

Where to with leave policy?

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1. Ireland in a European context
2. Some trends in parental leave
3. Rationales and designs for parental leave
4. Where to? Beyond parental leave

But first....

Network on Leave Policy and Research

Annual International Review

Country notes for participating countries:

- details on leave(+other work/family measures)
- take-up
- recent policy developments
- publications and research
- relationship with ECEC

2014: 35 countries – 26 **European** (23 member states + Norway, Iceland, Switzerland)

Available at www.leavenetwork.org

Three basic types of leave

- **Maternity leave**: health & welfare - mothers
- **Paternity leave**: support and care - fathers
- **Parental leave**: care – equally for both parents

But distinctions blurring in some countries

1. Ireland in a European context

Ireland in a European context

European situation (26 countries)

Post-natal leave periods

	<u>MatL(mn)</u>	<u>PatL(wk)</u>	<u>ParL(mn)</u>
None	4	9	1
Length	1.9-12	0.2-13	6-36
<i>Average</i>	3.7	2	12.6

Ireland in a European context

European situation (26 countries)

Post-natal leave periods - well paid

	<u>MatL(mn)</u>	<u>PatL(wk)</u>	<u>ParL(mn)</u>
None	1	2	12
Length	1.4-12	0.2-13	6-24
<i>Average</i>	3.3	2	11.5

Ireland in a European context

Current Irish provision in relation to 26
European countries

Maternity leave: very long, none well paid

Paternity leave: 1 of 9 with none

Parental leave: minimum possible by EU law

Flexible work: 1 of 3 + Portugal has entitlement

Overall: only country with **no** well paid leave +
maternalist policies, i.e. assumes women
responsible for care of very young children

2. Some trends in parental leave policies

(NB. Now using 'parental leave' to cover all types of leave for parents with young children)

Some trends in parental leave policies

- ‘Maternity’ leave transferable to fathers in normal conditions e.g. Czech Republic, Poland, Spain, UK
- Three leaves reduced to single Parental leave with quotas for mothers/fathers/family e.g. Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden
- Growing attention on fathers
 - Paternity leave
 - Design of Parental leave to encourage use

Three important European cases

- Iceland, Germany, Portugal
- All made major changes since 2000
- All redesign leave to encourage fathers' use:
 - Well paid, father only leave period OR
 - 'Sharing Bonus' OR
 - Leave obligatory
- No separate Maternity leave in 2 cases

The case of Iceland

No maternity leave

2001-3 ▶▶▶ 3+3+3 'birth leave' model (3 months each for mothers/ fathers/family @ 80% of earnings; non-transferable) ▶▶▶ 5+5+2(?when)

2010

- 95 fathers take leave for every 100 mothers
- Fathers take 1/3rd of all leave (92 days v 179 for mothers)
- Most fathers take 'father only' quota – but only 17% take part of 'family' quota v. 93% of mothers

The case of Germany

West Germany goes East German

2006: 36 months low paid leave; family entitlement
– 3.5% of fathers take some

2007: 12 months well-paid leave + bonus 2 months
if both parents take at least 2 months

2012: 29% of fathers take some...but 78% take only
2 months

2013: entitlement to ECEC from 12 months of age.

West Germany has adopted East German policies!

The case of Portugal

No maternity leave and obligatory leave for fathers

‘Initial Parental leave’: 120 cal.days @ 100% OR
150 @ 80%[45 days obligatory for mother, rest
transferable]... IF father takes 30+days 150
days @ 100% OR 180 days @ 83%

‘Father’s only Parental leave’: 20 working days
@ 100% - 10 days obligatory

‘Additional Parental leave’: 3 months per
parent@25%

The case of Portugal

No maternity leave and obligatory leave for fathers

Other measures:

- 2 hours/day 'nursing leave' up to 12 months; parents can share; paid
- Right to flexible work until child 12 years (choose start and finish times)

2013: 24% of families share Initial Parental leave...68% of fathers take obligatory Paternity leave, 58% remaining period.

3. Rationales and designs for parental leave

Rationales and designs for parental leave

What rationale(s) for Irish leave policies?

- Health and welfare?
- Gender equality?
- Children's right to parental care?
- Fathers and mothers' right to spend time with their young children?
- Increasing birth rate?
- Supporting traditional family roles?
- Reconciling employment and family responsibilities?
- **+**???????

Rationales and designs for parental leave

1. **Decide** rationale(s) and goal(s) for leave policy...where to?
2. **Identify** and involve interested parties
3. **Design** for rationale(s)...5-10 year development programme
4. **Set** short and long-term targets + monitor
5. **Review** and **revise**

Rationales and designs for parental leave

- If health and welfare: How long is justified? Obligatory or voluntary? If voluntary, what conditions, e.g. well paid?
- If gender equality: if fathers to use, need well-paid, 'father only' period. Obligatory or voluntary?
- Which model?
 - Maternity+Paternity+equalParental leave **OR**
 - Parental leave, e.g. 5+5+2 or 6+6 or ???

4. Where to? Beyond parental leave

Beyond parental leave

Need to walk on two legs! Improve existing parental leave policies now...but start thinking about larger 'work/life' issues, e.g.

How does parental leave relate to ***other policies for children?***

How does parental leave relate to relationship between employment, care and gender ***over the lifecourse?***

By itself, parental leave is not nearly enough

Beyond parental leave

How does parental leave relate to other policies for children?

- Parental leave and ECEC: Large gap between entitlements in Ireland – and most countries
- Parental leave and health: Is leave policy informed by health policy? Leave for child illness?
- Parental leave and children's rights: Leave policy usually made without any reference to/input about children's rights and best interests

Beyond Parental leave

How does parental leave relate to relationship between employment, care and gender *over the lifecourse?*

- Leave policies of limited use if limited to a short period in a long lifecourse
- Lifecourse 'career break' model: period of paid leave over lifecourse to be used for various reasons (e.g. Belgium)

Beyond Parental leave

How does parental leave relate to relationship between employment, care and gender *over the lifecourse?*

- Leave policies of limited use if no fundamental change in workplace practices and norms...having to request flexible work implies workplace norm continues to be full-time, continuously employed (male) worker
- Flexible working as standard practice and adopt 'universal caregiver model' as norm...

Universal caregiver model

[T]he trick is to imagine a social world in which citizens' lives integrate wage earning, caregiving, community activism, political participation, and involvement in the associational life of civil society – while also leaving time for some fun. This world is not likely to come into being in the immediate future, but it is the only imaginable postindustrial world that promises true gender equity. And unless we are guided by this vision now, we will never get any closer to achieving it (Nancy Fraser)

Beyond Parental leave

Without working towards a lifecourse perspective to relationship between employment, care and gender we face:

- A growing crisis of care – who will do the caring in our societies?
- A growing crisis of participation in public work – how can we be concerned citizens?
- An environment inimical to individual or societal flourishing – how can we have a life worth living?

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