

Same challenges, different solutions: how to explain variations in leave policy development in Croatia and Serbia?

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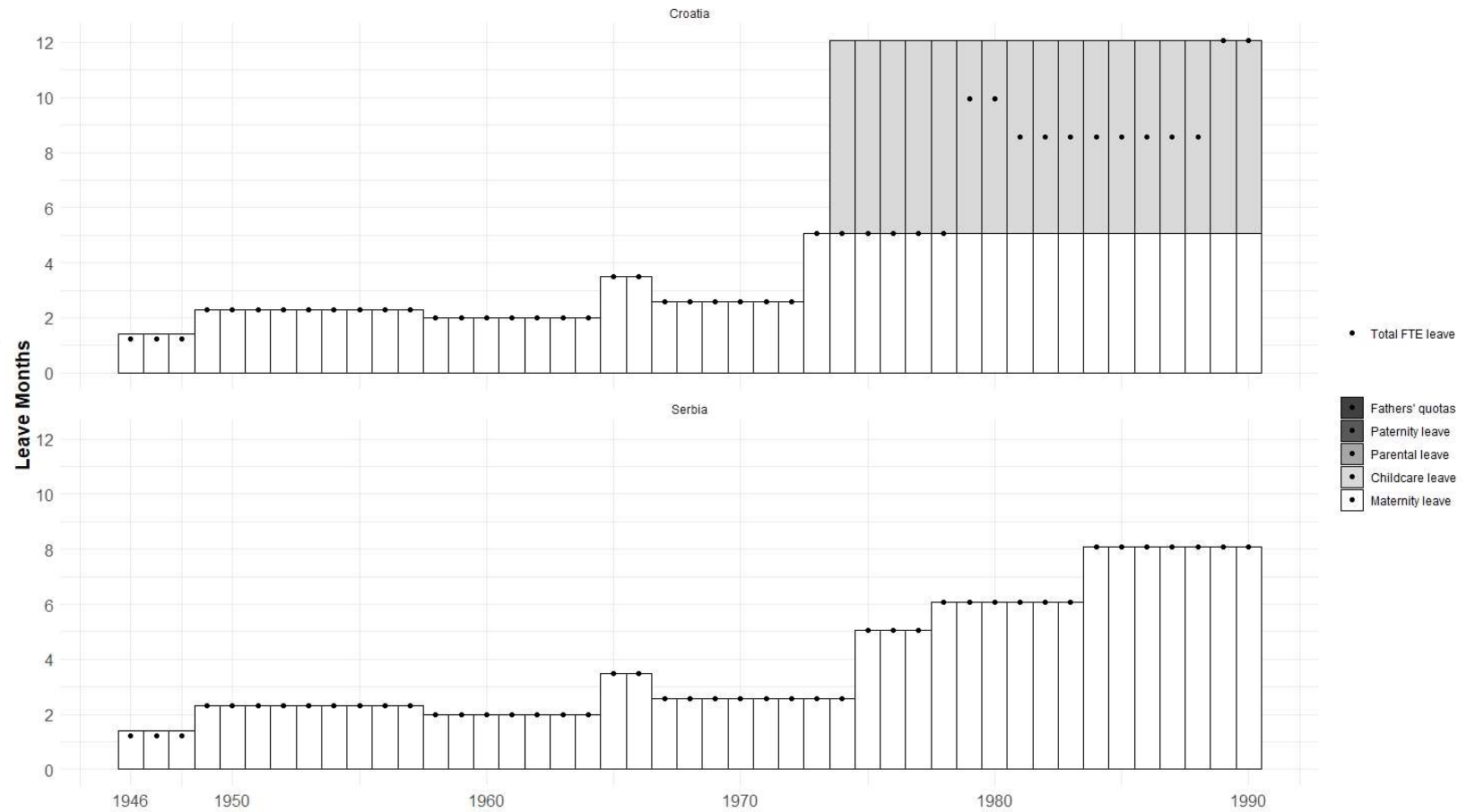


Before 1990s...

