control)	-0.604
	(0.310)
Women (ref. men)	-0.637*
	(0.302)
Interaction	
Priming x Female	1.102**
	(0.413)
Constant	15.802***
	(0.502)
N evaluations	16,707
N respondents	5,783

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A5. OLS regression of normative judgements about maternal working hours on interaction between policy information and subgroups of female respondents

	Mother's working hours
	Coeff.
Priming (ref. control)	0.845*
	(0.385)
Childless women (ref.)	
Mother of child under 6	-0.445
	(0.617)
Mother of child 6+	-0.783
	(0.657)
Mother of child living outside HH	1.346
	-1.077
Interaction	
Priming x Mother of child under 6	-1.642*
	(0.728)
Priming x Mother of child 6+	0.316
	(0.641)
Priming x Mother of child living outside HH	-3.367
	(1.816)
Constant	14.855***
	(0.638)
N evaluations	8,837
N respondents	3,059

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A6. Ordered logistic regression and average marginal effects of normative judgements about day care use on policy information and OLS regression of normative judgements about parental working hours on policy information by subgroups of male respondents

	Day care	No day care	A few hours on some days	Half-day every day	Full-day every day	**Mother's working hours**	**Father's working hours**	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Odds ratio	Average marginal effects of coeff.				**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Childless men	**1.057**	**-0.002**	**-0.008**	**0.002**	**0.008**	**-0.418**	**-0.132**	**0.031**
Priming (ref. control)	(0.082)	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.391)	(0.314)	(0.571)
N evaluations	5,121					5,121	5,121	5,121
N respondents	1,781					1,781	1,781	1,781
Father of child under 6	**0.877**	**0.005**	**0.014**	**0.006**	**-0.024**	**-1.731***	**0.724**	**-2.937***
Priming (ref. control)	(0.153)	(0.006)	(0.018)	(0.008)	(0.032)	(0.769)	(0.600)	(1.178)
N evaluations	1,223					1,223	1,223	1,223
N respondents	442					442	442	442
Father of child 6+	**1.081**	**-0.003**	**-0.009**	**-0.003**	**0.014**	**-0.277**	**-1.615****	**1.026**
Priming (ref. control)	(0.189)	(0.006)	(0.200)	(0.007)	(0.032)	(0.748)	(0.605)	(1.072)
N evaluations	1,183					1,183	1,183	1,183
N respondents	405					405	405	405

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A7. OLS regression of normative judgements about parental working hours on interaction between policy information and subgroups of male respondents

	Father's working hours	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Coeff.	**Coeff.**
Priming (ref. control)	-0.138	0.052
	(0.314)	(0.569)
Childless men (ref.)		
Father of child under 6	0.160	1.322
	(0.538)	(0.939)
Father of child 6+	1.833**	-0.262
	(0.558)	(1.000)
Father of child living outside HH	0.952	1.437
	(0.974)	(1.181)
Interaction		
Priming x Father of child under 6	0.954	-2.995*
	(0.678)	(1.291)
Priming x Father of child 6+	-1.377*	0.913
	(0.685)	(1.206)
Priming x Father of child living outside HH	-1.660	-1.622
	(1.498)	(1.991)
Constant	34.653***	30.393***
	(0.596)	(1.100)
N evaluations	7,870	7,870
N respondents	2,724	2,724

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A8. Logistic regression of normative judgements about day care use on policy information and (ordered) logistic regressions of normative judgements about parental working hours on policy information

	Binary: At least some day care (vs. none)	**Binary: Mother works full-time (vs. fewer hours)**	**Categorical: Mother works full-time (vs. does not or part-time)**	**Binary: Father works full-time (vs. fewer hours)**
	Odds ratio	**Odds ratio**	**Odds ratio**	**Odds ratio**
Priming (ref. control)	1.130	1.013	1.000	1.007
	(0.125)	(0.050)	(0.041)	(0.043)
Constant	13.164***	0.047***		4.130***
	(3.322)	(0.006)		(0.424)
Cut 1			0.246***	
			(0.095)	
Cut 2			2.951**	
			(0.098)	
N evaluations	16,707	16,707	16,707	16,707
N respondents	5,783	5,783	5,783	5,783

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A9. Ordered logistic regression of normative judgements about day care use on policy information and OLS regression of normative judgements about parental working hours on policy information (additionally controlling for respondents' gender ideology)

