

Conceptual and methodological challenges in comparing work-care policies

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Wider framework...

rEUsilience WP: aims to explore **how policies envision, shape and affect** decisions and behaviours regarding labour market and care engagements in families

- Assessed through 3 policy-review criteria: **inclusiveness, flexibility & complementarity**
- Six countries: Belgium, Croatia, Poland, Spain, Sweden, UK

Inclusiveness and Flexibility of Work-Life Balance Policies

rEUsilience Working Paper Series 5

Ivana Dobrotić
Anja Iveković Martinis



Inclusiveness and Flexibility of Care Policies

rEUsilience Working Paper Series 4

Margarita León
Ivan Cerrillo



Inclusiveness and Flexibility of Income Support Policies

Mary Daly





Today's presentation narrowed to:
*Parenting leaves, their specifics & relationship
with other work-care policy measures*

Policy design & inequalities

Complex policies

- a multi-layered & ambiguous character (cf. Ciccia & Verloo, 2012; Chung, 2022; Dobrotić, 2023)
- introduction motivated by different & often conflicting considerations (e.g., free choice, gender equality): **diversification of leaves & flexible working arrangements**

➡ complexity of design

Vary in many dimensions (e.g. duration, payments inclusive of floors & ceilings, transferability, flexibility, eligibility & right to request...)

➡ complex for research: carrying the risk of concealing **social & gender inequalities embedded in policy responses & their implications**



Absence of coherent work-care policies & their clear conceptualisation in comparative research

Some challenges in comparative research?

(1) Conceptualisation of leave policies: what are we capturing?

✓ „Leave from paid work” vs „care right”

- *Diversity of leave policy design across Europe?* E.g. employment oriented/more selective vs citizenship-based/more universal systems (see Dobrotić & Blum, 2019, 2020)

Employment-based (red) vs mixed (blue) systems

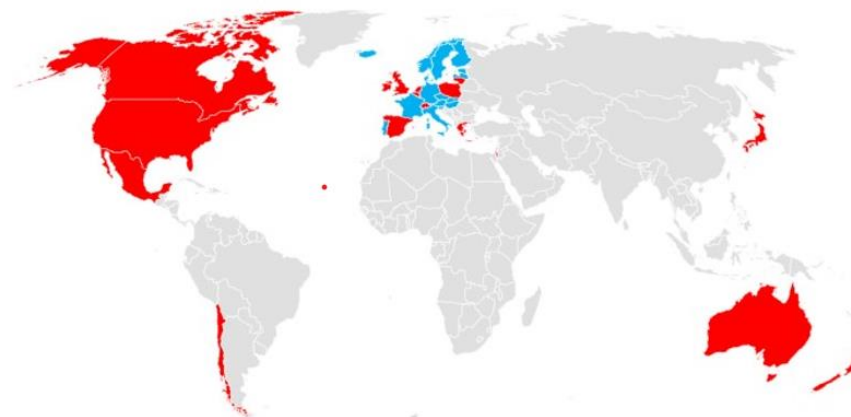


TABLE 1: PARENTING LEAVES “CONCEPTUALISATION” IN NATIONAL POLICY DESIGNS

	Belgium	Croatia	Poland	Spain	Sweden	UK
Maternity leave	+	+	+	+ (birth and childcare leave)	+	+
Paternity/co-parent leave	+ (birth leave)	+	+	+ (birth and childcare leave)	+ (temporary leave in connection with a child’s birth or adoption)	+
Parental leave	+	+	+	+	+	+
Other “leaves”	+ (time credits)	+ (career break)	+ (childcare leave)	+ (nursing care; career breaks)	-	-

Sources: Dobroćić (2023a); Duvander and Löfgren (2023); Fusulier and Mortelmans (2023); Kurowska et al. (2023); Meil et al. (2023); O’Brien et al. (2023).



...

(2) **Inclusiveness?** How well do we capture intersectional inequalities in parenting leave (work-care) related rights?

- ✓ Policy indicators reflect **only some aspects of leave (work-care) policy design**
 - ✓ **Leave generosity** (leave duration, wage replacement rates, sometimes FTE)
 - ✓ vs. other aspects (e.g. **flexibility, inclusiveness**)

(a) Who has access to leaves?