➤ Socialist legacy

- Rapid industrialisation & state-led process of women's emancipation → increase in women's employment → **early investments in well-paid maternity leaves**
- Gendered dual-earner norm embedded in policy design, primarily developed to recognize and resource care arrangements of employees in the public sector and 'standard' employment

Leave policy design 1945-1990 (postnatal)



Post-1990

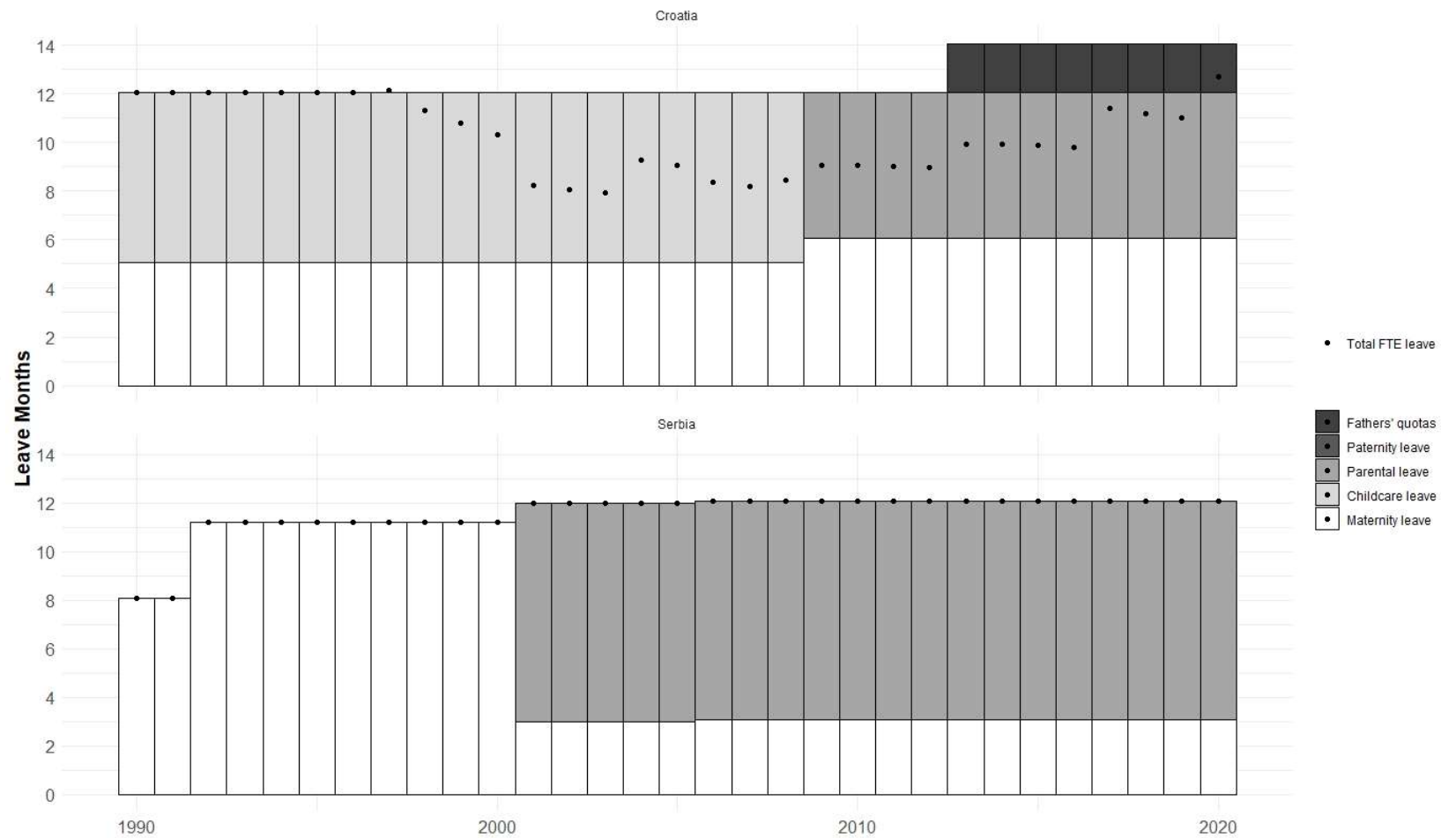
➤ 1990 +

