INSTITUT FÜR ARBEITSMARKT- UND BERUFSFORSCHUNG
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## Longer maternity leave

21. Dec[illegible]Jeurt 2a0 1W7inters, Paul Setzepfand, Ipek Yüksel

Leave policies allowing parents to take time
important measure to buffer the stresses ass
employment. Despite reducing this double bur
necessarily support the return of healthier

This has been shown in a recent study conducted
Cologne. Based on the introduction of the so cal
demonstrates that the longer leave duration was
sickness spells among mothers who returned to th

### Maternity leave policies and thei

Most OECD countries offer, at a minimum, relativ
and after childbirth, with the primary aim to pr

health impairments around childbirth. In additio
countries run much more generous policies. One s
decades experienced several expansions in matern
primarily initiated to enhance children s well-b
employment, (West) Germany s earliest reform exp
first reform of maternity leave took place in Ma
maternity leave after childbirth from initially

## Why maternity leave might be rela

Maternity leave durations might impact mothers
health, much of the evidence on the labor market
in leave duration delay mothers return to work
Zweimüller (2009) or by Uta Schönberg and Johann
they are eligible for maternity leave, young mot
impairments resulting from stress caused by the
employment. Next to such short-run e ects, one m
protection after childbirth might give rise to a
health over a mother s life course. Moreover, a
higher incidence of breastfeeding, which may als

## Maternity leave may affect mother

Mothers entitlement to maternity leave may also
behavior. The direction of this indirect mechani
protected leave entitlements seem to facilitate
women with small children and have been shown to
employer. They may thus enable more women to enj
the other hand, incentives to postpone one s ret
programs, might discourage mothers to participat
economic disadvantages in the long-run, as time
individual s qualification level and lower her e
childbirth might thus experience an indirect he
attachment to the labor force might not only fac

resulting in adverse health outcomes.

## Types of mothers returning to wor

A further channel through which expansions in le
of employed mothers relates to the composition o
here is that an expansion in leave coverage may
labor market. However, the direction of this e e
argue that longer leave mandates o er better opp
with childbirth particularly for mothers with a
also allow these women to better adapt to their
reducing subsequent work-family con ict and its
especially those who otherwise would have stayed
the other hand, more time spent at home may make
the labor market. This is arguably more relevant
therefore worsen the incentives to return to wor

Empirical approach of the study

As the reform in 1979 has been implemented dep
change creates a setting which allowed the res
maternity leave duration a ected mothers retu
reform s consequences for returning mothers h
analysis made use of the fact that at least fo
legislation came into effect (iMnay pa1r9t7i9c)u,l amro:t hfe
should be comparable in all relevant aspects
to a di erent leave duration.

## How the reform delays mothers re

Similar to what has been found earlier for examp
2014 study, the researchers first showed based o
Insurance Fund and the Employment Agency 1979 leave extensi
signi cantly delay their return to work within t

return-to-work is only of short-term nature, sin
and post-reform mothers returned to the labor ma

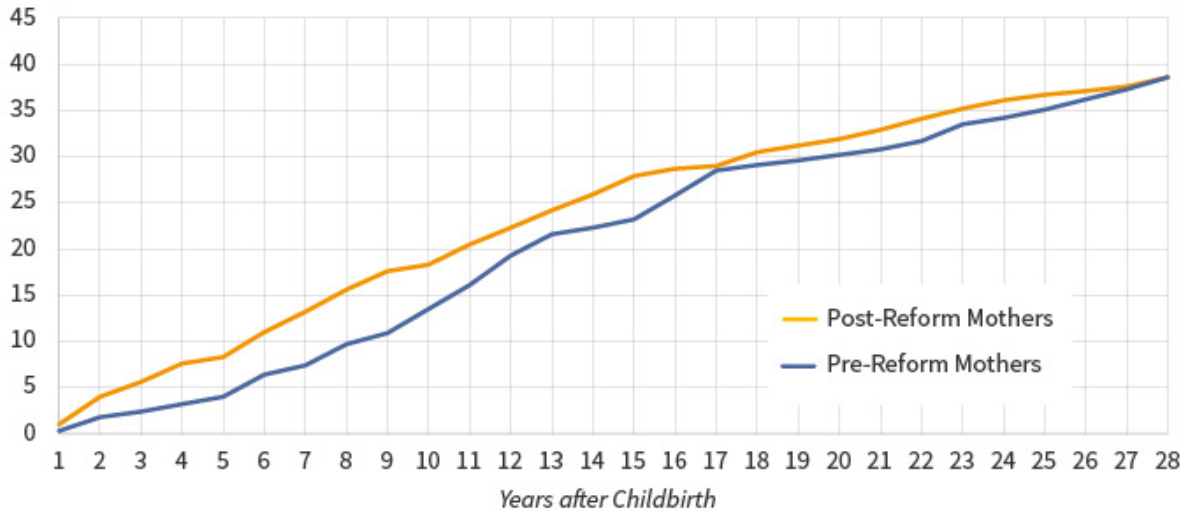
## Long-term sickness of working mot

To explore whether a longer time spent at home s
labor market, the study looked at periods of lon
episodes of employees who have been absent due t
weeks.

