

When the personal becomes political: Rethinking legal fatherhood ^[1]

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Source: Oxford University

Format: Article

Publication Date: 17 Nov 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Inspired by my personal experience as a working mother during the pandemic, this contribution reflects on the urgent need, and possible ways, to rethink legal fatherhood. If the aim is to make fathers (more) active carers, making family-leave policies more assertive in encouraging fathers' uptake is certainly an important first step towards bringing men into the care frame. Yet, to counter the multiple negative effects of the pandemic on women, legal fatherhood must undergo a structural rethinking, which extends to legal regulation more broadly. A legal venue where this rethinking is long overdue is filiation law, whose rules function as channels through which notions and arrangements of (child)care are created and can, therefore, also be recreated. Driven by the desire to promote a substantive vision of equality, this article argues for a relational rethinking of legal fatherhood, which is mindful of the interconnectedness between the lives of women, men, and children, and places care at its core.

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