- Societal re-traditionalisation supported by (ethnicized) pronatalist agenda → a need to restore traditional patriarchal & heteronormative family, and „natural” gender roles → **reform proposals aimed at women’s redomestication**
- State’s limited (re)distributional capacities → **cuts and underinvestment + trade-offs** (benefits vs. services)

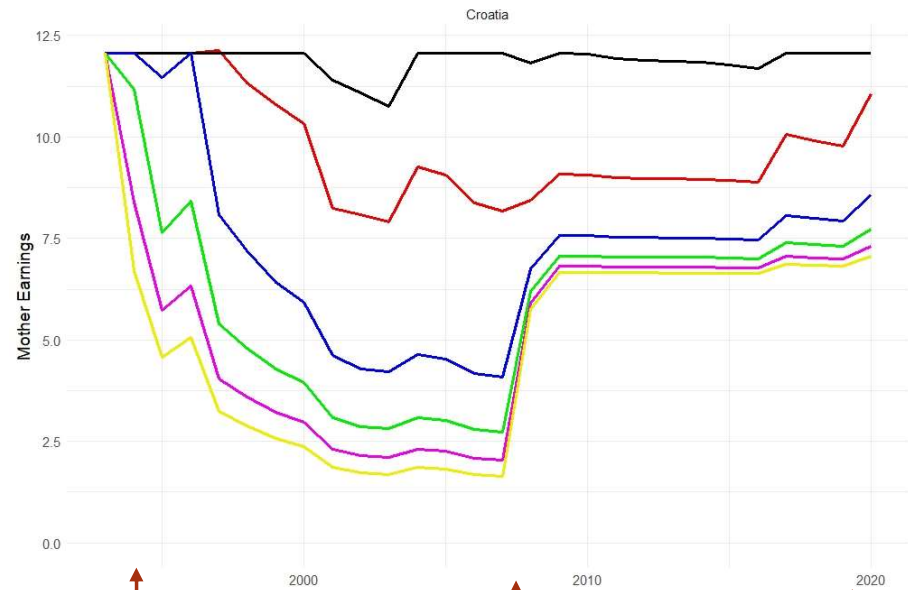
➤ 2000 +

- European integration – **Croatia** vs. Serbia

Leave policy design 1990-2020 (postnatal)



FRE leave months by earnings



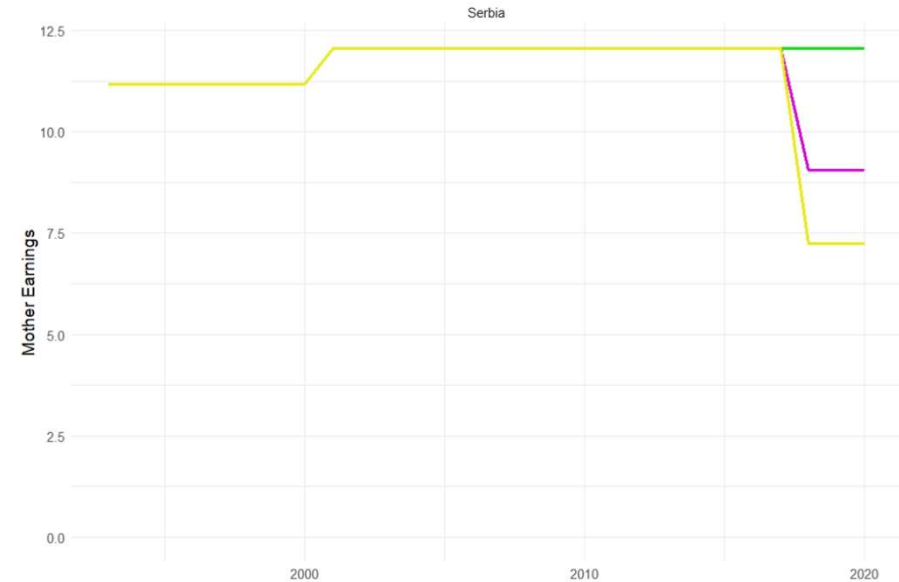
Flat-rate childcare benefit & ceiling on all leave benefits

