

Extra Credit Week 7-4

A CHILLY CLIMATE FOR FATHERS?

Purpose: This exercise is designed to have you investigate attitudes toward mothers and fathers taking parental leave when a child is born.

Instructions: American fathers have not taken advantage of parental leave. For example, recent studies indicate that approximately 1% of all eligible male workers use the leave to which they are entitled. Louise Silverstein (1996) argues that negative attitudes in the workplace may discourage fathers from taking parental leave.

Using the interview formats on the following pages, interview two men and two women. Notice that two versions of the interview format have been prepared. Ask one of your male participants to evaluate “Steve” and the other to evaluate “Susan.” Similarly, one female participant should evaluate “Steve” and the other “Susan.”

Select a variety of participants for this project. Include four people who vary not only by sex but by other social categories (for example, age, race, or ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, etc.). Be sure to describe each participant by indicating her or his sex, age, and social attributes (for example, race or ethnicity, social class, etc.) at the top of each interview form.

Summarize your findings by answering the following questions.

1. Compare and contrast your findings. Overall, were attitudes more positive toward Steve or Susan? Or were attitudes similar toward both?

