



Methodological Challenges in Paid Parental Leave Research and Policy

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The 2019 EU Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers issued a set of legislative actions aimed at supporting work-life balance, encouraging equal sharing of informal care between parents, and increasing women's participation in the labour market. Actions under the directive include continued monitoring of policy outcomes and improved data on leave take-up and use of flexible work arrangements. However, sufficient data for adequate policy evaluation are still out-of-reach.

This workshop brings together policy experts across academic, government, and practitioner institutions to identify the data needed for rigorous study of parenting leaves policy outcomes. Workshop participants will share the latest progress toward filling [data gaps](#), the challenges of data collection, and future policy evaluation.

We invite experts and policymakers who are in key positions to address at least one of four challenges:

1. Synthesizing leave terminology
 - What are the key dimensions of leave policy? How does leave policy terminology differ across countries or regions?
 - How have researchers defined leave provisions in different or contradictory ways?
 - What attempts have been made to standardize parental leave terminology across international or regional bodies, such as the EU, OECD, or the ILO?
 - To what extent do stakeholders use a common language when discussing parenting leave policies? What challenges arise from differing terminologies, and how can standardization efforts address these challenges?
 - What are the implications of varied or inconsistent leave policy terminology for research, policy-making, and implementation?
2. Advancing administrative data
 - Who is overlooked by existing administrative data? And what information would benefit from linking points in administrative data?
 - What kind of administrative data do we need in order to compare leave take-up between countries and efficiently monitor EU Directives?
 - How can statistical offices adapt to new data needs? And how can they coordinate with government agencies tasked with monitoring progress toward EU equality goals, for example?
3. Improving survey data
 - What are some of the most important questions that are not currently asked in European surveys?
 - How can new questions be introduced to already existing European surveys?



- How can leave policy research benefit from survey data? What are some unique data contributions from survey data compared to administrative data?

4. Developing policy indicators

- What policy indicators do we really need? And to what end?
- How can we incorporate eligibility requirements in policy measures? How can we account for the inclusivity of leave policies, such as their accessibility to non-traditional workers (e.g. self-employed, platform workers) and families (e.g., LGBTQ+ parents, adoptive parents)?
- How should we account for differences in paid versus unpaid leave, as well as variations in wage replacement rates, when developing indicators?
- How can we ensure that indicators developed in one context are relevant and adaptable to different countries or regions? What role do international organizations play in standardizing these indicators?
- What mechanisms do we need to put in place to facilitate the collaboration of different stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, researchers, advocacy groups) when developing and standardizing leave policy indicators?

The workshop is supported by the [Sustainability@Leave COST-Action \(CA21150\)](#). Members of the COST-Action team will report on [their assessments of issues with regard to data quality](#), which will provide a basis for further discussions. Within each of the above four challenge areas, we will discuss the child's perspective in leave policies and outcomes, long- and short-term alternatives for solving data challenges, and how to make data accessible to researchers and policymakers.

In addition to the above-stated objectives, we expect the workshop outcomes to address several COST-Action objectives. Namely, the workshop will develop knowledge needing international coordination (1.e), engaging in dialogue with stakeholders by seeking their input (1.g) and disseminating research results (1.j).

Program and Organizing Committee:

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The program and organizing committee is collating a list of key policy makers from the European Community and international organizations (e.g. ILO, OECD). Please alert Cassandra (cassandra.engeman@sofi.su.se) and Ásdís (aaa@hi.is) if there are policy organizations who should be considered for invitation. The meeting will be invitation only due to space and funding constraints.