Ceiling on maternity leave benefit withdrawn

+ ceiling on parental leave benefit slightly increased

Earnings

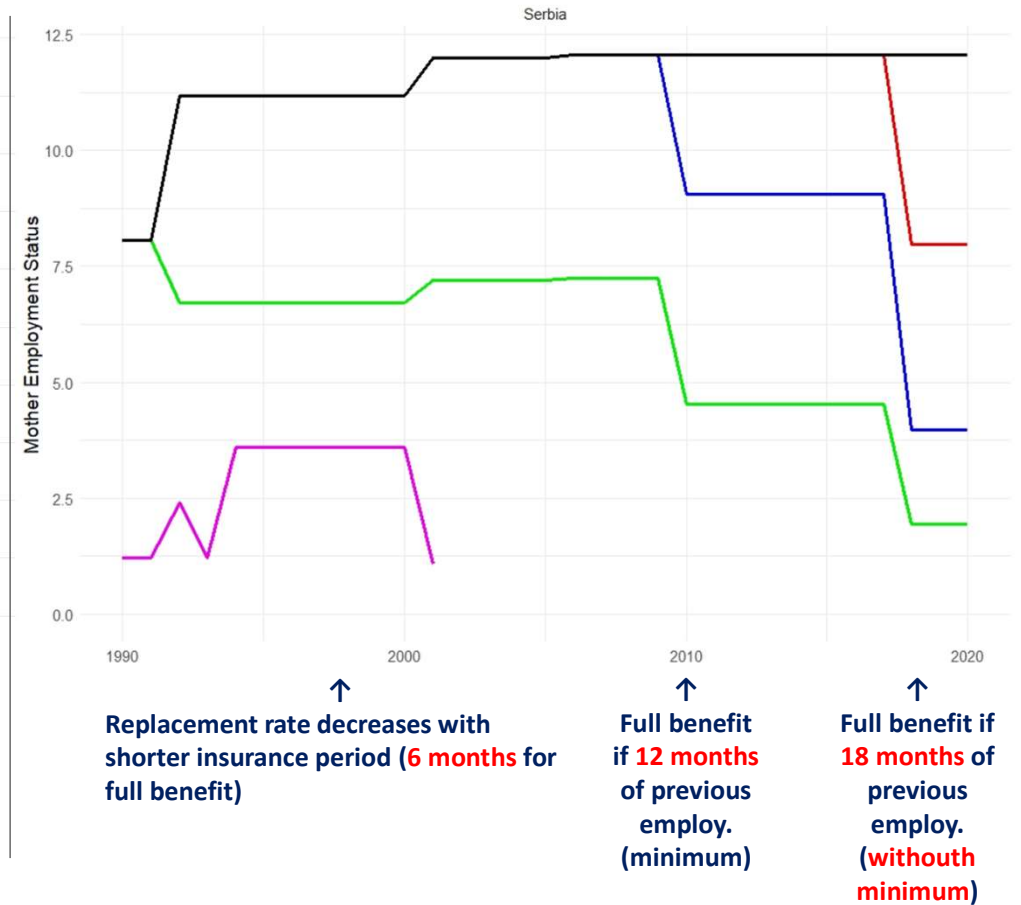