	Day care	**Mother's working hours**	**Father's working hours**	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Odds ratio	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Priming (ref. control)	1.102*	-0.054	-0.074	0.076
	(0.049)	(0.203)	(0.173)	(0.298)
Constant		16.602***	35.253***	30.569***
		(0.484)	(0.419)	(0.747)
Cut 1	-2.510***			
	(0.110)			
Cut 2	-0.496***			
	(0.102)			
Cut 3	2.313***			
	(0.106)			
N evaluations	16,082			
N respondents	5,563			

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A10. Ordered logistic regression of normative judgements about day care use on interaction between policy information and respondents' education and OLS regression of normative judgements about maternal working hours on interaction between policy information and respondents' education for subgroups of parents

	Group: Mother child under 6	**Group: Father child under 6**	
	Day care	**Mother's working hours**	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Odds ratio	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Priming (ref. control)	1.605*	-2.844**	-4.420**
	(0.306)	(1.088)	(0.167)
Tertiary education (ref. none)	1.168	-0.489	1.520
	(0.239)	(1.024)	(0.147)
Interaction			
Priming x Tertiary education	0.569*	3.592*	4.655*
	(0.163)	(0.157)	(0.205)
Constant		19.664***	33.491***
		(1.310)	(0.207)
Cut 1	-2.010***		
	(0.239)		
Cut 2	-0.482***		
	(0.208)		
Cut 3	2.117***		
	(0.219)		
N evaluations	1,684	1,223	1,223
N respondents	575	422	422

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A11. Ordered logistic regression of normative judgements about day care use on interaction between policy information and vignette dimensions and OLS regression of normative judgements about maternal working hours on interaction between policy information and vignette dimensions

	Day care	**Mother's working hours**	**Father's working hours**	**Mother's share of working hours**
	Odds ratio	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Priming (ref. control)	1.102		-0.269	
	(0.077)		(0.268)	
Only mother part-time support (ref.)				
Only father part-time support	0.963		-3.296***	
	(0.059)		(0.274)	
Both	0.930		-1.759***	
	(0.057)		(0.251)	
None	1.144*		-1.395***	
	(0.070)		(0.256)	
Interaction				
Priming x Only father part-time support	1.070		-0.152	
	(0.091)		(0.395)	
Priming x Both	1.103		0.684*	
	(0.093)		(0.350)	
Priming x None	0.833*		0.224	
	(0.072)		(0.367)	
Constant			35.508	
			(0.417)	
Cut 1	-2.321***			
	(0.111)			
Cut 2	-0.317***			
	(0.102)			
Cut 3	2.444***			
	(0.106)			
Priming (ref. control)		-0.392		-0.397
		(0.251)		(0.390)
Child adapts easily (ref. difficulties in adapting)		0.118		-0.314
		(0.213)		(0.349)
Interaction				
Priming x Child adapts easily		0.746*		1.071*
		(0.300)		(0.489)
Constant		15.667***		29.232***
		(0.493)		(0.751)
Priming (ref. control)				-0.457
				(0.449)
Father earns more (ref.)				
Mother earns more				5.075***
				(0.431)
About equal income				1.179**
				(0.419)

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Table A11. continued

	Day care	Mother's working hours	Father's working hours	Mother's share of working hours
	Odds ratio	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Interaction				
Priming x Mother earns more				0.529
				(0.619)
Priming x About equal income				1.245*
				(0.590)
Constant				29.270
				(0.761)
N evaluations	16,707	16,707	16,707	16,707
N respondents	5,783	5,783	5,783	5,783

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.

Table A12. Ordered logistic regression of normative judgements about day care use on policy information and OLS regression of normative judgements about parental working hours on policy information (weighted with calibrated design weights)

	Day care	Mother's working hours	Father's working hours	Mother's share of working hours
	Odds ratio	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**	**Coeff.**
Priming (ref. control)	1.102	-0.206	-0.255	0.060
	(0.065)	(0.288)	(0.234)	(0.435)
Constant		15.282***	35.792***	28.452***
		(0.700)	(0.592)	(1.073)
Cut 1	-2.276***			
	(0.146)			
Cut 2	-0.304***			
	(0.127)			
Cut 3	2.376***			
	(0.132)			
N evaluations	15,440	15,440	15,440	15,440
N respondents	5,339	5,339	5,339	5,339

Note: vignettedata Wave 12, pairfam Waves 11 & 12, own calculations. †p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. The following control variables are included: gender, parenthood status, partnered, education, working hours, cohort, East Germany, vignette dimensions. Cluster-robust standard errors at the individual level in parentheses.