TABLE 2: ACCESS TO PAID PARENTING LEAVES BY STATUS GROUPS (2023)

	Belgium			Croatia			Poland			Spain			Sweden			UK		
	ML	PtL	PL	ML	PtL	PL	ML	PtL	PL	ML	PtL	PL	ML	PtL	PL	ML	PtL	PL
Employee	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	-*	[++]	++	++	++	++	-*
Self-employed	+	+	-	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	-	[++]	++	++	-	-	-
“Short” contracts	+/-	-	-	+/-	-	+/-	n/a	-	+	++	++	-*	[+/-]	+/-	+/-	-	-	-
Unemployed	+	-	-	+/-	-	+/-	n/a	-	+	++	++	-	n/a	-	+	+/-	-	-
Inactive	-	-	-	+/-	-	+/-	n/a	-	+	-	-	-	n/a	-	+	-	-	-
Students	-	-	-	+/-	-	+/-	n/a	-	+	-	-	-	n/a	-	+	-	-	-
Same-sex parents	++	++	++	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	-	-	++	++	-*	[++]	++	++	++	++	-*

Notes: ML= maternity leave; PtL=paternity/co-parent leave; PL=parental leave; ++ Eligible; + Eligible, but right to less generous scheme (e.g. shorter leave period and/or lower benefit); +/- Eligible, but with additional conditions (e.g. activity “test”, longer residency period in a country, formal right of parental care); – Not eligible; n/a Not applicable (maternity leave is subsumed under parental leave scheme); [] The benefit can be exercised through parental benefit days; * Only unpaid leave is available.

Sources: Dobrotić (2023a); Duvander and Löfgren (2023); Fusulier and Mortelmans (2023); Kurowska et al. (2023); Meil et al. (2023); O’Brien et al. (2023).



(b) To what extent do available rights *respond to the needs of various groups of* parents/ carers & their *situations*?

TABLE 7: FAMILIES RECEIVING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH PAID PARENTING LEAVES AND RELATED ENTITLEMENTS (2023)

Additional provisions within the parenting leaves scheme for:	
Larger families (2+ children)	
Belgium	No
Croatia	Yes: + 11 months of <i>parental leave</i> per parent for 3+ children (maximum postnatal leave = 36 months, if both parents use the leave; otherwise, 34 months)
Poland	Yes: a flat-rate allowance attached to <i>childcare leave</i> is paid for an additional 12 months for the second or each subsequent child
Spain	Yes: a flat-rate <i>maternity allowance</i> is extended to 56 days for families with 3+ children (i.e., an additional 14 days)
Sweden	No
UK	No
Lone parenthood	
Belgium	Yes: the flat-rate <i>parental benefit</i> is 68% higher for single parents
Croatia	No
Poland	Yes: a flat-rate allowance attached to <i>childcare leave</i> is paid for an additional 12 months to single parents
Spain	Yes: a flat-rate <i>maternity allowance</i> is extended to 56 days for single mothers (i.e., an additional 14 days)
Sweden	Yes: One of the parents may use all <i>parental leave</i> benefit days in cases of one custodian
UK	No

...

(3) What about **policy coherence**?

- ✓ **Complex relationship** between different policy dimensions and policies

Statutory leave provides a necessary foundation but is not a “sufficient condition for an equitable and sustainable relationship between care, employment and gender” (Moss and Deven 2020, p. 434). It is important to consider the link between leaves and broader work-care policies and provisions such as occupational schemes and ECEC, which can provide a better insight into coherence across policy areas and care gaps. Namely, the relationship between leave and ECEC remains problematic in most of the OECD countries, and a ‘well-paid leave–affordable ECEC gap’ is absent in all but five countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden) (Dobrotić, 2023)

- ✓ Leaves vs ECEC vs **time flexibility**?
- ✓ Relationship between **statutory, regional & employers’ provisions**?

Questions?

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TABLE 3: INCLUSIVENESS OF *PAID* PARENTING LEAVES: ELIGIBILITY INDEX (2023)

	Maternity leave			Paternity/co-parent leave			Parental leave		
	Employment-based	Citizenship-based	Total eligibility index	Employment-based	Citizenship-based	Total eligibility index	Employment-based	Citizenship-based	Total eligibility index
Belgium	8	0	8	11	0	11	4	0	4
Croatia	10	5	15	10	0	10	10	5	15
Poland	12	8	20	12	0	12	12	8	20
Spain	10	0	10	10	0	10	-	-	-
Sweden	-	-	-	7	0	7	7	8	15
UK	5	0	5	4	0	5	-	-	-

Notes: See Appendix 1 for dimensions included in the eligibility index.

Sources: The eligibility index is calculated based on information available in country notes: Dobrotić (2023a); Duvander and Löfgren (2023); Fusulier and Mortelmans (2023); Kurowska et al. (2023); Meil et al. (2023); O'Brien et al. (2023).