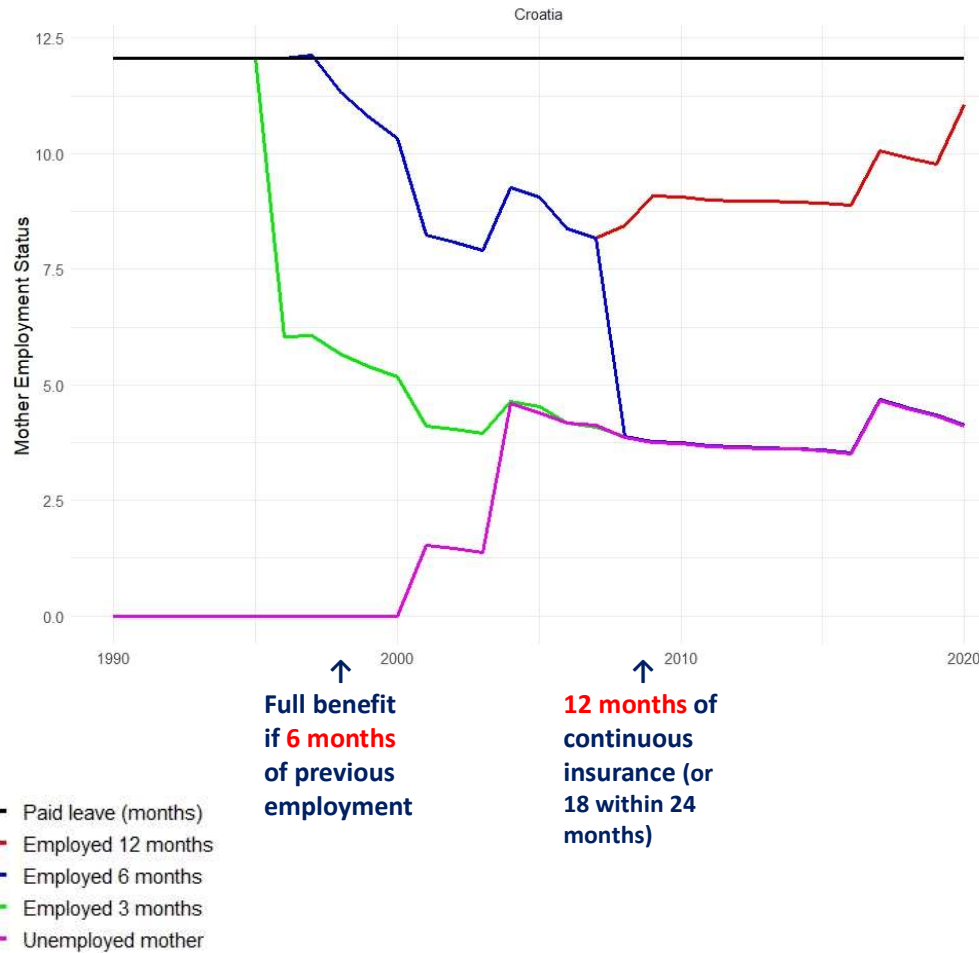
- 1/2 average wage
- 1 average wage
- 2 average wages
- 3 average wages
- 4 average wages
- 5 average wages



