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WORKING MOTHERHOOD: A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POLICIES SURROUNDING CHILDBIRTH, WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY AND GENDER EQUALITY

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This paper looks at the impact of patriarchal gender roles on various types of parental leaves and childcare, up to ages six, and on women's economic stability. It examines the impact of gender stereotypes, from historical, media, and social sources, on the gender division of work in the private sphere and how that contributes to which parent chooses to take the parental leave after childbirth. It acknowledges that the private sphere, domestic work and unpaid care work, is usually the responsibility of women; therefore the image of women and the salience of traditional stereotypes have a very important impact on the division of domestic tasks. It is specific to Croatia because of history, including war during the break-up of Yugoslavia and possible ascension into the European Union, and its history's impact on the development and entrenchment of traditional gender roles. The paper finds that for traditional gender roles to be pushed aside, men must be encouraged and allowed to participate in the domestic sphere, especially with childbirth, for paternity leaves to be used effectively. The public/private sphere balance for women should not be framed as an exclusive choice because it is not framed in this light for men - paternity and managerial positions do not involve a trade off.