Figure 1 displays the differences between pre- a
experienced at least one long-term illness spell
demonstrates that the expansion in leave coverag
fraction of women ever having experienced a long
childbirth, the share of women with at least one
percentage points higher among post-reform as co

Figure 1: Share of mothers who have ever been long-term ill among pre-reform compared to post-reform mothers

in percent

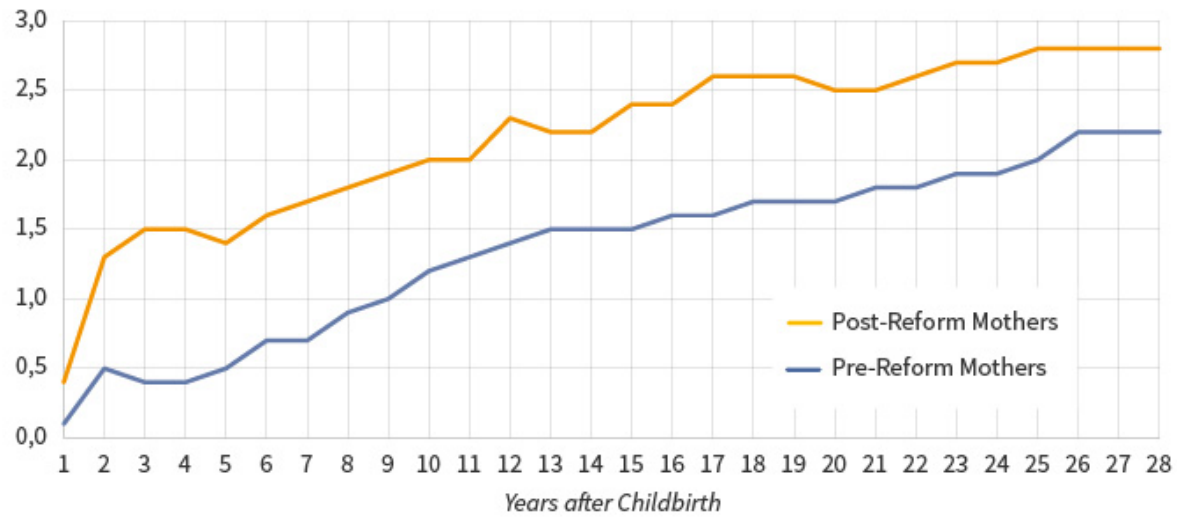



The figure displays the fraction ever become long-term ill among post-reform mothers (496 mothers subject to longer leave mandates) and pre-reform mothers (471 mothers subject to shorter leave mandates). The differences are statistically significant at the 5%-level from year three to nine after childbirth.
Source: BASiD 2007. © IAB.

Figure 2 compares the number of days of illness
after childbirth across both groups. The gure i
reform mothers experienced a longer duration of
than pre-reform mothers. Even after about 20 yea
point, suggesting that the di erence tends to be
the labor market, the gures imply that after 28
mothers have experienced on average 141 (131) da
remain unaltered even if one accounts for the fa
the reform might be characterized by systematic
to childbirth.

Figure 2: Share of cumulative sick days relative to their years of work for pre-reform compared to post-reform mothers

in percent




The figure displays the share of cumulative long-term illness days relative to the time spent in the labor market among post-reform mothers (496 mothers subject to longer leave mandates) and pre-reform mothers (471 mothers subject to shorter leave mandates). The differences are statistically significant at the 5%-level from year three to nine after childbirth.
Source: BASiD 2007. © IAB.

The overall result of more and longer long-term
subject to the longer leave duration is clearly
above, such a nding may be explained by a diffe
market. Put differently, the reform might have e
mothers, who would have stayed away from the lab

## Health status of mothers returnin

To investigate this issue, the study distinguish average sickness absence prior to childbirth) fr absence) pre-birth health. After re-investigatin (details not shown), the results clearly indicat affected di erently by the reform: In particular childbirth increased their return-to-work probab to mothers in good pre-birth health. One potenti response among mothers in poor pre-birth health extent from the legislation s guaranteed right t with a better pre-birth health status. Moreover, mothers turned out to be strongly driven by moth strongly support the view that the reform induce status to re-enter the labor market and that the mothers are driven by this group.

## Conclusions

Taken together, the evidence suggests that the 1 labor market participation by supporting the ret the labor market. It is important to keep in min in 1979 cannot be naively transferred to other c attachment to the labor force tends to be higher generous. Still, an important policy conclusion leave on the health composition of those returni negative), if such reforms are not complemented improving working mothers health following thei

## References

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*The study is forthcoming under the title „Maternity leave and mothers' long-term sickness absence – evidence from West Germany" in the journal "Demography".*

## Zitationshinweis

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maternity leave healthier mothers? , In: Onlin
forum.de/en/longer-maternity-leave-healthier-mot

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