Ceiling on all leave benefits

Note: two-months quota in HR not included

FRE leave months by employment status



Note: two-months quota in HR not included

Pronatalist elements

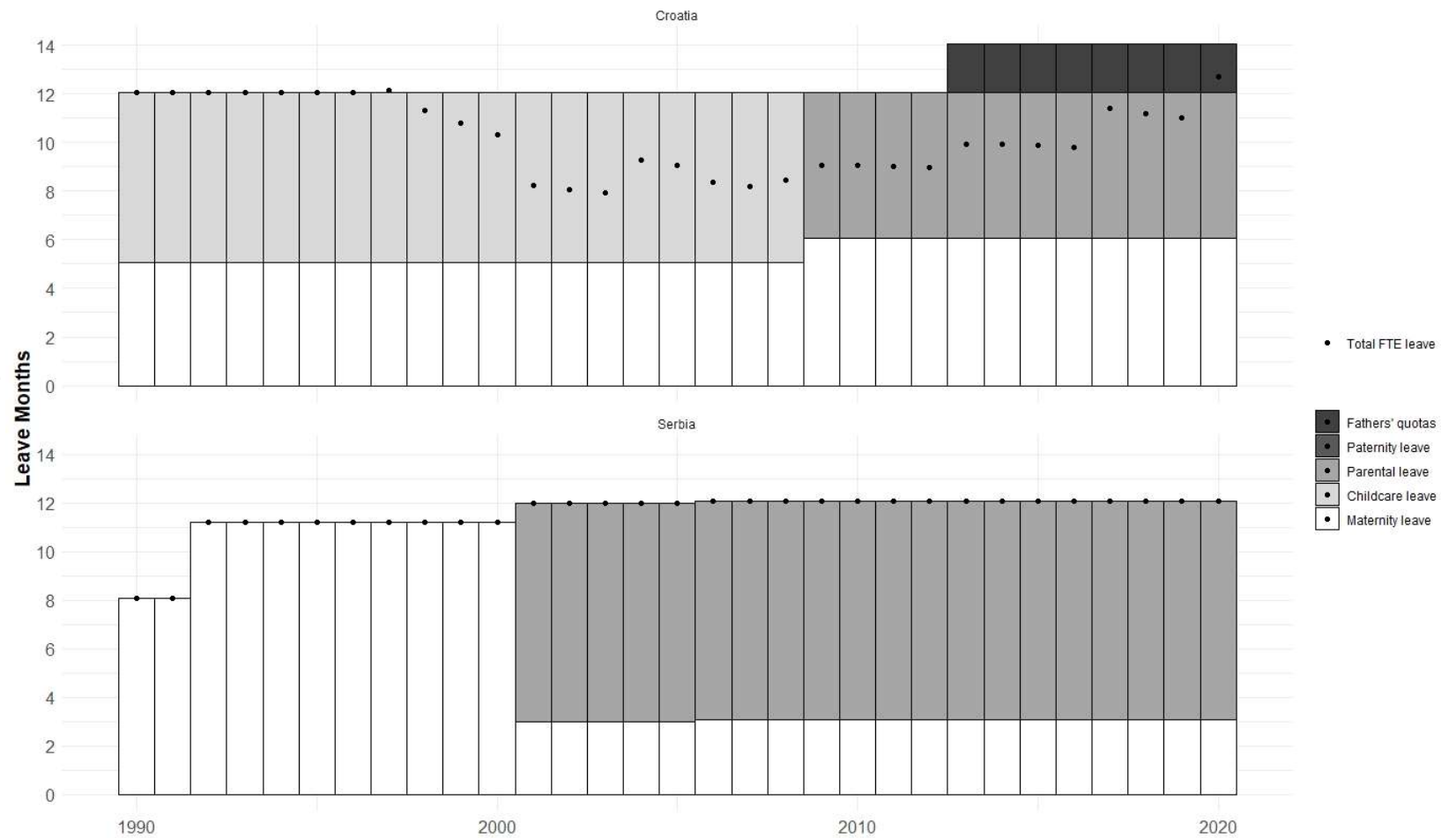
Croatia

- Three-year leaves for parents (i.e. mothers) with three **or more** children (1996)
 - for both employed & **unemployed**
 - short withdrawal episode (2001-2003)
- Citizenship-based benefits gradually including all parents but 'new' migrants

Serbia

- Two-year leaves for parents (i.e. mothers) with three children
 - For employed
 - Initially also for the 4th child only if residing in a depopulated area; extended to parents with more than three children in 2005 (after withdrawal episode 2001-2004)
- Citizenship-based benefits withdrawn in 2002

Leave policy design 1990-2020 (postnatal)



Final thoughts...

Mixed (HR) vs employment-based (RS) policy design (+ new polarisations – stronger in Serbia)

Dual-earner families (& often better-off families) supported via well-paid leaves (& affordable ECEC) vs. parents (mostly mothers) with weak, low quality or no labour market attachment that need to cut back or make accommodations in employment to provide care

Why differences among countries?

HR – stronger feminist movement and parents' organisation (+ female MP's 'sponsorship' over the leave policy reforms)

& earlier EU integrations (directives but also policy learning)

THANK YOU!

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